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Analysing Radicalism through the Social Media Interactions of Transnational Far Right and Islamist Movements in Western Europe and Contextualising the Movements' Relationship with Mainstream Media Political Discourse

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to explore whether the threat of Islamist radicalism in Western Europe has been *over-emphasised*, in contrast with the threat of far-right radicalism, which was widely under-estimated until recently. Furthermore, this thesis will explore how the rise in Islamist and far-right radicalism has affected Muslims in Western Europe.

Two research questions were formulated to decipher the similarities and differences between adherents of Islamist and far-right radicalism on social media to see whether they show an interaction and whether both movements influence media and political discourse and vice-versa.

The software 'SocioViz' was used to collect keywords from 600 Tweets from accounts associated with adherents of both ideologies, corresponding to six searches over a two-month period during the months of July and August 2020. The keywords were subjected to a short analysis of their contents to interpret similarities and differences in communication.

The findings showed that adherents of far-right and Islamist movements on Twitter use similar keywords and language to similar extents to communicate, suggesting a relationship, or interaction, between adherents of both types of movements based on the similarity and frequency of word usage. This suggests that the worldviews of Islamist and far-right adherents are more similar than it imight appear. The findings also suggest that high-interest moments such as a migration crisis can create a spike in online discussions.

These findings present implications for governments and media agencies, as the interactions between the two movements has been shown to further radicalise adherents of both movements. Although no Tweets were collected which called for violence against the other, anti-immigrant hostilities and Islamophobia have been shown to legitimise and normalise the demonisation of immigrants and Muslims in Western Europe.

Introduction

Throughout history, political and religious-motivated violence has been used to achieve political aims. From movements such as 'Al-Qaeda' and the protestant reformers, the cultural-nationalist 'Black Power' movement and ethno-nationalist groups such as Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland (Mitchell, 2013), political and religious extremism has been employed by 'fringe' groups and movements who have often resorted to violent-means to communicate their aims of achieving or resisting socio-political change (Cantoni, 2012).

The last two decades have seen a consistent rise in the spread of socio-political and religious extremist ideology and domestic and global acts of terror, with momentum growing in the late-1990s, culminating in the attacks of September 11, 2001 (9/11) in the United States of America (US) (Jones, 2014). As will be explored in Chapter 2, social movements by their nature are radical and often favour 'extreme and complete social and political change' (OED, 2019).

'Extremism' denotes the 'extent of one's beliefs regarding political and ideological matters' (OED, 2019). For example, during the Irish 'troubles', violence was used to achieve political aims, and while this violence was termed 'terrorism'; the expression of political violence, it was not linked to religion, despite being between two religions (Mitchell, 2013). As such, the extremism is not linked to any ideology, neither political nor religious, as Islam has come to be associated with terrorism in present times. In the recent past, extremism was associated with fringe groups using whatever means necessary to achieve their socio-political goals (Rydgren, 2007).

Since 9/11, Islam has become associated with 'terrorism' and 'extremism'; with 'radicalism' used mostly for ring-wing political ideology. However, this is not accurate, as research has shown that other left-wing and right-wing socio-political movements also express the same actions by strategizing and mobilising against the threats of injustice, globalism, state exclusion as well as to future threats (Kaya, Ayse and Troian, 2019). This highlights the difficulty in conceptualising the terms, as often, violent and

non-violent extremism often sits within a delicate balance and can be difficult to entangle (Schmid, 2013).

Islamist extremism and Islamophobia have been key assets in helping mobilise Western European Muslim youth with an immigration background and far-right nativist European youth to join radical and extremist movements. Such movements usually attract young men with a low-education and low-attainment background (Schwoerer, 2018) and seek to unify them around common political and socio-economic disadvantages to provide a sense of meaning and belonging (Lipset, 1960). These 'anti-establishment' movements are mobilised using online social networks.

According to research by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, START, the term 'far-right' encompasses any and all individuals, groups and movements espousing right-wing, anti-Muslim, anti-Islam, anti-immigrant, anti-Semitic, neo-Nazi, neo-Fascist, anti-LGBT and extreme anti-liberal ideology (Miller, LaFree, Dugan, 2018). Like Islamist ideology, far-right ideology can be referred to as a contemporary anti-democratic ideology with elements of religious and societal organisation (El Karoui, 2018).

As postulated by the relative deprivation theory in the 1950s (Lipset, 1960); political, social and economic deprivation was seen as the major cause in the rise of xenophobia, fascism and anti-Semitism in groups. Thus, it would be reasonable to presume that groups undergoing similar struggles in the present day would behave in a similar way by channelling righteous indignation when faced with complex societal issues such as economic recession and austerity, globalisation and inequality, rising political discontent and unemployment. These factors are examined in more detail in Chapter 4.

At the same time as global Islamist extremism was rising in the 2010s, so were parallel violent far-right movements that went largely ignored (Koch, 2017). However, the threat posed by far-right movements went ignored in Western Europe, as far-right radicals were viewed as non-violent and not an 'immediate' security threat (Al Jazeera,

2019), so political elites and security officials concentrated resources on Islamist radicals instead, both violent and non-violent (HM Government, 2011).

According to START's 'Global Terrorism Index' report published in January 2020, there is a 5-year incremental increase in far-right radicalism and extremism (Miller, LaFree and Dugan, 2018), highlighting a need for a further look at the threat posed by far-right movements and networks and a back-to-back comparison of two trans-national radical extremist movements highly active in Western Europe (Figures 1 and 2).

Instead, as this thesis will show, the threat posed by Islamist extremism and terrorism was given all the states' and media's attention, resulting in an over-exaggeration and over-criminalisation of members of Islamist groups and their sympathisers while the far-right extremists and their sympathisers were allowed to grow bigger and more dangerous (Abbas, 2017). For example, Islamist offenders received prison sentences that were three time or more longer than far-right offenders on similar charges (Griffin, Aked, Miller and Marusek, 2015).

European Muslims have paid the price and become targets of all sides in the battle between Islamist extremists and terrorists on one side, Western governments and politicians on another side, and the media and ordinary citizens on another side.
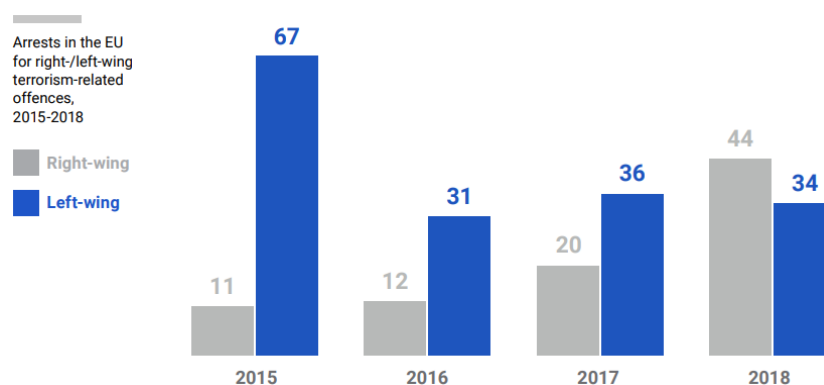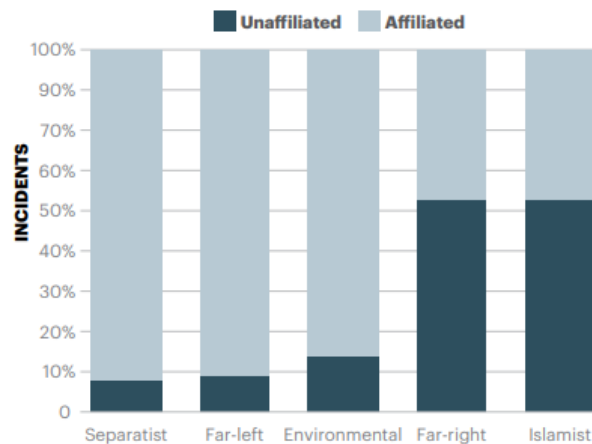

Figure 1: Terrorism-related offences perpetrated by far-right groups in the EU, 2015-2018, (Ravndal and Bjørgo, 2018)

Proportion of affiliated and unaffiliated attacks by ideology

Around 60 per cent of both far-right and Islamist attacks are unaffiliated.

Figure 2: Proportion of affiliated and unaffiliated attacks by ideology, (Ravndal and Bjørgo, 2018)

Rationale of the Research

Radical and extremist movements are vehicles for political mobilisation around common economic and cultural anxieties and legitimate concerns. These 'anti-modern' movements appear to provide answers that do not exist to questions that have been ignored by the ruling elite for too long.

Research evidence suggests that social, economic and political factors drive this ideology, and radicalised far-right youth idolise violent acts of terrorism and see committing violence as a means to achieving their goals (Abbas, 2017). Far-right movements are increasingly adopting terms like 'Christian Jihad' and 'counter-jihad'; highlighting the mutual learning and adopting of ideology from radical Islamist movements.

In analysing the socio-economic factors behind far-right and Islamist reciprocal radicalisation in Western Europe, Abbas (2020) shows that the social alienation and discontent shared by many youths are magnified in urban communities experiencing wider structural inequality, unemployment and political discontent. Similarly, Campelo et al., (2018) analysed the social and psychological profiles of Islamic radicalised

European youth engaged in extremism in a meta-analysis of 22 studies and found overwhelmingly similar factors of early psycho-social vulnerabilities such as family dysfunction, abandonment, injustices and uncertainty around employment.

Bartlett and Birdwell (2013) coined the terms 'cumulative radicalisation' and 'cumulative extremism' to explain the process of mutual mobilisation and escalation spirals that occur with both movements in response to high-level incidents; e.g. terrorist attacks, perpetrated by members of the opposite group. To illustrate this, Fielitz et al. found that 54% of all far-right posts alluded to 'Islamic extremism' while promoting a victim narrative. The threat of invasion via 'mass migration' and widespread 'Islamisation' featured in 26% of posts. The remaining analysed posts were about migrant violence, left-wing extremism, unavoidable civil war and demographic replacement.

Both types of radicalism aim to create an over-reaction to extremism responses, thus increasing the movement's legitimacy and relevance. The rise in populist nationalist politics with anti-Muslim prejudices and hostilities emboldens the far-right and provides support in the form of evidence for the claims of Islamists. Furthermore, politicians and media often skew debates by focusing too much on Islamist radicalisation and extremism and ignoring far-right radicalisation and extremism.

This has been aided by the apparent 'mainstreaming' of extremist rhetoric by media outlets, which has led to a heightened visibility of Islam and Muslims particularly, which in turn influences government policies hostile to Muslims and citizens' overreaction, mistrust, fear and hostility towards Muslims in general, not seen in Western countries since 9/11 (Abbas, 2017).

Incidents attracting high media attention; e.g. terrorist attacks by the far right or Islamists, are key triggers for both groups to attract support for their movement and provoke hate and counter-reactions towards the opposite side.

As research by Ravndal and Bjørgo (2018) shows, often high-profile ideologically-motivated attacks by one radical movement is followed by a similar attack by the

other, and this has been particularly evident since the 2015 Islamist terrorist attacks on the Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris. Figure 2 shows that the attacks were perpetrated by members and sympathisers of radical and extremist Islamist and far-right groups.

This thesis will concentrate on exploring Islamist and far-right movements in Western Europe in more detail, as well as in relation to their transnational networks. The next chapter will examine the current and historical discourse relating to radicalism, extremism, terrorism and youth socio-political movements; Islamist and far-right radicalism will be explored in more detail in Chapter 3; Chapter 4 will examine the concept of 'co-radicalisation'; the social media interaction of the two types of socio-political movements in terms of similarities and differences in mobilisation and radicalisation ; and the confluence of the two types of radicalism with mainstream media and political discourse will be discussed in Chapter 5.

In order to interpret whether the concept of co-radicalisation between adherents of the two ideologies is supported, a social network software, 'SocioViz', will be used to collect messages on the social media site Twitter (Tweets), corresponding to six searches over a two-month period during the months of July and August 2020 (Zonin, 2015). The influence of mainstream and right-wing political parties in Western Europe on the mainstream media rhetoric surrounding far-right and Islamist movements will be considered briefly.

To this end, this thesis aims to answer the following questions:

Research Questions:
i.   What are the similarities and differences between radical Islamist and far-right groups/movements online, in relation to mutual amplification, mobilisation and radicalisation, in the Western European context? Does the analysis of online social networks of Islamist and far-right groups/movements show an interaction?
ii. The confluence of both movements on mainstream political discourse: how do the radical groups/movements influence political discourse, and vice-versa?

Methodology

To answer the above research questions, the following method will be adopted.

Research Design

Procedure

SocioViz

To answer the Research Question, the Free software 'SocioViz' will be used to collect 600 Tweets corresponding to six different searches over a two-month period during the months of July and August 2020 – 100 Tweets collected per search (Zonin, 2015). To aid with this, a series of six searches will be conducted using keywords associated with far-right and Islamist ideologies; as follows:

I.   **Phrases associated with far-right ideology**: 'Islamisation of Europe'; 'Islamic/Muslim Threat Against Europe/West'; 'Muslim/Islamic Migration to Europe/West.

II.   **Phrases associated with Islamist ideology**: 'Threats Against Islam/Muslims in Europe'; 'Muslims Defending Islam in Europe/West'; 'Muslims Establish Caliphate/Islamic State in Europe'.

For each of the six searches, the top 10 keywords contained within 100 Tweets will be collected by SocioViz and an analysis of the relationship of the keywords to other keywords found within the social network will be included in the results.

Twitter

Twitter has been shown to be used by far-right and Islamist ideologues to recruit and mobilise networks (Klausen, 2014). The ease of use of micro-blogging social media sites such as Twitter also makes them attractive for data collection in several languages in a timely manner, though this thesis will only collect Tweets in English.

Sampling

The SocioViz social network analysis tool will be used to automatically select Tweets from accounts associated with the far-right group such as the 'English Defence League' and 'European Defence League' and from accounts associated with the Islamist groups such as 'Al-Muhajiroun' and 'ISIS'.

The SocioViz software will collect a total of 600 Tweets, 100 Tweets corresponding to each category, and automatically calculate the top 10 keywords from the Tweets, in order of frequency. These keywords will then be subjected to a short analysis of their contents to be able to interpret common were collated and then subjected to content analysis to decipher how frequently themes associated with the keywords were revealed.

Data Analysis

Social Network Analysis

Social Network Analysis (SNA) is an analytical method used to interpret patterns of relationships between different categories within a network (Home Office, 2016). The search word of phrase is referred to as a 'node', which connect with each other through 'ties' and other 'attributes'. SNA can be used to analyse the relationship between two or more variables or the density of the network.

Researchers such as and Caiani and Wagemann (2009), Davey and Ebner (2017), Froio and Ganesh (2018), Koehler (2014) and Wojcieszak (2010) have used SNA to investigate connections between the different levels within the networks and explore the idea that the Internet serves as an 'echo chamber' for like-minded individuals. Caiani and Wagemann (2009) researched right-wing extremist organisations in Germany and Italy, focusing on the structure and shapes of the networks. They concluded that the German network was more centrally organised compared to the Italian network, reflecting the 'real-world experiences' in both countries.

Content analysis

Content analysis will be used to analyse the keywords collected by SocioViz. Content analysis is used to identify and analyse specific messaging commonly embedded within

a sample to be able to interpret recurring themes within primary or secondary sources (Krippendorf, 2011).

Content analysis is a flexible and easy to use method in social science research as results can be easily replicated. The top 10 keywords collected from SocioViz will be allocated to each of the six categories.

Fielitz, Ebner, Guhl and Quent (2018) analysed content from over 10,000 Facebook posts, Tweets, Telegram and chat groups by far-right and Islamist groups and individuals and additional ethnographic research over a 3-year period between 2013 and 2017. Fielitz et al. found that 54% of all far-right posts alluded to 'Islamic extremism' while promoting a victim narrative. The threat of invasion via 'mass migration' and widespread 'Islamisation' featured in 26% of posts. The remaining analysed posts were about migrant violence, left-wing extremism, unavoidable civil war and demographic replacement.

Applied to Islamist posts, the analysis showed 91% of posts relating to world-wide 'hate against Muslims' and the 'oppression and persecution' of Muslims, 'racism' and 'discrimination'; all seemingly promoting a victim narrative. The remaining posts were about far-right groups and extremism in general and an impending civil war.

Radicalism, Extremism and Social Movements

The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'radicalism' as 'the belief in *radical* ideas and principles, especially on political and social issues' (OED, 2019). The word 'radical' is defined as pertaining to that which is '*new, different and likely to have great effect*' and also being '*in favour of extreme and complete political or social change*' (OED, 2019).

Historically, since the English 'glorious revolution' and subsequent European Enlightenment of the 18th century, radicalism has been associated with the quest for progressive reforms. The radicals tended to be young socialists and liberals who organised and founded a movement to fight against tyrannical rule (Boetticher, 2017).

The radicals had become 'radicalised' as a result of political and socio-economic discontent; thus, become 'more extreme or *radical* in their opinions on political or social issues' (OED, 2019). Following the English 'Enlightenment' and the French and American revolutions of the 18th century, the term 'radical' took on a political context as it became attributed initially to left-leaning 'liberal' parties, then later all political outliers (or extremes) who fought against tyrannical regimes to emancipate citizens and bring about changes thorough progressive social reforms (Ballard, Gubbay and Middleton, 1997; Kaya, 2020). This radicalisation came about as a result of political and socio-economic exclusion by the ruling elites and inter-generational conflict (Lichbach, 1989; Braungart and Braungart, 2001).

Sociologist Craig Calhoun (2011), in his theory of social movements, classified radicalism into three types; 'philosophical', 'tactical' and 'reactionary' radicalism. *Philosophical radicalism* is attributed to 'theorists' who provide society with rational means to understanding 'structural transformations'; for example, radicals such as Martin Luther in leading the Protestant Reformation. *Tactical radicalism*, on the other hand, is attributed to 'activists' who seek immediate changes in society that often co-opts 'violent and extreme' means; for example, the Civil Rights and Arab Spring movements. Lastly, *reactionary radicalism*, attributed to those 'left-behind' by

globalisation forces, seek to restore their values and cultural traditions. This last type of radicalism has been suggested as the closest fit for both Islamist radicals as well as far-right radicals who are often anti-Islamic (Kaya et al., 2019).

As has been shown throughout history, social movements are vehicles for political mobilisation around common economic and cultural anxieties and legitimate concerns (Calhoun, 2011). They serve to channel righteous anger to bring about fundamental and progressive reforms or resist other changes. Mobilisation theories have been proposed to explain how groups mobilise into social movements. Charles Tilly (1977) suggested four reasons for groups mobilising into social movements: the *Marxist* approach proposes that people seeks solidarity in order to avoid conflict, while the *Durkheimian* approach states that people mobilise into groups as a response to integration and disintegration challenges in society, the *Millian* approach suggests group mobilisation as a utilitarian pursuit for individual freedoms and the *Weberian* approach proposes mobilisation as a quest for modernity (Tilly, 1977; Kaya, 2020).

The 'resource mobilisation theory' was initially proposed to explain mobilisation in relation to radical-left groups while breakdown theories explain mobilisation for radical-right groups; however, this distinction has disappeared. Recently, breakdown theories have been found to have no empirical basis (Barnard, 2000).

According to Tilly (1977), socio-political mobilisation can be *defensive*, *offensive* or *preparatory*. Kaya (2020) designated the increased mobilisation following 9/11 in the form of political radicalism and Islamist extremism as forms of *defensive mobilisation*, as is mobilisation by nativist youth towards far-right radicalism since the 2014 European migration crisis. Both types of movements are rising up against the same threats of injustice, globalism and state exclusion (Kaya et al., 2019). Furthermore, transnational European-wide far-right groups such as PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the Occident) can also be classified as *preparatory* in strategizing and mobilising for future attacks against Muslim invaders.

Braungart and Braungart, (2001) defined contemporary 'youth movements' as 'the organized, conscious attempts by young people to bring about or resist societal change', which is very similar to the definition of 'radical' (OED, 2019). The role of young people in organising, mobilising and founding usually anti-establishment movements to radical changes brought by a new-way-of-doing-things mentality is often derived from dissatisfaction with old institutions and mistrust for the older generation (Reulecke, 2001). Contemporary youth movements unify young people around common social issues that help them define their identities, thus providing a sense of meaning and belonging (Braungart and Braungart, 2001). Furthermore, well-connected social networks and access to shared learning environments enabled young people to mobilise over common goals such as economic uncertainty and housing problems. As such, youth movements can be thought of as alternatives to political parties, as they provide the essential services albeit in a non-institutionalised setting.

Social movements by their nature are radical and often favour 'extreme and complete social and political change' (OED, 2019). Extremist movements seek to unify people around common social issues as a way of expressing marginalisation and insecurity caused by political and socio-economic disadvantages. Social movements such as the Black liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s had extremist elements such as openly carrying weapons and using force and violence to achieve change (Kurlansky, 2004). Similarly, the Reformation movement resorted to violence in the form of rioting and massacres (Cantoni, 2012).

Throughout history, political and religious-motivated violence has been used to achieve political aims. From political and religious movements such as the Taliban (Stanford University, 2016) and the protestant reformers (Cantoni, 2012) and the 'Black Power' movement (Kurlansky, 2004) to ethno-nationalist groups such as Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland (Mitchell, 2013), political and religious extremism has been employed by 'fringe' groups and movements who have often resorted to violent-means to communicate their aims of achieving or resisting socio-political change.

'Extremism' denotes the 'extent of one's beliefs regarding political and ideological matters' (OED, 2019). For example, during the Irish 'troubles', violence was used regularly to achieve political aims, and while this violence was termed 'terrorism' (OED, 2019), it was not linked to religion, despite being between two religions (Mitchell, 2013). The conflict began in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s between the mostly-Protestant 'Unionists' who sought for Northern Ireland to remain in the United Kingdom and the mostly-Catholic 'Nationalists' who sought re-unification with the Republic of Ireland (McGarry and O'Leary, 1995). An academic consensus has categorised the conflict as a 'marker of ethnonationalism' rather than being theologically-based (Mitchell, 2013).

As such, the extremism was not linked to any ideology, neither political nor religious, as Islam has come to be associated with 'terrorism' in present times. In the recent past, extremism was associated with fringe groups using whatever means necessary to achieve their socio-political goals (Rydgren, 2007).

In present times, 'radicalism' and 'extremism' are linked solely to Islam and Muslims. Despite being different types of radicalism, it is important to highlight the distinction between 'extremism' and 'terrorism'. Extremism, as described earlier in this work, denotes a spectrum with respect to a person or a group's beliefs regarding political and ideological matters, which can also be linked to religious beliefs. However, the beliefs may be distinct from those of movements or parties who advocate any violence; particularly political violence, which is more commonly referred to as 'terrorism'. (Roy, 2015; Kruglanski et al., 2019). Extremism can take the form of violent or non-violent means, as stated in the UK government's counterterrorism 'Prevent' strategy (HM Government, 2011), and applies to Islamist and far-right groups.

The ambiguity in defining the term *radical* also lends itself to the definition and subsequent interpretation of the terms, *radicalism*, *radicalisation*, *extremism* and *terrorism*; highlighting the difficulty in explaining these concepts to a mainstream audience. Furthermore, radicalism in relation to violent and non-violent extremism often sits within a delicate balance and can be difficult to entangle; particularly with

the modern conceptualisation of the terms which have been difficult to differentiate/define even within social science scholarship, (Schmid, 2013; Kaya, 2020) let alone by political and media institutions and mainstream. As such, extrapolating findings derived using one definition of these terms and applying them to a different cultural setting will likely result in bias (Coolseat, 2014). In the chapter and throughout this thesis, *extremism* and *radicalism* may be used interchangeably, unless otherwise specified.

One way to make sense of these definitions is through the understanding that non-violent extremism can transform into terrorism, based on a few factors, as explained by the resource mobilisation theory and the 'relative deprivation theory' (Lipset, 1960; Barnard, 2000). According to the relative deprivation theory, people who experience 'relative deprivations' in society develop a feeling of grievance and 'deserving better', though with realising that what they seek cannot be achieved by conventional means, organise into groups and mobilise to fight towards transforming society.

The process of the extremists coming to terms with reality and understanding some of the reasoning of why the complex social, political or religious issues persist; for example, the ideological and generational divisions that caused the Brexit crisis, the recent migration crisis in Europe or the prolonged Civil Wars in Libya and Syria, and accepting their 'erroneous' beliefs can often result in acting out with aggressive actions against authority figures or minority groups seen as the reasons for the complex issues (Kaya, 2020). Research has shown this to be true across different 'extremism' contexts; compared to the processes involved in 'radicalisation', which have been shown to be more dynamic, harder to define and consequently more open to different interpretations across political and social divides (Kruglanski et al., 2019; Kaya, 2020).

Sociologist David Aberle (1966), who thought of social movements as 'an organised effort by a group of human beings to effect change in the face of resistance by other human beings', believed there to be four categories into which social movements could be best understood, in terms of what the groups seek to achieve. While 'redemptive' or religious movements seek to inspire total spiritual change in

individuals in the quest for deeper meaning, 'alterative' movements seek to inspire only partial change in individuals, focused on self-improvement and behaviour-change. 'Reformative' movements, on the other hand, pursue partial change in specific social systems; for example, more inclusive rights, while 'transformative' or revolutionary movements seek total change to *every* aspect of society in order to destroy the current systems which are seen as ineffective (Aberle, 1966). Lastly, 'resistance' social movements were added to explain movements which seek to prevent changes to society; such as further liberalisation or progression in society.

Far-right and Islamist radicalism best fit into *resistance* social movements. For example, many far-right groups seek to inspire other native white Europeans to join them in shunning 'immigrants' who are seen as exterminating European societies through terrorist attacks, depleting sparse resources through welfare claims, contributing to an increase in illegality and the demise of the Christian European civilisation (Rydgren, 2007; Kaya, 2015). Similarly, Islamist groups seek to inspire Europeans with immigration backgrounds and native white Europeans who sympathise with their plight to join them in rejecting the Western societies' mission to 'pigeonhole' Muslims, including the majority of Westernised Muslims, as backwards and potentially dangerous terrorists, while native white Europeans are seen as progressive reformers.

Furthermore, Islamist movements particularly can also be *redemptive* as they call for Muslims to return to the true version of their religion and live according to 'Shari'a' or Islamic laws and traditions (Ruthven, 2016). Likewise, far-right groups call for native Europeans to defend their Christian values and civilisation. Nonewithstanding, both types of movements could be said to be seeking *transformative* revolutions to destroy current society by trying to *resist* the current systems. This confusion highlights the inherent difficulty with categorising complex human behaviours into singular boxes, without nuance, as some actions cross many categories the theory provides no explanations for this. It could be the case that some movements can shift into another category during their life course; for example, from starting out seeking partial

reformative change to becoming more radical and seeking total *transformation* in society as societal norms changed, such as during the Reformation movement.

Radical Social Movements

Movements such as the French revolution. For 10 years beginning in 1789, young radicals espousing radicalism were at the forefront of the French Revolution that birthed the French Republic and overthrew the monarchy (Campbell, 2006). Young radicals achieved major reforms based on the Enlightenment ideals of equality and democracy; in a movement that is said to be the starting point for contemporary radicalism.

The confluence of myriad social, political and economic inequalities and radical ideas led to widespread fears around food insecurity, rising debt levels, unpopular support of the American Revolutionary War and governance failures of the *Ancien Regime* (the monarchical ruling class), in whom the public had lost confidence and called for a re-balancing of power to benefit the masses (Lichbach, 1989; Campbell, 2006).

Per Emile Durkheim's 'structural functionalism' theory, organised religion functions as a social movement which advocates solidarity and unity (Barnard, 2000). As such, the movement can often become extreme in order to achieve its aims, as proposed by Karl Marx (Ballard, Gubbay and Middleton, 1997), based on the notion that religions lead to divisions and entrench political and economic inequalities in society. Karl Marx believed that revolutions are the only means for people to resist the inevitable oppression and exploitation caused by religions. By this analysis, by the 19th century, there was an element of violence associated with the radical revolutionaries as they became outsiders on the fringes of centre and left-wing parties (Barnard, 2000).

As a case in point, Papal monarchy under the Catholic church during the Middle Ages in Europe reinforced social, political and economic inequalities and encouraged corruption, led by the priests and aristocrats. Catholic dominance in European societies received much resistance from the 16th century, when student-led radicalism, peasant revolts and rioting, enabled by the printing press, led to a European-wide

movement and the 'Protestant Reformation' (Cantoni, 2012). Martin Luther's activism which called for reforms across the political and religious classes eventually led a new religious movement which challenged the monopoly held by the Catholic church, eventually resulting in Christianity splitting into two types. As Karl Marx stated, revolutions are the only means for the masses to avoid oppression and exploitation, as Europe was experiencing a wave of revolutions in 1848. Popular uprisings in the form of riots and protests against rising food prices, unemployment, structural inequalities and abolitionism led to activism by radicals seeking freedom and guarantees of rights against governmental oppression. (Ballard, Gubbay and Middleton, 1997).

The 'Young Turks' movement of the late 19th century though idealistic achieved its aims of reform and overthrew the Ottomon Empire (Reulecke, 2001). Similarly, the 'German Youth Movement' emerged early in the 20th century critical of modern civilisation and developed and a unique youth culture that was independent from political involvement and promoted women's liberation and environmental protection.

By the 20th century, radicalism came to be associated with the anti-establishment and anti-capitalist politics of the likes of Josef Stalin, Adolf Hitler and Mao Zedong, and later by the politics of neo-liberalist such as Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher (Short, 2009; Pugh, 2010). What the politics of these politicians have in common is they were all viewed as 'radicals' at the time, seeking to make fundamental social, political and economic reforms (Caiani and della Porta, 2018).

Just as Adolf Hitler and the Nazis met the definition of a radical when the term was previously associated with left-leaning radicals and political parties, in a similar way, extremist politico-religious movements such as ISIS and far-right movements the European Defence Leagues and Knights Templar International are now also referred to as radical as the term has taken a more controversial meaning in modern times (Pugh, 2010). As explained earlier in this chapter, 'social breakdown theories' proposed explanations for collective action in relation to right-wing radicalism as resulting from to a breakdown in the traditional social institutions in society; such as religion, which

leads to disintegration. The resulting vacuum is hijacked by radical right movements, such as the Nazis, but has since been found to lack empirical support (Rydgren, 2007).

Following WWII, when radicalism became associated with right-wing nationalism, the distinction between left- and right-leaning radicalism evaporated in the following years as social democratic associations and political parties filled the space (Pugh, 2010). The 1960s heralded the decolonisation movement and anti-colonial wars of independence and national liberation (Anderson, 1995).

Conflicts such as the Algerian war and the Vietnam war became prolonged and vicious, whereby the colonial states supported the repressive regimes in using torture and chemical weapons (Zack, 2002; Kurlansky, 2004). In the United States, initial widespread support for the Vietnam war; particularly by the older generation, served to create widespread divisions in society; particularly among young people, who largely disapproved of America's involvement in the war and the use of napalm (Kurlansky, 2004).

The political conditions of the 1960s was one of student movement, civil rights movement, anti-Vietnam war movement, gay rights movement, women's movement and environmental movement) set the scene for wide-spread radicalism and popular uprisings in the United States (Anderson, 1995). The movements converged around *activism* for political reforms and cultural progressive rights as well as resistance against oppression, violence and racism.

Following decades of smaller protests against state-sanctioned segregation, discrimination and white racism in America, between 1963 and 1968, a combination of strategies such as rioting, marches, 'freedom rides' and peaceful sit-ins, led by radical student organisations, resulted in successful legislative and policy changes, endorsements by powerful media institutions and institutions and a change in public opinion (Kurlansky, 2004). Despite these successes, from the mid-1960s, a shift to the more militant 'Black Power' movement and support for the Black Panther Party which openly advocated violence led to a reversal of public opinion as the movement was

now viewed as too extreme. The radicalism that was openly championed across political and social divides then became associated with extremism and terrorism. From the mid-1960s, protests became riots as kidnappings, armed robberies and bombings became frequent.

Similarly, in Europe, student-led activism against injustice and structural inequalities began in the 1960s and gradually spread across the newly-built iron curtain. Reform-minded students and workers protested against colonial wars, globalisation, low wages and unemployment (Anderson, 1995). In Prague, a student self-immolated in a square in January 1969 as a protest against government censorship. What followed was the 'torches for freedom' movement whereby young people set themselves on fire in public squares using increasingly extreme and radical means. Oppressive political conditions led to consequent activism by groups across the political spectrum.

In the late 1960's in Northern Ireland, the Catholic Nationalist minorities campaigned for civil rights from the Protestant Unionist majority government, by whom the Catholics felt subjected to structural discrimination (English, 2005). The protests were met with violence and brutality from the authorities, quickly descending into riots, mass protests and acts of civil disobedience; encouraging several armed paramilitary groups and British troops to join the conflict (McGarry and O'Leary, 1995). The conflicts ended with the 'Good Friday Agreement', brokered by an International coalition in 1998, after several ceasefires failed.

The 1980s brought a series of anti-racism protests in Western Europe (Hussain, 2019) and pro-democracy protests against communist rule in Eastern Europe. The fall of the Berlin Wall arrived on 9 November 1989, triggered by coordinated protests in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia (Stokes, 1993). The 1990s and 2000s renewed global youth mobilisation around extremist nationalist and anti-democratic movements, boosting far-right and Islamist radicalism and extremism (see Chapter 3).

December 2010 saw a series of protests in the Middle East and North Africa that culminated in a revolutionary uprising that became known as the 'Arab Spring' (Lynch,

2012). Named after the Prague, Czechoslovakia, democratisation revolution of 1968 (the 'Prague Spring'), the Arab Spring had hopes of bringing about lasting democratic changes across the Middle East and North Africa. This was achieved somewhat in January 2011, when the Tunisian leader Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was overthrown after over twenty years in power.

The revolution spread quickly by the Internet as footage shared on social media encouraged Arabs across the region to protest against state oppression and corrupt governance. This awareness led to similar protests in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Jordan, Oman, Syria, Iraq, Kuwait and Lebanon, overthrowing the Egyptian, Libyan and Yemeni governments (Hassan and Dyer, 2017).

Amidst the chaos of the popular uprisings, extremist groups such as ISIS seized the power vacuum and armed jihadists assumed violent control of the movement (Ruthven, 2016). Despite bringing forth regime change in some countries, the 'Spring' did not materialise. Syria and Libya descended into prolonged civil wars that have seen the deaths of thousands and economic stagnation, widespread corruption and political instability persists (Hassan and Dyer, 2017). The refugee crisis that has affected Europe and the Middle East in the last 10 years have led to a resurgence in far-right and Islamist youth radicalism.

Modern-day Radicalism

Islamist extremism and Islamophobia have been key assets in helping mobilise Western European Muslim youth with an immigration background and far-right nativist European youth to join radical and extremist movements. As Kaya (2020) designated the mobilisation of youth towards Islamist radicalism and extremism and nativist youth towards far-right radicalism as *defensive and preparatory mobilisation*, both types of movements are rising up against the same threats of injustice, globalism and state exclusion while also strategizing and mobilising against future threats, particularly for far-right groups such as PEGIDA.

As postulated by the deprivation theory in the 1950s, political, social and economic deprivation was seen as the major cause in the rise of xenophobia, fascism and anti-Semitism in groups. Thus, it would be reasonable to presume that groups undergoing similar struggles in the present day would behave in a similar way by channelling righteous indignation when faced with complex societal issues such as economic recession, globalisation and inequality, rising political discontent and unemployment.

Research by the World Economic Forum (2017) found that for groups of 'millennials' (people aged between 26 and 40 years), the most critical social, economic and political problems facing the world today to be the destruction of the climate, poverty, large-scale global conflicts and the decline of safety and security, government corruption, rising inequality in relation to income and discrimination, lack of education and unemployment and lack of economic opportunities. Thus, these pose a significant problem to young people and without the structured institutional means to channel these anxieties, frustrations and grievances, radical and extremist movements have stepped in to fill the void left by socio-political institutions.

It is important to note that radicalism is a fluid and dynamic concept (Calhoun, 2011). For example, in the 18th century, the 'radicals' were the liberals; but now the extremist far-right nativists defending their values and culture are also 'radicals', as are extremist Islamists who also seek to defend their conservative Islamic values from cultures they view as too liberal, just as the meaning of radicalism and radicalisation pivoted after 2001 to become associated with more violent extremism and Islamic terrorism (Khosrokhavar, 2014; Kaya, 2020).

As this chapter has shown, the politico-religious movement that birthed the extremist groups of today such ISIS and the EDL meet the requirement of being referred to *radical movements*, perhaps even *radical youth movements*, as has been the case throughout history. To this end, this chapter has challenged the general understanding of the terms 'radical', 'radicalism' and 'extremism' to be difficult to differentiate, even by social scientists. As such, findings from current research on radicalism and

extremism should be treated with caution until better understanding and historical analysis of the terms arrives.

Islamist and Far-right Radicalism

Islamist radicalism and Islamist movements

El Karoui (2018) defined 'Islamism' as a contemporary political ideology with elements of religious and societal organisation. While invoking 'Islam' frequently as a means to legitimise Islamism, this ideology, coupled with social, economic, political and psychological factors such as political discontent, poverty, economic and social inequality and exclusion, has been shown to lead to radicalisation, the process that often results in extremism; whereby beliefs about religious and political ideology are held, to differing extents (Kaya et al., 2019). As discussed in the previous chapter, this extremism can take the form of violence or non-violence, as the term was associated with fringe groups using whatever means necessary to achieve socio-political goals (Rydgren, 2007).

Therefore, an individual radicalised through extreme Islamist ideology could be one who is on their way to committing violent acts of terrorism or 'jihadism' (armed struggle) (Roy, 2015) or one who idolises such acts and has fantasies of committing similar violence at home or abroad. Throughout this thesis, this last group is referred to interchangeably as supporters or sympathisers of the global Islamist jihadist movement.

These jihadists are strong adherents of the trans-national 'Salafi' politico-religious movement; derived from Sunni Islamic ideology whose devotees claim to emulate "the pious predecessors" (the first generations of Muslims) as closely as possible by combining a literal interpretation of the Qur'an with violent jihad (martyrdom) by whatever means (Moghadam, 2008; Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion, 2019).

As shown in chapter 2, in the past, extremism was not linked to any ideology, neither political nor religious. Since 9/11, however, Islam has become associated with 'terrorism' and 'extremism', with 'radicalism' used mostly for ring-wing political ideology. Although not a new phenomenon, innovation in electronic communication

such as audio-visual engineering, enabled by the internet, has made the consequences of radicalism greater (Baldauf, Ebner and Guhl, 2019).

Roy (2015) viewed radical Islamism as a socio-political youth movement, just like the black liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s. As explained previously, social movements by their nature are radical and often favour 'extreme and complete social and political change' (OED, 2019). Such movements usually attract young men with a low-education and low-attainment background (Schwoerer, 2018) and seek to unify them around common political and socio-economic disadvantages to provide a sense of meaning and belonging (Lipset, 1960). These 'anti-establishment' movements are mobilised using online social networks.

Islamism in context

The political context greatly shapes how Islamist movements behave (Hafez, 2012). Research has shown that rather than being fanatical and resistant to change, the majority of ideological movements tend to be 'malleable' and the strategy and level of organisation used is highly dependent on the political context the particular movement seeks to fit within.

'The Society of Muslim Brothers' (Muslim Brotherhood) is a Salafist Islamic political movement that emerged in Egypt in 1928 founded by scholar Hassan Al-Banna is a good example of the malleability of Islamist movements (Hafez, 2012). The movement was mobilised to resist communism, British occupation in Egypt and liberate Egyptians from the monarchy, through active armed struggle (Al Jazeera, 2017). The group was nationalist, extreme, violent and religiously and politically conservative (Ghattas, 2013) and was 'highly resistant' to dialogue with the government and political opponents. After being banned and mobilising underground, the movement organised to become a political party, going on to win Egypt's first democratic elections in 2012 (Al Jazeera, 2017).

The shift from movement to party saw the group transform to become more reformist-oriented. In seeking to reform the political system in Arab countries through

political participation, activism, education and social responsibility, the group's core principles core principles of 'promoting Islamic laws and morals' and introducing an Islamic social system in the Arab world (Al Jazeera, 2017).

This highlights the apparent flexibility and malleability within Islamist movements as they seek the means to become more influential in order to affect wide-spread change through their ideology. This adaptability was later instrumental in enabling Islamist groups that formed in the Middle East and North Africa to spread and grow in Western Europe (Khosrokhavar, 2009).

One Cold War legacy was the mass abandonment of advanced weapons by former Soviet states which went into the hands para-military and Islamist radicals, the 'jihadists' (foreign fighters) (Moore, 2014). Some states, self-declared enemies of the 'West' such as Iraq, Iran and Pakistan, provided support to the extremists during the Soviet Union's 10-year invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 (Davidson, 1998). This worked to radicalise many young Muslim men into extremism; for example, Saudi Arabia's Osama Bin Laden, who founded 'Al-Qaeda', and Abu Musa Al Zarqawi, who founded ISIS in Iraq in 2013.

Globalisation and trans-nationalisation made transporting weaponry, people, communication and intelligence simpler (Abdelrahman, 1995). Jihadists descended on Afghanistan and started organising and planning global terrorist attacks with the local militia groups, the 'Taliban'.

Bin-Ladin established Al-Qaeda in the early 1990s with the core goal of 'coordinating a transnational network' of jihadists and re-establish a Muslim State (Moore, 2014). Just like the Muslim Brotherhood before them, with ideology rooted in a conservative interpretation of Sunni-Islam, the group was strongly anti-Israeli and anti-Western, anti-US specifically, aimed to 'overthrow corrupt regimes', resist Western imperialism and remove Western influence from Islamic states through active and violent armed struggle. The group coordinated the September 11, 2001 (9/11) attacks on New York (Moore, 2014).

Al-Qaeda viewed itself as the defenders of Islam and Muslims around the world. This is interesting, as the group was partly-created by the US, which initially viewed Islamist radicalism as an ally to Western interests more than as a threat. However, Islamist movements have proved to be highly malleable and adaptable, easily shifting from a strategy focused on localism to global concerns (Coolseat, 2014).

The invasion and occupation of Iraq by the US in 2003 had the effect of destabilisation the Iraqi army, who formed associations with militant groups to fight against the US and allied forces (Glenn, 2016). A Sunni-Shi' civil war was triggered in Iraq in 2004 as Sunni-militant groups formed an alliance, 'Al-Qaeda in Iraq' (AQI) (Glenn, 2016). The Sunni-alliance against the majority Shi'a militias led to Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi leading the group now called the 'Islamic State in Iraq' (ISI).

The onset of the 'Arab Spring' across the Middle East in 2011 birthed an attempted revolution challenging the rule of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, which was violently suppressed, propelling the country into a civil war (Moore, 2014). Several rebel groups formed into the 'Jabhat Al-Nusrah' group to resist the the regime's suppression, and with Western intervention imminent, Al-Assad released extremist jihadist fighters from prison to assist the Syrian army fight rebel groups (Glenn, 2016). The ISI travelled to fight the Syrian army, with Al-Baghdadi later creating the 'Islamic State of Iraq and Syria' (ISIS), headquartered in the captured city of Raqqa, Syria (BBC, 2015). ISIS's core goals were to violently expand its reach globally via a holy war (jihad) in order to revive the Islamic Caliphate in Iraq and Syria, introduce pure Islamic law to re-reunite Muslims globally (Hafez, 2014).

The movement was successful in invading, occupying and destabilising major cities across Syria (Raqqa) and Iraq (Mosul, Fallujah and Tikrit) and expanding its reach and economic powers (BBC, 2015). From 2014, over 30,000 Muslim jihadists enlisted in the 'online army' and travelled from over 100 countries in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, North America, Europe, Caribbean and Australia to fight in the holy war and live within the Caliphate, with an estimated '3,922 to 4,294' from EU Member States (Brooking

and Singer, 2016; Boutine et al; 2016); founding an extreme socio-political movement that operated like a youth movement (See Chapter 2), enabled by social media.

Air strikes were launched by the US and allies in response to kidnappings and crucifixions (BBC, 2015). The group and its supporters responded with a 'campaign of terror'; frequent terrorist attacks in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Kuwait, Tunisia and Western Europe. Western European countries such as France and the UK where a high number of Jihadist fighters had travelled from would suffer some of the worst attacks between 2014 and 2017, perpetrated by 'home-grown jihadists' (BBC, 2015).

In the past, Islamist groups such as Al-Qaeda advocated the use of violence only directly against the USA, its citizens, military and allies, referred to as the 'head of the snake', as Al-Qaeda referred to the US, which it saw as the source of all Al-Qaeda's grievances (Badawy and Ferrara, 2018). ISIS, with its strong branding, enticing messaging and sophisticated corporate identity, was able to spread its ideology and draw Muslims from all over the world to fight an obscure enemy and establish an even more obscure Caliphate - In one day in 2014, 40,000 Tweets of grotesque imagery were posted by ISIS (Berger, 2018).

Badawy and Ferrara (2018) noted that the leadership in ISIS favoured a more direct and sophisticated 'shock-and-awe' approach to achieving its goals in the short-term, unlike previous movements. From the outset, ISIS coordinated a deliberate strategy to invade cities, seize oil and gas fields (Glenn, 2014) and targeted executions (Abdelaziz, 2014). This served to help the group recruite members and supporters globally (Badawy and Ferrara, 2018). Furthermore, the unapologetic strategy of filming and sharing incredibly violent content on social media sites served a second aim of sending a message to the former leaders of Islamist extremism and terrorism, Al-Qaeda, that ISIS would maintain a hegemony in Iraq and Syria (Badawy and Ferrara, 2018).

Radical Islamist Movements in Western Europe

In Western Europe, radicalism is usually associated with extreme ethno-nationalist ideology as seem in groups such as the *IRA* in Northern Ireland and the *Basque*

movement in Spain and extreme left-wing ideology of groups such as *Action Directe* in France (Khosrokhavar, 2009). The mobilising power of Islamist ideology emerged as a new phenomenon in the 1990s following the Afghan war against the Soviet Union and western silence on conflicts in Muslim countries such as Palestine, Bosnia and Chechnya. In addition, dissident radical Islamists linked to the Muslim Brotherhood who had been exiled from their countries (Egypt, Syria) (Mandaville, 2010).

Khosrokhavar (2009) notes that this Islamist radicalism emerged from the second- and third-generation of Europe's Muslim immigrants who were experiencing 'integration problems', as well as a few converts to Islam. This radicalism initially started in the UK and France, owing to their colonial relationship with Muslim-majority countries such as Pakistan and Algeria, then later in Germany and Spain, from newer groups of Muslim immigrants from Turkey and Morocco.

As such, the story of Islamist radicalisation in Europe is one of global-historical as well local origins, as many European Islamist movements took advantage of globalisation and formed associations with global jihadist networks to incorporate other disaffected young radicals in search of identity and belonging who sought to act out the indignity they experienced in Europe (Kaya, 2015). Islam becomes a way of 'legitimising' this indignity and rejection as extremists/radicals seek to avenge themselves by 'seeking salvation' (Khosrokhavar, 2009). In this way, they see Islamisation as a way of attaining the dignity that proved elusive in their adopted countries.

However, it is important to note the different forms of Islamist radicalism in Western Europe, for example, some groups were 'committed to working within existing political and legal systems', such as Muslim Brother-hood-affiliated groups. One such group, Hizb-ut-Tahrir, focuses more on protests, political campaigning and rejected violent extremism as a means of achieving political reform (Mandaville, 2010), while the Muslim Brotherhood is active in France, Belgium, Britain and Germany.

The 'Groupe Islamique Arme' (GIA) was an Algerian extremist movement that emerged in the early 1990s after being denied rule by the military dictatorship in control of

Algeria. The GIA was a political party that splintered into an extremist movement. GIA cells developed in France among the Algerian diaspora who were mostly poor and disaffected youth experiencing racism, exclusion and anger at colonialism (Khosrokhavar, 2009). Some French GIA networks formed associations with global jihadist networks such as Al-Qaeda in the 1990s and were implicated in the 1995 Paris bombing.

Since the 1980s, Muslim Brotherhood-affiliate groups such as 'Union des Organisations Islamiques de France' have represented French Muslims with networking, financing and community relations.

In the UK, Islamist radicalism grew within the immigrant Muslim community in the 1990s to become the largest Islamist network in Western Europe (Khosrokhavar, 2009). The radical Islamist group 'Al-Muhajiroun' which has strong associations with global Islamist networks in Afghanistan and Pakistan, was instrumental in spear-heading Islamist radicalism in the UK. Communities experiencing the rejection and frustrations of rejection similarly see extremist Islamism as the only means of attaining dignity and purpose.

Although many groups emerged to exploit these grievances, there was a distinction within these groups as some were violent extremists while groups such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir ("Party of Liberation"), an anti-democracy offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, sought to establish the Caliphate by non-violent political means, though 'media and policy elites' continue to lump-group all strands of Islamist radicalism together (Mandaville, 2010). They focused on fundraising and raising awareness of humanitarian crises in Muslim countries. People such as Abu Qatada and Abu Hamza, who had close ties to Al-Qaeda and had fought in the Balkans, had already participated in global jihadism and focused on 'radical preaching', going on to be convicted of 'terror-related' offences (Mandaville, 2010). The movement spread to other European countries and is still active in Germany and Denmark.

By contrast to France and the UK, Khosrokhavar (2009) argues that the Muslim-origin Turkish minorities began forming Islamist networks as a means of showing discontent with the politics in Turkey by campaigning and fundraising for opposition parties. However, this changed with the later generation of Turkish-origin Muslims in Germany. For example, the secular movement founded by Turkish scholar Fethullah Gülen in Turkey in the 1960s is still active in Germany, building many educational and cultural centres catered to Turkish-origin Germans since the 1990s. The 'Gülen movement' has played an important role in supporting ethnic-Turks with networking, assimilation, social mobility and inter-cultural relations (Mandaville, 2010), contrast to the Islamist 'Millî Görüş' group.

A series of jihadist terrorist attacks have been committed by homegrown terrorists in Western Europe, since the Madrid train bombings of 2004 (Brooking and Singer, 2016). These attacks were committed by Islamist extremists who were either involved with a transnational extremist group such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS, or their 'sympathisers', who were either self-radicalised online, or by Al-Qaeda and ISIS-linked groups such as Al-Muhajiroun.

Far Right Radicalism and Far Right Movements

First coined by Blee in 2003, the term 'far-right' refers to groups with 'anti-democratic values' who reject the 'principles of fundamental human equality (Carter, 2005). This has been expanded on by Ravndal and Bjørgo (2018) to incorporate the 'acceptance of social inequality, authoritarianism, and nativism', which encompasses a spectrum; from the democratic 'radical right' to the anti-democratic 'extreme right' (Lee, 2019).

As such, this thesis will incorporate the terms 'radical-right', 'extreme-right' and 'right-wing' to refer to far-right radicalism, as all conceptualisations include a strong leaning towards nationalism (ethno- and cultural-nationalism), with xenophobia, exclusionism and anti-immigrants as sentiments (Caiani et al., 2012). The 'nativism' criteria used in the definitions above refers to a 'racial or cultural threat' experienced by a 'native group against a perceived alien group in society (Lee, 2019).

Far-right movements and groups are disparate and consist of protest movements, gangs, political parties and pressure groups (Lee, 2019), both local and global. Though disparate, the 'far-right' operate a highly-connected transnational network which incorporates diverse ideologies, aided by the internet and social media platforms.

The ideology behind far-right radicalism is similar to that of Islamist radicalism, as members seek revolutionary changes to socio-political systems, to differing extents. While more extreme movements seek to achieve radical changes such as 'homogenous nations', others seek easier changes such as reforms of the immigration laws, achievable within mainstream systems (Lee, 2019). The extreme far-right advocate for violence; encompassing hate crimes to terrorism (Ravndal and Bjørgo, 2018).

The Far-Right in Context

The far-right ideology as it is understood today, emerged in the 1920s in Western Europe as a competitor to communism and liberalism; where fascist systems in Germany and Italy inspired an extreme militant socio-political movement to transform society (Copsey, 2008). Griffin (1991) referred to fascism as a form of 'populist

ultranationalism'; whereby, 'the masses', as opposed to the elite, protect the nation from 'corrupting influences', using a strategy that goes beyond existing norms.

Although the Nazism associated with Germany collapsed at the end of WW2, 'neo-Nazism' as an ideology has thrived as a 'dominant model for fascism' (Copsey, 2008), since white-supremacist groups such as Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in the US co-opted Nazi symbolism and rhetoric first in the 1920s and again in the 1950s (Camus and Lebourg 2017). White-supremacist groups advocate for the superiority of the white race over other races and have exported this ideology internationally; cultivating a diverse range of groups; from Christianity-derived to Satanist-derived (Hope Not Hate, 2019).

The extremist fascist ideology underpinning far-right movements transformed further into 'neo-fascism', with the foregoing of racial superiority and replacing this with 'ethnopluralism', a system based on the differences between races, as opposed to the superiority of one race over another (Camus & Lebourg 2017; Lee, 2019). In reality, this development has been called into question, as 'Identitarian' movements such as the 'New Right' in France adopted ethnopluralism into a rhetoric of a clash-of-civilisations (Zúquete, 2018) and challenged left-wing intellectuals and the 'ruling elite' for maintaining a hegemony over society. However, a change in language has not reflected a change in membership; as many groups subscribed to the Identitarian rhetoric continue to openly advocate for racial divisions and support white supremacy.

Further, this transformation of ideology and rhetoric to fit the changing times highlights how flexible and adaptable the far-right movements are, in a similar way to Islamist movements (Hafez, 2017). Nazi symbols were dispelled with. However, as Camus and Lebourg (2017) put it, attempting to 'repackage old ideas' does not remove the extreme fascism from the movements' core (Lee, 2019). Neo-fascists heavily promote white supremacist-derived theories such as the 'great replacement'; that Western civilisation will once again be conquered by Muslims and Europe will be replaced by Muslim immigrants (Maleagrou-Hitchens and Brun, 2013). This narrative was heavily influential to far-right terrorists such as Anders Breivik, the self-described 'militant-nationalist fascist' who claimed in his 2011 manifesto to perform his

"martyrdom operation" to "save Europe from cultural Marxism and Muslim takeover" (BBC, 2012).

This shows that the line between radicalism, extremism and terrorism to support one's beliefs is easily blurred, as subscribing to extreme ideology far often leads to extremist actions. Another case in point is that of Brenton Tarrant, the Australian terrorist who massacred 51 Muslims at a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, in March 2019. The self-described 'white supremacist' became radicalised on online forums and in Europe and acted "against the invaders" to "create an atmosphere of fear… to further social, cultural, political and racial divide" (Walden, 2019). This blurring of ideologies to encompass fascism, neo-Nazism, neo-fascism and populist anti-Muslim narratives is the hallmark of the transnational modern far-right movements, which has been exported globally with the aid of the internet and social media.

The 'counter-jihad' protest movements which emerged in the late 2000s with the founding of the English Defence League (EDL) have been classified as populist by Bartlett, Birdwell and Littler (2011) as they rely on a narrative of patriotic-activism to preserve 'native cultures' and values and defend Europe from 'Islamisation', while adhering to democratic norms and anti-racism (Maleagrou-Hitchens and Brun, 2013), an allegiance which at times has been questionable; for example, the targeting of minority groups as a threat to the majority promotes an 'us-versus-them' exclusionary narrative.

The heavily-branded ideology of the Europe-wide counter-jihad movement borrows from the New-Right movement in seeking to distance the groups from overt racism and anti-Semitism by instead mounting a defence of European civilisation against 'invaders' based on differences in cultural values only (Maleagrou-Hitchens and Brun, 2013). However, research has shown the similarity between these narratives and white supremacy, as the movements do not exist in a vacuum, as discussed above. Fears for the decline of European civilisation and the extermination of Europeans are repeated across social media, online forums and manifesto's of far-right extremists (BBC, 2012; BBC, 2016; Walden, 2019). Furthermore, counter-jihad movements frequently brand

minorities as prone to criminality and underachievement, rhetoric which is shared widely online (Lee, 2019).

Far-Right Movements in Western Europe

The open European boarder have enabled far-right groups to form networks, as has the shared interest around European elections.

The 'favourable conditions' for far-right 're-mobilisation' in Europe started with the media coverage of refugee crisis in 2014 (Caiani, 2016; Stier, 2017). Other important events to happen during the same time-frame such as Donald Trump's inauguration and the Brexit referendum in the UK served as push-factors that made mobilising far-right groups such as 'PEGIDA' and other 'EDL' much easier (Caiani and Graziano, 2019), with electoral successes across Europe serving as the ultimate push-factor; for example, 'Alternative for Germany' (AfD) entered the German parliament in 2017 after winning 13% of the votes following a divisive campaign by right-wing groups and media.

On the more extreme end of the spectrum are groups such as 'Combat 18', a British neo-Nazi group founded in 1992 (Hope Not Hate, 2018). The group openly uses Nazi rhetoric and symbols and has divisions in the US, Canadian and Germany. The group is suspected in the murder of several people of immigrant-origins in Germany and has recently been declared a terrorist-organisation and been banned in Germany, Canada and Britain.

Similarly, 'National Action' is on the extreme-right of the far-right spectrum, with ties to the right-wing British National Party (BNP). Founded in 2013 and banned in 2016, members of the British neo-Nazi group self-refer as 'white jihadis' (Hope Not Hate, 2019). Members use encrypted online forums such as 'Stormfront' to communicate within 'Alt-right' online networks and have organised intimidation campaigns against opponents such as mainstream politicians.

'Britain First' is an extreme ultra-nationalist political movement derived from white supremacy with links with Nazi-related US groups (Hope Not Hate, 2018). Founded in 2011, the group is Islamophobic while promoting Christianity. A member of Britain First inspired by Nazi ideology attacked and killed the British MP Jo Cox outside her parliamentary constituency in June 2016, on the eve of the Brexit vote (BBC, 2016), shouting; "Britain first, this is for Britain", during the attack.

The 'Knights Templar International' are a Christian militant groups seeking to 'defend' Europe' against a 'Marxist Islamic takeover' (Hope Not Hate, 2018). Founded by Britisher Jim Dowson in 2015, the group is strongly Islamophobic and anti-establishment and has a wide international network. Liberal politicians are referred to as 'treasonous cultural Marxists' (Cox and Meisel, 2018).

The 'Identitarian movements' are a network of groups derived from ultra-nationalist neo-fascist and neo-Nazi ideologies (Hope Not Hate, 2018). Founded in France in 2003, the Identitarian movement has networks across Europe, Australia and the US, through exploiting social media websites such as YouTube and Facebook to share the group's ideology and are 'less violence-oriented', though it has participated in hate-crimes (Zuqueta, 2018). 'Generation Identity', its UK-based iteration, has sought to separate from older neo-fascist groups, with the removal of Nazi-inspired symbolism and rhetoric (Lee, 2019). Although groups within this movement such as the French 'New Right' supposedly believe in *ethnic* and *cultural*, rather than *racial* heterogeneity, groups within the movement are very diverse and many openly advocate for racial segregation and white supremacy (Schaffer, 2013). The movement has replaced the American 'alt-right' as the 'main international far-right movement' (Hope Not Hate, 2019).

The 'counter-jihad movements' are a 'loose connection of movements who believe the West and Islam are at war', emerging following 9/11 and the rise of Islamist radicalism in Western Europe (Maleagrou-Hitchens and Brun, 2013). The 'European defence league' movements, part of the counter-jihad, started with the 'English Defence League' (EDL), which has been described as populist and fascist, based on an

Islamophobic rhetoric and narrative of patriotic-activism (Bartlett, Birdwell and Littler, 2011). Founded by Britisher Tommy Robinson in 2009 initially to protest against Islamist extremists in Britain, the group's style of protest-activism in the form of demonstrations and rallies was borrowed from Islamist groups such as Al-Muhajiroun (Casciani, 2019). Protests have frequently turned violent, usually against minority groups (Pilkington, 2016). EDL was one of the first European far-right groups to use this method of activism to radicalise and recruit, a method which has become pan-European, with the founding of several local defence leagues organised under the 'European Defence League' (Hope Not Hate, 2019).

'Pegida' (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the West) was founded in 2014 as a protest movement in Dresden, Germany, standing against 'unchecked mass immigration', 'Islamisation of Europe' and deeper European integration (Pegida, 2015). The movement emerged from a Facebook group discussion over fears of Islamists in Dresden and has since become active in several German cities and political platforms, although the movement favours the ease of access, openness and control of communicating on social media channels (Vorlaender, Herold, & Schaeller, 2016).

The role of 'extra-parliamentary grassroots activism' in the structure of nativist mobilisation and radicalism is increasingly being acknowledged by scholars (Gattinara and Pirro, 2019). The researchers analysed mobilisation factors of the far-right across the macro, meso and micro levels and found the relationship between right-wing political parties and far-right movements to be very close, particularly when gearing towards elections.

Right-Wing Parties

Far-right movements have been shown to be fluid and dynamic and often transform into political parties (e.g. AfD) (della Porta et al., 2017) or sit on the tightrope between political parties and movements as 'movement parties' (Gattinara and Pirro, 2019). Populist right-wing political parties who combine the ideologies of nativism,

authoritarianism and anti-elitism have seen a recent resurgence in Europe (Goodwin and Eatwell, 2018).

Right-wing populist parties are of two types, those that are willing to work within existing democratic systems and defend liberal values and those that remain staunchly anti-democratic, which tend to be more extreme (Mudde, 2007). As with Islamist movements that transformed into political parties, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, the matter of whether far-right movements can survive within mainstream democratic institutions (e.g. AfD) is open for discussion, as the parties' base and voters are still derived from often extreme groups. It is impossible to understand far-right mobilisation as separate from wider right-wing political party networks, as the boundaries blur (Mudde, 2016).

The 'AfD' (Alternative for Germany), created in 2013, is a right-wing populist political party which refers to itself as the 'Volkspartei' (party of the people) (Vorlaender, Herold, & Schaeller, 2016). Created by academics and left-leaning politicians as a Eurosceptic party, the AfD transitioned into an anti-Islam and anti-immigration, a move that proved popular, as the party won 7.1% of the German votes in the European elections of 2014 and 13% of the votes in the German election of 2017 (Stier, 2017).

The UK-based nationalistic Independence Party (UKIP), formerly led by Nigel Farage, was founded on Euroscepticism, anti-immigration and anti-establishment principles. Although with minimal success in the British parliament, UKIP has had success in the European parliament, House of Lords and local elections. The party is becoming more racist and anti-Islam (Hope Not Hate, 2019).

The threat posed by far-right movements went ignored in Western Europe for too long, as far-right radicals were viewed as non-violent and not an 'immediate' security threat (Al Jazeera, 2019), so political elites and security officials concentrated resources on Islamist radicals instead, both violent and non-violent (HM Government, 2011).

This thesis will concentrate on exploring far-right movements in Western Europe in more detail, the co-radicalisation and interaction online and with Islamist movements. The influence of mainstream and right-wing political parties in Western Europe on the mainstream media rhetoric surrounding far-right and Islamist movements will be considered briefly.

Co-radicalisation and Online Interaction of the Two Types of Radicalism, aided by the Internet and Social Media

Co-radicalisation

Caiani (2019) conducted an analysis of studies on far-right groups in Europe and considered the *micro-level* explanation of individual radicalisation factors, the meso-level analysis of the *internal supply-side approaches* of the groups' internal structure, and the *macro-level* contextual explanations relating to the wider societal factors behind the group's mobilisation.

This chapter will introduce the individual, internal and contextual factors relevant to far-right and Islamist mobilisation, radicalism and co-radicalisation.

Micro-level factors

Members of far-right groups tend to be middle-aged men from lower-class backgrounds and of lower education (Merkl, 2003; Schwoerer, 2018; Gattinara and Pirro, 2019). This demographic feel fearful and threatened by immigration, particularly Muslim immigrants, as immigrants are perceived as having access to better housing, social welfare, education and employment opportunities which would have otherwise gone to 'natives' (Kriesi et al., 2008); in keeping with the 'relative deprivation' hypothesis of socio-political vulnerabilities.

However, the picture is far more complex than it appears. In the past, European Islamist radicals also tended to be middle-aged men, although they also tended to be educated and from middle-class backgrounds - 60% university educated, 75% middle-upper class and over 50% in skilled employment (Bakker, 2006), while many of the younger Islamist radicals today are from lower-class and lower-education backgrounds who have looser community ties and often criminal pasts - 12% university educated, 66% known to police and being 25% unemployed (Basra, 2016).

Nonewithstanding, some right-wing movements, particularly those related to political parties, such as PEGIDA and the AfD in Germany and Britain's UKIP, have many middle- and upper-class members. Other individual factors implicated in radicalisation include family cohesion, attachment style, identity, friendships, social status and employment prospects belonging, social status and employment prospects (Caiani, 2019).

In their analysis of the 'social psychology of youth extremism', Baez et al., (2017) and Kaya et al (2019) found that extremism is linked to factors such as 'rigidity in reasoning', 'cognitive dissonance' and the 'oversimplification of complex social issues' and matters concerning morality which aid the extremists to make sense of their world. This works to skew the debate about issues of morality according to already-held biases, to fit their understanding of what the world should be, rather than what it is (Baez et al., 2017).

In the last two decades, Muslim-origin migrants and their descendants have been perceived by sections of the European public as a financial burden and are negatively-associated with crime, violence, drug abuse, extremism and terrorism, among other things (Kaya, 2015). In analysing the psycho-social factors behind far-right and Islamist reciprocal radicalisation in Western Europe, Abbas (2020) shows that the social alienation and discontent shared by many youths are magnified in urban communities experiencing wider structural inequality, unemployment and political discontent. Similarly, Campelo et al., (2018) analysed the social and psychological profiles of Islamic radicalised European youth engaged in extremism in a meta-analysis of 22 studies and found overwhelmingly similar factors of early psycho-social vulnerabilities such as family dysfunction, abandonment, injustices and uncertainty around employment. This marginalisation has been theorised to lead to victimisation in Muslim youth (Khosrokhavar, 2009; Olsen, 2019).

During or after a crisis, traditional social structures have been shown to disintegrate, to varying extents. For example, the family and family structures, political institutions and social security and religious organisations which may lead to feelings of anxiety and frustrations. The 'left-behind' natives, predicting worsening social-economic

circumstances and employment prospects, become aggrieved and may channel their feelings of grievance and insecurity into mobilising far-right groups to defend European society against immigrant 'invaders'.

On the other hand, research shows that support for radical right movements is associated with practical and ideological concerns rather than just irrational fears (Van der Brug et al., 2005), so subscription to radicalism and extremism does not necessary equate to personal dysfunction. In recent years, voters of right-wing parties, and by extension people who join far-right movements have been improving their political education and engagement and using social media websites such as Facebook to find like-minded people for political discussions, building networks and fundraising (Graham, 2015).

Meso-level factors

These *internal* factors focus on the group itself; its organisational and leadership structure, approach to fundraising, recruitment and campaigning (Art, 2011).

Strong charismatic leaders such as the EDL's Tommy Robinson, has been identified as important for far-right mobilisation (Eatwell, 2016) as leaders are viewed in paternalistic way as able to maintain cohesiveness and recruit new members. Similarly, high-profile Islamists such as the Al-Muhajiroun's Anjem Choudary has attracted recruits due to their charisma and media profile (Khosrokhavar, 2009; Olsen, 2019). Both regularly tour British cities to inspire followings (Casciani, 2019).

Koch (2017) found that both Islamist and far-right groups rely on the use of targeted gripping imagery, videos, symbolism and powerful and emotive rhetoric to draw recruits and build networks. Powerful symbols such as the St George's cross adopted by EDL would reinforce the group's identity, as many members join in order to become part of a network (Froio and Ganesh, 2019).

The internationalisation and 'trans-nationalisation' of far-right radicalism united far-right extremists to fight in defence of Christian European civilisation against a common

enemy – the 'invading' Muslims and Islam. Far-right groups form larger networks with other groups and right-wing political parties (reference as above), which is crucial to the survival of smaller groups, especially when seeking access to international networks. Organising and attending marches, protests and vigilante missions in defence of native Europeans with members of other networks is becoming increasingly important to the expansion and survival of far-right groups (Caiani, 2018).

For example, Caiani (2019) notes that many of the right-wing parties that were successful relied on far-right social movements such as Pegida and the Identitarian movement as grassroots campaigners via frequent marches and protests around German cities, successful online propaganda campaigning using visually-arresting imagery and 'anti-immigrant vigilante groups' who went on patrols seeking to protect native Germans from assaults by Muslim immigrants (Gattinara and Pirro, 2019). This was achieved in part due to the ease of dissemination and amplification of messaging that the internet provides, which coincided with the proliferation of mobile phone use.

There are parallels with the transnationalisation of Islamist radicalism, also enabled by the internet, sensational mainstream media commentary on 'Muslim' issues and politicians who use inflammatory language to discuss complex socio-political problems. Furthermore, seeing sensational and unsympathetic reporting of fellow Muslims in Palestine, Chechnya, Bosnia and Afghanistan suffering and the Western politicians and public seemingly unaffected helped with radicalisation, as European Islamist radicals developed an 'us-versus-them' mentality and some extremists chose their Muslim brothers and sisters over their European ones and targeted Europe as 'revenge' (Khosrokhavar, 2009).

Macro-level economic, social, political and cultural factors

Social and economic crises play a key role in mobilising the far-right groups and political parties, as suggested by the relative deprivation theory (Lipset, 1960). During the financial crisis of the 2010s and subsequent austerity measures elected by European governments, the level of far-right mobilisation in the form of protesting,

joining radical groups and posting extreme online messaging was shown to increase (Caiani and Graziano, 2018).

Political crises; for example, conflicts in the Middle East and the ongoing European migration crisis, have been shown to serve as 'push-factors' for radicalism and mobilisation. Increased securitisation following 9/11 led to Western European countries adopting strict anti-terror laws and policies as a response to increased intolerance by the media and general population (Khosrokhavar, 2009). These 'counterterrorism' measures became more draconian following Islamist-inspired terror attacks such as the 2004 Madrid train bombings, the '7/7' bombings in London in 2005 and the 2015 Paris bombings (TESAT, 2018). Hostile counter-terrorism measures led to frequent raids and police humiliation targeted at Muslims, who viewed them as curbs to religious freedom. This over-securitisation may have served to radicalise Muslim youth and also to encourage racism and Islamophobia in far-right activists and extremists.

Islamophobia has become a discursive tactic widely exploited by right-wing populist parties and far-right groups in parts of Europe affected by the financial and refugee crises (Minkenberg, 2015). Issues associated with perceived mass migration by mainly-Muslim and African immigrants into Europe are related not just to socio-economic and political anxieties and insecurities but also to cultural issues as perceived fears of the erosion of Western liberal values as Europe becomes more conservative and 'Islamic' amid the inevitable clash-of-civilisation (Kriesi et al., 2008). Such fears are more difficult to dispel, especially when far-right parties and movements exploit them false statements and imagery to further their missions.

Several studies have shown that aspects of Western European societies; most prevalent in societies built upon secularism such as France, lead to religious minorities, a big proportion of whom are Muslims, feeling victimised at being unable to genuinely practice their religion, coming to believe that European societies operate a system of structural inequalities and institutionalised discrimination (Khosrokhavar, 2009). Although countries such as Britain are more tolerant to religious minorities, Muslims

there also experience entrenched problems such as poor schooling, inadequate housing, insecure employment, exclusion from institutions and police brutality (Hussain, 2019).

This racism and marginalisation lead to feelings of victimisation and frustration developing in Muslim youth (Adam-Troian and Kaya., 2019). They feel unwelcomed as 'the other within' and become angry, hostile and resentful, channelling their grievances into 'extremist ideologies and violent action' (Cammaerts, 2016); a 'fertile ground' for recruitment and radicalisation. Radical Islamism becomes a way of legitimising this indignity as radicals seek to avenge themselves by 'seeking salvation', which Islamist movements happily exploit (Khosrokhavar, 2009). Feeling like outsiders may make aggrieved young people want to take revenge Hussain (2019).

Kaya e al., (2019) conceptualised this relationship thus: while marginalised 'migrant-origin' populations have advanced the 'Islamisation of radicalisation'; for example, through Islamist groups, marginalised nativist youth who join far-right movements have similarly advanced the 'nativisation of radicalisation'.

Furthermore, globalisation forces operating against nativist youth which favour further mechanisation of processes and jobs that will ultimately leave many unemployed (Allen, 2014), who may channel their fears into nationalism and extremism. The growth of the far-right parties (e.g. Front National in France) reinforces these views. Many voters of right-wing parties feel abandonment by liberal politicians who they view as 'traitors' (Casciani, 2019) and blame for crises such as the migration and financial crises.

While the 'counter-jihad' far-right movement justifies its beliefs about defending Western civilisation amid a 'Muslim' takeover of Europe owing to two completely disparate systems of cultural values and beliefs, certain European traditions such as the ridiculing of religion in popular culture as satire serve to agitate and radicalise both far-right and Islamist movements (Cammaerts, 2016). For example, the controversy surrounding the cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad which were published in

several European newspapers and magazines as a defence of free speech appeared to Islamists as just another opportunity to openly insult Islam, while fa-right radicals would have rejoiced at Islam and Muslims being targeted in this way. After the deadly Islamist-inspired terrorist attacks on Paris in 2015, the far-right have gripped on the attacks as proof that Migrant-origin European Muslims will never understand and accept liberal European values (Hussain, 2019).

In some European countries, the electoral system is designed to allow the incorporation of far-right movements into the political spectrum; for example, in Italy, France, Austria and the Netherlands. This allows for open debates regarding complex issues than un-discussed may lead to further racism in society. However, in countries such as Belgium and Britain, the electoral systems do not incorporate radical parties, with this rejection assisting far-right agitators to gain a substantial underground following and set up networks for more extreme and dangerous discussions. These fringe networks rely heavily on online following, which is disseminated widely. Islamist radicals coming across these groups may become further agitated and radicalised. it is not a coincidence, therefore, that Britain has the most active and influential far-right networks in Europe (Hope not Hate, 2019), while Belgium has one of the most active Islamist extremist networks (BBC, 2016).

As Koopmans (2005) has argued, one explanation for this is that far-right movements are more likely to form and gain successful when the electoral process is hostile and there are no opportunities offered by right-leaning radical parties to join forces. This atmosphere of hostility serves as a counter-factor for the far-right movement to mobilise and often thrive underground. Furthermore, research has shown that former communist Eastern and Central European cities/countries have political systems that make it easier for radical right parties to thrive, in addition to a more receptive public that were brought up on ethno-nationalism (Minkenberg, 2015). Likewise, Mudde (2007) showed that when radical right movements have access to 'allies' within right-wing political parties, this can often serve as a benefit as well as a disadvantage, as the

party and the movement may compete to gain a foothold in the particular city/country.

<u>Online Radicalism and Radicalisation</u>

Innovation in electronic communication such as audio-visual engineering, enabled by the internet, has made the consequences of radicalism greater (Baldauf, Ebner and Guhl, 2019). Social media networks enabled groups like ISIS to around 30,000 fighters from over 100 countries, including thousands from Western Europe, to fight in Iraq and Syria and commit acts of terror across the world (Brooking and Singer, 2016). The militant group created an app, which it used to post thousands of propaganda and triumphant announcements on Twitter and Instagram, capturing the group's conquering of territories and spread of chaos, often accompanied by arresting and grotesque imagery. In one day in 2014, up to 40,000 Tweets were posted by ISIS (Berger, 2018).

ISIS has been identified as the most 'savvy' extremist group in history (BBC, 2015) in the way it exploits social media to spread propaganda and recruit radical militants to carry out terrorist attacks (Badawy and Ferrara, 2018). Frequent social media platforms targeted include Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr; to be used by its many 'small groups of active online members' to post and retweet ISIS propaganda to increase the group's exposure (Berger and Morgan, 2015).

Similarly, the internet allows far-right movements to create trans-national networks for the purpose of recruitment and radicalisation (Meleagrou- Hitchens and Brun, 2013). Many far-right groups heavily rely on the activism and recruitment through social media channels such as Facebook and YouTube and fundraising via PayPal (Casciani, 2019), through the sharing of videos, arresting imagery and divisive rhetoric. For example, the EDL adopted the way Islamist groups such as Al-Muhajiroun use YouTube to share sermons and videos to generate awareness within the wider movement.

Far-right mobilisation across Europe, Australia and the US relies on websites such as Twitter and Facebook, which allow propaganda to spread quickly. For example, the EDL generate thousands of 'likes' on their Facebook pages which showcases their 'activism' against 'radical Islam', helping to inspire several other Defence League groups in Western Europe which have organised mass anti-immigration protests and anti-Muslim campaigns (Meleagrou- Hitchens and Brun, 2013).

Both types of movements are early and eager adopters of 'alt tech'; e.g., 'MuslimCryp', a custom-made encryption app created by Islamist radicals to hide their communication, and 'Hatreon' a crowd-funding website for far-right groups. As a response to increased government regulation, messaging platforms such as Telegram and Discord are preferred for internal group communication and organising campaigns.

ISIS employs digital magazines (*Dabiq*), professionally-edited videos, online recruitment campaigns (*One Billion* campaign), films (*Rattling the Sabres*) music and video games in the image of popular culture but with the primary aim of spreading 'anti-modern' values (Lesaca, 2015). Video games such as Call of Duty and Islamic-style hip-hop music videos have proved highly useful in recruiting people sympathetic to the movements, with violence as the main attraction. Similarly, Koehler (2019) found evidence of far-right extremists' glorification of violence and obsession with the military, through many cases of extremists infiltrating armed forces and police forces in the United Kingdom, Germany and North America to gain access to weapons, training and skilled recruits.

Online Interaction of Far Right and Islamist Radicalism

Studies have shown that both types of radicalism interact with each other online. Bartlett and Birdwell (2013) coined the terms 'cumulative radicalisation' and 'cumulative extremism' to explain the process of mutual mobilisation and escalation spirals that occur with both movements in response to high-level incidents; e.g. terrorist attacks, perpetrated by members of the opposite group. To illustrate this,

Fielitz et al. found that 54% of all far-right posts alluded to 'Islamic extremism' while promoting a victim narrative. The threat of invasion via 'mass migration' and widespread 'Islamisation' featured in 26% of posts. The remaining analysed posts were about migrant violence, left-wing extremism, unavoidable civil war and demographic replacement.

Fielitz, Ebner, Guhl and Quent (2018) analysed content from over 10,000 Facebook posts, Tweets, Telegram and chat groups by far-right and Islamist groups and individuals and additional ethnographic research over a 3-year period between 2013 and 2017.Applied to Islamist posts, the analysis showed 91% of posts relating to world-wide 'hate against Muslims' and the 'oppression and persecution' of Muslims, 'racism' and 'discrimination'; all seemingly promoting a victim narrative. The remaining posts were about far-right groups and extremism in general and an impending civil war.

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In a research report exploring polarisation and the interaction between anti-Muslim extremism and radical Islamism, Fielitz, Ebner, Guhl and Quent (2018) were the first to provide direct evidence for the notion that the online interaction of Islamic and far-right movements 'converge at different levels and mutually amplify one another'. Fielitz et al. analysed content from over 10,000 Facebook posts, Tweets, Telegram and chat groups by far-right and Islamist groups and individuals and additional ethnographic research over a 3-year period between 2013 and 2017.

Both extremist movements shared commonalities with regards to the use of vocabulary and communication strategies, the narrative of victimisation of own group and demonization of the other, the denigration of democracy, the demonization of

enemies and the promotion of conspiracy theories and an imminent civil war (Fielitz et al., 2018).

The researchers found a 'symbiotic relationship' between the two extremist movements – they each relied on the other via 'mutual learning, strategic references and reciprocity; which intensify individual and group radicalisation. For example, the racism from far-right groups intensifies the radicalisation of international Islamic fundamentalists. Following high-profile incidents by Islamist groups, far-right groups respond by increased recruitment, mobilisation, radicalisation and extremism. A spike in anti-Muslim content, racism and hate crimes was observed following such incidents on the opposite side, and vice-versa. Other incidents such as election success by right-wing political parties e.g. the AfD, also boosted mobilisation and legitimacy for far-right groups. The researchers postulated that high-profile incidents involving one side triggered an 'escalation spiral' which transitioned prejudice into hate crimes on the other side.

Although the two movements hardly ever communicated directly with one another and only converged against a common enemy e.g. to advocate for Holocaust denial or against the elites, both groups adopted symbols from the other perhaps as attempts to provoke the other. Far-right groups shared online posters calling members toward 'white jihad' or 'Christian jihad', while Islamist groups often adopted the far-right narrative of a loss of identity within their country to agitate the far-right further (Fielitz et al., 2018).

The study concludes that both groups need each other to continue lending the other credibility and legitimacy. The authors recommend that both movements be considered together in order to halt the mutual radicalisation and social polarisation since they are part of the 'same phenomenon'. More restrictive regulations exist to police Islamist content but not far-right content. This needs to be addressed urgently.

Similarly, Froio and Ganesh (2018) mapped the transnational far-right network on Twitter across Germany, Italy, France and the UK. Following qualitative coding of the

content from retweets, it was found that the network members were most likely to retweet about issues connected to 'immigration and 'anti-native' economic strategies; particularly, how immigration from predominantly Muslim countries is framed as a perceived 'threat' to European culture, security, and the economy'. As such, the researchers determined that Islamophobia was the "transnational glue of the far right" (Froio and Ganesh 2018).

Researchers such as and Caiani and Wagemann (2009), Davey and Ebner (2017), Froio and Ganesh (2018), Koehler (2014) and Wojcieszak (2010) have used Social Network Analysis (SNA) to investigate the connections between the different levels within the networks and explore the idea that the Internet serves as an 'echo chamber' for like-minded individuals. Using SNA, Caiani and Wagemann (2009) researched right-wing extremist organisations in Germany and Italy, focusing on the structure and shapes of the networks. The conclusions were that the German network was more centrally organised compared to the Italian network, reflecting the 'real-world experiences' in both countries.

In another project exploring the far-right network, contrary to the findings of Froio and Ganesh (2018), Davey and Ebner (2017) found the transnational far-right in Europe to be quite connected and cooperative; particularly in relation to national elections in 2017. For example, there was a spike in information sharing across social media networks (e.g. Reddit, 4Chan, Infokrieg, Discord) to influence elections in Germany and bolster support for the AfD, the German right-wing political party. Interestingly, the far-right activism usually began on public social media channels before shifting to closed forums and gamer networks.

Similarly, Klein and Muis (2018) studied the Facebook pages of far-right groups in Germany, France, UK, and the Netherlands and found that compared to right-wing political parties, the discourse among far-right movements and communities such as Pegida was more active, extreme and exclusionary.

Confluence of the Two Types of Radicalism on Mainstream Media Political Discourse

Far-right and Islamist Radicalism and Right-wing Politics

Analysis of radical and extremist movements such as ISIS has shown that they carefully tailor propaganda to 'be picked up directly' by mainstream media (Brookings and Singer, 2016). Brookings and Singer (2016) posit that once news of extremist and terrorist attacks spread widely on social media, 'it is never far from people's minds' and even mainstream politicians encourage this by amplifying the hostile overreactions to online hate-speech and physical violence perpetrated by radical groups. Right-wing politicians regularly reinforce this.

Similarly, members and sympathisers of Islamist and far-right groups spread toxic ideology internationally, inspiring local acts of terrorism, including in Western Europe. Analysis from manifestos of far-right radicals who transformed into terrorists, such as Brenton Tarrant, the Australian responsible for the 2019 attacks on Christchurch mosques in New Zealand (Walden 2019); Alexandre Bissonnette, the Canadian responsible for the 2017 mosque attack in Quebec, Canada (BBC, 2019) and Anders Breivik, the Norwegian responsible for the 2011 attacks on Utoya (BBC, 2012), highlights this transnationalisation of radicalism, extremism and terror. The manifestos admit the influence of right-wing political commentators and the electoral success of European right-wing parties in their radicalisation.

Incidents attracting high media attention; for example, terrorist attacks by the far-right or Islamists, are key triggers for both groups to attract support for their movement and provoke hate and counter-reactions towards the opposite side.

Researchers have analysed mobilisation factors of the far-right across the macro, meso and micro levels and found the relationship between right-wing political parties and far-right movements to be very close, particularly when gearing towards elections. The

political parties provide the groups with the all-important networks with which to 'mobilise public support' and expand their networks (Gattinara and Pirro, 2019).

Similarly, Graham (2016) examined the discursive overlaps between far-right movements and mainstream politics. Using Twitter, Graham examined the hierarchical clusters, using a hashtag search, with hashtags coded into 'extremist', 'mainstream conservative' and 'mainstream progressive' categories. Textual analysis was then conducted on individual Tweets over a two-month period to determine whether the extremist hashtags overlapped with mainstream right-wing hashtags in the same Tweet. It was found that extremists used hashtags to reach out to a more mainstream audience by a number of strategies; such as adding extremist content to a trending hashtag ("piggybacking"), linking extremist websites in hashtags ("back-staging"), and turning debates around to fit the extremist activists' ideas ("narrating").

Stier et al. (2017) sought to determine areas of overlap between the far-right movement Pegida and parties across the political spectrum in Germany such as AfD and CDU online by comparing Facebook 'likes' and 'comments'. Stier et al. found many similarities between Pegida and AfD; such as, the German government's refugee policy, refugee housing, asylum claimants, Islam and mass migration. The researchers concluded that political parties were increasingly espousing claims made popular by 'radical right-wing populists', which 'challenges the self-presentation of the AfD as a party of the political centre'.

Far-right and Islamist Radicalism and Media Reporting

This shows that the 'mainstreaming' of extremist rhetoric by media outlets had led to a heightened visibility of Islamist groups, Islamic extremism and Muslims particularly, which in turn influences government policies hostile to Muslims and citizens' overreaction, mistrust, fear and hostility towards Muslims in general, not seen in Western countries since 9/11.

Both types of radicalism aim to make governments 'overreact' and respond to extremism in a reactionary fashion, thus increasing the movement's relevance. The rise in politics with anti-Muslim prejudices and hostilities emboldens the far-right and provides support in the form of evidence for the claims of Islamists, and the cycle continues. Furthermore, politicians and media often skew debates by focusing too much on Islamist radicalisation and extremism and ignoring far-right radicalisation and extremism.

The response of governments, organisations and citizens to the apparent threat of Muslims and multi-culturalism in the West heightens mutual distrust, learning and reciprocal radicalisation (Abbas, 2017). This overreaction in the response of governments and security agencies to the assessment of the threats posed by Islam and Muslims in general has served to increase the legitimacy of extremists, as extremists from both types of radicalism achieve their aim of creating distrust and hostility to Muslims living in the West (Abbas, 2017).

Studies derived from constructivist-interpretations have shown that the mainstream media coverage of high-profile incidents such as terrorism can lead to a 'contagion effect'; inspiring sympathisers and copy-cats (Midlarsky, Crenshaw and Yoshida, 1980). This suggests that controls should be imposed on the coverage of such incidents, however, this has not been the case since 9/11.

Coverage of these high-profile emotive incidents and subsequent court trials have been shown to be highly-speculative and mis-represented and invoke nationalistic sentiments; constantly reminding the public of the threat and security-risk associated with Islam and Muslims (Miller & Sabir, 2012). Furthermore, mainstream media reports promote an 'us' versus 'them' rhetoric by labelling such extremist events as 'Muslim-related'; inciting fear and negativity towards Muslims, which serves to naturalise Islamophobic-stereotypes to the point they become acceptable in public discourse (Ansari, 2006; Allen, 2007). Media reports could easily make distinctions between extremist Islamists and Muslims, adherents to the Islamic faith, but choose not to (Mandaville et al, 2010).

Spencer (2012) identified reporting of high-profile Muslim-related incidents in the British press to be metaphorically associated with 'war, crime, uncivilised evil and disease' and serve as the underpinnings to hostile immigration and counterterrorism policies.

Populist far-right movements and right-wing politicians have co-opted this phenomenon and seek to normalise these hostilities by ensuring that the memory of the attacks remain in the public consciousness. To achieve this, far-right groups launch online campaigns by widely sharing videos and memes of negative Muslim-related incidents, so they can become normalised.

Findings

The following keywords were the top 100 words collated from Tweets by adherents of far-right ideology in the SNA:

i.   'Islamisation of Europe': Islamisation, radical, Europe, Islam, supporting, values, civilisation, Christian, jihadists, Orthodox.

ii.   'Islamic/Muslim Threat Against Europe/West': Europe, Islam, Muslim, threat, civilisation, invading, Christianity, religion, jihadism, migration.

iii.   'Muslim/Islamic Migration to Europe/West': Europe, migration, Muslim, religion, collapse, birth, Western, family, traditional, rates.

The following keywords were the top 100 words collated from Tweets by adherents of Islamist ideology in the SNA:

i.   'Threats Against Islam/Muslims in Europe': Europe, Islam, demands, submissions, protests, Quran, jihad, Swedish, police, armed, fearfulness.

ii.   'Muslims Defending Islam in Europe/West': Europe, Islam, defend, killed, Muslim, sexual, offender, migration, countries, jihad.

iii.   'Muslims Establish Caliphate/Islamic State in Europe': Caliphate, Koran, sharia, infidels, banned, football, police, wages, Swedish, riots.

Please see Figures 3 and 4 (Appendix 7) for graphical representations of the top keywords collated from Tweets corresponding to adherents of both ideologies.

Preliminary analysis of the top keywords contained in Tweets by adherents to far-right and Islamist ideology show many similarities in the word used and the frequency in which the words are used in communication. Further analysis of the contents of the tweets (See Appendix 1 and 6) shows the contents of the Tweets to be similar. Similar words and vocabulary were detected in the Tweets (e.g. words describing religions and

alluding to values and migration), suggesting a relationship, or interaction, between adherents of both types of movements based on the similarity and frequency of word usage. These findings support Research Question I.

Analysis of the words from the Tweets collected shows that adherents of far-right ideology send Tweets with top words including 'Islam', 'Muslims', 'migration', 'Christianity/Orthodoxy', 'Jihad', 'Jihadists', 'invading', 'collapse', 'civilisation', 'Western', 'Values' and 'Europe' the most (Figure 3). This fits with the nationalistic neo-fascist ideology favoured by far-right groups and movements such as the Identitarian and counter-jihad movements (Maleagrou-Hitchens and Brun, 2013; Fielitz et al., 2018).

Similarly, adherents of Islamist ideology send Tweets with the following top words: 'Islam', 'Muslim', 'Qur'an', 'Jihad', 'Sharia', 'Infidels', 'Migration', 'Fearfulness', 'Police' and 'Europe' (Figure 4). The use of these words suggests adherence to the Islamist ideology of religious conservatism, seeking to establish Islamic law (Sharia) and launch a holy war (jihad) in Europe (Davidson, 1998; Khosrokhavar, 2009).
These findings support the view that far-right and Islamist networks interact on social media sites such as Twitter adding further support to the notion of mutual radicalisation or 'co-radicalisation' between the two types of movements.

Categorising themes

After selecting the words generated from the SNA, a preliminary qualitative analysis of the contents was performed (recurring words, relationship/ties between words) to decipher patterns, which the following four themes emerged:

   i.   Fears and threats posed by adherents of one movement on the other; an 'Us versus Them' mentality,
   ii. Victimisation and Demonisation,
   iii. Values – anti-liberal and anti-establishment,
   iv. Interaction of the online expression of far-right and Islamist ideologies on mainstream media reports and political discourse.

Discussion

Theme 1: Fears and threats posed by adherents of one movement on the other; an 'Us versus Them' mentality:

Preliminary interpretation of the keywords from the Tweets suggests that adherents of Islamism freely use words tied to extremism; such as 'Jihad', 'Sharia' and 'Infidel', which have been used consistently by members and supporters of the trans-national radical Islamist group ISIS (Berger, 2018), which is known to have thousands of members and supporters in Western Europe who Tweet in English (Froio and Ganesh, 2018). These could be conceived of as threats against Europe (Appendix 2).

Similarly, interpretation suggests that in July and August 2020 on Twitter, adherents of far-right radicalism appear to be most concerned with Muslims and Islam, as Muslims and Islam are targeted in almost every Tweet (Appendix 1). This could be a strong indication of Islamophobia and being threatened by Islam and Muslims. The remaining top words tweeted about by adherents of far-right ideology suggest an exclusionary nativist clash-of-civilisations narrative of Muslims being a cultural threat on the social network, which is popular with members and supporters of the English and European Defence League movements (Maleagrou-Hitchens and Brun, 2013). Appendix 1 shows a selection of these Tweets about Muslims in Europe.

Words about migration appear in Tweets by adherents of both types of radicalism, suggesting immigration to be a high-profile topic (Appendix 3). Far-right nativists promote the narrative of Muslims invading Europe which would lead to the collapse Western civilisation, and one way that Muslims could achieve this is through mass migration, which proponents of this view already believe to be happening. In this way, Islam and Muslims could be viewed as a threat to Europe and Western civilisation, suggesting that Islamophobia is a key driver towards nativism. This supports the findings of Fielitz et al., (2018). Similarly, proponents of Islamism view Europe as a

threat to Islam and Muslims through policies that limit the resettlement of refugees and migrants fleeing repressive regimes.

Theme 2: Victimisation and Demonisation:

As shown above, similar words are used by adherents of both types of ideologies to defend their ideology while rejecting the other. This could be conceived of as the 'victimisation' of their own movement and the 'demonisation' of the other.

The narrative of Islam and Muslims 'under attack' in Europe shows itself through analysis of key words and terms used in Tweets by Islamist-adherent. The words 'fearfulness' and 'police' appear in the top 10 most-used words as contained in every 100 Tweets, supporting this notion of Islamist victimisation, while the appearance of more Islamist-leaning as interpreted above could suggest Islamists seeking to defend Islam and Muslims in Europe from racism (Appendix 4).

On the other hand, far-right victimisation is easier to decipher through the keywords 'invading', 'collapse' and 'values', suggesting a narrative of being under attack by the 'other' (Fielitz et al., 2018). Furthermore, the words 'sexual' and 'offender' appearing among the top words in Tweets alongside Muslims and Islam suggests the use of another far-right trope of aggression and sexual deviancy inherent in Muslims, which leads to Europeans being less safe among Muslims as European values are attacked. In addition, the continued appearance of 'migration' also supports the far-right promotion of migrants as 'illegal' invaders, despite this being untrue (Fielitz et al, 2018).

Interestingly, words that suggest security fears from Muslims such as 'terrorism' and 'extremism' were not seen in Tweets during the data collection period.

Theme 3: Values – anti-liberal and anti-establishment:

Anti-liberal values

The repeated use of the words 'Western' and 'values' by far-right ideologues could be interpreted as being in-keeping with the ultranationalist neo-fascist narrative promoted by Christian far-right groups such as the Knights Templar (Hope Not Hate, 2018). Proponents of this ideology aim to protect European values against Islamist conservativism while promoting similarly conservative 'Christian' European values.

Similarly, Islamist-ideologues aim to defend Islam from Western liberalism and protect Muslims from being corrupted by 'liberal' values (see Chapter 3). Although not among the top 10 words tweeted in any category, 'liberal' and 'liberalism' make a repeated appearance within nodes, as shown by the SNA (see Appendix 1-6). Liberalism entails rights to minority groups and women are viewed as intolerable by far-right ideologues, as Fielitz et al, (2018) has shown.

Anti-establishment

This interest in liberals and liberalism is interesting, as the ideology which far-right radicals appear to defend is also one mistrusted and rejected by many far-right ideologues within the wider network who seek more radical changes. As Reulecke, (2001) showed, mobilisation into movements is often in itself as a result of dissatisfaction with old institutions and mistrust for the older generation. Populist far-right movements such as Pegida reject established norms and seek transformative socio-political changes, as do Islamist movements such as ISIS and Al-Muhajiroun (see Chapter 3). Adherents of both types of ideologies unite in their desire not just to conserving their values but also against a 'cultural Marxist takeover' by liberal politicians who are viewed as promoting an inevitable 'civil war' between the two ideologies (Simon Cox and Anna Meisel, 2018).

Furthermore, the constant alluding to migration and the 'invasion' of Europe by migrants from Muslim countries has been interpreted by Fielitz et al to be related to

far-right 'economic nativism'. Such language is most prevalent when Europe is undergoing a crisis, which is used to promote a narrative of 'not enough resources to go around'.

Theme 4: Interaction of the online expression of far-right and Islamist ideologies on mainstream media reports and political discourse :

Several keywords about migration appear in Tweets by adherents of both types of radicalism, suggesting immigration to be a high-profile topic. Many of these keywords were collated from the search on 'Muslim Migration to Europe/West'. This search criteria was included to garner insight into the interaction of adherents of both movements' on mainstream media reports and political discourse.

It is interesting that the keyword 'migration' was present among the top 10 average searches across categories; highlighting the primacy of the topic in fringe discussions. Other top keywords appearing in the category were; 'family', 'collapse', Western', 'religion', 'tradition'; suggesting the linking of the topic of migration with the collapse of traditional Western family values (see Appendix 3). The network map for the 'Muslim migration' search is very broad and interconnected.

As discussed under theme 1, far-right nativists promote the narrative of Muslims invading Europe which would lead to the collapse Western civilisation, and one way that Muslims could achieve this is through mass migration, which proponents of this view already believe to be happening.

Interestingly, at the time of writing, there has been a resurgence of discussions about migration into Europe via the Central and Eastern Mediterranean routes. Reporting on this high-interest topic have been sensationalist and frenzied, garnering the attention of the public at large as well as fringe groups such as the EDL and Pegida, who have held mass demonstrations in response to the increase in migration (BBC, 2020). This could be interpreted as a 'spike' in information-sharing in response to the 'hot-topic' of immigration in Western Europe, possibly representing anti-Muslim bias.

As has been shown by Ansari (2006) and Allen (2007), sensational and highly-emotive media reporting of high-interest topics related to Muslims serve to promote an 'us' versus 'them' rhetoric as all 'Muslim-related' items are reported with hysteria, inciting fear and negativity towards Muslims.

This study did not analyse the text of the news article in detail so will only rely on contextualising and interpreting the top keywords associated with Twitter conversations about 'Muslim migration in Europe'. As such, analysis of the data collected for this study was not sufficient to answer Research Question II in full.

Furthermore, this study was not able to garner much data on whether far-right movements and right-wing politicians have utilised this high-interest moment to mobilise and naturalise Islamophobic discourse in public to provoke hate and counter-reactions towards the opposite side; however this assumption is partly supported by the news article from a mainstream publication (BBC, 2020) and the breadth of the social network (Appendix 3).

However, this interpretation is not without contention, as it assumes that the influence of media coverage on audiences is linear and standard across the board. In this way, interpreting the results as such is promotes an over-simplistic view of a passive audience being easily influenced by hostile media reporting. It could be the case that while inevitably some audiences can be easily influenced by such reporting, the majority will apply nuance and construct individual meanings to decode the reporting, however emotive the news report.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to explore whether an interaction between adherents of far-right and Islamist movements could be surmised from keywords linked to Tweets associated with adherents of far-right and Islamist movements. Furthermore, the study sought to explore whether both types of movements could interact further on mainstream media and political discourse.

The Research Questions for this thesis were:

i. What are the similarities and differences between radical Islamist and far-right groups/movements online, in relation to mutual amplification, mobilisation and radicalisation, in the Western European context? Does the analysis of online social networks of Islamist and far-right groups/movements show an interaction?

ii. The confluence of both movements on mainstream political discourse: how do the radical groups/movements influence media and political discourse, and vice-versa?

The findings can be summaries as such:

i. Adherents of far-right and Islamist movements on Twitter use similar keywords and language to similar extents to communicate online. The contents of the Tweets were highly similar, as was the vocabulary used. In answering Research Question I, these findings suggest a relationship, or interaction, between adherents of both types of movements based on the similarity and frequency of word usage.

ii. To answer the Research Question further, the findings suggest the two movements interact by the use of similar words by adherents of both types of ideologies to defend their ideology while rejecting the other; for example, to 'victimise' their movement while 'demonisation' the other. Furthermore, the two types of movements show similarities in their reference of the other as a 'threat'.

iii.Another suggestion of an interaction is the finding of keywords related to religion. Many keywords collated from searches of accounts linked to far-right adherents are linked to the Christian religion, just like many keywords collated from accounts linked to far-right adherents are linked to the Islamic religion. These findings suggest that both types of movements favour a return to more tradition and conservatism, which is in keeping with both ideologies' rejection of most democratic norms such as religious freedom and human dignity.

iv.Furthermore, adherents of both types of ideologies show similarities in their desire not just to 'conserve' their values but also against a 'cultural Marxist takeover' by liberal politicians, suggesting an anti-establishment mentality present in both types of movements.

v.Although the findings suggest that high-interest moments such as a migration crisis can create a spike in online discussions, the data collected was not sufficient to show whether the media reporting of the crisis led to this spike, and whether the high-interest moment increased the interconnectedness of the far-right and right-wing politics networks.

Implications of findings

The findings suggest that the social media networks of adherents of far-right and Islamists ideology share many similarities and interact with one another across several levels. This suggests that the worldviews of Islamist and far-right adherents are more similar than it initially appears.

Although, interestingly, words that suggest security fears from Muslims such as 'terrorism' and 'extremism' were not seen in Tweets from accounts associated with far-right adherents during the data collection period, both movements demonise the other while victimising their own, suggesting an internal policy of creating divisions in society. Such divisions have been shown to lead to 'reciprocal radicalisation' (Fielitz et al, 2018).

These findings present important implications for governments, media and security agencies as the interactions between the two movements has been shown to further radicalise adherents of both movements. As discussed above, although no Tweets were collected which called for violence against the other, anti-immigrant hostilities and Islamophobia have been shown to legitimise and normalise the demonisation of immigrants and Muslims in Western Europe.

Research Limitations

Due to time and resource constraints, analysis and interpretation of the findings resulted from only 60 keywords from Tweets. Data collection from more sources (e.g. Facebook posts and comments and Twitter hashtag searches) and a larger sample size would have garnered more results, which would have increased the validity and reliability of the findings.

Furthermore, with more time and resources, the interaction of the two movements on mainstream and far-right political discourse as well as the discursive overlaps between far-right movements and mainstream and right-wing political rhetoric on Twitter could have been examined further.

Improvements

The present study could be improved by broadening its scope and collecting data not just from Tweets but also from hashtag searches, Facebook pages of adherents of both radicalisms and comments under posts. This would have broadened the search criteria and resulted in more data collected to aid in analysis. The research could have been conducted over a longer period of time.

Furthermore, to answer Research Question II, newspaper and online news reports of high-interest incidents (e.g. terrorism or crises that affect both movements) could be textually analysed to decipher whether high media attention triggers more division between the movements and mobilisation and co-radicalisation. The discourse from

the news reports could be further analysed to interpret meanings, as discourse analysis is a more comprehensive method of data analysis.

Recommendations

The present study recommends that future research be concentrated on understanding far-right radicalism and extremism and their networks better, as research ignored far-right movements while concentrating on Islamist movements, until recently.

This study's recommendation to policymakers is also to understand the breadth of far-right networks so as tackle groups and their narratives of promoting anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim intolerance and hate better, which is very divisive and dangerous. This could be achieved by undertaking a government inquiry.

To this end, policymakers should understand that the threat posed by far-right movements is just as immediate, if not more, than the threat posed by Islamists; therefore, more resources should be concentrated on both types of radicalism.

Similarly, policymakers should work to arrive at clear working definitions of 'radicalism' and 'violent and 'non-violent extremism', in relation to both far-right and Islamist groups. A distinction between violent and non-violent extremism should aid media reporting of high-interest immigrant- and Muslim-related news items to be more objective and measured.

Word count: 18, 215

APPENDIX 1
Far-Right Ideology 1 – 'The ''Islamisation'' of Europe'

APPENDIX 2
Far-Right Ideology 2 – 'Islamic/Muslim Threat Against Europe/West'
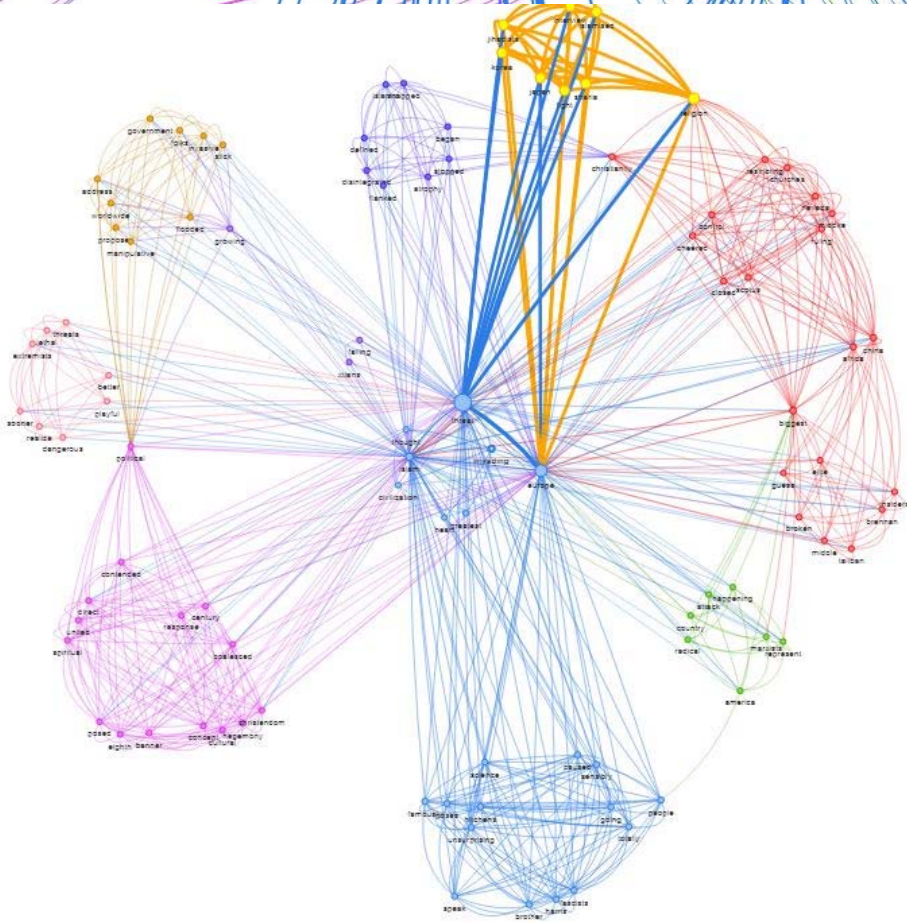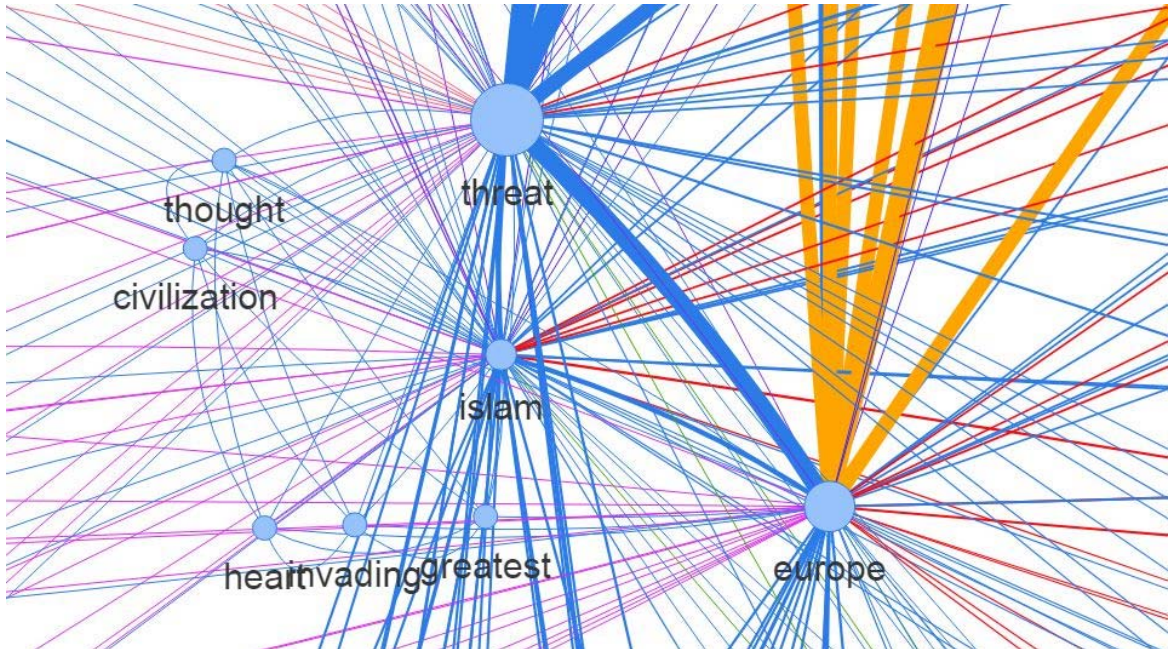
APPENDIX 3
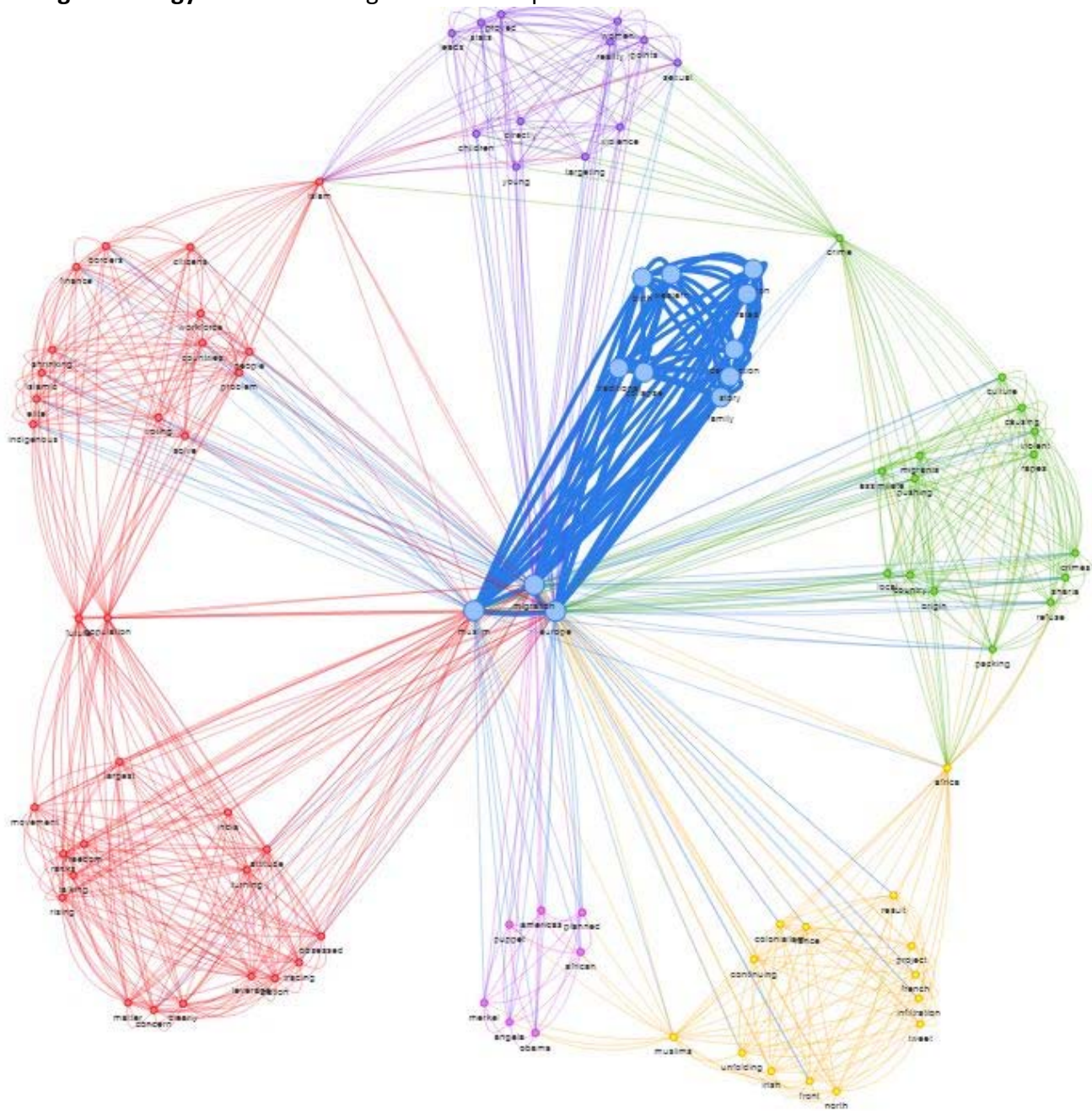**Far-Right Ideology 3** – 'Muslim Migration to Europe'

muslim migration europe

Overview   Tweets   Users   **Words**   Words Network   Emoji Network   Users Network   Hashtags Network
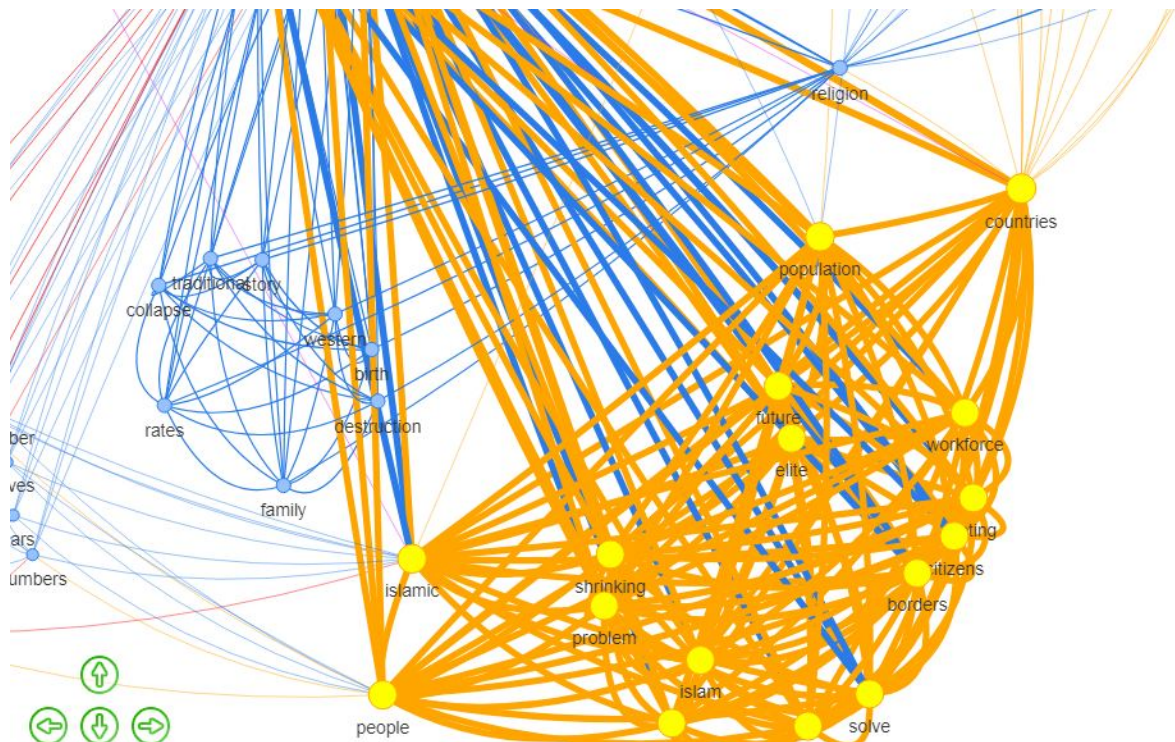
Top words
frequency

europe	100
migration	100
muslim	98
religion	93
collapse	93
birth	93
western	93
family	93
traditional	93
rates	93

Top emoji
frequency

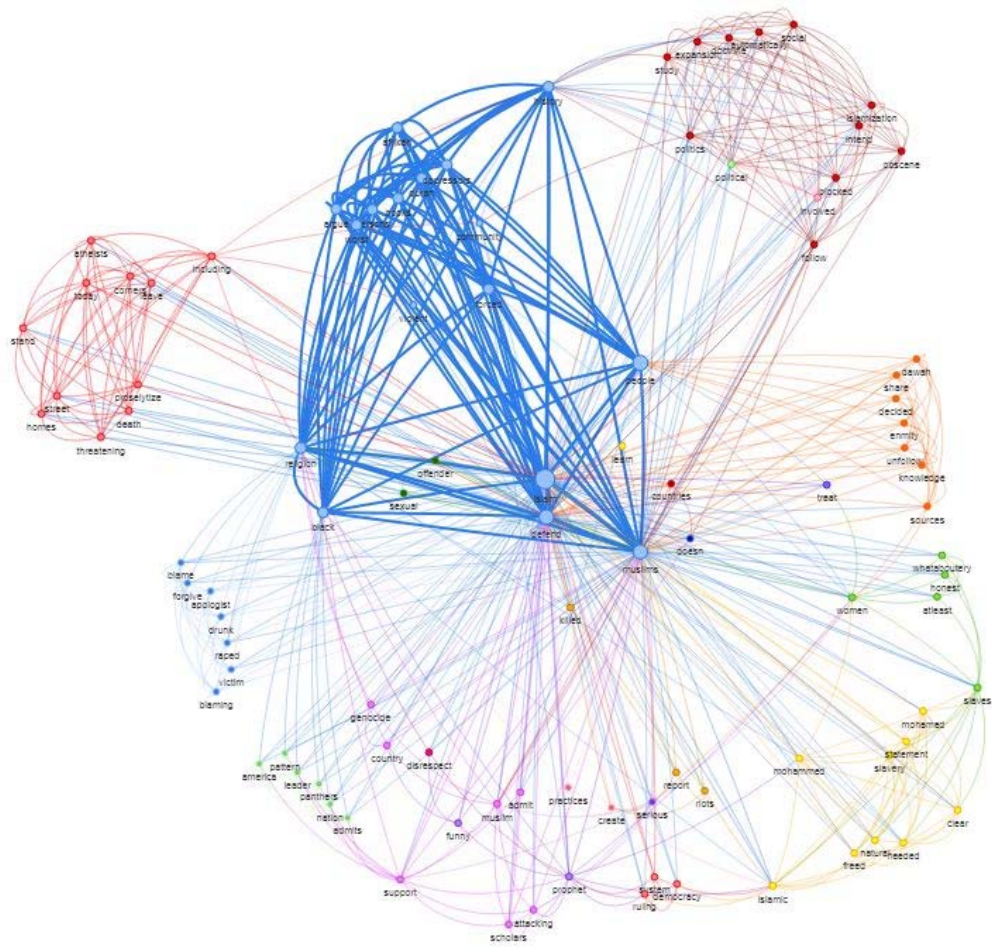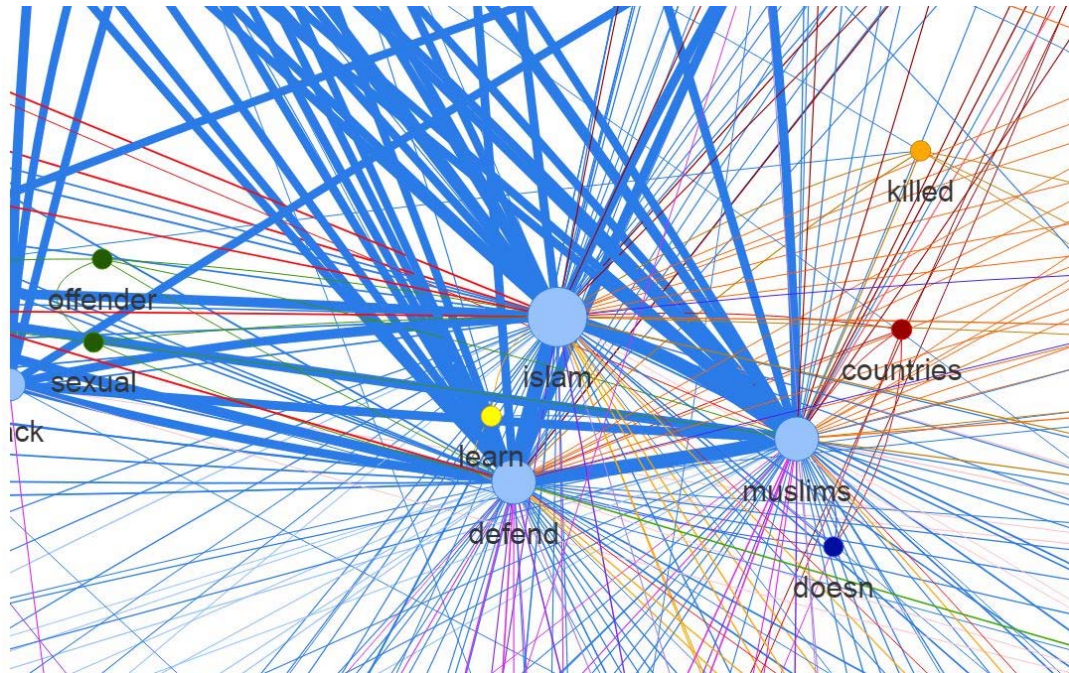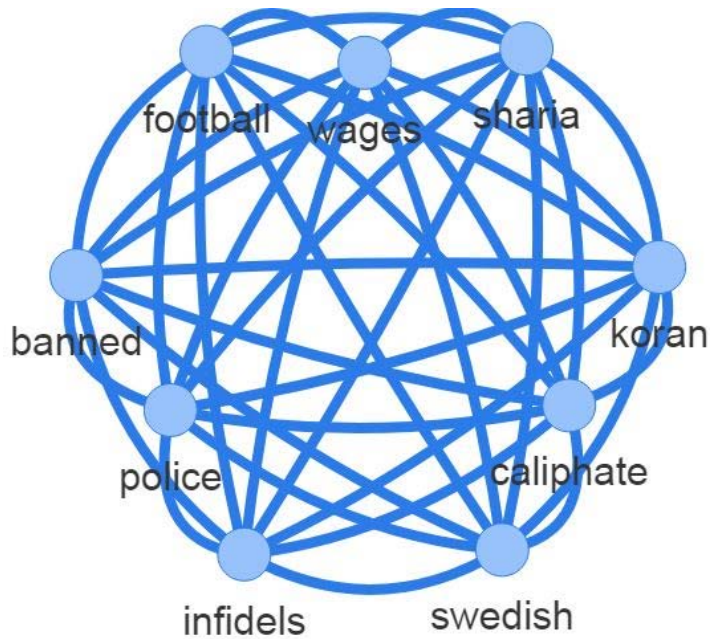**Islamist Ideology 1** – 'Threats Against Islam/Muslims in Europe'
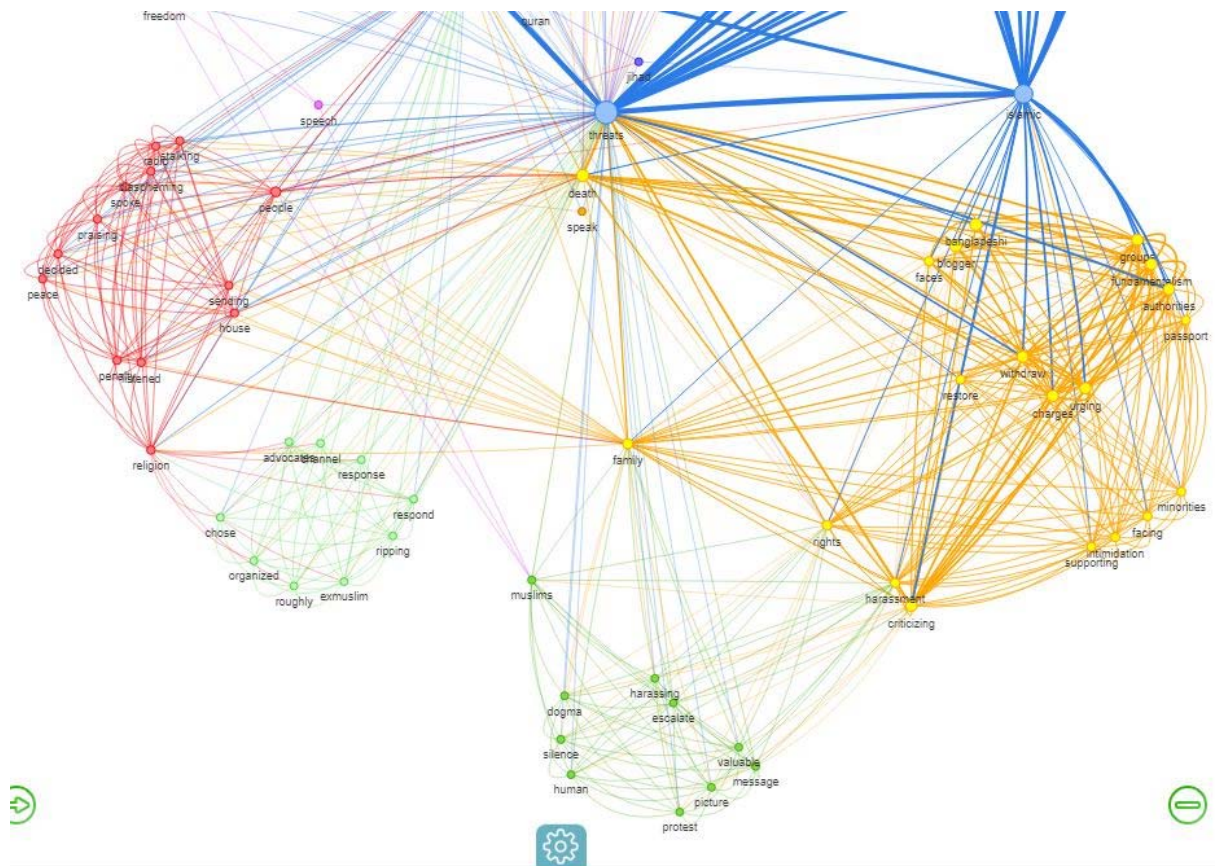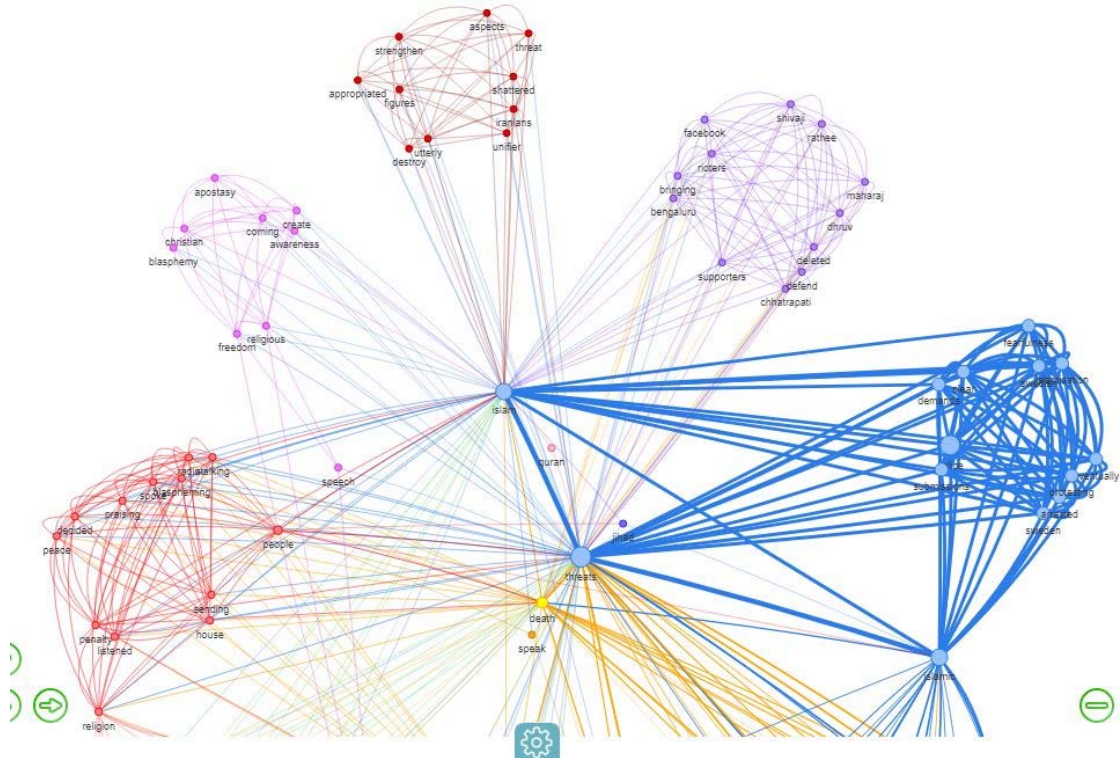
Islamist Ideology 2 – 'Muslims Defending Islam in Europe/West'

APPENDIX 6
Islamist Ideology 3 – 'Muslims Establish Caliphate/Islamic State Europe'

@osmanturkel94 — August 26, 2020 3:18 AM
Those who followed me for Dawah, please unfollow me, I decided, I will not share my sources with ignorant people, I'm fed up with enmity and grudge of some Arab Muslims against me, they can defend Islam with their knowledge against Christians ..

@shake_michari — August 26, 2020 2:29 AM
@ExMuhammadan @DrDimashqiah It's funny how Muslims claim Jesus is a prophet and yet they disrespect him just to defend Muhammed (who had no miracles and dodged questions about the unknown) and Islam

@palestiniangel — August 26, 2020 1:11 AM
let's not forget how muslims treat women, lgbtq+ people (muslims and non muslims alike), how they treat their poor, how they treat people differently than them. these actions all lead back to them using islam to defend them when islam has a way to protect all the vulnerable.

@incredibleYasir — August 25, 2020 11:42 PM
I defend the Sharia laws since they go in all Muslims' favour. They'll unite the 57 Muslim countries & when the caliph will call Muslims for Jihad, all countries would follow him. That's the only worry of Islamophobic ones. Moreover, Islam doesn't allow to kill those who left it. https://t.co/nEr5kdtE5Q

@AcKilly — August 25, 2020 7:01 PM
@CoachRed7 @SpartanRed7 @evreux67 @NimasAnna @Frand32706016 @NajmulOsmani @mohammed_hijab Yes they keep throwing in uneducated exposed fools to defend them. It dont work like that. If you wanna learn about islam, learn from muslims. Not islamaphobes

@ashoks1912 — August 25, 2020 6:19 PM
@visitkhan @RawootTiktik @Herainp @MisbahulGhani @Pratika333 @Muhamma59864664 @AIMPLB_Official Quoran s Chutiya I know that. Don't fall too low to defend illogical Islam. Islamic practices can only create Isis others who r following good practices r not fully Muslims yet.. please return the black stone shivling to Hindus

@TarekFatah — August 22, 2020 4:47 PM
Today is #ApostasyDay, a day for all of us, including Muslims, to stand up & defend the right of Atheists born in Muslim homes to leave Islam. If u can't, then u have no right to proselytize Islam at street corners while threatening death to @ExMuslimsOrg https://t.co/vPrqVgWi66

APPENDIX 7

Top Keywords from Tweets by Far-right and Islamist Adherents
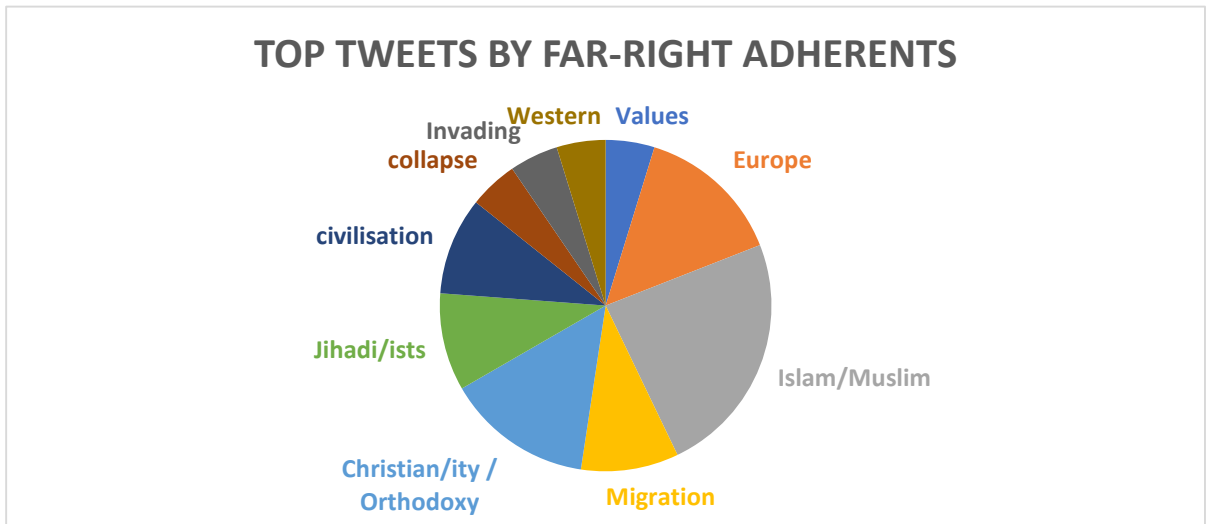

Figure 3: Top Words used in 100 Tweets by Far-Right Adherents
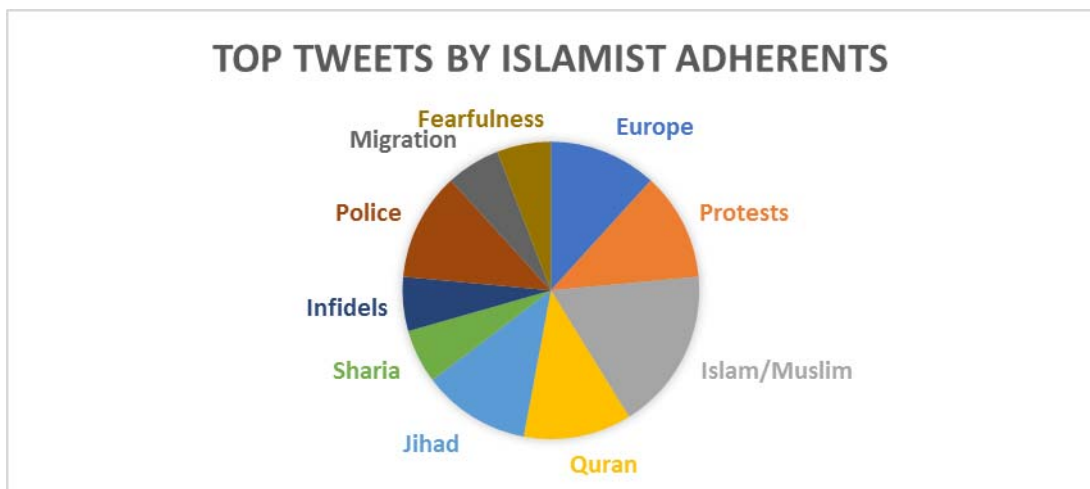

Figure 4: Top Words used in 100 Tweets by Islamist Adherents

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