



The Anti-Islamic Movement  
Far Right and Liberal?  
Lars Erik Berntzen

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to  
obtaining the degree of Doctor of Political and Social Sciences  
of the European University Institute

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European University Institute  
**Department of Political and Social Sciences**  
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**Examining Board**

Professor Donatella della Porta, Scuola Normale Superiore (Supervisor)

Professor Jens Rydgren, Stockholm University

Associate Professor Susi Meret, Aalborg University

Professor Olivier Roy, European University Institute

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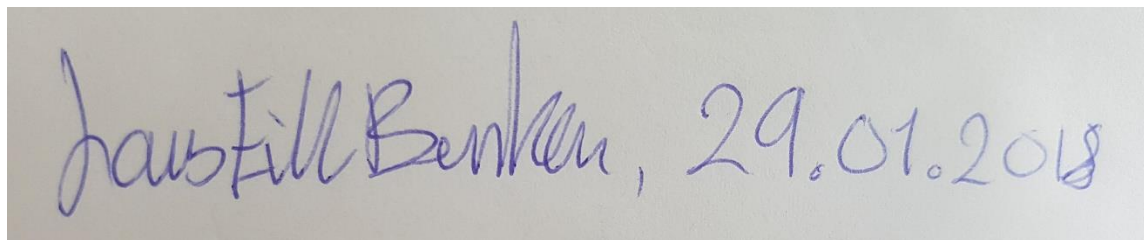
**Statement of inclusion of previous work:**

I confirm that part of chapter 5 draws upon an earlier article I published. The section on the anti-Islamic collective action framing (5.4) builds and expands on parts of the article “The Collective Nature of Lone Wolf Terrorism: Anders Behring Breivik and the Anti-Islamic Social Movement” (2014), co-authored by Sveinung Sandberg.

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# The Argument

This thesis is about the anti-Islamic turn and expansion of the far right in Europe and beyond between 2001 and 2017. The anti-Islamic far right has undergone four waves of expansion in this period, driven by terror attacks and other moral shocks. Their leaders and ideologues have varied backgrounds ranging from far-left to far-right before joining the anti-Islamic cause. The anti-Islamic expansion of the far right builds on an ideological duality. Whereas their hostility toward Muslims and defense of traditions continues the legacy the older far right, the simultaneous inclusion of modern gender norms and other liberal positions are historically at odds with the far right. Their online, organizational networks mirror the strategic ambiguity present in their ideology. They connect with Christian conservative and pro-Israeli groups as well as LGBT, women's rights and animal right groups. Many of their members express views in line with this duality. Based on these findings, this thesis indicates that anti-Islamic initiatives in Europe and beyond comprise a transnational movement and subculture characterized by a *semi-liberal equilibrium*. The anti-Islamic turn and expansion is thus also a liberal turn and expansion. Rather than being interchangeable and inconsequential, the anti-Islamic expansion of the far right demonstrates *who the enemy is matters*.

The semi-liberal equilibrium is challenged by three factors: (1) the expansion of their network into Eastern Europe with the inclusion of traditional extreme right groups; (2) the presence of extreme activists harboring anti-democratic, racist and anti-Semitic views; and (3) the belief that Western civilization is facing impending doom at the hands of Islam and those who practice it. The equilibrium is therefore fragile.

# Preface and acknowledgement

Writing this thesis has been a long journey. I want to give you a little preamble before you delve into it, so that you can understand the premises for it.

I start by winding the clock back to the very beginning of my academic career and then some. My journey into academia began August 2006 at the Department of Sociology, University of Bergen. Bergen is my hometown, and the region of Norway where my ancestors come from as far back as anybody has traced them. I am among the first persons in my family who have completed a higher education. My mother was a hairdresser, while my father began as a carpenter before he gradually advanced to a higher management position in a construction company. The generations before them have been farmers, fishermen, factory workers and housewives. Today many of my relatives work in the oil industry or related fields. This journey of upward mobility through the generations is not unique to me or my family but has been one core characteristic of Norwegian society during the last century.

Perhaps not surprisingly, when I began studying sociology most of the classes I took were on the welfare state, class differences and questions of poverty and inequality. Already instilled with a sense of pride in Norwegian social-democracy, my understanding of the welfare state as the single greatest achievement of our society was solidified during these years.

Then I came across Sigurd Skirbekk's *Nasjonalstaten: Velferdsstatens grunnlag* (The nation state: Foundation of the welfare state). Skirbekk claimed that the support necessary to maintain this costly welfare state was being eroded. Not only that, it was being eroded by the increased ethnic and cultural diversity immigration brings with it. The premise was that the Norwegian majority



population would withdraw their support for economic redistribution as society became more diverse. Was he right?

My own sociological background and its emphasis on the explanatory power of economic issues and class differences over notions of ethnic and cultural differences made me resistant to the idea. I nonetheless decided to delve into the matter. Based on a limited amount of survey data between the 1980's and 2008, my tentative answer was that the normative foundations for the Norwegian welfare state had until that point in time not been substantially undermined through immigration. However, this work had made me increasingly aware of the organized and popular opposition against immigration. Particularly Muslim immigration.

Inspired by the social anthropologist Marianne Gullestad and her book *Det norske sett med nye øyne* (Norwegianess seen with new eyes), I decided to study this opposition from the point of view of the majority rather than looking at the Muslim minority and how it impacted them. The result was the first study of anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim mobilization in Norway, finished in May 2011. The anti-Islamic movement in Norway, I argued, was a peaceful one. But their view of Islam and Muslims as an existential and totalitarian threat contained the seeds of anti-democratic and violent solutions.

No more than two months later Norway was struck by two large scale terror attacks on the fateful summer day of July 22. Of the 77 people killed, most were youths. A further 46 had been severely injured. It was by far the most devastating attack in Norwegian peacetime, and the consequences of which reverberate through our society to this day.

To most people's surprise the perpetrator turned out to be Anders Behring Breivik - a white, Norwegian man from Oslo. Just before committing these attacks, Breivik had uploaded a 1,518

page manifesto titled 2083: A European Declaration of Independence. I immediately downloaded the manifesto, and together with Sveinung Sandberg (Department of Criminology and Sociology of Law, University of Oslo Professor) I analyzed the extent to which his views overlapped with the broader, Norwegian anti-Islamic movement. The overlap was considerable. Considering this, we argued that the violent solutions he championed – and committed - were just as plausible an outcome as peaceful ones for those who believed that the West was in danger of going under. This would indicate that the potential for radicalization among anti-Islamic activists was considerable.

After that I began delving into the support Breivik received among these activist groups and online forums. It quickly became apparent that Breivik and his choice of violence in fact had little or no support among anti-Islamic activists. What meagre support there was came from a fringe collection of individuals who got together online – mass murderer and school shooting fans, some ideologically motivated people and a collection of people who seemed drawn into this small community through the allure of romance and brotherhood. The anti-Islamic scene remained largely peaceful, and Breivik represented a clear outlier.

At that point in time two distinct pathways lay before me. First, either continue down the track of studying the important but marginal phenomenon of actual extreme right political violence. Second, continue studying the broader anti-Islamic mobilization. Both remained heavily underexplored. Furthermore, both dimensions are needed to explain the intertwined issues of the dynamics and mechanisms that lead to right-wing violence and those that lead to an *absence* of violence. Of the two, I chose to focus on the anti-Islamic mobilization.

Studying the broader anti-Islamic mobilization also means that my work is precisely that – broad. A project can be both ambitious in its scope and informative in its outcome, but the obvious risk is that it ends up saying too little about too much. Whether I managed to walk that tightrope is

up to you, the reader, to decide. It certainly would have been broader still without the excellent input and guidance I got along the way.

\*

First, I would like to thank my outstanding supervisor at the European University Institute (EUI), Professor Donatella della Porta. Thank you for believing in me and my project, transforming what I initially thought was only going to be a brief interview and the chance to see Florence into a fully-fledged PhD project. You have been nothing but supportive throughout the entire process, always available for a chat or feedback no matter where you or I happened to be in the world.

The time spent in Florence and at the EUI was magnificent. Who can ask for more tranquil and scenic surroundings for writing their thesis than the rolling hills of Tuscany, grand gardens, villas and the Duomo glistening in the sunlight far away? The academic coursework during the first years was demanding, but also rewarding. I am particularly grateful to Professors Hanspeter Kriesi and Stefano Bartolini. Both provided helpful input on my own work and provided courses that were intellectually stimulating.

To my fellow students and colleagues at the EUI. I am glad to call many of you my friends. I particularly want to thank Mariana, James, Vivian, Johannes, Rutger, Teresa, Marita, Harpal, Anna, Niels, Agnieszka, Fabio, Julia and Sergiu. A special thank you to Manès Weisskircher and Jonas Bergan Dræge, both of whom started on the PhD programme the same year as me. To Manès for your knowledge about the stars, Gewürztraminer wines and great appetite for dining. Not to mention the tremendous amount of input on my work over the years and our successful collaborative studies on the anti-Islamic PEGIDA (one article and one book chapter so far). To Jonas, my friend and partner in crime making the social-science podcast *Politikk og Røvere* (Politics and Robbers). You have always been a great sparring partner when it comes to intellectual

ideas and not-so intellectual ideas alike. I hope to continue both our friendship and podcast collaboration for the indefinite future.

I also want to thank the Centre on Social Movement Studies –community, which is now based in the Institute of Humanities and Social Science at the Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence. A particular thank you to Helge Hiram Jensen for your input on my research during the first years and to Matteo Cernison and Martín Portos for your constructive criticism of my network analyses.

Not least, a special thank you to my local Florentine saviors after long days and nights of work as well. To Vittorio at Runner Pizza who would call me in as I passed by in the streets to share a glass of beer and a chat about Italian football – which I knew absolutely nothing about. And to Alberto at the Caffetteria Dino’s on the corner of my building in Via Andrea del Castagno, ever eager to end the working day with a glass of prosecco or spritz while blasting Pavarotti over the speakers. I also have to thank Mr. Zu and family at the Fu Qui restaurant, which I frequented with my friend Manès, for their jovial attitude and great arm-wrestling skills.

\*\*

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Speaking of the online data which I analyze in this thesis, I want to thank Carl Norlund for his solid input - even going so far as to devise a separate little program for my block modeling part of the network analysis (Berntzon). I also want to thank my brother Jørn Andre for spending countless hours on my wild ideas for data gathering and help with coding the changes over time within the networks.

\*\*\*

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In April 2016, the Center for Research on Extremism (C-REX) was opened at the University of Oslo. I was given the opportunity to spend my time there from the start – despite, or perhaps because of the fact that I had been part of the competing application to get the center to Bergen. I want to thank everybody at the growing C-REX community for creating a stimulating academic and social environment. I particularly wish to thank Director Tore Bjørgo, Deputy Director Anders Ravik Jupskås, postdoctoral fellows Jacob Ravndal, Graham Macklin and Pietro Castelli Gattinara di Zubiena for taking the time to give me feedback in the final stretch of my thesis work. I also want to thank the other “in-house” affiliates and staff-members Eviane Leidig, Astrid Hauge Rambøl, Nina Høy-Petersen, Birgitte Prangerød Haanshus, Ingvild Magnæs Gjelsvik, Hanna Paalgaard Munden, Alida Skiple, Cathrine Moe Thorleifsson, Johannes Due Enstad and Dagfinn Hagen.

\*\*\*\*

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## Acronyms

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Original name</b>	<b>English name</b>
4F		Four Freedoms Community
AFA		Anti-Fascist Action
AfD	Alternative für Deutschland	Alternative for Germany
AIG	al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah al-Musallaha	Algerian Islamic Group
BFP		British Freedom Party
BNP		British National Party
BPE	Bürgerbewegung Pax Europa	Citizens' Movement Pax Europa
BPI	Blok proti islámu	Bloc Against Islam
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	Christian Democratic Union
CVF		Center for Vigilant Freedom
DDE	Direkte Demokratie für Europa	Direct Democracy for Europe
DDF	Den Danske Forening	Danish Association
DDL		Danish Defence League
DF	Dansk Folkeparti	Danish Peoples' Party
DFG	Die Freiheit – Bürgerrechtspartei für mehr Freiheit und Demokratie	German Freedom Party
FDV	Freiheitlich Direktdemokratische Volkspartei	Liberal Direct Democratic People's Party
FMI	Folkevebegelsen mot innvandring	People's movement against immigration

FN	Front National	Front National
FPÖ	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs	Freedom Party of Austria
FrP	Fremskrittspartiet	Progress Party
GoV		Gates of Vienna
HRS		Human Rights Service
IFPS		International Free Press Society
ISIS		Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
Jobbik	Jobbik Magyarorszáért Mozgalom	Hungarian Jobbik, the Movement for a Better Hungary
LGB		Liberty Great Britain
LGF		Little Green Footballs
LN	Lega Nord	Northern League
LPF	Lijst Pim Fortuyn	Pim Fortuyn List
NdIE	Nie dla Islamizacji Europy	No to the Islamization of Europe
NDL		Norwegian Defence League
ONR	Oboz Narodowo-Radykalny	Radical Nationalist Camp
PEGIDA	Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes	Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West
PI		Politically Incorrect
PP	Partido Popular	Peoples Party
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê	Kurdistan Workers Party
PVV	Partij voor de Vrijheid	Party for Freedom
SD	Sverigedemokraterna	Sweden Democrats



SIAD	Stop Islamiseringen af Danmark	Stop Islamization of Denmark
SIAN	Stopp Islamiseringen av Norge	Stop Islamization of Norway
SIOA		Stop Islamization of America
SIOE		Stop Islamization of Europe
SIOED	Stop Islamization og Europe Deutschland	Stop Islamization of Europe Germany
SION		Stop Islamization of Nations
SIOTW		Stop Islamization of the World
SVP	Schweizerische Volkspartei	Swiss People's Party
TFS	Trykkefrihedsselskabet	Free Press Society
UKIP		United Kingdom Independence Party
VB	Vlaams Belang	Flemish Interest
ViS	Verdier i Sentrum	Core Values



# 1. Far Right and Liberal?

## 1.1 Introduction

Europe is currently undergoing large-scale demographic and cultural change. An otherwise aging and secularizing corner of the world has received an influx of younger, non-Western and often religious migrants. This influx has been increasingly and consistently contested by a resurgent far right from the 1980s onwards (Klandermans and Mayer 2006, 3). For decades, the conflict revolved around race, ethnicity and nationality – Africans and Arabs, Turks, Moroccans, and Pakistanis – some on the far-right upheld Islam as a positive, conservative force.

That has changed. In tandem with a long list of spectacular acts of political violence committed in the name of Islam and controversies such as the Muhammed cartoon crisis, Muslims and Islam have now become the predominant enemy for the far right in Europe and beyond.

This thesis examines this anti-Islamic turn of the far right. It is about a growing movement and subculture that is transnational in scope ranging from the United States, Western Europe and increasingly Eastern and Central Europe. It has old ideological roots, but the movement began to coalesce online in the wake of the terror attacks on the United States by Al Qaeda on September 11, 2001 (9/11). Since then, the anti-Islamic struggle has given rise to several distinct waves of activism under the names of Stop Islamization, Defense League, Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West (*Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*, PEGIDA) and others. Anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim groups flourish online. In party politics, new initiatives such as the Dutch Pim Fortuyn List (*Lijst Pim Fortuyn*, LPF) and later Geert Wilders' Freedom Party (*Partij voor de Vrijheid*, PVV) made opposition to Islam their main issue.

The parties that mobilize on anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic ideas and arguments are now the most studied of all the party families (Mudde 2016). In contrast, we know less about the broader

movement and subculture.<sup>123</sup> An important reason for precisely why far-right parties are the subject of so much research, and why the anti-Islamic movement(s) and subculture merit closer scrutiny, is the idea that these initiatives either want to destroy democratic society itself or will in some way lead to its corrosion.

Franz Timmermans, the first Vice President of the European Commission, stated in an official speech that “The rise of islamophobia is one of the biggest challenges in Europe. It is a challenge to our vital values, to the core of who we are.” (2015). Given this notion of a threat to “our” values, it is striking that the anti-Islamic far right in Western Europe and North America argue that they are defending democracy and freedom of speech (Betz and Meret 2009, 313), whilst loudly proclaiming their support for Jews, gender equality and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transexual (LGBT) rights (e.g. Andersen 2013; Dauber 2017, 52).<sup>4</sup> If we turn the clock back two decades we find a surge in neo-Nazi violence (Koopmans 1996) and outspoken hostility towards Jews, homosexuals and modern gender norms was commonplace.

Hearing far-right politicians and activists talk in such different terms today may appear paradoxical, given the legacy of opposition towards both progressive and liberal ideals, movements and parties. Is the far right, which has been so closely tied to antagonism towards these very groups, now one of their defenders?

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<sup>1</sup> Art (2011) and Busher (2015) are two prominent and notable exceptions.

<sup>2</sup> The existing studies of “non-parties” are predominantly case studies of single activist groups. They show that anti-Islamic initiatives like the English Defence League (EDL) (e.g. Allen 2011; Jackson and Feldman 2011; Kassimeris and Jackson 2015; Busher 2015) and PEGIDA (Daphi et al 2015; Dostal 2015; Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016) are fixtures of the broader political landscape.

<sup>3</sup> Several authors point out that far right initiatives outside of party politics and the networks they form deserves more attention (e.g. Mudde 2007, 5; Rydgren 2007, 257; Macklin 2013, 177).

<sup>4</sup> For instance, following the attack on the gay club in Orlando, where an IS sympathiser killed fifty people the far-right news site Breitbart commentator Milo Yiannopoulos wrote that "America has to make a choice. Does it want gay rights, women’s emancipation, and tolerance for people of all nonviolent faiths — or does it want Islam?" (12.06.2016). Available at: [http://www.breitbart.com/milo/2016/06/12/left-chose-islam-gays-now-100-people-killed-maimed-orlando/?utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=social](http://www.breitbart.com/milo/2016/06/12/left-chose-islam-gays-now-100-people-killed-maimed-orlando/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social) (accessed 08.11.2016).

Viewed through the lens of history, it is their apparent self-portrayal as defenders of progressive and liberal ideals and *not* their opposition to Islam and Muslims that is most distinctive. In academic circles, this is often portrayed as being only skin deep, a thin veneer masking their true positions – and that the far right hides a radical “back-stage” behind its moderate “front stage” (Fleck and Müller 1998) which is racist, anti-Semitic, homophobic, against women’s rights, and hostile to democracy.

It is defined as a transparently strategic vocabulary (Scrinzi 2017) used to circumvent and defend against allegations of racism. This is a necessity on their part since openly racist remarks are stigmatized and pathologized (Lentin and Titley 2012, 20) ever since the total defeat of the Axis powers in World War II (Jackson and Feldman 2014, 7). Marine Le Pen of the French Front National (FN) claims to defend women’s rights are for instance understood as “instrumental” and “pseudo-feminist” (Larzillière and Sal 2011). In much the same way, Mayer, Ajanovic and Sauer (2014) state that the far right exploit gender and LGBT arguments strategically in order to denigrate Muslim men. Others have conceptualized this as *homonationalism* (Puar 2013; Zanghellini 2012),<sup>5</sup> and *femonationalism* (Farris 2012; 2017).<sup>6</sup>

Critical positions and skepticism are not without merit. For instance, studies of the British National Party (BNP) that go beyond the “front stage” by examining speeches and memos not intended for the public reveal that they toned down their anti-Semitism and anti-democratic positions as a ploy to win over new recruits and circumvent opposition from mainstream society

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<sup>5</sup> The concept of homonationalism refers to the use of gay rights for racist and islamophobic ends (Zanghellini 2012, 357).

<sup>6</sup> Skepticism of what far-right initiatives say and write precedes the explicit focus on Islam and claims of defending liberal values, the rights of women and minorities. Mudde argues that one explanation for this assumption of is that most authors define them as “the other” (2002, 21). The academic othering of those they study mimics the anti-Islamic narrative about Muslims engaging in *taqiyya*, that is, deception and lying about their true goals and beliefs. For as Arne Næss says “An important ingredient in descriptions of outgroups is the hypothesis that the outgroup says one thing, but means another” (1980, 136).

(Feldman and Jackson 2014, 10). These findings are in line with the broad consensus in the literature. Yet, we risk misconstruing the anti-Islamic turn and expansion if we limit ourselves to a theoretically based rejection or if we rely exclusively on single-case evidence from organizations with a clear fascist legacy. As a starting point for mapping the anti-Islamic movement and to investigate this apparent paradox and its ramifications on a broader scale, I pose the two following research questions:

*RQ1. What characterizes the anti-Islamic movements' structure and composition?*

*RQ2. How, and to what extent, does the anti-Islamic movement incorporate progressive and liberal values?*

In order to investigate the movements' configuration and degree of entanglement with progressive and liberal ideals, this thesis studies four specific dimensions: (1) the background of leaders; (2) the official ideology; (3) organizational networks; and (4) the mobilization of sympathizers. The extent to which liberal and progressive positions and arguments permeate the anti-Islamic movement has far-reaching consequences for our basic understanding of what the anti-Islamic movement *is*. In addition to saying something about their entanglement with progressive and liberal ideals, these dimensions give us insight about the anti-Islamic turn on the far right.

First, tracing the waves of activism and the biographies of the leaders, representatives and ideologues provides us with a necessary contextual overview. Second, studying their official ideology (front-stage) gives an indication of whether their positions are consistent or fragmented across countries and organizations. Third, network analysis tells us whether these initiatives form a cohesive whole or consist of disjointed communities. Taken together, the historical and biographical overview alongside the analyses of ideology and networks go to the core of the matter:

is this really a movement, or is it just a question of different groups driven by national, regional and local legacies and peculiarities. By studying their mobilization, we uncover whether they have managed to recruit moderates or extremists, and to what extent they are aligned with the official ideological platform espoused by the leaders. It also provides insight into the drivers of their continued online mobilization and ability to spread their message, and why certain messages get more traction than others.

## **1.2 The four steps**

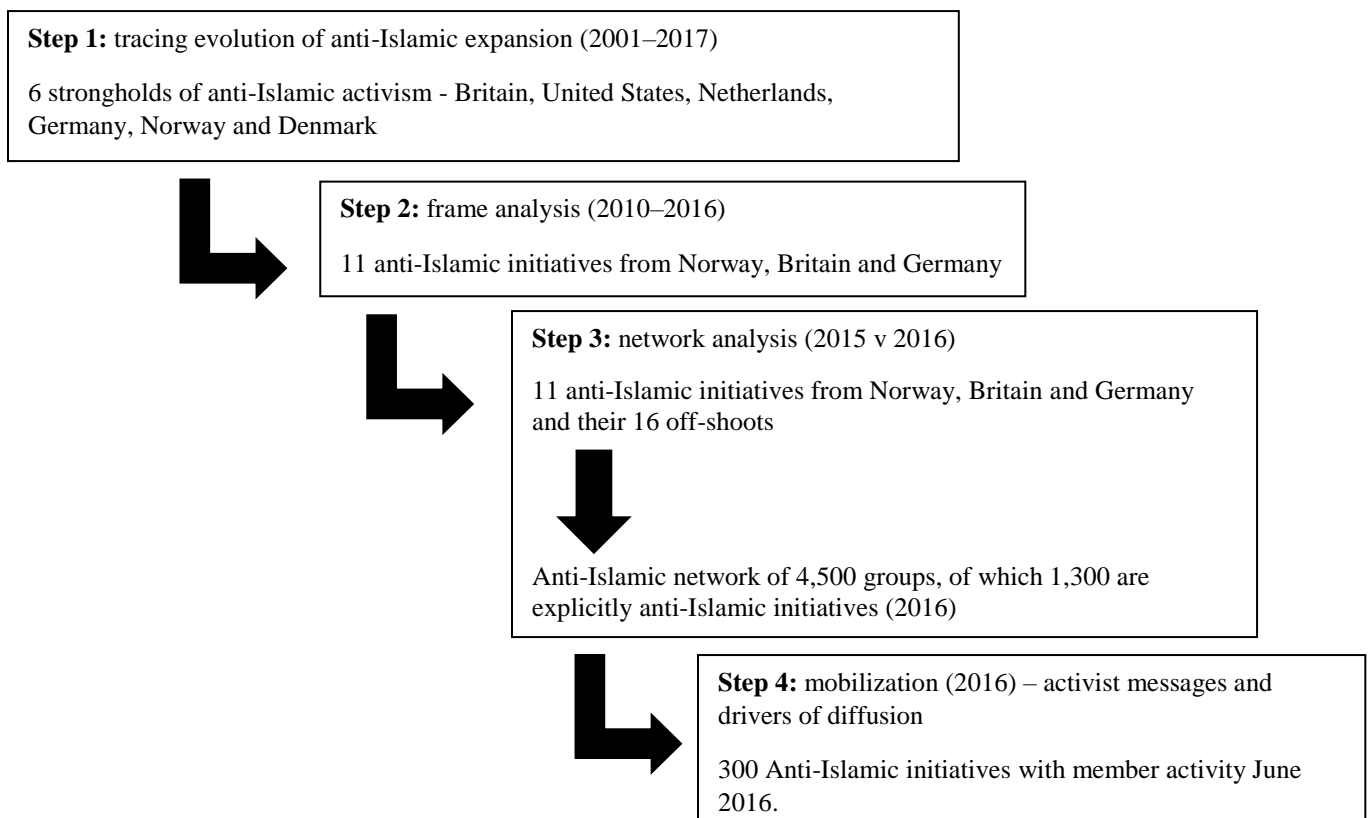
The broader anti-Islamic turn consists of two parallel developments. First, an anti-Islamic reorientation of pre-existing radical right parties. Second, an anti-Islamic expansion of the far right with new political initiatives. Whilst the expansion includes some electorally successful parties, such as Pim Fortuyns' LPF and Geert Wilders' PVV both in the Netherlands, it largely consists of electorally unsuccessful parties, alternative newsites and blogs, think-tanks and street protest groups such as the English Defence League (EDL) and PEGIDA. Empirically speaking, the universe of cases dealt with in this thesis is limited to the anti-Islamic expansion. The findings and theoretical claims, however, have some bearing on the broader anti-Islamic turn.

The thesis starts by tracing the growth of anti-Islamic activism between 2001 and 2017, focusing on initiatives and central figures from six "stronghold" countries: Britain, the United States, the Netherlands, Germany, Norway and Denmark. This is followed by a frame analysis of official statements by eleven key initiatives known for their anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic rhetoric in Germany, Norway and Britain. All three countries are epicenters for anti-Islamic activism. Norway is the first country to have an explicitly anti-Islamic activist organization in Stop Islamization of Norway (SIAN) in 2000. Britain was the location where the online communities first gathered for a street march in 2005, and which witnessed the rise of the EDL in 2009. Finally,



Germany gave birth to the latest version of anti-Islamic activism with PEGIDA in 2014, which has since spread across Europe (Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016). I then trace the online anti-Islamic network starting with these eleven anti-Islamic initiatives' and sixteen of their offshoots from Norway, Britain and Germany in March 2015 and March 2016; that is, before and after the “refugee crisis”. When examining members of these networks, the case selection consists of the anti-Islamic groups found in the network analysis that were active during the summer of 2016 – totaling 300 groups across Europe, North America and Australia.

**Figure 1.1. The four steps taken to explore the anti-Islamic movement and expansion**



### 1.3 Findings and the argument(s)

Through these four steps, a detailed picture of the anti-Islamic movement and subculture emerges.

First, the movement has undergone four waves of expansion, in response to acts of terror and other moral shocks, starting with 9/11. The initiators and ideologues come from a range of different backgrounds, but with more from the left than the far right.

Second, the worldview of these anti-Islamic initiatives is broadly consistent across organizations and countries. In addition to idiosyncratic nationalisms which emphasize “British”, “Norwegian” or “German” culture, they stress a supra-national identity under the name of Western civilization. They continuously include both traditional and modern perspectives on a broad range of issues. On the one hand, hostility towards Muslims and defense of traditions continues the legacy of the older far right. On the other hand, they simultaneously include modern gender norms and positions historically at odds with the traditional far right. For instance, when it comes to women’s rights *vis-à-vis* Muslims, they vacillate between “protector frames” with a male point of view (our women), and “equality frames” with a female point of view. I define this ideological duality as *strategic frame ambiguity*.

Third, the anti-Islamic network mirrors this ideological duality: geographically they reach out to anti-Islamic groups across North America, Europe, Australia and beyond. They also reach out to animal rights, LGBT, and women’s rights groups, together with Christian conservatives, Jewish and pro-Israeli initiatives. Some, but not all, of these reciprocate.

Fourth, both main components of the ideology: 1) Islam as an existential threat enabled by “the elites”; and which undermines 2) Western traditions and Christianity, democracy, gender equality and minority rights - resonate with the online activists and followers. In terms of the two

overarching research questions, the findings in this thesis can be summarized in one structural and one ideology-centric argument:

First, the initiatives that make up the anti-Islamic expansion of the far right comprise a transnational movement and subculture with a consistent worldview and prominent ideologues.

Second, the anti-Islamic movement and subculture is characterized by a semi-liberal equilibrium.

In other words, the anti-Islamic turn is concurrently a liberal turn of the far right. This reflects their understanding of Islam and Muslims as the ultimate embodiment of authoritarianism, narrow-mindedness, patriarchy and misogyny.<sup>7</sup> The concomitant liberal turn demonstrates that it matters who the enemy is.

Nonetheless, extreme activists who espouse long-standing hostilities and notions about race, homosexuals, Jews and democracy still flourish side-by-side within these groups. Taken together with logical inconsistencies in their own framing and the Eastward expansion of the network to include extreme right groups of the old ideological order, it shows that the movement and subculture is vulnerable to internal struggles. To sum up, this highlights the fragility of the current semi-liberal equilibrium that characterizes the anti-Islamic far right.

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<sup>7</sup> Speaking of the then exceptional case of the Dutch List Pim Fortuyn, Tjitske Akkerman defined this as a liberalism turned inward, driven by fear (2005, 346).

## **1.4 Motivation and limitations**

This is an exploratory thesis, whose aim is to better grasp the impact of the anti-Islamic expansion at a macro level, and the theoretical implications for our understanding of the current far right flowing from this. As far as I am aware it is the first study of this nature, and therefore fills a large gap. It helps rectify the fragmented and lopsided knowledgebase which pre-existing single case studies of extra-parliamentary initiatives alongside the voluminous body of work on radical right parties provides. I have already described the merits of this approach and the findings that it has produced.

However, as an exploratory study of the anti-Islamic expansion in the aftermath of 9/11, my study also has several clear limitations. First, studying the anti-Islamic expansion entails focusing on the “successful” cases, their networks and mobilization. My work offers limited insight into “failed” cases, the question of timing or why the old far right remains dominant in many countries. What it does provide, however, are good grounds for investigating these questions in future studies. As a first step, the clues my findings do provide to these questions are leveraged to sketch out some tentative answers in the conclusion.

To a certain extent this study challenges the party-movement distinction by introducing the conceptual categories of ideological reorientation versus expansion. These categories are independent of organizational form. Empirically speaking, however, the focus is on the extra-parliamentary actors. Therefore, I cannot tell the extent which radical right parties have undergone an anti-Islamic, ideological reorientation except by drawing on secondary literature. My findings resonate with some recent studies on these pre-established radical right parties, but the degree to which my findings carry over is nonetheless unclear.

Relatedly, party-movement interactions are only tangentially touched upon. It remains a promising avenue of research but lies outside the scope of this study. This means that my work does not substantially go into the exchange of ideas between parliamentary and extra-parliamentary actors, or the extent to which the new anti-Islamic initiatives have influenced the older radical right which existing literature indicates have undergone an ideological reorientation.

Finally, the network analysis only captures one online dimension of their interactions with other groups. It does not refer to “deeper” ties, such as economic transactions, membership overlap, or mutual participation in collective action on the streets.

In the following sections, I look at the state of the art and list key contributions on the issues of ideology and framing, networks and the mobilizational aspects of recruitment and message diffusion.

## **1.5 Anti-Islam, the far right and liberal values**

### **1.4.1 Concepts, ideology and framing**

Anti-Muslim prejudices are widespread across Europe (Wike and Grim 2010; Savelkoul, Scheepers, Veld and Hagendoorn 2012), but these prejudices are not directly affected by the actual number of Muslims in any given country (Lucassen and Lubbers 2012, 567). This puts the onus on the anti-Islamic initiatives and their role in diffusing anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim ideas as well as mobilizing activists and citizens to this cause. Examples of anti-Islamic rhetoric include portraying Europe as in danger of being “overrun” by Muslims and an “Islamization” manifested through the introduction of halal products, Sharia law, Muslim ghettos and honour killings, all of which constitutes a totalitarian threat. Some initiatives openly talk of “Eurabia”, an alleged conspiracy between amorphous European political elites and Arab rulers where the European elites agree to transform the continent into a part of the Islamic world through Muslim colonization in return for access to oil (Bangstad 2013, 3). In the literature, anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim opposition is mainly

understood as stemming from the radical and extreme right (e.g. Strabac and Listhaug 2008; Grabow and Hartleb 2014). Anti-Islamic initiatives with no organizational links to older extreme or radical right organizations and milieus and that adopt this rhetoric are also labeled as radical right, extreme right, neo-fascist or simply Islamophobic (e.g. Zuquete 2008; Jackson and Feldman 2011; Archer 2013; Lee 2015). In short, these initiatives have consistently been defined as belonging to the far right. However, their almost exclusive focus on Islam and Muslims has led some researchers to distinguish between them and the broader far right (e.g. Meleagrou-Hitchens and Brun 2013; Goodwin 2013).

Ideology, that is worldview, is what distinguishes the far right from other political phenomena. Not their organizational form or actions. The emphasis on ideology makes the way we define and conceptualize their ideologies vitally important. In this field we find a profusion of concepts and definitions – all of which have implications and guide our analysis in specific directions. For instance, as far back as 1996, Cas Mudde identified over twenty-six different definitions of the term ‘extreme right’. As della Porta et al. state, we have to “acknowledge that the term extreme (or radical) right has multiple facets” (2012, 4). Many of these terms are used as slurs in politics and everyday interactions, and this can muddy the field of analysis. Before we move on, some clarification is therefore required. See Chapter 2, Perspectives on the Far Right, for an in-depth discussion.

As there is no clear-cut consensus on the different terms, this thesis draws on some of the most widely cited definitions to compile a taxonomy of far-right ideologies. The term ‘far right’ is not used to define an ideology in itself, but is a highly abstracted conceptual container which includes extreme and radical right ideologies. ‘Nativism’ is broadly considered to be the common denominator for far-right ideologies, where the nation state should only consist of members of the

native group. Non-natives are therefore a threat by default (Mudde 2007, 17).<sup>8</sup> If an ideology does not have nativism at its core, it is incorrect to define it as far right. The distinguishing characteristics of radical right vs. extreme right ideology lies in their approach to the political system and the solutions they profess. Whereas the extreme right is anti-democratic and willing to use non-state violence to achieve their goals, the radical right is for working within the confines of the democratic system, but is critical of the establishment (e.g. Bornschier 2010). Within this framework, fascism is one permutation of extreme right ideology, whereas the ethno-pluralism of the *nouvelle droite* and others is a permutation of radical right ideology.

Key to many studies that use these terms is that while they deal with anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic antagonism from parties and activist groups, they generally raise the level of abstraction and define them as, for instance, hostile to immigrants and minorities – thereby stressing the continuity between current and older iterations of the far right. Emphasis on continuity through theoretical abstraction has been a factor in the scant attention afforded to these initiatives claims of defending liberal and progressive values.

The studies that specifically scrutinize opposition to and mobilization against Islam and Muslims alternate between three concepts: anti-Islam, anti-Muslim and Islamophobia. The three have been used intermittently, but it is Islamophobia that has received the most attention and which has been most developed (Doyle and Ahmad 2013). Although the term ‘Islamophobia’ has a long history (Bangstad 2016), it resurfaced in Britain in the 1990s, when Muslim rights groups attempted to put the discrimination of Muslims on the political agenda. In 1997 the left-wing think-tank, a

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<sup>8</sup> This is in contrast to Art’s relative definition of the far right as “an umbrella term for any political party, voluntary association, or extra-parliamentary movement that differentiates itself from the mainstream right” (2011, 10). In Art’s definition, the far right is a relative phenomenon precisely because it is dependent on what ideas the mainstream right chooses to adopt.

Commission of the Runnymede Trust, issued a report on British Muslims and Islamophobia (CBMI) (1997) entitled ‘Islamophobia: a challenge for us all’. The Commission defined Islamophobia as “an unfounded hostility towards Islam, and therefore fear or dislike of all or most Muslims” (ibid., 4). The use of the term became widespread, and entered into academic discourse, especially in the Anglo-Saxon sphere. Islamophobia as a concept was, and to a large extent still is used ‘because there [was] a new reality that need[ed] naming’ – but also as a tool so that in identifying it could be ‘acted against’ (Sayyid and Vakil 2008, 40). Animosity towards Islam, Muslim culture and immigration takes different shapes, some more moderate and some more extreme – at times seemingly inseparable from secular criticism, at times one of vitriolic racism. Research that relies on the term Islamophobia, however, is often linked with the tradition of fascism studies, describing Muslims as “the new Jews”, and paying less attention to the issue of liberal and progressive values. Siding with Bowens (2005), Sedgwick (2013, 209) and Busher (2015, 29), I set aside the concept of ‘Islamophobia’ as a confusing term which conflates different phenomena and unnecessarily places the emphasis on irrationality.<sup>9</sup>

In an ethnographic study of the English Defense League, Joel Busher (2015) shies away from any prefix such as ‘far right’ and uses the term ‘anti-Muslim’, for which he gives three justifications. First, unlike imprecise concepts such as far right or extreme right, anti-Muslim is specific to the subject matter at hand (Busher 2015, 20). Second, it reflects the activists own self-portrayal and self-perception (ibid. 20). Third, it guards against overemphasizing specific cultural or ideological influences from the far right, especially since the EDL did not emerge out of the existing far right (ibid. 21). Laudable as it may be in a specific ethnographic and moral sense *vis-à-vis* the subjects he studies, an unwillingness to engage with the broader far right literature is an

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<sup>9</sup> See section 2.5 in Chapter 2 for a more in-depth discussion and comparison of these terms.



obvious hindrance for the scientific accumulation of knowledge. This leaves it up to others to evaluate whether or not it is a vital piece of the empirical and theoretical puzzle.

This thesis primarily uses the term ‘anti-Islamic’ in combination with the term ‘the far right’. I specifically rely on the term anti-Islam based on an analysis of the various actors’ views of Islam as a political, totalitarian force. Their claims indicate that they are negative not only towards Islamism, but towards Islam in general. On an ideological level, their opposition to Muslim immigration and culture flows from their view of Islam as a totalitarian and destructive force. On a personal level it may be just the opposite for many people. This thesis, however, is concerned with the meso- and macro-level of organizational actors and ideology. Not with the underlying prejudices driving individuals at the micro-level. At the meso- and macro-level, ‘anti-Islam’ is therefore a more precise label than ‘anti-Muslim’. In line with this reasoning, I define anti-Islam in terms of *framing Islam as a homogenous, totalitarian ideology which threatens Western civilization*. Whereas the term ‘Islamophobia’ contains an inherent emphasis on (emotional) reaction, conceptualizing anti-Islam in terms of framing moves the focus to the agency of far-right initiatives.

#### ***1.4.1.1 Ambiguity, the anti-Islamic master frame and GAL/TAN***

In essence, this entire thesis speaks to the ideologically oriented debate about the far right. In the section above, I sketched out two of my contributions which draw on existing work. First, by providing a taxonomical conceptualization of far-right ideologies and second by offering a definition of anti-Islam in terms of framing. Beyond this, two larger contributions are worth highlighting. The first comes from a ground-up approach where I compare the collective action frames of anti-Islamic across organizations and countries, followed by an in-depth analysis of how these initiatives frame issues such as women’s rights. When exploring the issue of women’s rights,

I identify two sets of frames that are used intermittently by all the anti-Islamic initiatives examined; protector frames with a male point of view and equality frames with a female point of view. I characterize the simultaneous use of both as *strategic frame ambiguity*.

Second, in order to contextualize the anti-Islamic turn in relation to other versions of the far right, this thesis expands on Jens Rydgren's conceptualization of far-right ideological evolution since World War II (2005a; 2007). In line with the broader literature, Rydgren argues that the original extreme right ideology – or master frame – became unviable in the political climate post-World War II and the defeat of the Nazis and fascists (2005a, 413). The situation for the far right only changed after a period of ideological reorientation and moderation – that is, with the invention of a second master frame by the new right (*nouvelle droite*) and the French Front National (FN) which stressed anti-establishment populism and xenophobic ethno-nationalism. The (partial) embrace of democracy embodied by this new master frame signaled a major shift - the establishment of radical right ideology. Furthermore, their xenophobic ethno-nationalism was packaged in the notion of “separate but equal cultures”, meaning that the superiority and inferiority of ethnicities and cultures was no longer part of the equation (2005a, 427). This is in stark contrast to the supposedly biological, racial hierarchies of the older extreme right. For the sake of clarity, the first master frame is hereafter defined as ‘fascist’, whereas the second is defined as ‘ethno-pluralist’.

The distinction between the two master frames, and as a consequence, between extreme and radical right ideology, rests on two dimensions; their view of the political system and their conceptualization of ‘the other’. I argue that the anti-Islamic collective action framing (Chapter 5) is sufficiently distinct from both these master frames to be categorized as a third master frame for the far right, but not as a distinct ideology. Instead, in its predominant form it is a new permutation

of radical right ideology. First, unlike the ethno-pluralist radical right, anti-Islam reintroduces notions of superiority and inferiority, but this time they speak in terms of civilizations – Western, Judeo-Christian versus Islamic – and not race. Second, and more importantly, distinguishing anti-Islam as a third master frame rests on introducing a third dimension; their conception of themselves, particularly when it comes to family and gender relations. The fascist and ethno-pluralist master frames more or less overlap on this dimension, as both build on “traditional” family and gender values. In contrast, the anti-Islamic, civilizational master frame incorporates LGBT rights and women’s rights, in addition to the historically vilified Jewish minority.

On an abstract level, the anti-Islamic master frame resembles the fascist master frame in their strong emphasis on hierarchies of worth, whilst the anti-Islamic master frame overlaps directly with the ethno-pluralist master frame in their partial acceptance of democracy. The anti-Islamic master frame basically breaks with both and incorporates liberal and progressive perspectives on gender and minority rights. This means that the anti-Islamic master frame transcends the libertarian-traditional divide at the core of the so-called Green–Alternative–Libertarian (GAL) vs. Traditional–Authoritarian–Nationalist (TAN) cultural cleavage, which some have argued is the most salient struggle in Western politics (Kriesi et al. 2008; van der Brug and Van Spanje 2009; Bakker et al. 2015). This is important, as the radical right are seen as championing the TAN-side in a struggle against the libertarian left (Bornschieer 2010, 5).

#### **1.4.2 Far-right networks, movements and transnationalization**

Ideology and framing are interconnected with networks, but the causal relationship is difficult to untangle. Social networks function as channels for the construction of meaning, and operate as both resources and constraints (Caiani, della Porta and Wagemann 2012, 30). The network-oriented perspective helps us to get a grasp on the interplay between competition and co-

operation among plural and complex actors (ibid., 210). The presence of networks between the initiatives is also one of the necessary factors to establish whether or not we are talking about a movement. A social movement can be defined as “a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity” (Diani 1992, 165). Social movement research has long stressed the importance of online communication platforms as resources for the mobilization of transnational movements, as information can be disseminated virtually instantaneously (Petit 2004), overcoming problems of leadership and decision-making (Castells 2000) and creating transnational solidarity (Chase-Dunn and Boswell 2002). It has been argued that online networks are important for groups that are marginalized in their own domestic politics (Tarrow and della Porta 2005, 1-21). Caiani and Wagemann (2009) claim that online networks have been particularly important for the extreme right, due to the constraints they face when taking to the streets or trying to mobilize in other offline arenas. Speaking of the radical right parties, however, Cas Mudde argues that the notion of transnational far right alliances and networks are inflated (2017).<sup>10</sup>

Narrowing things down to extra-parliamentary anti-Islamic initiatives, there is a small but growing body of research that goes beyond the study of particular organizations to look at the network constellations between anti-Islamic and other far-right groups *within* specific countries, primarily the United States (e.g. Bail 2012, 2014; Duss et al. 2015). In one of the first empirical studies of anti-Islamic initiatives in the U.S., such as ACT! For America and Stop Islamization of America, Ali et al. claim that “...this core group of deeply intertwined [anti-Islamic, sic] individuals and organizations manufacture and exaggerate threats of “creeping Sharia”, Islamic domination of the West, and purported obligatory calls to violence against all non-Muslims by the

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/26/opinion/the-radical-rights-united-front.html>

*Quran* (2011, 2). Detailed network analyses and the plagiarism detection program, (Bail 2012, 2014), show that the network of anti-Islamic organizations in the U.S. has grown in influence and become an agenda-setter which sometimes dominates the news cycle due to its emotionally charged language.<sup>11</sup> While focusing on Norway, Berntzen and Sandberg (2014) claim that these communities form a transnational social movement “sharing an anti-Islamic identity and rhetoric, and have overlapping and close ties” (ibid. 761). The transnational character of the anti-Islamic movement, with organizational and ideological roots across Europe and the United States has been further outlined by several scholars. Meleagrou-Hitchens and Brun labels it as an “identifiable pan-European far-right movement (2014, 1), and Goodwin describes it as “... an amorphous network of think-tanks, bloggers and activists” (2013, 1), whereas Denes characterizes it as a “loose global fraternity” (2012, 295). Small empirical inroads have been made by Yang and Self (2015) and Lee (2015). Yang and Self conducted a network analysis starting from the anti-Islamic blog, Atlas Shrugs, finding that it primarily had connections to other U.S. right-wing sites. Beginning with five anti-Islamic websites, and tracing their hyperlinks, Lee made a partial mapping of what he defines as the “Counter-Jihadist Nebula”, uncovering an online network of forty-six websites (2015, 256). Furthermore, it has been claimed that “... the ‘counterjihad’ network seems to have dissolved, as many right-wing populists have branded themselves primarily anti-EU.” (Fleischer 2014, 69). Apart from these studies, little is known about the full scope and configuration of the anti-Islamic movement and subculture.

#### ***1.4.2.1 Growing, ideologically diverse and transnational network***

The network analyses in this thesis (Chapter 6) fill a large gap and can be divided into three categories; size and persistence; ideology; and transnationalization. First, my analysis shows that

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<sup>11</sup> Bail uses the label ‘anti-Muslim’.

the anti-Islamic movement and subculture is large and growing. In 2015, the network consisted of just over 3,000 groups. A third of these were explicitly anti-Islamic. By 2016 the network had expanded to over 4,000, with anti-Islamic groups accounting for a somewhat larger share. Although growing and structurally cohesive at the macro-level, the movement and subculture which the online network analysis captures also indicates that there is a large degree of fluidity. One third of the groups present in the network in 2015 were no longer present in 2016, whereas over 2,000 new groups joined. There are also major internal shifts, with close to one third of the groups present in 2015 migrating from one community to another by 2016. This fluidity may be a function of the media platform itself. Setting up a new group on Facebook does not demand resources, although being noticed and accepted by pre-existing anti-Islamic groups does require some effort. Fluidity aside, the movement and subculture has persisted for over two decades, and cannot be described as “embryonic” (see e.g. Goodwin 2013; Busher 2015).

Second, we see that “birds of a feather flock together”. The overview of the various clusters within the network in both 2015 and 2016 gives an immediate picture that closely mirrors what my own and other qualitative studies have uncovered about anti-Islamic initiatives’ rhetoric and worldview (e.g. Zuquete 2008; Goodwin 2013; Berntzen and Sandberg 2014). They have strong ties to Israeli and pro-Israeli groups, which consist of everything from Christians for Israel to the official website of the Israeli Defence Forces. By 2016 the anti-Islamic movement and the pro-Israeli community had become further integrated, with a large chunk of the former Stop Islamization community being absorbed by the pro-Israeli community. This means that the anti-Islamic far right is clearly different from the traditional anti-Semitic extreme right on this dimension. The growing presence of women’s rights, animal rights and LGBT groups within the network also highlight its distinctive quality when compared to the ethno-pluralist far right, which emphasizes traditional gender and family values. Their presence underlines the fundamental shift

that the focus on Muslims and Islam means for the far right, particularly in Western Europe and North America. If progressive actors and ideas continue to exert influence the anti-Islamic movement and the far right as a whole seems to be set on a course for continued moderation.

In combination with the comparative frame analysis, the network analyses also contributes to the understanding of the ongoing transnationalization of the far right. As this thesis shows, the ties between Western European anti-Islamic initiatives and Eastern European radical and extreme right initiatives increased in the wake of the 2015 “refugee crisis”. Major far-right parties such as the Hungarian Jobbik, the Movement for a Better Hungary (*Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom*), have also adopted anti-Islam positions (Thorleifsson 2017), moving away from their characteristic focus on antiziganism (Roma), antisemitism (Jews) and biological racism (Wodak 2015). Simultaneously, in Western Europe the “refugee crisis” seems to have led to a resurgent focus on asylum seekers and refugees and a comparative decline in emphasis on Muslims and Islam (see e.g. Jupskås and Hanshuus 2017). In other words, the refugee crisis has facilitated an increased transnationalization and Europeanization of the far right, and has also led to some degree of breakdown between the (ideal type) ethno-pluralist and anti-Islamic master frame. These two co-occurring processes in the wake of the “refugee crisis” reveal not only the increasing impact of anti-Islam, but also that old and new far right ideologies can to a certain extent be interchangeable without causing major internal ruptures within these initiatives – be it parties or activist groups. In other words, both the eastward expansion and mixture indicate that these two master frames are sufficiently similar to co-exist without causing organizational breakdown, in much same way that extreme right ideas intermittently surface among the members of old populist radical right organizations.

Organizationally speaking, the movement's attempts to reach out to groups championing women's rights, LGBT groups and animal rights, as well as Christian conservatives and pro-Israeli initiatives, are primarily best understood as ongoing efforts to build a negative coalition. This term comes from the studies of social revolution, which suggest that multiclass coalitions were critical to revolutionary success (Goldstone 1994; 2011; Goodwin 2001). For instance, Dix (1984) attributed the degree of success enjoyed by revolutionary movements in Latin America to their ability to construct a negative coalition which brought together different classes united by a common rejection of the ruling regime. More specifically, a negative coalition is "a coalition displaying highly diverse preferences on most major politically salient issues but united primarily by their common rejection of a particular outcome" (Beissinger 2013, 3).

### **1.4.3 Mobilization**

Mobilization, and more specifically recruitment, is a pivotal aspect in all spheres of politics. David Art argues that it is precisely who the radical right recruit that is crucial when it comes to determining whether or not a given radical right parties succeeds or fails (2011, 33). What characterizes those recruited by far-right initiatives? In his analysis, which builds on interviews and ethnographic fieldwork, Art distinguishes between three kinds of activists on the basis of their views and motivations: moderates, extremists and opportunists (ibid., 31-33). Extremists reject democracy and espouse racist and anti-Semitic ideas, but moderates embrace democracy and distance themselves from explicitly racist views. Art identifies opportunists as those without a radical right legacy or ideological motivation. Narrowing this down to the anti-Islamic far right, work by Goodwin, Cutts and Janta-Lipinski (2016) on who sympathized and joined the EDL showed that supporters hold more classic racial prejudice than the population as a whole (ibid., 4). Extrapolating from this, we would therefore expect that anti-Islamic initiatives should draw a large amount of what Art defines as extremists.



Why do people join? The social movement literature presents three variables for recruitment: ideological compatibility, or frame alignment (Benford and Snow 1986), personal networks (McAdam 1988; Goodwin and Jasper 2014), and external shocks (Gould 2009). First, an underlying assumption is that participation in a movement or group is dependent on the congruence between the goals and ideology of the organization and the individual activist and members (Snow, Rochford, Worden and Benford 1986, 464). However, with some exceptions (e.g. Beissinger 2013; Ketelaars, Walgrave and Wouters 2014) this has not been tested. In contrast, personal networks and external shocks have now been empirically identified as important in a number of studies. In his ethnographic study of the EDL, Joel Busher (2015) also identified personal networks (ibid., 42-43) and external shocks (in this case personal trauma) as two of the main factors driving activist recruitment. Only a minority were deeply involved in EDL ideology before joining (the ideologically compatible). Nonetheless, one of the reasons for their importance is because of the meaning they transmit. In other words, they were channels which facilitated ideological compatibility. According to Busher, the same holds for external shocks (critical events). When these aligned with the EDL position, they made the person susceptible to the rest of their views.

As already mentioned the literature on the far right also indicates that strategic thinking and planning plays a role for far-right initiatives and those people who adopt anti-Islamic and civilizational claims. They are thought to do this to fend off allegations of racism and the potential normative and political sanctions that it entails. They are therefore opportunists, but of a different variety to those cited in Art's research.

#### ***1.4.3.1 Different entry pathways, bound by belonging***

Building on these perspectives, this thesis suggests two different, causal pathways for adopting the anti-Islamic, civilizational master frame, and thereby potentially joining the

transnational movement (Chapter 8). There is one pathway for people with a far right, nativist outlook and another for those with a liberal and progressive outlook. The first pathway is strategic, escaping normative sanctions against xenophobic nativism. I call this the rational calculation (RC) pathway. The second pathway is where Jihadist terror attacks and other critical events trigger a fear-based response (moral shock), whereby they come to adopt the civilizational claims about Islam being a totalitarian, existential threat. I call this the emotional response (ER) pathway.

Regardless of their entry pathway, the views activists *express* is probably far more important than the views they *hold* for the trajectory of a single initiative and the broader movement. In this sense, the degree of ideological compatibility and frame alignment becomes the important factor once a person has joined. This thesis sheds light on what is expressed by those who have become (online) activists (Chapter 7). Orienting myself towards Art (2011), I therefore make a bipartite distinction between moderate and extreme activists in studying the views expressed by those who have become (online) activists (Chapter 7). As with previous studies on alignment, my findings indicate a strong congruence on the diagnostic framing of Islam and Muslims as the penultimate threat to Western civilization. Furthermore, a majority seem to embrace the expansive in-group which includes women, LGBT, Jews and others deemed to be threatened by Islam. Nonetheless, expressions of racist, misogynistic, anti-Semitic and anti-democratic ideas are also present. This points to a subset of extreme activists who are not (strategically) motivated to disguise their views.

This thesis also connects with the growing literature on the role of emotions in understanding continued mobilization and message diffusion. It studies which emotions drive online mobilization within anti-Islamic groups active on Facebook and their diffusion on the same platform. According to Klandermans and Van der Toorn, the mobilizing role of emotions had

previously been neglected in social movement literature (2008). This also holds for those who employ framing theory (e.g. Benford 1997), even though frames are tailored to elicit emotional responses and for instance hot cognition has been recognized as pivotal for mobilizing potential members (Zajonc 1980; Gamson 1992). This thesis finds that joy and trust are strongly associated with mobilization. The more joy or trust-related words a post contains, the more comments it gets. Increases in joy and trust-associated words also correlate with an increase in the number of times a post is shared by members and followers, either with friends, on their own Facebook-wall, or in other groups they participate in. There is no similar pattern for anger-associated words, and fear seems to have no effect at all. In contrast, fact-heavy statements seem to drive down responses and shares beyond the specific group. When looking at the content of these posts, mobilizing messages focus on the in-group and the building of a common identity. The core theme is 'belonging'.

## **1.6 Chapter outline**

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. After this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 provides an overview of the main research traditions and concepts and how they inform our analysis of anti-Islamic mobilization. The chapter has three main sections. After providing a brief overview of the research field, the first section draws on key literature to construct a taxonomical ladder of far-right ideology. In it the far right is used as an umbrella term for the extreme and radical right, respectively, whereas fascism is understood as one permutation of the extreme right and ethnopluralism is understood as one permutation of the radical right. The second section deals with the concepts of Islamophobia, anti-Islam and anti-Muslim and how far-right antagonism towards Islam and the inclusion of liberal and progressive positions have been understood. The third section presents the dominant perspectives and claims about far right and anti-Islamic networks and mobilization.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the methodological tools and data used. It includes qualitative content analysis of statements made by leaders and representatives of anti-Islamic initiatives in Norway, Britain and Germany, tools used to harvest data from Facebook, network analysis and the dictionary-based, automated sentiment analysis for large amounts of text.

Chapter 4 provides a chronological overview of the anti-Islamic expansion which emanates from the United States, Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, Norway and Denmark as well as a comparative analysis of the background of thirty figureheads (leaders, ideologues and representatives) from these countries. First, it argues that the anti-Islamic movement has undergone four waves of expansion, precipitated by large-scale critical events and smaller moral shocks. Second, the comparative analysis shows that many of the figureheads have both a left-wing and a right-wing background, with only a few having any previous affiliation with the far right. Just as extreme right legacies can help continue old extreme right ideas, legacies from outside the far right may have contributed to the inclusion of progressive and liberal ideals among the anti-Islamic initiatives.

Chapter 5 consists of three main sections. The first is an analysis of the collective action framing of the leaders and representatives of anti-Islamic initiatives in Norway, Britain and Germany. Similarities and differences in their diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framework are identified. In addition, there is a particular focus on the issue of gender and women's rights. This is because it has a key function in their overarching framework, and because its legitimacy is most often contested by opponents and academics alike. The main finding is that their positions are broadly aligned across country cases and organizational form – parties, activist groups or online groups. The understanding of Islam as an existential threat is unison, and so is the rejection of the “establishment”. Furthermore, they are aligned in their understanding of what and who is

threatened (democracy, the Christian cultural heritage, gender equality and LGBT rights) as well as in their inclusion of pro-democratic solutions. In the second section, I delve down to look at how they frame women's rights. I identify two sets of frames that are used intermittently by all the anti-Islamic initiatives in question: protector frames that operate with a possessive, male point of view; and equality frames operating with a female point of view. I characterize the simultaneous use of both as strategic frame ambiguity. In the third section, I synthesize and discuss these findings in the light of Rydgren's work on the evolution of far-right master frames and the literature on the cultural cleavage between initiatives which represent the green, alternative and libertarian (GAL) vs. the traditional, authoritarian and nationalist (TAN) dimension. Extending Rydgren's argument, I claim that anti-Islam is best understood as a third, distinct master frame. The anti-Islamic, civilizational master frame transcends the fundamental GAL/TAN divide by incorporating the libertarian dimension. Finally, I employ grid/group analysis first developed by Mary Douglas (1982) to further elaborate on the distinctions between the three versions of the far right. Arising from this, I argue that the anti-Islamic far right is characterized by a form of liberal sectarianism. This mirrors the arguments about an authoritarian decoupling among some radical right parties, first put forth by Herbert Kitschelt (2012) in his grid/group re-theoretization of the GAL/TAN divide.

Chapter 6 takes the anti-Islamic organizations in Norway, Britain and Germany and offshoots around the world present on Facebook as a starting point for a network analysis that ends up uncovering a transnational constellation of over 3,000 and 4,000 groups in March 2015 and 2016, respectively. Beyond uncovering the fundamentally transnational nature of the anti-Islamic movement and subculture, the major finding is that extreme right groups were virtually non-existent in the network in 2015, whereas anti-Islamic initiatives do reach out to groups that label

themselves as women's rights, LGBT rights, animal rights as well as Jewish and pro-Israeli groups. This is in line with the framing activity of the organizations, as identified in Chapter 5. However, by 2016 the share of extreme right initiatives had risen with the introduction of more groups from Eastern Europe. In general, the broad ideological span between the initiatives which anti-Islamic groups attempt to create ties with can be defined as attempts at building *negative coalitions* – united primarily by what they are against.

Chapter 7 looks at the arguments and sentiments expressed by the members and followers of 300 anti-Islamic groups on Facebook, using a selection based on the preceding network analysis. In other words, who have they mobilized? When compared to the framing activity of the organizations in Chapter 5, we can identify a strong alignment on the prognostic framing (what and who is the problem), less so on the solutions. Furthermore, the inclusion of the “progressive” in-group (LGBT, women and people of different religious and from different ethnic backgrounds with the exception of Muslims) is dominant. Nonetheless, the traditional extreme right views of black people, Jews and LGBT and arguments in favour of violent solutions are also present. A second aim is to identify the emotions and messages which drive internal online mobilization in the form of comments and messages disseminated beyond the specific groups in the form of shares. Here I used a dictionary-based sentiment analysis, which ranks emotions connected to specific words. Using multilevel regression analysis, the major findings are that positive emotions of joy and trust, often connected to messages that affirm the in-group identity, drive mobilization.

Chapter 8 provides syntheses of the findings and develops the core arguments relating to the two overarching research questions. I argue that the various initiatives that make up the anti-Islamic expansion of the far right comprise a cohesive transnational movement embedded in a larger subculture. This movement and subculture has a consistent worldview and prominent

ideologues. Today, the anti-Islamic movement and subculture is no longer an embryonic phenomenon. The anti-Islamic civilizational master frame (partly) structures their organizational online networks and dominates among their online members. I therefore argue that the anti-Islamic movement and subculture is characterized by a semi-liberal equilibrium. This demonstrates that it matters who the enemy is, but not just in the way that earlier research indicates. I suggest two mutually exclusive pathways into adopting the worldviews espoused in the anti-Islamic movement and subculture. In the first opposition to Islam precedes an inclusion of some progressive and liberal positions, driven by a rational attempt to escape social and political sanctions. In the other pathway progressive and liberal positions precedes an understanding of Islam as a totalitarian ideology and an existential threat, driven by an emotional response to Jihadi terror attacks and other critical events. Despite their framing being resonant with large sections of the population in most Western countries, the influence of the anti-Islamic movement and subculture is hampered by a lack of popular legitimacy. Finally, the equilibrium is threatened by the Eastward expansion of the network, the sizeable minority position which includes racist and anti-democratic positions, and the inherent tension in their worldview which portrays Islam as an apocalyptic threat, but which should be met by adhering to democratic procedures. The semi-liberal and peaceful equilibrium is therefore fragile.

## 2. Perspectives on the Far Right



## **Summary**

Opposition to and mobilization against Islam and Muslims is understood as a far-right phenomenon, and the far right is understood in terms of ideology. This chapter provides an overview of the main perspectives on far-right ideology, networks and mobilization. It is structured into three main sections. As ideology is held as the common denominator, the first two sections are devoted to the issues of ideology and conceptualization. The first section discusses and clarifies the different concepts used to describe the far right by creating a taxonomy of ideologies, whereas the second section provides an overview and discussion of Islamophobia and anti-Islam as the two concepts which specifically refer to mobilization against Islam and Muslims. It argues that anti-Islam is a more suitable label than Islamophobia, offering a definition of anti-Islam as the framing of Islam as a homogenous, totalitarian ideology which threatens Western civilization. Whereas some describe the anti-Islamic worldview as a continuation of the ethno-pluralist master frame described by Rydgren, others point to the novelty of their inclusion of liberal and progressive positions. This inclusion is, however, commonly depicted as a strategic façade. The third and final section provides a brief overview of the work looking at the anti-Islamic far right in terms of networks and mobilization. Several studies describe an anti-Islamic far right outside party politics which is transnational in scope and prominent online, and their online networks seem to be ideologically structured. Whether it is a movement with a common ideological outlook is nonetheless contested by some.

## 2.1 Introduction

Organized opposition to Islam and Muslims is understood as a far-right phenomenon. This chapter provides an overview of the main research traditions and concepts and how they inform our analysis of anti-Islamic mobilization. It is structured into three main sections. As ideology is taken as the common denominator which distinguishes the far right from other political phenomena, the first section sets out key perspectives on the various permutations of far-right ideology. These are placed within a taxonomical ladder of abstraction in the tradition of Sartori. 'Far right' is used as an umbrella term for the extreme and radical right, respectively, whereas fascism is understood as one permutation of the extreme right and ethnopluralism one permutation of the radical right.

The second section deals with the anti-Islamic turn in the wake of 9/11 and how this has been understood. The term Islamophobia is discussed and ultimately rejected in favour of anti-Islam, here conceptualized as *framing Islam as a homogenous, totalitarian ideology which threatens Western civilization*. Opposition to Islam and Muslims is tightly coupled with a defense of Judeo-Christian Western civilization in the shape of Christian heritage, the state of Israel, freedom of speech, democracy and liberal values (including women's rights and LGBT rights). In the literature, rejection of anti-Semitism is seen as *strategic abandonment*. Muslims are the functional equivalent of Jews and the inclusion of liberal and progressive positions is seen as a *strategic inclusion*. Strategic is frequently used as a euphemism for deceptive. The emphasis on continuity through theoretical abstraction is one reason why there has been relatively little empirical analyses on the claims made by such initiatives, namely that they defend liberal and progressive values.

The third section examines the studies and perspectives on the extra-parliamentary anti-Islamic far right, often understood as a transnational social movement. In line with findings from

other fields, some research indicates that the networks are structured along ideological lines. Some, however, contest this position, arguing that the anti-Islamic far right outside party politics is amorphous, loosely connected and without a unified ideology.

## **2.2. Background**

The study of the far right has its roots in the in the 1930s and immediate period after World War II, focusing on the fascists in Italy and Nazism in Germany. The need to understand exactly how they could come to power in Western, democratic societies – culminating in the devastation of Europe and the attempted extermination of the Jews - was profound. This legacy of mass atrocities, war and persecution shapes the academic perspectives on the far right to this day.

The first decades of scholarship were dominated by psychoanalytical studies that emphasized the underlying mechanisms for popular participation in what culminated in atrocities, locating the roots in individual and social pathologies. For instance, Wilhelm Reichs' study *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* from 1933 considered fascism to be “the basic emotional attitude of the suppressed man” and in its purest form “[...] the sum total of all irrational reactions of the average human being”. Similarly, in *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson and Sandford argued that the authoritarian politics of fascism and Nazism arose from hierarchical parenting practices which fuelled fear and aggression. More important than repression, however, were the functionalist ideas of social breakdown and anomie expressed by major figures in sociology, such as Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons (Useem 1998, 215). These breakdown-theoretical perspectives posit that old social norms and practices dissolve in the face of society-wide change brought about by modernization, industrialization and capitalism, and later by

globalization. Individuals in these societies were thought to be particularly likely to support the far right (e.g. Arendt 1951).<sup>12</sup>

Theories of social breakdown, of which fascism and Nazism were one supposed outcome, were an integral part social movement studies.<sup>13</sup> The emphasis on collective mobilization driven by irrational, emotional outbursts in response to situations of society-wide crisis, however, eventually led to a decades-long backlash within the social movement field. Scholars shifted their attention from theories of emotions, crisis and abnormality to perspectives emphasizing rationality and cooperation, such as rational choice (e.g. Olson 1971), resource mobilization theory (for example, McCarthy and Zald 1977), political process theory (for example, McAdam 1982) and subsequently framing theory (see Benford and Snow 1986; 2000). This shift coincides with the almost exclusive focus of social movement literature on leftist movements, whereas the study of the far right became the predominant domain of political science and scholars studying party politics.

More precisely, the study of the far right in party politics became a sub-field in its own right, where the values parties espoused were understood as a perverse inversion of the ideals and procedures of democracy (e.g. Rosanvallon and Goldhammer 2008, 265). A small share of the population was hypothesized as sharing these values based on “structurally determined pathologies” (Scheuch and Klingemann 1967, 18), which become relevant under “extreme conditions” (ibid., 86). According to Mudde (2010, 1171), this demand-side perspective which fixated on crisis and abnormality dominated the study of the far right in post-war Europe (e.g. Betz 1998; Grumke 2004; McGowan 2002). Concomitantly, there was a lack of studies by political

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<sup>12</sup> For a thorough overview, see Jens Rydgren’s article “The Sociology of the Radical Right” (2007).

<sup>13</sup> Social movement scholarship is dominated by sociology, but includes the work of social psychologists, historians, political scientists and social anthropologists (van Troost, van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2013).

scientists looking at the politics and agency of the far right on the supply-side of the equation (Mudde 2010, 1772).

The focus on party-centric scholarship gradually changed from the 1990s onwards, as perspectives from mainstream political science stressing the agency of the far right were applied. For instance, political scientist Elisabeth Carter stated that “parties of the extreme right are to some extent ‘masters of their own success’” (2005, 12).

Meanwhile, the “groupuscular” world of neo-Nazis, white power and militant nationalists in the United States and Western Europe won the attention of sociologists, anthropologists and criminologists who often conducted ethnographic work (e.g. Blee 1996; Bjørgo 1997; Fangen 1998; 1999). In contrast to the demand-side orientation prominent among political scientists, these studies often looked at micro-interactions between individuals within and between groups in order to explain recruitment, activist views and acts of political violence.

This was followed by a piecemeal reintegration with the broader social movement literature by studying aspects such as political and discursive opportunity structures, framing, diffusion and networks spearheaded by Ruud Koopmans (1996; 2004), Jens Rydgren (2003, 2004a, 2005a, 2007), Bert Klandermans and Nonna Mayer (2006), David Art (2011) and Manuela Caiani, Claudius Wageman and Donatella della Porta (2012).

Organization, strategy or behavior cannot be used to delineate the far right from other phenomena, and therefore do not figure in most conceptual definitions (Carter 2005; Griffin 2006 (XX)). Instead, there is now a broad consensus across social scientific disciplines that their ideology is the main factor which distinguishes these initiatives from others (e.g. Ignazi 2003; Carter 2005; Caiani et al. 2012). There is a profusion of concepts such as populist radical right and extreme right, fascist and neo-fascist. Sometimes these concepts are defined in an overlapping

manner, or at times they refer to relatively distinct phenomena. Each individual term is in turn often conceptualized in different ways. For instance, as far back as 1996, Cas Mudde identified over twenty-six different definitions of the term ‘extreme right’. Minkenberg noted that many definitions often “resemble mere shopping lists of criteria.” (2003, 171). Over time, however, some specific conceptualizations have become dominant over others – meaning that they are frequently cited, endorsed and applied. This holds for Roger Griffin’s definition of fascism, Cas Muddes’ definition of the populist radical right and Jens Rydgren’s conceptualization of extreme right master frames.<sup>14</sup>

The first shared characteristic is that initiatives which are alternately conceptualized as belonging to the fascist, extreme or radical right primarily tend to be understood as reactionary ideologies, “movements of exclusion” (Rydgren 2005b, 1) and defined by what they are against – and not what they support (Blee 2017; Durham 2007; Lo 1982). Hence the frequent use of the prefix anti --\_ anti-immigrant, anti-Semitic, anti-gay, anti-feminist, anti-abortion, anti-communist and so on. Of these it is the opposition to immigration which many claims are the core, defining feature of their ideology and voter appeal in the case of political parties (e.g. van der Brug and Fennema 2007; Ivarsflaten 2005; Lucassen and Lubbers 2012).

### **2.3 Ideologies and master frames**

Before moving onto the taxonomy of the far right, the concept of ideology deserves some attention. Converse (1964) used the synonymous term ‘belief system’, defined as a “configuration of ideas and attitudes in which the elements are bound together by some form of constraint or functional interdependence” (3), “logically coherent” (5), and “which consumers come to see as

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<sup>14</sup> As of June 2017, going by Google scholar, Roger Griffin’s article “The nature of fascism” (1991) was cited 910 times, Cas Muddes’ “Populist radical right parties in Europe” (2007) 1,800 times, and Jens Rydgren’s “Is extreme right-wing populism contagious? Explaining the emergence of a new party family” (2005a) 408 times.

‘natural’ wholes” (9). This emphasis on a logically coherent set of ideas has been favored by some scholars, whereas others have defined ideology in a less restrictive way. For instance, Sainsbury defines it as “a body of normative or normative-related ideas about the nature of man and society as well as the organization and purposes of society” (1980, 8) – a definition given by Mudde in his analysis of far-right ideologies (2002, 19). Coming from the social movement field, Oliver and Johnston (2005) define ideology as “a system of meaning that couples assertions and theories about the nature of social life with values and norms relevant to promoting or resisting social change.” (192).

Ideologies exist at different levels of generality and subdivision. For instance, environmentalist ideology exists in both a conservationist and an ecologist form (Dalton 1994), while feminism includes several varieties such as liberal, socialist and radical feminism (Oliver and Johnston 2005, 198).

The concept of collective action framing is a related perspective located below the broad and fixed level of ideology (Snow and Byrd 2007; Caiani, Wagemann and della Porta 2012, 12). At the meso-level, collective action frames can be defined as the dominant worldviews which guide the behavior of social movement groups, and which are often produced by the organizational leadership which provides followers and would-be followers with the rationale for participating and supporting them (ibid., 13).

Collective action framing by social movements (and political parties) include the articulation of a diagnosis (what is the problem and who is to blame?), prognosis (what are the solutions?), and motivational framing that articulate calls for action (Snow and Benford 1988). Ideologies are cultural resources for framing activity, and framing processes involve the emphasis on or amplification of existing beliefs and values (Benford and Snow 2000, 58). Collective action

frames often consist of elements of one or *more* ideologies, where pre-existing ideologies function as both facilitators and constraints on framing processes (Benford and Snow 2000; Snow and Benford 1988).

The term master frame is used for collective action frames that have expanded in scope and influence, constraining the activities and orientations of movements both within cycles of protest (Snow and Benford 1992) and between them (Gerhards and Rucht 1992; Mooney and Hunt 1996). They have therefore taken on more of the static nature ascribed to ideologies. Master frames vary according to their potency (salience and resonance), rigidity, and whether blame is directed outward or inward (1988, 139-40). They also have the ability to give rise to families of movements or political parties (Rydgren 2005a, 426). For example, Snow and Benford (1992) defined the collective action framing by the American civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s as a “rights” master frame, since their emphasis of equal rights and opportunities was of such a general and inclusive nature that it was usable by other aggrieved groups such as native Americans, women, gays and lesbians (*ibid.*, 145). Oliver and Johnston (2005), however, argue that master frames differentiate themselves from full-blown ideologies in that they are signifiers which provide an angle and perspective on a problem, and not elaborate social theories and normative systems (198, 199).<sup>15</sup> The “rights” master frame pointed many women in the direction of feminism, but did not necessitate fully embracing feminist ideology (*ibid.*). In other words, it is precisely because master frames exist at a lower level of internal complexity to ideologies that they are able to diffuse and be incorporated by initiatives (SMOs and parties) with different ideologies.

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<sup>15</sup> This understanding of master frames shares some similarities with what some call “thin-centered” ideology.



### 2.3 Conceptualizations and levels of abstraction

These terms and the way they are conceptualized guide our analysis in different directions.

We can make a rough distinction between lumpers and splitters. The lumpers build broad macro-level categories – some of which tend towards the universalistic, while splitters look for nuances ranging from the micro-level of variations within organizations and groups to the meso-level between groups and organizations. Generally speaking, lumpers stress historical continuity, while splitters identify discontinuity and novelty. Both approaches carry their own risks.

The lumpers run the risk of what Sartori defined as “the line of least resistance”, namely conceptual *stretching* (1970, 1034). Concepts are made in a specific historical and political context, and when we attempt to expand them beyond their original scope and context, we are in danger of underreporting differences – equating apples with oranges. Splitters, on the other hand, stand in danger of not seeing the forest for the trees, and therefore impair the accumulation of knowledge.

To avoid these pitfalls, Sartori advocates a taxonomical approach to conceptualization. He uses the hierarchical terminology of genus, species and sub-species to structure scientific inquiry and knowledge aggregation. In the hierarchy of abstraction these concepts are redefined as high level (HL), medium level (ML) and low level (LL) categories. The further down on the ladder of abstraction the more “adjectives” are added, whereas traveling up on the ladder means that the concepts contain less. In other words, the high level categories allow for maximal *extension* to the entire universe of cases, but have minimal *intension*. At the opposite end, low level categories extend to few cases (extension) but have a maximal level of intension, meaning that they contain much more information. These categories are the most “grounded” in the contextual, thick information from the specific cases, and it is the low level conceptual containers that are put to immediate use and challenged directly (ibid. 1,043). I apply this approach to build a taxonomy of the far right based on some of the most widely cited perspectives.

## **2.4 Constructing a ladder of abstraction for the far right**

Substantially speaking, two terms are most commonly used at the highest level of abstraction; far right and extreme right. We can distinguish between two uses of the term far right – one relative and the other absolute. The relative conceptualization has its roots in the way which the two terms have been used in political science. The term ‘right’ is used as opposed to ‘left’, and denotes a spatial difference between them in terms of socioeconomic and sociocultural politics (Rydgren 2005b), whereas the prefix ‘far’ is often used to categorize initiatives which differentiate themselves from the mainstream right on the sociocultural dimension (e.g. Art 2011). That is to say, the far right is more restrictive and exclusionary than the mainstream right. Due to its spatial basis, what the term ‘far right’ actually covers can differ from country to country and over time depending on the level of analysis. If two initiatives are labeled far right, this does not necessarily denote any kind of kinship in the organizational, historical or even ideological sense. This has led some to reject the term far right as too diffuse (e.g. Carter 2005).

Another usage has emerged, however, which is partially unmoored from the spatial origins laid out above. In this second usage, ‘far right’ is used as a conceptual container at the highest level of abstraction for initiatives whose ideology fulfill two criteria. First, it is nativist. Nativism, in Muddes definition, is the combination of xenophobia and nationalism where the nation state should only consist of members from the native group, making non-natives a threat by default (2007, 17). Second, it is either anti-systemic in the sense that it seeks to replace the current system of democracy in toto, or fundamentally challenges some core dimensions of the liberal democratic system (and not just procedural democracy). As already stated, the far right is an umbrella term (Fielitz and Laloire 2016, 8) that implies a certain fixed nature, subsuming the myriad of initiatives and ideological positions which the literature define as fascist, extreme, radical and so on. If an initiatives ideological platform or collective action framing does not incorporate anti-systemic

positions or a rejection of some core dimension of liberal democracy, then it falls outside the scope of what far right entails. By implication, far-right ideologies can become both “mainstream” and “moderated”, but never “moderate”.

In much the same way the term ‘extreme right’ has been used two different ways. The first way, which has a long pedigree in Germany and France, is to use it as a vague high-level container for everything that is understood as different from the mainstream right on the sociocultural dimension. In this way extreme rights become synonymous with the relative understanding of the far right - a moving target depending on the context, and therefore equally open for the critique of conceptual stretching and vagary.<sup>16</sup> The other approach is to narrow it down to those initiatives and ideologies which are directly opposed to democracy and the social and political rights which are embodied by the various political institutions and norms that dominate Western Europe today, namely the anti-systemic. This places the extreme right below far right on the level of abstraction. In both cases, it is the second conceptualizations of far right and extreme right that allows us to rank them hierarchically, which therefore holds more merit according to Sartori’s taxonomical logic.

### **2.3.1 Fascism**

Fascism is another key concept in the study of the far right. Roger Griffin’s definition of fascism as “[...]... a political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism” (2006 (XX), 41) has become the standard reference. Unlike many other approaches, Griffin argues that the ideology of fascism is not primarily negative in the sense of anti-liberalism, anti-Semitism or anti-Marxism, but constituted by their positive identification of remedies to the crises which beset society – the idea that a heroic elite will intervene and enable

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<sup>16</sup> Others, such as Elisabeth Carter (2005) use the term ‘right-wing extremism’ as the overarching conceptual container in which she combines both spatial and absolute reasoning. Carter identifies five subsets of extreme right parties from the 1980s onwards: neo-Nazi, neo-fascist, authoritarian xenophobic, neo-liberal xenophobic and neo-liberal populist.

the national community to regenerate and resurrect "... from the ashes of the decadent old order." (Griffin 2006 (XX) 42). In this sense, however, fascism is anti-systemic and can therefore be understood as a subset of the extreme right. This also allows us to recognize Nazism as one historical permutation of fascism at the lowest level of abstraction, which Griffin defines as "a form of ultra-nationalism deeply imbued with notions of imperialism, anti-Semitism, Aryan supremacy, racial hygiene and eugenics" (2006 (XX) 44). Although fascism first emerged in the interwar period, he is highly critical of those that say it is also (largely) limited to this period of European history. In the Griffinian sense, fascism is a heuristic tool applicable to cases across time and culture, and which allows us to delimit it from other forms of far right and subsequently extreme right ideology.

Thus conceptualized, fascism has more or less died out as a party-political phenomenon in Western Europe and North America. It continues to exist as a subcultural, groupuscular phenomenon carried by neo-Nazi and white power groups with a transnational orientation, and also has a moderated intellectual tradition in France (the so-called *nouvelle droite*, or new right) (Griffin 2006 (XX) 59-61). In contrast, the world of party politics in these countries has become "post-fascist".<sup>17</sup> This is not the case in all of Europe, however, as shown by the rise of Golden Dawn in Greece and Jobbik in Hungary.

### **2.3.2 (Populist) radical right**

Another distinction at the intermediate level of abstraction within the far right is between the extreme and radical right. Etymologically speaking, radical is derived from the word 'radix' or root. It has often been used, however, in the same spatial and relative way as both extreme and far

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<sup>17</sup> Although Griffin's definition allows us to delimit 'fascism' from other forms of far-right ideology, many of those who use the term include the very political actors which Griffin himself excludes. These works are perhaps the most easily identifiable as the lumpers committing the sin of conceptual stretching.

right. In the most widely used definitions, however, an essential and qualitative difference between the extreme and radical right is identified in their approach to democracy. Whereas extreme right ideology includes an anti-systemic rejection of democracy which opens up for violent revolution, the radical right does not want to overthrow democracy *per se*, and therefore reject violence (e.g. Bornschier 2010). It does, however, include a strong anti-establishment critique of for instance representative democratic institutions as an obstacle to the will of the majority, which they claim to represent. Because of this the radical right is often understood as “semi-loyal” (Capoccia 2005). Cas Mudde’s definition of radical right ideology incorporates this qualitative change with the term ‘populism’, which has won over a large number of adherents. Populist radical right ideology is defined as a combination of three elements; nativism, authoritarianism and populism (Mudde 2007; 2016, 1).

Whereas nativism refers to the belief that the nation state should only consist of members from the native group (regardless of how the native group is defined), authoritarianism refers to the belief in a society which is strictly ordered and where all infringements on this order are to be punished severely (ibid., 23). Finally, populism is the belief that society is separated into two homogenous and mutually hostile groups, the ‘pure people’ vs. ‘the corrupt elite’ (ibid., 23). The populist radical right opposes phenomena that are perceived as detrimental to ‘the people’, but caters to the interests of the minority. As such, populism channels ‘elite protest’ rather than ‘system protest’. In Mudde’s perspective, all three features combined is what identifies an initiative as populist radical right (2016, 34). By their own these ideological components are necessary, but not sufficient.

Even though this approach identifies anti-establishment populism as the main distinction between the radical and extreme right, nativism is the most salient feature of radical right ideology. Whereas nativism is generally understood to be the exclusive terrain of the radical and extreme

right, the two other dimensions of radical right ideology are not. Populism, as a thin-centered ideology, can also be found on the left as well as the right (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017), while authoritarianism is a core part of conservatism (Layton-Henry 1982, 1; Pilbaum 2003). Furthermore, as nativism in the form of ethnic nationalism is the principal ideological feature for the radical right, the inclusion of populism in the terminology has criticized for being misleading (e.g. Rydgren 2007; 2017).

#### **2.3.4 A new master frame**

The re-emergence of the far right as a prominent phenomenon in Western Europe is partly connected to the changing salience of economic and cultural issues. In the postwar era politics was structured by the traditional left-right economic cleavage (Budge and Robertson 1987). The cultural cleavage grew in salience with the rise of the so-called new social movements on the left which mobilized on issues such as minority rights, feminism, and environmental protection. This created political opportunities for counter-forces, but the extreme right in the fascist tradition was unable to fill the void. It is commonly argued that the defeat and destruction of Nazi Germany and the fascist state in Italy during World War II explain why. The destruction of these regimes is also understood as the death knell for fascism as a mass movement or viable ideology for an electorally successful party in Western Europe. Not only was fascism defunct as an ideology, so were aspects most particularly connected to Nazism, which nonetheless were prevalent among broader swathes of society during the interwar period, such as the belief in biologically based racial hierarchies of worth and virulent anti-Semitism (Rydgren 2005a, 413). He argues that the resurgence of the far right from the 1980s and onwards is partly due to the innovation and diffusion of a new set of ideas to replace these – a new master frame unhampered by the legacy of war and mass extermination, and therefore able to fill the space left by left-wing mobilization on cultural issues.

The innovation consisted of two parts which circumvented the social stigma and burden associated with fascism. First, the anti-systemic antagonism to democracy was replaced with an anti-establishment critique (ibid., 428). Second, biological racism was replaced by “cultural racism” (ibid.). More specifically, the master frame which emerged during the interwar period included an explicit and racialized hierarchy, whereas the second master frame is based on the notion of ethnopluralism. In the ethnopluralist perspective, the cultures of different ethnicities or races are not formally placed in a hierarchical order, but are nonetheless seen as distinct entities requiring their own states in order to survive. The generalized form of nativism which Mudde and others include in the definition of radical right ideology, is in this perspective not detailed enough as it masks the vital distinction between the fascist extreme right and the ethnopluralist radical right. Although explicitly biologically racist notions is the purview of the extreme right, it may however be more correct to conceptualize the ethnopluralist line as one of several possible nativist permutations for the radical right, such as the more inclusive form of civic nationalism (Mudde 2000, 17). The ethnopluralist, anti-establishment master frame should therefore be seen as a subset of radical right ideology, which means that it is at a lower level of abstraction, akin to how fascism is a subset of the extreme right.

Rydgren identifies the French Front National as the genesis of the new master frame, and its electoral breakthrough in 1984 and subsequent media coverage inspired other nascent radical right parties to adopt the two core elements of populism and ethnopluralism. The ideological roots for the ethnopluralist line of reasoning come from the French *nouvelle droite* (Rydgren 2005a, 416, 427), which Griffin described as a permutation of the fascist extreme right.

### **2.3.5 A far-right taxonomy**

In this overview of far right ideology, I have made the case that the different concepts can be systematized and placed in a taxonomical ladder of abstraction under the common umbrella

rubric of far right. This is systematized in Table 2.1 below, operating with distinct categories at the high level, mid-level and low level of abstraction.

**Figure 2.1. A taxonomical hierarchy of abstraction for far-right ideologies and master frames**

<b>Levels of abstraction</b>	<b>Far right</b>	
High level	<p><b>Radical right</b> <i>Anti-establishment</i></p>	<p><i>Nativist</i></p> <p><b>Extreme right</b> <i>Anti-democratic</i></p>
Mid-level	<p><b>Ethnopluralism</b> <i>Against the political establishment and emphasizing ethno-cultural difference between people, necessitating expulsion</i></p>	<p><b>Fascism</b> <i>Against procedural democracy as political system and emphasizing a biological hierarchy among people based on race, necessitating extermination, expulsion and subordination</i></p>
Low level prototype	<b>Front National (FN)</b>	<b>National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP)</b>

The two constituent elements in extreme right ideology are nativism and the rejection of democracy, whereas radical right ideology is constituted by nativism and the rejection of the political establishment. At this level of abstraction, the distinction therefore consists of the radical right's shift towards anti-establishment populism. Moving down a level, the differences become clearer. What Rydgren describes as the ethno-pluralist and anti-establishment master frame is best understood as one possible permutation of radical right ideology, which means that we can place it at the same level of abstraction as fascism. Fascism is fundamentally opposed to democracy as a political system, seeking a national rebirth facilitated by a select elite and includes notions of racial superiority and inferiority, whereas ethnopluralism combines opposition to the political establishment with claims of ethno-cultural uniqueness rather than superiority. Griffin identified



German Nazism as the prototypical case of fascism, although the Italian fascist party which the term is derived from was the genesis for the first cycle of ideological diffusion. In the case of the ethnopluralist radical right, Rydgren identifies the French Front National as genesis (2005a), and is also the prototype for this ideology.<sup>18</sup>

## **2.5 Islam and new directions for the far right**

During the early 2000s scholars began to note the increased antagonism towards Islam and Muslims by far right parties and other initiatives (e.g. Rydgren 2008, 761). In comparison to the focus on populism, however, this was treated tangentially. Two of the first notable exceptions are José Pedro Zúquete's "The European extreme-right and Islam: New directions?" (2008) and Hanz-Georg Betz and Susi Meret's "Revisiting Lepanto: the political mobilization against Islam in contemporary Western Europe" (2009). Zúquete argued that the *Islam-as-a-threat-to-European-security-and-values frame* (223) went from being intermittently and sporadically used during the 1990s to a basic ideological feature for the European far right after September 11, 2001 (2008, 322), defining it as an ideological reorientation (215) of parties with diverse roots (212). Betz and Meret see this antagonism as a continuation of the ethno-pluralist master frame identified by Rydgren (2009, 314; see also Jackson 2011, 12), which is built on confounding Islam with radical 'Islamism' (319). By now, the far right in Western Europe is almost exclusively focused on the perceived threat of Islam (e.g. Minkenberg, Deland and Mays 2014, 12; Mudde 2016, 32).<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, it is common to raise the level of abstraction and define them as for instance hostile to migrants and minorities – thereby stressing the continuity between current and older iterations of the far right. Studies that either explicitly deal with, or acknowledge opposition to Islam and Muslims as the primary nativist

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<sup>18</sup> The anti-democratic position is a necessary factor to designate a political initiative under the rubric of right-wing extremism, but the biological racism which defines fascist nativism (at least of the Nazi variety) can be exchanged with ethnopluralist or other forms of nativism.

<sup>19</sup> Mudde uses the term 'Islamophobia'. See conceptual discussion of this term below.

sentiment of the current far right in Western Europe, use the terms Islamophobia (e.g. Allen 2010, 2011; Bangstad 2014, 2016; Bleich 2011), anti-Islamic (e.g. Zuquete 2008; Sedgwick 2013; Berntzen and Sandberg 2014) and anti-Muslim (e.g. Bail 2012; 2014; Busher 2013; 2015). Of these, Islamophobia has become the most widely used term.

### **2.5.1 Islamophobia, anti-Islam and anti-Muslim**

The term Islamophobia was coined in 1918 by two French researchers, novelists and converts to Islam.<sup>20</sup> Highly critical of their compatriots work in North Africa and the Middle East, they devised the concept of Islamophobia as a way to classify what they saw as a political, colonial struggle to undermine Islam. The term resurfaced in Britain in the 1990s, when Muslim rights groups attempted to put the discrimination of Muslims on the political agenda. In 1997 a Commission of the left-wing think-tank the Runnymede Trust issued a report on British Muslims and Islamophobia (CBMI) (1997) entitled ‘Islamophobia: a challenge for us all’. It defined Islamophobia as “an unfounded hostility towards Islam, and therefore fear or dislike of all or most Muslims” (ibid., 4). It has subsequently seen widespread use, and entered into academic discourse – especially in the Anglo-Saxon sphere. The term came into use for two different reasons, one analytical and one normative/operational. It was meant to capture a “new reality” which needed naming, and be a tool to identify precisely what should be acted against (Vakil 2008, 40).

As with the term ‘extreme right’, it has been common to use Islamophobia without defining it explicitly (e.g. Bunzl 2007; Halliday 1999; Kaplan 2006; Poynting and Mason 2007; Betz and Meret 2009). Of the explicit conceptualizations, Erik Bleich’s (2011) definition of Islamophobia as “indiscriminate negative attitudes or emotions directed at Islam or Muslims” (2011, 1585) has won most ground. This and several other definitions have three elements in common. First,

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<sup>20</sup> Dinet and El Hadj, 1918.

Islamophobia is used as a container for prejudice and hostility towards both Islam and Muslims in general. The inclusion of both anti-Muslim prejudice and anti-Islamic sentiment recalls the Runnymede definition, and has subsequently been proposed by other researchers (Allen 2010) who have tended to opt for a scale-based approach, which is radial and ‘how much’ oriented. Radial categories are structured in a diametrically opposite fashion to taxonomic categories (Collier and Mahon 1993). In the taxonomical approach we leave out information, or adjectives, the higher we go up the ladder of abstraction, and conversely begin with a dense conceptualization at the high level (many adjectives) and drop them as we move down the ladder using a radial approach (ibid., 851). Second, they tend to understand Islamophobia in terms of emotional *reactions* (primarily fear), a sub-set of cognitive responses (e.g. Abbas 2004; Lee et al 2009). Third, the main focus is directed towards the individual, attitudinal level and not towards the meso-level of ideology or the collective action framing of social movement organizations.

Leaving aside its use as a polemical tool to castigate political opponents and stigmatizing any critique of Islam,<sup>21</sup> a strong case can be made against the uses of Islamophobia. I mention four key points. First, the term *phobia* means morbid fear, and is commonly used to classify mental illnesses where the fear of something is both irrational and impossible to control. The focus on irrational reactions mirrors the influential studies of fascism between the 1930s and 1970s. This approach has been rejected as analytically unfruitful in the broader field of social movement studies. Second, it has been used to conflate very different phenomena, such as French state secularism with hatred of Muslims, a fuzziness which is subject to ‘conceptual stretching’. This is because most previous studies have not used Islamophobia as an umbrella term containing two different phenomena, but actually *conflated* prejudice against Muslims and anti-Islamic positions.

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<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Bowen 2005, 524; Halliday 1999, 899; Zúquete 2008, 324. This is an issue common to all terminology used to describe the far right, however, and outside the control of academia.

Studies of far-right initiatives indicate that they primarily focus on Islam (e.g. Betz and Meret 2009), whereas hostility towards Muslims flows causally from this, and not all Muslims are portrayed in an unequivocally antagonistic manner (Berntzen and Sandberg 2014). This suggests that we should treat hostility towards Islam and hostility towards Muslims as two analytically distinct categories. Empirical studies at the individual level also show that an aversion to Islam does not necessarily translate into negativity towards Muslims (Kühnel and Leibold 2007; Leibold, Kühnel and Heitmeyer 2006). Finally, even though the conceptualizations refer to irrational or unbased fear of both Islam and Muslims, the term Islamophobia itself is misleading since it only suggests an irrational fear of Islam.

Bearing in mind that anti-Islam and anti-Muslim refer to two analytically distinct, but causally linked issues, the dominant antagonism should be reflected in the labeling. Anti-Islam is therefore the correct term to use if these initiatives primarily mobilize on messages against Islam. This is in line with the taxonomical logic and Rydgren's argument that the term 'populist' should not be included on equal footing to radical right. The term anti-Islam makes the implicit primacy of hostility towards Islam over Muslims explicit in the term Islamophobia, but not in its conceptualizations. It also lets us move away from the focus on irrationality and fear as constitutive elements.<sup>22</sup> Moving from the label to the conceptualization, these initiatives portray Islam as a totalitarian ideology akin to Nazism, and the *Quran* as equivalent to Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (Betz and Meret 2009, 320). In line with this logic, anti-Islam can be defined as:

*framing Islam as a homogenous, totalitarian ideology which threatens Western civilization.*

Conceptualizing anti-Islam in terms of framing also shifts the theoretical focus from reaction to action, in line with the agency-oriented perspective dominant in social movement

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<sup>22</sup> Instead of making theoretical assumptions about irrationality and fear as constitutive elements, concepts need to be built (and tested) from the ground up.

analysis today. Anti-Muslim prejudice at the individual, cognitive level can be conceptualized through a simple recalibration of Rydgren's definition of prejudiced stereotypes (2004b, 129)<sup>23</sup> into an attitude or set of attitudes held regarding Muslims, encompassing over-simplified beliefs and a set of negative feelings and evaluations. In terms of framing, Christopher Bail identified a commonly recurring "Muslim as Enemy" frame, which "depicts all Muslims as potentially violent radicals who have a religious obligation to overthrow Western governments" (2012, 863). When speaking of the relational, meso-level of parties/social movement organizations the so-called "groupuscular", the choice of anti-Muslim or anti-Islam as label should be driven by which "perspective" takes pre-eminence.

Naturally, the term 'anti-Islam' is open to some of the same critiques as 'Islamophobia'. It can for instance be claimed that anti-Islam blurs the lines between antagonistic views of Islam and Muslim culture on the one hand, and secular criticism of religion on the other. While anti-Islamic framing in the case cited has some family resemblances to the secular criticism of religion, the latter is neither singularly focused on Islam nor does it require an essentialised view of Islam as a homogenous entity or more dangerous than other religious manifestations in the public sphere.

### **2.5.2 Strategic abandonment and strategic inclusion**

A frequent argument, especially prominent in the Islamophobia literature building on the old perspectives of fascism, is that Muslims have taken the place of Jews; anti-Semitism has been replaced by Islamophobia (Williams 2010; Fekete 2012; Meleagrou-Hitchens and Brun 2013). Exemplifying this dominant position, Bunzl (2013) argues that it is because there is no debate on

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<sup>23</sup> Rydgren includes negative and positive feelings and evaluations in his definition. Positive evaluations and feelings are *a priori* excluded from anti-Muslim: "A prejudiced stereotype can be defined as an attitude or set of attitudes held toward a group or members of a group, encompassing over-simplified beliefs and a set of negative or positive feelings and evaluations." (2004b, 129).

the legitimacy of the Jewish presence in Europe. One approach is to understand Jews and Muslims as functional equivalents by their nature of being the targeted out-group. Another is that traditional anti-Semitism is simply dormant, or “off-stage” (see Jackson 2011, 9), shelved for strategic purposes (Betz 2013, 80). For instance, Fleischer argues that the radical right reject anti-Semitism and use support for Israel as a tactic to disassociate themselves from the stigma of neo-Nazism (2014, 54), and that there are no contradictions between anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic prejudice (ibid. 55).<sup>24</sup> This implies that anti-Islamic far right is compatible with other variations, such as neo-Nazism (see Kundnani 2014). This means that who they say the enemy is has little real significance when it comes to the rest of their ideology or the political alliances that far-right initiatives form.

From a historical perspective, the most striking development is the inclusion of liberal and progressive positions by the anti-Islamic far right. Betz and Meret (2009, 319) argue that it is precisely their antagonism towards Islam and Muslims which has allowed them to define themselves as defenders of liberal values of individualism, secularism and gender equality (2009, 319). This stands in stark relief compared to the older far-right versions and concurrent neo-Nazi and white power focus on gender, which emphasizes (white) male domination and women as subordinate non-political mothers and wives who nurture their family, race and nation (Bedi 2006; Lesselier 2002; Anahita 2006; Ferber 2000; Vertigans 2007).

The inclusion of liberal positions is understood as emanating from their hostility towards Islam (Zuquete 2008, 224). In other words, the far right has co-opted issues that mainstream politicians find it hard to disagree with, such as women in Muslim communities and the rights of women in general (Akkerman and Hagelund 2007; Betz 2013, 73), arguments that were formerly

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<sup>24</sup> Although Fleischer uses the word ‘prejudice’, which commonly refers to individual-level attitudes, his analysis and discussion actually revolves around ‘ideology’.

the exclusive domain of progressive and feminist groups (Zuquete 2008, 222). The notion that one ideological “exchange” – Jews for Muslims – is causally connected to the inclusion of new positions and stands in opposition to the forementioned perception of the enemy as interchangeable, and thereby to a certain extent inconsequential.

Betz and Meret identify the Danish Peoples Party (FP) as among the first to make the question of Islam’s incompatibility with liberal democracy and rights an issue (2009, 319), and other far right (nativist) parties adopted this position following Pim Fortuyn’s success in the Netherlands (ibid., 322). This has been conceptualized as a form of liberalism turned inwards and driven by fear (Akkerman 2005; Betz and Meret 2009, 423). It has also meant that these initiatives emphasize a supra-national, Western identity and belonging over the strictly national by stressing the common heritage of Judeo-Christian religion and culture. Mirroring these claims, Brubaker argues that the populist radical right has shifted from nationalism to “civilizationalism”, which builds on an identitarian Christianity (to wit not a belief in Christ, but adherence to Christian culture) and a liberal defence of gender equality, gay rights and freedom of speech (2017, 1191). Takis Pappas describes this as “liberalism for the natives” (2016, 27).

A majority position is that the championing of Western civilization and liberal and progressive values is a strategic attempt to shield themselves from accusations of racism while still pursuing their standard goal of ethnic homogeneity by excluding Muslims (e.g. Zuquete 2008; Scrinzi 2017; Lenting and Titley 2012). For instance, in their analysis of the Swedish far right website Flashback, Törnberg and Törnberg argue that “... gender equality seems to be used as a discursive strategy in order to criticize Islam” (2016, 2), whereas others define it as exploitation of feminism (e.g. Mayer, Ajanovic and Sauer 2014). In much the same way, Minkenberg, Deland and Mays define anti-Islamic activist claims of supporting LGBT as a “pinkwashing” strategy (2014,

12). The exception is Betz and Meret, who do not see it as a strategic consideration but as one which reflects their identity-oriented ideological core (2009, 334).

It is not uncommon to use the terms tactical or strategic in a wide array of social scientific fields that emphasize rational agency. When it pertains to the far right, however, the examples mentioned indicate that it is frequently used as a euphemism for disingenuous and manipulative.

To summarize, even though ideology is seen as the constitutive element which distinguishes the far right from other political initiatives, there is a common understanding that elements which distinguish “newer” varieties of the far right from the old extreme should not be taken at face value. Rejecting anti-Semitism is seen as strategic abandonment, whereas the inclusion of liberal and progressive positions is seen as a strategic inclusion. The inherent duality in emphasizing ideology but rejecting select elements as “strategic” has a long pedigree. For instance, Hainsworth states that “nominal commitment to democracy and constitutionalism should not simply be taken as evidence of its actual realization” (2000, 8). The following perspective on political parties such as the Front national and the Danish and Norwegian Progress parties by Griffin succinctly illustrates this widespread position:

[...] ... their axiomatic rejection of multi-culturalism, their longing for ‘purity’, their nostalgia for a mythical world of racial homogeneity and clearly demarcated boundaries of cultural differentiation, their celebration of the ties of blood and history over reason and a common humanity, their rejection of *ius soli* for *ius sanguinis*, their solvent-like abuse of history represent a reformist version of the same basic myth. It is one which poses a more serious threat to liberal democracy than fascism because it is able to disguise itself, rather like a stick insect posing as a twig to catch its prey. (Griffin 2000, 174).

## **2.6 Networks and mobilization**

The far right is defined by its ideology and not by its organizational form, but ideologies and collective action frames have their structural carriers (Klandermans and Mayer 2006, 11). Whereas



some of the literature on the mobilization of the far right against Islam and Muslims included the use of social movement perspectives, most focus almost exclusively on political parties. This has begun to change. In recent years the party-centric work has been joined by a growing body of studies which focus on the broad range of extra-parliamentary initiatives that create, carry and disseminate anti-Islamic frames. Prominent examples include websites such as the Gates of Vienna, Atlas Shrugs and Document.no, as well as activist groups such as Act! For America, the English Defence League, PEGIDA and others. Modern anti-Islamic initiatives have their roots in the “political soil” of post-9/11 North America and Western Europe (Ekman 2015; 1990). These initiatives have been described as forming a far-right movement (Meleagrou-Hitchens and Brun 2013, 1), “sharing an anti-Islamic identity and rhetoric, and have overlapping and close ties” (Berntzen and Sandberg 2014, 761).

The term ‘movement’ is often used uncritically, but among scholars of movements Mario Diani’s synthetic definition, which stresses the constitutive role of networks, is now widely accepted. Specifically, Diani defines a movement as “a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity” (1992, 165). In other words, a movement is not a single initiative such as an activist group, which often consists of a group of people without a clearly defined structure, or an organization with an internal structure and hierarchy. Instead, a movement consists of several initiatives which have ties to each other and which take part in a mutually recognized, common struggle.

Whereas a majority of studies of extra-parliamentary anti-Islamic initiatives examine individual activist groups such as the EDL (e.g. Allen 2011; Jackson and Feldman 2011; Kassimeris and Jackson 2015; Busher 2015; Pilkington 2016) and PEGIDA (Daphi et al. 2015;

Dostal 2015), some also look at the networks between anti-Islamic initiatives. In the United States, initiatives such as Act! For America and Stop Islamization together with prominent individuals, constitute a deeply intertwined core which "... manufacture and exaggerate threats of 'creeping Sharia'..." (Ali et al. 2011, 2). Anti-Islamic initiatives have grown in influence in the U.S. and become agenda-setters who have been able to dominate the news cycle using emotionally charged language (Bail 2012; 2014).

### **2.6.1 Ideological homophily**

Several websites, blogs and communities disseminate anti-Islamic frames and the idea that the West is being colonized (Ekman 2015, 1987). Many of these online initiatives refer to themselves 'counter-jihadists', and researchers use this term for the networks they form (e.g. Fekete 2012; Feldman 2012).

Ideology and framing are interconnected with networks, but the causal relationship is difficult to untangle. Research indicates that networks are structured by ideological affiliation among non-government organizations (Murdie 2014, 20), as well as online on Facebook (Wells and Thorson 2015) and Twitter (Yardi and Boyd 2010; Himelboim, McCreery and Smith 2013, 41; Conover et al. 2011). Some studies have found that the degree of ideological segregation online largely reflects the offline mobilization (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2011; Halberstam and Knight 2016). Online links are considered good indicators of ideological affinity, common objectives, or shared interests between the groups (Burris et al. 2000; Tateo 2005; Caiani et al. 2012).

Findings indicate that ideological homophily is also predominant within far-right initiatives. In a comparative study of hyperlinks between far-right initiatives in the United States, Italy and Germany, Caiani et al. (2012) found that that the Italian (ibid. 60) and American (ibid. 64) networks were strongly fragmented, mirroring the ideological divisions which were more

prominent than in Germany (ibid. 62). For instance, Christian identity groups were quite disconnected from neo-Nazi, white power and other extreme groups in the U.S. (ibid., 64). Furthermore, a study of transnational ties between far-right websites online found both ideological and strategic closeness by combining the tracing of hyperlinks with semantic content analysis (Wiederer 2014, 48). The websites identified exhibited a small-world structure, which the author argued meant that national boundaries have become less important for the far right (ibid., 49).

Turning to the anti-Islamic far right, Lee uncovered a network of forty-six anti-Islamic websites by tracing hyperlink connections starting from five anti-Islamic sites (2015, 256). A network analysis starting with the prominent blog Atlas Shrugs primarily found that it had connections to other far-right sites (Yang and Self 2015) – thereby exhibiting ideological homophily. Contrary to Wiederer’s findings however, this network was geographically contained within the U.S.

Whether or not the anti-Islamic far right has ties to initiatives that represent the progressive and liberal positions which the “new” far right claim to defend remains unexplored. This can partly be explained by the limited scope of the network analyses, but it may also reflect the common position that it is a strategic turn.

### **2.6.2 An amorphous nebula in decline**

Whether the anti-Islamic far right in Western Europe and North America is actually one or several movements at all, is directly and indirectly contested by some of these studies. The terminology often indicates that we cannot speak of a social movement *per se*. For instance, the extra-parliamentary anti-Islamic far right has been described as a “... an *amorphous* network of think-tanks, bloggers and activists” (Goodwin 2013, 1) and a “loose global fraternity (Denes 2012, 295), whereas Lee speaks of a nebula – meaning a cloud of gas in space – to “evoke the indistinct

character of the online wing of the counter jihad scene” (Lee 2015, 249). Both Goodwin (2013) and Busher (2015) call it an “embryonic” phenomenon, whose future direction and possible influence remains to be seen. Speaking to the future direction of the anti-Islamic far right, Fleischer argued that the “counter-jihad” network is fading because the far right began shifting their hostility towards the Roma minority and the European Union (Fleischer 2014, 69). Others go a step further. For instance, Önnarfors argues that the European Counter-Jihad movement is “without a consistent world view, dominant leaders and prolific ideologues (2017, 159).<sup>25</sup>

### **2.6.3 Activist mobilization**

Whether we can speak of a coherent movement and worldview matters a great deal for mobilizing potential of the anti-Islamic far right. Mobilization refers to the process which brings demand and supply together, and which transforms people into activists (Klandermans 2003). Both resource mobilization theory and political process theory emphasize social networks as mobilizing structures (Diani 1997; Diani and McAdam 2003; Kitts 2000; McCarthy and Wolfson 1996). Social movement research has stressed that online networks are important resources for the mobilization of transnational movements, as information can be disseminated almost instantaneously (Petit 2004), overcoming problems of leadership and decision-making (Castells 2000) and creating transnational solidarity (Chase-Dunn and Boswell 2002). Networks facilitate the joint construction of meaning, acting both as a resource and a constraint (Caiani and Wagemann 2009; Caiani, della Porta and Wagemann 2012, 30). In the study of online networks, web links between organizations are understood as ‘potential means of co-ordination’ (Burriss et al. 2000, 215).

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<sup>25</sup> Clearly, the conceptualization and delimitation of what a social movement is and what is not has a big impact for our understanding of the anti-Islamic far right. This is highlighted by the fact that several studies which look at initiatives, such as the EDL and PEGIDA, define them as movements unto themselves, and not social movement organizations which are part of a wider movement.

Having an online presence is obviously not a prerogative of the far right, but online platforms and communication is thought to be particularly important to these initiatives because they face repression and stigmatization in other arenas (Caiani et al. 2012, 57; Simi and Futrell 2009). For instance, Art (2011) showed that the actions of counter-protesters and social sanctions were a deterrent for regular activists. In some ways, however, online platforms can be more vital to the extreme right than the new anti-Islamic far right, as the former risk prosecution (Blee 2002, Futrell et al. 2006; Gerstenfeld et al. 2003).

The ability to mobilize also hinges on the frame alignment between (potential) activists and the initiative or movement (Snow et al. 2014), meaning that those who join already share some part of their ideology (Klandermans and Mayer 2006). Frame alignment is defined as “linkage of individual and SMO interpretive orientations, such that some set of individual interests, values and beliefs and SMO activities, goals, and ideology are congruent and complementary” (Benford and Snow 1986, 464).

Research indicates that people join white supremacist and other extreme right groups without having a solid grasp of their key ideological tenets, including anti-Semitism (Blee 2017). Instead they are primarily attracted to opportunities to engage in violence, access to drugs and alcohol, sexual relationships, profit and links to criminal networks (Billig 2001; Blee 2002; Gruenwald 2011; Simi and Futrell 2009; Simi, Sporer and Bubolz 2016; Fangen 1998). Turning to studies of anti-Islamic activist groups, Joel Busher identified personal networks and moral shocks as two of the main factors driving EDL recruitment (2015, 42-43), whereas only a minority was already well versed in their anti-Islamic views. Moral shocks have consistently been found to propel people into action (e.g. Jasper 1998).

This does not mean that ideology and collective action framing are without meaning. Both networks and shocks work as conduits for ideological compatibility and frame alignment. For instance, when a traumatic event occurs to a person and this fits into the narrative of a far-right initiative, that person becomes more susceptible to the rest of the ideological package.

Finally, emotions and “hot cognition” have played a vital mobilizing role. The previously dominant perspectives with the explicit or implicit assumption that emotions stood in contrast to rationality has been repudiated (Aminzade and McAdam 2002; Emirbayer and Goldberg 2005; Gould 2009). In particular, social movement literature points to negative emotions as powerful mobilizers (Jasper 1998, 414), with anger as the prototypical protest emotion (Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2017). It is an approach oriented emotion which boosts to protest participation (Van Zomeren et al. 2004; van Troost et al. 2013), promoting action against the responsible agent (diagnosis) - promoting a corrective response (prognosis). In other words, frames are tailored to illicit specific emotions. Whereas emotions have been under-analysed when it comes to far-right mobilization as a whole, research shows that the anti-Islamic far right in the United States managed to use emotionally charged frames to mobilize and to become dominant actors in the public debate in the years following 9/11 (Bail 2012; 2014).

## 2.7 Conclusion

This chapter gives an overview of the main concepts and positions of far-right ideology, the anti-Islamic turn and their extra-parliamentary activism. It argues that anti-Islam is a more suitable label than Islamophobia, offering a definition of anti-Islam as the framing of *Islam as a homogenous, totalitarian ideology which threatens Western civilization*. Whereas some describe the anti-Islamic worldview as a continuation of the ethno-pluralist master frame described by Rydgren, others point to the novelty of the inclusion of liberal and progressive positions – a sort of ‘civic nativism’. Some

describe it as liberalism turned inwards, driven by fear. Their inclusion of liberal and progressive positions is thought to flow causally from viewing Islam as an existential threat. However, this is commonly depicted as a strategic façade. Several studies describe an anti-Islamic far-right outside party politics which is transnational in scope and prominent online. Their online networks seem to be structured on an ideological basis. Yet, whether it is a coherent phenomenon in terms of ideology and relations between initiatives remain contested, with some arguing that it is actually in decline. Furthermore, none of the studies that examine anti-Islamic organizational networks online discuss ties to other initiatives on the basis of their civilizational perspective, which includes the defense of Christianity, Jews and progressive ideals with their associated minorities, such as the LGBT.

# 3. Mapping a Movement



## **Summary**

This chapter provides an overview of the various methodologies and sources of data which are used to explore the anti-Islamic far right and their entanglement with progressive and liberal values. Chapters 4 and 5 rely on a wide range of written sources to trace the evolution of the anti-Islamic far right, their background and their collective action framing, while chapters 6 and 7 draws on “big data” gathered from Facebook. Chapter 6 explores the anti-Islamic network between groups on Facebook, whereas chapter 7 relies on several tools to investigate the content of these groups. In combination, these approaches garner insight beyond the official positions pushed by the leaders, spokespersons and ideologues.

### 3.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is two-fold. The broadest aim is to expand our knowledge about the ongoing anti-Islamic turn of the far right by mapping and exploring the anti-Islamic movement and subculture. The narrower purpose is to investigate their entanglement with liberal and progressive ideals, and to what extent the anti-Islamic turn is a concomitant liberal turn of the far right. In this chapter, I outline the methodologies and data sources used to that end.

In the previous chapter, I discussed how ideology is seen as the defining characteristic which distinguishes the far right from other initiatives. Nonetheless, it is common to argue that ideological elements which break with the legacy of the extreme right should not be taken at face value. For instance, whereas rejecting anti-Semitism is seen as a strategic abandonment driven by historical necessity, the adoption of liberal and progressive positions is seen as a strategic inclusion, sometimes described as a frontstage façade. The notion of a front- and backstage is derived from the social interactionist and constructivist tradition of Erving Goffman (1959). Theoreticians in this vein talk of social interactions and the relational construction of reality in general. In contrast, when used to describe and understand the far right, the frontstage/backstage division is not conceived of as something which permeates all social life, but rather to indicate that the far right covers up their “true”, anti-democratic, anti-Semitic and homophobic beliefs. Substantially speaking, this assumed frontstage/backstage division stands in stark contrast to Goffman’s mundane example of the waiter who behaves differently with customers (frontstage) than with the other waiters and chefs in the kitchen (backstage).

In order to reconcile the focus on ideology with the predominant skepticism toward ideological content which breaks with the extreme right, we need to go beyond the frontstage of official statements made by figureheads, spokespersons and leaders. Before getting beyond the

frontstage, however, we have to come to grips with what their platform actually consists of, and whether it has the semblance of a coherent world view, or if their ideas are strongly fractured along organizational, regional and national lines.

This chapter provides an overview of the methodological choices and data sources that are employed to map the (extraparliamentary) anti-Islamic far right, both the frontstage worldview formulated and expressed by their leaders and spokespersons, and their possible entanglement with liberal and progressive positions beyond this. It begins with the qualitative analyses provided in chapters 4 and 5, which rely on a wide range of written sources to trace the evolution of the anti-Islamic far right, the background of their leaders and ideologues and finally their framing. It then moves on to discuss the gathering and analysis of “big data” used to explore their organizational networks (chapter 6), the contents of their online discussions as well as which messages drive their online mobilization (chapter 7). It finally concludes with a discussion of anonymity.

### **3.2 Laying the groundwork**

The anti-Islamic turn of the far right is clarified by distinguishing between two processes; the anti-Islamic reorientation of pre-existing far right initiatives and the anti-Islamic expansion of the far right with new initiatives. While the reorientation predominantly occurred among political parties (see e.g., Betz and Meret 2009), the expansion is largely an extra-parliamentary affair. Chapter 4 is dedicated to mapping the evolution of the anti-Islamic expansion and the political legacies of the initiators and key figures. This forms an important preamble to chapter 5, where I investigate their world views.

**Table 3.1. Overview of cases, focus, methods, data and timespan in chapter 4 and 5.**

Chapter	Cases	Focus	Methods and data	Timespan
4	Strongholds of anti-Islamic activism: Norway, Denmark, Britain, Germany, Netherlands and United States.	Historical evolution of anti-Islamic expansion and the biographies of leaders, representatives and ideologues	Qualitative tracing drawing on newspaper articles and online material from the initiatives themselves	2000 – 2017
5	11 anti-Islamic initiatives in Norway, Britain and Germany.	A comparison of their collective action framing; diagnosis, prognosis and motivational framing, in addition to women's rights.	Qualitative content analysis of framing, drawing on manifestos and official material in addition to public statements by initiative spokespersons and leaders	2010- 2017

### 3.2.1 Tracing the expansion

The evolution of the “new” anti-Islamic far right is traced through the use of publicly available material from a wide collection of sources; newspaper articles, “about us” statements and overviews available from the initiatives own websites in addition to secondary research material. It covers initiatives and key figures responsible for the anti-Islamic expansion of the far right from the United States, Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and Norway. These are all strongholds of anti-Islamic activism, countries where a wave of anti-Islamic activism began or the home of prominent and well-established initiatives which underpin these waves. Austria, Sweden, Belgium and France have also witnessed a large and durable mobilization against Islam and Muslims, but they are excluded as it has been channeled through pre-established radical right parties that underwent an ideological reorientation: the French FN, the Freedom Party of Austria (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*, FPÖ) and SD in Sweden. Of the countries included, Norway and Britain also have pre-existing parties which have undergone a reorientation and transformation

towards anti-Islam: the Norwegian FrP, British UKIP and the BNP. Again, these parties are not included in the analysis. The overview of the anti-Islamic expansion is followed by a structured comparison of their leaders, representatives and ideologues based on publicly available biographical data. The time period of anti-Islamic mobilization detailed in this chapter stretches from 9/11, which is widely seen as the critical event preceding both the anti-Islamic reorientation and expansion of the far right, up until the beginning of 2017.

### **3.2.1 Collective action framing - worldviews**

When looking at the worldviews promoted by the official platforms of anti-Islamic initiatives, I narrow them down to eleven cases in three countries between 2010 and 2017; Britain, Germany and Norway. Organizationally speaking, the eleven cases extend from small political parties and think-tanks to protest groups and websites dealing with alternative news. The list is not exhaustive of all the anti-Islamic initiatives which have been operational in the three countries, but they include the largest and perhaps most influential in the anti-Islamic expansion. Unlike the preceding chapter which traced the evolution of the anti-Islamic expansion and the most prominent figures background, notable individuals that are not leaders or representatives for a collective entity are excluded.

Data consists of a wide selection of manifestos, public statements printed in newspapers and on their websites. This is supplemented by interviews with the leader and representatives in Norway. Their positions were first coded and systematized for each initiative, and then compared. Both coding and analysis was theoretically guided and structured applying Snow and Benford's distinction between diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing on a sentence-based level. In addition, the cross-cutting issue of how they frame women's rights was coded on a similar basis. Women's rights was chosen as it is one of the most prominent and academically contentious issues

of the concomitant liberal and progressive turn which is thought to flow from their mobilization against Islam. Describing their shared collective action framing over a long period involves simplifying for analytical reasons, and rationalization of texts that are sometimes ambiguous.

### **3.3 Digital traces – networks and messages**

When combined with computational resources, the availability of massive amounts of social media data has given rise to a growing body of work using machine learning, natural language processing, network analysis and statistics for measuring human behavior and social structure on a previously unprecedented scale (Ruths and Pfeffer 2014, 1063). In this regard, the two last empirical chapters build on large amounts of online activity in order to grasp the substantial scope and structure of the anti-Islamic turn and overall entanglement with progressive and liberal positions. It is argued that the internet is particularly important for the far right (e.g. Castells 2012), but that we nonetheless know little about how they actually use the internet for political communication and mobilization (Caiani and Parenti 2013).

This thesis sheds light on their online political communication and mobilization, but investigating the online dimension is not a primary goal *per se*. It offers no empirical comparison between online and offline communication among anti-Islamic initiatives. Instead, their online presence and activity are a source for “naturally occurring” information (Shah, Cappella and Neumann 2015, 7) which would otherwise prove difficult to gather. Our digital lives leave traces that can be “... compiled into comprehensive pictures of both individual and group behavior, with the potential to transform our understanding of our lives, organizations, and societies” (Lazer et al., 2009, 721).

The online data stems exclusively from Facebook. Globally, Facebook is the most prominent online platform for activism and information dissemination with over 2 billion members

as of June 2016, exceeding the more studied Twitter by 1.7 billion. By 2015 six out of ten Americans aged 18–33 and five out of ten of those aged 34–49 got their political news on Facebook, and close to one in three were members of issue-based groups (PEW 2015, 8–12). The data were gathered using the web scraper Netvizz, which is accessible as an application on Facebook (Rieder 2013). Netvizz lets us gather content from specific Facebook groups and pages as well as connections between groups. In order to circumvent limits on data gathering set by Facebook, I operated with twelve different Facebook accounts connected to an equal number of unique email accounts.

**Table 3.2 Overview of the cases, focus, methods, data and timespan in Chapters 6 and 7**

Chapter	Case(s)	Focus	Methods and data	Timespan
6	Global anti-Islamic network at two points in time consisting of 3,654 and 4,594 groups, respectively	Composition and evolution of anti-Islamic network between initiatives	One-mode network analysis of “Like” links between initiatives on Facebook. Snowball-tracing from 27 anti-Islamic initiatives (2 step)	March 2015 vs March 2016
7	298 anti-Islamic initiatives	1) Comparing activist framing to official platform and 2) emotions and messages driving mobilization	Posts, comments, likes and reactions analyzed using automated sentiment analysis, key words in context, word networks around key words and multilevel regression analysis.	August 12–18, 2016

### 3.3.1 Networks

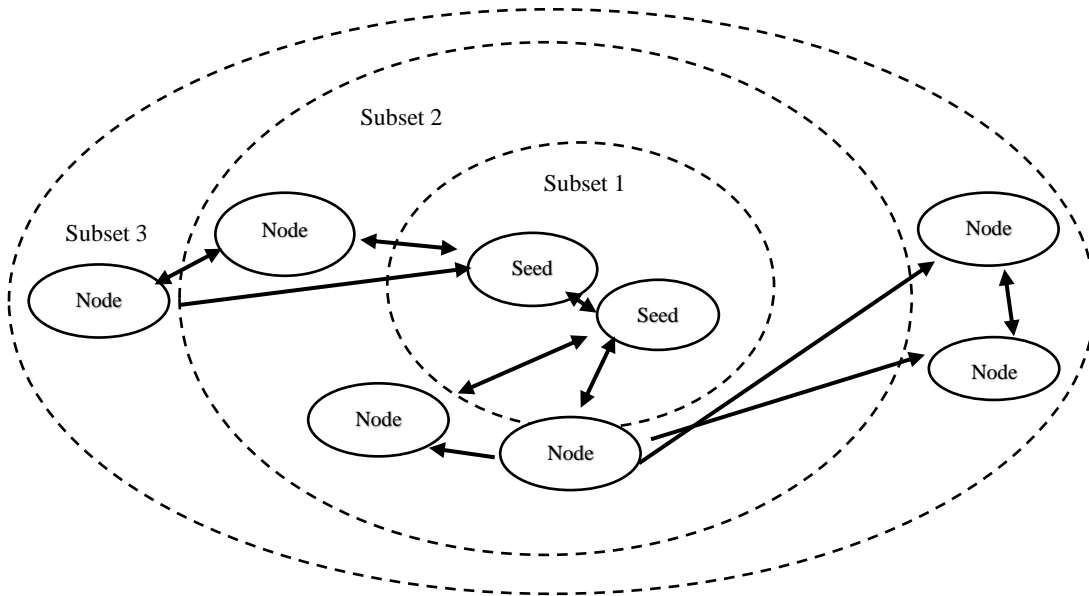
The network analysis started with the Facebook pages of eleven anti-Islamic initiatives in Norway, Britain and Germany and sixteen of their off-shoots, which in network terminology are described as seeds. The boundaries of the network were not defined *a priori*, but discovered through a snowball-saturation approach which extended two steps out from each individual Facebook page,

capturing three subsets. The first step traces the connection between the twenty-seven seeds in subset 1 and newly discovered nodes, which form subset 2. The second step identifies all ties between the nodes in subset 2, the ties they have back to the seeds in subset 1, as well as the other nodes they connect to in the third subset. In the final step, we see whether nodes in subset 3 have ties which connect them back to subsets 1 and 2. At no point are ties between initiatives assumed, they are only empirically found. In sum, all possible interrelations between the groups contained in the universe of cases are accounted for. The two-step snowball-approach provides data which can tell us the scope, geographical distribution and configuration of relations between anti-Islamic initiatives. Crucially, it also lets us empirically identify relations to groups that have a different ideological orientation. As Christopoulos and Aubke state, the merit of this approach is that it gives us a comprehensive overview of a network when the boundaries are difficult to predefine (2014, 17). Peripheral groups that tie in, but whose ties are not reciprocated, however, are not captured in the analysis. The network structure is also influenced by “where we start the ball rolling” (Hanneman and Riddle 2005) unless our analysis extends to all the potential subsets.

Ties between the initiatives are identified through “Likes”. Moderators can ‘like’ another page or group on Facebook on behalf of their own group or page, just as individual users can. See Chapter 6 for an elaboration on the functions and qualitative meaning of Facebook-Likes between pages and groups.



**Figure 3.1 Illustration of the three subsets within the network analyses**



Data was collected in March 2015 and 2016. While not truly longitudinal, it allows for a comparison between the network configuration at two points in time. The same twenty-seven initiative pages were used as starting points at both intervals, capturing a network of 3,654 and 4,594 groups and pages, respectively.

Different measures are used to describe and analyze networks. The analyses in this thesis includes measures of centrality and modularity as well as block models to describe the structure of the network.

Centrality measures characterize the position of a node in the network, with degree, centrality and closeness-centrality being the most common (see e.g. Freeman, Roeder and Mulholland 1979). Degree centrality gives us the normalized sum of row and column degrees, which means that an individual node with a high degree of centrality is connected with many others. This should give them an easier access to resources – ranging from financial to ideological (Walther and Christopoulos 2015). Betweenness centrality tells us a group's relative position as a broker or

gatekeeper between other nodes in the network, whereas closeness centrality measures the inverse of the average distance from one node to other nodes in the network. Nodes with a high score in closeness centrality are closer to others, and should therefore be able to spread information with relative ease. In addition to these measures, this thesis operates with ‘honest brokerage measures’ to pinpoint actors who provide unique connections or exclusive control of resources between other actors (Christopoulos and Quaglia 2009). These distinguishes between pure brokerage, weak brokerage and no brokerage. Pure brokerage means that there are no other ties between any pair of alters joined by a broker, whereas weak brokerage means that one directed tie is allowed between pairs of alters joined by a broker. Non-brokerage means that alters who have ties to a broker also have two-way ties with each other (Walther and Christopoulos 2012, 13).

Modularity reflects the concentration of edges (connections) within a given module, which is a subset of the entire network, compared with a random distribution of edges between all the given nodes irrespective of clustering. The ability to locate local sub-structures is one of the most interesting features of network analysis. Not only can we say something about the whole network and the individual groups, but we can also see the way a network divides into different cliques (Hanneman and Riddle 2005). Here, I use the modularity scores to create aggregates, where individual nodes in a graph represent entire communities of groups according to the modularity scores they have been awarded. This means that instead of showing Like-ties between specific initiatives on Facebook (where the maximum is 1-1), ties can vary in strength according to the number of aggregate likes that flow between the specific communities.

Supplementing this, block modeling is a key approach for uncovering tie strength both within and between network segments (Hanneman and Riddle 2005), allowing us to say something about the structural connectivity for the various segments. Block modeling is particularly useful

when it comes to identifying whether the network exhibits a strong core-periphery structure. I include density matrices which shows us the correlation between observed scores and scores which should be present if each node had ties to the other within a segment, and between segments (block).

### **3.3.2 Text as data**

Whereas textual information was primarily analyzed qualitatively, with quantitative social scientists focusing on numerical data, the massive amounts of textual data and advances in computational techniques allow us to treat and analyze *text as text* on a large scale. Today much of the data being compiled and analyzed in the social sciences is in textual form (Shah, Cappella and Neuman 2015, 12).

The concluding empirical section of the thesis consists of a multi-pronged analysis of the contents in 298 of the anti-Islamic initiatives which were identified in the network analysis from 2016. They form the subset of anti-Islamic initiatives where the members were active, posting and commenting, in August 2016. The data from these initiatives amounts to 1,799,970 observations consisting of posts, shares, likes and comments between the period of August 12 to August 18, 2016. The posts and comments are rich sources of textual data.

The analysis consists of two main sections. In the first section, I investigate how “regular” activists write about the issues which are included in the anti-Islamic initiatives collective action framing (Chapter 5) through triangulation. In the second section, I investigate which emotions and messages drive internal mobilization and the diffusion of messages. Computational analyses of big data provides new means of triangulation in multimethod confirmation (Shah, Cappella and Neuman 2015, 7). I use automated sentiment analysis and word-network analysis supplemented by qualitative analysis of associated text. As a counter-point to my approach, which employs “an interdisciplinary skill set that draws from traditional social sciences, statistics, and computer

science” (Miller 2011, 1815), some scholars have argued that qualitative analysis, and indeed hypothesis testing, is made obsolete by massive amounts of data and computational analyses (Anderson 2008, 108), such as natural language processing, sentiment and network analysis.

Keywords such as ‘Muslim’, ‘women’, ‘democracy’, ‘violence’ form the backbone and starting point for the tools used to investigate the corpus of text in the first section. The keywords form what I describe above as “seeds” for one-mode word-networks. These identify the co-occurrence of the selected keyword alongside others in a sentence after filtering out stop words (e.g. ‘so’, ‘that’, ‘to’, ‘go’). Third approach used to qualitatively investigate and validate the patterns which emerge from the sentiment analysis and word networks is keywords in context (KWIC). KWIC transcripts provide the entire sentences in which the key words are embedded.

Research shows that emotional states can be transferred to others via emotional contagion through personal networks (Fowler and Christakis 2008). An ethically controversial experimental study conducted on Facebook users indicates that this is also the case with online networks without in-person contact (Kramer, Guillory and Hancock 2014). The impact of emotions and sentiments can also be studied without experimental interference. Automated sentiment analysis is the most novel, and in some regards advanced, approach used. I use automated sentiment analysis as one of the tools to scrutinize the contents in the anti-Islamic activist groups, as well as identifying which emotions and associated messages drive mobilization and diffusion. I use the Canadian National Research Council’s (NRC) Word-Emotion Association Lexicon (Mohammad and Turney 2010; 2012), available as a package for the open software R. The NRC-Canada system ranked first in several competitions at the annual international Conference on Semantic Evaluation Exercises (Mohammad, Kiritchenko, and Zhu 2013; Zhu, Kiritchenko, and Mohammad 2014; Kiritchenko, Zhu, and Mohammad 2014). The lexicon contains association connections between words and

positive and negative sentiments, as well as eight emotions divided into four pairs: 1) joy – sadness, 2) trust – disgust, 3) fear – anger, 4) surprise – anticipation. The lexicon has valence and emotion associations for about 25,000 words, coded using paid respondents on Amazon Turk. The more words in a piece of text, the higher the validity.

To investigate which emotions and messages drive mobilization and diffusion, I use multilevel regression analysis. This is used because the data has an inherent multilevel structure, where comments, likes, shares and reactions are nested within – or more precisely attached to – posts. For an overview of multilevel regression analysis and modeling, see for instance Snijders (2011).

### **3.3.3 Data collection ethics**

As this overview has shown, I draw on a broad range of data and methodologies to map the anti-Islamic social movement and the expansion of the far right. The material for the Chapters 4 and 5 consists of publicly available and publicly *intended* statements, in addition to interview material from some of the leaders and representatives in Norway. Shortly after the interviews were conducted, the transcriptions were sent to those leaders with the offer of anonymity, redaction and retraction.

In the second part, the network analysis is at an organizational level and does not reveal information about individuals. In the subsequent analysis of the content, individual activists (users) are anonymized prior at the point of download using the Netvizz-application. That means that the names of those who post, comment, like, share and react have never been a part of any data examined by me. In addition, the data from these pages is treated as an aggregate corpus of text. In other words, the contents of a post or comment is not traced back to the specific pages where they are posted.

# 4. Expansion and Legacy

## **Summary**

This chapter details the anti-Islamic expansion of the far right between 2000 and 2017 and the backgrounds of its key figures in six countries. Beginning with the online formation of the Counter-Jihadi community and ending with PEGIDA, this chapter provides an overview of the four major waves of anti-Islamic expansion across Europe and the West. It argues that each wave was propelled by moral shocks in the form of Jihadist terror attacks and related events. The chapter goes on to compare the personal biographies of thirty leaders, spokespersons and ideologies from these countries. Among these figureheads, it is more common with a political left-wing background than a far or extreme right background. Women are in a clear minority, but still play an important role. Some are self-professed feminists and outspoken about their LGBT identity, and most have a middle-class background. The left-wing legacies of key personnel are a plausible channel for the adoption and dissemination of nominally left-wing, progressive and liberal ideas in the anti-Islamic movement.

## 4.1 Introduction

The overarching turn on the far right from focusing on ethnicity and nationality to focussing on Muslims and Islam is driven by two factors. First there is an anti-Islamic *reorientation* among pre-existing far right initiatives and an anti-Islamic *expansion* of the far right with the creation of new initiatives. As with the other empirical chapters, this chapter focuses on the anti-Islamic expansion. Although a variety of populist radical right parties such as Lega Nord (LN), Belgian Vlaams Belang (VB), French Front National (FN), and Norwegian Progress Party (FrP) and Sweden Democrats (SD) have undergone an ideological reorientation,<sup>26</sup> the expansion is predominantly a story of extra-parliamentary activism. Organizationally, anti-Islamic activism outside of party politics takes many forms, from think-tanks, blogs and alternative news sites to street-oriented protest groups. Several of the street-oriented protest groups such as Stop Islamization of Denmark (SIAD) and the English Defence League (EDL) have tried to enter party politics, but failed to get above electoral thresholds. The expansion also includes some successful political parties, however, such as the Dutch List Pim Fortuyn and Geert Wilders' Party for Freedom.

Older populist radical right parties have intermittently mobilized by explicitly targeting Islam and Muslims for several decades. The former leader of the Norwegian Progress Party, Carl I. Hagen, was probably one of the first politicians to push an anti-Islamic agenda when he toured the country in the run-up to the 1987 elections with a fictitious letter from "Muhammed" which stated that Muslims would take over Norway and replace the cross in the flag with the star and crescent moon (Bangstad 2013; Ivarsflaten and Berntzen, forthcoming). However, the anti-Islamic positions for which these far- right initiatives are the carriers did not really coalesce into a salient

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<sup>26</sup> See Zuquete (2008) and Betz and Meret (2009) for an analysis of the anti-Islamic reorientation of several populist radical right parties.



and relatively coherent worldview before the turn of the century, informed by the works of the late historian Bernard Lewis and political scientist Samuel Huntington. Both scholars came to see Islam as the main challenge to the West, articulated in Bernard's article "The Roots of Muslim Rage" (1990) and Samuel Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations?" (1993). In his oft-quoted article, Huntington argues that civilizations are fundamentally different and durable products of centuries, and that Islamic civilization is a particular challenge to the West because of its insurgence and demographic growth; something which would inevitably lead to a bloody clash.

While the importance of these intellectual treatises should not be overstated, some regarded them as prophetic after Al-Qaeda's attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001 (9/11). In contrast, it is no overstatement to say that increased politicization of hostility towards Muslims and the anti-Islamic expansion of the far right has been profoundly impacted by events such as 9/11 (Bail 2012), other jihadist terror attacks, and political assassinations in the name of Islam as well as public controversies such as the Muhammed cartoon crisis. These have contributed to creating what Swidler (1986, 282) calls "unsettled times". These are rare historical periods when large scale-crises or unprecedented events generate cultural change (McAdam 1982; Sewell 1996; Wagner-Pacifci 2010). Historical turning points of this kind have three features in common (Abbott 1997). First, they create widespread public uncertainty because very few people anticipated these events (Kurzman 2004), undermining the legitimacy of the political establishment. This helps explain precisely why the clash of civilizations narrative became so potent. Furthermore, this creates political and discursive opportunities for challengers to alter the cultural trajectory of a society (e.g. Amenta et al. 2010; Meyer and Minkoff 2004; Soule and Olzak 2004). Finally, these dramatic events have triggered strong emotional reactions – moral shocks – which propel people into action (Jasper 1998). Almost all the instances of anti-Islamic mobilization and the establishment of

activist initiatives cited in this chapter can be traced to one such event or another. Not all moral shocks stem from dramatic events that affect all of society or dominate the public debate. Some of the people who went on to establish an anti-Islamic initiative were shocked into action by local demonstrations of Islamists and others *they* associated with Islam and political violence. This was the case with the EDL in Luton, Britain and PEGIDA in Dresden, Germany.

This chapter begins with an analysis of the expansion of anti-Islamic activism between 2001 and 2017, before moving on to a comparative analysis of the biographical backgrounds of the leaders and representatives behind the groups, think-tanks and parties.

## **4.2 The four waves of expansion**

Starting with the creation of the online Counter-Jihadi community, the anti-Islamic expansion of the far right has undergone four waves between 2001 and 2017. Each wave is defined by the creation of a new activist group which managed to establish offshoots in several countries. This first Counter-Jihadi wave was followed by the spread of Stop Islamization groups, offshoots and affiliates of the EDL and finally PEGIDA. Online activism has been a crucial factor in all four waves. The first wave stands out for its two parallel genesis points – both online and within party politics. The three latter waves have also been visible on the streets. Each subsequent wave of activism has led to the solidification of transnational, organizational networks between the myriad of anti-Islamic initiatives. Major initiatives such as the EDL and PEGIDA have continued to add to the online fauna after dwindling away from the streets. They are notable in their own right, but also because they have reinvigorated think-tanks, blogs and alternative news site established in previous waves. More than specific forms activism, these waves of expansions are processes of ideological diffusion.

**Table 4.1. The four waves of transnational anti-Islamic expansion from 2001 until 2017**

<b>Time period</b>	<i>First wave (2001-2005)</i>	<i>Second wave (2005-2009)</i>	<i>Third wave (2009-2014)</i>	<i>Fourth wave (2014-)</i>
<b>Starting point</b>	United States, the Netherlands	Denmark, Britain	Britain	Germany
<b>Main initiative</b>	Little Green Footballs / List Pim Fortuyn	Stop Islamization, Act!	Defence Leagues	PEGIDA
<b>Primary arenas</b>	Traditional websites / Party politics	Traditional websites and streets	Facebook and streets	Facebook and streets
<b>Moral shock</b>	September 11. 2001, terror attacks	Muhammed cartoon crisis	Islamist picketing of soldier funerals	German Salafists clash with protesting Kurds and Charlie Hebdo terror attack

These four waves of anti-Islamic expansion and ideological diffusion are proof that organized opposition to Islam, Muslim culture and immigration exists across Europe and the West. Since the outset, it has been a transatlantic affair with cooperation between American and European initiatives. Nonetheless, some countries stand out as strongholds of anti-Islamic activism - countries where a wave of anti-Islamic activism began or are home to prominent and long-lasting initiatives, which undergird these waves. These stronghold countries are the United States, the Netherlands, Britain, Norway, Denmark and Germany.

#### **4.2.1 First wave - online and party politics**

The organized, explicitly anti-Islamic far right outside of mainstream party politics started in 2000 with Arne Tumyr's Norwegian Forum against Islamization (*Forum mot islamisering*).<sup>27</sup> At that time it stood out as an isolated anomaly with its singular focus on Islam and Muslims, but

<sup>27</sup> Briefly called *Aksjonskomiteen mot bøønnerop*.

not for long. On September 11, 2001, Al-Qaeda struck the United States with four coordinated attacks in New York and Washington D.C., killing 2,996. It was the largest attack on American soil since Pearl Harbor.<sup>28</sup> These attacks triggered the transformation of the website Little Green Footballs (LGF) from a predominantly non-political forum led by a self-proclaimed liberal into a hotbed of agitation against “Islamic fascism” and the creation of the self-defined Counter-Jihadist<sup>29</sup> scene (Munksgaard 2010, 48). This marked the first wave of anti-Islamic activism and at its peak in 2004 the blog was listed as the sixth most popular worldwide (Ronen 2004). The success of LGF inspired the growth of several other, now more prominent Counter-Jihadist blogs such as Jihad Watch by Robert Spencer and Gates of Vienna (GoV) in 2003, and Atlas Shrugs by Pamela Geller in 2004.<sup>30</sup> GoV eventually took over the mantle as the dominant Counter-Jihadi web community, placing their struggle against Islam in a historical context:

The roots of the movement [Islam, sic.] can be traced back to antiquity, since the first violent *razzia* against Christian civilization in the seventh century, under Mohammed and the early Caliph. (Gates of Vienna November 24, 2011)

They took their name from the Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683, an event which the Counter-Jihadists portray as a turning point for Western civilization. On their website they present a list of points they claim to be fighting for: civil liberties, the rights of women, homosexuals, religious freedom and opposition to religiously-sanctioned violence. They frame their struggle in stark terms, stating “To oppose the Counterjihad is, in a sense, to support jihad.” Their most

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<sup>28</sup> In the wake of these attacks, President George W. Bush launched what he called a Global War on Terror, drawing in allies from across the globe. After having approached the Afghani Taliban and then the Pakistani military ruler, Pervez Musharraf he went on the world stage saying, “You are either with us or against us in the fight against terror” on November 6, 2001; CNN (2006, November 6). ‘You are either with us or against us’, *Cable News Network*. Retrieved from <http://edition.cnn.com/2001/US/11/06/gen.attack.on.terror/> (accessed 16.08.2014).

<sup>29</sup> Or anti-Jihadist, the terms are used interchangeably.

<sup>30</sup> Geller was a frequent poster on LGF. The LGF-forum and its host later became one of the most ardent critics of Counter-Jihadi scene.

prominent contributor has perhaps been the Norwegian blogger known by the alias Fjordman, otherwise known as Peder Nøstvold Jensen. GoV has since become notorious due to the use of texts from many of their key contributors, not least from Fjordman (Gardell 2014), by the terrorist Anders Behring Breivik.

The newly formed Counter-Jihadi community found a unifying narrative in Bat Ye'or's (Gisele Littman) Eurabia thesis, first publicized in 2002.<sup>31</sup> Ye'or claimed that the European Union had entered into a conspiratorial alliance with Muslim states to create a single unified region – Eurabia. This collaboration has supposedly been ongoing since the petroleum crisis of 1973, marking the European Union as “spiritual heirs of the 1930s Nazism and anti-Semitism”.<sup>32</sup>

In parallel with the establishment of the online Counter-Jihad emanating from the website LGF, the Lebanese-born activist Brigitte Gabriel set up the organization American Congress for Truth, to inform the American public about “Islamofascism” in the wake of the 9/11 attacks.<sup>33</sup> Gabriel describes herself as a Christian “survivor of Islamic terror”, claiming that she does not want the United States to share the fate of Lebanon.

In the wake of the 9/11 terror attacks another, and partially interwoven with them, the Netherlands witnessed a development in anti-Islamic activity when it burst onto the stage of party politics in earnest. It began with the openly homosexual and public intellectual Pim Fortuyn, who published a pamphlet entitled “The Islamization of our Culture: Dutch identity as foundational” in 1997, inspired by the likes of Huntington and Lewis. Dutch media picked up Fortuyn's message had after the terror attacks against the United States (Eyerman 2008). Shortly after this surge in

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<sup>31</sup> Available online in French at: <http://obs.monde.juif.free.fr/pdf/omj04-05.pdf> (accessed 26.06.2015). The outspoken Italian journalist and feminist Oriana Fallaci later popularized the Eurabia theory in her book *The Force of Reason* (La Forza della Ragione), published in 2004 (Bangstad 2013, 145).

<sup>32</sup> <http://archive.frontpagemag.com/Printable.aspx?ArtId=12077fa>

<sup>33</sup> Later named Act! for America Education

media attention, Fortuyn founded his own party, LPF. The main issues were stricter immigration- and asylum policy, a complete halt to immigration from Muslim countries and assimilation rather than integration.<sup>34</sup> Fortuyn's arguments cemented the idea of Islam as a civilizational threat to Dutch culture, represented as a unified entity with four core elements: the separation of church and state, respect between the genders and between adults and children, and individual rather than collective responsibility (Eyerman 2008, 104).

On May 6, 2002 Pim Fortuyn was assassinated. The murderer claimed he had committed the act on behalf of the country's Muslim population. A week after Fortuyn's death his party won 24% of the vote and twenty-six seats in the Dutch Parliament (ibid., 45). The party fell victim to bickering and infighting not long after, but had by then contributed to a fundamental shift in the political debate on Islam, immigration and multiculturalism.

Two years later the Netherlands was rocked by the murder of Theo van Gogh, a high-profile film director who had just released a film entitled *Submission* about women and Islam together with the Somali-born politician, author and activist Ayan Hirsi Ali. After killing van Gogh, the murderer left a note pinned to his body with a knife. It contained a diatribe against the West, addressed to Hirsi Ali. The fact that the killer, Mohammed Bouyeri, was a twenty-six year old Dutch-Moroccan further polarized the debate about Islam and the position of Muslims in Dutch society. At around the same time, the politician Geert Wilders took up Fortuyn's anti-Islamic mantle, and set up the his own party, PVV. Ever since Wilders has waged a continuous political

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<sup>34</sup> In an interview with the Dutch newspaper *Volkscrant* Fortuyn was asked «why he hated Islam», to which he replied «I don't hate Islam. I consider it a backward culture. I have travelled a lot and wherever Islam rules, it's just terrible. All the hypocrisy. It's a bit like those old reformed Protestants. The Reformed lie all the time. And why is that? Because they have standards and values that are so high that you can't humanly maintain them. You also see that in that Muslim culture. Then look at the Netherlands. In what country could an electoral leader of such a large movement as mine be openly homosexual? How wonderful that that's possible. That's something that one can be proud of. And I'd like to keep it that way, thank you very much". (*Volkscrant*, 09.02.02).

campaign against Islam and what he perceives as the Islamization of the Netherlands. He has compared the *Quran* with Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, drawing clear parallels between Islam and Nazism. The party's outspoken goal has been to stop all Muslim immigration, to halt the building of mosques, to ban the *Quran* and to outlaw hijabs. Wilders is portrayed as a hero by anti-Islamic activists across Europe and in the U.S. for his stand against Islam and Muslims in spite of an unknown number of death threats and having to live with police protection.<sup>35</sup>

Outside the Netherlands, Al-Qaeda sympathizers bombed commuter trains in Madrid on March 11, 2004 killing 191 and wounding 1,800. A little over a year later Muslim extremists set off three bombs on separate underground trains in London, during the morning rushhour July 7, 2005 (7/7). An hour later, a fourth bomb went off on a bus. The attacks in London cost the lives of fifty-two travelers and four suicide bombers, with 7,001 injured. Together with the Dutch developments, these attacks formed the backdrop for what turned out to be a long-lasting, international crisis.

#### **4.2.2. Second wave - streets and alliances**

On September 30, 2005 Denmark's biggest newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten*, printed twelve cartoons of the prophet Mohammed. These ranged from relatively benign to provocative, the most famous being one of Mohammed with a bomb in his turban.<sup>36</sup> In November 2005, the cartoons received a lot of negative attention in several Muslim majority countries, among them Egypt where the government played a leading role as agitator (Hjärpe 2006, 165). On January 9, 2006 the Norwegian Christian conservative newspaper *Magazinet* printed a replica of the cartoons. Shortly thereafter the conflict escalated. A long list of organizations and prominent figures, mostly in the

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<sup>35</sup> In an interview by *The Guardian* in 2008 Wilders was asked if his «provocative rhetoric fermented hatred», to which he replied “I don't create hate. I want to be honest. I don't hate people. I don't hate Muslims. I hate their book and their ideology”.

<sup>36</sup> The raison d'être given for publishing them was that the Danish author Kåre Bluitgen had trouble finding an illustrator willing to draw Mohammed in his childrens book (Kapelrud 2008).

Middle East, condemned the publications as blasphemous. By February 4, the Danish and Norwegian embassies in Damascus had been set on fire. In the days that followed large demonstrations took place in a long list of countries with a Muslim majority and in front of Danish embassies in major European cities. The protesters chanted slogans against Norway, Denmark and the United States. For the first time Danish and Norwegian flags were burned in demonstrations in other countries – scenes closely associated with anti-war and anti-colonial activism towards the United States and major European powers with a recent colonial past.

In turn, these reactions by Muslim citizens and states spurred a great expansion of organized, anti-Islamic mobilization in Western Europe and North America. The clarion call was free speech. It propelled the Counter-Jihadist community to mobilize in the streets for the first time with rallies for free speech held in London and Copenhagen.<sup>37</sup> After these demonstrations participants from GoV got together and formed the 910 Group. Their goal was “... organizing a movement that could actually initiate action against the encroachment of sharia in Western Society.”<sup>38</sup> In Denmark, Anders Gravers Pedersen set up the organization Stop Islamization of Denmark (*Stop Islamiseringen af Danmark*, SIAD) inspired by the Danish resistance to Nazi occupation during World War II. Shortly thereafter Gravers Pedersen established the pan-European umbrella organization Stop Islamization of Europe (SIOE) together with Stephen Gash, who ran a small initiative called No Sharia Here (later Stop Islamization in Britain). With this, the anti-Islamic protest scene started to gain traction. Stop Islamization offshoots were subsequently set up in

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<sup>37</sup> The free speech rally in London was attended by around 300 protesters, who stated they were not against Muslims and that they feared infiltration from the fascist British National Party. Source: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/england/london/4844634.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/london/4844634.stm) (accessed 02.09.2014).

<sup>38</sup>The group formalized in 2007, calling itself the Center for Vigilant Freedom (CVF). They later merged with other activists, rebranded as the International Civil Liberties Alliance, taking their name from a quote by Thomas Jefferson saying that “the price of liberty is eternal vigilance.” <http://www.libertiesalliance.org/about-2/> Today they continue as a Swiss based NGO called the Center for Vigilant Freedom.



several Western European countries and have remained a fixture among the anti-Islamic and Counter-Jihadi community since.<sup>39</sup>

In the United States, anti-Islamic activism also solidified with the establishment of the organization Act! For America in 2007 by Brigitte Gabriel. Act! is dedicated to combatting “islamofascism” for the “survival of our nation, the protection of the United States of America and the Western values upon which our nation was built, and the preservation of the freedom of religion and speech”<sup>40</sup> Act! members have been described as predominantly “evangelical Christian conservatives, hard-line defenders of Israel (both Jews and Christians) and Tea Party Republicans.”<sup>41</sup> As of 2017, they claim to have 750,000 members in the United States. They focus on lobbying state and federal officials, and have initiated a drive for so-called anti-sharia bills in state legislatures. Besides Gabriel, the leadership includes Guy Rodgers, a former consultant for John McCain’s 2008 presidential campaign and director for Ralph Reed’s Christian Coalition. Several prominent conservatives have served on Act! For America’s board, including Michael T. Flynn, who worked as United States National Security Advisor in the first months of Donald Trump’s presidential administration.

Besides triggering the formation of new initiatives, the crisis increased the traffic on Counter-Jihadi websites such as Atlas Shrugs and GoV. In addition, it caused a number of pre-existing initiatives and alternative news outlets to adopt the anti-Islamic cause, much in the same way that Little Green Footballs did after 9/11. This was the case for the German website Politically Incorrect News (PI), the Norwegian Document.no, Human Rights Service (HRS), the Danish

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<sup>39</sup> Gravers Pedersen first tried to enter politics with Stop Islamization of Denmark, which received a total of 11,172 votes in the municipal elections in Aalborg, 2005.

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.actforamerica.org/policy>

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/08/us/08gabriel.html?pagewanted=all>

Snaphanen.dk, Uriasposten and Trykkefrihedsselskabet (TFS). These initiatives' websites have a large readership in their respective countries, and have intermittently collaborated with each other over the years.<sup>42</sup> With the exception of PI, however, they do not define themselves as Counter-Jihadists. This is in contrast to the protest groups and the blog community spawned from LGF after the first "moral shock" of 9/11.

In 2001 Rita Karlsen established HRS as a politically independent think-tank, and have since been granted government funding. The journalist Hege Storhaug joined HRS a year later. With Storhaug on board, HRS initially worked with the plight of Muslim girls and female genital mutilation as their primary issues, but became outspokenly anti-Islamic over the years, with the cartoon crisis marking the tipping point. In 2015 Storhaug's book *Islam. The 11<sup>th</sup> Plague (Islam. Den 11. Landeplage)* became a bestseller. In it she argues that mosques should be banned and that anti-Semitism in the *Quran* is worse than what is expressed in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. As of 2017, HRS articles are among most widely shared on Norway's social media.<sup>43</sup>

Journalist Hans Rustad set up Document.no in 2003 as a conservative counterweight in the Norwegian public debate. Initially much of the coverage was about the American war on terror, the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq with a more favorable perspective on President Bush and the Republicans. As the cartoon crisis escalated, it retained the international outlook, but almost exclusively focused on (un)covering issues related to Islam and Muslims. By 2017, it had become one of the most read online news outlets in Norway.

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<sup>42</sup> These initiatives share each others' stories, participate in joint celebrations and have established formal collaboration. For instance, HRS and Hege Storhaug participated in the ten-year anniversary celebration of Trykkefrihedsselskabet in Denmark alongside Hans Rustad from Document.no and Raaschou from Snaphanen.dk. TFS and Document.no have also provided funding to Snaphanen. For a short time in 2016, Uriasposten was shut down and Kim Møller headed up Document.dk in collaboration with Hans Rustad and Document.no.

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.klassekampen.no/article/20170609/ARTICLE/170609967> (accessed 13.06.2017).

Meanwhile in Denmark, the blog Uriasposten (2003) was established by the historian Kim Møller. This was followed by the prominent blog Snaphanen.dk by Steen Raaschou and TFS, co-founded by the journalist Lars Hedegaard, historian David Gress, philosopher Kai Sørlander, priest and politician Søren Krarup, priest, journalist and politician Jesper Langballe and Max Stugbgaard in 2004. Both Snaphanen and Uriasposten have consistently been among the top-ranked blogs in Denmark, whereas TFS has had significant influence in the public debate in general.

Like the Norwegian Document.no, the German teacher Stefan Herre founded PI in 2004 after the re-election of George Bush. When the cartoon crisis unfolded, PI went from being a conservative and pro-American blog to a fully-fledged anti-Islamic initiative. In 2006, and concomitant with its adoption of anti-Islamic agitation, it became one of the most popular blogs in Germany and has retained a large readership since.<sup>44</sup> Beyond the online sphere, the crisis also marked the start of anti-Islamic protests in Germany. The activist group and self-proclaimed human rights organization Federal Association of Citizens' Movements (*Bundesverband der Bürgerbewegungen*)<sup>45</sup> was established in 2003 to combat Turkish accession to the EU, and became explicitly anti-Islamic during the onset of the cartoon crisis. In 2006, another German anti-Islamic activist group calling itself Pax Europa was also established. Together with the Danish SIAD and the British No Sharia Here, Pax Europa planned a demonstration against the alleged Islamization of Europe in Brussels on 11 September 2007, but was barred by government officials. In 2008 Pax Europa and the Federal Association of Citizens' Movements merged, changing their name to Citizens' Movement Pax Europa (*Bürgerbewegung Pax Europa*, BPE).

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<sup>44</sup> By 2017 PI was ranked as the 389<sup>th</sup> most visited website in Germany <http://www.alex.com/siteinfo/pi-news.net> (accessed 13.06.2017).

<sup>45</sup> Headed by Willi Schwend.

BPE's attempts to mobilize were partly inspired by the successful "UK and Scandinavia Counterjihad Summit" in Copenhagen on April 14, 2007, which came about through the collaboration of the Stop Islamization community and 910 Group from GoV. The main organizer, SIAD, stated that they chose the location as a direct consequence of the cartoon crisis. This was followed up with a second gathering in Brussels in October the same year. The conference was hosted by the Flemish populist radical right Vlaams Belang, with prominent speakers such as Lars Hedegaard (TFI), and the originator of the Eurabia thesis, Bat Ye'Or.<sup>46</sup> The close co-operation with Vlaams Belang and the presence of Kent Ekeroth from the Swedish radical right Sweden Democrats (SD) caused a rupture among the originators of the online Counter-Jihadist community. For instance, the founder of the, until then, most prominent Counter-Jihadi site LGF attempted to distance himself and his blog from the scene, which he saw as increasingly influenced by right-wing "kooks", extremists and racists (Munksgaard 2010, 50).

In the following years, the Stop Islamization and GoV community dominated the anti-Islamic activist scene, convening Counter-Jihadi conferences in Vienna (2008), Copenhagen (2009) and Zurich (2010). The conferences were an important platform for building ties between established populist radical right parties and the broader fauna of anti-Islamic activist initiatives. In Zurich, the Swiss People's Party (*Schweizerische Volkspartei*, SVP) showcased their successful campaign to ban the building of minarets in Switzerland. One of the key events was a workshop by a French organization called Alliance to Stop Sharia, on how to stop any alleged Islamization and the introduction of sharia by fighting for the rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and several Western constitutions. Alongside these gatherings, the Stop Islamization community continued to grow. The Norwegian activists joined the umbrella organization SIOE in

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<sup>46</sup> Lars Hedegaard has become a well-known figure internationally after a failed attempt on his life by a jihadist in 2013 (the perpetrator later joined ISIS).

2008, taking the name Stop Islamization of Norway (SIAN). Their stated goal was to “counteract, stop and reverse the Islamization of Europe”.<sup>47</sup> In this period Stop Islamization initiatives never managed to mobilize a large number of activists for street demonstrations, however, and remained mostly active in other forms. For instance, the Norwegian group SIAN also arranged reading groups, where they discussed the *Quran* and other books on Islam. It was not before the advent of the EDL in 2009 that we saw large-scale anti-Islamic street activism.

#### **4.2.3 Third wave – British reinvigoration and transnational solidification**

The EDL began as a local initiative calling themselves the United People of Luton, protesting against a gathering of extreme Islamists from the (banned) group Al-Mahajiroun. The Islamists were themselves staging a demonstration against the British military, with slogans such as “Anglian Soldiers: cowards, killers, extremists” (Gable et al., 2009).

Like the other Counter-Jihadi and anti-Islamic initiatives that came before them, they claimed to be fighting for democracy and freedom of speech. Like the Norwegian HRS, the Stop Islamization groups and BPE, they also explicitly labeled themselves as a human rights organization protecting against the infringement of human rights, including the right to ‘to protest against radical Islam’s encroachment into the lives of non-Muslims’.<sup>48</sup> In a short time EDL became one of the most active protest groups in Europe, staging over fifty demonstrations between 2009 and 2011, regularly gathering between 1,000 and 3,000 activists.<sup>49</sup> In doing so, they rapidly managed to establish a national media profile and more than eighty local divisions, amassing over 80,000 Facebook supporters by 2010.<sup>50</sup> In an ongoing attempt to counter the stigma of racism, they

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<sup>47</sup> The Norwegian group later split when a moderate faction split off following a heated general assembly meeting early 2014, forming a group called Core Values (*Verdier i Sentrum*, ViS).

<sup>48</sup> ‘The English Defence League: About us’, available online: <http://englishdefenceleague.org/about-us> (accessed 20 June 2012).

<sup>49</sup> ‘Policing EDL demo in Bristol cost force £495,000’, *BBC News*, 10 August 2012.

also established a Jewish Division and a Sikh division. In their marches, they carried both the rainbow flag used by the LGBT community and the Israeli flag. An issue on which they campaigned heavily was the alleged abuse and grooming of non-Muslim women.

Their “success” and media attention drew admiration from the older Counter-Jihadi and anti-Islamic community. For instance, GoV called them ‘the most significant anti-sharia movement in Europe’<sup>51</sup>. In 2011, GoV arranged a London summit together with Stop Islamization<sup>52</sup> and other well-known public figures to build ties with the EDL. The main goal was to form a political party based on opposition to Islam. This led to the creation of the short-lived British Freedom Party (BFP) headed by Paul Weston, and supported by the EDL. In 2012, Tommy Robinson was named deputy leader of the BFP,<sup>53</sup> whereas Weston remained the chair until January 2013 when he was replaced by Kevin Carroll from the EDL. By then the British Electoral Commission had already decommissioned the BFP two months earlier for failure to return the annual registration form.<sup>54</sup> The decommissioning of the BFP was shortly followed by the establishment of Liberty Great Britain (LGB), also headed by Weston.

These attempts to establish a party and run for elections were preceded by the Danish Anders Gravers Pedersen’s SIAD in 2005, and subsequently the Freedom Party (*Die Freiheit – Bürgerrechtspartei für mehr Freiheit und Demokratie*, DF) in 2010. The German DF was headed by René Stadtkewitz, a local Christian Democratic Union (CDU) politician and leader of the activist group BPE. Stadtkewitz set up DF after he was expelled from the conservative CDU because he invited Geert Wilders to speak in Berlin. Wilders later gave his support to the German

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<sup>51</sup> ‘A Brief History of the Transatlantic Counterjihad’, available online: <http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.co.uk> (accessed February 2013).

<sup>52</sup> <http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.no/2011/10/slouching-towards-london.html> (accessed 02.05.2016).

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2012/apr/28/britain-far-right-anti-islamic> (accessed 04.02.2015).

<sup>54</sup> Carroll went on to found Liberty GB, which fielded three candidates for the 2014 European elections: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-hampshire-27186573> (accessed 04.02.2015).

counterpart, and intended to include them in his own transnational anti-Islamic organization (International Freedom Alliance).<sup>55</sup>

The EDL made vigorous attempts to build offshoots and mobilize street activism in other countries, coordinating eighteen Defence Leagues across Europe and North America.<sup>56</sup> They staged the first rally outside the UK on October 30, 2010 traveling to Amsterdam to show their support for Geert Wilders during his trial.<sup>57</sup> They held a second rally outside the UK in Denmark together with SIAD, SIAN, the Danish Defence League (DDL) and Norwegian Defence League (NDL) in Aarhus, March 31, 2012.<sup>58</sup> Despite these efforts and the willingness to travel abroad, Defence League groups outside the United Kingdom never managed to mobilize large numbers of on-the-street activists on their own. For instance, the NDLs first attempts to mobilize were an abject failure and only drew a handful of activists, swamped by journalists.<sup>59</sup>

Perhaps more importantly, the rapid rise of the EDL in the UK contributed the ongoing establishment of transnational, organizational connections among anti-Islamic initiatives at the top level. This process was already prominent during the second wave, and continued in 2010 when Pamela Geller and author Robert Spencer set up Stop Islamization of America (SIOA) at the request of Anders Gravers Pedersen.<sup>60</sup> In October 2010, representatives from BPE,<sup>61</sup> Act! For America and Stadtkewitz from the German DF travelled to Tel Aviv to speak at the Alliance of the

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<sup>55</sup> See <http://www.zeit.de/2010/40/Geert-Wilders-Berlin/seite-2> (Accessed 05.02.2015), and <https://www.mnw.org/archive/wilders-sets-international-alliance-against-islam> (accessed 05.02.2015).

<sup>56</sup> In January 2013 the European Freedom Initiative listed affiliated defence leagues in Britain, the United States, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Sweden, Germany, Australia, Serbia, Greece, Indonesia, Poland, the Philippines, Belgium, Czech Republic, Romania and Luxemburg.

<sup>57</sup> Wilders was on trial for hate speech and inciting racism: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/oct/08/far-right-geert-wilders-protest> (accessed 04.02.2015).

<sup>58</sup> <http://cphpost.dk/news/international/racist-network-to-hold-rally-in-aarhus.html> (accessed 04.02.2015).

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.nrk.no/norge/takket-de-10-frammotte-1.7587515>

<sup>60</sup> <https://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9E05EEDB113CF933A25753C1A9669D8B63&scp=3&st=cse&pagewanted=all> (accessed 23.09.2014).

European Freedom and National Parties Conference alongside Geert Wilders and other prominent populist radical right politicians.<sup>62</sup>

In 2011 the Counter-Jihadi and anti-Islamic community gathered in Stockholm to establish the umbrella organization Stop Islamization of Nations (SION). Their so-called President's Council consisted of Anders Gravers from SIAD/SIOE, Tommy Robinson and Kevin Carroll from the EDL, Debbie Robinson from the Australian Liberty Alliance as well as Robert Spencer and Pamela Geller from SIOA/Atlas Shrugs/Jihad Watch.<sup>63</sup> Their board included figures such as the far-right Swiss politician Oskar Freysinger and Stefan Herre of Politically Incorrect.

A year later, EDL figures attended the SION free speech conference in New York in September 11, 2012, where they co-founded the European Freedom Initiative. The trip proved unfortunate for Robinson, who was imprisoned after entering the United States illegally using a friend's passport.<sup>64</sup> American backers such as Pamela Geller and Robert Spencer attempted to help him and the EDL through fundraising. Robinson was later sentenced to ten months in prison.<sup>65</sup> The trip and subsequent imprisonment marked the beginning of a downward spiral driven by internal organizational troubles and increased police and state intervention. During the period of imprisonment, Robinson's close friend Kevin Carroll took over. Both, however, resigned in October 2013,<sup>66</sup> and Tommy Robinson joined the anti-radicalization think-tank Quillam Foundation. The decline of the EDL in 2013 marked a two-year lull in anti-Islamic activity across Western Europe.

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<sup>62</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-islam-far-right-idUSTRE6BJ37120101220> (accessed 04.02.2015).

<sup>63</sup> <http://pamelageller.com/2012/08/announcing-the-sion-presidents-council-the-fruit-of-stockholm.html/> (accessed 12..05.2015).

<sup>64</sup> This was likely because he was refused entry to the USA to attend a protest against building a mosque on the "Ground Zero" site two years before.

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.channel4.com/news/edl-leader-stephen-lennon-jailed-for-10-months> (accessed 19.05.2016).

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-24442953> (accessed 19.05.2016).



#### 4.2.4 Fourth wave – PEGIDA and Eastward expansion

The rise and spread of PEGIDA is the fourth wave of anti-Islamic activism. Similarly to the establishment of the EDL in Luton, the moral shock leading to the creation of PEGIDA was a local event. It began when the founder, Lutz Bachmann, personally witnessed Kurdish supporters of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) demonstrating against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Dresden.<sup>67</sup> This was followed by clashes between Salafists and Kurds in Hamburg, something which got broad news coverage. Angered by the spread of what he saw as terrorism and extremism, Bachmann turned to Facebook where he created a page entitled Peaceful Europeans against the Islamization of the West (later exchanging Peaceful for Patriotic).<sup>68</sup> Bachmann used this page as a platform to rally people for weekly marches through the city of Dresden. The marches and their slogan, “We are the people!”, hark back to the demonstrations against the former DDR regime in East Germany. Initially only drawing a handful of participants, PEGIDA marches quickly ballooned in size. Within a month it had become one of the biggest protest phenomena in East Germany since the fall of the Berlin Wall. The number of people marching under PEGIDA’s banner reached a peak with approximately 25,000 participants in the week after the terror attacks on January 7, 2015 where two Jihadists struck the offices of the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris, killing thirteen and wounding eleven.

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<sup>67</sup> "KURDEN DEMO DRESDEN", Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6aFr9GVE2c> (accessed 01.12.2016). In the video description, Bachmann wrote “They are demanding weapons for the PKK. This is a terrorist organization, which is banned in Germany, and they demand weapons on our streets! Where’s the police?” (author’s translation).

<sup>68</sup> PEGIDA’s symbol is a man throwing flags carrying the emblems of the Kurdish PKK, Nazi Germany, Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) and ISIS into a trash bin. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/pegida-leader-lutz-bachmann-steps-down-over-hitler-photograph-9993425.html> (accessed 01.12.2016).

Not long after PEGIDA became beset by infighting which began when Bachmann resigned under mounting pressure after a photo of him posing with a “Hitler mustache” was leaked online.<sup>69</sup> On the advice of Frauke Petry, leader of AfD, several prominent figures also withdrew in the wake of Bachmann’s resignation, establishing a competing group calling themselves Direct Democracy for Europe (*Direkte Demokratie für Europa, DDE*).<sup>70 71</sup>

Bachmann was quickly reinstated, but the internal leadership struggles continued. Following the wave of resignations, Tatjana Festerling became the new spokesperson alongside Bachmann. Before she became a leader in PEGIDA, Festerling had been active in AfD. Some months later, Festerling ran as a candidate for mayor in Dresden, where she received 9.6% of the vote in the first round. Festerling received the backing of key figures in the anti-Islamic movement, with Geert Wilders traveling to Dresden to speak on her behalf. Not long after she ran for mayor, however, she was expelled from PEGIDA. She has since been staging counter-protests against Bachmann by way of retaliation.<sup>72</sup>

At a more general level there have also been informal relations between PEGIDA and AfD, but Petry and Bachmann shared a mutual dislike of each other. Bachmann has stated that he was open for the two initiatives to join forces and merge into one political party as long as Petry resigned as AfD leader. On her part, Petry got the Saxonian AfD board to decree that AfD members should

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<sup>69</sup><http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/pegida-leader-lutz-bachmann-steps-down-over-hitler-photograph-9993425.html> (accessed 01.12.2016)

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/23/pegida-head-lutz-bachmann-reinstated-hitler-moustache-photo> (accessed 01.12.2016)

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/afd-beriet-pegida-in-der-hitler-ffaere-von-lutz-bachmann-a-1014623.html> (accessed 01.12.2016).

<sup>72</sup> <https://www.thelocal.de/20160927/pegida-take-to-dresden-streets-to-march-against-pegida> (accessed 01.12.2016).

not appear as speakers or with party symbols at PEGIDA events.<sup>73</sup> Indicative of the strained relationship between the two, Bachmann established his own political party in 2016 – the Liberal Direct Democratic People's Party (*Freiheitlich Direktdemokratische Volkspartei*).<sup>74</sup> Despite the conflict with Petry and ongoing infighting, PEGIDA have been able to stage weekly marches through Dresden more or less unabated since the inception in October 2014 until the summer of 2017.

PEGIDA led to a revitalization of the anti-Islamic far right across Western Europe, drawing both older activists from the Stop Islamization and Defence League communities and new participants. Between January and June 2015 PEGIDA groups marched in Britain, Denmark, Austria, the Netherlands and Belgium. PEGIDA Netherlands was one of the first off-shoots, holding their first rally in the city of Utrecht on October 11, 2015. Headed by Edwin Wagenveld, the rally was attended by Bachmann as well as Tommy Robinson.<sup>75</sup> They held several rallies between 2015 and 2016 in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Apeldoorn.<sup>76</sup> On March 18, 2016 they held a protest in support of Geert Wilders during his second trial for inciting racism.<sup>77</sup>

After speaking at PEGIDA rallies in Utrecht, Dresden and Cologne, the former EDL leader Robinson staged a return to the anti-Islamic activist scene in Britain by creating PEGIDA UK.<sup>78</sup> Unlike the heyday of the EDL between 2009 and 2011, with marches drawing up to 3,000

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<sup>73</sup> <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/plaene-fuer-gemeinsame-kundgebung-afd-und-pegida-planen-schulterschluss/19743318.html> (accessed 25.06.2017)

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/lutz-bachmann-hat-angeblich-eine-pegida-partei-gegruendet-14348098.html> (accessed 25.06.2017)

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/dead-pigs-reportedly-dumped-outside-refugee-site-following-dutch-pegida-rally-a6891556.html> (accessed 02.12.2016).

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/dead-pigs-reportedly-dumped-outside-refugee-site-following-dutch-pegida-rally-a6891556.html> (accessed 12.01.2017).

<sup>77</sup> <https://www.rtlnieuws.nl/nieuws/binnenland/grote-demonstratie-van-pegida-tijdens-wilders-proces&usg=ALkJrhWRNYgwOUkj39wcqol0h3YwHZ6AA> (accessed 12.01.2017).

<sup>78</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/12/03/tommy-robinson-launch-pegida-uk\\_n\\_8710610.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/12/03/tommy-robinson-launch-pegida-uk_n_8710610.html) (accessed 01.12.2016); <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35432074> (accessed 01.12.2016).

protesters, PEGIDA UK reached its peak with 400 participants during a rally in Newcastle.<sup>79</sup> In terms of street mobilization, the British offshoot drew numbers equivalent to the first round of protests in 2005, when the Counter-Jihadi community first took their activism offline. In Denmark a PEGIDA offshoot was first set up by the Social Democrat Carsten Thrane, later replaced by Nicolai Sennels, a former parliamentary representative for the radical right DF. In Norway, PEGIDA was headed by the teacher and shop owner Max Hermansen and supported by prominent figures from SIAN and the former NDL. As in the British case, the revitalization of the anti-Islamic far right in Norway and Denmark did not lead to mass demonstrations.<sup>80</sup> Instead of large numbers of demonstrators, the wave of expansion and revitalization in Western Europe is notable because it happened within a very short time span, indicative of the small but determined pool of activists which have accumulated during the three preceding waves of anti-Islamic activism. Most offshoots were set up by mid-January, attracting large numbers of online followers and members (Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016).

PEGIDAs success in Germany also triggered the establishment of anti-Islamic initiatives across Central and Eastern Europe. The eastward expansion was partly facilitated by the shock of the so-called ‘refugee crisis’, where previously unprecedented numbers of migrants entered Europe during the summer of 2015. A Czech group calling itself the Bloc Against Islam (*Blok proti islámu*, BPI) led by Martin Konvicka became the most influential, organizing a joint rally in Prague in June 2016, where Bachmann and Robinson spoke to the crowds alongside the Czech president Milos Zeman.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-tyne-31657167> (accessed 02.12.2016).

<sup>80</sup> In Norway PEGIDA held 19 marches across the country between January and June 2015. The largest drew 200 participants, with an average of 40 participants across the marches (Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016).

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2015/11/17/eastern-europe-rising-czech-president-speaks-anti-islam-rally-pegida-leaders-tommy-robinson/> (accessed 10.06.2016).

In January 2016, Czech BPI arranged a meeting of representatives from PEGIDA offshoots around Europe, the Italian populist radical right party, the Italian Northern League (*Lega Nord*, LN) and other anti-Islamic initiatives in the town of Roztoky. There they signed the so-called “Prague Declaration”, where they affirmed their common goal of saving Western civilization from being destroyed by an Islamic conquest of Europe. At the behest of Bachmann they called out “We are Fortress Europe” in English and German, before signing the treaty and formalizing their collaboration using under the banner of Fortress Europe.<sup>82</sup> According to one participant, the decision to collaborate was in response to the sexual assaults on New Year’s Eve in Cologne, which had sent shockwaves of anger and indignation through the German public just a week before.

Two weeks later, PEGIDA, Bloc Against Islam and several other initiatives who flocked to the banner of Fortress Europe staged protest marches across Europe, ranging from Ireland to Estonia.<sup>83</sup><sup>84</sup> The ability to orchestrate simultaneous demonstrations across Europe was something which had eluded the Counter-Jihadi, Defence League and Stop Islamization groups before them. The “Fortress Europe” marches were met by anti-racist and far left counter-demonstrations in most countries, but in the Polish city of Wroclaw organizers cancelled after receiving threats from the extreme right Radical Nationalist Camp (*Oboz Narodowo-Radykalny*, ONR). This demonstrates the fraught and often hostile relationship between extreme right initiatives of the older kind and anti-Islamic initiatives.

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<sup>82</sup> <http://www.dw.com/en/pegida-meets-with-european-allies-in-the-czech-republic/a-19000895> (accessed 07.05.2017).

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.jpost.com/Breaking-News/Thousands-protest-in-Poland-against-Islamisation-of-Europe-444083> (accessed 07.05.2017).

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/thousands-take-part-in-anti-islam-pegida-protests-across-europe-a6857911.html> (accessed 02.12.2016).

<sup>85</sup> <https://www.baltictimes.com/pegida-to-hold-anti-islamic-march-in-estonia/> (accessed 07.05.2017).

In sum, the four waves of anti-Islamic expansion have transformed the far-right activist scene. Starting from a relatively disjointed position with a couple of websites, a lone activist group in Norway and a single anti-Islamic party in the Netherlands, the anti-Islamic far right is now an established presence with transnational ties across Europe, North America and beyond. This expansion has been propelled by a long list of moral shocks, ranging from terror attacks to Islamist demonstrations on the streets of European cities.

### **4.3 Legacies and identities**

Klandermans and Mayer write that “social movements never emerge from nothing: They are a combination of old and new elements; it is a cumulative process” (2006, 270). They point to ideological continuity *through* activist continuity. The question they pose is whether the radical right, between the 1980s and early 2000s, were the heirs of the fascist and Nazi organizations of the 1930s, or whether they were what Kitschelt and McGann (1995) call the New Radical Right.<sup>86</sup>

As continuity of personnel is an important factor for understanding the far right (e.g. Klandermans and Mayer 2006; Art 2011), providing an overview of the organizational legacies and known affiliations is therefore an important part in grappling with whether the anti-Islamic turn and expansion represents a “new” far right phenomenon or not.

In this section, I compare the backgrounds and political affiliations of thirty figureheads – leaders, representatives and ideologues - from the six strongholds which have been prominent in the four waves of anti-Islamic expansion. Besides their political background, several other dimensions are of interest; gender and (openly professed) sexual identity, religion and class. Brief biographies for each figure are given in Appendix I, on a country-by-country basis. I start with

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<sup>86</sup> On organizational or ideological continuity, see also Ignazi 1992, 2003; Rydgren 2005, 2007; Carter 2005; Golder 2003.

their political backgrounds before becoming active in the anti-Islamic struggle and then move on to gender, sexual identity, religion and class.

Beyond establishing the extent to which their affiliations represent a direct link with older forms of the radical and extreme right, their individual backgrounds matter in two clear ways.

First, if they have a background that clearly sets them apart from openly fascists, neo-Nazis and so forth, this can impact their authenticity and public appeal. Elisabeth Ivarsflaten argued that a far right party's success depended on their "reputational shields" (2005). If a party started out as, say, focused on economic liberalization before picking up anti-immigration as an issue, then that afforded them and their electorate a shield against accusations of being racist. An individual figurehead's background can function in a synonymous way. Second, studying their backgrounds can provide an agency-oriented avenue to explain why certain ideas have become widespread among anti-Islamic initiatives, and not others.

#### **4.3.1 Many former leftists**

Of the thirty figureheads, twenty-two were politically active before they became engaged in anti-Islamic activity. Their political activities span a broad range of activities, from participating in single-issue groups such as Free Tibet to having been prominent members of political parties. An equal number had a history of left-wing activism (eleven) as right-wing activism (ten).

Those with a left-wing background have been central in the four waves of anti-Islamic expansion. For instance, Hans Rustad of Document.no has been influential from the second wave onwards and has a background as an active member of the Norwegian Socialist Youth Organization, whereas the newcomer Anne Marie Waters of Sharia Watch UK, PEGIDA and UKIP was a Labour member and activist who stood twice as a party candidate. Pim Fortuyn, who altered the dynamics of Dutch politics, going on to become the most important figure in the first wave,

began as a Communist before migrating to the Dutch Labour Party and then Livable Netherlands before forming his own explicitly anti-Islamic party. Another prominent example, Lars Hedegaard of TFS was an active member of the Danish Socialist Workers Party in his younger days. It is worth noting that Charles Johnson, an American with no former far-right affiliations and with center-left leanings, was the most acclaimed figure among the “cadre” of anti-Islamic activist leaders during the two first waves of anti-Islamic expansion.

#### **4.3.2 Peripheral extreme right, prominent center-right and radical right**

Among those with a right-wing background prior to becoming engaged in anti-Islamic activism, the numbers are equally distributed between the center right and the far right. The major Dutch figures Geert Wilders and Ayaan Hirsi Ali were both parliamentary members of the center right People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), whereas René Stadtkewitz, chairman of the German BPE was a member of the center-right CDU and was a local councillor for ten years in Berlin, before being expelled in 2011 after inviting Geert Wilders to speak at a rally, at which point he formed a German sister-party to Wilders’.

Of those that have an identifiable far-right background, only Ronny Alte, former leader of NDJ, activist in PEGIDA Norway and subsequent leader of Sons of Odin, has a known history of right-wing extremism. Alte was a member of a local neo-Nazi group for several years during his youth, and has never been affiliated with left-wing parties or organizations. Furthermore, he can be described as a peripheral figure among the anti-Islamic activists. In Britain, Tommy Robinson,<sup>87</sup> co-founder and leader of the EDL between 2009 and 2013 and PEGIDA UK from 2015, had been a low-ranking member of the BNP for one year in his youth. Stephen Gash, a vehement opponent of the BNP and former leader of SIOE who was an active figure in the anti-Islamic movement

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<sup>87</sup> Whose true name is Stephen Christopher Yaxley-Lennon

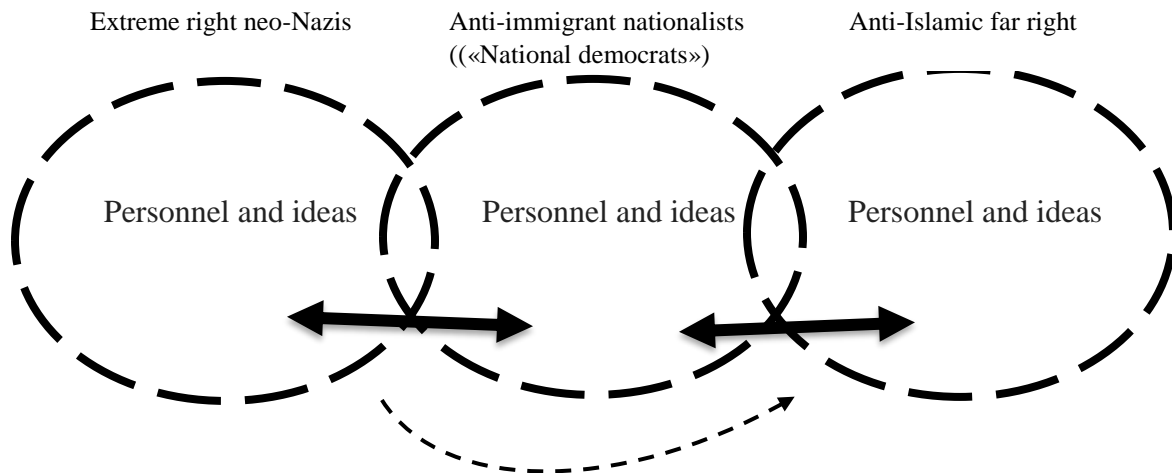


during the second wave of expansion, was a member of the nationalist English Democrats Party (EDP) and the National Council of the Campaign for an English Parliament before that. In Denmark, the founder of SIAD and co-founder of SIOE, Anders Gravers Pedersen, was a member of the nationalist Danish Association (*Den Danske Forening*, DDF) prior to founding SIAD and co-founding SIOE with Stephen Gash. Although not an official member, former leader of SIAN, Arne Tumyr consistently expressed support for the nationalist anti-immigration organization the Peoples' Movement against Immigration (*Folkebevægelsen mot innvandring*, FMI), the Norwegian sister organization to DDF. This despite the fact that FMI's former leader Arne Johannes Myrdal, had been sentenced to one year's imprisonment for planning to blow up a refugee center on the island of Tromøy in 1990 (on Myrdal, see Bjørgero 1997, 283).

#### **4.3.3 The older nationalist anti-immigrants – a bridging function?**

In sum, the extreme right legacy among the leaders, spokespersons and activists is not a prominent feature, but some connections do exist. In his study of the Scandinavian radical and extreme right outside party politics, Bjørgero noted that the anti-immigrant nationalists and neo-Nazi communities had contact and some personnel overlaps (1997, 288). Despite the fact that only one activist leader has a neo-Nazi background, the affiliations between some anti-Islamic figureheads and militant nationalist communities facilitate a certain degree of interaction between the anti-Islamic and neo-Nazi side. I exemplify this in a diagram which expands on Bjørgero's findings and the ideological typology of the anti-immigrant nationalists (or "national democrats") and the extreme right neo-Nazis (1997, 64).

**Figure 4.1. The potential bridging function of the older anti-immigrant nationalists between neo-Nazi and anti-Islamic personnel and ideas**



In this sense, the nationalist groups, which have a longer organizational history, can act as a bridge between the anti-Islamic far right and the neo-Nazi extreme right and therefore mean that neo-Nazi activists and ideas have the potential to gain influence. This potential for extreme right influence has led to splits within the anti-Islamic movement, most prominently when Johnson of LGF denounced the self-described Counter-Jihad which he himself had helped set up.

It is important to note, however, that the anti-Islamic far right portrays Islam as an equivalent to Nazism and often expresses clear disdain for neo-Nazis. Similarly, scattered evidence indicate that contemporary neo-Nazis see anti-Islamic activists as traitors. For instance, on the Danish neo-Nazi blog Hammersmeden (Hammersmith), anti-Islamic activists and their ideas are denigrated as “globalists”, “feminists” and “gay lovers” who are blinded by their opposition to Islam, when the true enemy is the Jew.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>88</sup> <https://hammersmeden.wordpress.com/2015/10/25/hvorfor-moderat-indvandringsmodstand-altid-taber/> (accessed 30.08.2016).

#### **4.3.4 Few, but prominent, women and LGBT**

Turning to the issue of gender and sexual identity, two things stand out. First, there is a noticeable gender gap in the top cadre of anti-Islamic activists, with only six women versus twenty-four men. Four of the six women are self-professed feminists. For instance, Hege Storhaug of HRS anchors and legitimizes her antagonism to Islam as a struggle for gender equality, women's rights and against female gender mutilation, much in the same vein as the Somali-born Dutch-American, Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Second, some leaders have been outspoken about being gay/lesbian, and including it in their public platform. Pim Fortuyn is the first and most prominent example, who based much of his arguments against Islam and Muslim immigration around the notion that Muslims threatened the rights of homosexuals. British Anne Marie Waters also bases her activism on opposition to Sharia law as a danger to women's rights and as well as religious homophobia from Muslims.

The prominent role of women and people with an overt LGBT identity is not unique to the initiatives that have been part of the anti-Islamic expansion. It is also evident among the radical right parties which have undergone a reorientation. For instance, the French FN has been led by Marine Le Pen since 2011 and the Norwegian FrP has been led by Siv Jensen since 2006, whereas Pia Kjærsgaard led radical right DF until 2012 (for an analysis of gender issues and the role of women leader's in these parties, see e.g. Meret and Siim 2016). More recently, the openly lesbian Alice Weidel was nominated as AfD Chancellor candidate for the 2017 elections.

#### **4.3.5 Religion and class**

When it comes to religious identity, half of the thirty leaders have incorporated their affiliation in their public identity and mobilization activity. Ten are Christian, and four identify as atheist or agnostic. The latter have a history of left-wing activism. In terms of class, a majority can be characterized as coming from a middle class background. Furthermore, eight have worked in

journalism or publishing, four as programmers and several of them also have a university degree in History.

A minority come from a working-class background, some of them have become small entrepreneurs and others work in manual jobs. These are also predominantly engaged in street-oriented initiatives, have no clear religious affiliation and represent the subset of leaders who have an extreme right legacy or expressed affinity with militant nationalists.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The all-encompassing turn of the far right from focusing on ethnicity to Muslims and Islam on the far right consists of two processes: an anti-Islamic *reorientation* among pre-existing far-right initiatives; and an anti-Islamic *expansion* of the far right with the creation of new initiatives. This thesis studies the latter. In this chapter, I have provided an overview of the waves of anti-Islamic expansion anchored in the anti-Islamic strongholds of the USA, Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway. I have made an analytical distinction between four waves of anti-Islamic expansion. The initial wave is traced back to two different starting points; the U.S.-based website LGF and the Dutch party, LPF. The second wave marks the turn towards street-oriented activism, co-originating in Britain and Denmark called Stop Islamization. The third wave began in Britain with the formation of the EDL, whereas the fourth wave started off with PEGIDA in Germany. Furthermore, I trace these waves to critical events and moral shocks ranging from the “international” – such as the 9/11 terror attacks and Muhammed cartoon crisis, to “local” events of Muslim picketing soldiers’ funerals outside Luton and Kurds marching on the streets of Dresden.

In the second section, I analyzed the biographies of the thirty main anti-Islamic leaders, spokespersons and ideologues active in these countries during the four waves of expansion. Four aspects stand out. First, it is more common with a left-wing background than with a far or extreme

right-wing background. Yet the older ethno-nationalist groups can serve as a bridge between the anti-Islamic far right and the neo-Nazi extreme right and thereby provide the extreme right with some potential for influence. Second, while men are in the clear majority, women also play a prominent role – as do people with an outspoken LGBT identity. Several of the women are self-professed feminists. Third, half of the leaders, spokespersons and incorporate their Christian or non-religious (atheist and agnostic) identity into their public persona and mobilization activity. Whereas a majority of the Christians has a right-wing background, the non-religious have a left-wing background. Fourth, a majority have what can be described as a middle-class background with careers in journalism, publishing and programming.

The presence or collaboration with self-professed progressives and liberals has been noted in other cases. For instance, pointing to the Belgian journalist Claude Demelenne, Liberal MP Alain Destexhe and the feminist Nadia Geerts, Fekete writes that they have gained allies among dogmatic secularists and identity-bound feminists through the idea of Islamo-fascism (2011, 42).

There is no lack of historical figures and leaders who have moved from one end of the ideological spectrum to the other during the course of their political lifetime. Historically, Benito Mussolini is the perhaps the most prominent and pertinent example. Mussolini started his career as a socialist before becoming a nationalist, and later founded the fascist movement. Whether or not a person's legacy creates an ideological path dependency is disputable. Yet just as Mussolini carried with him and mutated socialist ideas, it is certainly plausible that people with a past political background as left-wing activists and politicians at least carry with them some – if not all – of the ideas which they previously professed. The left-wing legacy among several of the key figureheads is a possible channel for the dissemination and adoption of nominally left wing, progressive and liberal ideas in the broader anti-Islamic movement.

# 5. Worldviews

## Summary

This chapter explores the anti-Islamic framing and ideology. It makes two meso-level contributions and one macro-theoretical contribution. First, it shows that anti-Islamic views are broadly coherent across a wide variety of initiatives in Britain, Germany and Norway. This underlines the transnational characteristic of the anti-Islamic movement and subculture. Their proclaimed defense of liberal values and minorities is a noteworthy and recurring aspect in their official platforms. To understand how this inclusion of values and groups so historically at odds with the far right plays out, this chapter narrows things down to the way they frame women's rights vis-à-vis Muslims. Distinguishing between *protector frames* anchored in a traditional, male-oriented perspective and *equality frames* in a modern, feminist perspective, this study finds that the equality frames are most salient in the Norwegian context. Nonetheless, both are used side by side by all the anti-Islamic actors across cases. Their turn towards a broad and inclusive "us" vis-à-vis Muslims while simultaneously maintaining traditional perspectives is a form of *strategic frame ambiguity*. In sum, these positions are sufficiently coherent and distinct from previous iterations of the far right to define anti-Islam as a separate master frame. The anti-Islamic master frames main novelty lies in transcending the cleavage between Green/Alternative/Liberal and Traditional/Authoritarian/Nationalist positions on the cultural dimension.

## 5.1 Introduction

As seen in Chapter 4, the anti-Islamic worldview originated and was spread by the online Counter-Jihadist community, the activists beginning in Norway, and the radical right parties following the rise of LPF in the Netherlands. The diffusion and salience of this rhetoric and worldview closely coincides with key events, first of which is Al-Qaeda's attacks that brought down the World Trade Center in New York, September 11, 2001. This chapter examines the rhetoric and ideas of leaders and representatives from eleven political initiatives in Britain, Germany and Norway. These actors have all become known for their hostility towards Islam and Muslims, and the selected countries are three of the main epicenters for the following waves of organized opposition to Islam and Muslims.

Several studies define this opposition as a transnational movement, yet most studies looking at their ideology and framing beyond a cursory level study individual organizations or single countries. By conducting a qualitative comparison my first aim is to provide insight into the degree of transnational alignment. Is this an ideologically homogenous phenomenon? Previous studies have indicated that many of these actors claim to defend liberal values, women's rights and the rights vulnerable minorities. This apparent paradox lies at the core of understanding the anti-Islamic turn, and the initial process of grappling with the apparent inclusion of liberal values by actors and movements defined as belonging to the far right is the second aim of this chapter. In most instances these claims are treated very briefly or understood as deceptions. This sometimes resembles tautological reasoning: actors using anti-Islamic rhetoric are defined as far right, and since the far right has historically been consistently illiberal, consequently actors using anti-Islamic rhetoric must by definition still be illiberal through-and-through and therefore it cannot be anything but a masquerade. The previous chapter showed that among the fig-ureheads it was just as common to have a left-wing as a right-wing political background. By making an in-depth comparison of



their framing specifically related to these claims, the goal is to go one step further and simultaneously escape tautological reasoning or get locked in the binary logic of true or false.

My analysis underlines the transnational character of the views found in this movement and subculture. This strengthens the arguments made in the growing body of literature on what is defined as the new, Islamophobic or anti-Islamic far right. They share the supranational diagnosis, that Islam is a totalitarian ideology and an existential threat to the West and all other groups in society, with the “elites” either co-conspiring or passively allowing this destruction. By and large, they also adopt democracy and non-violent solutions. Finally, their motivational framework stresses the need to fight for liberty and “Western” values.

Narrowing down to the way they frame the issue of women’s rights vis-à-vis Muslims, this chapter shows that they intermittently rely on male-centric, traditional “protector” frames and female-centric, modern “equality” frames. In particular, the issue of women’s rights captures the tension intrinsic to this movement and subcultures’ framing – straddling the span between the old far-right legacies and positions previously held more exclusively by self-defined liberals and leftists. This intermittent use of these two largely opposing frames is a form of strategic ambiguity which allows those involved to bridge their anti-Islamic collective action framework with a feminist framework. It also allows them to lay the foundations for portraying themselves as the “true” defenders of women’s rights and gender equality; those who do not share their view of Islam and Muslims become *de facto* anti-feminists. This strategic ambiguity is a general pattern in their “adoption” of liberal values and vulnerable minorities. Based on these findings, I argue that anti-Islam constitutes a third master frame for the far right.

This chapter is structured as follows. First, the methods, data and choice of actors are discussed. This is followed by a brief outline of framing theory before the analysis of the actors’

diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing.<sup>89</sup> Then comes an analysis of the way in which they frame the issue of women’s rights vis-à-vis Muslims. Finally, the findings and claims are put in a broader, comparative context by drawing on Jens Rydgren’s overview of the far rights ideological evolution.<sup>90</sup>

## 5.2 Methods and actors

Data in this chapter are: (a) a wide selection of literature from eleven anti-Islamic initiatives in Norway, Britain and Germany from 2010 and onwards: manifestos and statements by leaders in newspapers, on their own websites and in periodicals; supplemented by (b) interviews with key actors in Norway. As this chapter demonstrates, they share a common identity and rhetoric. The texts are illustrative and not exhaustive, but they capture the general rhetoric of the movement. Describing their shared collective action framing means simplifying for analytical reasons. Even though they are adept at getting their message over, analyzing several actors’ statements over a long period entails a certain rationalization of ambiguous text.

**Table 5.1 Number of anti-Islamic initiatives included in the qualitative frame analysis, by country and type**

Country	Germany	Britain	Norway
Protest groups and minor parties	2	3	2
Alternative news and think-tanks	1	1	2
SUM	3	4	4

The broad spectrum of anti-Islamic initiatives span from small political parties and think-tanks to protest groups and websites dedicated to alternative news. The list does not include all the

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<sup>89</sup> The section on the anti-Islamic collective action framing (5.4) builds and expands on parts of the article “The Collective Nature of Lone Wolf Terrorism: Anders Behring Breivik and the Anti-Islamic Social Movement” (2014), co-authored by Sveinung Sandberg. This is done with the explicit consent of Dr. Sandberg.

<sup>90</sup> Previously covered in Section 2.3.4 of Chapter 2.

anti-Islamic initiatives which have been operational in the three countries, but it does include the largest and perhaps most influential ones. In Britain, the cases included are the activist groups English Defense League (EDL), Stop Islamization of Europe (SIOE, formerly No Sharia Here) and the British Freedom Party (BFP) as well as the website Four Freedoms Community (4F). The German cases include the activist group PEGIDA, the website Politically Incorrect (PI), and the small group Stop Islamization of Europe Deutschland (SIOED). In Norway, the cases included are the activist groups Stop Islamization of Norway (SIAN), PEGIDA Norway, the alternative news site Document.no and the self-described think-tank Human Rights Service (HRS).

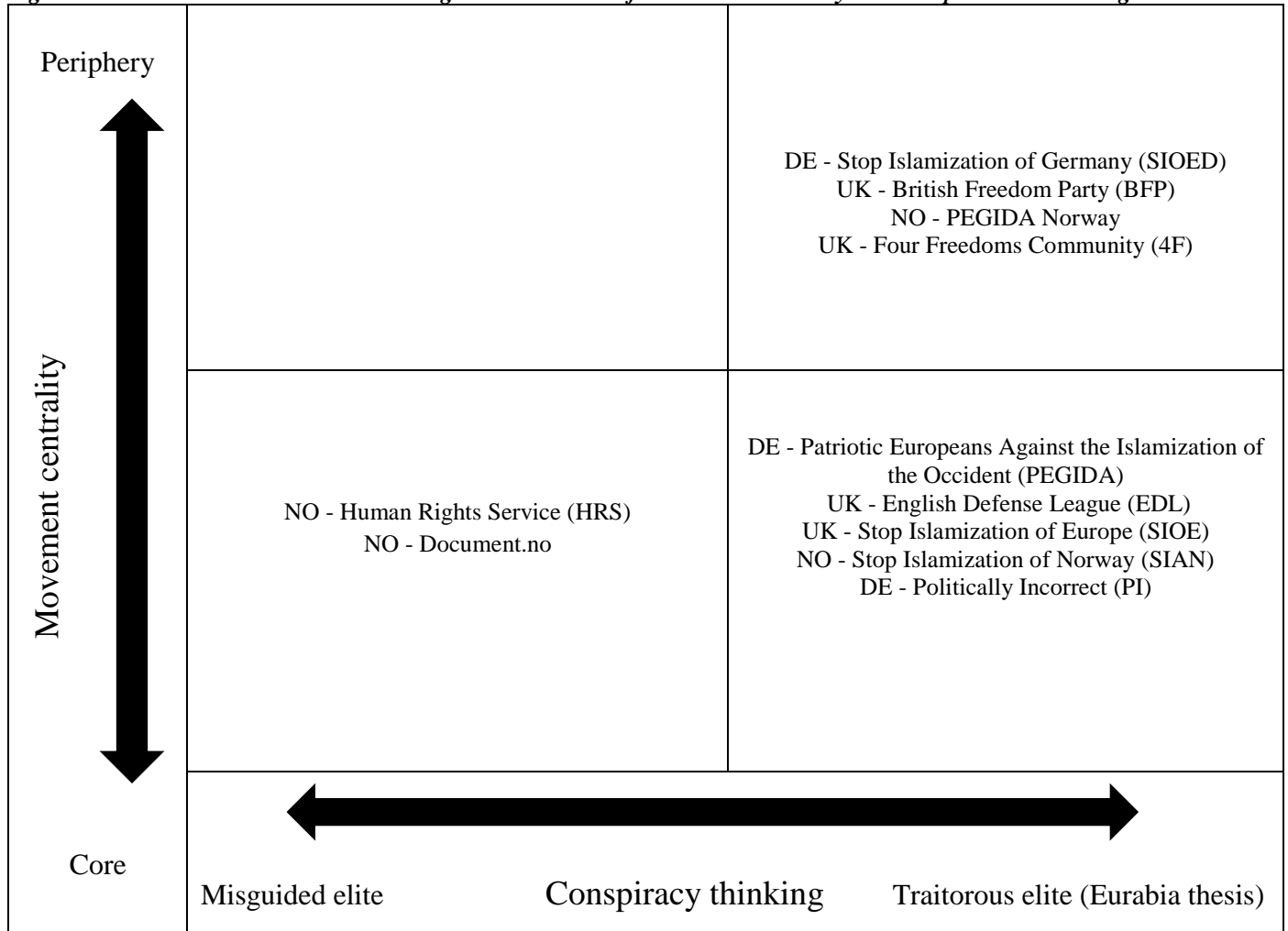
The frame analysis could have been expanded to the larger populist radical right parties, the Norwegian FrP, UKIP and AfD, but these are not included in the analysis. In addition to having undergone an ideological transformation and reorientation towards opposition to Islam, they also mobilize on a different set of issues, not all of which are related to their opposition to Islam, Muslim immigration or culture. For instance, although immigration is the most important issue for FrP voters, the party also receives considerable support for their emphasis on lowering taxes, improved healthcare for the elderly, and broader issues of law and order. Similarly, the AfD includes a broader range of issues and began by mobilizing on the economic dimension, arguing that the Euro should be replaced with the Deutsche Mark. As the frame analysis demonstrates, however, it is a mistake to view the activist groups as strictly single issue. Opposition to Islam and Muslims is the core issue, but they also mobilize against those they see as their internal opponents and propose a wide range of solutions (such as more direct democracy).

When it comes to the issue of movement centrality, organizations such as HRS probably hold more sway than UKIP, FrP or AfD. For these parties the peripheral status is something they have actively sought, as being too strongly associated with activist groups could undermine their

legitimacy in mainstream party politics. This allows them to adopt and refine parts of their message, which is something FrP did in the 2009 elections with the concept of “sneak Islamization”.

Movement centrality is built on a qualitative understanding of where individual actors are situated in the web of influence vis-à-vis others. Besides HRS, the core consists of the largest and longest lasting activist groups – the EDL, PEGIDA and SIAN as well as the alternative newsites Document.no and PI. This is not a strictly party or non-party distinction, as some of the activist groups also belong to the periphery in terms of intra-movement influence. This primarily holds for the smaller organizations which are off-shoots from PEGIDA, SIOE and the EDL. The various organizations are on a continuum of conspiratorial thinking, which is a relative marker of differentiation. Along this continuum, actors such as HRS, and Document.no are at the moderate end of the scale, emphasizing the dichotomy of the people vs. the elite, and warning against the “Islamization” of society, but putting little emphasis on hidden agendas and conspiracies. A majority of the agents such as PEGIDA, SIOE, SIAN and the EDL by contrast, are at the opposing end, openly embracing conspiracy theories. The most common conspiracy theory is the so-called “Eurabia thesis”. This conspiracy theory claims that the political and cultural elites have entered into a covert partnership with the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamists, and that this collusion has been in effect for decades (Bangstad 2013). They also consistently define political opponents as cultural Marxists and denigrate the press as liars (“*Lügenpresse*”), who are conspiring to destroy Western civilization from within. While they are distinct

**Figure 5.1 Anti-Islamic actors divided along the dimensions of movement centrality and conspiratorial thinking**



### 5.3 Framing theory

In studies of social movements, framing theory is concerned with rhetoric and language (Snow et al., 1986; Snow and Benford 1988, 1992; Gamson 1992, 1995). It offers a specific tool for comparing the rhetoric of different political entities. The term ‘frame’ is taken from Goffman (1974), and describes ‘schemata of interpretation’ used by individuals to attach meaning to events and occurrences (Snow et al. 1986). The basic idea is that one of the major tasks of social movements is to develop and diffuse these inter-subjective frames. In framing theory, the rhetoric of social movements is conceptualized as collective action

frames. These can be categorized in different ways, but in Snow and Benford's (1992) version, they encompass a diagnosis and prognosis of a problem, and a call to action for its resolution (Cress and Snow 2000, 1071). Diagnostic framing is concerned with problem identification (who is to blame?), prognostic framing with problem resolution (what can be done about it?), and motivational framing with a rationale for engaging in collective action, or some articulation of a motive (Benford and Snow 2000, 617). These are analytical categories, and all three aspects can be present in an individual sentence.

## **5.4 Anti-Islamic collective action framing**

### **5.4.1 Diagnosis**

To construct a common framework for action, the different actors must operate with a unified understanding of what they define as problematic (Benford and Snow 2000, 617). The anti-Islamic initiatives identify a wide range of problems, but their core diagnosis is that 'we' are at risk of being 'destroyed', culturally and demographically. The survival of their respective countries and the West at large is under threat of becoming subservient to Muslims within a few decades. The key factor is the portrayal of two enemies; one internal and one external. Conceiving of the political elite as an internal enemy, they vary between including the parties on the right wing or only those on the left. They portray the external enemy (Muslims) as conspiring, or having fooled or intimidated the 'politically correct' internal enemy. The survivalism rhetoric is underlined by linking this overarching frame to facts such as the construction of mosques, which are 'hate factories...teaching Muslim children the grotesque message from the Q'uran: Kill the infidel!'...and that they will 'exterminate the unbelievers'.

Even though Islam and Muslims are portrayed as the main threat, most of the carriers of the anti-Islamic collective frames acknowledge the differences between secular, moderate, and fundamentalist Muslims, as exemplified in the EDL mission statement:

The EDL argues for the rights and ability of all people to protest against Islam's encroachment into the lives of non-Muslims. We also reject the unjust assumption that all Muslims are complicit in or somehow responsible for the actions of other Muslims. So we stand firm in support of the right of both Muslims and non-Muslims to speak freely about these actions and encroachments.

Nonetheless, all the anti-Islamic initiatives adhere to one central and unifying tenet - that Islam is a political ideology, and not simply a religion. The EDL for instance states that "It is a category mistake to compare Islam with religions such as Christianity or Judaism. Apples and oranges" (EDL Manifesto 2016). All of them focus on Islam and Muslim cultural norms gaining a foothold, something which they claim to be undermining Western society. The initiatives define the increased accommodation of Muslims as a form of creeping Islamization. Unless something is done, they argue, Islamization will only increase in speed and extent. As examples of what Islamization entails they mention the introduction of halal products, sharia laws, Muslim ghettos, honor killings, gender segregation, rape, female genital mutilation (FGM) and anti-Semitism.<sup>91 92</sup> All of the above is thought to flow directly from the teachings of Muhammed, here exemplified by a statement on the website PI about the legality of rape and enslavement under Islam:

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<sup>91</sup> It is not uncommon that the leaders and spokespersons list many of these issues at once, as exemplified by Tatjana Festerling's (PEGIDA) statement at a rally in Warsaw "We have Sharia zones, patriarchy, polygamy, child marriage, FGM, hate preachers, religious slaughtering" (06.02.2016). Publicly available at: [http://www.tatjanafesterling.de/download/160206\\_Warsaw\\_TF\\_English.pdf](http://www.tatjanafesterling.de/download/160206_Warsaw_TF_English.pdf) (Accessed 12.03.2016).

<sup>92</sup> "... nebulous statements of islamic representatives in this country properly, who assert in prayer-mill fashion that women hold an equal position in Islam and stereotypically reiterate that honor murders, forced marriages and violence against women have nothing to do with Islam. This hogwash is being believed by fewer and fewer people ...".

Islam codifies and legalizes the diabolical evil of rape. God and his messenger Muhammad not only endorsed the institution of slavery but also the raping and sexual molestation of female slaves. The very proposition that God would make rape a divine, holy act and have as his prophet a man who raped, allowed his male followers to attack their female captives is simply outrageous.<sup>93</sup>

The final outcome is either extermination or subjugation and slavery. As a part of this narrative they make a clear distinction between Islam and Christendom and Christianity. While Christianity is portrayed as a benevolent force for good, Islam is viewed as an alien, backwards and historically static force that spreads to the detriment of our own culture and religion. By framing Christianity as a central aspect, they can draw upon historical events dating back to the 7<sup>th</sup> Century and onwards, thus pointing out that this is but the latest variation of a grueling conflict<sup>94</sup>



**Picture 5.1. Propaganda material by anti-Islamic initiatives**

Note: On the right is a white woman dressed in a Norwegian folk dress (*bunad*) with a veil. The picture tells us that Norway will turn into “Norgestan” by the year 2030, and that the slogan for the Norwegian Labour Party (AP) will be “Allah will be included” instead of their current “Everybody will be included”. For the German case, the hated figure of Angela Merkel is represented as a Muslim, signaling that she and others belonging to the elite allow themselves to be “Islamized” in the name of tolerance.

<sup>93</sup> Quote from the blog Politically Incorrect, 03.03.2013. Publicly available at: <http://www.pi-news.org/2013/03/islamic-sanctification-of-rape-and-the-horror-of-muslim-rape/> (Accessed 05.12.2015).

<sup>94</sup> Some of the most prominent historical events include the conquest and establishment of Al-Andalus in Spain, the conquest of Byzantium by the Ottomans in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the attack on Wien in 1683.



Islamization is contextualized by arguing that this is either at the behest of, or due to, the failings of what they define as the globalist and multicultural elites within the political arena, academia and mainstream media. For instance, the EDL position is that Britain's leaders are cowards:

Our political leaders are too cowardly to deal with the problem of Islamic terror at its root; so they make a virtue out of their cowardice. We are not fooled. (EDL manifesto 2016)

The respective anti-Islamic initiatives are primarily concerned on their own countries, followed by Europe and the West in general. As such the dominant center-left parties are often portrayed as a main opponent enabling the destruction of traditional, Norwegian, English and Germany society.<sup>95</sup> The CDU and Angela Merkel have recently superseded the Social Democrats as the embodiment of the internal enemy across the cases following the “refugee crisis” of 2015 and her statements about the leaders of PEGIDA having “hatred in their hearts”.<sup>96</sup> For instance, then Deputy leader of PEGIDA stated that:

Angela Merkel is the most dangerous woman in the world. She has given up control of the country, the borders and probably also about herself.<sup>97</sup>

This is a marked shift from being portrayed as a savior early on in 2010 – when Merkel stated that “creating a multicultural society has utterly failed”.<sup>98</sup> The elites are framed as having betrayed the people by oppressing and misleading the popular opposition towards immigration, Islamization and multiculturalism. In their view, this is not only because they collude with Muslims, are

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<sup>95</sup> HRS stands out in this regard as the sole Norwegian initiatives which doesn't explicitly single out the Labor Party.

<sup>96</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/chancellor-angela-merkel-delivers-stinging-attack-on-germanys-growing-anti-islamic-protest-movement-9952274.html> (accessed 10.01.2015).

<sup>97</sup> Excerpt from Tatjana Festerling's speech made in Warsaw (06.02.2016).

<sup>98</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/oct/17/angela-merkel-german-multiculturalism-failed> (accessed 10.01.2015).

ideologically blinded or cowards, but because the elite deem both the people and the anti-Islamic initiatives to be racist. It is from this position that the anti-Islamic initiatives frame their struggle.

It is common to point to the education system as one of the main explanations for the dominance of multiculturalist elites. This is done by “selling in self-hatred to generations” towards Western civilization by downplaying Christianity, preaching the evils of colonialism and the Crusades. The result is cravenness and self-dissolution when faced with foreign cultures. This paints a vast and dark picture of a hegemonic elite that actively conspires to undermine the people it governs, so that *we* have to give ground to *them*. In this way we can argue that they are constructing a framework of injustice. The elite and the leftwing are oppressing both them and the people at large. This is done proactively or tacitly in league with Islamic organizations and agents.

The role of the elites in what they see as an ongoing Islamization is reinforced by emphasizing immigration and the subsequent demographic shifts associated with it. One of the main arguments is that non-Western immigration is undermining social coherence and trust. Politicians and the media talk about integration in a way which is deceptive and which conceals reality, that it is ethnic Norwegians, Britons and Germans are being integrated and assimilated into an alien and oppressive culture. Anti-Islamic initiatives actively incorporate arguments about women being oppressed by the Muslim patriarchy based on the *Quran* and Islamic cultural norms being the primary example. They see multiculturalism as a failed project leading to the self-destruction of Western civilization. All these factors help cement the three central dichotomies of anti-Islamic initiatives. These are the *people* versus *the elite*, *Norwegians/British/German* versus *Muslims* and the *West* vs. *Islam*. Throughout this framing activity, they create an active delineation where they view themselves as being on the side of the people, and against the elite, Islam and Islamists. This sharp divide is at the focal point for enmity.

#### 5.4.2 Prognosis

The construction of a solution-based framework implies an articulation of possible solutions and strategies for coping with the issues which the agents view as problematic (Benford and Snow 2000). The various anti-Islamic initiatives propose a wide range of solutions and strategies to overcome what they view as multicultural dominance and the Islamization of society. This is seen as an existential struggle for democracy, and all the solutions proposed are non-violent. The rejection of violence is linked to their diagnostic framing of Western societies as civilized and rights-based, in contrast to the violent Islamists. They aim to stop the spread of Islam and to halt Muslim immigration through legislation and political power, directed towards mobilizing the people against multiculturalism by disseminating information and thus contributing to their understanding of the democratic process.

To counter what they see as a failed multicultural doctrine they argue that the state must place a higher emphasis on Western values. Freedom of speech, gender equality and toleration of difference become focal points that define us, cementing the distinction between the civilized West and their portrayal of Islam and (practicing) Muslims. They argue for assimilation of immigrants and relegating any expressions of Islam and the Muslim faith to the private sphere. By continually emphasizing these aspects they actively cement the framework which juxtaposes Islam and liberal values. The fear is that Islamic influences will lead to a degradation of our democratic institutions. To counteract this, some argue for a “democracy canon” – wherein democracy and all the aspects that are connected to it – such as secularism, equality and freedom of speech – must be promoted far more actively in schools:<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> HRS is the initiatives most clearly advocating an emphasis on teaching about democracy in schools, which they have argued for in several articles as well as in the interview conducted by Berntzen (4.10.2010).

In order to be able to resist this menace, we need a society in which citizens have a firm appreciation of democracy, a knowledge of its history, and a familiarity with its key texts, and a reverence for its fundamental values. Democracy stands or falls on citizens' love and persistence – their fierce loyalty to these fundamental principles and values.<sup>100</sup>

Some initiatives propose intervening directly in Muslim communities, teaching *them* about democracy.<sup>101</sup> They frame this as a fight against totalitarian and oppressive ideologies such as Communism, Nazism on the one hand and Islam and Islamism on the other. This is pivotal to their argumentation, and highlights the seriousness of the situation. For this matter, they use the historical cooperation of the Sunni Muslim Grand Mufti of Jerusalem (who was awarded the title of honorary Aryan) with Adolf Hitler. An historical image that is often reproduced to this effect is one where the Grand Mufti is meeting a senior Nazi commander. Strikingly, although they frame their struggle as being for freedom of speech, many also say adhere to the position that the *Quran* should be banned, comparing its contents to Hitler's *Mein Kampf*:



**Picture 5.2. Anti-Islamic propaganda material**

Note: a historical photograph of the Grand Mufti meeting a high-ranking Nazi official

With the National Socialists, a radical minority emerged to overthrow the majority. The same is true in Islam: When jihad is called for, no Muslim can oppose it, otherwise he is regarded as an apostate and must be killed

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<sup>100</sup> Excerpt with interview of HRS spokesperson by journalist in Frontpage Magazine, available at: <https://www.rights.no/2011/05/frontpage-intervjuer-hege-storhaug/> (accessed 31.05.2015).

<sup>101</sup> In Norway, the fringe group SIAN is the one most fervently arguing for intervening in Muslim communities in such a manner. Intervention in Muslims communities was generally something which the leader of SIAN advocated consistently in the interview (1.10.2010).

by the order of Mohammed. The similarity of the two ideologies is demonstrated by the close ties they had at the time [...]. Even today *Mein Kampf* is a best-seller in Islamic countries.<sup>102</sup>

In order to achieve their goals, they place a large emphasis on the judicial system, something which underlines their focus on state-based solutions. All the different actors, whether they belong to a party, a newspaper or an independent think-tank, are highly focused on achieving change through the political system. To stop Islam's encroachment the anti-Islamic initiatives also advocate a complete halt or a drastic reduction of non-Western immigration. This perspective contains a latent assumption that all Muslims are hard to integrate. Therefore, every Muslim immigrant is a potential threat.<sup>103</sup> As the perception that the anti-Islamic actors are being oppressed by the elite is a central theme, they argue that the elites should start discussing these aspects openly, or things will take a turn for the worse. Subsequently, some initiatives also point to the unwillingness of governing parties to apply scientific analyses of the negative consequences of immigration.<sup>104</sup> In so doing, they present themselves as agents for enlightenment, fighting for the common man:

Yes, but my goal is that this should be a contribution to the democratic process. It has to be channeled within legal forms, within rational and articulated forms. Otherwise it will take extremely unhealthy directions.

'Unhealthy' means that it isn't being articulated. We do live in a democracy after all, with a long tradition of solving problems in a non-violent way – which means that they have to be articulated! The pressure will keep

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<sup>102</sup> My translation of statement by Michael Stürzenberger, the leader of the German Freedom Party, DF: "Schon bei den National-Sozialisten hat eine radikale Minderheit ausgereicht, um die Masse der Menschen ins Unheil zu stürzen. Genauso verhält es sich im Islam: Wenn der Dschihad ausgerufen ist, darf sich kein Moslem widersetzen, sonst gilt er als Apostat und muss gemäß Befehl von Mohammed getötet werden. Wie ähnlich sich die beiden Ideologien sind, beweist der enge Pakt, den sie beide damals schlossen. Auch heute ist „Mein Kampf“ ein Verkaufsschlager in islamischen Ländern." (30.05.2015).

<sup>103</sup> When talking about their internal opponents they tend to identify them with the "radicals of '68".

<sup>104</sup> As such HRS has published several reports on the rate of immigration and population growth based on datasets from the Norwegian Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Norway (SSB).

rising if somebody at the top dictates to the people, saying “no, you’re not allowed to say that”. This will result in very detrimental conditions.<sup>105</sup>

The desire to confront and halt the spread of Islam is part of a joint framework shared by all the initiatives. They place a major emphasis on peaceful solutions. The general view is that they contribute as a moderating force, and thus reduce the possibility of a violent escalation. This stresses the congruence between the way different agents are framed, wherein the solutions match their diagnosis. In this way, their explicit focus on distancing themselves from violence is a consequence of their framing of Western societies as civilized and rights-based, in contrast to the violent Muslims. The coherence with, and limitations set by the diagnostic framing is a tendency that has been noted in several studies that apply a framing theoretical perspective (Benford 1997). While they frame Islam as an existential threat and political adversary, the primary opponent becomes the “oppressive, multicultural elites”.

#### 5.4.3 **Motivational framing**

The active construction of a motivational framework is something which Snow characterizes as a central and final component of the creation of meaning in a social movement. Its primary use is to rationalize and legitimize opposition, and to mobilize people in support of their struggle (Benford and Snow 2000, 619). The anti-Islamic motivational framing is an essentialization of their core arguments, coupled with an emphasis on the primacy of action. They do this by arguing that we are all part of this struggle, whether we want to or not. Implicitly this means that passivity equals condoning a process in which society becomes Islamized. They frame their opposition as a defensive battle for freedom and democracy, a fight in which they are willing to give anything to

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<sup>105</sup> This excerpt is taken from the interview with the editor of the prominent webpage Document.no (29.9.2010).

win. Either you are on the side of freedom or democracy, or you are opposed and on the same side as the Jihadists and Islamists and their totalitarian ideology of Islam:

The time for tolerating intolerance has come to an end: it is time for the civilised world to unite against a truly Global Jihad, in all its forms.<sup>106</sup>

They reinforce their motivational framing with apocalyptic statements such as ‘our entire civilization is in peril if the developments we see now continue’, and war metaphors such as ‘invasion’, ‘struggle’, ‘fight’, ‘traitor’ occur frequently. Some draw parallels to World War II. The war metaphors are not meant literally, at least not by most actors, but they highlight the severity of the current situation. In this way, they work as effective motivational framing. The anti-Islamic motivational framework is centered on mobilizing people to join in an active struggle to preserve Western society and values against those who seek to undermine it. This is done by delineating between *us* and *them*, wherein one is forced to take a stand. The conflict is heightened to an existential level between *freedom* versus *submission*, *good* and *evil*. The emphasis on fighting for “what’s ours” can be seen as highly rational when seen in light of the adjoining framework, where the very foundations for our free societies are under threat.

To summarize, the anti-Islamic movement adheres to a broad, common framework that is relatively uniform across organizations and countries. Their diagnostic framing of the threat can be roughly divided into two: Islam and Islamism as a totalitarian and existential threat; alongside 2) the elites’ attempts to cover up this fact or otherwise conspire with Muslims to destroy Western civilization. They operate with a broad, inclusive understanding of who is being threatened - women, LGBT, Jews as well as people of different religious, ethnic and national backgrounds. In short, the rights and liberties of all other groups are threatened by Muslims. Their prognostic

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<sup>106</sup> EDL Manifesto, 2016.

framing is anchored in democratic means; they advocate halting or minimizing non-Western immigration, assimilation instead of multiculturalism, an extended emphasis on Christianity and liberal values as well as public inquiries into the negative effects of immigration and achieving an open debate on these subjects. Their motivational framework is constructed by combining the diagnostic and prognostic elements, calling for people to fight for freedom and democracy.

### **5.5 Women's rights and strategic ambiguity**

The distinction between the civilized “us” and the totalitarian and barbaric “them” transcends the diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing.<sup>107</sup> This apparent inclusion and defense of liberal and progressive values and vulnerable minorities is particularly striking when seen in a historical perspective where the far and extreme right have been characterized by their ideological opposition to gender equality, and their racism, anti-Semitism and homophobia. This inclusion, which runs across the cases in this chapter, has been understood as a thin veneer masking their true positions, and nothing more than an “exploitation” of gender and LGBT arguments (e.g. Mayer, Ajanovic and Sauer 2014) to defend themselves against accusations of racism (Lenting and Titley 2012, 20). The second part of this chapter therefore unravels the use of these liberal and progressive ideals and how they relate to more traditional perspectives long dominant among the far right. It does so by narrowing down to the issue of women's rights. Issues such as democracy, freedom of speech, conserving the Christian heritage and so on play an important role, but women's rights and safety is perhaps the most salient across time and cases. It is one of the most central and recurring themes in the definition of “us”, consistently juxtaposed with the threat posed by Muslim men. The issue of women's rights also captures the tension inherent in this movement and subcultures'

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framing – straddling the span between older far right legacies and positions previously held exclusively by liberals and leftists. To clarify this, we make an analytical distinction between protector frames (PF) and equality frames (EF), both of which are used intermittently by all anti-Islamic actors. These frames can be broken down into four recurring components; point of view, victim, perpetrators and enablers. The two frames are distinct on the first three of these, and only overlap on the last.

**Table 5.2 The traditional protector frames and modern equality frames used by anti-Islamic initiatives**

	<b>Traditional protector frames (PF)</b>	<b>Modern equality frames (EF)</b>
Point of view	Male	Female
Victim	«Our women»	“Oppressed” Muslim and all non-Muslim women
Perpetrators	Muslim men	Muslim patriarchy
Enablers	The elite	The elite

Description: The frames are broken down by point of view, portrayal of victim, perpetrators and enablers.

First, the PF point of view is male, whereas in the modern EF it is female. Second, PF includes the possessive notion of “our women”, whereas EF is more expansive and includes “oppressed” Muslim women as well as all non-Muslim women. Third, PF is agency oriented and refers to Muslim men in general as inherently dangerous, just more so because the *Quran* supposedly legitimizes rape. On the other hand, EF relies on the structural notion of Muslim patriarchy rooted in social traditions. Nonetheless, the consistent depiction of Muslim men as perpetrators remains fixed in both depictions. They are systematically portrayed as depraved sexual predators and Islam as an ideology of the penultimate embodiment of male dominance. Within this framework anti-Islamic initiatives talk about “Western” women being harassed, assaulted and raped by Muslim men, but also portray Muslim women as the biggest victims, highlighting their inferiority under Sharia law and Islam in general. Finally, both frames overlap in the portrayal of

the elite as the enablers of (male) Muslim sexual violence and predatory behavior.<sup>108</sup> Protector frames are in line with the older extreme right and ethno-pluralist far right, insomuch as it is about Norwegian, British or German men defending “our women” from Muslim men. This reflects traditional notions about gender divisions and women as the weaker sex, and is epitomized by depicting Western men being prevented from rescuing vulnerable women from the predations of Muslim men by the state. In a sense, men are the true victims in this perspective. On the other hand, equality frames are aligned with modern gender norms, this is evident in the inclusion of Muslim women and omitting the above-mentioned male victimhood-perspective.



*Picture 5.3. Propaganda material from HRS, the EDL and PEGIDA which captures elements of the two frames*

*The picture of a young black girl is representative of the modern equality frame and has the text “Norwegian-born girls are gender mutilated” on it, whereas the latter two are in line with the traditional protector frames.*

Having stressed that the two frames are used by all the anti-Islamic actors, the salience of EF and PF nonetheless varies between the three country cases. This is partly traceable to differences in national contexts and the impact of the specific organizations. As a consequence of the central role played by HRS alongside the broader influence of Norwegian state feminism, the Norwegian case

<sup>108</sup> Whether or not the elite is portrayed as willfully enabling Muslim men is a key distinction between “moderate” and “radical” anti-Islamic actors. The notion that the elite is willfully enabling Muslim men/Muslim patriarchy to the detriment of women is an extension of the Eurabia theory.

is dominated by EF, whereas PF are more prominent in the British and German cases. For instance, Norwegian anti-Islamic initiatives such as PEGIDA Norway<sup>109</sup> and HRS consistently make references to the oppression of Muslim women by other Muslims – especially female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. FGM has been a key issue for HRS, and was portrayed by the spokesperson as her gateway to understanding that Islam was a totalitarian ideology completely, unlike Christianity.<sup>110</sup> Gender equality seen in relation to Islam and Muslim cultural praxis has also been salient over a longer time span in Norway, stretching back to the mid-1990s with reports about (Somali-Norwegian) Muslim girls being forced into marriage and subjected to FGM (Van Es 2016). Public debate persisted over the years, and the importance of gender equality as a Norwegian value under threat from “Islamization” became increasingly salient following the “Muhammed cartoon crisis” in 2006, reinforcing the dichotomy between perceived Western values and Islam (ibid.). In contrast, gender and women’s rights only became a high salience issue in the British and German cases after more recent sexual assault scandals. In Britain, the spark was the conviction of five men in a “grooming scandal”, which became a major issue in 2010, where predominantly men with a Pakistani background were accused and in some cases convicted of luring underage girls into sexual relationships in return for such things as candy, alcohol and drugs.<sup>111</sup> This also has a class dimension which is much less salient in Germany and Norway, both since the EDL began in the former industrial town of Luton and emphasize the working-class roots of its members, alongside the fact that most targeted girls are poor and white. In Germany, the sexual assaults on women on New Year’s Eve in Cologne, 2015, became the main focal point. In their subsequent demonstrations, PEGIDA relied on the slogan “rapefugees not welcome”, which quickly diffused

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<sup>109</sup> For instance, the leader of PEGIDA Norway stated that gender mutilation and forced marriage was because of Muslim immigration and the influence of Islam:

<http://www.dagbladet.no/2015/01/12/nyheter/innenriks/samfunn/politikk/pegida/37136855/>

<sup>110</sup> Interview with spokesperson from HRS.

<sup>111</sup> <https://www.channel4.com/news/rotherham-grooming-scandal-in-numbers> (accessed 07.12.2016)

among other anti-Islamic activist groups around Europe, including the EDL.<sup>112</sup> Both the case of FGM of Muslim girls and women as well as sexual assaults and grooming have been high salience topics beyond the anti-Islamic “sphere”. In Germany, for instance, the feminist magazine *EMMA* also linked it to the behavior of Muslim men, and referred to “Tahrir-like scenes”.<sup>113</sup>

It is plausible that the dominance of EF over PF is conditional on whether the antagonistic view of Islam or the inclusion of gender equality was the entry point. Was their initial concern women’s rights or the notion of Islam as a destructive force in general? In the Norwegian case, gender equality and women’s rights was the entry point to the broader anti-Islamic framework for HRS, whereas the temporal link was reversed for most other initiatives.<sup>114</sup> In other words, both pathways are possible. Irrespective of this, the cases of sexual violence committed by people with a Muslim background have been catalysts for anti-Islamic initiatives in bridging the traditional PF and modern EF frames. Both frames are used by most anti-Islamic actors, sometimes appearing together within a single sentence or paragraph. In other words, the use of EF and the broader defense of modern gender norms does not exclude a male-centric perspective, but represents a novelty when compared with the older extreme and ethno-pluralist far right who have highlighted traditional gender roles and family values. It also creates a certain degree of overlap between the anti-Islamic collective action framework and feminist collective action framework(s).

Bridging a traditional and modern perspective on women’s rights under the umbrella of the anti-Islamic collective action framing is an indirect or “nonrelational” channel of diffusion (Soule 2004). Specifically, it allows the diffusion of the anti-Islamic collective action framework to actors

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<sup>112</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/cologne-attacks-what-happened-after-1000-women-were-sexually-assaulted-a6867071.html> (accessed 07.12.2016)

<sup>113</sup> *EMMA*, “Frauen berichten EMMA vom Terror”, Emma Online, ticker, (accessed 05.12.2016), [www.emma.de/artikel/koeln-frauen-berichten-emma-vom-terror-331129](http://www.emma.de/artikel/koeln-frauen-berichten-emma-vom-terror-331129)

<sup>114</sup> In my interview with the HRS spokeswoman, she told me that they realized that Christianity was a positive force for society when they saw how it contrasted with Islam on the issue of women’s rights.

who share a cultural understanding of gender equality and women's rights, yet have no direct political or organizational ties to each other (ibid., 312). The credibility of the frame bridging rests on how well the frames resonate with the culture of the actors they try include in their collective action framework; what Snow and Benford call "narrative fidelity" (1988). This varies on an organizational level as well as between the different country cases, and is probably most resonant in Norway

Other scholars have noted the intermittent use of "traditional" and "modern" perspectives, particularly on populist radical right parties rallying against Muslims and Islam. Gender equality and women's rights has been defined as a transparently strategic vocabulary (Scrinzi 2017), "instrumental" and "pseudo-feminist" (Larzillière and Sal 2011), and that these actors exploit gender and LGBT arguments to vilify Muslim men (Mayer, Ajanovic, and Sauer 2014). However, the traditional gender perspectives and use of PFs have escaped being labelled 'strategic', which implies that scholars use the concept of strategic to indicate that it is somehow false. This makes sense if we understand the *use* of, for instance, EF and PF as mutually exclusive, which rests on an unspoken assumption that the historical origins of the traditional and modern gender norms and the subsequent political divides are carved in stone. It also conflates incommensurability of ideologies – for instance feminism and conservatism – with incommensurability (or illegitimacy) when specific actors' and movements draw on different normative and ideological strains. Within a framing theoretical perspective, varying between and incorporating messages from ideologies and traditions with an antagonistic history is not anomalous. Instead, framing ambiguity, i.e. vacillating between different frames can be used to forge alliances bridging political differences (Polletta and Lee 2006). This back-and-forth between historically and sometimes logically opposed ideas is a consistent feature of the anti-Islamic collective action framework. This means that both frames are

equally strategic, but for different audiences. The PF helps maintain their legitimacy with conservative factions, whereas the EF is key to their portrayal of feminists who do not mobilize against Islam as *de facto* anti-feminists conspiring with Wahabists and “woman haters”:

Because the International Women’s Day march have taken sides. The wrong side. And if Norwegian “feminists” do not dare, cannot or will not demand that Islam’s power over women is crushed in the free Norway (as they demanded that the power of Christian priests, churches and reactionaries be crushed), how can women standing in the midst of oppression dare to? If the International Women’s Day march is not on the side of minority women – then who? Better to keep shut and accept ones fate. What an incomprehensible betrayal. The Wahabi hijab-brigade won. Again.<sup>115</sup>

The intermittent use of PF and EF to bridge the anti-Islamic collective action framework with the broader struggle for gender equality and women’s rights enables them to level a multilayered critique of feminists who do not share their view. Thus, the anti-Islamic initiatives can claim to be the “true” feminists while simultaneously employing traditional gender perspectives. On an overarching level, this strategic ambiguity stretches beyond framing women’s rights and gender equality vis-à-vis Islam and Muslims. This also applies for the inclusion of “liberal values” and “progressive ideals” more broadly, such as LGBT and minority rights, portraying themselves as anti-racists and supporters of Jews. This is most apparent with initiatives which started out with a traditional perspective. For instance, some initiatives began by seeing Islam as a threat to their

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<sup>115</sup> My translation of the following text from Norwegian: “Fordi 8. mars-toget har valgt side. Feil side. Og hvis norske «feminister» ikke tør, kan eller vil kreve at islams makt over kvinner knuses i det frie Norge, (slik de før krevde at kristendommens presteskap, kirke og mørkemenn ble knust), hvordan skal kvinnene som står midt i undertrykkelsen våge da? Hvis ikke 8. mars-opptøget står på minoritetskvinnenes side – hvem gjør det da? Bedre å holde kjeft og finne seg i sin skjebne. For et ufattelig svik. Wahaabismens hijab-brigade vant. Igjen.” Available from: <https://www.document.no/2017/03/08/8-mars-et-opptog-av-hyklere/> (accessed 12.03.2017).

Christian identity, and the inclusion of gender equality and LGBT rights are a relatively new and partial realignment used in specific contexts. Furthermore, although Islam is likened to Nazism and they portray themselves as staunch defenders of Jews, the ambiguity is still evident in the specific manner Jews are portrayed. For instance, in the interview with the leader of SIAN it was stressed that Jews never actually did anything to anybody, unlike Muslims. They were presented as the “model minority” – something which was not apparent without a Muslim presence. In other words, this back-and-forth between historically, and sometimes logically, opposed ideas are a consistent and core feature of the anti-Islamic collective action framework. Mirroring this strategic framing ambiguity, anti-Islamic initiatives claim to defend human rights, freedom of speech and the political system, whilst simultaneously being explicitly hostile to human rights organizations, the media and most established political parties (primarily on the left). It is always conditioned on their acceptance or rejection of Islam, Muslim culture and immigration.

### **5.6 The master frame**

To understand the transformative impact of anti-Islam, we must look at the ideologies that preceded it. Drawing on framing theory, Rydgren argues that the ‘extreme right’ master frame of the 1920s became a prominent force in the 1930s and 1940s carried by the fascist and Nazis and basically became defunct following World War II (2005a, 413). He goes on to argue that the French FN and *nouvelle droite* of the 1970s became the ideological model for other radical right parties, who adopted their innovative master frame in place of the old extreme right master frame. Whereas the first extreme right master frame was characterized by an anti-democratic stance and biological racism, the second master frame’s basic components were anti-establishment populism and xenophobic ethno-nationalism. The latter includes the notion of “separate but equal cultures” which should be confined to their own states, and which targets non-European nationalities such as Algerians and Moroccans. By contrast the old extreme right emphasizes the biological superiority

of the “white race”. According to Rydgren, the doctrine of ethno-pluralism is a form of cultural racism which rejects hierarchical thinking, where superiority and inferiority of ethnicities and cultures does not come into the (official) equation (2005a, 427). For simplicity’s sake, the first master frame is hereafter defined as ‘fascist’ whereas the second is defined as ‘ethno-pluralist’.

A third and vital component which Rydgren did not stress is their position on gender, family and sexuality. This is perhaps because the fascist and ethno-pluralist master frame both rely on so-called “traditional” family values, which means that there was continuity in this regard. Feldman and Jackson (2014, 176) for instance argue that the surge in anti-Islamic opposition (they use the term ‘Islamophobia’) since the turn of the century is another expression of the cultural racism at the core of the ethno-pluralist master frame. Although there are similarities, I argue that the shift from targeting specific ethnicities to Muslims and Islam, particularly when coupled with progressive and liberal ideals and a defense of Jews, women and LGBT is sufficiently different to constitute a third master frame for the far right.

Whereas there was continuation between the fascist and the ethno-pluralist master frame in their emphasis on traditional family values, the anti-Islamic master frame incorporates both traditional and modern perspectives. Anti-Islam also continues the ethno-pluralist master frame’s anti-establishment line. The antagonism towards Islam and Muslims breaks with the ethno-pluralist line of separate but equal by explicitly defining Islam as inferior due to its inherent oppressive and violent character, yet both the anti-Islamic master frame and the ethno-pluralist master frame can be understood as “cultural racism” in its broadest sense. This thesis’ argument that anti-Islam constitutes a third master frame therefore rests heavily on bringing the family/gender-dimension










into the equation, which Rydgren excluded from his minimalist definition.<sup>116</sup> The political historian Vossen pointed out the likelihood of anti-Islam developing into a distinct master frame, highlighting Geert Wilders and his PVV party as innovators in this sense (2011; 2016). Moreover, he argues that anti-Islam may replace the previous, ethno-pluralist master frame identified by Rydgren among “nationalist populist parties and movements” (2011, 180).

Figure 5.3 presents the distinctions and overlaps between the three master frames are systematized along three dimensions: 1) how they view the system; 2) the basis for their understanding of the other; and 3) which values they otherwise uphold. This makes it clear that the anti-Islamic master frame is fundamentally different from the fascist master frame, whereas the ethno-pluralist master frame can be understood as a transitory phenomenon that bridges the fascist and anti-Islamic lines. Whereas the far-right parties that managed to succeed largely did so because they adopted the ethno-pluralist master frame (Rydgren 2005a), the old extreme right master frame survived in the fauna of neo-Nazi, white power and fascist groups.

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<sup>116</sup> Rydgren does mention that the ethno-pluralist doctrine is embedded in “a general sociocultural authoritarianism, stressing themes like law and order and family values” (2005, p. 433, n. 1).

**Figure 5.3. The traits that unite and distinguish the three epoch-defining master frames for the far right: fascist, ethno-pluralist and anti-Islamic**

	Fascist master frame	Ethno-pluralist master frame	Anti-Islamic master frame
The system	Anti-democratic 	Anti-elite 	
The other	Biological racism (inferior races) 	Ethno-pluralism (separate but equal ethnicities) 	Anti-Islam (inferior religion and ideology) 
Themselves	Traditional values (e.g. no to abortion, distinct gender roles, sanctity of heterosexual marriage) 		Modern values (e.g. gender and LGBT rights) 

### 5.6.1 GA(LT)AN

The implications of a reorientation towards an anti-Islamic master frame becomes even more visible when seen in the light of the literature on political cleavages, which also captures the “gendered” dimension. Ideologically speaking, the anti-Islamic master frame transcends the so-called *Green–Alternative–Libertarian* (GAL) versus *Traditional–Authoritarian–Nationalist* (TAN) cleavage that much scholarly literature argues replaced the traditional left-right economic cleavage as the most salient the main dividing line in Western politics (Kriesi et al. 2008). The libertarian-traditional dimension has been considered the central component of this cleavage (e.g. Van der Brug and Van Spanje 2009). Where libertarian is understood as being in favor of same-sex marriage, greater democratic participation, access to abortion and so on (Bakker et al. 2015),

traditional entails a rejection of these ideas and an emphasis on Christianity, the sanctity of heterosexual marriage and so forth. Bornschieer identifies the populist radical right as challenging precisely the societal changes stemming from the ‘libertarian left’ (2010, 5). According to this perspective, the electoral advances of populist right parties is driven by a reaction against the libertarian-universalistic issues’ dominance over traditionalist-communitarian stances (Kriesi, Grande et al. 2008; Bornschieer 2010; Kriesi 2010; Bornschieer 2011), meaning that these parties represent the TAN side of the cleavage. This is in line with Rydgren’s definition of the radical right, ethno-pluralist master frame.

Whilst I identify the website LGF as the genesis for the civilizational, anti-Islamic master frame outside party politics, its initial rise in party politics can largely be traced to the Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn and his party LPF (see chapter 3). LPF have been described as ideological innovators in several studies (e.g. Akkerman 2005; Kitschelt 2007: 2012; de Lange and Mügge 2015). Besides the LPF, some radical right parties have since undergone a partial ideological reorientation that breaks with the supposed GAL/TAN divide. For instance, in a comparative analysis of populist radical right party manifestos, de Lange and Mügge found that the relationship between gender and Islam became increasingly significant after 9/11 (2015, 74). Moreover, they argue that some of these parties, such as the Flemish LDD and the Dutch LPF, do not espouse traditional views on family and gender issues and can therefore be defined as modern rather than traditional on this dimension (ibid. 71). Spierings, Lubbers and Zaslove (2017) show that this has had an impact on the demand side, with voters in Norway, Sweden and Switzerland in particular. They find that people who think LGBT rights are important but who are negative to immigration are actually more likely to vote for the populist radical right than those who are only negative to immigration.

Among radical right parties, however, the reorientation has not been total. The ethno-pluralist master frame has not become defunct. For whereas some initiatives seem to align with L rather than T on the libertarian-traditional dimension when it comes to gender equality and gay rights, others embody a limbo position. In the cases studied here, both traditional and libertarian/modern arguments and positions are used side-by-side – what I define as *strategic frame ambiguity*. In the case of the Dutch PVV it seems to tilt clearly in the direction of the libertarian position, whereas the innovator of the previous master frame and one of the parties which have undergone at least a partial anti-Islamic reorientation, The French FN, under the auspices of Marine le Pen, have engaged in protests against legalizing same-sex marriage and liberalizing adoption laws (Akkerman 2015).

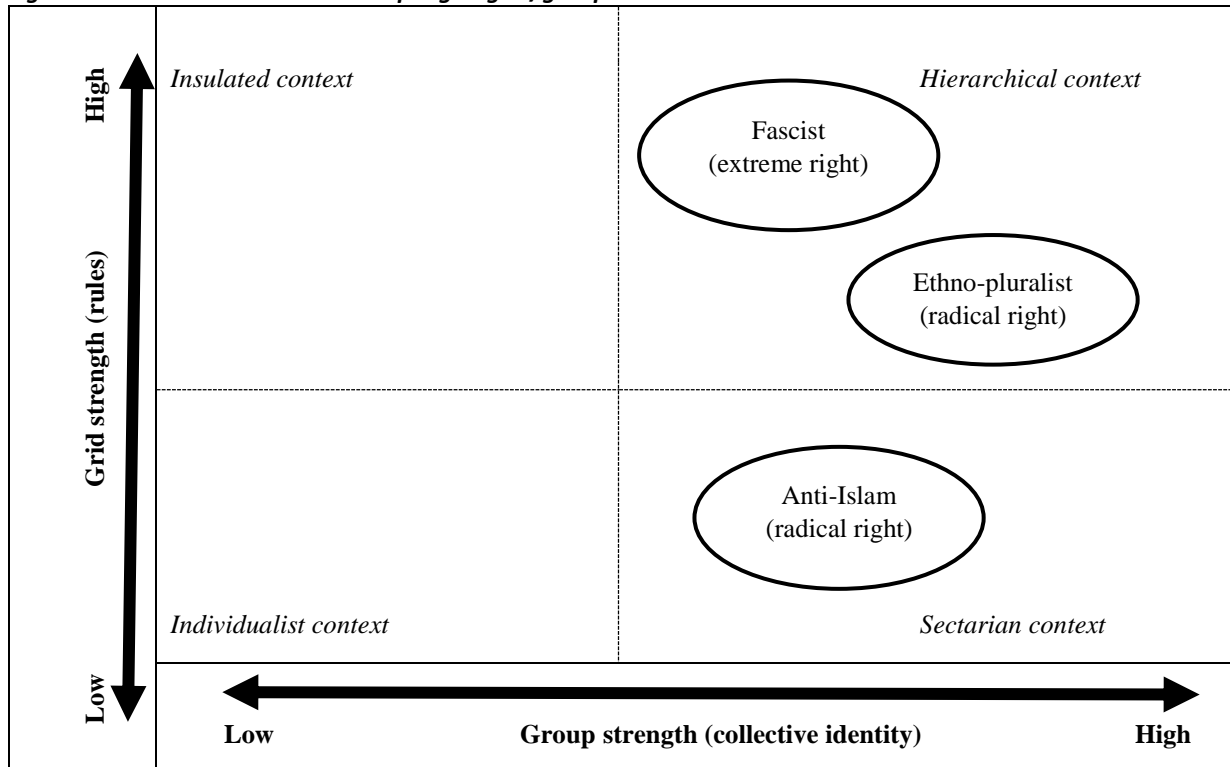
### **5.6.2 Decoupling group from grid – a sectarian context**

Grid-group analysis, initially developed by Mary Douglas' (1970; 1982), enables us to further systematize the implications of the anti-Islamic, civilizational master frame. The terms grid and group refer to two separate dimensions of social order (1982, 191). Group refers to the general identity-boundaries around a community, whereas grid indicates the amount of structural regulations and limitations. These two dimensions give rise to four separate fields or contexts which we can plot onto matrix. First, an individualist, market-like context characterized by weak collective identities and few rules (low group/grid). Second, an isolationist, and fatalistic context with weak collective identities and many rules (low group/high grid). Third, a hierarchical and collectivist context (high group/high grid). Finally, a sectarian context with strong collective identities and few rules (high group/low grid).

Originally meant to classify different societies, Kitschelt (2012) employed Douglas' framework to re-theorize the cultural libertarian-authoritarian dimension at the heart of the

GAL/TAN divide to explain the rise of LPF. In this re-theoretization, we can split the libertarian-authoritarian dimension along group-issues and grid-issues. Whereas questions of immigration, integration and ethnicity are group-issues, questions of law and order, gender equality and gay rights are grid-issues.<sup>117</sup>

**Figure 5.4. The authoritarian decoupling: a grid/group matrix.**



*Description: Vertical axis indicates grid strength, that is the adherence to rules and hierarchies. The horizontal axis indicates group strength, that is the adherence to a collective identity. Fascist, extreme right and ethno-pluralist radical right are situated within the high grid/group quadrant, whereas the anti-Islamic radical right is situated within the low grid/high group quadrant.*

<sup>117</sup> Kitschelt introduced economic issues as a third dimension in addition to grid-group, which he labeled greed. The greed dimension is equivalent to the economic left-right, or socialist-capitalist dimension (e.g., Kitschelt 1994; Kitschelt and McGann 1995, 15). While certainly relevant to model and explain the dimensions on which political parties (have to) compete, I contend that this third dimension provides little descriptive or explanatory power to the anti-Islamic turn itself.

Building on my findings and Kitschelt's re-theoretization, we can classify both the fascist extreme right and ethno-pluralist radical right as belonging to the upper right quadrant, which Douglas described as the hierarchical context, whereas the anti-Islamic radical right is situated in the bottom right quadrant. We can characterize this as a *decoupling* of immigration related issues and sociocultural issues. Within a functionalist perspective, the decoupling no longer makes authoritarian values and claims a necessary condition for (anti-Islamic) radical right voting or activism.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter shows that the anti-Islamic actors in Norway, Britain and Germany share the same collective action framework. Their transnational coherence consolidates the understanding of anti-Islam as a potent, civilizational master frame. Narrowing down to the contentious issue of gender equality and women's rights vis-à-vis Islam and Muslims, it shows how they use both traditional protector frames with a male point-of-view and modern equality frames with a female point-of-view. Whereas the Norwegian opposition is strongly anchored in concern for all women's rights, the possessive notion of protecting "our women" is more predominant in the German and British cases. Nonetheless, all the anti-Islamic actors – often in quick succession, use both sets of frames. This framing ambiguity is a recurring phenomenon. Instead of understanding the inclusion of gender equality as a deceptive ploy, this chapter argues that both traditional and modern frames are equally strategic. The ambiguity evident in the simultaneous use of these frames makes it easier for anti-Islamic activists and parties to build alliances across previously untenable political differences, whilst sidelining those who disagree with their view of Islam and Muslims. Bridging frames also function as a channel for diffusion beyond establishing organizational or individual ties (Soule 2004). This shift creates the potential for building negative coalitions between such varied actors' as Christian conservatives, nationalists, LGBT rights groups, women's rights groups

and Jewish groups. As Kitschelt (2012) argued, the decoupling between group and grid-related issues has opened up for a different set of radical right voters that do not stress authoritarian values. Similarly, this decoupling makes it possible for the extra-parliamentary, anti-Islamic far right to mobilize different activists than the “old” extreme and radical right. This does not mean, however, that authoritarian values and identity issues related to Muslims and immigration have become decoupled among those radical and extreme right parties and extra-parliamentary initiatives that adhere to the ethno-pluralist or fascist master frame. Even though the anti-Islamic turn and partial decoupling of authoritarian values is the most pronounced development on the far right during the last decade, it is also important to bear in mind that the carriers of this anti-Islamic, civilizational master frame (both parties and extra-parliamentary initiatives) do not constitute the entire far right, but a subset.

# 6. Networks

**Broad and ideologically diverse**



**Abstract**

The far right has undergone two parallel changes since the turn of the millennium: the shift to the web; and the increased focus on Islam and Muslims. This chapter takes both of these shifts into account, using network analysis to trace anti-Islamic organizations' Facebook ties in March 2015 and 2016. It shows that PEGIDA and the English Defence League are part of a transnational and growing network with over a thousand anti-Islamic groups online. It also reveals that anti-Islamic communities build links with actors traditionally portrayed as enemies by the extreme right. This corroborates work showing that anti-Islamic initiative portray themselves as defenders of Western civilization, Jews, women and LGBT minorities. At a meso-level, the ideological position and organizational ties of anti-Islamic groups represent a qualitative break with the traditional extreme right. However, the refugee crisis in 2015 has coincided with a stronger presence of the anti-Semitic and homophobic Eastern European extreme right. This has made the distinction fuzzier, possibly reversing the previous trajectory.

## 6.1 Introduction

Since the turn of the millennium, the far right in Western Europe and the United States has undergone two broad changes. First, much far-right activity has migrated online. Far-right groups were among the first to use online platforms in the U.S. (Burns, Smith and Strahm, 2000), and their presence has not diminished since. Social media platforms have made far-right activists less dependent on taking to the streets to catch the attention of traditional mainstream media, giving them a larger degree of control over their image. Second, animosity towards Jews and targeting minorities based on ethnicity has declined, while we have seen a concomitant increase in hostility towards Islam and Muslims (Zuquete 2008; Mayer 2013; Goodwin 2013). Opposition to Islam and Muslims have for instance become dominant among the radical right parties (see e.g. Betz and Meret 2009; Mudde 2016). Outside party politics, we have seen a rise of activist groups and other initiatives that explicitly define themselves as Counter-Jihadists (Feldman 2012; Ekman 2015), opponents of Islam and Muslims.

The proliferation of anti-Islamic activist groups such as EDL (e.g. Allen 2011; Jackson and Feldman 2011; Kassimeris and Jackson 2014) and PEGIDA (Daphi et al. 2015; Dostal 2015; Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016) indicate that the anti-Islamic far right has become a fixture in the broader political landscape. A small, but growing body of research indicates that these actors are tending to amalgamate. For instance, in one of the first empirical studies of anti-Islamic actors in the U.S., such as ACT! For America and Stop Islamization of America (SIOA), Ali et al. claim that “...this core group of deeply intertwined [anti-Islamic, sic.] individuals and organizations manufacture and exaggerate threats of ‘creeping Sharia’, Islamic domination of the West, and purported obligatory calls to violence against all non-Muslims by the *Quran*” (2011, 2). Through detailed network analyses and the use of a plagiarism detection program Bail (2012, 2014) shows that the network of anti-Islamic organizations in the U.S., such as Concerned Women for America

has grown in influence and become agenda-setters at times dominating the news wave due to their emotionally charged language. Berntzen and Sandberg (2014) claim that these communities form a transnational social movement “sharing an anti-Islamic identity and rhetoric, and have overlapping and close ties” (ibid. 761). The transnational character of the anti-Islamic movement, with organizational and ideological roots across Europe and the United States has been further outlined by several scholars. Melagrou-Hitchens and Brun describe it as an “identifiable pan-European far-right movement (2014, 1), and Goodwin defines it as “... an amorphous network of think-tanks, bloggers and activists” (2013, 1), whereas Denes characterizes it as a “loose global fraternity” (2012, 295).

Yet the transnational scope of the anti-Islamic far right and their networks remains empirically underexplored (Macklin 2013). Exceptions include Yang and Self (2015) and Lee (2015). Yang and Self conducted a network analysis starting from the anti-Islamic blog Atlas Shrugs, finding that it primarily had connections to other U.S. right-wing sites. Beginning with five anti-Islamic websites, and tracing their hyperlinks, Lee made a partial mapping of what he defines as the “Counter-Jihadist Nebula”, uncovering an online network of forty-six websites (2015, 256). Apart from these studies, little is known about the full scope and configuration of this movement. Despite only having mapped parts of the anti-Islamic movement, these groups have consistently been defined as belonging to the far right (e.g. Zuquete 2008; Jackson and Feldman 2011; Archer 2013; Lee 2015). Both Melagrou-Hitchens and Brun as well as Goodwin distinguish them from the explicitly racist and anti-immigrant far right in their specific focus on Islam and Muslims.

In the previous chapter, I argued that their collective action framing builds on an ideological duality where they incorporate both traditional and modern values in their self-portrayal as defenders of Western civilization. Many of these views are usually associated with parties and movements on the left, and- not the far right. This includes presenting themselves as defenders of

gender equality, LGBT, minorities and even animal rights, against their main enemy - Islam. They combine this with rallying around Christianity and unwavering support for Israel, the latter being particularly ‘inimical to the anti-Semitism of the itraditional extreme right.

This chapter maps the size and configuration of the anti-Islamic movement as it manifests itself online, and grapples with the movement’s specific composition and analyzes whether, and to what extent, it represents a break with the traditional extreme and ethno-pluralist right as some of their ideological positions might entail.

Besides engaging in protest events, most anti-Islamic actors are primarily active on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Starting with twenty-seven anti-Islamic organizations from North America and Western Europe, I conduct a one-mode network analysis, unraveling a network of 3,615 groups in March 2015 and 4,594 groups in March 2016. By historically tracing the anti-Islamic expansion of the far right, we saw how important major events such as 9/11 and the Muhammed Cartoon Crisis have been for their growth. Taking the importance of major events into account, data from before and after the refugee crisis that unfolded in the summer of 2015 allows us to discern some of the changes that occurred in its wake.

My analysis shows that, online, the anti-Islamic network is genuinely transnational with groups in places such as India, Myanmar, and the U.S. as well as in all Western European countries where they exist in a borderland between forming a movement and a subculture.<sup>118</sup>

Anti-Islamic groups in this online network also have ties to communities across the traditional left-right divide, such as Christian conservatives, Israeli and pro-Israeli groups as well

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<sup>118</sup> Following Diani’s definition, a movement is understood as “networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups, or associations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict on the basis of a shared collective identity” (Diani and Bison 2004, 282), whereas a subculture is one in which actors experience a sense of commonality that cuts across the boundaries of specific groups, but there is no systematic exchange between organizations (ibid., 285).

as groups focusing on animal rights, women's rights and LGBT rights. Few extreme right groups fronting anti-Semitic and anti-systemic ideas connect with the anti-Islamic network.<sup>119</sup> However, actors can be part of a network without being a part of a coalition or movement. Ties to animal rights, women's rights and other groups do not mean that they themselves are part of an anti-Islamic movement or subculture. Nonetheless, it is clear that the anti-Islamic actors are distinct from the traditional extreme and ethno-pluralist right. Instead, some say it represents a form of "liberal nationalism" (Laegaard 2007; Bangstad 2011), where Muslims are the ones portrayed as threatening these rights and are therefore excluded.

In the competition between the traditional extreme right and the anti-Islamic far right, the latter seems to be dominant. The anti-Islamic turn and expansion can potentially contribute to a further marginalization of the homophobic, anti-Semitic extreme right. However, the refugee crisis may have sown the seeds for reversing this move towards embracing liberal and progressive ideas at the expense of Muslims. More Eastern European extreme right groups of the older variety have entered the online network in its wake. What this will entail is still unclear.

The chapter is structured as follows. I begin by detailing my use of social network analysis, the initial case selection as well as the challenges of gathering data from online communities. I then give an overview of the anti-Islamic Facebook network in 2015 and 2016, respectively. I provide an in-depth analysis of the interrelations between the anti-Islamic communities and other communities present within the network, with a particular focus on "progressive" and extreme right forces.

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<sup>119</sup> The analysis does not include data on more traditional arenas of activism or collaboration. A group or constellation of groups within the network that is sizeable online may only have a small institutional footprint or presence on the streets.

## 6.2 Framing, ideology and networks

Are these anti-Islamic groups as ideologically different from the traditional extreme and ethno-pluralist right as Chapters 4, 5 and previous work would lead us to believe? Several studies have shown that networks are structured along ideological lines among non-government organizations (Murdie 2014, 20) as well as on social media platforms such as Twitter (Yardi and Boyd 2010; Itai, McCreery and Smith 2013, 41; Conover et al. 2011) and Facebook (Wells and Thorson 2015). Furthermore, the degree of ideological segregation online is similar to that of off-line communities (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2011; Halberstam and Knight 2016). In other words, homophily on the basis of ideology is predominant. If the ideological position of anti-Islamic groups has a relational impact this should also be mirrored in who they seek information from and who they try to create alliances with on Facebook. This means that we should be able to uncover whether the anti-Islamic movement as a whole is distinct from the traditional extreme right based on the overall network structure. First, we would expect anti-Islamic groups to establish ties to other anti-Islamic groups. As noted, overviews and qualitative analyses of anti-Islamic groups' ideology show that they claim to defend freedom of speech, gay rights, women's rights and other minorities (Archer 2013; Berntzen and Sandberg 2014). If this is more than skin deep, and ideology truly is causally linked to network formations, then we can also expect that:

*H1: Anti-Islamic initiatives have ties to groups which the anti-Islamic initiatives themselves claim to defend against Muslims.*

This includes Jewish groups, LGBT, women's rights and animal rights. We should stress that network ties are not the same as actual coalitions. Ties to, and even some reciprocation from, Jewish and "progressive" groups does not mean that they are actual coalition partners. Social movements are composed of overlapping networks encompassing a broad range of ideologies, social relations

and issues (Diani 1992, 2000; Mische 2003) whereas coalitions are “interorganizational agreements formed for the purpose of collectively addressing a specific set of policy or political objectives” (Heaney and Rojas 2008, 45). Networks transcend coalitional agreements (ibid.), but indicate which actors are desirable coalition partners (Heaney 2004). In much the same way, the absence of connections indicates which actors are undesirable coalition partners. Since they represent themselves as anti-racist and equate Islam with Nazism, we should also find that:

*H2: Traditional extreme right groups are marginal in the anti-Islamic network.*

Unlike the dominant strains of anti-Islamic ideology, traditional extreme right ideology includes reverence for violence and dictatorship at the expense of democracy. It also includes portraying Jews as the penultimate enemy, homosexuals as deviants, women as inferior and other minorities as a threat (Bjørngo 1997; 2012). Whether or not the extreme right is marginal will be determined on the basis of three factors: the number of extreme right groups; the number of ties between these and anti-Islamic groups; and their structural position in the network as a whole. For instance, are they important in tying the network together and facilitating the flow of information? A confirmation of my hypotheses would support the argument that the anti-Islamic far right is a qualitatively distinct phenomenon from the traditional extreme right. On the other hand, the assumption that the anti-Islamic far right is distinct from the traditional extreme right on an organizational level is substantially weakened if they have no ties to progressive and liberal groups, while traditional extreme right groups constitute a strong component of the network in terms of the number of groups, ties and their structural position.

### 6.3 Research design and data

In order to extract data from their Facebook groups, I relied primarily on the web-crawler Netvizz (Rieder 2013) which is accessible as a Facebook application. It allowed me to scrape content from specific Facebook groups and connections between groups. This data was subsequently analyzed using UCINET.

To collect information on the anti-Islamic groups and their online network I used what is known as a ‘saturation snowball’ approach. This allows us to begin with a selection of key actors that clearly belong to the category under scrutiny. I began with twenty-seven prior known cases of anti-Islamic actors from Norway, Britain and Germany in addition to off-shoots across Europe, North America and one group from India and one from Myanmar. Prominent groups include the EDL, SIOE and PEGIDA.<sup>120</sup>

The snowball saturation consists of going two steps beyond the starting point, dividing the groups (nodes) into three subsets. The first step is to trace whom the twenty-seven initial seed groups (subset 1) connects to (subset 2). In the second step, I identify all the ties subset 2 has back to both the original subset and out to new groups in subset 3. Finally, we see whether the groups in subset 3 connect back to subsets 1 or 2. This means that the network I analyze contains all the interrelations between all the groups in the three subsets for March 2015 and March 2016, respectively. On the one hand, the snowball approach and a vast amount of data allowed me to look at the size, scope and geographic reach – both regionally and globally – of these anti-Islamic groups, capturing an operative reality completely different from that of traditional social surveys or regular qualitative analyses.<sup>121</sup> It allows a comprehensive identification and overview of the

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<sup>120</sup> The groups come from the three last waves of anti-Islamic activist groups, which are cited in section 6.2 above.

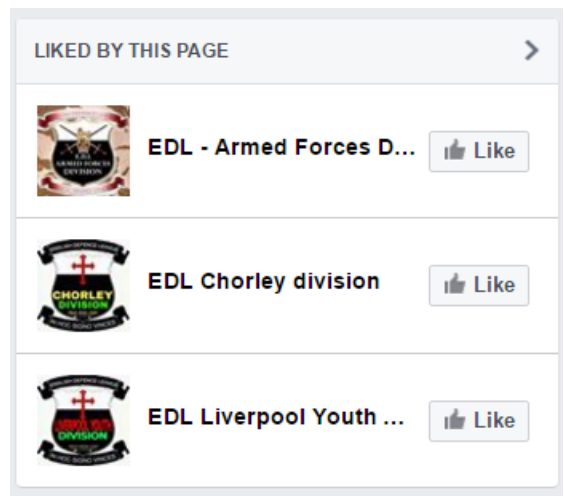
<sup>121</sup> The survey approach certainly is able to get at the broader support in the population as well as the electoral support for these platforms, but completely neglects the reality of these groups’ present existence. Let us not forget, that it does not take a large amount of people to become engaged for this phenomenon to have staying power, certainly less than is within the margins of statistical error (normally calculated as in the 3% range). Similarly, a qualitative approach, while being able to provide much



network, and is particularly helpful when the boundaries beyond a given core are difficult to predefine (Christopoulos and Aubke 2014, 17). On the other hand, a snowball approach does make the study vulnerable in two ways. First, there is the risk of missing some of the most peripheral actors (isolates). The groups that will be missed are those that connect in to these twenty-seven anti-Islamic groups but whose ties are not reciprocated by either the starting groups themselves or any other of the groups that the anti-Islamic groups in turn link to. Snowball selection may therefore lead to an overstatement of the connectedness of the actors within the network. Secondly, the identification is heavily influenced by where “we start the snowball rolling” (Hanneman and Riddle 2005). The latter issue is not of particular concern for me, as my interest is naturally focussed on singling out anti-Islam and the additional fact that I was able to start with several major anti-Islamic actors, as well as some middling and small ones.

Each connection is a directional “Like” on Facebook, meaning that somebody with administrative rights on one of the group pages has established a connection to another group by finding their site and clicking the “Like” button. Connections are *not* established when individual members of a Facebook group “Like” one another.

What does a group “Liking” another group entail? Analytically, “Like”-based connections share some similarities to hyperlinks between regular webpages. They allow users to jump to the other webpage instantaneously. However, “Likes” entail more than this. When an administrator of a



**Picture 6.1 Screenshot of the English Defense Leagues' Like roster (November 2016).**

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insight into specific phenomenae, suffers from a severe blind spot in not being able to rigorously trace networks and movements because of their innately high demand on resources.

Facebook group “Likes” another group, this action shows up on their own groups’ wall for members and followers to see. Subsequently, all updates and posts from “Liked” groups show up in the group administrators feed. This makes it easy to re-share information such as written posts, videos and pictures. Information dissemination can be almost instantaneous. It also allows the administrators to “Like” and comment individual posts of the other group, which is a good way to signal support. Even though the word “like” has positive connotations, it is not given that they have a positive view of the other group. On the contrary, it might also be used for monitoring purposes. Yet, this kind of neutral or hostile monitoring is easy to stop. As an administrator of a page, you can see which individuals and groups “Like” your own page and simply delete their “Like”. This severs the information flow, so that they no longer receive updates. It is also easy to reverse a “Like” by going to their page and unselecting them. For purposes of journalistic or hostile monitoring, it is much harder to weed out individuals who “Like” your page. Even though it is easy to detect organizations monitoring through the “Like” function, removing them naturally depends on the administrator – their awareness, commitment and possibly even paranoia.

In the following section, I begin with an overview of the anti-Islamic network captured in March 2015 before moving on to an in-depth comparison of the two time periods and the changes that have occurred. This is followed by a discussion of the specific hypotheses concerning the impact of the ideological inclusion of Jews, LGBT, women’s rights and the equation of Nazism with Islam on connections to “progressive” and traditional extreme right groups, respectively.

## 6.4 The anti-Islamic networks

Starting with the twenty-seven anti-Islamic groups, I uncovered a vast, transnational network. In 2015 the network is composed of 3,615 groups and 38,000 connections (“Likes”) between them. The data is not symmetrized, which means that the original directionality of the connections remains intact. By 2016 the network has expanded with close to 1,000 groups, containing 4,594 groups and 43,733 connections. Some measures indicate a certain degree of stability, for instance the graph density scores. They are quite low, at 0.003 and 0.002, even for a large network. This indicates that the network is far from being a single tightly-knit community. The average clustering coefficient is 0.3, which means that more than one in four possible triangles is complete at both points in time. This does not, however, tell us about the existence of larger communities. Newman’s modularity metric is one way to delve into the specific clustering and pinpoint communities. Modularity reflects the concentration of edges (connections) within a given module, which is a subset of the entire network, compared with a random distribution of edges between all the given nodes irrespective of any clustering. The ability to locate local sub-structures like these is one of the most interesting features of social network analysis. Not only are we able to say something about the whole network and the individual groups, but we can also see the way in which the network divides into different cliques (Hanneman and Riddle 2005). Applying Newman’s modularity metric at the lowest resolution (1) produces a modularity score of 0.6, with eighteen distinct communities at both points in time. The largest of these are dominated by explicitly anti-Islamic groups.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> See Tables I and II in Appendix I for a full list of communities ranked by the number of groups.

**Table 6.1 Key statistics for the anti-Islamic network in March 2015 and 2016**

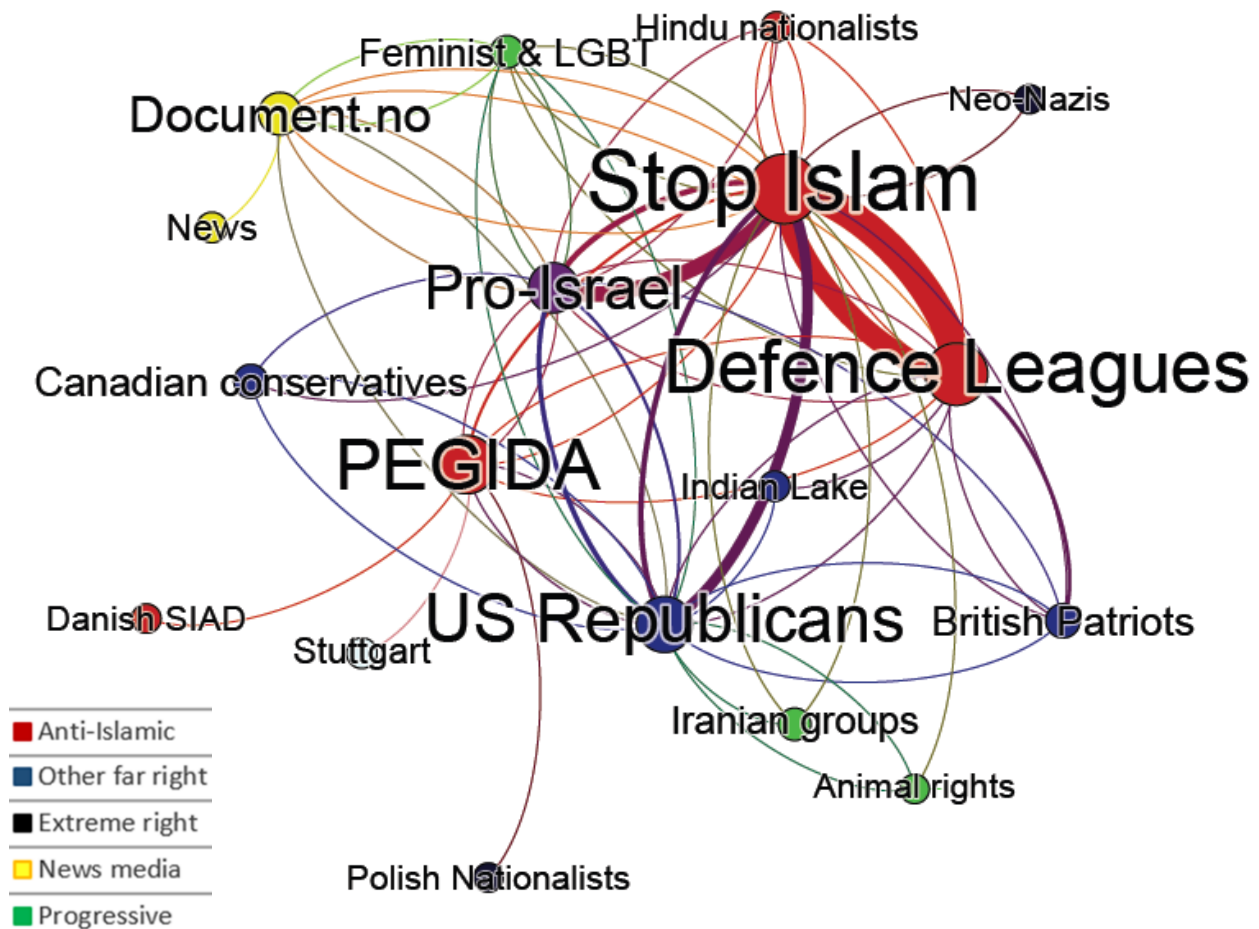
Anti-Islamic Network	March15	March 16
Nodes	3 615	4 594 [+ 27 %]
Edges	38 956	43 733 [+ 12 %]
Average degree	10.7	9.5
Network diameter	24	29
Density	0.003	0.002
Communities	18	18
Modularity score	0.6	0.6
Average clustering coefficient	0.32	0.31
Average path length	5	6.4

The subsequent figures give the aggregated versions of the entire network, where each node (circle) represents all the groups in the separate communities. Node size is determined by the number of groups, and the ties between the nodes by the number of “Likes” between the communities. The labels for the eighteen communities reflect the main composition of each community.

The network can roughly be separated into five segments at both intervals: the anti-Islamic communities (red); the extreme right (black); the broader far-right (blue); media organizations (yellow); and progressive groups (green) often labeled as part of the new social movements that began cropping up during the 1970s. In this study, it is the ties to the extreme right and the progressive groups that interest us. I begin by listing the networks and communities in 2015, before moving on to the comparison with 2016.

## 6.5 The anti-Islamic network 2015

Figure 6.1. The anti-Islamic network in March 2015



Note: The 3,654 groups as part of their respective clusters in the anti-Islamic network, March 2015 (N = 18). Node size reflects number of groups in the given cluster. Red indicates clusters dominated by explicitly anti-Islamic groups, black marks extreme-right clusters, blue other right-wing clusters, yellow for media outlets and green for “progressive”.

In 2015, the anti-Islamic communities made up 54% of the network with five communities and 1,953 groups. The largest community (766 groups) was characterized by groups whose name and descriptions included the words Stop Islamization of [England/Europe]. Although containing other groups, e.g. Gates of Vienna, labeling this community Stop Islam seems appropriate. I follow this strategy for all communities, and provide more in-depth exploration of each community in the following pages. The Stop Islam community is followed by the Defence Leagues’ (631 groups),

PEGIDA (556 groups), the Hindu nationalists (twenty-five groups) and the Stop Islamization of Denmark community (ten groups). The first three anti-Islamic communities are also the largest communities in the network. This is followed by five other far-right communities with 1,151 groups, or 32% of the network. In total, far-right groups including the anti-Islamic communities accounted for 86% of the network. The two media clusters (293 groups) and three progressive communities (152 groups) made up the rest.

With its 766 groups, the Stop Islam community constituted the largest cluster in the entire 2015 network. Besides the explicitly Stop Islamization groups, this community also included several support groups for the Dutch politician and leader of the anti-Islamic populist radical right PVV, Geert Wilders, and the famous critic of Islam and Somali refugee, Ayaan Hirsi Ali. We also find some animal rights groups within this community – although most are single-issue and focus on Halal butchering. We also have Christian fundamentalist groups with names such as the Warriors of Christ, and Women Against Socialism and Islam. The Stop Islam community also contained support groups for famous anti-Islamic and self-labeled Counter-Jihadists such as Bat Ye’Or (the woman who invented the term ‘Eurabia’) and the website GoV, both of which received massive coverage in 2011 because they were widely cited in the personal manifesto of the Norwegian terrorist, Anders Behring Breivik.

The Defence League community is the second largest within the network (631 nodes), the most well known of which is the EDL. Besides the many Defence League groups this community includes groups such as the Sikh Awareness Society (SAS), Hindus and Punjabis(Sikhs) are Friends and United, Stop lowering the armed forces pension, and groups with names such as Prophet Muhammed was a Pedophile. As with the slightly larger Stop Islam community, we also find a couple of animal rights groups such Stop Animal Cruelty, and Animal Rights UK. To the left we come across the third largest community within the anti-Islamic network; the

PEGIDA community, which had only started five months before the data was collection. In addition to a large amount of groups across Europe carrying the PEGIDA label, this community also includes some AfD groups. This is the the nascent populist right party in Germany which first picked up steam on their anti-Euro message, but later came to adopt an anti-immigrant stance as well. You also have several far right Identitaire groups in this community, which originated in France. It is interesting to note that the Swedish radical right SD also pop up in this cluster – although as a minor player with five in-links and no out-links.

Besides the explicitly anti-Islamic communities, I have classified most other communities as belonging to the broader far right; the U.S. Republican and Tea Party community, a pro-Israeli community, a cluster of Canadian conservatives as well as British patriot groups, the largest of which were the Tea Party and the pro-Israeli communities. The Tea Party community consists of 509 groups such as the Tea Party Patriots, National Rifle Association and support groups promoting television personalities such as Bill O'Reilly from Fox News. The Pro-Israeli community has 397 groups such as Christians United for Israel (CUFI), Freundschaft Deutschland-Israel, Friends of the IDF (FIDF), Hindus United for Israel and The Truth About Israel's Defensive Actions Against The Flotilla. This community contains explicitly anti-Islamic groups such as We Stand With Israel – Siotw (Stop Islamization of The World) but the Pro-Israeli community is also closely interlinked with the broader Stop Islam community. Due to the number of links to the Stop Islam and Defence League communities as well as the presence of many explicitly anti-Islamic groups within the cluster itself, the pro-Israeli community straddles the border between anti-Islamic and the broader far right. The British patriot community is the third largest far-right cluster, with 102 groups. These are mainly groups such as Support Our Armed Forces in all they do for our Nation and Keep the Falklands British. In addition, there are fan pages for well-known political and military leaders such as Winston Churchill, and

support groups for populist radical right figures such as Nigel Farage, former leader of UKIP. There was also a relatively large cluster consisting of Canadian conservative groups (ninety-five), with ties to the Defence League, Stop Islamization as well as the Tea Party & Republican communities.

There are two clusters of media outlets in the network with 280 and thirty-seven groups, respectively. The key actor in bringing the biggest cluster of media organizations into the network is the Norwegian, anti-Islamic news site Document.no. This is one of the most prominent anti-Islamic actors in Norway, with a large readership (Berntzen and Sandberg 2014). Document.no was also one of the main groups the Norwegian terrorist Anders Behring Breivik tried to establish contact with before he decided to turn to violence. As a whole this cluster has almost no links into/with other anti-Islamic groups, and as such are structurally peripheral. Document.no, however, has an important role as an information outlet for the anti-Islamic community.

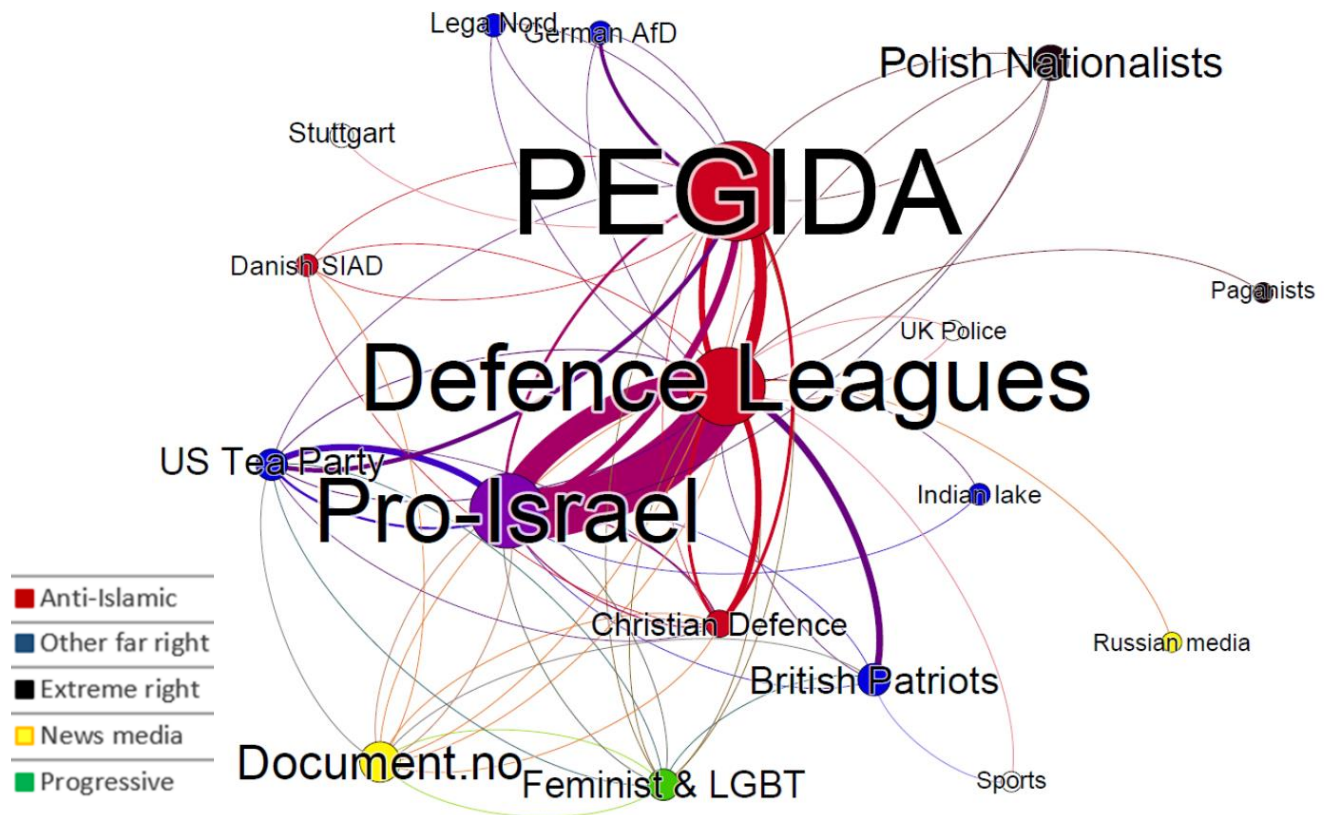
Lastly, there are the communities of progressive groups. The biggest of these is the community consisting of feminist and LGBT groups (seventy-three), with names such as Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, STOP FGM NOW!, Girls Are Not For Sale, LGBT News, Muslim & Exmuslim Women for Secularism, Women Who Change The World and Smashing the Patriarchy. There was also an Iranian anti-regime community (sixty-nine groups) and an animal rights community (ten groups).

I now turn from an overview of the communities and groups present in March 2015 to the reconfiguration of the network in March 2016.



## 6.6. Changes between 2015 and 2016

Figure 6.2. The anti-Islamic network in 2016



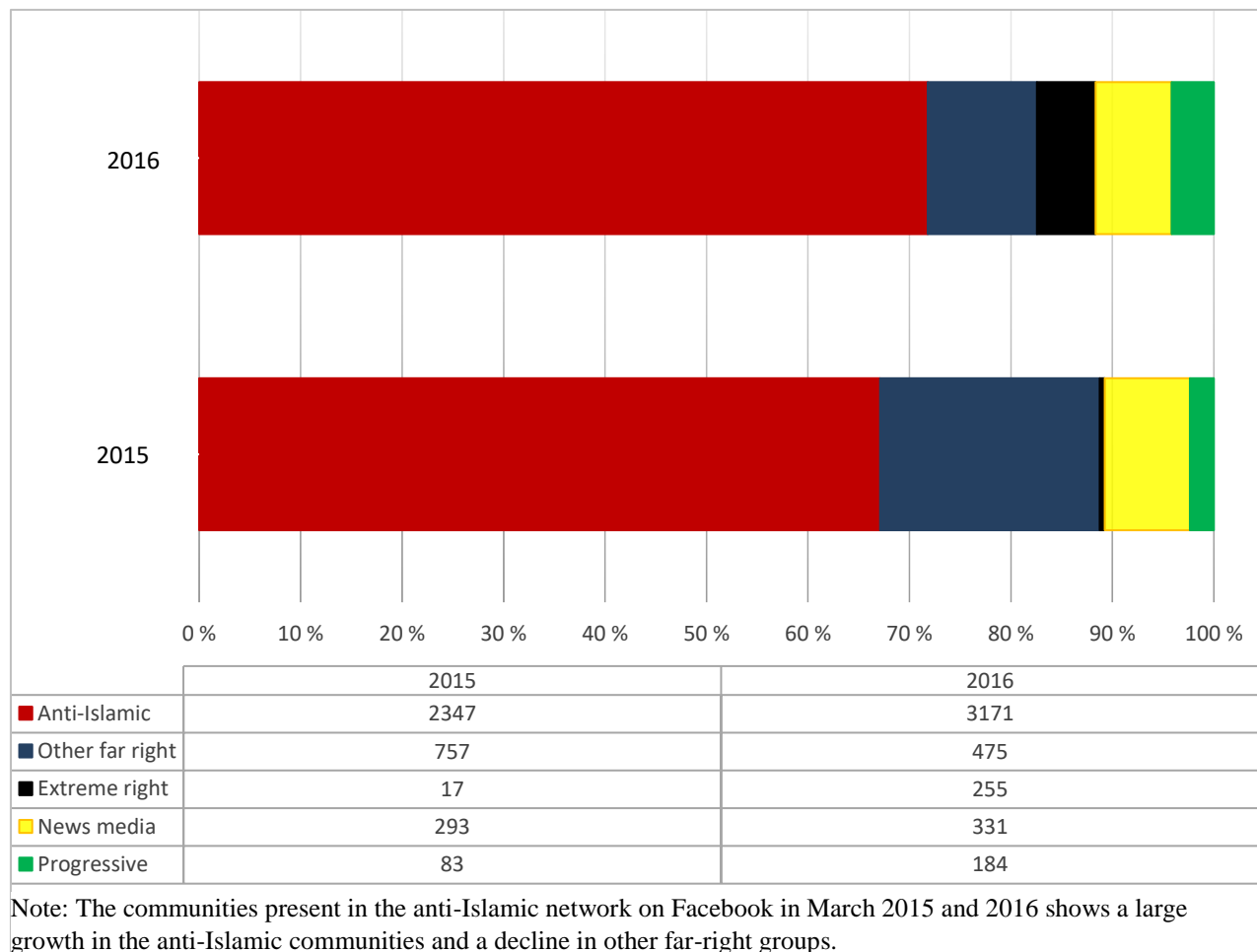
Note: The 4,594 groups as part of their respective clusters in the anti-Islamic network, March 2016 (N = 18). Node size reflects number of groups in the given cluster. Red marks the clusters dominated by explicitly anti-Islamic groups, black marks extreme right clusters, blue other right-wing clusters, yellow for media outlets and green for “progressive”.

By 2016, there were eighteen distinct communities in the anti-Islamic network on Facebook, and the network had undergone profound changes. New communities have emerged and old ones have disintegrated or disappeared. Three factors affect the new composition of the network. First, growth is caused by the addition of new groups via the “Like” function. The network has expanded a great deal by 2016, and now consists of over 4,500 groups. Second, 38% of the groups present in 2015 are no longer in the network in 2016. Groups vanish from the network either

because Facebook or group moderators have deleted them, or because they are no longer on the Like list of other groups. Third, groups can move from one cluster to another as the configuration of ties changes; this occurred in 23% of the groups.

The anti-Islamic communities have expanded the most, now accounting for 69% of the network – growing from, 1,953 to 3,171 groups. The biggest change comes from the PEGIDA community’s growth, from 556 to 1,262 groups. The Defence League community has also

**Table 6.2. A comparison of the communities present in the anti-Islamic network in 2015 and 2016**



expanded, and consists of 922 groups. The explicitly anti-Islamic community has also grown with the addition of the Christian Defence League as a new community (118 groups). More significantly, the Stop Islam community has evaporated as a distinct cluster along with the Hindu nationalists,

and the already tightly interlinked pro-Israeli community has grown by including a large amount of anti-Islamic groups. Since the pro-Israeli community had a very strong component of anti-Islamic groups, this integration means that we can define this community as belonging within the sphere of the anti-Islamic movement.

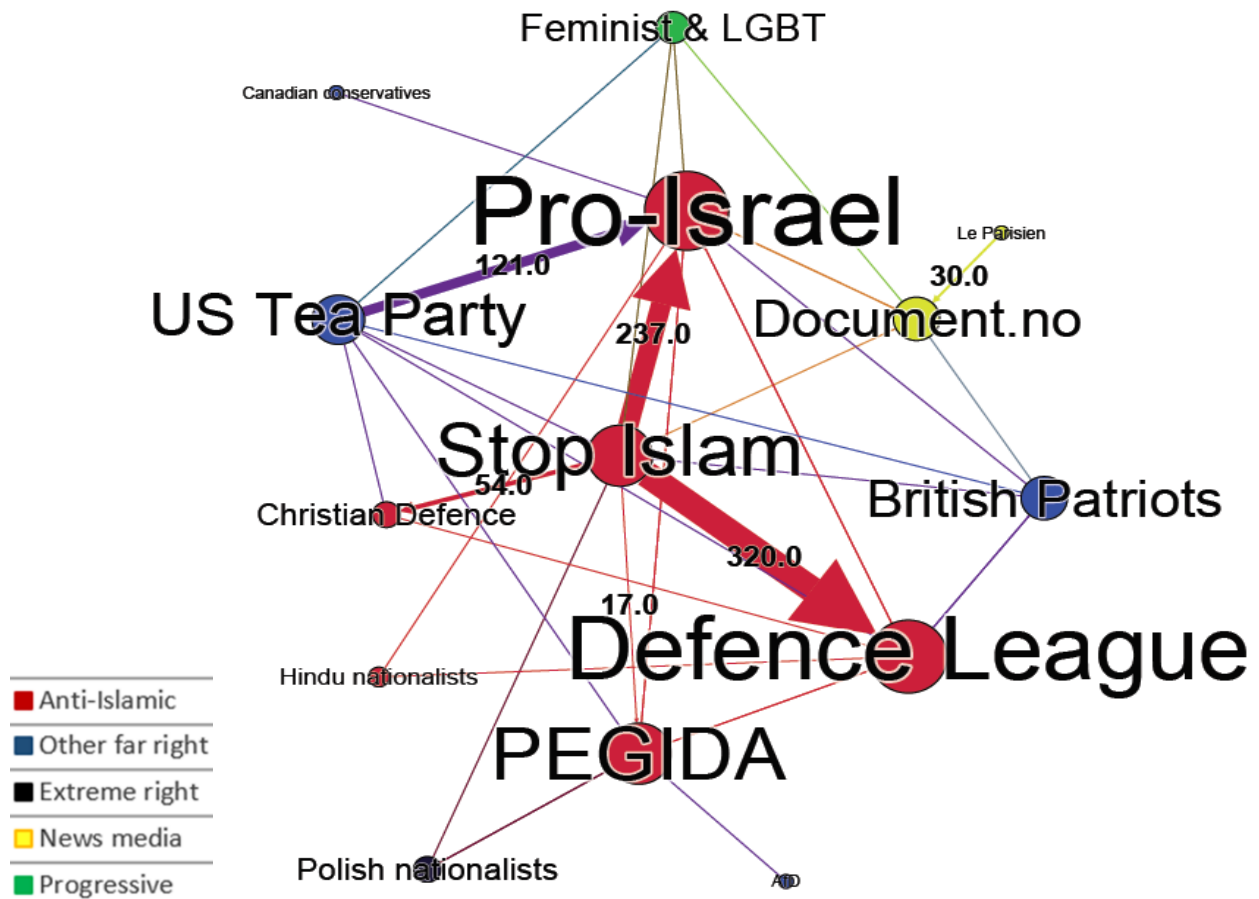
The number of groups belonging to other far-right communities is nearly halved despite the inclusion and emergence of the German AfD (57 groups) and the Italian LN (53 groups). Looking back to 2015, the network included a community of Canadian conservative groups (95) with ties to the Defence League, Stop Islam together with the U.S. Republican and Tea Party communities. However, by 2016 this community had vanished. More surprisingly, the Republican and Tea Party community also declined significantly, from 509 to 186 groups. Of these, 374 groups fell out of the network altogether.

The extreme right presence in the anti-Islamic network transformed when the small community of neo-Nazi groups fell out and two new communities emerged; a small pagan community (7 groups), and a community of Polish nationalists (248 groups).

The news media communities have grown and consolidated, with the former Le Parisien community merging with the Document.no community. We also see the appearance of a small community of Facebook groups for Sputnik (4), the Russian pro-Putin news organization. Turning to the community of progressive groups, the small animal rights community and the Iranian exile community have disappeared, whereas the feminist and LGBT community has more than doubled in size (184 groups).

Groups entering and falling out of the network are only part of the explanation for the changes. Internal restructuring and migration within the network is another pivotal factor. In fact, 24% of the existing groups from 2015 migrated from one community to another. As we can see in Figure 6.3, most of these went from one anti-Islamic community to another.

Figure 6.3. The movement between communities in the anti-Islamic network between 2015 and 2016



Note: This shows the fracturing of the Stop Islam community and integration with the Pro-Israeli community. Node size reflects number of groups in the given cluster. Red indicates the clusters dominated by explicitly anti-Islamic groups, black marks extreme right clusters, blue other right wing clusters, yellow for media outlets and green for “progressive”.

As noted earlier, the Stop Islam community has disintegrated. A large portion of the groups formerly in this cluster has migrated to the Defence League community (320 groups), with the EDL at its core. This constitutes the single largest migration of groups in the period of time examined. Another large section broke off and migrated to the pro-Israeli community (237 groups). A take-home point from this is just how much the pro-Israeli community has transformed and grown in importance. It also points to the “attractiveness” of the pro-Israeli and Israeli groups on Facebook. In addition to the groups from the former Stop Islam community, the pro-Israeli community has

also expanded with the addition of a large chunk of the Tea Party community (124 groups). Besides these internal rearrangements there have been few shifts between other communities.

### **6.7 Progressive and extreme right presence in the anti-Islamic network**

Moving on to the specific hypotheses about the anti-Islamic communities and the ties to other progressive and extreme right groups we note that previous studies found that ideology is consistently correlated with the structure of online and offline alliances and information networks. We can use this knowledge to test whether the findings from qualitative analyses of anti-Islamic groups hold. Does the broader anti-Islamic movement incorporate progressive ideals at an organizational level and shy away from the traditional extreme right views? If so, we should find two things. First, progressive groups should be present. Second, traditional extreme right groups should be marginal.

To delve into this I draw on the material presented above as well as two other aspects; the specific ties between the communities (see the density matrices, Tables IV and V, Appendix II) and the possible power position of the progressive and extreme right, respectively. To say something about the power position of these communities I turn to their brokerage positions, calculating their “honest brokerage” scores (see Table III, Appendix II). The goal is to pinpoint not only which community plays the role of a broker in a traditional sense, but also in a wider sense. Honest brokerage is much more sophisticated measure than regular ones such as betweenness centrality that pinpoints actors who provide unique connections or exclusive control of resources between other social actors (Christopoulos and Quaglia 2009). The honest brokerage measure distinguishes between pure brokerage, weak brokerage and no brokerage. Pure brokerage means that there are no other ties between any pair of alters joined by a broker, whereas weak brokerage means that one directed tie is allowed between pairs of alters joined by a broker. Non-brokerage

means that alters who have ties to a broker have two-way ties with each other as well (Walther and Christopoulos 2012, 13). In other words, pure brokerage means that you are the sole connector between different communities whereas weak brokerage means that you are the predominant connector. Centrality and brokerage consistently equals power in political systems such as these. However, the role of brokerage comes with a price. This is because brokers are seen as “Janus faced”, which by definition implies that they are under pressure “from conflicting norms of any groups they connect. The more extreme the difference between groups, the more likely that they are under strain” (Walther and Christopoulos 2014, 19). This kind of norm conflict and ambiguity can also be a resource, allowing recipients to emphasize different aspects of collective action framing as well as giving representatives the opportunity to tailor their message to differing contexts. Ambiguity of this kind can therefore forge agreement and identity across political differences (Poletta et al. 2011).

### **6.7.1 Ties to progressive forces**

My first hypothesis was that the anti-Islamic groups have ties to groups they claim to defend from Muslims, particularly Jewish groups, LGBT, women’s rights and animal rights groups.

The cursory overview at a community level supports this. However, to verify we need to delve more deeply into the relations between the communities and subsequently the specific groups. In 2015, twenty-three of the groups in the Stop Islam community and seven in the Defence League community had ties to the community of eighty-three feminist and LGBT groups. None of the feminist or LGBT groups reciprocate the ties from the Defence League community, but have seven ties to the Stop Islam community. Strikingly, there pro-Israeli community has twenty-five links in to the feminist and LGBT community, and these are reciprocated by eighteen feminist and LGBT groups. The Stop Islam community also had twelve

ties to the small animal rights community of ten groups, but there was no reciprocation. By 2016 these animal rights groups have disappeared altogether from the network. By 2016 the number of groups in the feminist and LGBT community had more than doubled, to 182. The number of ties from the pro-Israeli community which has absorbed so many of the anti-Islamic groups rose to forty-two, followed by eighteen ties from the Defence Leagues and three from the PEGIDA community. Thirty groups from the feminist and LGBT community reciprocate the ties from the pro-Israeli community, followed by four to the Defence League and one reciprocation to PEGIDA. The feminist and LGBT community has also grown in importance, as indicated by their brokerage score in Table III in Appendix II. They have gone from zero to 0.167, meaning that they have become more pivotal in tying together the network as a whole and thereby function as more important channels for information dissemination. The pro-Israeli and other anti-Islamic communities form a triangular relationship with the feminist and LGBT community, although the latter is much smaller.

In a study of the Swedish far right, anti-Islamic website Flashback, Törnberg and Törnberg find that "... gender equality seems to be used as a discursive strategy in order to criticize Islam" (2016, 2). They reach this conclusion through a combination of critical discourse analysis and topic modeling on a corpus of 90 million sentences. My findings indicate that the issue of gender equality has become deeper embedded than just as a discursive strategy. Not only does the anti-Islamic movement have ties to leftist and progressive groups, but their online impact on the movement has increased within the given time span as indicated by their brokerage score. The feminist and LGBT community is clearly less central to the anti-Islamic movement than the pro-Israeli community, but it is more pivotal than for instance the American far right with the Tea Party and similar groups. So, what then of the extreme right?

### 6.7.2 Ties to extreme right forces

In 2015 there was an almost total absence of traditional extreme right groups. No White power or neo-Nazi groups show up with the exception of a small cluster consisting of five Norwegian and Swedish anti-immigrant and racist actors such as the racist “news site” Fyret.nu, and Realisten.se. These groups only had two ties out to the Stop Islam community, and were therefore very marginal players. By 2016, they had fallen out of the network. Instead, we have seen the inclusion of an equal number of paganist groups, but these are not as clear-cut extremist. There was also a small, marginal community of seven Polish groups. Over the course of a year, the Polish and Eastern European extreme right community had grown by well over 200 groups. ONR Brygada Podlaska is an offshoot from the self-described “radical nationalists” in the National Rebirth of Poland, and dominates this community of groups. They take a strong position against LGBT rights and have been characterized as openly anti-Semitic by the Anti-Defamation League.<sup>123</sup> Many of these groups have several hundred thousand followers. This community also includes explicitly anti-Islamic groups, like the Polish group No to the Islamization of Europe (*Nie dla Ilamizacji Europy*) with 281,832 followers in 2015 and 307,043 in 2016. Some actors outside Poland also show up, such as the Hungarian radical right party Jobbik. However, this community has few ties to the anti-Islamic communities. Of the explicitly anti-Islamic communities, PEGIDA is the one with the most ties to the Eastern European extreme right with thirty-eight “Likes” emanating from the PEGIDA community. This may be partly driven by geographical proximity between the German-speaking countries, Poland and Hungary. This is followed by four ties from the Defence League community and two from the pro-Israeli community. Interestingly enough, these groups have fewer ties out than in. There are two ties out to the pro-Israeli camp, two to the newfangled AfD community and one to the Defence League community. Unlike the the brokerage

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<sup>123</sup> <http://archive.adl.org/international/polanddemocracyandextremism.pdf>



position held by the feminist and LGBT community, the extreme right does not have a brokerage position. The marginal position for neo-Nazi and other traditional extreme right groups combined with the strong presence of Jewish groups and pro-Israeli communities as well as progressive groups consolidates the fact that the anti-Islamic movement is a qualitatively very different entity than the classic extreme right (those that ascribe to the fascist master frame).

## **6.8 Discussion**

What are the main conclusions we can draw from the network analysis of anti-Islamic groups on Facebook? First, the transnational scope and large size of the network gives a picture of a phenomenon straddling the borders between a movement and a subculture. It has been claimed that “... the ‘counterjihad’ network seems to have dissolved, as many right-wing populists have branded themselves primarily anti-EU.” (Fleischer 2014, 69). The picture we get from their online presence on Facebook tells a completely different story, and that is a story of growth – not dissolution. Although the data only give us two static snapshots of the network, we know that a major branch has been added quite recently with the upsurge of PEGIDA in Germany and then across Europe.

Second, the picture provided by the online data is of a movement that is also internally unsettled and fluid. One third of the existing Facebook network from 2015 has fallen out, whereas over 2,000 groups have joined. There are also major internal shifts, with close to one third of the groups present in 2015 migrated from one community to another by 2016. When operating with more limited information, it is therefore easy to understand precisely why some could think that the so-called Counter-Jihad was dissolving. Beyond the actual demise of specific organizations, the large changes can be partly attributed to the nature of the media platform itself. Setting up a new group on Facebook is not resource demanding, although being noticed and accepted by pre-existing anti-Islamic groups does require some effort.

Third and most importantly, we see that birds of a feather really do flock together. The overview of clusters within the network in 2015 and 2016 give us an immediate picture that closely mirrors the findings in Chapters 4 and 5 as well as what other qualitative studies have uncovered regarding the rhetoric and worldview of anti-Islamic groups (e.g. Zuquete 2008; Goodwin 2013; Busher 2015). For instance, they have strong ties to Israeli and pro-Israeli groups, which consists of everything from Christians for Israel to the official website of the Israeli Defence Forces. By 2016 there has been a further integration of the anti-Islamic movement and the pro-Israeli community, with a large section of the former Stop Islam community being absorbed by the former. This means that the anti-Islamic far right is clearly different from the traditional anti-Semitic extreme right on this dimension. We know that movements rely on bridging ties between narrow cliques. Social systems lacking weak ties will be fragmented and incoherent which translates into less political staying power (Granovetter 1983). We also know that weak ties directly affect the diffusion of ideas and innovation, the structure of social systems and relations between individuals (Christopolous and Quaglia 2009, 192). Seen in this light, the role played by the women's rights and LGBT community as transmitters of ideas becomes even more important. Their presence emphasizes the fundamental shift that the focus on Muslims and Islam means for the far right, particularly in Western Europe and North America. If progressive and liberal initiatives and ideas continue to exert influence on the anti-Islamic movement and subculture, the far right as a whole seems to be set on a course which solidifies their difference from other far-right ideologies, movements and groups.

### **6.8.1 Negative coalitions**

The presence of LGBT groups and other “progressive” forces in the network does not mean that they are a part of an anti-Islamic movement or any coalitions. Managing coalitions is generally difficult, partly because they often unite the movement's moderate and radical strands, which are

normally in conflict with one another (Rucht 2004). Coalitions that go beyond the confines of a specific movement can be even more demanding, as they can challenge the identity of an organization or movement (Heaney 2004; Hojnacki 1997; Meyer and Corrigan-Brown 2005). What kind of coalitions can we expect to find between anti-Islamic actors and “progressive” actors? Guenther’s work on the feminist movement in Eastern Germany’s weak coalitions (2010) provides some clues. Weak coalitions do not require full recognition and discussion of identities, ideologies, and goals, and they only allow limited challenges to group boundaries. The closer collaboration and tighter communication and understanding necessary for strong coalitions is likely to generate conflict and highlight differences. Low levels of integration allow coalitions to thrive in coalition environments where differences are rarely explicitly acknowledged or discussed (ibid. 2010, 135).

### **6.8.2 Eastward expansion**

The inclusion of Eastern European right-wing extremists at the periphery of the anti-Islamic network represents a countervailing tendency to the presence of “progressive” actors and integration with Jewish, Israeli and pro-Israeli groups. Why is their presence stronger? Major events can have a strong impact on political alliances (Leifeld 2013). So-called critical events have also been found to have a strong impact on the structure of social media networks (Omodei, De Domenico and Arenas 2015, 1). The anti-Islamic movement has grown in fits and spurts over the last decade, and the growth seems to be event-driven. As already outlined in Chapter 4, the anti-Islamic movement started growing in the wake of the terror attacks on 9/11, and first took to the streets in Europe not long after the “Muhammed cartoon crisis”. In 2015 and 2016 there have been several events that have played into their narrative of conflict with Islam and the Muslim world: The most significant events have been the attacks on Charlie Hebdo in January 2015; the sexual assaults on women by refugees in Cologne on January 1, 2016; and the terror attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015 which killed 130 people. Yet, all of these merged into the backdrop of the larger

refugee crisis that began to unfold in summer 2015. Whereas the previous events fueling the movement had taken place in the U.S. or Western European countries, the refugee crisis is a truly trans-European crisis. It shook governments across Europe and the European Union, which is likely to have had a strong impact on the reconfiguration of political alliances. The inflow of migrants and refugees from Middle Eastern and North African countries met with very different responses from national governments. Angela Merkel and the German government was one of the most open, together with the Swedish government, whereas the Visegrad countries broadly refused to receive refugees and argued for stricter border controls. The Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orban, stated that Islam was incompatible with European culture and the Slovak Prime Minister, Robert Fico, that said they would only take in Christian refugees. The Central and Eastern European countries are now widely perceived to have a more restrictive stance on immigration and Muslims, more in line with the anti-Islamic far right.<sup>124</sup> This expansion of the political debate on Islam and immigration to a trans-European scale may well have raised awareness of potential allies for the anti-Islamic groups to the East. An eastward expansion might have major consequences because the far right in Eastern Europe is overall far less reformed, and more openly racist. Even though the Eastern European extreme right is still marginal within the network, their presence may herald a return to the traditional extreme right. Another prospect is that the extreme right in Eastern Europe align themselves with the anti-Islamic forces in Western Europe, and thereby moderate themselves and move away from scapegoating and aggression directed towards sexual minorities, Roma and Jews.

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<sup>124</sup> In an interview with Vox, Cas Mudde is quoted saying that “2015 unleashed an orgy of Islamophobia”: <http://www.vox.com/2016/5/31/11722994/european-far-right-cas-mudde> (accessed 21.11.2016).

### **6.8.3 Absent anti-Semitism**

Fleischer argued that “[...]...anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim racism, just as anti-Roma racism, are perfectly compatible prejudices, which are present in every part of Europe’s radical right” (2014, 70). Although empirically supported at the individual level and theoretically plausible at an organizational level, the constellations uncovered in the network analysis indicate that this is not predominant. More specifically, the argument about anti-Semitism does not hold water if we take into account the reciprocated ties between anti-Islamic groups on the one hand, and pro-Israeli and official Israeli groups on the other. However, further analysis of their framing activity is needed before coming to a decisive judgment. This is not to say that there are no xenophobic, extreme right communities and groups equally hostile to Jews, Muslims and Roma, but that they are not closely linked to the specifically anti-Islamic far right on an organizational level online.

### **6.8.4 Limitations and alternative avenues**

My claims regarding the presence of traditional extreme right groups in the online network is limited by two important factors. First, their presence may be underreported by the mere fact that I started the snowball sampling with anti-Islamic groups, which means the analysis may miss the fringe outliers that link to anti-Islamic groups without being reciprocated. If this is the case, it still goes to show how toxic and unpopular the traditional extreme right is – even for groups labeled and perceived as being part of the same phenomenon. As anti-Islamic groups have few ties to neo-Nazi and traditional extreme right groups this also means that there is very little information flowing from them to the anti-Islamic movement through Facebook. Second, it is important to bear in mind that the size and presence of traditional extreme right groups in the network would probably be higher were it not for Facebook’s own policing of hate speech. This has driven racist, neo-Nazi

and white supremacist groups to establish themselves on the Russian alternative to Facebook, Vkontakte.<sup>125</sup>

My broader claims are also limited by the fact that I have only examined the online network configurations, leaning on previous qualitative studies that tell us something about their ideology. This analysis says nothing about the composition of progressive or extremist ideas discussed by the members and followers of these groups. For this we need detailed studies of the anti-Islamic and broader far right discourse and framing. Only then can we untangle the possibly divergent impact of liberal and progressive forces on the one hand and the new inclusion of Eastern European right wing extremists on the other. For a deeper understanding, we also need ethnographic fieldwork along the lines of Joel Buser's study of the EDL (2015) or David Art's interviews with far-right activists (2011), in addition to qualitative and quantitative content analyses of their publications and online writing. The trajectory of the far right and the anti-Islamic movement and subculture towards either moderation or extremism will be a key issue for social scientists in the coming decades, especially since the Muslim minority is likely to grow.

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<sup>125</sup> <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2016/05/extremist-groups-vkontakte/483426/> (accessed 23.06.2016).

# 7. Mobilization

## **Activist Messages and Emotions**

## **Summary**

This chapter examines the anti-Islamic mobilization of activists on Facebook by analyzing the ideas and sentiments expressed in 298 groups, containing approximately five million members from 182 countries for a short period in 2016. Two patterns emerge. First, and contrary to expectations, many anti-Islamic activists express views aligned with the official, semi-liberal platform. This suggests that the anti-Islamic, organizational expansion has also expanded the pool for far-right recruitment. Second, messages which convey hope and trust in themselves, their cause and their leaders increases both internal mobilization and the spread of their message. There are also indications that angry messages may increase mobilization, but play a less important role. The angriest messages are about Muslims, whereas joyful messages often rely on Christian themes combined with progressive and liberal positions such as gay rights. This indicates the fusing of liberal-traditional positions under the umbrella of anti-Islam, previously documented in the leaders' framing. Nonetheless, the movement is beset by tensions. A sizeable minority appear to express anti-democratic and racist views at odds with the official platform. It is an open question whether these extremists or the current leadership and moderate activists will dominate the anti-Islamic movement in the long run.



## 7.1 Introduction

Islam is a philosophy of darkness, murder, rape and utter mind controlling insanity. Wherever Islam walks death follows. The Christian does not possess the power to fight this evil because they would have to fight this darkness with darkness and then it is they who become savages. I guess the modern man now understands why God told the Israelites to eliminate the evil around them. Left to their own devices Islam will eliminate all that is good on the earth. Even nature is at risk, the hatred towards all animals by those who practice Islam is yet another sign of its rancid effect on the human mind. (post on anti-Islamic Facebook-group Jihad Watch, August 2016)

Leaders and representatives of the anti-Islamic movement argue that they are fighting to save Western civilization from the totalitarian and violent threat of Islam.<sup>126</sup> As demonstrated in the above quotation, they frame Islam in truly apocalyptic terms. In this civilizational framework, they portray themselves as defenders of the West and everything that it stands for, and that Islam is not. This is built on an ideological duality, where they simultaneously rely on traditional, authoritarian perspectives and modern, liberal perspectives. They position themselves as defenders of Christianity, “family values” and law and order, as well as being gender equality, LGBT rights and anti-racism.<sup>127</sup> The (partial) adoption of progressive and liberal positions appears paradoxical coming from a movement that is understood, by its opposition and academics alike, as far right. The overarching question is how deep the entanglement with liberal and progressive values goes. Perhaps it is nothing but a thin veneer, window-dressing masking the anti-democratic and racist views of the extreme right.

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<sup>126</sup> Awareness of this turn has been picked up by major newspapers and media outlets for some time. For instance, as noted an article on LGBT and racism in *The Guardian*: “The far-right movements on the march across the western world are consciously trying to co-opt the LGBT rights campaign for their own agenda. Muslims are portrayed as an existential threat to gay people, particularly after Orlando” (*The Guardian*, 24.11.2016, accessed 25.11.2016). Available from: [https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/24/no-asians-no-blacks-gay-people-racism?CMP=fb\\_gu](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/24/no-asians-no-blacks-gay-people-racism?CMP=fb_gu)

<sup>127</sup> For instance, when focusing on women vis-à-vis Muslims, they vacillate between traditional, male-centric “protector frames” and feminist “equality frames”.

In Chapter 6 we saw that the traditional-liberal duality was reflected in their online networks. Anti-Islamic groups have ties to women's rights and LGBT rights groups. They are also closely integrated with Israeli, pro-Israeli and conservative groups. Finally, they have few ties to "traditional" extreme right groups such as white supremacists, fascists and neo-Nazis.

This chapter goes further by studying their online mobilization. If the anti-Islamic movement and subculture as a whole truly represents a different beast from the white supremacist, fascist and neo-Nazi extreme right as well as the ethno-pluralist radical right, this should not only be represented through statements by social movement organization leaders or be visible through their organizational networks. What the activists write and respond to matters.

Here I investigate which message the already mobilized convey, and whether the activists can thus be described as moderates aligned with the official ideological platform, or extremists who only share the animosity towards Islam and Muslims. It also looks at which emotions and messages drive internal mobilization and message diffusion beyond their Facebook groups.

In order to explore these two dimensions, this chapter uses a wide range of tools to analyze 1.8 million posts, shares, likes and comments from a membership base of close to 5 million in 298 anti-Islamic groups between August 12–18, 2016.<sup>128</sup> The groups are of varying size across the world, ranging from large initiatives such as EDL and PEGIDA to small, regional groups. These were identified and selected on the basis of the previous network analysis. I examine three core aspects previously identified in the collective action framing of anti-Islamic leaders and representatives to uncover the degree of alignment between the organizations and their members (see Chapter 5). The first aspect consists of views on Muslims and race to see whether they are more

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<sup>128</sup> Members and followers are not self-reported, but official Facebook statistics. They can inflate the numbers by creating "fake" Facebook profiles and having them join, but that means setting up new email accounts and using a phone number registered in their name.

focused on Islam and Muslims than racial categories in their problem identification. The second aspect is their conceptualization of themselves, and whether their messages convey support for Jews, women and LGBT as part of the in-group under threat from Islam and Muslims. Third and most significantly, whether they uphold democracy and propose peaceful solutions or promote and glorify violence against their opponents; this is crucial in determining whether we can speak of an anti-Islamic movement which is fundamentally distinct from the extreme right embodied by neo-fascists and neo-Nazis.

The emotions and arguments of the members reveal a struggle of competing views and ideas. On the one hand, the diagnosis of Islam and Muslims as an existential threat is dominant. Defense of democracy, supportive statements towards women, LGBT, Jews and other religious minorities are prominent. Democracy is the term most strongly associated with positive sentiments. On the other hand, views and arguments mirroring the traditional extreme right (white power, neo-Nazi, fascist) are also present. Derogatory views of women and homosexuals show up alongside views of violence as a necessary tool to “deal with” Muslims. Third, although they are a less prevalent enemy than Muslims, there is an even stronger association between the category “black” and negative sentiments, whereas “white” is associated with positive sentiments. In other words, there is an undercurrent of explicit racism. Taken together, this indicates that there is a contingent of extremists. These extremists are not just *more radical* than their leaders, but to some extent they represent older strains of far-right ideology.

Finally, joyful messages and expressions of trust towards their own members or authority figures drive internal mobilization. Joyful messages often rely on Christian themes, sometimes fused with arguments in favor of their expansive in-group, such as homosexuals. This reinforces the merger of liberal and traditional positions, previously documented in the leaders’ framing.

Nonetheless, it is still an open question whether the moderates or extremists will dominate among the anti-Islamic initiatives in the long run.

The chapter proceeds as follows. I begin by defining the anti-Islamic collective action framework, before I move on to theory and hypotheses. I then describe the data and choice of dictionary based sentiment analysis, word networks without stop words and qualitative analysis of a random sampling of keywords in context (KWIC). This is followed by an overview of the groups and their members broken down by country of origin and region. The main analysis consists of two sections. The first, and largest, part speaks directly to the issue of frame alignment. It investigates whether members write and accept the same ideas as their leaders on: 1) Islam and race; 2) women, Jews and homosexuals; and 3) democracy and violence. The second part identifies which emotions and messages get the most traction among members, relying on multilevel regression analyses where emotions expressed in posts are the independent variables and comments and shares of these posts the dependent variables.

## **7.2 Theory and hypotheses**

In Chapter 5 I analyzed the statements and arguments (frames) presented by leaders and representatives of anti-Islamic organizations, in interviews, newspaper articles and in their own pamphlets and manifestos. The anti-Islamic diagnosis consists of two main elements. They argue that Islam and Muslim culture represent a totalitarian threat which is destroying Western civilization through Islamizing everything from food (halal) to taking over neighborhoods. Second, it is the elite, in the shape of politicians, the press and academia, which is enabling Islamization. This is either through sheer ideological blindness and stupidity, or willful treason by withholding information about the Muslim takeover and colluding with Muslim elites. The enemy is therefore both Muslims and the elite, a poignant “injustice frame” (Gamson 1992). Muslims and Islam are

framed as antithetical to their Western “us”: gender equality, democracy, freedom of speech, the Christian heritage and rights of LGBT persons. Their prognosis is within democratic confines and non-violent. They argue for a halt to immigration, the assimilation of Muslims and extended emphasis on Christianity and liberal values. Their rejection of violence is linked to the diagnostic framing of Western civilization as rights-based and peaceful. Their motivational framing consists of rallying cries to defend freedom and democracy, emphasized by portraying passivity as acceptance of a Muslim takeover. They reinforce their calls to action with apocalyptic statements and war metaphors, such as “traitor” and “invasion”, drawing parallels with the Nazi attempt to conquer Europe during World War II. Thus, while non-violent solutions find support in the diagnostic framing of “us” as the peaceful and democratic ones, the motivational framing draws on the portrayal of Islam as an existential threat. The vital question is whether their members are aligned with these positions, or whether they espouse views and arguments from the agenda of the extreme right.

### **7.2.1 Extremist hypothesis**

Social movements play a significant role in the diffusion of ideas and values (Rochon 1998; Klandermans and Mayer 2006). Social movement organizations (SMOs) are carriers of meaning which seek to promote their definition of the situation to the public at large – what is known as collective action frames (Gamson 1992; Klandermans 1997). A strong assumption is that those who join a movement share some part of its frames before joining (Klandermans and Mayer 2006). A central tenet of framing theory is that the ability of SMOs to mobilize for street activism hinges on shared frame alignment<sup>129</sup> of activists and organizations (Snow et al. 2014). Just what kind of frames the activists who join anti-Islamic groups align with can tell us more about this movement,

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<sup>129</sup> Frame alignment is defined as “linkage of individual and SMO interpretive orientations, such that some set of individual interests, values and beliefs and SMO activities, goals, and ideology are congruent and complementary” (Benford and Snow 1986, 464).

and the extent to which it is a “new” phenomenon as distinct from older extreme and radical right movements. Finally, it can provide an indication of their potential to mobilize for street action.

At the individual level, we know that prejudices are group-specific but prejudice against one minority strongly correlates with prejudice against others (e.g. Sniderman et al. 2007). For instance, if you are prejudiced towards Muslims it is likely that you are prejudiced towards people with a different skin color. Work by Goodwin, Cutts and Janta-Lipinski (2016) on who sympathized with the EDL indicate that they fit with this description. Their analysis shows that sympathizers are more (openly) prejudiced than the population at large (ibid. 4). Despite what the leaders may claim the anti-Islamic initiatives stand for, their growth could therefore imply an increased, vocal support for everything that we associate with the far and extreme right; anti-Semitism and racism, authoritarianism and patriarchy. This means that anti-Islamic initiatives should draw a large amount of what Art (2011) defines as extremists, and not moderates. In line with these accounts, one should also expect the following:

*H1. Activists only align with the official diagnosis of Islam and Muslims as a threat and enemy.*

In other words, the expectation is that activists share a strong opposition to Islam and Muslims, whereas there is no common ground between activists and organizations when it comes to just who (the “us”) and what is being threatened and what to do about it. Instead of embracing women and LGBT rights, democratic ideals and the Jewish minority, and a rejection of other pejorative discourses about race, we should find a stronger continuity with “traditional” extreme right frames. Specifically, we should find a large share of negative frames explicitly targeting people of color, Jews, women and sexual minorities as well as promoting violence and a stronger emphasis on white identity.

### **7.2.2 Mobilization hypotheses**

The extent to which activists are aligned with the anti-Islamic collective action framework is not the only relevant issue. What kind of messages actually manage to mobilize and spread is of paramount importance. Here it is vital to stir up the emotions of the target audiences (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2000; Van Stekelenburg 2006; Van Zomeren et al, 2004). Theoretical inclusions of emotions have a long pedigree in the study of the extreme and far right (Blee 2016). The older literature emphasized that support for racist and far-right agendas was driven by irrationality and troubled personalities (Gusfield 1963), and was a product of collective fear, frustration, paranoia and anger (Caiani, della Porta, and Wagemann 2012; Chirumbolo, Mayer, and De Witte 2006; Klandermans and Mayer 2006). As a backlash to this understanding of mobilization as collective irrationality, emotions were absent from social movement literature for several decades (Klandermans 2008). This was particularly true of studies employing a framing perspective (Benford 1997), despite the fact that frames are tailored to elicit specific emotional responses.

Emotions are now back in the spotlight (Jasper 2011) and social movement literature indicates that they are powerful mobilizers (Jasper 1998, 414). Recent social movement and social psychology research identifies anger as the prototypical protest emotion (Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2017). It is an approach-oriented emotion which boosts protest participation (Van Zomeren et al. 2004; van Troost et al. 2013), promoting action against the responsible agent (diagnosis) and promoting a corrective response (prognosis). Anger lowers the individual's perception of risk (Lerner and Keltner 2001) and increases reliance on prior conviction, thereby counteracting deliberation. Moreover, anger fosters support for aggressive policies (Cassese and

Weber 2011; Gault and Sabini 2000; Huddy et al. 2007; Lerner et al. 2003; Petersen 2010),<sup>130</sup> and heightens superficial information processing (Huddy et al. 2007; MacKuen et al. 2010).

Positive emotions, such as happiness, joy, hope, love and trust, are another set of emotions the literature indicates as a strong mobilizer. For instance, hope is understood as a “fundamental ingredient in supporting goal-seeking action” (Castells 2012, 14). When it comes to risk perception, angry people resemble happy people (Lerner and Keltner 2001).<sup>131</sup> In the social movement literature happiness is associated with affirmative statements about the in-group and articulating moral principles (Jasper 1998, 418).<sup>132</sup> Research indicates that far-right activists themselves emphasize the importance of positive aspects of belonging to a group and sharing a sense of community as primary, and hostility to minorities as secondary (Klandermans and Mayer 2006, 271). Together, expressions of joy and trust directed towards the in-group combined with anger directed outwards maintains the enthusiasm of activists.<sup>133</sup> On the basis of this we can expect that expressions associated with the positive emotions of trust and joy to be positively connected with online mobilization. In much the same way the negative emotion of anger should also be positively connected with online mobilization. In line with this, the three hypotheses are:

*H2a. The more joy-associated words a message contains the higher the response to this message.*

*H2b. The more trust-associated words a message contains the higher the response to this message.*

*H2c. The more anger-associated words a message contains the higher the response to this message.*

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<sup>130</sup> For instance, in a study on the use of emotional stimuli in presidential speeches Villalobos and Sirin (2017) found that anger leads to higher support for military interventions in civil conflict.

<sup>132</sup> Joy and happiness are associated with collective activities such as singing and dancing during protests – what Durkheim described as “collective effervescence” (Jasper 1998).

<sup>133</sup> More specifically, hatred of outsiders (Scheff 1994) and love of the group have been claimed to maintain activist enthusiasm (Berezin 2001).



It matters which emotions and messages cause the largest amount of response and diffusion. In addition to mobilizing, information from partisan sources (such as anti-Islamic activist groups) can help fuel negative feelings towards those holding differing political (and religious) views (Brundidge et al. 2014; Lelkes, Iyengar, and Sood, 2013). In this case, the explicit concern is that it can contribute to the legitimization of hate crimes and political violence against Muslims and others who do not share the anti-Islamic initiatives view of Islam as a totalitarian threat.

### **7.3 Data and analytical tools**

As with the previous chapter on the anti-Islamic movements' Facebook network, data from this chapter was collected using the application Netvizz (Rieder 2013). The data consists of the writings (posts and comments) and activity (likes, shares and other reactions) in 298 anti-Islamic Facebook groups. The selected cases are groups with activity during the summer of 2016. The total amount of posts, shares, likes and comments amounts to 1,799,970 within the timespan of one week, from August 12 until August 18, 2016.

Facebook is an increasingly prominent arena for social activism and dissemination of ideas and propaganda. In the U.S., six out of every ten people aged 18-33 and five out of ten people aged 34-49 get their political news from Facebook (PEW 2015, 8). Approximately three out of ten follow issue-based groups – the flora which anti-Islamic groups are part. In total, Facebook had over 2 billion members as of June 2016, of which 200 million are from the United States. In comparison, the more studied platform Twitter has 313 million users (June 2016) and is a less common source for political news (14% and 9% for the same age groups) (ibid. 12).

The data is analyzed using a combination of tools. First of these is dictionary-based automated sentiment analysis and word networks. The patterns identified with these tools are then investigated qualitatively with random samples of text surrounding specific search words,

known as keywords in context (KWIC). The word networks identify the co-occurrence of one word alongside another in a sentence after filtering out stop words such as “go, and, to” that tie sentences together. A subset of the posts and comments are written in a wide variety of languages besides English, such as Polish, German, French, Norwegian and Portuguese. All posts and comments were translated to English using Google Translate prior to analysis. Previously known for producing nonsensical translations on a word-by-word basis, by November 2016 Google Translate switched to neural machine translation engine which translates "whole sentences at a time, rather than just piece by piece. It uses this broader context to help it figure out the most relevant translation, which it then rearranges and adjusts to be more like a human speaking with proper grammar" (Tukovsky 2016).<sup>134</sup> The translation accuracy is highest with European and major world languages, as the engine was trained on United Nations and European Parliament transcripts.

In order to triangulate and identify the way in which specific categories and groups are framed, I employ the NRC Word-Emotion Association Lexicon (Mohammad and Turney, 2010, 2012). The lexicon contains association connections between words and positive and negative sentiments, in addition to the eight emotions identified by Plutchik (1980). These emotions belong to four opposites: 1) joy–sadness; 2) trust–disgust; 3) fear–anger; and 4) surprise–anticipation. The lexicon has valence and emotion associations for about 25,000 words. They built the lexicon using Amazon Turk, where respondents rank words by association.<sup>135</sup> Words can be associated with more than one emotion, and the lexicon can capture hundreds of thousands of valence and emotion associations (Mohammad and Turney 2013). The more words in a piece of text, the higher the

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<sup>134</sup> <https://www.blog.google/products/translate/found-translation-more-accurate-fluent-sentences-google-translate/> (accessed 04.12.2016).

<sup>135</sup> Respondents were asked whether specific terms were strongly associated, moderately associated, weakly associated, or not associated with the target emotion.

validity for the various sentiments such as fear, anger, trust, joy and so forth. An important caveat is that we are not able to say whether a category – such as women – is the *target* of negative sentiments or whether it is portrayed as the *victim* of negative actions and circumstances. The qualitative reading in combination with the word networks that show the co-occurrence of words is therefore pivotal.

#### **7.4 Descriptive overview – the groups and the members**

The anti-Islamic expansion of the far right began in Western Europe and North America. The main genesis point was the website LGF in the United States, before spreading to the United Kingdom, Scandinavia.<sup>136</sup> Since then it has spread throughout Europe and beyond. The 298 groups included in the analysis have members from 182 countries.<sup>137</sup> This pattern mirrors the transnational character of the network between groups.

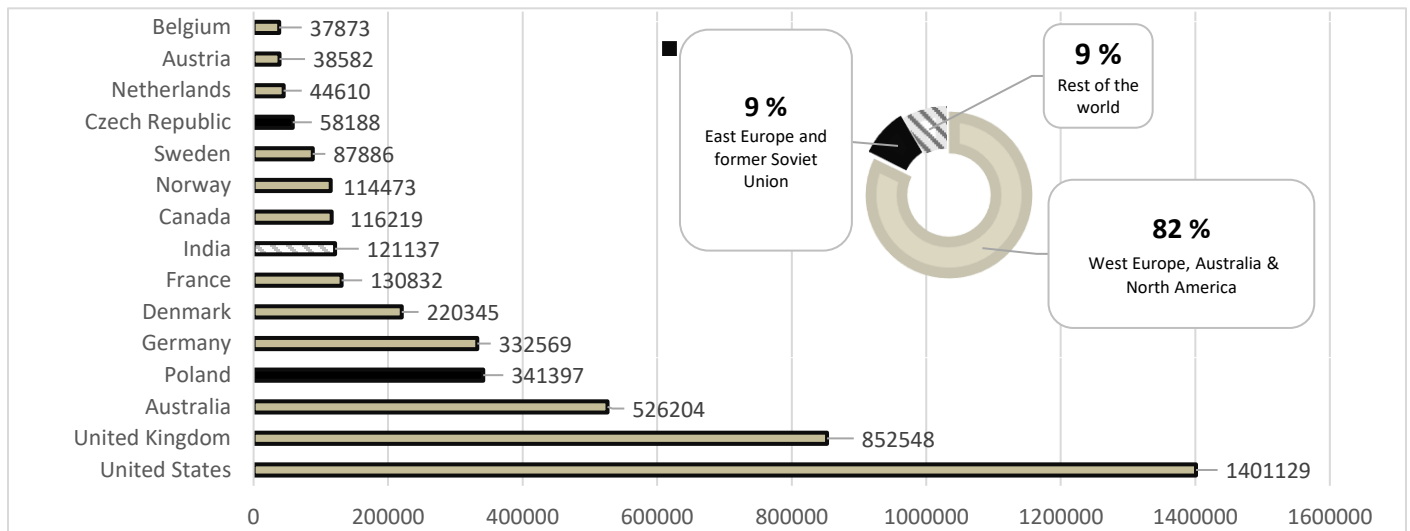
The groups included in the analysis contain close to five million members. On average, each group has members from thirty different countries. Figure 7.1 gives an overview of activists by region alongside a list with the fifteen countries with the largest shares of activists. Of these, 82% of the five million hail from Western Europe, Australia and North America, 9% from countries previously on the other side of the Iron Curtain which divided Europe. I make this analytical divide as the “traditional” forms of right wing extremism still flourish there. Finally, another 9% come from other countries around the world.

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<sup>136</sup> The second, and parallel genesis point of import was the Dutch party LPF. See Chapter 4 for an overview of the anti-Islamic expansion, which is largely synonymous with the establishment of an anti-Islamic movement and subculture.

<sup>137</sup> The share of various nationalities is naturally skewed by the network analysis starting with Western groups such as the EDL, PEGIDA and SIOE. The network analysis was large enough to capture a majority of anti-Islamic groups that are present on Facebook, but misses isolated outliers.

**Figure 7.1 The fifteen countries with the most members in the selection of anti-Islamic groups on Facebook**



As we can see, English speaking countries are strongly represented with the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia ranked in the top three, followed by Poland, Germany and Denmark. With 120,000 members, India is the only non-European country present in the top fifteen outside the Anglo-Saxon sphere. These ties are also manifested ideologically. The conflict between Hindus and Muslims, often erupting in violence, is frequently mentioned by anti-Islamic ideologues.<sup>138</sup>

In addition to Poland, the Czech Republic is the second “Visigrad” country with a substantial share of members in these anti-Islamic groups. The Republic had one of the first anti-Islamic rallies in the former Soviet satellites in 2015, organized by a group calling itself Bloc against Islam, and inspired by the rise of PEGIDA in Dresden, Germany. The rally included anti-Islamic dignitaries such as Tommy Robinson, the former leader of the EDL. However, this time they were also joined by the Czech president Miloš Zeman.<sup>139</sup> The warm welcome extended to top

<sup>138</sup> It also made its way into the “manifesto” of the terrorist Anders Behring Breivik in his justification for seeing Islam as a totalitarian force that must be destroyed before it obliterates the West.

<sup>139</sup> <http://www.breitbart.com/london/2015/11/17/eastern-europe-rising-czech-president-speaks-anti-islam-rally-pegida-leaders-tommy-robinson/> (accessed 08.10.2016).

politicians is something altogether different from what has been playing out so far in most Western European countries.

The Defence League groups are by far the largest contingent, ranging from national to local initiatives. The English divisions make up seventy-three out of the 298 groups, with ninety groups in total around the globe. This is followed by PEGIDA with eighty-two groups, Stop Islamization with twenty-one groups, ACT for America with fifteen groups, Infidel (also American) with thirteen and Reclaim Australia with six. The remainder is a hodgepodge of activist groups, the pages for anti-Islamic newssites and support groups for individual far-right politicians or polemicists. The latter are a small minority in the network itself, but they are nonetheless key actors in the anti-Islamic fauna. The number of cases is too large for an in-depth exploration, so this chapter is limited to elaborating on the five groups with the most Facebook members and followers.

The group with most followers (386,735) is dedicated to the activist, author and commentator, Pamela Geller. She became famous for her opposition to an Islamic community center being built near the former Twin Towers. She also sponsored a “Draw the Prophet” contest and, as the founder of SIOA, consistently warned against “creeping Sharia”. She is also known for her staunch support for abortion and same-sex marriage.

American Infidel is the second largest Facebook group in my analysis (360,357 followers). It is a company established in 2011 selling propaganda material, stickers, mugs and patches for clothes warning against jihad and mocking Islam.<sup>140</sup> Besides selling merchandise, the group is a forum for discussing Islam, Muslim immigration, jihadist terrorism and opposition to these.

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<sup>140</sup> <http://americaninfidel.com/faq> (Accessed 04.10.2016)

With 307,043 members by 2016, the Polish No to the Islamization of Europe is the third largest Facebook group in the analysis. Set up in 2012, they define themselves as a grassroots citizens' initiative intended to stop Poland from "making the same mistakes as the West", and to stop "Islamization", which they argue is caused by "inept economic policy and European Union immigration, weakening the position of Christianity and cultural Marxism terror".<sup>141</sup>

The EDL is the fourth largest of the anti-Islamic Facebook groups with just under 300,000 members. Active since 2009, they are the most studied anti-Islamic group to date. This is primarily due to their frequent and disruptive protest events around Britain between 2009 and 2011. In their own description and mission statement from January 2016, they stress their working-class roots and the need to combat "global Islamification". They claim the mantle of being a human rights organization fighting to save democracy, the rule of law, English traditions, and freedom of speech with a goal to "educate the British public about Islam".<sup>142</sup> Some of the issues they expressly mention are oppression of women, female gender mutilation, homophobia, anti-Semitism and organized sexual abuse of children.

ACT for America is the fifth largest group. Founded by the Lebanese-born Brigitte Gabriel in 2007, they claim to have over 1,000 chapters across the United States.<sup>143</sup> ACT for America have pushed for the introduction of a so-called anti-Sharia bill in state legislatures and warn against the threat of Islam.<sup>144</sup> They define their platform as confronting terrorism, preserving the constitution, securing the border, energy independence, empowering women and protecting children, and support for Israel.

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<sup>141</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/niedlislamizacjaieuropy/about/?entry\\_point=page\\_nav\\_about\\_item](https://www.facebook.com/niedlislamizacjaieuropy/about/?entry_point=page_nav_about_item) (accessed 07.10.2016).

<sup>142</sup> <http://www.englishdefenceleague.org.uk/mission-statement/> (accessed 07.10.2016).

<sup>143</sup> <http://www.actforamerica.org/chapters> (accessed 07.10.2016)

<sup>144</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/31/us/31shariah.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/31/us/31shariah.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0) (accessed 06.10.2016).

## 7.5 Extremists or Moderates?

In this section I try to identify the degree to which anti-Islamic initiatives have managed to recruit activists aligned with their official ideological platform by studying their messages. The following keywords are used as starting points for the sentiment analysis, network analysis and as text samples for qualitative analysis: *black, white, Muslim, Jew, woman, gay, homosexual, lesbian, LGBT, democracy and violence*. These are found throughout the diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing of the anti-Islamic collective action framework.

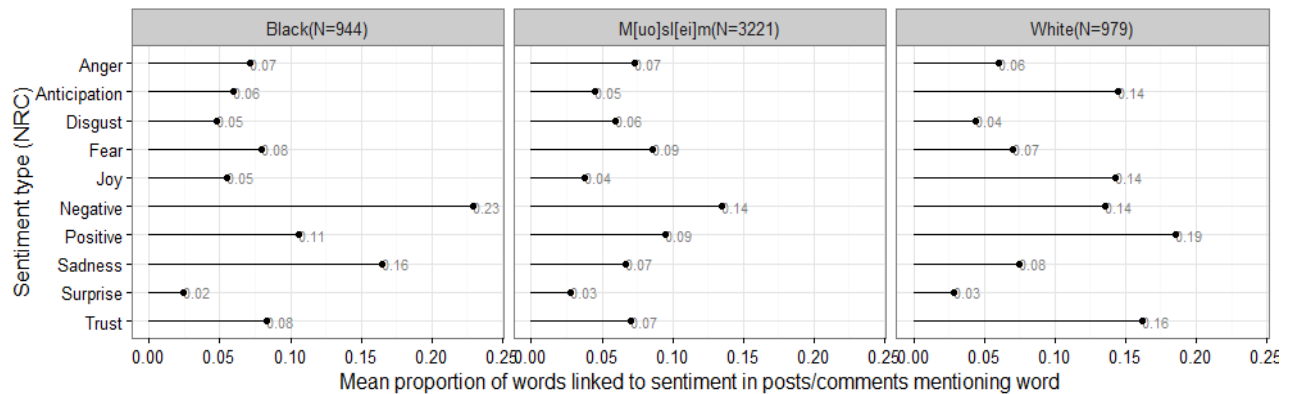
### 7.5.1 The enemy

The main component of the anti-Islamic diagnosis is that Islam and Muslims constitute an existential threat. A word network analysis of the most frequently used words in sentences containing the word ‘Muslims’ indicates that it is the case for regular online activists as well. For instance, Muslims are often mentioned in relation to words such as “rape”, “death”, “majority”, “hate”, “terrorism” and “invasion”. The corpus of text containing the word “Muslim” shows that they are consistently framed as an ominous and deadly threat. A random sample of text using the KWIC-method highlights this. Statements about molestation, decapitation and other gratuitous acts of violence are recurring in activists’ posts and comments that mention Muslims, exemplified by statements such as “Muslims want to impose shariah law and the radical [Muslim] wants to cut off your head...”. Although more explicit and focused on the grotesque than what the leaders (Chapter 5) mention, the framing is more or less identical. The notion of impending war is also common, especially connected to Germany and the so-called refugee crisis of 2015; “Civil War is also immanent in Germany. Non [Muslims] , you have to stand up for your rights!!”





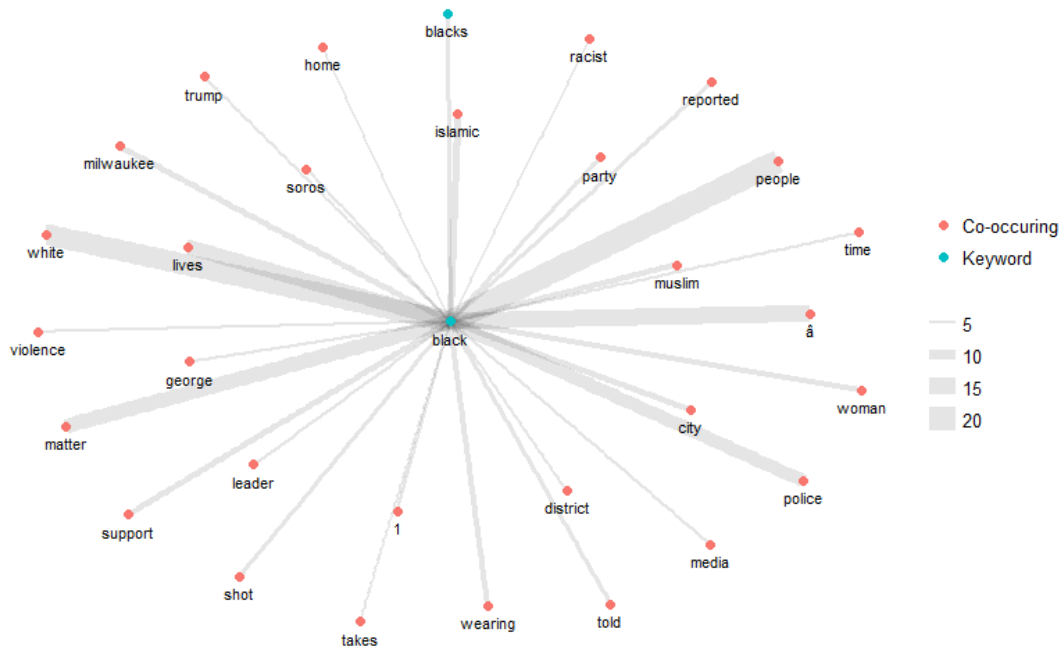
means unusual. Most anti-Islamic activist groups go out of their way to stress that they are not racist. Let us compare the emotions and sentiments associated with the words ‘Muslim’, ‘black’ and ‘white’ in Figure 7.3 to see how this plays out among the online activists. Since the words ‘white’ and ‘black’ can be used to denote and describe a wide variety of topics, posts which use the words as anything else than ethno-racial terms have been manually excluded from the overview.



**Figure 7.3. Comparative overview of mean proportion of words linked to sentiments in posts and comments mentioning the word black, Muslim and white**

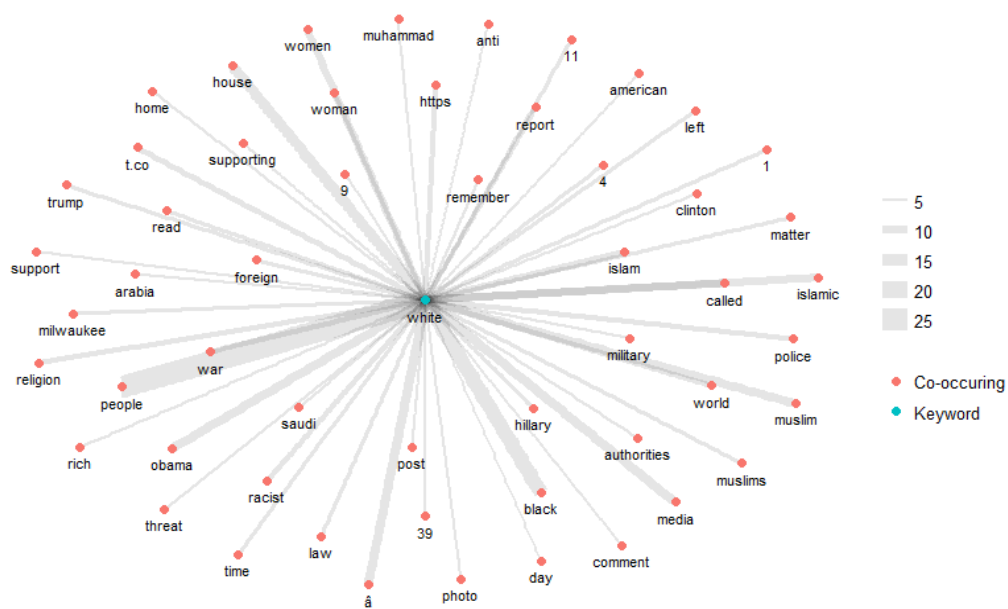
We see that the words black (N = 944) and white (N = 979) are used on an equal basis. These words are numerically eclipsed by the word Muslim, but another pattern appears if we compare the specific sentiments and emotions. First, although Muslims are talked about more frequently, we also find racial terms. There is also a stronger association between black and negative sentiments than for Muslims. On the other hand, white is associated with positive sentiments.<sup>146</sup> This indicates that many members of anti-Islamic groups define the in-group, namely those threatened by Muslims, in racial terms. The lower frequency of race-terms but strong connection to negative (black) and positive (white) sentiments indicate that the framing is split between the official anti-racist position and racist positions in line with the traditional far right.

<sup>146</sup> Of the words in my analysis, white is also the one most strongly associated to trust.



**Figure 7.4. The words most frequently co-occurring together with “black” in posts and comments by activists on anti-Islamic Facebook groups**

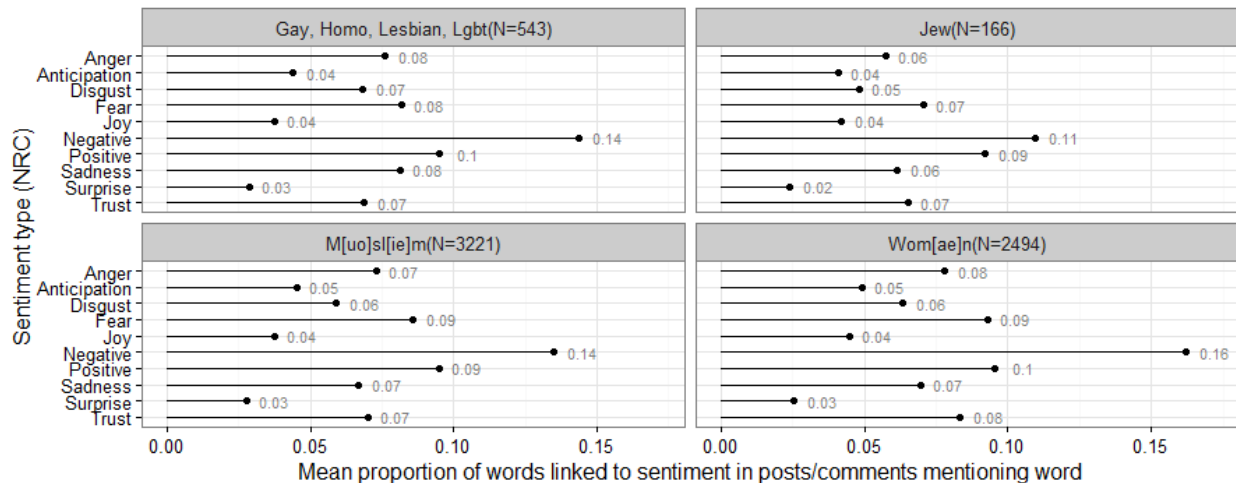
The word network and KWIC analysis supports this. For instance, statements such as “There is only one race, it’s the human race, be it black, white, brown, yellow etc, etc. Fact.” are juxtaposed with statements such as “Exterminate the black race because they are like weeds”. One denying the idea of race and another explicitly racist view advocating the annihilation of black people. Another comment suggests that they have to abandon notions of race because their country has undergone irreversible demographic change. Statements about Muslims also stress this divide between the who use explicitly racist frames and those who do not. For example, some express misgivings about black people being “easy prey” to Muslim conversion, whereas others emphasize that Muslims will kill all infidels, and that non-Muslims have to stand up for their rights.



**Figure 7.5.** *The words most frequently co-occurring together with “white” in posts and comments by activists on anti-Islamic Facebook groups*

### 7.5.2 The victims

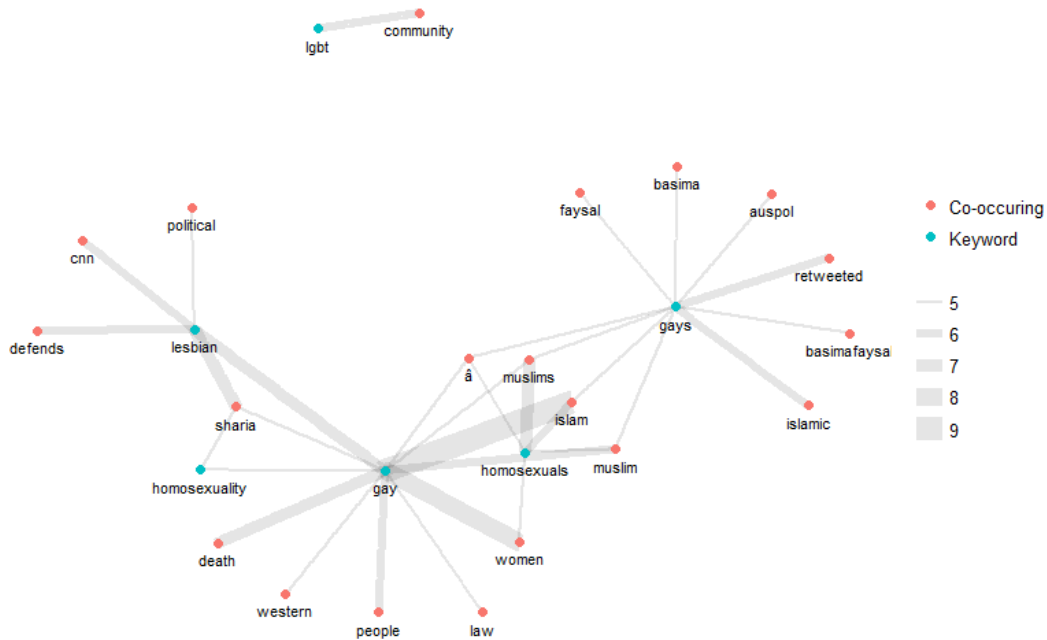
What about the other groups that anti-Islamic leaders explicitly frame as belonging to their in-group, which are often the target of slander and vilification by the “traditional” extreme right? Jews, the LGBT community, and – to a certain extent – women. White supremacists, neo-Nazis and fascists usually portray Jews as the ultimate and nefarious enemy, homosexuals as deviants corrupting the nation and its people, and finally women as the weaker sex, and breeding machines for the survival of the race. A first indicator for the degree of alignment between the online activists and the official platform can be teased out by seeing whether these groups are associated with less negative sentiments than Muslims.



**Figure 7.6. Comparative overview of mean proportion of words linked to sentiments in posts and comments mentioning the words “gay, homo, lesbian, LGBT”, “Jew”, “Muslim” and “women”**

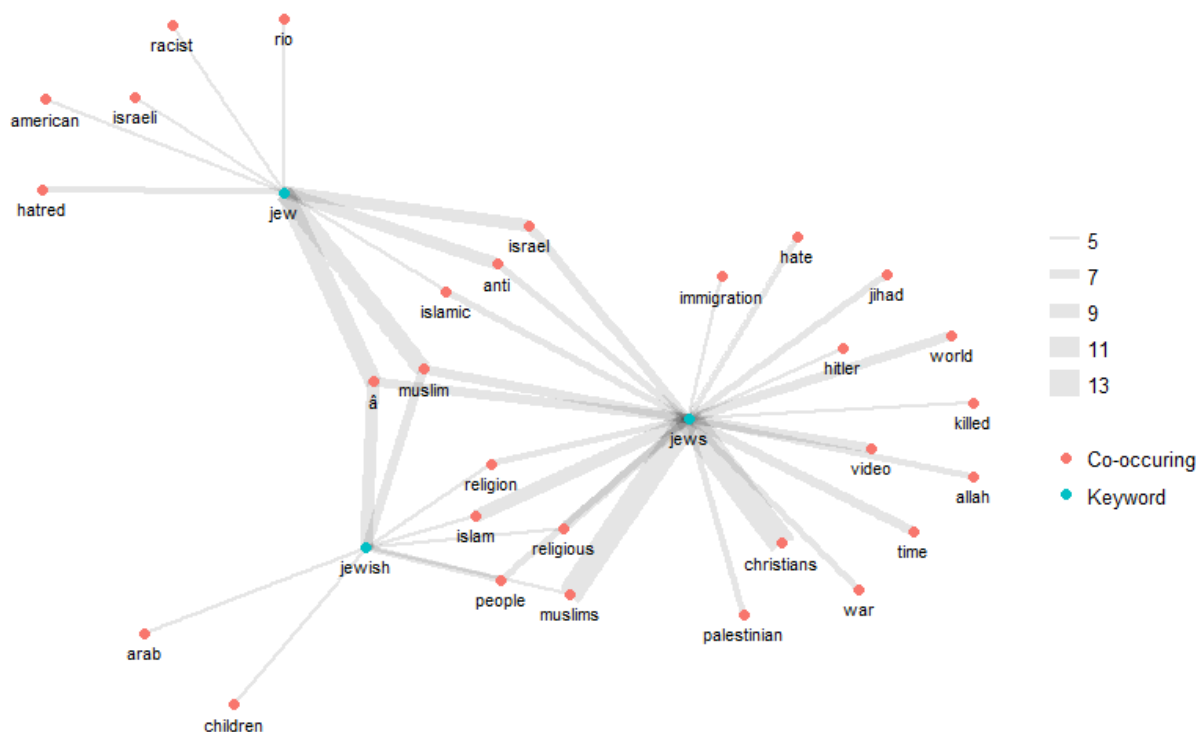
Overall, the sentiment scores are similar between the four categories. Of the three categories belonging to the in-group in the anti-Islamic master frame, however, women stand out as most associated with negative sentiments, and Jews with the least. In fact, women and homosexuals are just as, or more, associated with negative sentiments than the main antagonists – Muslims. To understand what this means we must scrutinize their posts and comments. Muslims are portrayed as the perpetrators of violence, but women and homosexuals are the victims, with statements such as “So which is it, Women's and Gay rights or Islam? They aren't mutually compatible” and “It is the doctrines of Islam, the subjugation of women, the hatred of anything and everything not Islam”. This highlights why the automated sentiment lexicon is a very rough tool when it comes to making valid interpretations. The co-occurrence word network underlines the diagnostic frame alignment with seeing women as a target of Muslim violence and oppression, with words such as “killed” and “attacked”.





**Figure 7.8. The words most frequently co-occurring together with “gay, homo, lesbian” or “LGBT” in posts and comments by activists on anti-Islamic Facebook groups**

Compared to women, LGBT are more consistently portrayed as vulnerable victims in need of protection, and not autonomous agents able to stand up for themselves. For instance, with references to the killing of forty-nine people in Orlando, Florida or the attacks on transgendered people in Turkey with statements such as “LGBT (lesbian gay bisexual and transgender) community in Turkey are raped and burnt to death in Istanbul”. Several comments equate LGBT people giving support to Muslims with black people supporting slavery. When we turn to the word network “gay”, “homosexual”, “lesbian” and “LGBT” co-occur with the words “defend”, “women”, “Western”, “law” as well as “Muslim”, “Islam” and “Sharia”. This cements the picture of frame alignment between activists and anti-Islamic diagnosis and prognosis – with LGBT strongly identified as belonging to the in-group under attack and meriting protection.



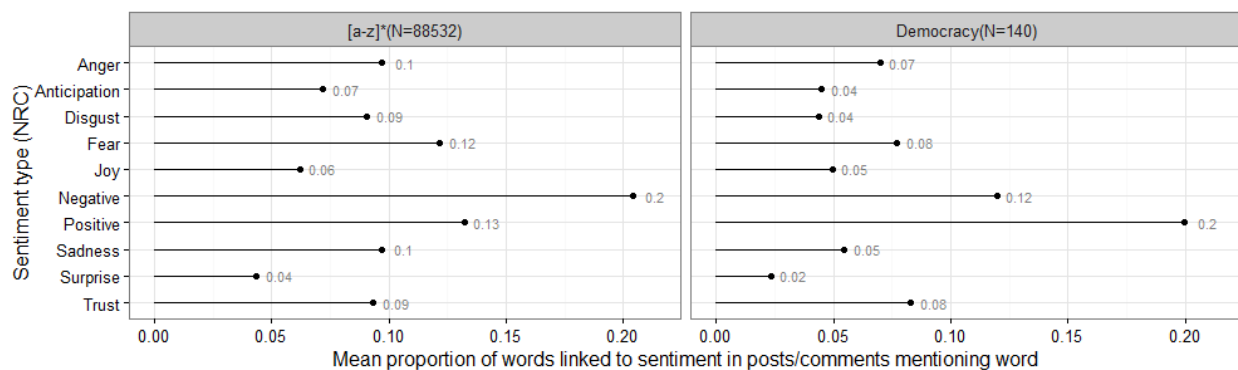
**Figure 7.9. The words most frequently co-occurring together with “Jew” in posts and comments by activists on anti-Islamic Facebook groups**

Jews are also taken as belonging to the in-group under attack in many of the posts and comments. Moreover, they are put in direct connection to the other groups which anti-Islamic initiatives claim to defend, as demonstrated by statements such as: “The goal is to stop the truth from being told. This is a direct assault on free speech. Christians, Jews, and the LGBTQ communities need to flood these police departments with complaints and drown them”. The overarching theme is that Islam and Muslims are out to destroy all non-Muslims. Yet, as in the other cases there are also some statements that adhere to a traditional extreme right point of view, such as “Just feel that there is not enough information out there to expose the New Jew Order”. In this competing narrative, Jews are portrayed as using Muslims as the unwitting foot soldiers to destroy the white race and European civilization. In other words, a majority of the statements regarding women, Jews and

LGBT seem to align with the anti-Islamic collective action framework, but traditional extreme right arguments are also present.

### 7.5.3 The solutions – democracy and violence

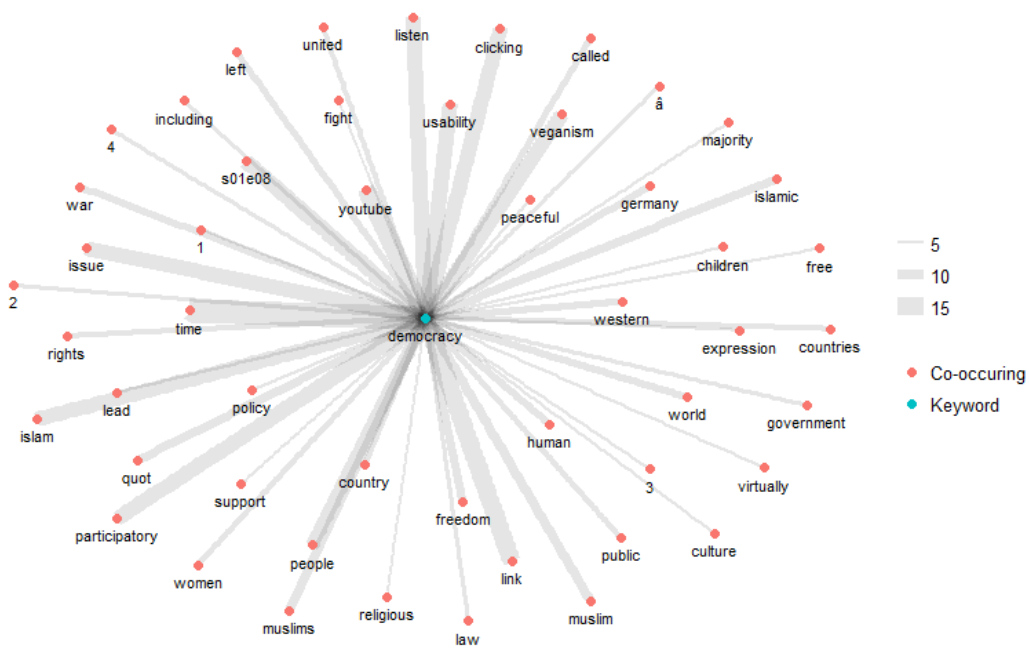
I now come to the way they relate to democracy and violence. As with the other categories, these words can be found in all three categories of framing. If activists align with the anti-Islamic master frame then democracy should define “us”, what is under threat from Muslims and what is worth fighting for. In Figure 7.10 I compare the mean proportion of words linked to sentiments that mention democracy to the entire body of text (a-z).



**Figure 7.10. Comparative overview of mean proportion of words linked to sentiments in posts and comments mentioning the words “a-z” and “democracy”**

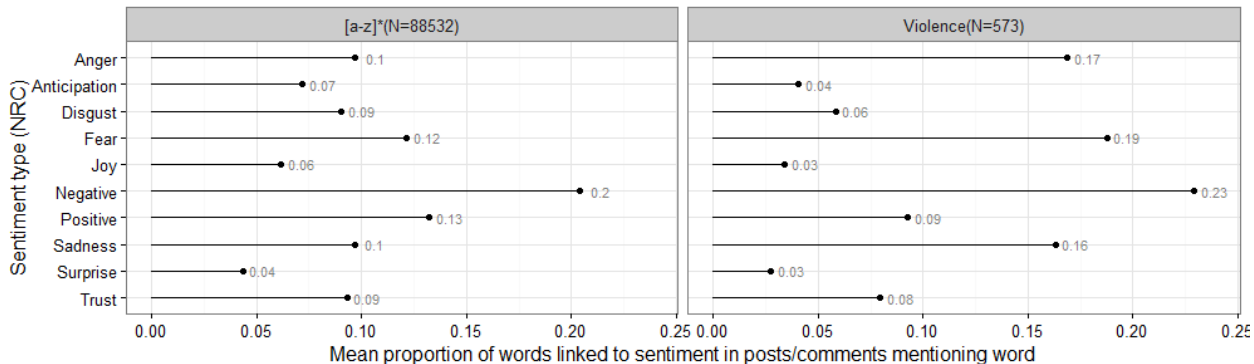
Democracy is found alongside words classified as positive almost twice as often as negative ones. This is the highest score in my selection, superseding for instance “white”. However, the KWIC samples also reveal the same underlying tension between pro-democratic views and anti-democratic ones as we have seen with views of race, women and Jews. On the one hand, there are statements that define “we” in terms of democracy, freedom of thought and expression together with women’s rights and gay rights – those threatened by Muslims and Islam. On the other hand, there are statements such as “...[we will] not defeat Islamic demographic takeover through democracy. Forget it. Human rights must be tossed out the window...”.





**Figure 7.11. The words most frequently co-occurring together with “democracy” in posts and comments by activists on anti-Islamic Facebook groups**

But what about violence? Should it be included in prognostic frames or only used to describe the actions of Muslims and the Islamic threat? If we look at the fascist tradition, violence is associated with glory and control – a necessary factor for rejuvenation and unity. This extreme tradition is not evident in the sentiment analysis.



**Figure 7.12. Comparative overview of mean proportion of words linked to sentiments in posts and comments mentioning the words “a-z” and “violence”**



Overall, the analysis of the coherence between activists and the anti-Islamic master frame reveals that there is substantial frame alignment on some issues. In the diagnostic framing of Islam and Muslims as the ultimate threat is dominant. However, internal tension is evident. Racist, anti-Semitic and other extreme right narratives are present in the posts and comments alongside the new, dominant anti-Islamic narrative which operates with the broad “us” of LGBT, women, Jews and other minorities united in the struggle against Muslims and Islam. Speaking to the individual categories, LGBT are consistently framed as part of the broader Western and civilized “us”, and as victims of Muslim violence and oppression. They are not scorned or derided. This is a break with the traditional extreme and ethno-pluralist right. Women’s rights are framed in positive terms as something which is inherent to “us” and alien to Muslims, but women are also written about in a possessive form. This mirrors the ideological duality evident in the leaders’ positions and their use of male-centric protector frames, which is indistinguishable from the fascist extreme right and ethno-pluralist radical right. Comments about Jews indicate a larger divide. The conspiracy theory that Jews are using Muslims as their foot soldiers against the “West”, understood in racial terms, is striking. Especially since Israel and the plight of the Jewish minority are played up by anti-Islamic leaders, and the selfsame anti-Islamic groups and pro-Jewish organizations have become more integrated online. Hostility against Jews goes hand in hand with the use of denigrating rhetoric about black people. A competing set of solutions is also present. Some reject dealing with Muslims within democratic parameters on the pretext that it is simply too late, even though democracy is idealized as inherently Western.

## **7.6 Emotions and Messages Driving Online Mobilization and Diffusion**

We have seen that activists espouse many of the liberal and progressive positions that the anti-Islamic initiatives have incorporated in their platform. These are often wedded to Christian themes and expressions of devotion. However, racist and anti-democratic stances are also present. Relying on multilevel regression analyses, this section tries to tease out the emotions and messages that drive internal mobilization in anti-Islamic groups and that spread beyond those groups.

When somebody writes a post on the wall of a group, Facebook users can choose to add comments, like (a thumbs-up symbol) or react with other emoticons. They can also share posts directly with friends via personal chat, on their own walls and other groups' pages. I include comments and shares of these in my analysis. Whereas comments capture substantial responses that simple likes and reactions do not, shares are pivotal because they let us know whether (and which) messages get traction beyond the given anti-Islamic group.

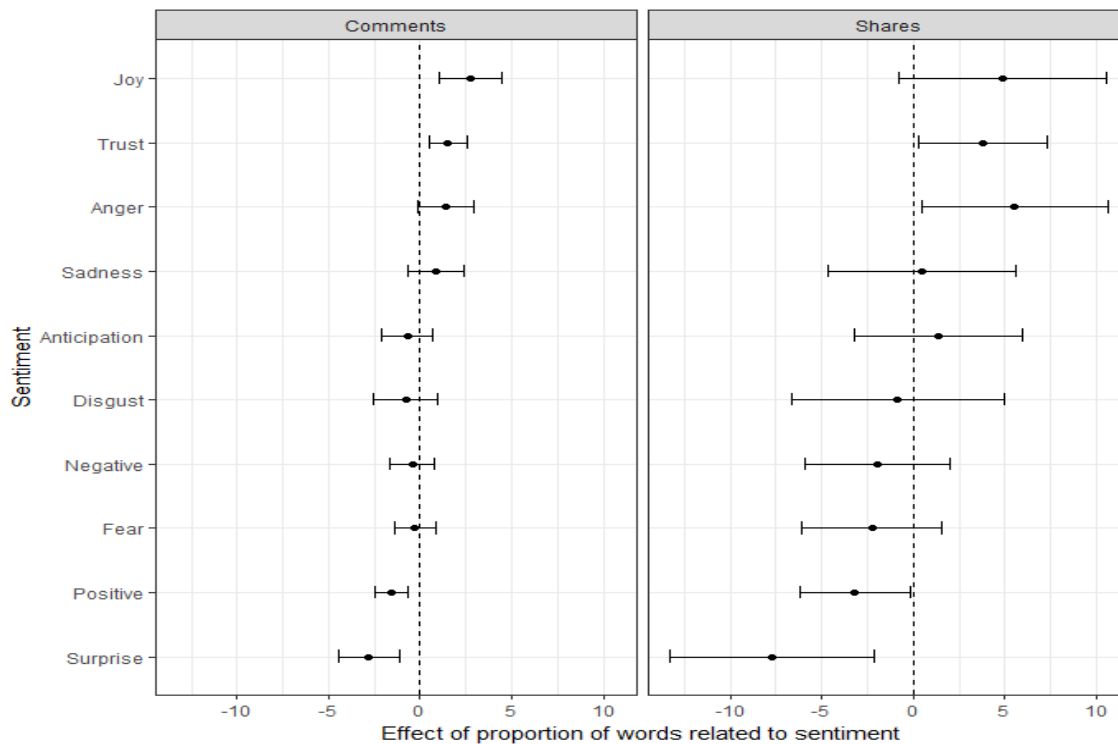
The individual words associated with a specific emotion or sentiment in a post are treated as independent variables, with comments and shares as dependent variables. If the proportion of one emotion in a post is increased by 100% then the number of comments and shares will increase or decrease accordingly when the others are held constant. There are a total of 5,514 posts divided over 298 groups included in the analysis. Drawing on the literature on mobilization and emotions, I hypothesized that the negative emotion of anger and positive emotions of joy and trust increase the amount of comments and shares a post gets. The results are presented in Table 7.1 and Figure 7.14.

**Table 7.1. Main results of multilevel regression analysis, with emotions and sentiments as independent variables and comments and shares as dependent variables**

	Comments	Shares
<b>Fixed Effects</b>		
Joy	2.738*** (0.947)	4.848 (3.151)
Trust	1.530*** (0.585)	3.828** (1.947)
Anger	1.413* (0.850)	5.523* (2.830)
Sadness	0.833 (0.857)	0.446 (2.854)
Anticipation	-0.697 (0.768)	1.362 (2.557)
Disgust	-0.796 (0.966)	-0.872 (3.214)
Negative	-0.434 (0.661)	-1.990 (2.199)
Fear	-0.226 (0.641)	-2.270 (2.133)
Positive	-1.543*** (0.505)	-3.188* (1.681)
Surprise	-2.796*** (0.930)	-7.693** (3.096)
Intercept	46.520*** (11.479)	72.513* (38.209)
<b>Model summary</b>		
N posts/group	5514/298	5514/298
Log Likelihood	-30039.860	-36670.710
AIC	60699.72	73961.42
BIC	62750.39	76012.09

\*\*\*p <.01; \*\*p<.05; \*p<.1; two-tailed test.

**Figure 7.14. Main results of multilevel regression analysis. Emotions and sentiments are independent variables and Comments and Shares dependent variables. Joyful and Trusting messages are strongly associated with increases in comments to a post**



The overall consistency of the directional effect which the individual independent variables have on the amount of comments and shares is reassuring. Moreover, this empirical pattern roughly mirrors Plutchik's (1980) binary distinction between joy and sadness, trust and disgust, fear and anger, and surprise and anticipation. The empirical gap between these theoretically assumed dichotomous emotions holds for both comments and shares.

We see that increases in joy-related and trust-related words have a statistically significant impact on the number of comments made by activists in response to a post. Both are significant at the level of 1%, and substantially significant with an average increase of 2.7 and 1.5 comments for every proportionate increase of joy-related or trust-related words. The results are not as clear when it comes to anger, which is only statistically significant at 10% – resulting in an average increase of 1.4 comments. Both statistically and substantially speaking, then, expressions of joy and trust are stronger drivers of internal mobilization than anger in the anti-Islamic groups.

There are indications of a similar pattern for diffusion, however, joy is not statistically significant, and trust is only statistically significant at the 5% level. Substantially, the average effect on the number of shares is stronger for both trust and anger than on the amount of comments, but the large standard deviations tell us that the effect is less consistent.

In sum, joy and trust have a clear effect and the directionality of that effect is along the lines postulated in the hypotheses, which are in turn derived from previous studies. Although the directional impact of anger also seems to be in line with expectations, the results are not significant at an equally stringent level as joy and trust.

Neither sadness, anticipation, disgust nor generalized expressions of negativity have a clear impact on the number of comments and shares. In contrast, positive sentiments and surprise actually drive down both the number of comments and shares obtained by a post. As with the mobilizing emotions and sentiments, the effect is clearer when it comes to comments than for

shares. An increase in the proportion of positive sentiments in a post leads to an average decrease of 1.5 comments, whereas an increase in surprise-associated words leads to an average decrease of 2.8 comments, which is statistically significant at the 1% level. The effect of joy and surprise is exactly the reverse. Turning to their effect on the number of shares, we again see a negative covariation.

Delving further into what these findings actually mean we must look at what messages the specific emotions are connected with. I begin with the three mobilizing emotions, followed by the two demobilizing emotions and sentiments.

### **7.6.1 Mobilizing messages**

Of the three mobilizing emotions, the literature indicates that the positive emotions are associated with affirmations of the in-group. The posts by anti-Islamic activists are no exception, and follow this pattern. Posts with a high share of joy-associated words contain combinations of Christian themes and expressions of faith with liberal and progressive positions. They clearly delineate the boundaries of precisely what they stand for, and which values they strive to embody. In the post containing the most joy-associated words, the activist writes:

If you are homophobic, you are a hater! My God loves all he commands us to love one another! So does your god! You are disobeying the law of God! If you believe homosexuality is a sin don't partake! Judge not lest you be judged. It's not complicated. Jesus said, of Faith Hope and Charity the greatest is Charity – love! <sup>147</sup>

The particular emphasis on Christianity is commonplace in the writings of anti-Islamic leaders and activists alike, either as a major component of Western cultural heritage and reason for “our” benevolence, or as profession of actual faith. Historically speaking, the combination of Christian themes with liberal and progressive positions bears more resemblance to the American civil rights movement than the fascist, extreme right. Other posts stress gratitude to fellow activists for

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<sup>147</sup> Taken as a whole, this specific post could be interpreted as containing both anger and joy.

arranging offline events and otherwise partaking in the activities of the group. To illustrate this, in another post with a high score in joy-associated words an activist stated that:

We thank everyone who came to the meeting... we are happy to have finally met!!! We are happy for this first meeting. I feel a hope that something will finally materialize. All together without division can go very far. As you asked there will be a next meeting in October or November 2016. If you have applications or important recommendations for the next meeting that will be our great pleasure to discuss with you : ) Thanks again to you who are traveling for this meeting THANK YOU !!!! !!!!

Posts containing a high number of trust-related words are often about concrete individuals and the efforts they have made or that activists believe they can make on behalf of their cause. In particular, trust-associated words are often used by anti-Islamic activists when talking about people with some authority who stand up to Muslims and describe Marxist cultural elites as politically correct, as in this expression of support for a police official:

And Sheriff [...] also has my respect. What he says and what he has constantly said is true. He should be our police commissioner over here in England. He would not stand for none of this that the police and we are getting. It's time to get tough. He should run for president. Hats off to you [...]. Respect from England.

Some of these posts contain elements that can be described as prognostic – namely they identify what has to be done, exemplified here by the statement, “time to get tough”. Others denote the human bonds of affection which have been built up among the activists, stressing their sacrifice and their dedication to the cause.

The results indicate that anger may play a role as an emotional driver of online mobilization and diffusion, but that it is not necessarily the prime mover indicated in social movement literature. In line with the literature, however, posts containing a high number of anger-associated words are linked with problem identification and rallying cries, namely what is defined as diagnostic and



motivational framing. The post registered with the highest proportion of anger-associated words is a diatribe against Islam and Muslims, saying they have made enemies of all religions, homosexuals and democracy itself and that appeasers of Islam trick themselves into believing otherwise. A random sample of posts containing words associated with anger also show a similar pattern of tirades against Islam as a malevolent entity. The content in these angry messages reinforces the broad coalition of people with a varied background united against Islam and Muslims:

ISLAMOPHOBIC HATE SPEECH. Islam is a Death Cult. I am an Atheist. I disagree with Islam I disagree with all religion. I have and always will. Hate speech does not exist. Hate speech and Racism will not be used to silence us. As the late great Hitchens said, freedom of speech means freedom to hate. Hate is just someone elses negative opinion. The number one target of criticism is truth.

Angry diatribes are far from unique to anti-Islamic initiatives. Strong emotional language is often used to express opinions online (Papacharissi, 2012), and news organizations' websites are full of uncivil and emotional comments (Coe, Kenski and Rains, 2014). However, anger used to mobilize for political action against a specific minority has some ominous connotations. Here the previously mentioned similarities with the arguments and slogans of the American civil rights movement come to an abrupt end.

### **7.6.2 Demobilizing messages**

The results also show that surprise and positive sentiments are demobilizing. In contrast to posts associated with joy and trust which affirm and strengthen in-group solidarity, posts which contain a lot of positive sentiments do not speak explicitly to the in-group as such. Instead, these posts come across as generic self-improvement and self-help messages that deal with common vices and issues such as alcohol abuse, marital problems or looking for a purpose in life. Many of these posts come under the rubrics of “Thought of the day” or “Meditation of the day”:

Make it a daily practice to review your character. Take your character in relation to your daily life to your dear ones, your friends, your acquaintances and your work. Each day try to see where God wants you to change. Plan how best each fault can be eradicated or each mistake be corrected. Never be satisfied with a comparison with those around you. Strive towards a better life.

Posts with a high number of surprise-associated words have a completely different character. Rather than containing generalized moral chastisement or self-help advice, they primarily appear in fact-oriented and number-heavy posts. They include electoral statistics, descriptions of events and so forth. For instance, the posts with the most surprise-associated words in the entire corpus deal with election results. Other posts with a large amount of surprise-associated words include reposts of stories from major news outlets covering jihadist terror attacks and plots, such as this:

[3] "ISIS terror plot to bomb German festival is foiled after police seize explosives as Oktoberfest organisers announce they will ban rucksacks from the event. Swat team arrested a suspected terrorist in Eisenhuettenstadt. Officials believe the man was planning to bomb the City Festival. The arrest comes after a string of attacks in Germany last month. Read more: Follow us: @MailOnline on Twitter | DailyMail on Facebook"

It is striking that news which conforms to the anti-Islamic narrative can cause a drop in mobilization, and seems counter-intuitive from the perspective of cumulative extremism where the assumption is that Jihadist terror fuels and drives increased mobilization and radicalization of anti-Islamic activists.

### **7.6.3 Where is the fear?**

Another striking finding is that fear has no significant impact on mobilizing online responses or the diffusion of messages. The literature on emotions indicates that fear is demobilizing and associated with avoidance, deliberation and desistance (see, for example, Bodenhausen, Sheppard, and Kramer 1994; DeSteno, Petty, Wegener, and Rucker 2000; Bushway

and Paternoster 2009; 2013), but much work on the far right and on opposition to Islam and Muslims actually describes fear as mobilizing. For instance, Ruth Wodak's central argument is that the populist radical right "...continuously construct fear..." to which only they "... seem to offer simple and clear-cut answers to..." (2015, 5). The fact that expressions of fear have no clear connection to mobilization among online activists in anti-Islamic groups contributes to nuance the prevalent description of the far right as fundamentally speaking a fear-constructing and inducing phenomenon.

## **7.7 Conclusion**

In this exploration of anti-Islamic activism online among 298 groups across 182 countries, two things stand out. First, and contrary to what we might assume on the basis of literature on prejudice and survey data of EDL sympathizers, my findings indicate that a sizeable number of activists embrace liberal and progressive positions included in the anti-Islamic initiatives official platform. This implies that the anti-Islamic, organizational expansion of the far right has also expanded the recruitment pool beyond individuals who are generally prejudiced against all minorities. These findings resonate with qualitative evidence from interviews with EDL activists (Busher 2015), where proclamations of being against racism were common. Busher argues that this genuinely reflected their self-identity, rather than being a strategic attempt to develop a 'reputational shield' (ibid. 97).

Second, unlike fear, expressions of joy and trust drive online mobilization. These are messages that focus on the in-group and on building a common identity. Their merger of Christian messages with rights-based claims for minorities has some striking similarities to the American civil rights movement. The inclusion of progressive and liberal stances such as support for gay rights in the messages which drive mobilization also demonstrates that it is more than a façade employed by the leadership. The overarching theme seems to be one of belonging.

As indicated in the first part of the analysis, however, there is still an undercurrent of openly anti-democratic and racist self-expression. This reveals an ideological tension between the official platform and the moderate activists on the one hand, and the extreme activists on the other. It is not given that the current leadership and moderates who now incorporate the liberal and progressive positions will dominate the anti-Islamic movement in the long run.

# 8. Transnational and Semi-Liberal

## **Summary**

In this concluding chapter, I summarize the findings which shed light on the overall structure of the anti-Islamic far right and its entanglement with liberal and progressive values. Having distinguished between the anti-Islamic expansion of the far right with new initiatives and the anti-Islamic reorientation of pre-existing radical right parties, I argue that the initiatives that make up the anti-Islamic expansion of the far right comprise a transnational movement embedded in a broader subculture. This movement and subculture has a consistent worldview and prominent ideologues. Furthermore, it is characterized by a semi-liberal equilibrium – which is evident in their official ideology, online organizational networks and among their online members. The anti-Islamic turn and expansion is therefore also a liberal turn and expansion of the far right, demonstrating that who the enemy is really does matter. Nonetheless, internal ideological inconsistencies between their pro-democratic stances and portrayal of Islam as an immediate and apocalyptic threat alongside the Eastward expansion and presence of activists with explicitly racist and anti-democratic views lays bare the precariousness of this semi-liberal equilibrium.

The aim of this thesis has been to understand the anti-Islamic turn at a macro level, and to grasp the theoretical implications for understanding the current far right produced by this. It has not been to explain the success or failure of individual parties or activist groups. Empirically, my thesis is concerned with what I have classified as the anti-Islamic expansion of the far right with new political initiatives, as opposed to the anti-Islamic reorientation of pre-existing radical right parties. The expansion includes electorally successful radical right parties such as the Dutch LPF and PVV, but is predominantly an extra-parliamentary affair of electorally unsuccessful parties, an array of activist groups, online forums, alternative news sites and think-tanks.

The radical right parties, including the Dutch cases, have received a large amount of scholarly attention (Mudde 2016). A much smaller, but growing, body of literature examines the extra-parliamentary anti-Islamic far right. Laudable research has been conducted on individual activist groups such as the EDL (e.g. Busher 2013; 2015) and PEGIDA. There have also been studies looking at the ties between anti-Islamic groups and websites, especially online (e.g. Lee 2015). The scholarship on the anti-Islamic expansion and extra-parliamentary activism has been hampered, however, by the fact that most of these studies are empirically rather narrow. Christopher Bail's work on anti-Islamic activist influence in the United States (2012; 2014) is a prominent exception, but as with similar work, the transnational perspective is missing.

The most novel aspect of both the anti-Islamic reorientation of pre-existing radical right parties and the anti-Islamic expansion of the far right is their apparent incorporation of some liberal and progressive values. Even though existing literature points to the importance of ideology and uses it as the common denominator to understand the far right, the literature has been skeptical about these "new" elements. To this day there is a shortage of studies that investigate this striking development. Those that do mention it predominantly look at pre-existing radical right parties that

have undergone an ideological reorientation, and the inclusion of for instance gender equality, LGBT rights and freedom of speech has been characterized as strategic tools to circumvent political and normative sanctions.

This points to two large gaps in our understanding of the anti-Islamic turn and the expansion of the far right. One gap concerns the overall structure of the anti-Islamic far right, both outside institutionalized radical right party politics and beyond the scope of single countries. The other gap concerns the extent and impact of the inclusion of liberal and progressive values by anti-Islamic initiatives.

Aiming to fill some of these gaps, I initially posed the following questions. First, what characterizes the anti-Islamic movements' structure and composition? Second, how, and to what extent, does the anti-Islamic movement incorporate progressive and liberal values? To answer these questions, I draw on and summarize the empirical findings and theoretical arguments from Chapters 4 - *Expansion and Legacy*, 5- *Worldviews*, 6 – *Networks* and 7 – *Mobilization*.

In response to the first research question, I argue that the initiatives which make up the anti-Islamic expansion of the far right are part of a transnational movement and subculture with a consistent worldview and prominent ideologues. The leaders, and representatives of these anti-Islamic initiatives come from diverse political backgrounds, with few connections to pre-existing radical right or extreme right groups and parties. The expansion can be divided into four waves from 2001 onwards, all of which have been propelled by critical events such as 9/11 and the Muhammed cartoon crisis.

My findings indicate that anti-Islamic initiatives continuously incorporate both traditional and progressive/liberal values under the rubric of their civilizational, supra-national identity. I



argue that their diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing constitutes a distinct anti-Islamic master frame, and conceptualize the ideological duality as a strategic frame ambiguity.<sup>148</sup> The anti-Islamic, organizational network mirrors the civilizational framework and ideological duality, with ties to liberal and progressive as well as Christian conservative initiatives. Furthermore, online activists are aligned with the official platform, and messages of belonging which incorporate both traditional and modern values seem to be the main driver of both internal mobilization and message diffusion. In response to the second research question, I therefore argue that the anti-Islamic movement and subculture is characterized by a semi-liberal equilibrium.

The anti-Islamic turn and expansion is consequently also a liberal turn and expansion of the far right, demonstrating that who the enemy is really matters. Based on existing literature and my own findings, I suggest two pathways into adopting the worldviews espoused in the anti-Islamic movement and subculture. In the first opposition to Islam precedes an inclusion of some progressive and liberal positions driven by strategic calculation to avoid social and political sanctions. In the second pathway progressive and liberal positions precede the understanding of Islam as a totalitarian ideology and existential threat, driven by an emotional response to Jihadi terror attacks and other critical events.

Although the anti-Islamic, far-right ideology transcends important political cleavages, I argue that the ability of these groups to transform the political landscape is hampered by the perceived illegitimacy of most anti-Islamic initiatives. Furthermore, my own work exposes the precariousness of this semi-liberal equilibrium. First, between 2015 and 2016 the online network expanded Eastward to include radical and extreme right groups of the old ideological order. Second, the Western anti-Islamic groups also hold activists who espouse racist and anti-democratic

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<sup>148</sup> By strategic I do not attempt to indicate deception.

ideas. Third, the anti-Islamic worldview contains an inherent potential for radicalization since it stresses the immediate and apocalyptic threat of Islamic domination. These sources of tension mean that the future direction of the anti-Islamic far right is uncertain.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into three sections. The first two answer the initial research questions, as summarized above. Each section is prefaced with a restatement of the related main argument. The third and final section examines two issues. First, the barriers to power which face the anti-Islamic far right, and finally the inherent challenges to the current semi-liberal equilibrium which, I argue, currently characterizes this movement and subculture.

## **8.1 A Transnational Movement and Cohesive Ideology**

The anti-Islamic expansion of the far right consists of a broad range of initiatives whose leaders come from a variety of political backgrounds, from far left to far right. The expansion has been propelled by society-wide critical events, such as 9/11, and local moral shocks. Anti-Islamic initiatives have created, and are embedded in, a transnational movement and subculture with a cohesive ideology. This ideology is manifest at the organizational level and among their online membership. Put more succinctly:

The initiatives that make up the anti-Islamic expansion of the far right are part of a transnational movement and subculture with a consistent worldview and prominent ideologues.

I will examine each of these sub-claims, beginning with the waves of expansion, political backgrounds, worldviews and transnational collaborations, networks and members before finally dealing with the subjects of movement and subculture.

### **8.1.1 Four waves of expansion**

Having made the central distinction between the anti-Islamic expansion and the anti-Islamic reorientation, I argue that we can divide the diffusion of anti-Islamic activism since 2001 into four waves of expansion (Chapter 4). The United States, the Netherlands, Britain, Norway, Denmark and Germany stand out as strongholds of anti-Islamic activism. These are countries where a wave either began or which was the home of prominent and durable initiatives which underlie these waves.

The first wave began at the same time in the United States and the Netherlands. In the United States it was the website LGF, run by a self-styled liberal, which was the initial platform for those who came to define themselves as “Counter-Jihadists”. LGF was followed by now more prominent sites such as GoV and Jihad Watch. The Netherlands became the first country with an electorally successful anti-Islamic party, LPF. Each subsequent wave is defined by an upsurge in

organizational activity, epitomized by the creation of a new activist group which managed to establish offshoots in several countries. The second wave was defined by the “Counter-Jihad” moving off the web and onto the streets and the formation of Stop Islamization, which was subsequently set up in countries across Europe. Furthermore, several pre-existing alternative newssites joined the anti-Islamic cause. The anti-Islamic movement and subculture was reinvigorated with the formation of EDL in 2009, which marks the advent of a third wave. Defence League affiliates were quickly set up around Europe, much in the same manner as the Stop Islamization initiatives before them. The EDL thus added another layer to the expanding landscape of anti-Islamic activism. Finally, the fourth wave is marked by the rapid establishment and diffusion of PEGIDA across Europe and North America.

### **8.1.2 Critical events and moral shocks - necessary but not sufficient**

Every wave was propelled by critical events and moral shocks. The first and largest of which was 9/11, which provided an opportunity for the already staunchly anti-Islamic Pim Fortuyn to become an important figure in Dutch public debate. It was also a personal turning point for the founder of the LGF website, who became a convert to the cause of battling so-called “Islamofascism”. The Counter-Jihadi community’s turn to the streets and transformation of websites such as Politically Incorrect, Document.no and Snaphanen was driven by the unfolding Muhammed cartoon crisis which enveloped Denmark in 2005-2006. The visibility and reach of the pre-established anti-Islamic community from the first wave also grew massively, as their websites became some of the world’s most read during that period. The third and fourth waves, in contrast, have been propelled by events of a more local nature. The EDL, whose creation in 2009 marks the onset of the third wave, was formed in response to Islamist picketing the funerals of fallen soldiers, while PEGIDA was created (online) by Lutz Bachmann in response to a PKK demonstration in

Dresden. These “moral shocks” were the starting point, but did not necessarily play a significant role in the subsequent diffusion of these activist groups in Europe and beyond.

Finally, it is important to remark that most Jihadi terror attacks, demonstrations or other events which *could* facilitate an expansion of the anti-Islamic movement and subculture have in fact *not* done so. There are therefore no grounds to say that these events as such cause anti-Islamic mobilization. In other words, critical events and moral shocks are necessary, but not sufficient, for sparking a wave of anti-Islamic expansion.

### **8.1.3 Broad composition of political legacies among anti-Islamic figureheads**

The leaders and representatives of the prominent anti-Islamic initiatives during these four waves of expansion come from varied political and professional backgrounds. Of the thirty figureheads from the six national strongholds included in the overview, a majority had been politically active in one form or another prior to engaging in anti-Islamic activism. An equal number of figureheads have a history of left-wing activism as right-wing activism, whereas only a minority have any prior connections to radical or extreme right parties and groups. In other words, there is no clear organizational continuity between the parties, groups and other organizations which have come to define the anti-Islamic expansion and the older, more traditional radical or extreme right at the top level.

When it comes to gender, men are in the clear majority. Whilst a minority, women (most of whom are self-professed feminists) also play a prominent role alongside people who incorporate their LGBT identity into their public persona. Half include their religious identity, be it Christian or atheist, and mobilization activity into their public persona. Religious affiliation intersects with political background, as atheists and agnostics have left-wing backgrounds whereas Christians (of various denominations) mainly come from a right-wing background. Most of the figureheads have

middle-class backgrounds and professional careers in journalism, publishing and programming. Leaders of the street-oriented activist groups such as PEGIDA, the EDL and others stand out with a larger share of working-class backgrounds.

#### **8.1.4 Consistent worldviews – prominent ideologues**

The cursory look at the positions taken by these figureheads and others, such as Bat Ye'Or and the scholarly work they draw on – most prominently Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis, indicate that their views regarding Islam as an existential threat is consistent, and the label anti-Islam is thereby clearly merited. Moreover, when examining the collective action framing by anti-Islamic initiatives in Britain, Germany and Norway in depth, I found that they were largely coherent and consistent in their diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing across organizational as well as country-specific contexts. The salience of specific frames varied, for instance with what I defined as "modern equality frames", with a female point of view being more prominent in the Norwegian context, as opposed to "traditional protector frames" with a male point of view. Both frames, however, were used intermittently by all the anti-Islamic initiatives in question. Lee argues that these initiatives hold a myriad of different ideas and therefore cannot be treated as a monolithic phenomenon (2015, 251). Önnersfors' takes it further, describing the "European Counter-Jihad Movement" as a right-wing discourse without a consistent worldview, dominant leaders and prolific ideologues (2017, 159). My findings in Chapters 4 and 5 points in the opposite direction. In fact, the worldview is consistent (Chapter 5), and they have dominant leaders as well as prolific ideologues (Chapter 4). Not only that, but my findings indicate that these views are widely shared by online activists who take part in anti-Islamic groups (Chapter 7), and not just at the top level. This goes for the entire worldview and not only the perception of Islam as a totalitarian ideology and existential threat.

### **8.1.5 Transnational coalitions, communicative networks and member-base**

In addition to the reorientation of alternative newssites, the establishment of off-shoot and sister organizations to activist groups such as Stop Islamization of Denmark, the EDL and PEGIDA across Western Europe and North America, the waves of anti-Islamic expansion have also been hotbeds of transnational cooperation and coalition-building. Since the start it has been a transatlantic affair, with a lot of interaction and collaboration between U.S. and European initiatives. Seen in its totality, each wave of expansion has resulted in an overall deepening of ties and mutual recognition across country and regional divides. The most prominent umbrella organizations have been the International Civil Liberties Alliance, SIOE, SION, IFPS, and Fortress Europa.

In addition to the establishment of transnational umbrella organizations and other forms of collaboration,<sup>149</sup> anti-Islamic initiatives have solidified their presence online via Facebook. There, my analyses uncovered a global network (Chapter 6), anchored in Western Europe and North America, which expanded by close to 30% between March 2015 and 2016. The clusters of Facebook-groups dominated by explicitly anti-Islamic initiatives ballooned from just under 3,200 to 4,200 within the same period. The anti-Islamic Facebook groups originate from 182 countries around the world, and on average each anti-Islamic Facebook group had members from thirty countries. Besides serving as channels for the rapid dissemination of information, these networks can also facilitate mobilization. This was most clearly seen with the rapid establishment of PEGIDA across Europe, whose physical manifestations were preceded by activists setting up Facebook groups (Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016).

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<sup>149</sup> For instance, on its website the IFPS linked to a website for donating to Dutch PVV party leader Geert Wilders' trial defense fund: [www.geertwilders.nl](http://www.geertwilders.nl)

### **8.1.6 Between a movement and subculture**

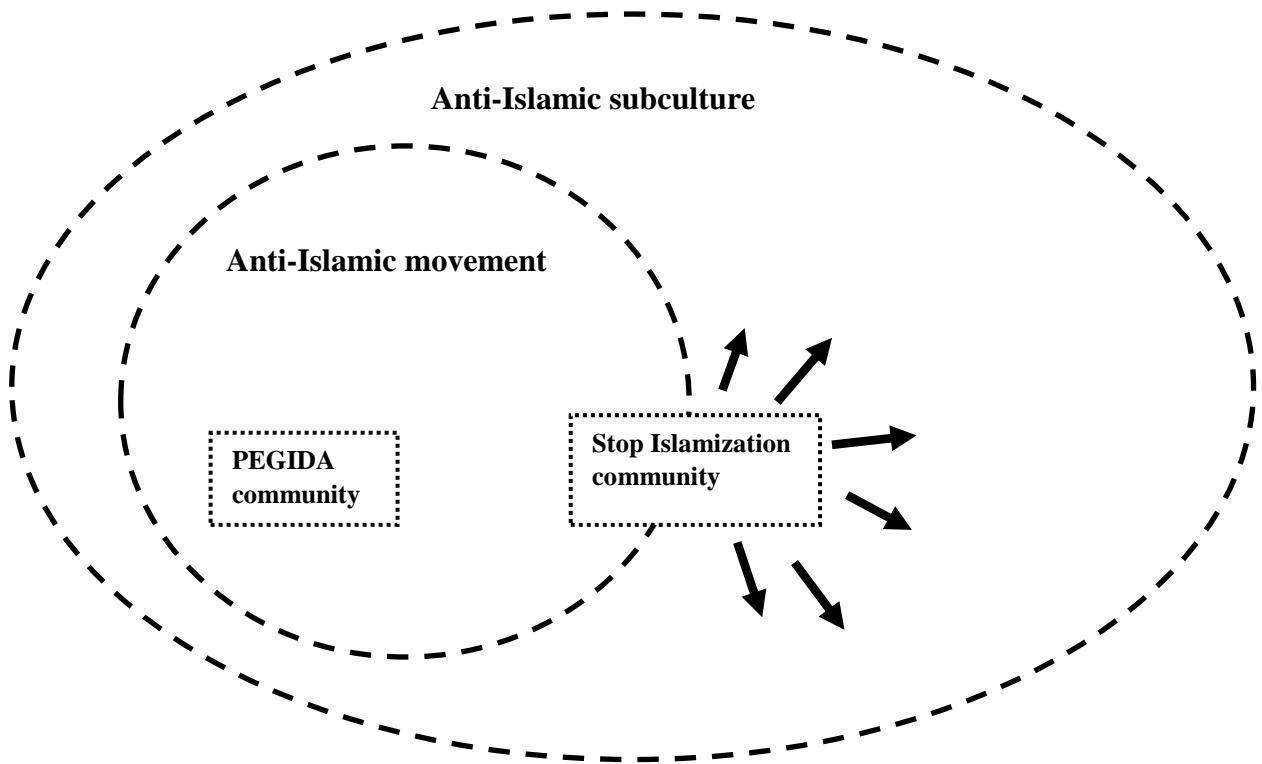
Some earlier research has defined the anti-Islamic far right as constituting a transnational social movement (Berntzen and Sandberg 2014; Melagrou-Hitchens and Brun 2014), others as a loose global fraternity (Denes 2012), an amorphous network (Goodwin 2013) and as a nebula in its online variety (e.g. Lee 2015). Irrespective of whether this is a movement, it is at least implicitly challenged by the chosen terminology of Goodwin and Lee, as amorphous is synonymous with formless and nebula refers to a cloud of gas. In other words, without substance.

I have operated with the synthesis-definition of a movement as “networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups, or associations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict on the basis of a shared collective identity” (Diani and Bison 2004, 282). In comparison, a subculture is one in which actors experience a sense of commonality that cuts across the boundaries of specific groups, but where there is no systematic exchange between organizations (ibid. 285). The broad empirical scope of my own research does not fully resolve this “dispute”. For example, online networks are not movements *per se*, although some argue that they indicate both ideological affinity, common objectives and shared interests (Burriss et al. 2000; Tateo 2005; Caiani et al. 2012). Furthermore, all social movements are made up of coalitions, but not all coalitions produce social movements (Tarrow 2006, 164).

Online networks can facilitate systematic exchanges, but whether they are consistently used in this manner is uncertain. The most apt description would be to say that at its core, there is a transnational anti-Islamic movement surrounded by a subcultural periphery. Just which initiatives form part of the movement can, and have varied over time. Some initiatives, such as the Stop Islamization groups, have either dissolved completely or fallen into a period of what Billig (1978) described as abeyance.



**Figure 8.1. Illustration of the transnational anti-Islamic social movement as a core embedded in a broader anti-Islamic subculture (periphery)**



*Note:* As specific initiatives or communities of initiatives begin to dissolve and only continue through low-intensity activity online, they move from the core movement to the subcultural periphery. This process is exemplified with the Stop Islamization community, which was important in the second and third wave of expansion, but which has since dissolved as a distinct community. Unlike organizations, neither movements nor subcultures have well-defined boundaries or central unit dictating the criteria for inclusion or exclusion.

Many activists nonetheless linger on, and their online groups gradually form part of the growing subculture. Within the “core”, transnational movement, they have been replaced by initiatives such as PEGIDA. Outside the *sui generis* case of PEGIDA in Dresden, their “success” also reinvigorated some older activists, inspiring them to rejoin the cause. This was most prominent in Britain, with the former leader of the EDL co-founding PEGIDA UK.

Speaking of the extra-parliamentary, anti-Islamic far right, Goodwin (2013, 4), Busher (2013) and Lee (2015, 250) call it an “embryonic” phenomenon, whose future direction and

possible influence remains to be seen. Based on my findings and the aggregate body of research, I argue that the anti-Islamic movement and broader subculture is not embryonic. In organizational and relational terms, it has been building and spreading for close to two decades (Chapter 4). There have been several attempts at building political parties (most notably various Freedom parties), and their ideological platforms appear to have been quite consistent, at least since the Muhammed cartoon crisis. The degree to which these initiatives have influenced the broader population is an open question, and we can probably expect some degree of variation between the countries where they are active. However, if we look at the American context Bail (2012; 2014) documents how anti-Islamic groups have become dominant players in the political debate. The network analysis also points to a high degree of cohesiveness and affinity between the various anti-Islamic initiatives when seen at the macro-level. The fact that pre-existing radical right parties also have adopted anti-Islamic stances and thereby undergone an ideological reorientation, certainly speaks to the viability of these views. The initiatives which are part of the anti-Islamic expansion of the far right, however, have not been very successful in institutionalizing their transnational collaborations. A lack of transnational institutionalization should not be taken to indicate that networks between anti-Islamic initiatives are fading away. In the next section, I turn to the second research question and substantive issues of ideology.

## 8.2 A Semi-Liberal Equilibrium

Beginning at the organizational level (front-stage), anti-Islamic initiatives continuously incorporate both traditional and progressive/liberal values under the rubric of their civilizational, supra-national identity. I define this duality as strategic frame ambiguity. Furthermore, I argue that the anti-Islamic collective action framing is best understood as a distinct, (relatively) static master frame which constrains the activities and orientations of social movement organizations both within and between waves of activism. At an ideological level, the anti-Islamic master frame transcends the so-called Green-Alternative-Libertarian/Traditional-Authoritarian-Nationalist (GAL/TAN) divide. The anti-Islamic network mirrors the civilizational framework and ideological duality. Anti-Islamic groups across North America, Europe, Australia and beyond have reciprocal ties. Moreover, these anti-Islamic groups also reach out to animal rights, LGBT, women's rights groups, Christian conservative, Jewish and pro-Israeli initiatives. Some, but not all, of these reciprocate. Turning to their online activists, my findings indicate that a majority are aligned with the official platform. Islam is viewed as a totalitarian ideology threatening Western civilization, hereunder Christianity, democracy, gender equality and the rights of other minorities. Among online activists, messages which stress this supra-national civilizational identity, which incorporates both traditional and modern values, seems to be the main driver of both internal mobilization and message diffusion. In sum, I therefore argue that:

The anti-Islamic movement and subculture is characterized by a semi-liberal equilibrium.

The anti-Islamic turn is thereby also a liberal turn of the far right. This reflects their understanding of Islam and Muslims as the ultimate embodiment of authoritarianism, narrowmindedness, patriarchy and misogyny. The concomitant liberal turn demonstrates that it matters who the enemy is, but not in the straightforward manner that some suggest. As documented, few of the figureheads

have a radical right background prior to becoming involved in the anti-Islamic cause, whereas many have a left-wing background. The fervent espousal of women and LGBT rights among some of the online activists resonates with this finding, indicative of an expansion in personnel and potential recruitment, and not just new organizations. This suggests two causal pathways into the anti-Islamic movement and subculture. One pathway where opposition to Islam generates an inclusion of some progressive and liberal positions, and another where the embrace of certain progressive and liberal positions generates an acceptance of the notion that Islam is a totalitarian ideology and existential threat. Whereas the literature suggests that far right nationalists adopt the anti-Islamic, civilizational master frame based on rational calculation in order to escape sanctions, my findings alongside studies of terror attacks suggest that people with a liberal and progressive outset do so based on emotional reactions to jihadist terror attacks and other critical events.

### **8.2.1 The anti-Islamic master frame - a civilizational identity**

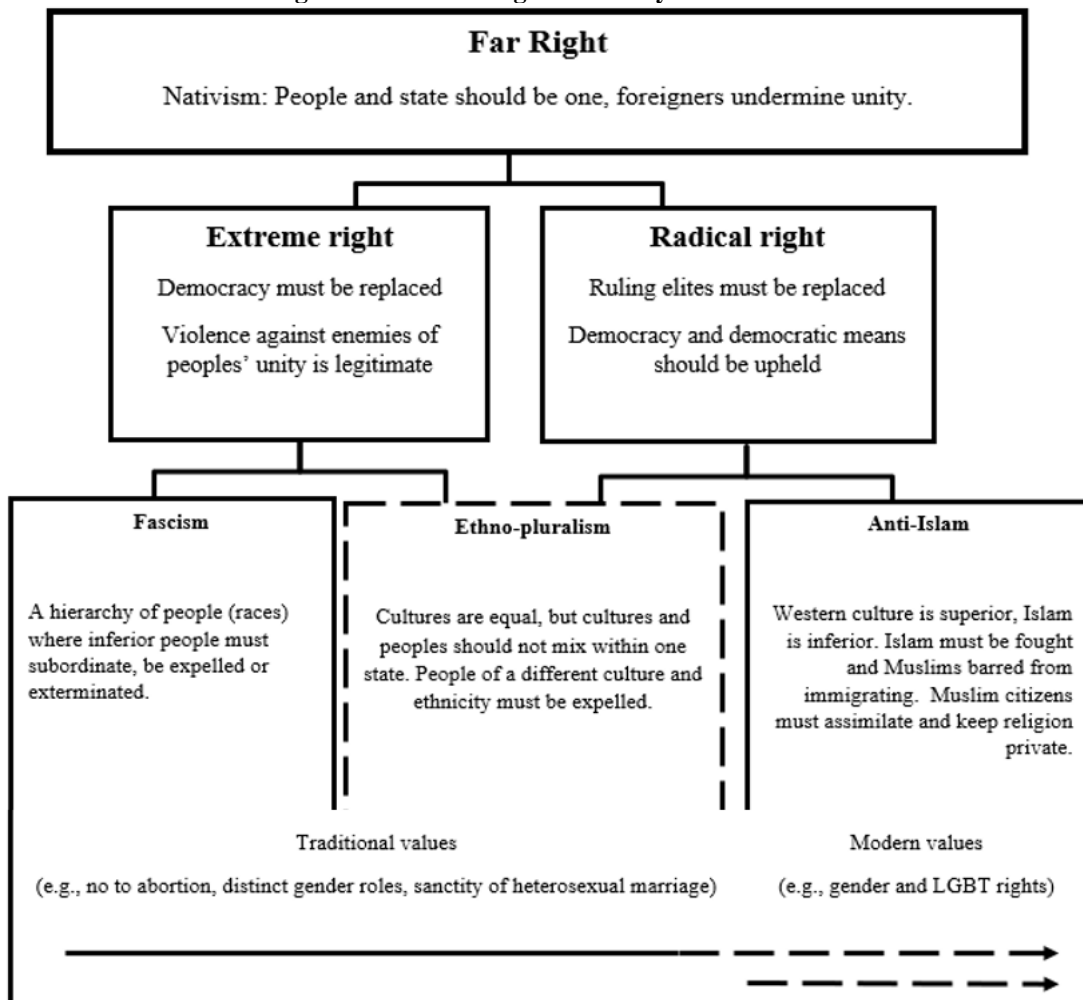
The eleven anti-Islamic initiatives I studied in Britain, Germany and Norway were in unison in their portrayal of Islam as a political, totalitarian ideology. In official documents they are careful to nuance and distinguish between Islam as an ideology and individual Muslims, although that distinction often vanishes in other texts and statements, thereby leading into explicitly anti-Muslim territory. Beyond this, they were also unified in their incorporation of both traditional values and progressive/liberal ones in their supra-national, civilizational identity. Mirroring their portrayal of themselves and Western civilization as peaceful and democratic, they propose non-violent solutions within the confines of the democratic system. Whereas the ethno-pluralist radical right which shot to prominence in the 1980s also embraced democracy, the anti-Islamic far right is distinct in that it constructs a supra-national identity by drawing on liberalism. I have argued that this is best understood as an anti-Islamic, civilizational master frame. This has been suggested by Vossen, based on his study of Geert Wilders' PVV (2011; 2016). However, unlike Vossen, I

believe it is incorrect to view Wilders as the innovator, and prefer to stress the gradual establishment and diffusion of this anti-Islamic, civilizational master frame, by individuals and political initiatives which were able to draw on the intellectual work of Huntington and others from the 1990s. Within the broader political landscape, the Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn and the Counter-Jihadi online community stand out as the most crucial early innovators and disseminators.

### 8.2.2 Placing Anti-Islam in the Far Right Taxonomy

I now return to the far-right taxonomy in Chapter 2 (p. 58), extricated from some of the most commonly held definitions of the far right and its various permutations. We can place anti-Islam within the taxonomy of the far right at the intermediary level of abstraction, adjacent to ethno-pluralism.

Figure 8.2. The far-right taxonomy revisited



In this figure, two aspects clearly distinguishes the anti-Islamic master frame from the ethno-pluralist master frame. First, whereas the ethno-pluralist form of nativism built on the idea of separate but equal cultures and ethnicities which leaves no room for cohabitation within a state, the anti-Islamic nativism is explicitly built on a value based hierarchy where Islam (and by consequence practicing Muslims) are viewed as inferior. Second, the anti-Islamic master frame builds on a greatly expanded conception of the in-group, incorporating liberal values as part of their Western, civilizational identity. It can be understood as a form of liberal nativism (Spierings and Zaslove 2015) – that is liberalism for the natives only (Pappas 2016, 27), but just who make up the natives is also fundamentally different from the older fascist and ethno-pluralist conceptions. It is, in essence, a liberalism for all those who are not Muslim.

In fact, the importance of the civilizational dimension actually challenges the use of the term nativist to describe the anti-Islamic far right.<sup>150</sup> At an ideological level, this also means that the anti-Islamic worldview transcends the so-called Green-Alternative-Libertarian/Traditional-Authoritarian-Nationalist (GAL/TAN) divide. By implication, the anti-Islamic variation of radical right ideology as espoused by these initiatives is, in fact, not a purely far-right phenomenon.

### **8.2.3 Decoupling from authoritarianism and increased sectarianism**

Relying on Douglas' grid/group scheme (1978) and Kitschelt's re-theoretization of the GAL/TAN cleavage (2012), I described this as a partial decoupling of group-issues from grid-issues. Rather than being authoritarian, like the fascist extreme right and ethno-pluralist radical right, the anti-Islamic far right embodies a form of liberal sectarianism (see figure 5.4. *The authoritarian decoupling*, page 151). This approach lets us delineate further differences in the conception of belonging compared to the fascist extreme right and the ethno-pluralist radical right.

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<sup>150</sup> As nativism explicitly refers the idea that the nation state should only consist of members from the native group.

For instance, in the ethno-pluralist master frame the culturally or ethnically different outsider plays a less vital role than in the anti-Islamic master frame. In the latter case everything revolves around what Islam is and is not, and by consequence what the West is and is not. Thereby the in-group/out-group demarcation is more important in a functional sense, meaning that anti-Islamic ‘nativism’ is a more salient issue.

This does not only impact the internal logic of the movement. The partial decoupling between authoritarian issues and identity issues which we see among anti-Islamic initiatives, in turn also makes identity demarcations even more important vis-à-vis *other* political actors. This is because they no longer distinguish themselves from other political actors on the authoritarian dimension – except from other radical and extreme right initiatives.

#### **8.2.4 Permeation of the semi-liberal identity**

The civilizational, semi-liberal identity – which I alternately described as liberal sectarianism -permeates the current anti-Islamic movement and subculture. This was demonstrated in my network analyses of their online, organizational Facebook ties as well as in my analysis of the messages espoused by their online members. Existing below the level of ideology, master frames and collective action frames frequently consist of elements from one or more ideologies. These function as both facilitators and constraints (Benford and Snow 2000). The absence of Western European and North American traditional extreme right groups and structurally peripheral role of extreme right groups from Eastern Europe speaks to the restraining nature of their positioning as defenders of Western civilization. Similarly, the way in which their framing has facilitated potential for new alliances is evident in the presence of Israeli, Jewish, women’s rights and LGBT rights organizations in the overall network. For instance, Israeli and pro-Israeli groups were at the core of the network in 2015, and by 2016 had become structurally intertwined to such

an extent that they had merged with an anti-Islamic cluster. Furthermore, the progressive elements, while only forming a small contingent within the network, had an important structural role as indicated by their degree and brokerage scores (see Chapter 6 and Table III, Appendix II). This suggests that ideas and claims pushed by the progressive elements has the *potential* for wide and rapid diffusion among anti-Islamic initiatives present on Facebook.

### **8.2.5 The enemy matters in more ways than one**

Studies that have described the cocomitant hostility to Islam and adoption of liberal and progressive values have quite consistently described it as strategy, front-stage and so forth (e.g. Larzillière and Sal 2011; Mayer, Ajanovic, and Sauer 2014; Minkenberg, Deland and Mays 2014, 12; Scrinzi 2017). The implication is that they are attempting to deceive others by covering up their true beliefs and intentions. Moreover, it is frequently claimed that the adoption of liberal and progressive ideals has come after their animosity towards Islam and Muslims (e.g. Zuquete 2008, 224; Brubaker 2016, 1193). It is therefore a *function* of their anti-Islamic position. This bolsters the claims that the liberal and progressive elements are, in any case, included as a strategic façade to circumvent the stigma and sanctions open racism has been met with since the defeat of the Axis powers in World War II (Lenting and Titley 2012, 20; Jackson and Feldman 2014, 7). This is probably part of the story, but it is certainly not all the story.

The sizeable amount of prominent anti-Islamic figureheads with a left-wing background (Chapter 4) and the degree to which liberal and progressive claims are included in statements made by online activists in my sample (Chapter 7) indicate that another pathway is also present. In this pathway, people start out identifying strongly with some progressive and liberal values or specific groups such as LGBT, and through this vantage point come to see Islam as a totalitarian and existential threat. This is the reverse pattern from those who start out with what we can characterize



as an exclusionary, nativist orientation. While it may be true for some, Islam and Muslims are therefore clearly not interchangeable with Jews for a sizeable subset of those who engage in the anti-Islamic movement and subculture.

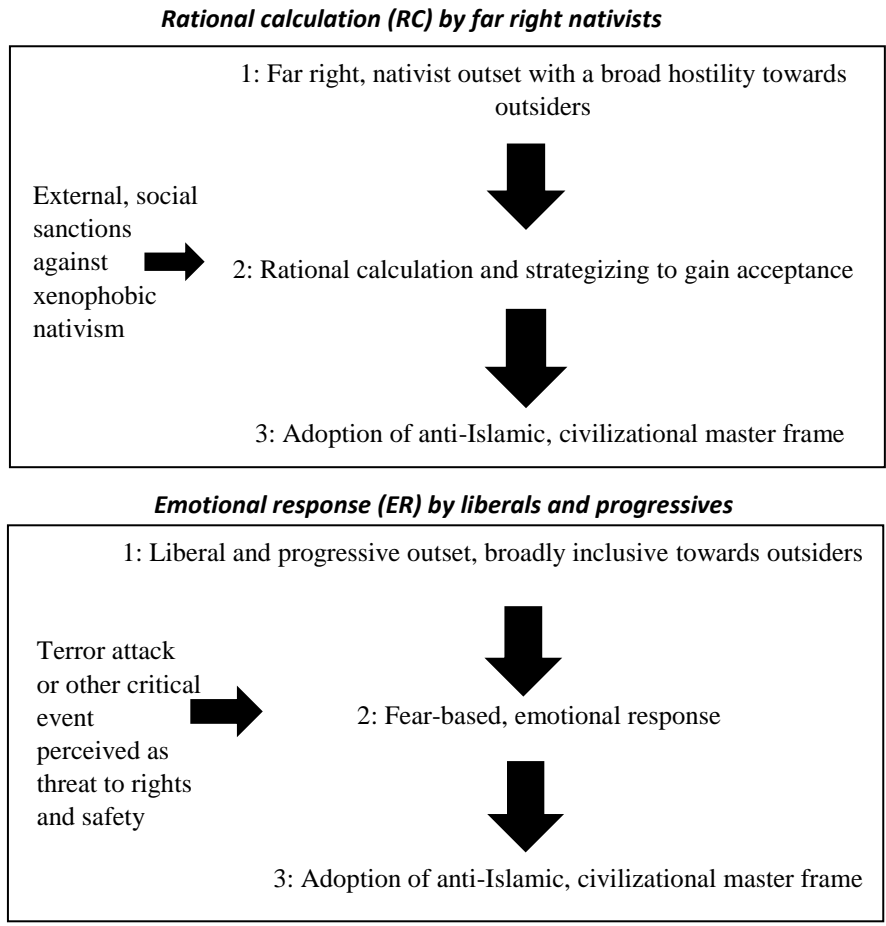
As I argued in the preceding section, critical events such as terror attacks and other moral shocks are a necessary, but insufficient, factor when it comes to triggering a transnational wave of anti-Islamic activism. Moving to the individual level, existing literature indicates that Jihadist terror attacks have a differentiated impact on people depending on their political orientations. More specifically, nonauthoritarians and liberals become more prone to endorsing authoritarian policies, policies they would normally oppose in response to terror attacks and other threats (Hetherington and Suhay, 2011; Hetherington and Weiler, 2009; Jost, Fitzsimons, and Kay, 2004; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Nail, McGregor, Drinkwater, Steele, and Thompson, 2009). This implies that moral shocks of this nature may work as a vital causal mechanism which leads people with at least some liberal and progressive inclinations to embrace the anti-Islamic, civilizational master frame.

### **8.2.6 Rational calculation versus emotional response**

In the light of this we can now sketch out two fundamentally different pathways for individuals adopting the anti-Islamic master frame. In the first pathway, individuals with a far right, nativist outlook attempt to circumvent social sanctions against xenophobia by strategically focusing on Islam rather than on Muslims, and who make claims of supporting those liberal and progressive positions Islam is thought to threaten, such as LGBT rights and free speech. I call this the rational calculation (RC) pathway. In the other pathway, individuals have a liberal and progressive outlook and are broadly inclusive towards outsiders. Jihadi terror attacks or other critical events perceived as a threat to rights and safety, however, trigger a fear-based and emotional

response which channelled the anti-Islamic, civilizational master frame. I call this the emotional response (ER) pathway.

**Figure 8.3 The two causal pathways for adopting the anti-Islamic, civilizational master frame**



Compared with the “liberal” ER-pathway, we can logically conceive that terror attacks have little direct impact for the far-right nativist’ choice of adopting the anti-Islamic, civilizational master frame as it does not fundamentally alter their political and normative positions on Islam and Muslims. In addition to speaking of the importance of social sanctions against the far right and discrimination in post-World War II Western Europe and North America, the RC pathway more broadly indicates “... liberalism’s transformation from ideology to a supposedly neutral meta-ideology, capable of providing the ground rules for all legitimate ideological disputes ...” (Bellamy 1999, 23).

These pathways into adopting the anti-Islamic, civilizational master frame are not exhaustive. Other pathways besides the RC provided by the broader far-right literature and the alternative ER-pathway are also plausible. Yet these two different pathways, and thereby the coexistence of both broadly tolerant progressives/liberals and broadly intolerant nativists, makes it clear that what we classify as the anti-Islamic far right is in some respects internally diverse.

### **8.2.7 Far right and liberal, or illiberal?**

One could argue that it does not make sense to talk of this phenomenon in terms of liberalism. Anchored in the notions of freedom, equality and fraternity, liberalism asserts the existence of basic rights on the grounds of a common humanity (Griffin 1999, 156). Clearly, categorically excluding a religion or the people who practice it cannot per definition be liberal in the Rawlsian sense. By systematically excluding adherents of a world religion they are *a priori* basically illiberal. This is the case irrespective of whether their starting point was as a self-professed liberal, progressive or if their “liberal” claims were driven a calculated attempt to circumvent social norms and sanctions against prejudice. Historically and empirically speaking, however, liberalism had been deeply linked with exclusionary thinking (Bellamy 1999, 28).

Firstly, through excluding citizens by establishing educational and economic preconditions necessary for making independent decisions (Bellamy 1999, 28). Secondly, even though liberalism includes universalistic ideals it has been interlocked with nationalism (Griffin 1999, 156). Thirdly, as liberalism was formed against the backdrop of the wars of religion and the rise of modern science, liberal parties have long been associated with secularism (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Margulies 2014). A secularism which has in some cases veered off into a militant repression of religion. Seen in this historical lens, instead of a clearly delimited normative-theoretical lens, the

anti-Islamic movement and subcultures is not anomalous in their exclusivist backing of liberal values.

In this sense, the anti-Islamic far right is not only qualitatively different from the old far right. It may also represent an *even more* liberal force than many of those groups and parties from previous eras which we describe as liberal. Similarly, anti-Islamic actors may be more liberal than many liberal political actors around the world that exist in contexts *outside* of liberal democratic systems. A counter-contention is that it is incorrect to make any of these three comparisons the main litmus test. We should rather judge them by “current” standards within today’s liberal democracies where they threaten the rights of Muslims *as* Muslim. Therefore, *if* we take the expansion of civil rights as a constitutive part of current democracy, *then* the anti-Islamic far right is also anti-democratic.

In slightly different terms; if illiberal in the absolute sense, then also undemocratic. Democracy becomes reduced to the set of liberal democracies, and democratic political actors are reduced to those which at any point in time support the maximum extent of social and political rights built into the political system. A definitive answer to this dilemma does not exist. Without entering a normative debate, however, going down this road increases the conceptual contestedness of democracy itself (Capoccia 2005, 235-36).

### 8.3 Barriers and Challenges

With the rise of the new social movements and Green parties in the 1970s and the populist radical right in the 1980s politics in the West was no longer mainly about economic issues, but also culture (Hooghe et al. 2002; Inglehart 1990; Kitschelt 1994). The cultural cleavage now pits those who favour environmental protection, free speech and gay rights against those favouring strict borders, law and order, traditional family values and religion (Kriesi et al. 2008). This is a prominent view in political science today, but in the case of the anti-Islamic far right it may obscure more than it reveals. In the last instance the actors – social movements, political parties and interest groups, generate political cleavages. This means that they can also change them (Zuckerman 1975, 248).

As part the broader anti-Islamic far right the anti-Islamic movement and subculture is one such potential transformative force. This is precisely because their most novel quality is *not* their opposition to Islam and Muslims, but that they portray themselves as defenders of progressive and liberal ideals. Potential, however, is not the same as realization. For although movements and parties can create political cleavages, existing ones are not easily relegated to the dustbin of history. From a Rokkanian perspective, they remain frozen in place long after the initial struggles which shaped them have subsided (Lijphart 1999; Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). My thesis has shed some light on the changes by noting how the anti-Islamic framing and organizational networks transcend older cleavages, but whether this will redraw the political landscape in the countries where they have had a modicum of success is another matter. This depends on issues which can be conceptually reduced to matters of power and influence. It is therefore on these subjects that I have chosen to end my thesis.

### 8.4.1 Barriers of legitimacy

The most direct way to exert power and influence is still through control of the state – the parties' primary domain, which partially explains why the far-right parties have received so much more scholarly attention than the broader movement and subculture. Whereas some are battled to keep them from ever exerting any power over the state whatsoever, others have been included government and parliament. This hinges on the perceived legitimacy of the specific far-right initiative. The Austrian presidential elections on May 23 2016 are a good electoral example, where the far right only lost by 31,000 votes.<sup>151</sup> Major actors from the established political system reacted with fury, and the president of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker warned that "there will be no debate or dialogue with the far-right".<sup>152</sup> On the activist front, anti-Islamic PEGIDA consistently met with massive condemnation from the established political parties, church officials and other public figures. In her 2015 New Year's address, German Chancellor Angela Merkel warned that PEGIDA's leaders "have prejudice, coldness, even hatred in their hearts". On the streets anti-fascist and anti-racist organizations rallied against them. Similar scenes played out in other countries where PEGIDA initiatives were established, such as Norway, Sweden and Austria (Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016).

Negative reactions are not only driven by what far-right initiatives claim they stand for, but also the forces they are supposed to represent. The "ghost of the Weimar past" still haunts liberal democracies. Ever since Hitler and the National Socialist German Workers' Party marched to power, there has been concern that democracies face ruin from within through elections. Capoccia shows how political elites prevented electoral ruin in Finland, Belgium and Czechoslovakia, before and after World War II, by building a consensus around the claim that these parties were a basic

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<sup>151</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/23/far-right-candidate-defeated-austrian-presidential-election-norbert-hofer> (accessed 31.12.2016)

<sup>152</sup> <https://www.yahoo.com/news/austrian-presidential-election-too-close-call-151316172.html> (accessed 31.12.2016)

threat to democracy. Building this consensus was not an easy task, even though many of the parties openly agitated against democracy (Linz 1978). In contrast to the interwar period, anti-systemic initiatives have not fared well electorally in recent decades (Carter 2005), and voters are less inclined to agree to policies proposed by groups that have an explicit affinity with Nazism, biological racism, or anti-Semitism (Ignazi 1992; Art 2011; Ivarsflaten 2006a).

As documented in Chapter 5, at an organizational level the anti-Islamic far right do not incorporate Nazism, anti-Semitism or biological racism. Nor are they anti-systemic in the sense of working to overthrow the democratic order. It may therefore be difficult for their political opponents to build consensus around the claim that the anti-Islamic far right poses a threat to democracy in the same way as the old extreme right. Instead of challenging procedural democracy their positions threaten the current form of liberal democracy and in particular the rights of Muslim minorities. Attempts by political elites to extend the understanding of democracy to include social rights and the rights of minorities and immigrants increases the conceptual contestedness of democracy itself (Capoccia 2005, 235-36). This carries the risk of a popular backlash. The question then is whether citizens regard anti-Islamic initiatives as more legitimate than other incarnations of the far right. This is a natural assumption to make, since the anti-Islamic far right does not pose an explicit threat for procedural democracy. In other words, does their ideology give them greater legitimacy than the openly anti-democratic extreme right? Contrary to expectations, survey experiments from Norway reveal that “new” far right anti-Islamic initiatives such as SIAN are not seen as more legitimate than ideologically older, extreme right initiatives (Ivarsflaten, Berntzen and Bjånesøy 2017). Instead, their legitimacy depends on whether the initiatives are single-issue

or associated with a broader policy portfolio.<sup>153</sup> If they exclusively mobilize on the opposition to immigrants or Islam and Muslims they are viewed as illegitimate, but if they mobilize on those issues in addition to others such as tax reductions or better welfare for the elderly, then they are viewed as legitimate, as is the case for the Norwegian FrP. If this pattern holds in other countries, a vast section of the anti-Islamic movement and subculture will be perceived as illegitimate, which is a major obstacle for transforming the political landscape.

An important question is why anti-Islamic activist groups are seen as equally illegitimate as neo-Nazi groups, when they go to great lengths to state that they are pro-democratic and when their negative view of Muslims resonates strongly with large sections of the public. This remains unanswered and is a promising avenue for future research. One possible explanation is that their opponents and political elites have managed to build a consensus around the notion that they are in fact the same as the old extreme right, but with new wrapping – despite the ideological changes and their attempts at alliance building.

In any case, the low level of legitimacy of anti-Islamic initiatives makes it clear that the far-right parties with reputational shields are a vital piece of the puzzle in understanding why the anti-Islamic worldview has become mainstream. Having said that, populist radical right parties with reputational shields are not always available as legitimate outlets, and when they are, they tend to be peripheral and ambivalent to other movement initiatives – particularly the activist groups. The presence of far-right parties with reputational shields therefore cannot account entirely for the success of anti-Islamic movement in mainstreaming ideas. This means that we have to take into account avenues and mechanisms that allow anti-Islamic initiatives to circumvent the channels

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<sup>153</sup> Anti-Islamic activist groups are not single-issue in the true sense of the word, since they propose a broad range of solutions – such as more direct democracy. Nonetheless, all of these issues can be related back to their antagonism towards Islam and Muslims, unlike AfD's rejection of the Euro or the FrP's goal of tax reduction.



dominated by pre-existing elites. First, existing research points to online forums and social media as key avenues for far and extreme right mobilization (e.g. Caiani, Wagemann and della Porta 2012). While street mobilization is still important, online forums and social media have also reduced the imperative for this kind of activism as a means of getting their message out (Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016; Jupskås and Prangerud Haanshuus 2017). Second, emotionally charged language is a recurring mechanism which explains diffusion – both beyond their own groups on Facebook (Chapter 7), as well as in the mainstream media (Bail 2012; 2014). Joyous messages are the strongest predictor of both reactions and shares on Facebook whereas neutral and fact-oriented statements drive down reactions and shares. By using emotionally charged language, anti-Islamic initiatives may be able to at least intermittently break through barriers of low legitimacy.

### **8.3.2 Shock and Structure. Explaining timing and scope.**

In the previous section, I discussed barriers to power in countries where the anti-Islamic far right have established themselves. Two related questions arise from my analysis of the anti-Islamic turn and expansion witnessed in the aftermath of 9/11. One pertains to the *timing* of the anti-Islamic turn and expansion, and the other pertains to the *scope* of the anti-Islamic far right. First, why did it not start before 9/11? Second, why has the anti-Islamic far right not successfully diffused across all countries in Western Europe?

Three dimensions allow us to provide a proximate answer to the question of timing. First, the political opportunity structure provided by the political-institutional setting, such as the space available to emerging political actors (see e.g., McAdam 1996; Tarrow 1994; Kriesi 1995). Second, the cultural opportunity structure provided by the cultural context outside the immediate influence

of the political actors (see Koopmans 1999; Koopmans and Statham 1999).<sup>154</sup> Finally, a large exogenous shock which undermines the existing system and creates new discursive opportunities from the existing cultural structure (Abbot 1997; Soule and Olzak 2004). These exogenous shocks can thereby produce a critical juncture in time where historical developments move onto a new path (Collier and Collier 1991).<sup>155</sup>

My material indicates that the cultural opportunity structure conducive to anti-Islamic, liberal sectarianism is one where liberal and progressive values are salient, whereas authoritarian values are less so. Second, older cleavages such as the economic left-right conflict must be sufficiently unsettled for the post-material, cultural cleavage to rise in prominence in the first place.

The most relevant aspect of the political opportunity structure is the composition of the pre-existing right-wing milieu, both inside and outside party politics. If the political space is occupied by an authoritarian, ethno-pluralist or fascist right then the potential for establishing new far right initiatives are constrained.

Besides leading to the war on terror and reorientation of NATO, the 9/11 terror attacks that struck the United States was the juncture point that opened for the anti-Islamic turn and expansion of the far right. Prior to these attacks, the democratic West had undergone a period of liberal and progressive consolidation, where not only democratic institutions themselves became further entrenched, but issues of gender equality, LGBT and minority rights became salient while the old economic cleavage lost prominence. The threat of militant Islamists and the increased awareness

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<sup>154</sup> Related work by Giugni, Koopmans, Passy and Statham (2005) indicate that political and cultural opportunity structures combined can account for much of the differences in extreme-right framing between Western European countries.

<sup>155</sup> Junctures are generally traced to economic crises, military conflicts and other large-scale disasters (Hall 1996).

of the incompatibility between fundamentalist interpretations of Islam and liberal values created a discursive opportunity for initiatives intent on mobilizing against Islam and Muslim immigration.

To summarize, the first condition for an *initial* establishment of an anti-Islamic far right building on liberal sectarianism was the occurrence of an Islamist terror attack that 1) received broad coverage as such and had 2) international ramifications. The additional conditions which likely contributed was a cultural context of liberalism and progressivism, an absence of a dominant economic cleavage and finally an opening in the political space due to the lack of a strong fascist or ethno-pluralist right.

Up until that point in time the 9/11 terror attacks are the only ones that fulfill the first condition, and the United States and the Netherlands are two of a handful countries which fulfill the structural conditions. The French case meet none of these conditions, which otherwise seems like a possible starting point for the anti-Islamic far right *before* 9/11.

For instance, although France experienced a spate of Islamist terror attacks during the 1990's, they were of an insufficiently large scale to have international ramifications. *al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah al-Musallaha* (Algerian Islamic Group, AIG), the organization behind these attacks originated in the Algerian struggle for independence and the subsequent aftermath of civil war. The dominant narrative was therefore one of anti-colonial struggle and not Islam or Muslim culture per se. Furthermore, although France certainly has a vibrant tradition of liberalism and progressivism, many of these values are not close to the near valence position they have in countries with a Protestant legacy. Tellingly, one of the most marked cleavages in France have centered on the issue

of Catholicism versus secularism.<sup>156</sup> The combination of authoritarianism and pro-Catholicism has been a hallmark for the radical right FN, as well as for the extra-parliamentary scene (Froio 2018).

Even though the anti-Islamic movement and subculture is transnational in scope, the diffusion across Western Europe has been uneven. To this day, the adoption of the anti-Islamic master frame has been particularly limited in Southern Europe.

After the critical juncture and successful establishment of an anti-Islamic far right that mobilize on the grounds of liberal sectarianism, we should not assume that the conditions for the successful diffusion of the anti-Islamic master frame are identical to before 9/11.<sup>157</sup> As mentioned in the case of France, the first factor setting North apart from South is the divergence in cultural opportunity structures, traceable to the Catholic-Protestant divide. Due to the persistent combination of authoritarianism and Catholicism and the extent this is represented by the right, these countries are less conducive to liberal sectarianism.<sup>158</sup> A second factor is the continued influence that economic left-right cleavages exert on political conflict. In combination, these limited political and cultural opportunity structures provide a plausible explanation for the divergent levels of anti-Islamic diffusion between the two regions after 9/11.

This thesis mainly focuses on “successful” cases and then traced organizational networks from there. Systematic research which investigate the negative cases as well are therefore needed to provide compelling answers to these questions. Methodologically, a stringent use of set-theoretical thinking that deals with sufficient and necessary factors in the form of qualitative case

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<sup>156</sup> To this day, the far-right initiative Soral considers French republicanism and secularism their primary target and solidarize with immigrant communities (Froio 2018).

<sup>157</sup> See e.g., Mark Beissinger’s (2007) work on revolutions in the former Soviet Union. He introduces the concept of modularity to explain the interdependent spread of revolutions from one country to another.

<sup>158</sup> Although for instance Spain does not have a successful radical right party, the center-right Partido Popular (Peoples Party, PP) is a functional equivalent (Alonso and Kaltwasser 2015). This is partly because their roots are in the authoritarian Francoist regime.

analysis (QCA) provide an avenue to explore both questions of timing and uneven diffusion across Europe further. See Ravndal (2017) for a particularly fruitful use of this methodology to understand and explain the related issue of variation in extreme right violence.

### **8.3.3 Challenges to the semi-liberal equilibrium**

While having argued that the anti-Islamic movement and subculture is characterized by a semi-liberal equilibrium, my thesis has also uncovered several factors which point to the possibility that this is just a temporary phase. It is not given that the hostility toward Islam and Muslims should be tied to liberal sectarianism instead of authoritarianism.

First, my network analysis uncovered an Eastward expansion in the wake of the refugee crisis in the summer of 2015. Varieties of radical and extreme right groups (particularly Polish) that do not share the anti-Islamic inclusion of progressive and liberal ideals became a part of the network. The Facebook network is primarily a channel for spreading information in the form of posts, images and pictures between these groups. Whether the Western European groups contribute to an ideological moderation of Eastern European groups or *vice versa* is an open question. At the level of specific groups, we can probably find both.

Second, the data shows that the online groups also serve as spaces for what Art (2011) defines as extreme activists, namely those that hold racist, anti-Semitic and anti-democratic sentiments, which in these cases are openly at odds with the majority position and the stated positions of the leaders. Research by Goodwin, Cutts and Janta-Lipinski (2016) on who sympathized and joined the EDL gives a clue as to why this is the case. Overall, self-identified EDL supporters hold more classic racial prejudice than the population at large (ibid. 4). Aside from the core issue of fighting Islam and Muslims, it may be the case that many online activists and followers only become aware of the given anti-Islamic initiatives' other stances after joining. The

question is then what the extreme activists choose to do. In the language of Albert O. Hirschman (1970), do they opt for exit when they realize this? Do they continue to voice their internal opposition or do they downplay their general xenophobia and remain loyal? From the point of view of the leadership maintaining strict boundaries by excluding people who are, for instance, anti-Semitic remains a challenge if high levels of general xenophobia remain the major predictor for joining. Interviews with EDL leaders by Elisabeth Morrow starting in 2016 show how they handled this by accepting the presence of neo-Nazis on the condition that they kept a relatively low profile. Once again, in a macro-perspective, what matters is not the fate of single initiatives, but what direction the movement and subculture take.

Third, there is also another, darker ambiguity than the one between traditional and libertarian positions on gender (Chapter 5). On the one hand, they frame Muslims and Islam as an apocalyptic threat. On the other hand, they define themselves as democratic, law-abiding and peaceful and propose non-violent solutions. The tension between the apocalyptic scenario of Muslim conquest and the democratic solutions is clear. It creates a logical opening for replacing the anti-Islamic movements' non-violent solutions with violent ones by drawing on the motivational framing, where they already use warlike metaphors to rally supporters. If Western civilization and all that goes with it faces imminent destruction, it makes sense to reject the democratic solutions for violent ones. This makes the explicit antagonism towards political elites, human rights and media organizations that do not share their view of Islam and Muslims all the more ominous. This is regardless of the intensity with which they themselves presently extoll the virtues of gender equality, democracy, freedom of speech and so forth. This scenario is not a hypothetical one, as is evident in the Manifesto of the Norwegian terrorist Anders Behring Breivik and his subsequent targeting of the government and Labour Youth camp (Berntzen and Sandberg

2014).<sup>159</sup> Nonetheless, these attacks have been an outlier. Even though their collective action framing contains the seeds for violent solutions there have been relatively few acts of anti-Islamic political violence to date. There is also anecdotal evidence of anti-Islamic initiatives actively downplaying their antagonism to Muslims during periods of conflict, such as the EDL abstaining from demonstrating after the killing of the soldier Lee Rigby by two Jihadists in London (Macklin and Busher 2015). Further indicating the “binding” nature of their democratically oriented solutions, PEGIDA never went against police or state bans of their demonstrations even though this occurred so regularly that they were generally not able to demonstrate in specific countries (Berntzen and Weisskircher 2016).

Finally, the prospect of cumulative extremism where one form of extremism feeds off and magnifies another (Eatwell 2006) is said to represent a growing threat to liberal democracies (Eatwell and Goodwin 2010, 243). This concern has been particularly linked to anti-Islamic versus extreme Islamist groups (Busher and Machklin 2015, 899). From this perspective anti-Islamic initiatives such as the EDL and PEGIDA threaten the wellbeing of society not because they *are* violent at present, but because their acts and views *may* cause the situation to spiral out of hand in the future.

Notions of civil war lurk in the shadows. In Chapter 4, I argued that Jihadist terror attacks and the actions of extreme Islamists triggered the four waves of anti-Islamic mobilization stretching back to the creation of the online “Counter-Jihad”, the breakthrough in Dutch party politics, the first protests in London (2005), all the way up until the rise of PEGIDA. However, it is unclear

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<sup>159</sup> It is important to stress that the motivation and causes for Breivik’s radicalization and acts of political violence are many, and that it was the “anti-Islamic story” that he wanted to tell at the time. His actions and self-portrayal also share similarities with school shooters (Sandberg, Oksanen, Kiilakasko and Berntzen 2014).

whether Islamist extremism has any further impact on the duration of anti-Islamic street activity, online activity or their repertoires of contention. It is also unclear if extreme Islamists react to what anti-Islamic initiatives do and say. In other words, dynamics between anti-Islamic initiatives and extreme Islamists remains empirically underexplored and important avenue of future research (see Busher and Macklin 2015). The aspects I analyze are only part of the equation. Instead of the macro-level and ideologically oriented perspective this thesis takes, a growing body of literature points to the relevance of relational mechanisms at a micro- and meso level for explaining the occurrence (or non-occurrence) of political violence (e.g. della Porta 2013). The merit of the relational perspective is that it promotes/encourages studies of anti-Islamic versus extreme Islamist radicalization and cumulative extremism.

#### **8.4 Conclusion**

I began this thesis by observing that studies of the far right and anti-Islamic initiatives have written off or paid insufficient attention to the inclusion of progressive and liberal ideals. This has reduced our ability to grasp the nature of today's far right. I have put this "turn" front and center. Based on my findings I made the case that the anti-Islamic movement and subculture transcends the cultural cleavage on the GAL/TAN dimension by its simultaneous inclusion of traditional and liberal positions. This ideological (re)orientation also structures the online anti-Islamic organizational networks and prevails among many of the activists. Given the impact of progressive and liberal ideals, I argue that the anti-Islamic movement and subculture is characterized by a semi-liberal equilibrium. This mirrors the evolution among some, but not all, radical right parties in Western Europe.

Nonetheless, political opponents and academics alike often portray them as a very real threat. In Norway it seems that this has paid off, since the man-on-the-street is disinclined to extend



democratic rights to anti-Islamic initiatives. Those that escape the stigma of illegitimacy are parties with reputational shields. The reach of the broader movement, and thereby its potential to transform the cultural lines of political conflict in Western societies, is therefore limited.

These are bold statements about the current state of affairs, and only partially indicate the future evolution of the anti-Islamic far right. Emphasizing this, my work has uncovered potential challenges to the current semi-liberal equilibrium characterizing the anti-Islamic movement and subculture. First, the expansion to the East carries the risk of the increased influence of traditional forms of right-wing extremist ideology. This is reinforced by the existence of a vocal racist and anti-democratic minority within “Western” anti-Islamic initiatives. Moreover, the entire anti-Islamic worldview rests on a precarious balance where Islam and Muslims are framed as an impending existential threat, but a threat nonetheless, and one which should be dealt with using democratic means. This opens up ideological radicalization irrespective of the influence of “old” extreme right forces may have. Yet ideological radicalization is not the only game in town. When we reduce the scope to specific initiatives and the actions of individuals we also need to consider relational mechanisms. Semi-liberal or not, the anti-Islamic movement and subculture appears poised to remain an important political and cultural force for the indefinite future. The movements’ overall trajectory towards moderation or radicalization, continued mainstreaming or relegation to the fringes will therefore be of importance to us all.

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# Appendix I. Key figures from strongholds of anti-Islamic activism

This Appendix provides a biographical overview of thirty key figures – leaders, ideologues and representatives from six countries in the transnational, anti-Islamic movement that has expanded throughout liberal democracies between 2001 and 2016. The countries are the United States, Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway.

## **United States**

Starting with the United States, the key individuals are; Charles Johnson, founder of Little Green Footballs, Pamela Geller and Robert Spencer of SIOA and Brigitte Gabriel, leader of Act! For America and Edward S. May, founder of Gates of Vienna.

## **Charles Johnson**

As the founder of LGF, programmer Johnson (1953), was the most prominent figure within the Counter-Jihadi scene for several years.<sup>160</sup> Johnson described himself as a center-left agnostic with a keen interest in history, who experienced 9/11 as a tremendous shock. After the Belgian Vlams Belang were allowed to co-host a Counter-Jihad conference in 2007, Johnson began distancing himself from the community and is now an ardent critic of the other Counter-Jihadi and anti-Islamic activists.<sup>161</sup>

## **Brigitte Gabriel**

Gabriel (1964) is the founder of Act! For America and American Congress For Truth, has been described as “America’s most prominent anti-Muslim activist”.<sup>162</sup> She was born in Marjayoun, Lebanon and fled to the United States with her parents during the Lebanese civil war, which she recounts as a harrowing experience which shaped her view of Islam as an existential threat, and Israel as a great force of good. Of a Christian Maronite background, Gabriel has established close ties with the Christian conservative, Republican right wing in the United States. She saw the 9/11 terror attacks as part of the same Jihadi struggle that in her eyes had destroyed Lebanon – saying that she “I do not want to lose my adopted country America” as well. In 2008

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<sup>160</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20110604220456/http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/62000> (accessed 12.06.2015)

<sup>161</sup> <http://www.webcitation.org/5ne7OyVtM?url=http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/24/magazine/24Footballst.html?hpw=&pagewanted=all> (accessed 12.06.2015)

<sup>162</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/03/americas-most-anti-muslim-activist-is-welcome-at-the-white-house/520323/> (accessed 05.03.2017)



she published the book *Because They Hate: A Survivor of Islamic Terror Warns America* (2008), in which she argues that radical Islam wants to conquer all non-Muslim countries and has repeatedly expressed that the United States military and intelligence services is infiltrated by Islamists working to achieve this in secret.<sup>163</sup> In February 2017, she met President Trump at the White House in March 2017, to which she claims to have a direct line.<sup>164</sup>

### **Pamela Geller**

As the creator of the Counter-Jihadi blog Atlas Shrugs, and co-founder of SIOA, SION and American Freedom Initiative, Geller (1958) is one of the most prominent anti-Islamic activists worldwide. She worked at *New York Daily News* during the 1980s, before becoming an associate publisher at the *New York Observer*. She defines herself as a Zionist and theist who is socially liberal on the issues of abortion and same-sex marriage, but economically right-wing.<sup>165</sup> Having no previous political affiliations, Geller became active after 9/11, which she says was a turning point for her.

### **Robert Spencer**

Spencer (1962) is, alongside Geller, one of the self-described Counter-Jihads most prominent figures internationally. Besides running the website Jihad Watch, Spencer is the co-founder of AFDI and SIOA. Spencer is an active member of the Melkite Catholic Church and has a Master's degree in religious studies in 1986, with a thesis on Catholic history. He has highlighted the plight of his grandparents, who fled Turkey partly because they were Christian.<sup>166</sup> In his youth, Spencer worked at the Maoist bookstore Revolutions Books in New York, but has since become a

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<sup>163</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/08/us/08gabriel.html?\\_r=1&ref=global-home&pagewanted=all](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/08/us/08gabriel.html?_r=1&ref=global-home&pagewanted=all) (accessed 23.05.2015)

<sup>164</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/mar/21/act-for-america-brigitte-gabriel-muslim-white-house-meeting> (accessed 24.03.2017)

<sup>165</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-32580059> (accessed 24.03.2017)

<sup>166</sup> <https://www.c-span.org/video/?193778-1/qa-robert-spencer> (accessed 24.03.2017)

prominent conservative figure in the United States, making frequent appearances on Fox News.<sup>167</sup> He has written several best-selling books on Islam and the threat of Jihad. For several years he was also used as a seminar leader for the U.S. military, the FBI and the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). Condemned by many, Spencer has received praise by figures such as Stephen Bannon from the Trump administration, who described him as "... one of the top two or three experts in the world on this great war we are fighting against fundamental Islam."<sup>168</sup>

### **Edward S. May**

May is the principal editor of Gates of Vienna under the pseudonym of Baron Bodissey, director of the Center for Vigilant Freedom (CVF) and key figure in the International Free Press Society. May has said that he was never politically engaged prior to joining the Counter-Jihad and setting up Gates of Vienna in 2004. May is an Episcopalian Christian, and has described himself as a right-wing anti-jihadist, arguing that they share common cause with anti-jihadist leftists and moderate Muslims, both of whom are – "... vilified, ostracized, and threatened because of their heresy. A heretical leftist may get to keep his head, but he will likely find his property destroyed and his career ruined because of his apostasy."<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> <https://www.mediamatters.org/blog/2015/01/13/meet-the-extremists-who-lead-foxs-conversation/202119> (accessed 24.12.2015)

<sup>168</sup> <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2016/09/stephen-bannon-donald-trump-muslims-fear-loathing/> (accessed 03.03.2017)

<sup>169</sup> <https://counterjihadreport.com/tag/baron-bodissey/> (accessed 03.03.2017)  
[http://emmanuelchatham.typepad.com/emmanuel\\_episcopal\\_church/files/bishop\\_john\\_c\\_buchanan.pdf](http://emmanuelchatham.typepad.com/emmanuel_episcopal_church/files/bishop_john_c_buchanan.pdf) (accessed 04.03.2017)

## **Britain**

In Britain, the key individuals are Alan Ayling of 4freedoms.com, Stephen Gash of Stop Islamization of Europe, Paul Weston of the British Freedom Party and Liberty GB, Stephen Christopher Yaxley-Lennon of the EDL, the British Freedom Party and PEGIDA UK, Kevin Carroll of the EDL and the British Freedom Party and Anne Marie Waters of Sharia Watch UK and PEGIDA UK.

### **Alan Ayling**

Ayling (1965), computer engineer and founder of the website 4freedoms.com became known as a wealthy financier of the EDL between 2009 and 2010. Initially supporting the EDL anonymously, Ayling lost his lucrative job at a development bank in the City of London after he was ousted. Prior to becoming active in the anti-Islamic scene, Ayling was involved with the Free Tibet Movement before joining the Pentacostal Church. According to himself, it was stories from African Christians he met in Church which turned him against Islam, whom he says is "... against freedom of speech, democracy, equality before the law and cultural tolerance."<sup>170</sup>

### **Stephen Gash**

Gash (1953), is a businessman and self-styled writer from Carlisle and led SIOE from 2007 until 2010. Prior to becoming a prominent anti-Islamic activist, Gash was engaged in the struggle for greater English autonomy.<sup>171</sup> He was a member of the National Council of the Campaign for an English Parliament until 2005, and later stood in the Sedgefield by-election in 2007 for the

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<sup>170</sup> <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/what-are-israeli-flags-and-jewish-activists-doing-at-demonstrations-sponsored-by-the-english-defence-league-1.307803> (accessed 18.08.2015)  
<https://socialistworker.co.uk/art/28820/Exclusive%3A+EDLs+Alan+Lake+loses+his+job+at+development+bank> (accessed 18.08.2015)

<sup>171</sup> <http://tellmamauk.blogspot.no/2012/11/stephen-gash-man-for-all-seasons.html#!/2012/11/stephen-gash-man-for-all-seasons.html> (accessed 18.08.2015)

English Democrats Party, where he won 0.6% of the vote. Gash has been outspoken in his opposition to the BNP, which he has denounced as racists.<sup>172</sup>

### **Paul Weston**

Weston (1965), leader of the British Freedom Party (2011-12) and its successor party Liberty GB (2013-), identifies himself as a “classical liberal” and runs a property development and investment company in London. Weston became engaged with the anti-Islamic (counter-jihad) online community in 2006, and first entered party politics as a candidate for UKIP, which he subsequently left for being too soft on Islam.<sup>173</sup> The Liberty GB website states that they promote “Western civilisation, Christian values (but you don't have to be Christian), traditional morality, marriage and the family, Britain's beautiful countryside, the monarchy, patriotism and national pride, honesty and free speech, capitalism (to benefit Britain and the British), rationalism, animal welfare, meaningful lives over slavish materialism, national sovereignty, modernity (science and technology for the public good), history and tradition, national identity ... and putting British people first!”.<sup>174</sup>

### **Tommy Robinson**

Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, alias Tommy Robinson, (1982), founder of the EDL, comes from a working-class family in Luton, where he went on to run a sunbed shop.<sup>175</sup> Robinson describes himself as a Zionist,<sup>176</sup> and the most prominent anti-Islamic activist in Britain. He is also the youngest of the anti-Islamic leaders and ideologues. In 2004 he joined the British National Party

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<sup>172</sup> <http://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/42792/collaborators-england-war-against-jews-jamie-jamie-glazov> (accessed 23.11.2016); <https://www.varsity.co.uk/news/2778> (accessed 23.11.2016)

<sup>173</sup> [http://www.newenglishreview.org/Jerry\\_Gordon/A\\_Future\\_for\\_Britain\\_Free\\_from\\_Islamization:\\_An\\_Interview\\_with\\_British\\_Freedom\\_Party\\_Chairman,\\_Paul\\_Weston/](http://www.newenglishreview.org/Jerry_Gordon/A_Future_for_Britain_Free_from_Islamization:_An_Interview_with_British_Freedom_Party_Chairman,_Paul_Weston/) (accessed 14.09.2015)

<sup>174</sup> <https://libertygb.org.uk/q-a> (accessed 04.03.2016).

<sup>175</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/newsnight/9385009.stm> (accessed 23.11.2016)

<sup>176</sup> <http://www.thejc.com/lifestyle/features/what-makes-the-edl-s-former-leader-who-says-he-is-a-friend-of-the-jews-tick-1.65493> (accessed 23.11.2016)

at the age of twenty. He remained a member for a year, stating that he “was looking for a way out, I was looking for somebody to be addressing this Islamic extremist problem”,<sup>177</sup> saying he was unaware that the BNP were exclusively for white people. Robinson was also active in football hooliganism. After forming the EDL, he also became vice-chairman of the British Freedom Party in 2012. He left the EDL in 2013 to join the counter-radicalization think-tank Quillam Foundation, but reentered the anti-Islamic activist scene in 2015 when he co-founded PEGIDA UK.

### **Kevin Carroll**

Carroll is a carpenter and the son of Irish immigrants, and the cousin of the EDL’s founder, Tommy Robinson. He served as the deputy leader of the EDL from 2009, and became its caretaker leader in 2012 while Robinson served a prison sentence. He was also vice-chairman of the British Freedom Party alongside Robinson in 2012. Carroll left the EDL in 2013. Prior to joining the EDL, Carroll was not politically active.

### **Anne Marie Waters**

Waters (1977) is leader of Sharia Watch UK and co-founder of PEGIDA UK. She is a self-identified feminist, has engaged in LGBT activism since her youth and is outspoken about her lesbian identity. She spent several years as a member of the Labour Party and stood as a candidate twice. Waters was a spokesperson for an organization called One Law for All, and a council member of the National Secular Society. She set up Sharia Watch UK in 2014 to bring attention to the dangers which sharia law poses “in relation to women’s rights”, and has argued that “There’s a problem today and that problem is that gay rights campaigners, even prominent ones, are

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<sup>177</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/06/16/tommy-robinson-bnp-edl-andrew-neil\\_n\\_3449252.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/06/16/tommy-robinson-bnp-edl-andrew-neil_n_3449252.html) (accessed 25.08.2015)

sanitising and ignoring religious homophobia, particularly from Muslim communities.”<sup>178</sup> Waters subsequently joined UKIP in May 2014, and vied for the leadership position in 2017.

### **Germany**

In Germany, the key figures included are Stefan Herre of Politically Incorrect, René Stadtkewitz of Die Freiheit and Citizens’ Movement Pax Europa, Lutz Bachmann of PEGIDA and Tatjana Festerling of PEGIDA and Fortress Europa.

### **Steffan Herre**

Herre (1965) is a primary school teacher from Cologne and founder of the website Politically Incorrect. Before he became active on the anti-Islamic scene, Herre primarily expressed pro-American positions, support for George Bush and free speech.<sup>179</sup>

### **René Stadtkewitz**

Stadtkewitz (1965) is co-founder of the German Freedom Party (2010–2013) and chairman of Citizens’ Movement Pax Europa. He is a small businessman and self-identified “bourgeois-liberal” with a long history of right-wing activism. He became a member of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in 1995 and served as a local representative in Berlin between 2001 and 2011, when he was expelled for inviting Geert Wilders to speak. Shortly before he stepped down as leader of the Freedom Party, Stadtkewitz called on its supporters to vote for the newly founded Alternative for Germany (AfD).

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<sup>178</sup> <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2017/06/14/lesbian-ally-of-the-edls-tommy-robinson-standing-to-be-ukip-leader/> (accessed 01.07.2017)

<sup>179</sup> <http://www.stern.de/investigativ/projekte/terrorismus/blog--politically-incorrect--die-offene-gesellschaft-und-ihre-feinde-3061282.html> (accessed 01.07.2017)

## **Lutz Bachmann**

Bachmann (1973), founder of PEGIDA (2015) is a graphic designer, publicist and former professional football-player from Dresden with a long criminal record from the 1990s.<sup>180</sup> After being sentenced to several years in prison, Bachmann fled to South Africa in 1998 where he claims to have opened a night club in Cape Town catering to black people.<sup>181</sup> Bachman was not politically active before founding PEGIDA.

## **Tatjana Festerling**

Festerling (1964), prominent figure in PEGIDA between 2015 and 2016, later in the PEGIDA-derived Fortress Europe, has an undergraduate in philosophy from the University of Hamburg and a professional background as an advertisement agent and publishing editor. She worked as an editor for Heinrich Bauer Verlag and Deutsche Spar and was press secretary for the Metronome railway company (- 2010).<sup>182</sup> She became involved in party politics in 2014, when she co-founded an AfD subdivision in Hamburg. Festerling argues that the left suffer from a Stockholm syndrome, and that “‘political correctness’ [is] putting women and gay men at risk of assault.”<sup>183</sup> She lost her job as a PR manager and was later forced out of AfD for taking part in a demonstration organized by Hooligans against Salafists.

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<sup>180</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30776182> (accessed 01.04.2016)

<sup>181</sup> <http://time.com/3668889/pegida-germany-islamization/> (accessed 15.08.2016)

<sup>182</sup> <https://www.wp.de/staedte/hagen/neue-pegida-frontfrau-stammt-aus-hagen-id10559375.html> (accessed 03.09.2016)

<sup>183</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3443786/Forget-decency-fight-sex-jihad-Femme-fatale-extremist-Pegida-group-accuses-Muslims-targeting-Western-women-gay-men-calls-public-grab-pitchforks.html#ixzz4r9OioBiq> (accessed 12.07.2016)

## **Netherlands**

The key anti-Islamic figures in the Netherlands include Pim Fortuyn, founder of List Pim Fortuyn (LPF), Geert Wilders, founder of the Party for Freedom (PVV), politician, author and public speaker Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Edwin Wagensweld of PEGIDA Netherlands. Fortuyn and Wilders have been subjects of considerable academic scrutiny already, and Hirsi Ali is a prominent public figure. In contrast, the head of PEGIDA is an undescribed character with far less clout.

### **Pim Fortuyn**

Fortuyn (1948–2002) was a sociologist, professor and founder and leader of anti-Islamic List Pim Fortuyn. In his youth he was a communist and Marxist. He later joined the Dutch social-democratic Labour Party in 1974, before leaving in 1989. Before he founded his own party, Fortuyn was elected top candidate for the party Livable Netherlands. In the period before he was murdered he made several appearances together with a Catholic priest, stressing his Catholic identity.<sup>184</sup> Fortuyn was openly gay, something which he held up as a big part of his public persona. He campaigned on his opposition to Islam, arguing in favour of a “cold war” against a “hostile religion” which he said threatened the liberal values of the Netherlands, womens’ rights and sexual minorities (Rydgren and van Holsteyn 2005, 59). According to Klandermans and Mayer “Pim Fortuyn and his movement were uncorrupted by any connections with Nazism or other extreme right” (2006, 23).

### **Ayaan Hirsi Ali**

Somali-born Hirsi Ali (1969) is a self-professed liberal, feminist and atheist fighting against honor violence, child marriage and female genital mutilation, currently a Fellow with the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.<sup>185</sup> Contrary to the other anti-Islamic activists included in this

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<sup>184</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20020306021624/http://www.katholieknieuwsblad.nl/actueel19/kn1920a.htm> (accessed 09.12.2016)

<sup>185</sup> <http://www.hoover.org/profiles/ayaan-hirsi-ali> (accessed 10.12.2016).



synopsis, Hirsi Ali has a Muslim background herself. She has been one of the most influential figures mobilizing against Islam and Muslim immigration within the framework of civilizational conflict, first in the Netherlands and then internationally. She wrote the script for van Gogh's movie *Submission* and was also a parliamentary member for the Dutch Liberal Party (VVD) between 2003 and 2006, at which point she was forced to resign after it was revealed that she lied in her asylum application. She was allowed to keep her Dutch citizenship, but moved to the United States where she became a naturalized U.S. citizen. In 2005 she was named as one of the 100 most influential people in the world by *Time Magazine*. That same year she was awarded the Bellwether Prize by the Norwegian HRS, which described Hirsi Ali as "... the leading European politician in the field of integration". In 2007 she described Islam as comparable to Nazism, and that Islam was at war with liberal democracy and therefore represented an enemy that had to be crushed. By 2015 she had moderated her views, arguing that it is possible to reform Islam by defeating the Islamists and supporting reformist Muslims.<sup>186</sup>

## **Geert Wilders**

Wilders, founder and leader of the Dutch Freedom Party (PVV), started his political career as a speechwriter and assistant for the Liberal Party (VVD) in 1900. He went on to become a member of their parliamentary group in 1998. Wilders identifies as a Catholic, and has expressed a strong affinity with Israel, which he claims dates to his one-year stay at a Kibbutz in his teenage years (De Hoog 2005; Wilders 2005, 13–17). By 1999 Wilders was already an outspoken critic of

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<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/24/opinion/southern-poverty-law-center-liberals-islam.html> (accessed 25.08.2017).

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-islam-reformers-vs-the-muslim-zealots/2015/03/27/acf6de6c-d3ed-11e4-ab77-9646eea6a4c7\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.2ced0e3a2b08](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-islam-reformers-vs-the-muslim-zealots/2015/03/27/acf6de6c-d3ed-11e4-ab77-9646eea6a4c7_story.html?utm_term=.2ced0e3a2b08) (accessed 10.12.2016).

<sup>186</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-islam-reformers-vs-the-muslim-zealots/2015/03/27/acf6de6c-d3ed-11e4-ab77-9646eea6a4c7\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.2ced0e3a2b08](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-islam-reformers-vs-the-muslim-zealots/2015/03/27/acf6de6c-d3ed-11e4-ab77-9646eea6a4c7_story.html?utm_term=.2ced0e3a2b08) (accessed 14.01.2016).

Islam, and his position hardened over the years. Alongside his then fellow party member Hirsi Ali, he called for a ‘liberal Jihad’ against Islam, which he portrayed as a totalitarian ideology akin to Nazism (Vossen 2011). Previously identified as a potential leader of the Liberal Party, Wilders left in 2005, and founded the Freedom Party in 2006.

### **Edwin Wagenveld**

Wagenveld (1969) has been the head of PEGIDA Netherlands since November 2014. He owns a small business based in Germany selling airguns and other non-lethal weapons. Prior to becoming a PEGIDA leader, he participated in a march Hooligans against Salafists in 2014. He lives in Germany on the border with the Netherlands and commutes across the border to stage demonstrations. He is a staunch supporter of Wilders and the PVV.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2016/05/05/ed-aus-holland-het-gezicht-van-pegida-1616000-a472998> (accessed 07.08.2016)

## **Denmark**

In Denmark, the key figures are Kim Møller of Uriasposten, Steen Raaschou of Snaphanen.dk, Lars Hedegaard and Jesper Langballe of the Free Press Society, and finally Anders Gravers Pedersen of SIAD and SIOE.

### **Kim Møller**

Møller (1971) is the founder and editor of the anti-Islamic website Uriasposten, and a historian. He comes from a working-class background and was a leftist and member of the Danish Green Party in his youth. By 2003 he no longer identified himself as a leftist, and later described himself as a national-conservative.<sup>188</sup>

### **Steen Raaschou**

Raaschou is a, photographer, founder and editor of the anti-Islamic website Snaphanen.dk. He remained anonymous until the assassination attempt on Lars Hedegaard, when he revealed his full support for Hedegaard.

### **Lars Hedegaard**

Hedegaard (1942), co-founder and director of the Danish and International Free Press Society, is a self-professed Marxist and convert to Judaism. He was an active member of the Danish Socialist Workers Party until 1982.<sup>189</sup> A historian by education, he worked as a high-school teacher before becoming a journalist – most prominently for the newspaper *Berlingske Tidende*.

### **Jesper Langballe**

Langballe (1939–2014), the second most prominent member and co-founder of the Danish Free Press Society, was a priest in the Danish Church and parliamentary member for the Danish Peoples Party (DF) between 2001 and 2011. Langballe also worked as a journalist in several newspapers and publications during his career, such as *Jyllands-Posten* (1964-72).

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<sup>188</sup> <https://www.b.dk/kultur/web-kriger-ser-roedt> (accessed 12.09.2015)

<sup>189</sup> <https://www.information.dk/kultur/2008/01/stadig-marxist> (accessed 23.09.2015)

### **Anders Gravers Pedersen**

Pedersen (1960), co-founder of Stop Islamization of Denmark and Stop Islamization of Europe, is a butcher and self-sufficient farmer. Before he became an anti-Islamic activist and leader, Pedersen was a member in The Danish Union (*Den Danske Forening*),<sup>190</sup> a nationalist organization formed by veteran resistance fighters from the struggle against the occupying Nazi forces during World War II. They fight against immigration, which they see as a continuation of the struggle against foreign invaders.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> <http://demos.dk/2015/04/17/2488/> (accessed 23.05.2015)

<sup>191</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyb2L7fSNFE> (accessed 24.08.2016)

## **Norway**

In Norway, the main figures included from this time period are; Hans Rustad of Document.no, Hege Storhaug of HRS, Arne Tumyr, founder and former leader of SIAN, Ronny Alte, former leader of NDL and Max Hermansen of PEGIDA Norway as well as Fjordman, blogger and author associated with Gates of Vienna.

## **Hans Rustad**

Rustad (1950) of Document.no has no former history of being a member of any extreme right or far right organization. On the contrary, he was an active member of the Socialist Youth Organization during his younger days.<sup>192</sup> He has written extensively about anti-Semitism,<sup>193</sup> and before founding Document.no he worked as a journalist for the newspaper *Morgenbladet*, which primarily caters to academics and people with a higher education. Since he founded Document.no Rustad has become increasingly open and adamant about his Christian faith.

## **Hege Storhaug**

Storhaug (1962), spokesperson for HRS, is a self-described atheist, leftist and feminist motivated by humanism and protection of vulnerable children and women.<sup>194</sup> She began as a journalist, and the fight for women's rights has been prominent in her journalistic work. Initially getting recognition for covering the issue of anorexia, during the 1990s she was among the first to cover the issue of forced marriage among immigrant girls in Norway. During that period she lived in Pakistan for two years, which she said were formative years in her understanding of Islam and women's position in Muslim countries. She was adamant in her opposition to Christianity in her youth, but has since come to see it as a force for good when compared to Islam.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> <http://idag.no/nyheter/en-ikke-representativ-elite-domminerer-nyhetsbildet/19.6547> (accessed 24.08.2016)

<sup>193</sup> See for instance his Master's thesis, "The Holocaust: execution and response: an appraisal

<sup>194</sup> <http://www.dagbladet.no/kultur/siv-jensen---landets-ledende-feminist/66259298> (accessed 24.08.2016)

<sup>195</sup> Interview with Storhaug from 2010.

## **Arne Tumyr**

Tumyr (1933), leader of SIAN between 2007 and 2014, is a former journalist and senior figure in the Norwegian Humanist Association. In 1999 he published an article calling for a halt of the “Islamization of Norway”, whereupon he left the Humanist Association whom criticized him for using hate rhetoric. Tumyr has remained an outspoken atheist and critic of religion, publishing a scathing book about Judaism, Christianity and Islam titled *Beacon Burning! (Varden brenner!)* in 2006. He was active member in the Norwegian social-democratic Labour Party (*Arbeiderpartiet*, AP) for several years, but switched to the populist right Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiet*, FrP), where he led a local chapter in the city of Kristiansand for some years. No formal co-operation exists, but Tumyr has consistently expressed support for the nationalist anti-immigration organization Peoples’ Movement against Immigration (*Folkebevegelsen mot innvandring*, FMI) whose former leader, Arne Johannes Myrdal, was sentenced to one year’s imprisonment for planning to blow up a refugee center on the island of Tromøy in 1990.

## **Ronny Alte**

Alte (1974), former leader of Norwegian Defence League (NDL) and a prominent figure in PEGIDA Norway, is a teacher from the town of Tønsberg. Alte calls himself a “liberal critic of Islam”. During his youth he was part of a neo-Nazi gang, and said that he was a “racist”, but later came to believe that Islam was the problem and that not all immigrants were bad. During 2015 he became the spokesperson for Sons of Odin in Norway, an organization founded by neo-Nazis in Finland which quickly spread across Europe during the refugee crisis in 2015. Alte, however, insists that the Norwegian version is not a vigilante group like the others.

### **Max Jarl Hermansen**

Hermansen (1960) founded PEGIDA Norway in 2015, staging nineteen marches across the country between January and June that year. Prior to becoming a prominent anti-Islamic activist, Hermansen was engaged in the anti-monarchist, republican organization Norway as Republic (*Norge som Republikk!*). Hermansen was formerly an officer in the Norwegian navy. Later became a publicist for the Norwegian Sea Military Society in 2008, but was forced to resign because of his vocal opposition to the monarchy. In 2009 he began working as a high-school teacher in Oslo, but agreed to resign in 2016 as a result of his anti-Islamic activism.

### **Peder Are Nøstvold Jensen**

Jensen (1975), alias *Fjordman*, has been a prominent contributor to Counter-Jihadi blogs and websites since 2005, in particular Gates of Vienna. As with Rustad of Document.no and Tumyr of SIAN, he has been politically active on the left (briefly). He was a member of the Socialist Youth organization, and he claims to have voted once for the Norwegian Labour Party and subsequently the Progress Party. Jensen studied Arabic at the University of Bergen and American University in Cairo, where he was at the time of the 9/11 terror attacks. According to Jensen, his Cairene neighbors celebrated the attacks with a cake, which marked a personal turning point in his view of Islam and Muslims. Between 2002 and 2003 he worked for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an observer in Hebron on the West Bank. After this he returned to Norway, finishing a master's degree in culture and technology at the University of Oslo. Jensen later became notorious after the terror attacks in Norway on the 22 July, 2011 because the terrorist (Anders Behring Breivik) included several of Jensen's texts in his "Manifesto".

## Appendix II. Network data

**Table I.** Anti-Islamic network broken down by community and the groups they contain in March 2015. Number of groups = 3615, number of communities = 18. Community labels given on the basis of which groups are predominant, as identified by manually trawling the list of groups.

Community	Groups in community
Stop Islam	766
Defence Leagues	631
PEGIDA	556
US Republicans	509
Pro-Israel	397
Document.no	259
British Patriots	102
Canadian conservatives	96
Feminist & LGBT	73
Iranian groups	69
Mainstream news	34
Stuttgart	34
Indian Lake	31
Hindu nationalists	25
SIAD	10
Animal rights	10
Polish nationalists	7
Nordic neo-Nazis	5



**Table II.** Anti-Islamic network broken down by community and the groups they contain in March 2016. Number of groups = 4594, number of communities = 18. Community labels given on the basis of which groups are predominant, as identified by manually trawling the list of groups.

Community	Groups in community
PEGIDA & Stop Islam	1262
Defence Leagues	922
Pro-Israel & Stop Islam	869
Document.no	327
Polish nationalists	248
British Patriots	201
US Republicans & Tea Party	186
Feminist & LBGT	184
Christian Defence Leagues	118
Stuttgart	61
German AfD	57
Lega Nord	53
SIAD	43
Indian lake	31
Sports	11
UK Police	8
Paganists	7
Russian media (Sputnik)	4

**Table III. PEGIDA and feminist community rises in importance for the anti-Islamic movement, US Tea Party declines. Brokerage score by community clusters within anti-Islamic Facebook network in March 2015 and March 2016.**

	Pure brokerage	Weak brokerage
<b>2015</b>		
<i>Defence League</i>	0.267	0.067
<i>Pro-Israel</i>	0.286	0.096
<i>Stop Islam</i>	0.578	0.089
<i>Tea Party</i>	0.472	0.167
<b>2016</b>		
<i>Defence Leagues</i>	0.5	0.143
<i>Pro-Israel</i>	0.333	0.19
<i>PEGIDA</i>	0.643	0.179
<i>Tea Party</i>	0	0.167
<i>Feminist &amp; LGBT</i>	0.167	0
<p><i>Honest brokerage is divided into three scores ranging from 0 to 1.</i></p> <p><i>Pure brokerage: No tie between any pair of alters joined by broker.</i></p> <p><i>Weak brokerage: One directed tie allowed between pairs of alters joined by broker.</i></p> <p><i>Non-brokerage: Alters who have a tie to broker have also have a 2-way tie with each other.</i></p>		



Table IV. Density matrix of the anti-Islamic network (2015).

	Defence Leagues	Indian Lake	Pro-Israel	Mainstream news	Document.no	British Patriots	Feminist & LGBT	Stop Islam	Nordic neo-Nazis	SIAD	Stuttgart	PEGIDA	Polish nationalists	Iranian groups	US Repub & Tea Party	Animal rights	Canadian conservatives	Hindu nationalists
Defence Leagues	1.75%	0.16%	0.04%	0.00%	0.00%	0.36%	0.02%	0.31%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%	0.03%	0.00%	0.00%	0.03%
Indian Lake	0.00%	13.98%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Pro-Israel	0.02%	0.00%	2.59%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	0.09%	0.12%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.10%	0.00%	0.00%	0.07%
Mainstream news	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	11.14%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Document.no	0.00%	0.00%	0.02%	0.01%	1.22%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
British Patriots	0.12%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	8.69%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.03%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Feminist & LGBT	0.00%	0.00%	0.06%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	7.38%	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Stop Islam	0.42%	0.00%	0.34%	0.00%	0.00%	0.05%	0.04%	1.18%	0.05%	0.00%	0.00%	0.02%	0.00%	0.00%	0.18%	0.16%	0.01%	0.08%
Nordic neo-Nazis	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.05%	40.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
SIAD	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	27.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Stuttgart	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	10.43%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
PEGIDA	0.02%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.04%	0.00%	0.02%	0.01%	1.79%	0.03%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Polish nationalists	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	19.05%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Iranian groups	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.02%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.37%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
US Repub & Tea Party	0.01%	0.00%	0.15%	0.00%	0.00%	0.03%	0.01%	0.09%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.54%	0.02%	0.00%	0.00%
Animal rights	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.04%	21.11%	0.00%	0.00%
Canadian conservatives	0.00%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	10.78%	0.00%
Hindu nationalists	0.01%	0.00%	0.04%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.05%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	8.00%

Table V. Density matrix of the anti-Islamic network (2016).

	Sports	British Patriots	Russian media (Sputnik)	News (Document.no)	Pro-Israel	Indian lake	UK Police	US Tea Party & Trump:	Defence Leagues	Paganists	Feminist & LGBT	Christian Defence Leagues	SIAD	Stuttgart	AfD	PEGIDA	Lega Nord	Polish Patriots
Sports	11.82%	0.05%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
British Patriots	0.00%	6.63%	0.00%	0.00%	0.02%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.02%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Russian media (Sputnik)	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
News (Document.no)	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.99%	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Pro-Israel	0.00%	0.02%	0.00%	0.00%	0.84%	0.00%	0.00%	0.06%	0.12%	0.00%	0.03%	0.07%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%
Indian lake	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.01%	14.19%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
UK Police	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	53.57%	0.00%	0.03%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
US Tea Party & Trump:	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.16%	0.00%	0.00%	3.05%	0.03%	0.00%	0.01%	0.03%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%
Defence Leagues	0.01%	0.15%	0.03%	0.01%	0.25%	0.11%	0.15%	0.03%	1.29%	0.02%	0.01%	0.24%	0.00%	0.00%	0.01%	0.02%	0.00%	0.00%
Paganists	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Feminist & LGBT	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.03%	0.00%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%	2.96%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Christian Defence Leagues	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.01%	0.06%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.12%	0.00%	0.00%	3.90%	0.02%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
SIAD	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.43%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Stuttgart	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.08%	0.00%	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%
AfD	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.97%	0.02%	0.00%	0.00%
PEGIDA	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.03%	0.00%	0.00%	0.08%	0.04%	0.00%	0.00%	0.09%	0.02%	0.04%	0.21%	0.56%	0.01%	0.01%
Lega Nord	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	9.83%	0.00%
Polish Patriots	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	5.97%