C-REX COMPENDIUM

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Knowing what's (far) right

A compendium

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Anders Ravik Jupskås and Eviane Leidig

What explains support for far right parties, or the mobilizing capacity of far right organizations? Why do some activists turn to violence to achieve political ends? When, and how, does the internet play a role in radicalization? How do democracies prevent and counter far right motivated violence?

Although journalists, policy-makers, practitioners, and activists often ask these big, important questions, most academic work does not address them. Moreover, academic projects and publications tend to focus only on specific countries, parties, organizations, events, or time periods. For example, while scholars aim for a general understanding of far right violence, studies will focus on a single case like 22 July in Norway or contemporary patterns of right-wing violence in Russia. Similarly, whereas many researchers are trying to understand the drivers of far right electoral and extra-parliamentary mobilization, individual projects look more narrowly at, for instance, how the far right organizes in a specific country or region, which media outlets far right actors use to disseminate propaganda, and what characterizes local far right responses to the so-called "refugee crisis" in Europe.

In this compendium, C-REX scholars synthesize theories and findings from various disciplines, providing concise, but solid, answers to ten big questions in the study of the far right. Some questions are more descriptive, some more explanatory. All of them, however, are key questions for academics and non-academics alike. These entries strive for completeness in their aim to include all important aspects, factors, and dimensions of a particular issue.

Thanks to adjunct professor at C-REX, Cas Mudde, and members of our advisory board, including Cynthia Miller-Idriss, Kathleen Blee and Michael Minkenberg, for comprehensive and valuable feedback on early drafts of the compendium.

We define far right ideology as characterized by anti-egalitarianism, nativism, and authoritarianism. This ideology is expressed in many different ways, ranging from actors who are profoundly anti-democratic and/or violent (i.e. the extreme right) to those who are mainly illiberal, but neither against democracy nor in favor of violence (i.e. the radical right). Most entries comprise both violent and non-violent expressions of the far right, highlighting differences and similarities between these different forms of mobilization. However, some of the entries focus exclusively on violent aspects of the far right.

In addition to answering big questions, the compendium contains twelve entries defining key concepts in the field, including 'nationalism', 'right-wing extremism', 'populism', 'radicalization', and 'terrorism'. We have structured each of these conceptual entries into four parts. The first part presents the dominant understanding of the notion and its contemporary relevance. The second part retraces the history of the concept, while the third part discusses different forms and/or conceptualizations. In most cases, there is no scholarly agreement, including among C-REX scholars, on how the concepts should be defined. But some definitions are clearly more common than others. The

fourth and final part provides empirical data about the prevalence of the phenomenon. Depending on what is available, the last part relies on one or several of the following indicators: views/attitudes, votes, violence, and/or visibility. It focuses mostly on recent decades, though some entries also refer to longer historical trends. Though the empirical part is predominately Western-centric, whenever possible we have included non-Western examples in order to illustrate the global scale of the far right.

This compendium is targeted at a diverse audience, including academics, policymakers, journalists, and the public at large. The entries contain many analytical concepts and complex arguments, but aims to avoid (too much) disciplinary jargon. Moreover, all entries begin with a summary of the key takeaways in bullet points.

We hope that the compendium will facilitate a more fruitful academic and public discussion about the far right, including key theories and empirical findings in the field. By addressing the big questions, we can identify whether scholarly arguments within or across disciplines are concurrent, complementary, or contradictory. We also hope that the compendium will contribute to a more consistent use of concepts in public debate. As of now, the same party might be labeled fascist in one media outlet and populist in another. Finally, instead of saying that all big questions are (too) difficult to answer and that we (always) need more research—which is what scholars often say (and is often true, at least to some degree)—the compendium provides an overview, albeit a very short one, of what we do know.

The compendium exists both as a working paper and as an online resource on our website. Furthermore, the compendium will provide the basis for developing overview lectures on right-wing extremism and related topics, which C-REX offers to non-academic audiences. In the long term, C-REX will also revise the compendium for educators, who are currently dependent upon outdated textbooks and/or inadequate online resources for students.

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Part I

What is right-wing extremism?

Anders Ravik Jupskås and Iris Beau Segers

- Right-wing extremism is usually defined as a specific ideology characterized by 'anti-democratic opposition towards equality'.
- It is associated with racism, xenophobia, exclusionary nationalism, conspiracy theories, and authoritarianism.
- There are several right-wing extreme parties and organizations in Europe and beyond, but most of them are not particularly successful.

Key definition

Right-wing extremism is usually defined as a specific ideology characterized by 'anti-democratic opposition towards equality'.[1] In public debate, but also among scholars, the concept is often associated with behavioral characteristics, such as politically motivated violence.[2] The concept applies to parties, movements, websites, and individual activists and intellectuals. Arguably, (neo-)Nazism and (neo-)fascism are the two most well-known forms of right-wing extremism. Some scholars argue that the more recent counter-jihad movement is right-wing extreme.[3] The concept is controversial, partly because very few political parties, groups, or activists use it to describe their own position, and partly because it is associated with attitudes and actions that are either illegal and/or highly stigmatized.[4]

History of the concept

The concept of "right-wing extremism" arises out of research on fascism in the post-war period. Initially, this research used "right-wing radicalism" as an umbrella term for parties and movements on the far right of the political spectrum—both those with and without clear ties to interwar expressions of fascism and Nazism.[5] During the 1970s and 1980s, however, "right-wing radicalism" was largely replaced by "right-wing extremism". In the 1990s, it became the dominant concept, particularly in continental Europe. In other contexts, most notably North America, the concept of "white supremacism" is more widely used, and entails overtly racist beliefs that the white race is superior, and therefore should be dominant over people of other races.

In recent years, scholars frequently refer to both 'right-wing radicalism' and 'right-wing extremism', most often to distinguish between ideologies that are democratic, but illiberal (radicalism), on the one hand, and those that are anti-democratic (extremism), on the other hand.[6] In other words, whereas the radical right is opposed to *liberal* aspects of democracy (like minority rights) and does not promote the use of violence, the extreme right is inherently anti-democratic and, in some cases, legitimizes the use of violence to pursue its political aims.

Different conceptualizations

There is extensive scholarly consensus that, despite some activists referring to themselves as national *socialists*, right-wing extremism is on the 'right' because it defends a hierarchal social relationship between groups, usually between what is considered the "in-group" and the "out-group" in ethnic or racial terms.[7] However, there is more disagreement about the definition of "extreme", mainly whether right-wing extremism by definition is violent, and partly what it means to be anti-democratic.

The first, and arguably most prevalent, understanding – the ideational definition – defines right-wing extremism as the combination of anti-democratic attitudes (the extreme aspect) and the defense of social hierarchies (the right-wing aspect). Being anti-democratic is usually narrowly defined as opposition to free and fair elections, although some scholars argue that opposition towards fundamental values of democracy, including universal human rights, is enough to be considered right-wing extreme.[8]

The second understanding – the behavioral definition – looks at right-wing extremism as politically motivated violent behavior, or the justification of such behavior, within a democratic system where the state has monopoly of violence.[9] Many, but not all, police security services and governments rely on this approach.[10]

Moving beyond minimal definitions**,** right-wing extremism is often associated with antisemitism, racism, xenophobia, exclusionary nationalism, authoritarianism, and conspiracy theories. These features produce a set of "enemies**",** which are seen as a threat against the survival of the nation, the culture or the race. The most common enemies and targets of violence are immigrants, ethnic and religious minorities, anti-racists/fascists and left-wing politicians.[11] However, there is also widespread contempt for LGBTQ, feminists, homeless, and disabled persons. Some of the most prevalent conspiracy theories on the extreme right, such as Zionist Occupation Government (ZOG) and Eurabia, identify Jews and Muslims (and the so-called "cultural Marxist establishment"), respectively, as the key enemies.

Prevalence of right-wing extremism

The prevalence of right-wing extremism depends on whether it is defined in terms of an ideology or in terms of (politically motivated) violent behavior.

Following the (narrow) ideational definition, only a few political parties in contemporary Europe can be described as right-wing extreme. Golden Dawn in Greece is among the most notable exceptions. In the most recent European Parliament election in 2019, the extreme right gained more support, mostly Marian Kotleba's People's Party Our Slovakia (Kotleba-L'SNS) and the National Popular Front (ELAM) in Cyprus, although overall, neo-Nazi parties lost two seats and one party (German NPD). In the non-party sector, there are several moderately sized and successful extreme right organizations, including the Nordic Resistance Movement, The All-Polish Youth, and *CasaPound* in Italy. Outside of Europe, well-known examples of extreme right movements are the Ku Klux Klan in the United States, and the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS) in India.

Compared to the ideational definition, the behavioral definition categorizes right-wing extremism as a more marginal phenomenon. However, right-wing violence continues to constitute a significant problem in many countries around the globe. Since

2000, there have been at least ten deadly extreme right violent events per year in Western Europe. In the US, levels of deadly right-wing violence are even higher. And in countries like India and Myanmar, there are numerous examples of anti-Muslim violence. Moreover, if we include non-physical violence (e.g., hate speech) or violent imaginaries, this form of right-wing extremism becomes even more widespread.[12]

What is right-wing radicalism?

Anders Ravik Jupskås

- Right-wing radicalism can be defined as a specific ideology characterized by 'illiberal opposition to equality'.
- It is associated with radical nationalism, authoritarianism, populism, and xenophobia.
- Radical right parties have been increasingly successful in recent decades, not only in Europe but also in some of the largest democracies in the world, including the US, Brazil and India

Key definition

Right-wing radicalism is usually defined as a specific ideology characterized by 'illiberal opposition to equality'.[1] While the concept occasionally is associated with behavioral characteristics like politically motivated violence, this is more common for 'right-wing extremism'.[2] The concept usually applies to parties, movements, websites, and individual activists and intellectuals. These actors often emphasize different aspects of radical right politics, including ethno-nationalism, anti-statist populism and religious fundamentalism.[3] Like right-wing extremism, the concept is controversial, partly because very few political parties, groups, or activists use it to describe their own position, and partly because it is associated with attitudes and actions that are highly stigmatized and, in some countries, even illegal.[4]

History of the concept

The concept "radicalism" comes from the Latin word *radicalis*, which means "of or having roots", which in turn arose from *radix*, or "root". It was traditionally used, and is still used by some scholars, to describe left-wing and, in the 19th century, liberal movements aiming for a fundamental (progressive) change of society, whereas right-wing movements were more commonly seen as reactionary defending existing institutions, norms and values.

The concept of "right-wing radicalism" arises out of research on fascism in the post-war period. Fascism had proven that (some) right-wing movements were aiming for a fundamental change of society. Back then, the concept was used as an umbrella term for parties and movements on the far right of the political spectrum—both those with and without clear ties to interwar expressions of fascism and Nazism.[5] It was particularly popular in the US, where scholars referred to the "radical right" to describe small groups like the John Birch Society.[6] During the 1970s and 1980s, however, "right-wing radicalism" was largely replaced by "right-wing extremism"[7], and in the 1990s, the latter became the dominant concept, particularly in continental Europe.

In recent years, scholars often refer to both 'right-wing radicalism' and 'right-wing extremism' to distinguish between ideologies that are democratic, but illiberal

(radicalism), on the one hand, and those that are anti-democratic (extremism), on the other hand.[8] In other words, whereas the extreme right is inherently anti-democratic and, in some cases, legitimizes the use of violence to pursue its political aims, the radical right is opposed to *liberal* aspects of democracy (like minority rights) and does not promote the use of violence.

Different conceptualizations

There is extensive scholarly consensus that, despite some activists and leaders claiming to be neither right nor left, right-wing radicalism is on the 'right' because it defends a hierarchal social relationship between groups, usually between what is considered the "in-group" and the "out-group" in cultural or ethnic terms.9 Inequality is not necessarily a goal in itself, but reflects that people with right-wing preferences prioritize values like family, tradition and authority.

However, there is more disagreement about the definition of "radicalism". The first, and arguably most prevalent, understanding – the ideational definition – sees (political) radicalism as being 'pro-democracy, but anti-liberal democracy'.10 This means that "radicals" will accept popular sovereignty and majority rule, but oppose specific liberal aspects of contemporary democracies, such as are minority rights, checks and balances and/or rule of law.

Others argue that radicalism is a relative concept in which radicals are those that engage in unconventional action (like vandalism or violence), believe in fundamental change of society and operate outside of established institutions.11 Based on this (rather strict) definition, groups like Occupy Wall Street and Tea Party movement are not considered "radical" because they use normal political tactics (Occupy Wall Street) or do not seek fundamental change (Tea Party Movement).

Moving beyond minimal definitions, right-wing radicalism is often associated with radical nationalism, authoritarianism, populism, and xenophobia. This is particularly the case in contemporary Europe where most far right parties subscribe to the ideological combination of populism, radical nationalism and authoritarianism. In short, these parties presents themselves as the representatives of "the good people" against "the corrupt elite" demanding less immigration, particularly from so-called "Muslim countries", and more emphasis on "law and order".

Prevalence of right-wing radicalism

Organized forms of right-wing radicalism – understood as illiberal opposition to equality – is on the rise across the globe, including not only European democracies, but also in large democracies like the US, India and Brazil. When looking at EU member state in recent decades, radical right parties increased their electoral support from 1.1 % in the 1980s to 4.4 in the 1990s, 4.7 in the 2000s and 7.5 in 2010s. Very few countries in Western Europe do not have a successful radical right party in parliament. In several countries, such parties have even entered government – either alone as in Hungary and Poland or as part a coalition, usually with other mainstream right parties, like in Italy and Austria.

In India, the radical right Bharatiya Janata Party, characterized by Hindu nationalism, is currently the ruling party gaining almost 40 percent of the votes in the 2019 national election. In the US and Brazil, the rise of Trumpism and Bolsonarism are very much expressions of radical right politics, though many of those who voted for these candidates in the presidential elections do not subscribe to their ideology. Having said that, in many countries, particularly those with multi-party system, radical right *attitudes* are often more widespread than the support for radical right *parties*. For example, although radical right parties have very little electoral support in Canada, one survey found that 37 percent of respondents believe immigration is a "threat" to white Canadians. [12] Those who have university educations, at 27 per cent, were least likely to hold such views. There are similar findings from other countries.[13]

What is nationalism?

Christopher R. Fardan and Cathrine Thorleifsson

- Nationalism is an ideology which holds that the state and the nation should be unified.
- Nationalism is simultaneously inclusionary and exclusionary, being associated with both state-building, as well as its "banal nature".
- Far right politics is characterized by "radical nationalism", in which groups are excluded on racial, ethnic or cultural grounds.

Key definition

Nationalism is 'a political principle which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent'.[1] Attempts to accomplish this congruence have been studied from a variety of perspectives. The classic debates in studies of nationalism have been divided between primordialists and modernists. The former emphasizes the deep roots, ancient origins, and emotive power of national attachment.[2] Modernists, in contrast, conceptualize nations as primarily modern constructs shaped by capitalism, industrialization, the growth of communications and transportation networks, and the powerfully integrative and homogenizing forces of modern nation-states.[3]

History of the concept

Historically, the concept of nationalism has been divided between "civic" and "ethnic" nationalism. The former is linked to the ideas of the French political philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau in the context of the French revolution. According to Rousseu's civic nationalism, the nation is built on demos – the people – and sovereignty thus belonged to the nation and the people. Civic nationalism is grounded in inclusionary values of freedom, tolerance and equality. The German philosopher Johan Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) in contrast conceptualized nationalism as a form of "Volksgeist", a unique spirit of an ethnic nation rooted in ther primeval characters, where the authentic "people" was linked to a particular territory, history and culture. Such ethnic nationalism emerging in Germany and that influences nation-building processes in both Eastern Europe and Scandinavia focused on belonging defined by ethnic identity, language, religion and similar traits. [4]

Historically, ethnic nationalism has been mobilized to justify ethnic cleasning, genocide and holocaust of Jews, Roma and LGBT people, as in the cases of Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Italy.

Different conceptualizations

In order to grasp what nationalism is, one must understand the concept of "the nation". Benedict Anderson defines the nation as 'an imagined political community – that is

culturally imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'.[5] There are four key elements to this definition. First, the nation is 'imagined' simply because members of any particular nation will never meet most of their fellow members, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. Second, the nation is imagined as 'limited' because it has finite, yet sometimes elastic, boundaries, beyond which other nations lie. Third, the nation is imagined as 'sovereign' because the concept of the nation itself was born in an age when the Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. Finally, the nation is imagined as a 'community' because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail within each, the nation is conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Imagining the political community as good and worthy of contious sacrifice necessarily entails a process of forgetting. French historian Ernest Renan has famously noted how the efforts to obtain national unity, either in the name of civic or ethnic nationalism, involve acts of violence and subsequent forgetting.[6]

The sociologist Rogers Brubaker suggests that instead of focusing on nations as static, real groups, however, we should focus on nationhood and nation-ness. In other words, the nation as a practical category and the ways it can come to structure perception, to inform thought and experience, and to organize discourse and political action.[7] Nations are continuously re-imagined,[8] re-invented,[9] and routinely re-produced in everyday life.[10] The latter is called 'banal nationalism'. Language, ethnicity, race, religion, culture, and history can be used to unify members of a group, but also mark boundaries against differentiated others.

The nation is always predicated on an identification of "non-nationals" and exterior threats to the nation. Hence, nationalism inevitably involves a mixture of the particular and the universal: If our nation is to be imagined in all its particularity, it must be imagined as a nation amongst other nations. There can be no "us" without a "them". Therefore, while nationalism can be open and tolerant, there are a variety of ways in which nationalism can be closed and intolerant. The exclusionary forms of nationalism – often at the very core of far right ideology and activism – are often referred to as "nativism" or "radical nationalism".

Different types of radical nationalism

Radical nationalism is aligned along three ideological camps: racial nationalism, ethnic nationalism, and cultural nationalism.[11] There are no sharp divisions between these three different camps of radical nationalism, and they should be seen as ideal types. For example, different parties and activist movements migrate between the different alignments, some individuals may have one foot in each camp, or there can be connections and collaboration across the camps. In fact, when looking at the far right landscape today (see entry on 'What characterizes the far-right landscape today), it is not always easy to distinguish between various forms of nationalism.

Racial nationalists often refer to themselves as "white nationalists" or "National Socialists". These actors typically rally behind a racial community – conceived as Aryan or white populations – and tend to identify non-white people and Jews as the ultimate enemies of their people. Racial nationalist groups are largely rejected by the political

mainstream due to their anti-democratic and often violent/militant outlook, making such groups highly marginalized and few in numbers.

Ethnic nationalism comprises of an eclectic mix of ideology, combining both racial and cultural nationalist thinking. Ethnic nationalists often claim that race and ethnicity are indispensable elements of identity, placing them close to racial nationalists. However, contrary to racial nationalism, ethnic nationalism does not necessarily strive towards racial or ethnic "purity" as an end in itself. Instead, ethnic nationalists assert that all ethnicities are of equal worth, but that they should be kept separately in order to "cultivate" their own distinctive features. Therefore, multiculturalism and "assimilation" are considered to be harmful. This line of thinking is often referred to as "ethnopluralism".

Cultural nationalism promotes exclusion on cultural, rather than ethnic or racial grounds, making this form of radical nationalism more likely to accept assimilation or integration of different ethnic groups. Opposite to racial nationalists, cultural nationalists tend to be philosemitic and pro-Israel, and direct their opposition towards (Muslim) immigration and Islam, claiming that Islamic culture is incompatible with "Western" values. Having a comparatively more mainstream agenda, cultural nationalists have a broader appeal than racial nationalists. Additionally, these groups have recently embraced liberal values about women and LGBTQ rights, values they believe arethreatened by Islam's ostensible invasion of Europe.

Prevalence of radical nationalism

The different types of radical nationalism are represented by a variety of different organizations across Western countries, but cultural nationalism is arguably more widespread than ethnic and racial nationalism. Notable racial nationalist organizations and networks include the Nordic Resistance Movement (DNM) in Scandinavia, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in the US, National Action in the UK, and the transnational Atomwaffen Division. Ethnic nationalism manifests itself in the so-called alt-right and Identitarian movements, which are typically committed to propaganda and metapolitical activism to shape ideas and influence public discourse. In the last two decades – particularly after the 9/11 attacks – cultural nationalist parties and movements have gained strong footholds across Europe and North America. Notable parties include Alternative for Germany, National Rally in France, Party for Freedom in the Netherlands, the Sweden Democrats, and the Danish People's Party. Prominent movements include PEGIDA in Germany, the English Defence League, and various "Stop Islamisation" networks in both Europe and the US.

What is fascism?

Elisabetta Cassina Wolff

- Fascism refers to a form of revolutionary radical nationalism aiming for a "rebirth" of the nation.
- Fascism favors actions rather than detailed political programs, being characterized by glorification of violence and military virtues.
- Fascism was particularly strong in some European countries in the interwar period, but continues to exist as a political force today.

Key definition

Fascism refers to a form of revolutionary radical nationalism, usually labeled "ultra-nationalism", which aims for a "rebirth" of the nation.[1] It favors actions rather than detailed political programs, being characterized by glorification of violence and military virtues, mass mobilization, and charismatic leadership.[2] With regard to its economic program, fascism privileges an illiberal corporatist national economic structure, which its proponents believe represent a "third way" between capitalism and communism.[3] Despite some similarities like anti-liberalism and anti-egalitarianism, a fascist regime is distinct from traditional forms of right-wing dictatorship because it requires not only passive obedience from citizens, or at least the absence of opposition, but also active political engagement and trust in the fascist national project. As such, fascist regimes tend to be not only authoritarian, but also totalitarian, at least in aspiration.

History of the concept

The term "fascism" was first used to label the Italian movement led by Benito Mussolini in the interwar period. The concept comes from *fasci*, the original units of combats founded by Mussolini in 1919 – *Fasci di combattimento*. *Fascio* in Italian means a bundle of sticks or a guild. Moreover, the emblem *fascio littorio* became the most popular symbol for the fascist movement. In ancient Rome, lictors (bodyguards) marching beside magistrates carried this emblem symbolizing strength through unity.

In academia, fascism has been an object of study since the 1930s. However, what is known as "Fascist studies" emerged in the post-war period. The first issue of the *Journal of Contemporary History* in 1966 was devoted to the topic for instance.

Different conceptualizations

Three schools of thought have been particularly relevant in academia to conceptualize fascism: 1) the national approach, 2) the historical approach, and 3) the generic approach. With regards to the first, some scholars see fascism as a unique and national phenomenon bounded by time and space. The Italian historian Renzo De Felice, with his in-depth studies of the Italian case, has been a pioneer in this respect.[4] This analysis

focuses on the individual national "fascisms", such as the Italian (Fascism with capital letter) or the German (Nazism). Wherever scholars look at several "fascisms", such as the variants in Southern and Eastern Europe – the Spanish Falange, the Romanian Iron Guard, or the Hungarian Arrow Cross – they study them in a comparative perspective.

Secondly, other scholars claim that fascism is first and foremost a historical phenomenon that must be examined in light of its context. It is therefore conditioned by its original birthplace – Europe in the interwar period. Scholars display a pragmatic approach to fascism as a political phenomenon that was born out of very specific historical conditions: The war, the economic crises, the social and political turmoil. All these conditions in the 1920s and 1930s created a violent and militant mood, and a growing discontent and distrust of established political elites, which in turn paved the way for both radical and extreme political movements and parties.

Lastly, some scholars define fascism as a more generic political phenomenon beyond that of time (e.g. interwar period) and space (e.g. specific European countries). The Italian and German cases are still important references, but the concept can also be applied to other cases. Within this school of thought we find for example the Marxist interpretation, also called the agent theory, which dates back to the 1920s and see fascists as simple armed hands for capitalist interests.[5] The same approach, which does not take into account spatial or temporal national specifications, can also be found in the theory of fascism as the right-wing version of totalitarianism. Here, German Nazism and Italian fascism in the interwar period, on the one hand, and the Soviet Union under Stalin, on the other, are analyzed on the basis of fundamental similarities in attitudes, organizational forms, and political methods.[6]

Prevalence of fascism

Most scholars agree that fascism as a political movement came into being first in Italy in the early 20th century. Fascism was born with the phenomenon of *squadrismo*, which during the period from 1918-1921 was confined to Northern Italy and was not yet totally controlled by Benito Mussolini. The origins must be seen in the Italian paramilitary squads (vigilantes) in rural areas, led by local leaders who were engaged in violent counter-revolution repression against left-wing parties and syndicates. Benito Mussolini was in an early phase able to merge his Blackshirts with national syndicalists, anti-Marxist revolutionaries, and Futurists so that the Nationalist Fascist Party was born in 1921 under his leadership.

The extent to which fascism continued to exist as an organized political phenomenon after the Second World War depends on how it is conceptualized. If we look for temporal continuity with historical fascism, some would argue that only a few fascist movements survived the war, most notably the Italian Social Movement (MSI: *Movimento Sociale Italiano*, 1946-1995), New Swedish Movement (NSR: *Nysvenska rörelsen*), and German Socialist Nationalist Party (SRP: *Sozialistische Reichspartei*, 1949-52). However, if we look for groups with ideological and historical references to historical fascism, we can include parties and groups like *CasaPound Italia* (since 2008), and the Nordic Resistance Movement (NMR: *Nordiska Motståndsrörelsen*, since 2001) from Sweden. These organizations have defended the legitimacy of historical fascism and they openly refer to a fascist tradition from the interwar period.[7]

What is populism?

Anders Ravik Jupskås

- Populism usually refers to an ideology or discourse claiming to defend the interests of "the pure people" against "the corrupt elite".
- Populism is associated with charismatic leaders or certain stylistic aspects, like "bad manners".
- Populist parties have become increasingly widespread and influential in recent decades, especially those with a nativist agenda.

Key definition

Populism is frequently used to describe key aspects of (most) contemporary far right parties. In short, it refers to 'an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite", and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people'.[1] Importantly, the opposition between "the people" and "the elite" in populism is not because the two groups have different socio-economic positions (as in socialism), but because they have different moral status: "The people" is supposedly pure and authentic, whereas "the elite" is not. Described as a 'thin' ideology or as a discursive frame, populism is usually combined with 'thicker' ideologies like nationalism or socialism. These (thicker) ideologies shape the specific content of "the people" and "the elite".[2] Nativist populists speak of an antagonistic relationship between "our people" and the cosmopolitan elite (who are viewed as responsible for the detriment of "native" people by favouring "non-natives"), while socialist populists typically defend the interests of "ordinary people" against the greedy capitalists.

History of the concept

The term populism appeared for the first time in US newspapers from 1891-1892.[3] However, scholarship on populism did not really emerge until the late 1960s when Ionescu and Gellner edited the seminal volume entitled *Populism: Its meanings and national characteristics*.[4] Since then, and particularly since the rise of far right parties in Europe, there has been exponential growth in the study of populism. With the election of Donald Trump as president in the US, and the UK deciding to leave the EU (i.e., "Brexit") in 2016, populism has become a trendy concept, both within academia and in the wider public. Historically, populism had positive connotations to popular engagement in politics and independence from special interests.[5] More recently, however, populism has been associated with politics of simplification and opportunism.[6]

Different conceptualizations

Academic discussions about the concept of populism commonly revolve around the following two questions: First, is populism democratic or not? Second, is it an (thin) ideology, a strategy or a political style? Based on the definition above, populism is inherently democratic, defending the idea of "the people" as sovereign. Yet, at the same time, because of its majoritarian concept of democracy and the primacy of popular sovereignty, populism is at odds with liberal aspects of contemporary democracies, including minority rights, checks and balances, and the rule of law.[7] Moreover, populist discourse might be used to legitimize authoritarian policies and regimes.[8] Regarding the second question, most scholars, at least among those who study contemporary forms of populism in the West, argue that populism is an ideology, albeit a very thin one, meaning that it does not provide answers to many political issues. Even those who do not consider populism an ideology, but claim it is a distinct discursive frame,[9] would largely agree on how to identify populists empirically.

There are two competing approaches to conceptualizing populism. The *organizational approach* is widespread, particularly among scholars working on Latin America. It defines populism 'as a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks or exercises government power based on direct, unmediated, uninstitutionalized support from a large number of mostly unorganized followers'.[10] More recently, scholars have also emphasized the stylistic aspects of populism, most notably the "bad manners" of populist leaders.[11] Within this *performative approach*, populism is first and foremost 'a particular form of political relationship between political leaders and a social basis, one established and articulated through "low" appeals'. These appeals differ based on context and they 'resonate and receive positive reception within particular sectors of society for socio-cultural historical reasons'.[12]

Prevalence of populism

Early examples of populist movements include the People's Party in the US, Narodniks in Russia, and Boulangism in France during the second half of the 19th century.[13] In the 20th century, populism was a viable political force in Latin America (in different waves since the 1940s) and Western Europe (since the 1980s). However, in recent decades, populism has become increasingly widespread and influential. In Europe, populist parties have increased their electoral support from around 7% at the end of the 1990s to more than 25% in 2018.[14] During the same period, the number of Europeans living in a country with a populist party in government has increased from around 12.5 to 170.2 million. This growth is largely due to *right-wing* populist parties, including Fidesz in Hungary, Lega in Italy, and the Freedom Party in Austria.

Beyond Europe, populist parties have been particularly successful in the Americas and India, though populism also exists in Africa, East Asia, Middle East, and Australia.[15] In the US, populism has a long political history and it is much more prominent in popular culture than in Europe. After the election of (the right-wing populist) Trump in 2016, populism has arguably become more visible than ever before. In Latin America, the most recent populist wave in countries like Mexico, Venezuela, and Bolivia, has mainly been a left-wing phenomenon, but the election of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil

suggests that there might be a fertile breeding ground for another wave of right-wing populism.

Populism is further prevalent outside of party politics. For example, many studies have demonstrated the populist discourse of different media outlets, but there is not necessarily more populism in tabloid media compared to elite media.[16] Other studies have pointed to the populist elements of social movements on the right (e.g., PEGIDA in Germany) and the left (e.g., *Los Indignados* in Spain).[17] At the individual level, several surveys suggest that populist attitudes are widespread among citizens, even if they do not necessarily lead to electoral support for populist parties.[18] Although it varies across different contexts, voters in Western countries with populist attitudes tend to be male,[19] less educated, less economically well-off, angry and/or dissatisfied with personal life circumstances. They also seem to have feelings of anomie, as well as perceived economic, cultural, and political vulnerability.[20]

What is racism?

Nina Høy-Petersen, Cora Alexa Døving and Katrine Fangen

- Racism is attributing negative traits to people based on their perceived belonging to cultural, biological, religious, national origin, and to allow this to legitimate their subordination
- Since the 1970s in particular, the has been a shift from "racial" to cultural and religious incommensurable differences, often described as 'cultural racism'
- Both individuals and institutions may act in a racist manner resulting in everything from subtle (even subconscious) exclusion to violent persecution.

Key definition

Racism is most widely recognized as a process of assigning negative properties to people on the basis of their biological characteristics, or essentialized understandings of their culture, religion, or nationality, and using these negative properties as an argument for keeping members of the group at a distance, excluding them, or actively discriminating against them. Contemporary forms of racism often consist of a complex overlap between ideas based on biological ancestry and culture/religion. For example, racist rhetoric, particularly what we find online and in right-wing extremism, refers to religion and culture rather than "race" or skin color. At the same time, victims of racism often consider their dark skin color to be the core motivating factor.

As such, and depending on the national context and research tradition, there are scholarly disagreements and social debates about whether racial thinking and a devaluation of biological ancestry must be involved for the term to apply. This makes the concept a controversial one, and while racism is a prevalent phenomenon across the globe, many cases that would be considered "racism" according to the dominant definition as presented here, will not be named as such. For example, in the United States and the United Kingdom, the broad definition is widely accepted and used, whereas Germany and the Scandinavian countries often use related terms of discrimination, xenophobia, and prejudice to avoid political controversy and terminological debates. Notably, the term "structural racism", which addresses dimensions in a society's history and culture that have led to institutionalized practices of privileging some people over others (in economy, health, politics, education and so on) based on ideas about "race", ethnicity, or cultural/religious identity, is far less controversial.

History of the concept

Going as far back as the 16th century,[1] the term "race" has been used in European languages to denote descent and family, and refer to religious or cultural groups.[2] In the 1700s, ideas of "race" and "racial thinking" were further developed by European eugenicists who began classifying and hierarchizing foreigners encountered by

explorers and colonialists, based on their perceived differences in "race", physical, moral, and cultural characteristic.[3] Racial thinking at this time developed into an ideology, which became increasingly prominent from the second half of the 1800s, when "racial hygiene" and "eugenics" were understood as necessary means to maintain a form of natural selection in civilized society. This "classical racism", which focused mostly on the concept of superior and inferior biological "races", became a political ideology in Hitler's Nazi regime. However, following the Second World War, associations to Holocaust partly discredited the concept of "race". At this time, anthropologists[4] assisted in establishing consensus in the social sciences that "race" is a social construct, but with real social and political implications. From the 1970s, the emphasis shifted towards cultural differences as the central justification for "racist" devaluations. This shift was reflected in the introduction of the terms "racism without races",[5] "cultural racism",[6] "neo-racism",[7] and "new racism",[8] which function as terminological tools to capture racism's forms without becoming dependent on race as an analytical category.

Different conceptualizations

Scholars have not fully resolved the question of what exactly counts as "racism".[9] There are disagreements around how broadly the term should be used – for example, to what extent it is relevant to integrate concepts of islamophobia and antisemitism in the racism tradition.[10] Proponents of integrating perceptions of incommensurable cultural and/or religious differences in the definition argue that hostility on the basis of culture and biological differences are (and have historically been) closely interlinked, have equally harmful effects, and that the focus on cultural differences may merely be a more socially acceptable way for biological racists to promote their ideas. Proponents of the broad definition of racism, on the other hand, consider it to diminish the term's scientific value and utility. Relatedly, there is also an ongoing debate pertaining to whether or not "racism" requires a history of oppression, or if it is possible for cultural and ethnic majorities to practice "reverse racism" against minorities.

Moving from debates about definitional characteristics to debates about origin, racism researchers place varying focus on racism's irrational or rational root causes. Whereas the former perspective explains racism as remnants of evolutionary survival mechanisms, with disgust for things foreign as a means of pathogen avoidance, the latter perspective centers on racism as rationally motivated by a struggle for economic resources and cultural integrity.

In terms of racism's current form, or modus operandi, ongoing research in the field is finding that both institutional and interpersonal racism is becoming more covert, particularly in the Western context as a result of increasingly egalitarian norms, discourses, and laws. For example, according to the "aversive racism"[11] framework, it is common for people to consider themselves open and tolerant, while subconsciously discriminating against and avoiding cultural and ethnic diversities to the same extent as previous generations. As a final example, critical whiteness studies focus on hidden structures in society that reproduce white power and privilege. From these perspectives, public visibility and expressions of racism have declined, while subtle discrimination in employment, housing, and access to education and health services remains high. Importantly, this change in racism's visibility and, at times, subconscious nature, has

required researchers to reconsider or reinvent their measurement tools, leading for instance to the development of Implicit Association Tests, experiments, and survey questions that capture racism more indirectly.

The concept of "everyday racism" is focused on the lived experience of racist oppression.[12] It refers to how racism permeates trivial and normal practices of everyday life. This is an especially useful concept in societies that do not stand out as particularly racist. Rather than focusing on racist movements or explicit racist institutions, the concept aims to capture practices that leads to disadvantages for minorities, infiltrate organizational life and become seen as normal.

Lastly, the intersectionality approach is central to contemporary racism research, finding that "race", as it exists alongside other identity markers of social class, gender and so on, is not a stable identity. Different identity categories are emphasized to a greater or lesser extent depending on the context or setting, making a person's propensity to be racialized or experience racism highly context dependent – and racism quite fluid.

Prevalence of racism

Due to the many conceptual and phenomenological variations of racism, it is often used in plural form, as *racisms*. To demonstrate this point, it may be helpful to consider the broad variety of racisms that arises from combinations of 1) source of devaluation (biological, cultural, religious and so on); 2) if it is practices by institutions or individuals, and 3) its implications, ranging from subtle discrimination to violent persecution. For example, European eugenicists practiced racism in their hierarchization of biological differences, but many will argue that so are contemporary far right parties in their criticism of immigration as founded on representations of Islam and Muslim culture as incompatible with Western values. The political system of apartheid in South Africa, and slavery in the United States which overtly and systematically discriminated against blacks on the basis of biological differences, was racist, but so is today's institutional racism in these same countries which continues to privilege white people in far more subtle ways. As a final example, a woman who is vocal in her support for liberal immigration policies, but who automatically crosses the street to avoid the immigrant walking towards her, has very little in common with a far right terrorist who writes online about the biological superiority of Caucasians. Still, while these examples vary tremendously, they exemplify racism as they involve the exclusion, discrimination, avoidance, or violent persecution of groups based on notions of origin.

What is islamophobia?

Lars Erik Berntzen and Astrid Hauge Rambøl

- The term Islamophobia, popularized in the late 1990s, refers to indiscriminate negative attitudes or emotions directed at Islam or Muslims.
- Organized mobilization against Islam and Muslims surged after the 9/11 terror attacks on the United States, and gave rise to what became a transnational, anti-Islamic movement.
- While opposition to Muslim immigration and certain anti-Islamic attitudes are widespread among ordinary citizens in Europe, prejudice toward Muslims is more prevalent in Eastern than in Western Europe.

Key definition

Islamophobia is the most used term to describe prejudice, negative sentiments, and hostility toward Islam and Muslims. Islamophobia can be based on ideas about Islam as a religion and on ideas about Muslims as a cultural and ethnic group. Islamophobic ideas portray Islam and Muslims as an existential threat to non-Muslims. Some argue that Islamophobia is the direct equivalent to antisemitism, and that Muslims have become the "new Jews" – the most reviled and at-risk minority. The "Eurabia" theory is a key pillar for Western Islamophobic circles, in which they believe that European elites and Muslim leaders have entered a secret plan to "Islamize" Europe.[1]

History of the concept

While what is understood as Islamophobia today has a long history, the term itself was coined in 1918 by two French researchers and converts to Islam. They used the term to classify what they saw as a political effort by colonial powers to undermine Islam.[2] However, it was not until the late 1990s that the term was popularized, with the British race equality think tank Runnymede Trust's report *Islamophobia: A challenge for us all*.[3] According to the report, 'Islamophobia refers to unfounded hostility towards Islam'. It acknowledges that although the term is 'not ideal', it is a 'useful shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam – and, therefore, to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims'.[4] Since then, the term has been used both in politics and academia. Of the explicit conceptualizations, Erik Bleich's definition of Islamophobia as 'indiscriminate negative attitudes or emotions directed at Islam or Muslims'[5] has perhaps won the most ground within academia.

Different conceptualizations

Its political use has led some to reject the term as being too normative. The main criticism pertains to the suffix *phobia*, which means morbid fear. It is commonly used to classify mental illnesses where the fear of something is both irrational and impossible to control. Another issue is that the term conflates opposition to Islam with prejudice toward Muslims. While opposition to Islam may translate into prejudice toward Muslims, empirical studies show that this is not a given.[6] To heighten the level of precision and set aside the focus on irrationality, some researchers replace Islamophobia with the two analytically distinct categories of anti-Islam and anti-Muslim.[7] Anti-Islam can be defined as 'framing Islam as a homogenous, totalitarian ideology which threatens [Western] civilization',[8] whereas anti-Muslim can be defined as 'oversimplified beliefs, negative feelings and evaluations of Muslims as a group'.[9]

Even though Islamophobia remains a contested term and the abovementioned alternatives do exist, some scholars suggest keeping it simply because it has become the most widely used term to describe anti-Muslim and/or anti-Islam sentiments in the public debate and in academia. Rather than introducing new terms, scholars should help define precisely those that already exists.[10]

Prevalence of islamophobia

Organized mobilization against Islam and Muslims in liberal democracies surged after the 9/11 attacks in the United States by Al-Qaeda. This gave rise to what became a transnational, anti-Islamic movement.[11] Prominent activist groups include the English Defence League (EDL), Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West (PEGIDA), Stop Islamization, and Act! For America. While these groups have taken to the streets, the anti-Islamic movement is also an online phenomenon.

Anti-Islamic activists see themselves as part of an ongoing civilizational clash stretching back to the historical strife between Muslim and Christian states, such as the Umayyad invasion of present-day Spain and France in the 8th century, Ottoman conquests of Constantinople in 1453, and the siege of Vienna in 1683. Since they view Islam as a totalitarian ideology that threatens Western civilization, they seek to control and limit the practice of Islam and halt Muslim immigration. Some advocate for expelling all Muslims from Western territories.

Over the last two decades, many far right parties have also undergone an anti-Islamic, ideological reorientation which makes them similar to the extra-parliamentary anti-Islamic movement.[12] Largely due to this anti-Islamic turn and expansion of the far right, Islamophobia has been described 'one of the biggest challenges in Europe' at the political level.[13] Cas Mudde, scholar of the far right, argues that the 2015 refugee crisis in particular 'unleashed an orgy of Islamophobia'.[14] Some scholars further argue that Western states' "counter-terrorism" policies are inherently Islamophobic for targeting Muslim populations as potential terrorists.[15]

While the broader organized anti-Islamic movement, which originated in Western Europe and the United States, is largely non-violent, Islamophobic ideas have motivated some right-wing terrorist attacks, including the terrorist attack on July 22, 2011, in Norway.[16] Outside the West, different varieties of Islamophobia also underpin the implementation of exclusionary policies toward Muslims, such as Hindu nationalism in

India,[17] and Buddhist nationalism in Asia, e.g. in Myanmar.[18] The recent drive to curtail Islam in China is another case, primarily through the internment of over a million Muslims from the Uighur minority in the western regions.[19]

Research looking at anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic attitudes at the mass level have generated mixed findings. While surveys indicate that opposition to Muslim immigration and certain anti-Islamic attitudes are widespread,[20] people in secular and liberal societies are on average more tolerant towards Muslim citizens and Islam than people in more religious countries.[21] In these secularized countries, however, people with the strongest anti-Muslim attitudes are found among the non-religious. [22] This intolerance is in part premised on a cultural understanding of liberal-democratic values,[23] where the explicit rejection of Muslim practices has little to do with Muslims as such but rather with how their practices are perceived to deviate from the norms of society.[24] Relatedly, studies comparing attitudes toward Muslims and Christian conservatives in Western Europe have found comparable levels of prejudice toward both communities.[25] Work zooming in on explicitly Islamophobic, conspiratorial thinking has nevertheless found that a sizable minority harbor such views.[26] Furthermore, Islamophobic attitudes have been found to correlate with certain personality traits such as social dominance orientation.[27] All the above-mentioned conclusions are drawn from so-called WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic) samples. Whether they can be extended beyond the sphere of secularized, liberal democracies is therefore uncertain.

What is antisemitism?

Johannes Due Enstad and Birgitte Haanshuus

- Antisemitism is prejudice, hatred, or hostility towards Jews because they are Jews, expressed through attitudes, cultural imagery, and hostile actions.
- While anti-Jewish hostility has a long history, with roots in antiquity, the term "antisemitism" dates back to the late 19th century.
- Although antisemitism was largely discredited in Western countries after the Holocaust, antisemitic attitudes remain more prevalent on the extreme right, among those most hostile to Israel, and among Muslims, particularly those that are more fundamentalist.

Key definition

Antisemitism, put simply, is prejudice, hatred, or hostility towards Jews because they are Jews. More precisely defined, antisemitism is 'a persisting latent structure of hostile beliefs towards *Jews as a collectivity*', which can be expressed through individual attitudes, cultural imagery, and hostile actions.[1] Antisemitic beliefs tend to portray Jews as greedy and wealthy, manipulating and powerful, and cunningly intelligent.

While organized anti-Jewish hostility dates back to the ancient world, the term "antisemitism" is relatively new. The term was popularized by Wilhelm Marr, a German journalist, in the late 19th century. Himself a proponent of antisemitism, Marr used the term to denote a modern, nationalistic, and race-based hostility towards Jews, as opposed to the traditional anti-Judaism of Christian doctrines.

History of the concept

Most historians trace the roots of antisemitism in Western culture to the split between Judaism and Christianity during the first century CE. Early Christians' hostility towards Jews resulted from their refusal to accept Jesus as the Messiah. Theologians fueled this hostility by developing anti-Jewish doctrines, accusing Jews of having killed Christ and being companions of the Devil.

In medieval and early modern Europe, Jews were not only a religious minority, but also an economic "middleman minority", acting as mercantile retail-traders and moneylenders amidst largely agricultural populations. Just like other middleman minorities (such as the Chinese in Southeast Asia or Armenians in Turkey), Jews were frequently accused of being "parasites" and "exploiters", subjected to official discrimination, stigmatization, and segregation, and sometimes viciously attacked, especially during times of societal turmoil.[2]

In 1903, an antisemitic forgery called *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* appeared in Russia. The *Protocols* purported to be notes from secret meetings of Jewish leaders plotting to subvert Christian civilization and conquer the world. Translated into numerous languages and spread across the world, the *Protocols* became an important

and enduring source of antisemitic ideology and conspiracy theories.[3] A few decades later, the notion of an international Jewish conspiracy became central in the propaganda of Nazi Germany (1933-1945), which made antisemitism a matter of state policy.[4] Hitler's regime first stripped Jews of civil rights and pushed them to the margins of social and economic life. Later, during World War Two, the Nazis attempted to murder all Jews in German-occupied Europe. Around six million Jews died as a result of the Nazi genocide.

Prevalence of antisemittism

Following the defeat of Nazi Germany, open antisemitism became discredited in mainstream political life in Western countries. However, antisemitic ideology has remained salient in some groups, including, but not limited to, the extreme right.

In recent decades, extreme-right milieus have adapted antisemitism to new conditions, spreading Holocaust denial, portraying Jews as a powerful entity working to undermine the "white race" by organizing mass immigration, and engaging in antisemitic propaganda and trolling online.[5] Antisemitic symbols include the use of (((triple brackets))) or coloring someone's picture blue to highlight the "Jewishness" of the targeted individual or institution.

Extreme right antisemitism was on display in the 2017 "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, USA, where marchers chanted, 'Jews will not replace us'. Other notable examples include the activism of groups such as the National Alliance in the US, the Nordic Resistance Movement in Scandinavia, or the National Democratic Party of Germany (NDP), all of whom openly propagate the myth of a Jewish (or "Zionist") world conspiracy. Online message boards such as Gab, 4chan, and 8kun (previously 8chan) have also become platforms for antisemitic activism. Notably, participants on these forums include the perpetrators of the synagogue shootings in Pittsburgh, San Diego, and Halle in 2018 and 2019.[6]

Opinion surveys suggest that anti-Jewish attitudes have decreased in Western societies in recent decades.[7] In France and Germany, for instance, the share saying they view Jews unfavorably has dropped from 14 and 24 percent respectively in 1991 to six percent in 2019.[8] Antisemitic attitudes are somewhat more prevalent in Eastern Europe, while Muslim-majority countries stand out with exceptionally high levels.[9] Within Western societies, antisemitic attitudes are low overall but more widespread among certain groups, including those identifying with the extreme right of the political spectrum, those reporting a high degree of hostility towards Israel, and those identifying as Muslim.[10]

Western Europe has seen a rise in antisemitic violence since the turn of the millennium.[11] In the years 1989-1999, an average of 186 incidents were recorded each year. This number rose to 507 in the period 2000-2010 and declined slightly to 490 in the period 2011-2019.[12] In European victimization surveys, Jewish victims of antisemitic violence and harassment most frequently identify the perpetrator(s) as "someone with a Muslim-extremist view". Other frequently mentioned categories include "someone else", someone with an extreme-left view, and someone with an extreme-right view.[13] While most antisemitic incidents with fatal outcomes since 2000 have involved radical Islamist

perpetrators, the late 2010s have seen three deadly synagogue attacks involving extreme-right perpetrators.

Besides the rise in incidents, the 2010s have seen leading politicians in Hungary, the UK, and the US accused of promoting or tolerating antisemitism.[14] Taken together, these developments have contributed to a heightened sense of concern among Jews on both sides of the Atlantic. In a 2018 survey, 38% of European Jewish respondents said they had considered emigrating because of safety concerns.[15]

What is a conspiracy theory?

Jørgen Eikvar Axelsen and Terje Emberland

- Conspiracy theories are explanations that describe the secret and wicked plans and actions of a powerful group of conspirators as the most important cause of an event or state of affairs.
- Although such theories are by no means limited to extreme political groups, they are often central to extreme ideologies and may radicalize followers.
- On the far right, we find conspiracy theories that place ethnic or religious minorities in the role of conspirator, often in collaboration with traitors "on the inside" of the system.

Key definition

Conspiracy theories are defined in a variety of ways.[1] At the broadest level, conspiracy theories are a type of *explanation* that describes the actions of a group of conspirators as the most important cause of an event, a series of events, or a state of affairs. More specifically, conspiracy theories consist of the following three interconnected characteristics. First, the actions and goals of the group are nefarious, threatening or illegal. Second, the conspirators manage, because they are particularly powerful, sly, or manipulative, to control the course of events and the official narrative. Third, the group operates in secret and have initiated a cover-up to hide its work. This cover-up involves the fabrication or removal of evidence or influencing those who control the official narrative.

Because of these characteristics, conspiracy theories are particularly difficult to disprove.[2] All counterevidence or lack of evidence can be seen as results of the secrecy and cover-up. Data from conventional sources are rejected for the same reason. The media and academia are often considered to be part of the conspiracy. In practice, this entails a worldview based on unconventional sources and a widespread skepticism or contempt toward those who espouse the official narrative.

History of the concept

Serious scholarly interest in conspiracy theories began in the post-war period with notable contributions including Popper's *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1945) and Hofstadter's *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* (1964). The first known use of the term in English-language newspapers is in the mid-1800s.[3] Initially, it was not a fully developed analytical concept, however. For example, variations of the term, such as "conspiracy theories" in the plural and "conspiracy theorist", did not appear in print until much later.[4] The term did not yet signify a way of thinking about society, but rather functioned as a description of specific individual cases. Karl Popper's descriptions of the "conspiracy theory of society"[5] as the oversimplified and unscientific understanding of society and Richard Hofstadter's conception of the "paranoid style"[6] as

a threat to liberal democracy are probably the most influential works in the early development of conspiracy theory as an analytical concept. In these works, conspiracy theory is used to denote a broader way of thinking about society. Butter and Knight dub the standard approach to the topic in this period the "Pathologizing Paradigm".[7] Theorists in this early phase depicted conspiratorial thinking as irrational, marginal, harmful, paranoid and pathological.

Different types of conspiracy theories

One of the most prominent typologies of conspiracy theories is Michael Barkun's categories of *event conspiracies*, *systemic conspiracies,* and *superconspiracies*.[8] These categories describe the scope of the conspiracy theory. Event conspiracies are those where a group of plotters are held responsible for a single event (e.g., the assassination of JFK). In systemic conspiracies, the plotters are believed to have broader goals of 'securing control over a country, a region, or even the entire world'.[9] Typical examples include conspiracy theories vilifying Jews, Muslims, Masons, and the Illuminati. Theories of superconspiracies posit a hierarchy of conspiracies, where the lower-level conspirators are controlled and manipulated to act against innocent people by powerful and distant forces.

When conspiracy theories become politically charged, particularly in radical and extreme ideologies, they often form the basis of so-called *subversion mythologies*.[10] In this subtype of conspiracy theories, central institutions or authority figures are thought to be under the control of the conspirators. The "enemy outside" has found allies within our society, and together they conspire to undermine the social order. The goals of the proposed conspirators within subversion mythologies are broad – full control or destruction of a nation, region, or even the whole world. The conspiracy beliefs underpinning the 22 July terror attacks in Norway fit such a model. The identification of "treacherous enemies within" formed the basis of the perpetrator's target selection. The ideas of secret traitors in positions of power within our society can also help cement a self-image among believers as "resistance fighters" fighting an evil cabal currently occupying the country. Radical rejection of the status quo, or even violence, can be legitimized if it is framed as resistance to occupation as in the name of the extreme right group the Nordic *Resistance* Movement.

Prevalence of conspiracy theories

Conspiracy theories have long been a central feature of radical and extreme groups, movements, and parties.[11] They have been essential to the worldviews in many totalitarian regimes and movements, of single actor terrorists, and in a large share of past and current radical and extreme groups. The conspiracy theories espoused by such actors are aligned with and contribute to the deepening of their enemy images. They usually describe plots of the type labeled systemic conspiracies above. Among the more wide-spread conspiracy theories of the far right are the antisemitic ZOG theory (Zionist Occupation Government), the Eurabia theory, and theories of communist control of key institutions. The ZOG theory is most prevalent among racial nationalists, for instance among those who identify as National Socialists or white supremacists. According to this

theory, a Jewish elite occupies the most important positions of power globally. Their goal is to pervert society and spread evil and destruction, and they have become synonymous with the oppressive "system". Such theories are sometimes accompanied by Holocaust denial. The Eurabia theory is more common in newer strands of far right movements, most notably so-called cultural and ethnic nationalists. According to this theory, the Muslims of the world are thought to conspire to invade Europe, destroy its culture, and subjugate its people. They are aided in these efforts by European politicians.

The connection between extreme political beliefs and conspiracy theories[12] presents something of a chicken and egg problem: Does the distrust and hostility toward the government and toward "out-groups" involved in radical political beliefs lead to conspiracy thinking, or does conspiracy-mindedness produce a generalized distrust that finds direction and meaning within radical movements? Bartlett and Miller note that conspiracy theories have a functional role within such movements.[13] They suggest that conspiracy theories contribute to further radicalization of attitudes by demonizing the enemy, dismissing those with whom they disagree as co-conspirators, and legitimizing violence as a necessary political tool in order to wake the sleeping masses).

Recent research shows that conspiracy belief is much more widespread, to extent that it may be considered a mainstream phenomenon.[14] Data from the US shows quite extensive belief in conspiracy theories. Recent studies show that about half of the American population consistently believe in at least one conspiracy theory.[15] European surveys also show significant levels of general beliefs in conspiracist ideas about the government and about "out-groups" such as Muslims and Jews.[16] Moreover, one of the key findings from conspiracy theory research is that there is such a thing as conspiracy-mindedness, or "conspiracism": People who believe in one conspiracy theory are more likely to also believe in other, unrelated[17] – or, crucially, even contradictory – conspiracy theories.[18] This is interpreted as evidence that the content of specific conspiracy theories is less important than the fundamental belief that powerful groups are pursuing nefarious goals in secret. (The terror attack in Hanau, Germany is a case in point.[19]) To such individuals, conspiracy belief is something closer to a worldview than an explanation of events. Based on survey data from several European countries, political and economic exclusion are the most important explanatory factors for belief in conspiracy theories.[20] Voters on the far right are more likely than other people to believe in conspiracy theories. This is especially true for those theories that involve themes usually associated with the far right (e.g. immigration, EU power-grabbing, climate change hoax). There was also variation between countries. In a wealthy, high-trust society like Sweden for instance, people were much less inclined to believe conspiracy theories than in a country like Portugal. Belief in conspiracy theories is also associated with personality traits and individual circumstances, such as lack of interpersonal trust, anomie, perceived job insecurity,[21] anxiety,[22] and paranoid ideation.[23] Finally, social media constitutes platforms where conspiracy theories spread and flourish, by assembling large groups of like-minded people, circumventing the gatekeeping of traditional media, and providing a safe space for communicating generally stigmatized knowledge.[24] The QAnon conspiracy theory is an ideal example of this.

What is hate crime?

Randi Solhjell, Nina Høy-Petersen, and Birgitte Haanshuus

- Hate crime is most commonly understood judicially as a criminal act motivated, at least in part, by prejudice or hostility towards the victim(s) (assumed) religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or other status.
- Hate crime can cause great harm in that the attack is aimed at a person's identity, thus spreading fear to entire communities and threatening targeted minorities' democratic participation.
- While official hate crime statistics from Western Europe show considerable variation across countries, these figures are generally not comparable due to different definitions and registrations methods

Key definition

Following the definition provided by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), hate crime are 'criminal offence[s] committed with a bias motive',[1] and it can refer to both verbal and physical violence. More specifically, hate crimes are motivated by the perpetrator's prejudice towards an (often) unchangeable identity trait of the victim. Targeting an identity trait signals that anyone from the larger community of people who shares this trait could be victimized, and hate crimes are considered unique in at least four ways. First, hate crimes cause greater psychological harm to the victim whose *identity* is under attack. Second, hate crimes spread fear beyond the individual victim to other members of the targeted group.[2] Third, such crimes have an increased risk of escalating into a wider intergroup conflict than other crimes do, and, fourth, they threaten democratic values and democratic participation.

Hate crime is considered a judicial term in the penal codes of different countries and often debated in relation to freedom of speech—a pillar of democratic societies. Furthermore, many scholars[3] would agree that both "hate" and "crime" are social constructions, meaning that what we consider prejudiced or criminal is subjective and will depend on place and time. To be homosexual, for instance, has previously been considered illegal in many Western countries, while today the same countries consider it illegal to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation.

Hate crime is often associated with a power imbalance between the victim and perpetrator, such as an ethnic majority person targeting a member of an ethnic minority population, or targeting a disabled person.[4] Thus, hate crimes should be interpreted in the context in which they occurs, i.e., broader historical and societal prejudices relating to, for instance, immigration, religious, and political conflicts.[5]

Although there are many different perpetrators of hate crime, the emphasis in the penal code is often on the motivation of the perpetrator, where hostility or biased views toward people due to their (assumed) identity typically warrants aggravated sentencing.

History of the concept

The term "hate crime" was first associated with the African American civil rights movement in the 1950-1960s where it was used to frame the oppressed and oppressors as "victims" and "perpetrators", and thereby question the morality of those who victimize marginalized identity groups. The term was later used by a variety of progressive social movements for women, the LGBTQ community, and ethnic minorities. Narrowly defined as a legal term, hate crime laws were first enacted around 1980 in the US.[6]

Different conceptualizations

Scholarly efforts to define what constitutes a hate crime center on three core debates. [7] The first debate relates to the importance and required evidence of a motive of *hate* or *prejudice*. While requiring such evidence makes the law difficult to enforce, so that the extra protection for marginalized groups potentially fails, many still consider it a necessity. Indeed, in recent years, frequent concerns have been raised that what we recognize as hate crimes may not be motivated by prejudice or hate. Instead, hate crimes result from complex social relationships where it is incorrect to define one side as an innocent and passive victim and the other as an evil perpetrator.

A second dilemma concerns whether only dominant identity groups should be recognized as perpetrators, and only marginalized groups as victims, or if all people can fall in either category regardless of whether or not they have a history of marginalization. On the one hand, and according to the principle of equality before the law, legislation should not provide special protection for certain groups.[8] On the other hand, an opening up for majority reports against minorities may then reverse the original purpose of the law, and further marginalize the marginalized[9] by framing them as "hateful perpetrators". To exemplify the potential breadth of the concept, it is worth mentioning the example of a bill in Oregon that called for hate crime protection for capitalists targeted by anti-capitalists.[10]

A final controversy to mention concerns whether hate crime laws with aggravated sentencing are to be understood as utilitarian or moralizing. From a utilitarian perspective, aggravated hate crime sentencing is justified because hate crimes are believed to cause greater harm than other crimes. From a moralizing perspective, hate crime laws and discourse should be used to "re-moralize the public" that prejudice is wrong, in part by stigmatizing perpetrators. However, it remains unclear whether labeling offenders as "hate offenders" has a positive educational effect on the perpetrator and the public, or merely inhibits offender rehabilitation, while the public remains indifferent.

Prevalence of hate crime

Many countries register and publish figures on hate crime offences. The quality of such data, however, vary within and between countries, depending on the resources,

knowledge, and focus of the local police. Consequently, such statistics are often uncertain and only cover the "tip of the iceberg" of hate crime incidents.

Recent official figures suggest that, in most European countries, hate crimes recorded by the police are on the rise.[11] From 2014 to 2018, the recorded incidents went from approximately 3 000 in 2014 to more than 8 000 in Germany, from approximately 52 000 to 111 000 in the UK and from 223 cases to 624 cases in Norway. However, this does not necessarily mean that hate crimes are actually increasing in those countries. For example, it may also be that the police have become better (or worse) at registering such incidents and/or that minorities are more (or less) likely to report hate crime incidents to the police.

There are even bigger challenges when comparing levels of hate crimes across countries. In fact, due to different judicial understandings of what constitutes a hate crime, as well as variations in the frequency with which they are reported by victims and recorded by officials, it is almost impossible to compare hate crime statistics across countries. Notable efforts, however, are undertaken by agencies such as the ODIHR and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).[12] ODIHR offers a publically accessible tool to gather data from countries in Europe, Asia and North America. From 2015 to 2018, ODIHR has recorded an average of 5634 incidents per year across the participating states (which varies from 41 to 48).[13] ODIHR emphasizes that the data is uncertain, and that high levels of hate crime incidents in one country may reflect a broader definition of hate crime or a more effective system for recording data than in other countries.

Surveys that ask minorities about their experiences with hate crime may be more trustworthy when it comes to cross-country comparisons than police statistics. Giving some indication of the potential magnitude of hate crimes, key finding from the 2018 survey by FRA[14] found that on average, one third of all respondents (39 percent) experienced some form of antisemitic harassment in the five years before the survey, but only 19 percent of those who have experienced such harassment reported the incident.

What is fundamentalism?

Torkel Brekke and Uzair Ahmed

- Fundamentalism is a religious reaction against aspects of modernity.
- The concept of fundamentalism first emerged in American christianity in the early 20th century, but later developed to denote movements in other cultures too.
- Fundamentalist religion sometimes overlaps or converges with radical nationalism and xenophobia.

Key definition

The word "fundamentalism" is often used in a vague and generalizing way in the media and in public discourse, and it is often simply a derogatory label that people use to characterize others as overly inflexible or zealous. In academia, the term has various meanings, but it always refers to antimodern religious worldviews. In terms of personality, fundamentalists tend to be prejudiced against out-groups.[1]

History of the concept

The conceptual history of fundamentalism starts in the US in the first decades of the 20th century. Curtis Lee Laws, the editor of the Baptist magazine *Watchman-Examiner*, wrote in 1920 that real Christians who still accept the fundamentals of the faith should proudly call themselves "fundamentalists". In this meaning, the word denotes the opposite of what was called "modernism", which encapsulated a modern, historical and relativizing approach to Biblical truth. Thus, the word "fundamentalism" was first used by American Christian groups to describe their own stance as opposed to what they perceived as the liberal and irreligious tendencies of modern science and theology. The greatest threats to Christianity, in their view, were the new science of life as presented in Darwinian evolutionary theory and the modern approach to the Bible as represented by modern historical philology and theology. Many of the leaders who wanted to revive Christianity and fight these aspects of modernity were lay pastors who saw the religious establishment as the problem.

A key development in the conceptual history of fundamentalism came in the late 1970s as a result of the so-called "second wave" of fundamentalism in the US, and political developments in other parts of the world, particularly the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979. A new sense of the global significance of religion in politics made both scholars and commentators detach the concept of fundamentalism from its Christian origins in order to use it to discuss phenomena in non-Christian societies, especially in the Islamic world. Because of this conceptual broadening, it became much more popular in the discussion of the role of religion in politics in many parts of the world; the use of the term "fundamentalism" in literature and media in the English language, or in

German (*fundamentalismus*) or French (*fondamentalisme*), witnessed a veritable surge from the late 1970s onwards.

Different types of fundamentalism

There are at least three basic distinctions in the major forms of fundamentalism. Firstly, there is a need to distinguish clearly between Christian fundamentalism and all other forms. As European colonial powers spread and consolidated their power throughout the world, secularization took root in different ways and at different speeds. For instance, traditional religious laws and courts often lost their status and their roles in Asian and African societies. The institutions and traditions of learning developed by world religions over centuries were rapidly marginalized, while religious elites were often co-opted by colonial states or by post-colonial governments. Fundamentalisms emerged in all world religions in this period (from the late 1800s to early 1900s) as attempts to fill the cultural vacuum left by the breakdown of traditional religious authority.[2] For instance, in the Islamic world, the Muslim Brotherhood emerged and spread from the 1930s, and the same was the case with the Hindu nationalist *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS) in India. Most of these non-Christian fundamentalisms share aspects of the anti-modernism of Christian fundamentalism, but in addition they often nurture anti-Western and anti-colonial sentiments and policies.

Secondly, there are varying degrees of overlap between fundamentalism and (radical) nationalism. For instance, radical nationalist movements that have emerged in Europe sometimes combine aspects of Christianity with nationalism. The radical Hindu movement in India that is collectively called the *Sangh Parivar* includes organizations that are clearly both nationalist and fundamentalist. In the Islamic world, fundamentalist (i.e. Islamist) movements were often seen as the main enemies of secular nationalisms in the 1950s and 60s, but after the 1990s, fundamentalism and radical nationalism seemed to merge in some contexts, as in Turkey and Iran.

Thirdly, there are varying degrees of political engagement and involvement among fundamentalist groups. The Fundamentalism Project, which was funded by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences from 1987 to 1995, resulted in several volumes with empirical and theoretical contributions from scholars in the social sciences and the humanities.[3] The project identified four positions that fundamentalist groups tend to take in relationship to society around them. The most extreme position is called “world conqueror” and implies a drive to change the world in radical ways, by violence if necessary, and is exemplified by jihadist movements and the Christian Identity movement in the US. At the other extreme end are the “world renouncer” types that completely reject all forms of politics and strive to isolate from the world. The Amish would be a good example of this apolitical type of movement or sect. Between the two extremes are the two categories of “world transformer” and “world creator”.

Prevalence of fundamentalism

There seems to be at least two possible approaches to the question of whether fundamentalism is becoming more or less important today. On the one hand, there is the general scholarly debate about the secularization or the de-secularization of the world.

Some scholars insist that religion is in inevitable decline and from this perspective fundamentalism will gradually disappear, like other forms of religion. But this is an increasingly minority position.[4] On the other hand, there is the more specific debate about the renewed importance of religion as a defensive marker of identity in the face of increasing globalization and immigration. This debate is highly relevant to understand contemporary right-wing ideology and politics in the Western world. Christianity has become an important frame for far right mobilization, not least as a reaction against immigration from Muslim minority countries.[5]

However, the convergence of fundamentalist Christianity with the populist and far right is not a new phenomenon. In Denmark in the mid 1980s there emerged an exclusionary Lutheran type of nationalism as a reaction against Muslim immigration and this nationalism later influenced at least some politicians in the populist right Danish People's Party, like Marie Krarup.[6] In France, the political party *Front National* (*Rassemblement national,* after 2018) was from its origins in 1972 under leader Jean-Marie Le Pen closely affiliated to the fundamentalist Catholicism espoused by conservative archbishop Marcel Lefebvre (1905-1991). This religious affiliation was an important element of the party's antisemitism and French nationalism, as well as its traditionalist views of the family.[7] It seems, then, that fundamentalist religion can provide a significant set of resources for far right movements in many cultures.

What is radicalization?

Uzair Ahmed and Milan Obaidi

- Radicalization refers to the gradual social process into extremism and is often applied to explain changes in ideas or behavior.
- A distinction exists between the cognitive and behavioral dimensions of radicalization, with the latter referring to engagement in extremist activities.
- Radicalization as a concept is not absolute, but relative and dependent on the context in which it takes place.

Key definition

The term radicalization received much attention following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. It is often applied to explain what happens before the bomb goes off.[1] Yet, the concept of radicalization is heavily contested and as a result, a universally accepted definition is yet to be developed since radicalization can have different connotations in different contexts, and it can mean different things to different people. Nonetheless, Van den Bos defines radicalization as a process of growing willingness to pursue and/or support radical changes in society (in an undemocratic manner, if necessary) that conflict with, or could pose a threat to, democratic legal order.[2] Further, Hafez & Mullins identify three elements that may be viewed as important for an comprehensive understanding of the concept: 'Radicalization is usually a (1) gradual "process" that entails socialization into an (2) extremist belief system that sets the stage for (3) violence even if it does not make it inevitable'.[3]

History of the concept

Throughout history, the term has implied various meanings. It derives from the Latin *radix* (or root), understood as 'relating to or affecting the fundamental nature of something'.[4] Its meaning changed from that of forces and processes that could change the basic attributes of an entity, to 'thorough and sweeping political change' by the 18th century. From the end of the 19th century, it referred to those who represented or supported sections of a political party that was viewed as extreme (remote or far from what is understood as the norm in a society).[5] However, since 2005, the term "radicalization" has been related to the adoption of extreme beliefs and violent behavior.[6]

Different conceptualizations

It is important to emphasize the distinction between cognitive and behavioral dimensions of radicalization. Cognitive radicalization refers to the process through which an individual increasingly endorses political ideas, beliefs, and values that are in opposition to fundamental values and norms of the society, including democracy and the

rule of law.[7] The cognitive component of radicalization can be defined as 'the social and psychological process of incrementally experienced commitment to extremist political or religious ideology'.[8] Behavioral radicalization, on the other hand, encompasses the behavioral outcome and refers to the process of participating in extreme activities, which could be either violent and illegal or non-violent and legal.[9] Thus, behavioral radicalization can be defined as a 'collectively defined, individually felt moral obligation to participate in direct action'.[10] Consequently, radicalization can be seen as a social and psychological transformation whereby an individual increasingly adopts an extremist belief system, regardless if it ultimately results in actual violence or not. Although individual trajectories of radicalization vary from person to person, some suggest that it is possible to identify four stages of radicalization in which people: 1) Become susceptible to radicalization; 2) orient toward a particular type of radicalization; 3) become a member and get involved in radical groups; and 4) participate in extremist actions.[11]

Radicalization as such does not necessarily have to result in terrorism. Therefore, some scholars oppose the need for these attitudinal and behavioral aspects.[12] In fact, many terrorists do not go through a gradual social and psychological process as often described through the concept of radicalization.[13] Radicalization tends to be a nonlinear and dynamic process.[14] Furthermore, many terrorists are not ideologically motivated. Likewise, many who adopt radical beliefs do not precede with violent behavior.[15] Bjørgo & Horgan have therefore proposed a need for a clarification and concept divide, namely, describing radicalization as the gradual social process of adopting beliefs and values about the use of violence as a political means, and engagement as the process of changes in behavior.[16]

Finally, the meaning of the term 'radicalization' varies from context to context. This is particularly reflected in the various definitions of radicalization proposed by a large number of scholars and security agencies, which emphasize different aspects of radicalization, as illustrated above. It is therefore important to be concrete and not apply radicalization as an absolute concept.[17] Variation can be found amongst radicalized individuals and groups. The term is often applied in reference to individuals belonging to left-wing, Islamist jihadists, and right-wing groups and ideologies.[18] The latter includes historical examples of right-wing radicalization in Nazi Germany in the 1930s and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the US, as well as contemporary examples like the development of Alternative for Germany and the emergence of offline and online subcultural extreme right milieus. [19]

What is terrorism?

Jacob Aasland Ravndal and Sofia Lygren

- Terrorism can be defined as the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change.
- Terrorism is often compared to theatre because of the manipulative and often spectacular ways in which violence is used to create a particular effect (i.e., fear) in an audience.
- While scholars may agree about what is essentially terrorism, there is much more disagreement about who the terrorists are.

Key definition

A frequently cited definition of terrorism is 'the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change'.[1] This definition corresponds well to a list of characteristics derived from fifty academic definitions, with the top five characteristics being: 1) Violence; 2) political; 3) fear; 4) threat; and 5) psychological effects and anticipated actions.[2] A key characteristic that makes terrorism analytically distinct from other forms of political violence is how violence, often of a spectacular kind, is used *manipulatively* (i.e., psychological effects and anticipated actions) to create a particular effect (i.e., fear) in a target audience. This is why *theatre* is a popular analogy for terrorism.[3]

History of the concept

The Terror Reign during the French Revolution introduced the term "terrorism" to public discourse.[4] However, other scholars argue that this form of terrorism is analytically distinct from what we today label terrorism, as the state was the perpetrator. Instead, they argue that the anti-Czarists of Russia in the 1880s is the first example of modern terrorism, characterised as violence perpetrated by a non-state actor. In addition, this was the time when targeting went from assassinations of high-level enemies to groups of people *associated* with this enemy.[5]

Modern use of terrorism as a concept originates from the 1920s, when the United Nations-precursor League of Nations sought to establish a common definition. The League presented its first attempt in 1937, describing terrorism as 'all criminal acts directed against a State and intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons or a group of persons or the general public'.[6] The deliberation among members states prior to settling on this definition brought up a number of contested issues that policy makers and scholars still grapple with today. While some states worried that "terrorism" could be misused by states to condemn all types of violence, others saw it as a too difficult task to reach consensus and proposed instead to refer only to specific criminal acts and leave the whole definitional task aside.

Later, the United Nations avoided further definitional debate until the Munich Bombing in 1972, but was unable to agree on a mutual definition.[7]

While modern terrorism has a long legal history, scholarly interest in the phenomenon gained traction in 1971 when David Rapoport conceptualized terrorism as an analytically distinct phenomenon from other types of political violence.[8] Prior to Rapaport's contribution, terrorism was referred to only as a tactic used in guerrilla warfare.[9] Since 1971, research on terrorism has grown exponentially – especially since the 9/11-attacks in 2001.

Different conceptualizations

Despite a growing volume in academic publications on terrorism, a consensus on the definition of terrorism is yet to be reached. One point of disagreement concerns whether terrorism should be confined to non-state actors only, or if states can also be involved in terrorism. For instance, the European Union's definition, adopted by a number of states, specifies the perpetrator as an individual or a group, thus excluding state-based terrorism.[10] The US makes an exception to this rule, defining an act as terrorism if it is state *sponsored.*[11] Another point of disagreement concerns whether attacks against military targets can be regarded as terrorism, or if non-combatant targeting is a crucial feature of terrorism.

Different understandings of, and approaches to, studying terrorism can also depend on one's philosophy of science. Two main paradigms characterise the field today: The realist paradigm and the constructivist paradigm. Realists argue that a terrorist act can be identified through a set of objective characteristics, such as the five listed above.[12] Constructivists, predominately scholars of critical terrorism studies, counter that terrorism exists in the eye of the beholder, and labelling something or someone as terrorism or terrorists can be utilised to advance a political agenda and discredit political enemies.[13] For instance, one of the most crucial NATO allies in the Syrian civil war, especially in the fight against the so-called Islamic State, the People's Protection Units (Y.P.G), is designated as a terrorist organization by Turkey. The group has deep ties to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), an organisation that is designated as a terrorist organization by both Turkey *and* the US due to its militant activity inside Turkey.[14] This, and similar examples, open up for criticism that there is an inherent ideological and political bias in defining terrorism with consequential policy implications.[15]

Prevalence of terrorism

Terrorism as a tactic of fear and intimidation has been practiced for millennia. Frequently mentioned examples of ancient terrorism are the Hindu Thugs, operating for at least six centuries (600-1300) in India; the militant Assassins seeking to purify Islam from 1090 to 1275; and the Zealots-Sicarii, a splinter group of the Jewish Zealots who, in 70 CE, militantly opposed the Roman occupation of Judea.[16] However, its modern-day use is closely related to the emergence of nation-states during the 19th century. As such, modern terrorism has manifested through four global waves distinguished by their ideological motivation and historical drivers: (1) Anarchist terrorism from 1880 to the

1920s; (2) anti-colonial terrorism from the 1920s to the 1960s; (3) new left terrorism from the 1960s to the mid-1990s; and (4) religious terrorism, predominantly of the Islamist variant, from the Iranian revolution in 1979 to present day.[17] Out of these four waves, only the anti-colonial one has truly ended following the end of the colonial era. In addition, other predominant kinds of terrorism include ethno-separatist or nationalist terrorism, right-wing terrorism, animal rights terrorism, and environmentalist terrorism. Currently, mass-casualty attacks committed by lone actors groomed in extreme-right online subcultures has emerged as a new type of threat at the global level.[18]

A number of databases covering terrorist incidents exist, enabling for temporal and spatial comparison. The most well-known database is the Global Terrorism Database (GDT). The GTD shows a sharp rise of terrorist attacks at the global level between 2004 and 2014, followed by a sharp decline. Other databases cover more specific regions or phenomenon, such as Terrorism in Western Europe – Events Data (TWEED), the United States Extremist Crime Database (ECDB), or the Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence (RTV) in Western Europe dataset. For instance, looking at ECDB and RTV, it becomes apparent that fatal right-wing attacks have decreased in the United States and Western Europe since the 1990s.[19] For Western Europe, this is also the case if we only count attacks that are more terrorist-like in kind, such as premediated attacks using explosives or firearms.

Terrorism as a strategy usually implies manipulating public fear to trigger overreactions from the enemy by way of repression and unjust behavior towards the terrorists' potential base of support, thereby creating increased sympathy and support for the terrorists' cause. Considering the marginal risk of becoming a victim of terrorism in Western countries and the massive amount of resources used to counter this marginal threat, one could argue that the strategy seems to be working rather well.[20] That said, due to the ineluctably political nature of terrorism, and its ambition of having far-reaching psychological repercussions beyond its immediate victims, much more is at stake than the risk of being attacked. Successful terrorist attacks can potentially alter the political dynamics of entire societies, and ultimately lead to fundamental societal changes. That is why political leaders still consider terrorism a major challenge to modern nation-states.

Part II

What characterizes the far right scene in Europe and beyond?

Pietro Castelli Gattinara, Eviane Leidig, and Jacob Aasland Ravndal

- The far right is a global phenomenon with implications for local, national, and transnational politics.
- Far right actors take on multiple organizational forms, have distinct political goals and hold different understandings of democracy, nativism, and authoritarianism.
- The boundaries between the different geographic, ideological, and organizational variants of the far right are often blurred.

Far right as a heterogeneous phenomenon

The far right landscape is truly global. Virtually all countries have a potential breeding ground for far right politics, including places that have long been considered "immune" to it, such as Ireland, Portugal, Canada and, until recently, Spain. Furthermore, the far right landscape stretches to all corners of the world, beyond Western Europe. While its salience in Central and Eastern Europe has grown considerably throughout the 2000s,[1] the far right has both a historical and contemporary presence in Latin America[2] and in the Global South, in countries such as India,[3] Indonesia,[4] Myanmar,[5] and Turkey,[6] as well as in industrialized countries such as Australia,[7] Israel,[8] Japan,[9] South Africa,[10] and the United States.[11] Within this global scenario, the far right features different variants of a shared ideological core, and it contains a multitude of organizations. Today, far right politics blurs the distinction different modes of political participation, as right-wing groups combine conventional party membership and unconventional (if not violent) forms of activism, left-wing issues and extreme right ideas, as well as traditionalist imageries and pop culture symbols.

Geographical scope

The main political domain of the contemporary far right is national domestic arenas. Most far right actors run for national elections, organize around recognized national leaders, and mobilize on (alleged) national values and issues. The prototypical example of these parties is the French *Rassemblement National,* or National Rally, under Marine Le Pen (previously *Front National* founded by Jean-Marie Le Pen), but more recent examples include *Vox* and its leader Santiago Abascal in Spain, and Jair Bolsonaro's *Aliança pelo Brasil* (Alliance for Brazil).

While national politics remains a primary channel of mobilization, the far right also informs supranational and transnational arenas. Parties like National Rally and the Danish People's Party, for instance, have took advantage of supranational institutions like the European Parliament to build international links and partnership.[12] In addition,

recent years have brought about a revival in cross-country mobilization against migrants and refugees, via the swift-spread of the pan-European *Identitarian* network, the emulation of the PEGIDA rallies outside of Germany, and the rise of citizen street patrols following the Nordic model of the Soldiers of Odin.[13] Finally, certain far right narratives, notably white and male supremacism, have transcended national borders to become effectively transnational. Global networks such as the so-called "counter-jihad" movement have especially benefited from the increasing availability of online spaces[14] that allow for greater connectivity between far right actors and Islamophobic individuals, which spans from Europe to North America to Asia.[15]

Finally, far right actors also participate in local and regional politics. First, most far right parties that are active at the national level also invest in local politics and community activism. Sub-national representation in government may in fact act as a "laboratory" to test national campaigns and policy, as with the local councils regularly held by FPÖ (Austrian Freedom Party), and by the National Front in the French cities of Toulon and Orange in the 1990s. Second, certain far right groups have emerged out of separatist movements (e.g., the Flemish nationalist *Vlaams* Belang, or Flemish Interest, and, until recently, the Italian *Lega* (previously *Lega Nord*-Northern League) or at least politicized regional grievances (e.g., the French *Identitarians, CasaPound* in Italy, and *Shiv Sena* in India), with the goal of bringing these issues into the national political arena.[16]

Ideological features

Ideologically, the far right landscape comprises all actors that are located "to the right" of the mainstream and conservative right on the left-right political spectrum. The ideology of these groups rests on the belief that inequalities are natural and therefore some groups are superior to others, which informs their nativist and authoritarian views of society. All far right groups see order and punishment (or "law and order") as the crucial conditions to keep society together. Still, some organizations believe that a strictly ordered society can be achieved only within a non-democratic, authoritarian regime, whereas others simply display authoritarian attitudes, such as the glorification of authority figures, and the predisposition towards punishing any behavior considered "deviant" from their own moral standards.[17] In this respect, it is important to distinguish the different sub-variants of far right ideology.[18]

Most notably, scholars distinguish between groups that are hostile to *liberal* democracy, usually referred to as the *radical* right, and those that oppose democracy as such, usually referred to as the *extreme* right. Radical right organizations are hostile to liberal democracy but accept popular sovereignty and the minimal procedural rules of parliamentary democracy. Hence, they seek to obtain the support of the people by criticizing crucial aspects of liberal democracy, such as pluralism and minority rights,[19] and publicly condemn the use of violence as an instrument of politics. This is the most widespread variant of contemporary far right ideologies, and applies to most far right parties represented in parliaments across Europe, including the Sweden Democrats and the *Alternative fur Deutschland* (AfD, or Alternative for Germany), as well as the Justice and Development Party in Turkey, and the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (Indian People's Party).

By contrast, extreme right organizations typically reject the minimum features of democracy: Popular sovereignty and majority rule. Often inspired by Fascism or National Socialism, they believe in a system ruled by individuals who possess special leadership characteristics and are thus naturally different from the rest of the "people".[20] Accordingly, they reject democracy and party politics, oppose all forms of ethnic and cultural diversity within the nation state, and are open to the use of violence to achieve political goals.[21] Contemporary examples of extreme right actors include the neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn in Greece, the paramilitary organization *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (National Volunteer Organization) in India, and the white supremacist Ku Klux Klan in the US.

In addition, scholars recognize two (or sometimes even three, as discussed in the entry on nationalism) main variants of the "nativist" component of far right ideology, i.e., the idea that only native people shall inhabit nation states. The first, biological racism, suggests that specific ethnic groups are genetically superior to others, and it is predominantly endorsed by marginal extreme right parties and white supremacist organizations promoting racial understandings of ethnic superiority. The second, ethnic nationalism, is supported by the majority of radical right parties that reject racial hierarchies in favor of an ethno-cultural understanding of the nation. Looking at the nation in terms of ethnicity, as well as shared cultural traits, such as language, traditions, and religion, these parties argue that the mixing of different ethnic groups creates insurmountable cultural problems and should thus be opposed.[22] Unlike biological racism, this variant of nativism distorts dominant liberal values to challenge minority rights, religious pluralism, and ultimately, the arrival and settlement of immigrants in general.[23]

If these ideological variants are becoming established, far right ideology can also take new and often surprising forms. Across the globe, far right groups draw increasingly on themes and demands traditionally associated with the political left, such as environmental protection[24] and women's rights.[25] Associating these issues to their nativist and nationalist ideals, far right groups try to blur the distinction between mainstream and far right politics. Repackaging far right worldviews in ways that resonate with more widespread ideas and pop culture symbols, in fact, allows marginalized far right groups to attract international media attention and influence mainstream politics.

Organizational variants

The far right landscape comprises four main types distinguished by their degree of internal organization and primary goals of action,[26] ranging from most structured and institutionally oriented, to least structured and grassroots oriented ones.

Political parties, understood as political organizations that contest elections for public office, are arguably the most influential far right organizations in contemporary societies. This organizational form allows the far right to elect public officials and gain parliamentary seating, while also gathering financial resources through state funding. In terms of organization, far right parties tend to be more centralized and less internally democratic than mainstream parties, and generally feature a strong charismatic individual as party leader.[27] However, they vary substantially in terms of membership

and organizational structure, as certain groups organize like the traditional mass-party model of the 20th century, whereas others rest on the individual project of single politicians. In terms of ideologies, while there are substantial differences across parties, the most successful ones tend to be radical, rather than extreme right. Through party politics and electoral campaigning, the contemporary far right is now systematically represented in many national parliaments and it is often able to join governments. It can thus regularly influence the policymaking process, either directly (e.g., the League which was in office for most of the 2000s in Italy), or indirectly (e.g., the UK Independence Party which was never in office but obtained the "Brexit" referendum via its influence on the British Conservative Party).

Social movement organizations are similar to political parties in that they aim to influence politics, resting on a relatively stable and hierarchical internal structure, a defined formal membership, and a clearly identifiable ideological platform. Unlike political parties, however, their internal procedures are looser and usually devoid of formal decision-making mechanisms. Furthermore, while not in principle opposed to elections, most groups privilege street protest as a way to influence decision-makers. Contemporary far right movements differ among each other on multiple accounts, including ideology, membership, and strategy. Some groups mobilize in the streets only because they lack the resources, personnel, or strength to compete with political parties (e.g., the Nordic Resistance Movement, *Uyoku dantai* in Japan, *Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging* in South Africa), whereas others consider themselves as part of an intellectual vanguard that will change the mentality of their fellow nationals (e.g., the *Identitarians*). Since a number of organizations have been successful in gathering support for street protest, especially against Islam (e.g., the English Defence League), and/or refugees (e.g. PEGIDA), far right street politics is becoming increasingly influential at the national and transnational levels.[28]

Less internally structured and institutionally oriented than either parties or social movements, *media and intellectual organizations* do not aim at influencing voting or policymaking directly, but indirectly by changing public debates and dominant ways of thinking. Compared to parties and movements, their structure is very loose, as they are made of individual intellectuals, clubs, and online and offline media organizations, among others. Their activities vary from organizing conferences and publishing books and magazines (e.g., GRECE in France, and the publishing houses Arktos and Counter-Currents), to promoting highly mediatized street politics (e.g., *Eesti Rahvuslik Liikumine*, or Estonian Patriotic Movement). Most intellectual clubs and schools are inwards-oriented: They operate to innovate far right ideas and make them more resonating or accessible (e.g., the *Nouvelle Droite*, or New Right), to form the cadres of political parties and to educate activists to reduce their stigmatization (e.g., the Hobbit Camps in Italy). Far right media organizations are instead mainly, albeit not exclusively, outward-oriented: While some are in-house publications with news about political parties mostly for militants, others offer information to the broader public. This can take the form of online hubs for transnational networks like Stormfront, or that of news outlets focusing on core far right issues, both online and offline (e.g., *Breitbart News Network*).

Subcultures constitute a final crucial component of the contemporary far right landscape. They comprise a myriad of loosely linked groups sharing specific identities, values, and codes. These subcultures differ from other organizations because while they coalesce around far right cultural objects (e.g., music or sports), they rest on a fluid

organizational structure and lack internal institutions.[29] Furthermore, their primary motivation is often more identity-related than political. Because of their looseness and emphasis on identity building, it is often difficult for parties and other more established political groups to form enduring collaborations with them. Most far right subcultures today are also present online[30] and on social media platforms and mobile applications such as 4chan, 8kun (previously 8chan), Telegram, and Signal,[31] which illustrates that the far right is quickly adapting to new technologies to spread their ideology, recruit members, and mobilize support. This is also contributing to the progressive blurring of the distinction between media organizations, social movements, and subcultures. On the one hand, these platforms can be non-hierarchical and leaderless, which is at odds with the dominant paradigm for most far right organizations. On the other hand, they allow for multiple forms of engagement, as far right groups and actors can readily manage web platforms, often in anonymous ways, and thus serve, at once, intellectual, militant, and information functions. Examples of successful far right online mobilization outcomes include the election of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil[32] and Narendra Modi in India,[33] the former as grassroots-oriented and the latter with professionalized operations.

What are the psychological characteristics of people holding far-right beliefs?

Milan Obaidi

- People with far right beliefs are characterized by a simplified mindset and tendency to search for order and structure.
- They have a strong desire for group-based dominance and hierarchy, and often see social groups arranged along a superiority-inferiority dimension.
- They perceive the wider authorities as illegitimate.

Extreme beliefs and orientations

The rise of ideological polarization and political extremism has reignited important questions about what characterizes those who hold extreme *beliefs* and *orientations*. It has been suggested that political extremists (e.g., right-wing and left-wing) and religious fundamentalists (e.g., Islamists) share a range of psychological similarities.[1] However, the main focus of this entry is to examine psychological features of people holding far right beliefs and orientations. A tremendous volume of scientific work has been published on this topic. Here we focus on the most common psychological features of people who hold far right beliefs (i.e. anti-egalitarianism, anti-democracy, illiberalism and opposition to state monopoly on legitimate use of violence).[2]

Avoidance of uncertainty or ambiguity

People adopt certain mindsets, cognitive styles, and dispositions because they satisfy psychological needs and motives such as need for closure, order, structure, and avoidance of uncertainty or ambiguity.[3] Individuals who endorse far right ideology often have an increased desire for obedience to authority, order, purity, familiarity, structure, and a rigid worldview mentality.[4] Particularly, they tend to adhere to a worldview that is based on authoritarianism and hierarchy between social groups.[5] This is further reflected in their psychological profile, which is more reflective of the desire for group-based dominance and subjugation (including women's subordination), traditionalism, and social inequality.[6] The tendency to dominate and subjugate disadvantaged and minority groups is particularly expressed in anti-immigrant and xenophobic stances, strong preference for an ethnically, culturally and/or racially homogeneous population, and prejudice against minorities.[7] Moreover, the motive to see social groups arranged along a superiority-inferiority dimension is typically more pronounced among people holding far right beliefs, and hence they are less tolerant of LGBTQ communities, ethnic and racial minorities, women, and generalized prejudice towards low-status groups (e.g., the homeless and disabled).[8]

Rigid mindset

Another key feature of far right individuals is the rigidity of their mindset—a cognitive style reflected in increased closed-mindedness, simplistic style of thinking, and black-and-white perceptions of society.[9] According to ideological extremity hypothesis (i.e. rigidity-of-the-extreme), individuals on the far left may also be characterized by psychological rigidity.[10] However, it has been argued that the rigidity of the left is less common than rigidity of the right (i.e., rigidity-of-the-right).[11] For example, individuals with far right beliefs display particularly strong dogmatic intolerance—defined as the tendency to reject opposing beliefs—and consider any ideological belief that differs from theirs as inferior.[12] This so-called rigidity-of-the-right hypothesis follows a long tradition of research suggesting that closed-mindedness and dogmatism are associated with increasingly right-wing attitudes and extreme ideologies. This is corroborated by findings demonstrating that right-wing political attitudes are correlated with psychological rigidity.[13]

Empirically, there are studies showing an association between far right political standpoints and dogmatism, as well as low openness.[14] In general, dogmatic people are characterized by increased cognitive inflexibility, inability to process opposing ideas and information, and the tendency to dehumanize those who oppose their beliefs.[15] Indeed, cognitive inflexibly is related to the realms of nationalism and authoritarianism, and extremist attitudes.[16] For instance, using two samples of predominantly white American and British respondents, scholars[17] demonstrated that mental inflexibility may facilitate a tendency towards extremist views. Respondents who were lower in cognitive inflexibly were more likely to harm others and engage in self-sacrifice in the name of an ideological group.

Role of social psychological factors

In addition to individual level variables, scholars of extremism have also emphasized the role of social psychological factors, such identity and belonging processes.[18] One theoretical framework that has explored the psychological motivations behind extremism is significance quest theory (SQT).[19] According to this theory, extreme beliefs and actions reflect means of obtaining or restoring an individual's experience of personal significance and identity.[20] Indeed, the experience of significant loss (e.g., experiences of humiliation, rejection, perceived relative deprivation, and injustice) predicts right-wing extreme attitudes and intentions.

Recent work has demonstrated that quest for significance can indeed lead to extremism[21] and motivate people to self-sacrifice for a political cause.[22] For instance, using a sample of Dutch respondents, scholars[23] demonstrated that psychological distress (e.g., perceived deprivation) stimulates adherence to far right ideology, which in turn predicts support for right-wing extremist violence and violent intentions.[24] Moreover, a study using a sample of white Americans with Republican affiliation[25] showed that perceived psychological distress predicted stronger willingness to violently persecute political out-groups. Effects on these extremist tendencies were largely mediated by people's increased closeness with their political leader.[26] In other words, the more psychological distress people experience, the more they identified with their

political leader, which in turn made them more willing to use violence against those identified as threats by this leader.[27]

Need for cognitive closure

Furthermore, the link between psychological distress and adherence to far right beliefs and extremism is suggested to be mediated by a need for cognitive closure (NCC)—a motivational state in which individuals seek unambiguous and absolute answers.[28] In fact, research shows that a need for cognitive closure is associated with right-wing political orientation.[29] Thus, people may endorse far right beliefs and ideology because of a need for belongingness and identity. Individuals who lack a coherent sense of identity may be particularly vulnerable to such indoctrination.[30] Indeed, in the face of social exclusion, it is reasoned that expressions of ethno-centrism—defined as the belief in the inherent superiority of one's own ethnic group or culture—becomes a means by which one's social identity is boosted.[31] In sum, holding far right beliefs increases people's social identity and personal importance because such beliefs satisfy a need to belong to groups of like-minded people.[32]

What explains far-right mobilization?

Pietro Castelli Gattinara and Iris Beau Segers

- Far-right mobilization stems from groups of marginalized or highly deprived individuals that use far-right ideals to get together and turn their grievances into action.
- Far-right groups mobilize in the electoral arena to gain office and influence the policy-making process, whereas they mobilize in the streets to set public agendas and target political opponents.
- Mobilization rests on the resonance of far-right claims in society, on the organizational capacity and legitimacy of far-right groups, as well as on individual member's rational calculations and emotions.

Explaining far-right mobilization

Far right mobilization refers to the process by which a group of individuals with far right ideals gets together as a collective actor in order to trigger or oppose social change.[1] The far right can use different strategies to pursue its goals, including participating in elections, making political statements offline and online, as well as deploying demonstrative, confrontational, and violent tactics.[2] No single explanation can account, in and by itself, for a process as broad and diverse as far right mobilization, the specific form it takes, and its outcomes. We focus here on the combination of three main factors: a) The societal and political context, which may or may not create favorable circumstances for far right movements and parties; b) group-level factors, such as resources, networks, and communication; and c) the profile and motivations of activists, which explain why and when individuals take part in far right collective action.

Socio-political context

Far right mobilization is part of its sociocultural and political setting. This means that contextual circumstances shape, but also is shaped in return, by far right collective action. Two explanations address this relationship. According to so-called "grievance" theories, far right mobilization is the result of marginalized and socially excluded groups experiencing high deprivation, notably during economic hardship or periods of high insecurity related to crime or corruption.[3] For example, the emergence of the French *Front National* (now *Rassemblement national*) in the 1970s, and the wave of extreme right violence in the 1990s, is explained by the feeling of competition between "natives" and migrants generated by globalization and modernization.[4]

Proponents of "resource-mobilization" theory, in contrast, focus on the capacity of collective actors to turn these grievances into action.[5] The appearance of new challengers would thus rest on the available opportunities in a given context. So-called "political opportunity structures"[6] that encourage people to mobilize include political

factors linked to the openness of the political system and the presence of potential allies, measured by i.e., the strength of political elites and the nature of the electoral system. In addition, so-called "discursive opportunities" include cultural and discursive factors like the salience and tone of public debates on migration, legal restrictions on hate speech, as well as a country's citizenship regimes and authoritarian legacy.[7]

While the two theories help make sense of far right mobilization in both elections and the streets, the relationship between far right parties and movements is contested. Some, in fact, suggest that far right actors normally prefer running for elections and only resort to protest politics when they are not firmly established in the party system, such as in Spain until the breakthrough of the *Vox* party. Others argue that the right waxes and wanes at the same time in both elections and the streets, as illustrated by the joint emergence of *Alternative für Deutschland* and PEGIDA in Germany, and particularly the Eastern state of Saxony.[8]

Group-level factors

Far right mobilization also depends on group-level factors, three of which hold special importance. First, mobilization strategies rest on various types of resources that far right actors may possess, including financial means, but also credibility, legitimacy, and knowledge. For instance, groups that are mainly shaped by the personality and resources of their leader, such as the Dutch Geert Wilders' *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV, or Party for Freedom), often mobilize via elections because they lack a social base to support mass protest. On the contrary, organizations that do not possess professional skills and/or a widespread legitimacy, such as the English Defence League (EDL) in the UK, generally remain grassroots and do not take part in elections.

Second, mobilization depends on the way far right actors are organized internally, and on the social networks they can count on externally, which shape if and how people participate in far right protest or join far right parties.[9] While established far-right parties conform to some extent to conventional forms of party organization, informal groups are generally organized according to the personal characteristics and charisma of the leaders: often resulting in strictly hierarchical structures that enforce leaders' decisions on all group members.[10] Externally, they seek to build networks to increase communication among supporters and facilitate coordination and effectiveness of mobilization, notably via "cyberactivism" and social media.[11]

Finally, mobilization depends on whether far right groups manage to attract broader audiences to their cause, for example through attaining visibility, resonance and legitimacy in the mainstream media.[12] If they promote identities that are too narrow, or too exclusive, far right groups may trigger solidarity within their own circles, but at the same time alienate the majority of potential supporters. Large-scale mobilization, either in the street or in elections, is possible if far right narratives are, at the same time, effective in summarizing their political views, resonating with broader understandings of public problems, and inclusive enough so that they can be applied by many groups in different contexts, as illustrated for instance by the global anti-Muslim movement.[13]

Individual-level factors

We can distinguish two broad individual-level explanations of far right mobilization, focusing on rational choice, and psychosocial or emotional factors. Before discussing these two broad explanations in more depth, it is important to note that, while unfolding at the individual level, these processes are often the result of the deliberate efforts of far right groups and networks.

First, far right mobilization may be the result of individuals' rational calculations, as activists and voters are not 'driven by irrational impulses',[14] but rather by a perception of threat that perceived enemies (notably migrants and other minorities) would pose to their socioeconomic status and "way of life". Far right mobilization would thus be the aggregate result of individual choices of people with specific grievances or attitudes. This explanation is particularly effective in addressing why people vote for far right political parties, but fails to account for why only a relatively small share of people holding anti-immigrant opinions engage in high-risk activism, contentious politics, or violence.[15] These choices might in fact stem from the combination of cost-benefit calculations and other individual-level factors, such as personal and/or professional constraints.[16]

The second explanation points at psychosocial and emotional factors. For instance, some specific factors apply to men in particular, arguably because far right mobilization, particularly violence, is a gendered phenomenon. The over-representation of men in extreme right movements partly owes to the capacity of these groups to provide emotional support, male comradeship, and a sense of collective belonging.[17] Similarly, far right mobilization is linked to psychological factors, such as a perceived 'loss of masculinity', especially among young men who try to "regain" it through collective action, and notably violence.[18]

What explains far-right violence?

Jacob Aasland Ravndal and Johannes Due Enstad

- Extreme-right violence occurs in all corners of the world, is committed by different types of perpetrators, and is directed towards different target groups
- Extreme-right violence is often the product of inherently violent ideology and aesthetics, not only idealizing and normalizing violent behavior, but also attracting apolitical people who are drawn towards violence.
- Nearly all perpetrators of extreme-right violence are men, which seems related to how extreme right ideology views violence as well as men's stronger biological inclination toward using violence compared to women.

Defining extreme-right violence

The term "violence" carries different meanings, but generally refers to an act of physical force that causes or is intended to cause harm, in this case against people. Violence may be distinguished from aggression, a more general type of hostile behaviour that may be physical, verbal, or passive in nature.[1] As such, extreme-right violence may be defined as any physical attack whose *target selection* is based on *extreme-right beliefs*.

Describing extreme-right violence

Extreme-right violence occurs in all corners of the world, is committed by different types of perpetrators, and is directed towards different target groups. Most extreme-right violence relates to fundamental conflicts between the extreme right and two of its main enemies: people on the left and people perceived as foreigners, thereby also making leftists and ethnic minorities two of the most common target groups. Other common target groups include sexual minorities, religious minorities (most notably Jews and Muslims) and state or government representatives. In the United States, extreme-right violence has historically been associated with the Ku Klux Klan and their systematic attacks against African Americans since former confederate officers formed this group in the 1860s.[2] In Latin America, extreme-right violence has been associated with state-sponsored death squads targeting political dissidents on behalf of right-wing military regimes during the 1970s and 1980s.[3] Other non-European countries with notable experiences of extreme-right violence include India,[4] Israel,[5] Japan,[6] and South Africa.[7] Russia is recorded to be the country in the world with the highest rate of fatal extreme-right attacks per million inhabitants during the 2000s. Most of these attacks targeted immigrants and were carried out by neo-Nazi gangs.[8] In Western Europe, left-wing activists constitute an important target group. Deadly extreme-right violence peaked in this region during the 1970s, as a result of continuous fighting between left- and right-wing militants.[9] A second peak was recorded in the early 1990s, when immigrants became the primary target group in many countries, particularly in Northern Europe.[10] Since then, levels of deadly extreme-right violence have decreased

across Western Europe, but continue to be considerably higher in some countries than in others.[11] Finally, unlike the group-based violence of the 1970s, lone actors carry out most of today's fatal attacks.[12]

Explaining extreme-right violence

Prominent variants of extreme-right ideology, most notably National Socialism and Fascism, are inherently violent, seeing violence as a natural feature of all living organisms, including human beings, and therefore as a valuable resource that can be used legitimately for the survival of the fittest. A key factor for explaining extreme-right violence is therefore this inherently violent nature of extreme-right ideology and aesthetics, not only idealizing and normalizing violent behavior, but also attracting people generally interested in or naturally drawn towards violence.

However, most people holding extreme-right views never use violence. Therefore, ideology is sometimes overlooked as an important explanatory factor. This misconception may result from too much emphasis on *explaining variation* between cases versus providing *exhaustive explanations* of each case. The fact that most extreme-right activists never engage in violence does not mean that ideology is irrelevant for those who do. On the contrary, the general appreciation of violence in extreme-right ideology is highly relevant for explaining many extreme-right attacks.[13]

To explain variation of extreme-right violence across time and space, it is helpful to distinguish between the individual level (why do some persons with extreme-right beliefs turn to violence while others do not?), the group level (why do certain groups turn to violence?), and the country level (why do some countries experience more extreme-right violence than others in certain periods?). On all levels, no single-factor explanation has been found, nor should we expect to find one. Rather, as with any complex social phenomenon, we should look for "causal cocktails" – particular combinations of factors.[14]

On the individual level, three types of explanations are routinely used to explain the violent behaviour of people with extreme-right beliefs: (1) their socio-economic background;[15] (2) their psychological profile;[16] and (3) their personality type.[17] To help explain why some extremists turn to violence, while other extremists remain non-violent, certain combinations of factors appear to be particularly relevant. For example, research has found that those using violence tend to suffer from psychological vulnerabilities making them more receptive to extremist narratives, such as emotional distress, experiences of humiliation, or feelings of helplessness, while at the same time seeking to balance this out by seeking significance and prestige through extremist behaviour.[18] In addition, some factors appear to be more predominant among extreme-right perpetrators than other extremist types, such as leftists or jihadis. These include low socio-economic status,[19] low educational achievements,[20] and difficult childhoods.[21]

On the group level, at least two types of explanations can be derived from the existing literature: (1) those looking at internal group dynamics and (2) those looking at external dynamics between extreme-right groups and other actors. Internal dynamics driving extremist groups towards violence include internal competition and conflict (outbidding), organizational splits and group isolation, and the adaptation of increasingly extreme and violent ideologies within small and increasingly isolated

groups.[22] Some of the most common external dynamics are police repression, external competition with other like-minded groups, and violent interaction with leftist enemies.[23]

On the country level, factors assumed to impact levels of extreme-right violence include grievances resulting from increased immigration, unemployment, and socio-economic hardship,[24] limited political opportunities for mobilization through the parliamentary system,[25] discursive opportunities for making extreme-right claims in the public space,[26] authoritarian (fascist) legacies,[27] and the extent of left-wing terrorism and militancy in a given country.[28] One study looking at how these factors might combine to explain cross-national variation in deadly far-right violence found two combinations of factors present in countries with high levels of extreme-right violence . The first, relating mainly to immigration in Northern Europe, is the combination of high immigration, low electoral support for anti-immigration parties, and extensive public repression of anti-immigration actors and opinions. The second, relating mainly to the conflict between fascists and communists in Southern Europe, is the combination of socioeconomic hardship, authoritarian (fascist) legacies, and extensive left-wing terrorism and militancy.[29]

Gender

A final observation is the fact that nearly all perpetrators of extreme-right violence are men. That said, men are heavily over-represented in all forms of violence-statistics, partly reflecting a stronger biological inclination towards violent behaviour among men than among women.[30] However, men are even more over-represented in statistics of extreme-right violence than other violence-statistics, including other forms of political violence, in particular left-wing violence. One reason may be how violence is portrayed as a natural and positive masculine feature in extreme-right ideology, thereby interacting with men's stronger inclination toward using violence to begin with.[31] In other words, as in most other fields, we should not look at either biological or socio-political factors, but at how these factors interact to produce recurrent outcomes.

What explains why people join and leave far-right groups?

Tore Bjørgo and Hanna Munden

- People join – and leave – extremist groups and activities due to a combination of push and pull factors, and relatively weak barrier factors.
- We distinguish between five ideal types of participants who join – and leave – extremist groups for very different reasons: Ideologists, followers, adventurers, the angry and frustrated, and traditionalists.
- Simplistic notions of radicalization and deradicalization fail to explain the complex processes of becoming involved in extremist activities and groups.

No single path

A common understanding of why individuals join extremist groups is that they first get radicalized by adopting extremist views, and subsequently join an extremist group and engage in violent activism. However, this model is far too simplistic.[1] Most of those who become radicalized never engage in extremist activities. Many engage in extremist groups for a variety of social or psychological needs and reasons, and may or may not adopt the extremist views of the group later on. Moreover, some of these are only radicalized superficially.[2] Thus, there is no single path into extremist groups, as those who join have varying motivations and causes for joining, and so do their ensuing trajectories.

An alternative to the radicalization paradigm is the push, pull, and barrier model,[3] which may be applied to all varieties of ideology and/or groups engaging in violence. When individuals join – or leave – an extremist group, it is usually due to a combination of push and pull factors, which vary between individuals, kinds of groups, and characteristics of the members (e.g., gender, age, mental health, level of ideological conviction, etc.). *Push* refers to negative social forces and circumstances that make it unattractive and unpleasant to remain in a particular social situation or environment, whereas *pull* refers to factors attracting the person to a more rewarding alternative. *Barriers* are the perceived negative consequences of joining or leaving an extremist group, serving as inhibitors to change. Importantly, what constitutes the specific push, pull, and barrier factors may vary considerably between individuals and kinds of groups.

Joining extreme right groups

There are five types of participants that can be found in various combinations across all ideological movements.[4] People who fall within these different categories will have differing trajectories and reasons for joining extremist groups.

- *Ideologists* are unsatisfied with the political situation and feel an urge to do something about a perceived threat, e.g., that Muslims are taking over Europe (*push*). They are primarily driven by political engagement, idealism, or even

altruism. More extreme ideological opinions are often developed over time, as a consequence of their engagement and group participation Embracing a militant ideology and movement provides an opportunity to act (*pull*). These are often socially resourceful and educated individuals. These "entrepreneurs" are not numerous but essential to establish and provide leadership to militant groups.[5] However, as for all group members, the prize of engagement in violent extremism may be social stigmatization, loss of job, or criminal prosecution (*barriers*).

- *Followers* are primarily driven by social needs. Some are victims of bullying, violence, or discrimination, or feel lonely and vulnerable (*push*). They seek friendship, protection, or belonging to a group (*pull*). Others become involved because they already belong to a group of friends that join the extremist scene together, or have family members who have joined. Although they may feel some initial reluctance towards violence and hatred presented by the group (*barriers*), they typically gradually adopt their views and behaviors in order to be accepted.
- *Adventurers* are attracted by the militant aspects of the group, such as weapons, uniforms, the adrenaline rush of fighting, and/or the controversial reputation of militias or skinhead gangs (*pull*). Mainstream life is experienced as too mundane (*push*). For most, ideology is not a driver, but rather a justification for violence and militancy.
- *The angry and frustrated* participants typically come from troubled family backgrounds characterized by parental neglect, abuse, or other traumatic experiences (*push*). They tend to have extensive experience with crime and violence.[6] The extremist group may offer them a form of redemption and purpose, and that they are valued for their criminal and violent skills (*pull*). The group may also function as a validator of their anger, further maintaining and/or strengthening these emotions. They are often uninterested in ideology or the cause, and have few barriers to join a violent extremist group.
- *Traditionalists* grew up in families where parents and siblings are deeply entrenched within extreme right views and subcultures. To them, extremist activism is a family tradition.[7] Unlike the other types, there may not be a particular transition into extremism; they were born and socialized into, and have multiple ties to, the group (*pull*).

These five types may be found in different proportions across different groups and movements. Ideologists are indispensable in all groups, but tend to be more numerous among intellectually oriented movements like Generation Identity. Skinhead gangs tended to attract many youths with a need for belonging, those attracted to fighting, and those with a problematic background (i.e., followers, adventurers, and the angry and frustrated).

Leaving extreme right groups

Participants in extremist groups are likely to sustain their engagement unless there is a favorable combination of push, pull, and barrier factors that enables their disengagement from the group. *Push* factors might be disillusionment about the ideology

or the (lost) cause, infighting, changes in group climate,[8] manipulative leaders, paranoia about suspected infiltrators, loss of trust and status within the group, prosecution by the police or militant anti-racists, expression of dismay from important family members or friends, or burnout.[9] Cognitive dissonance is another potential push factor; a conflict between the violent activities of the group and the individual's intuition about what's right and wrong.[10]

Pull factors include finding a romantic partner outside the group and prospects of forming a family, forming positive relationships with outsiders or even former enemies, rebuilding broken family relations, opportunities to get a job, and prospects of having a "normal" and peaceful life without all the stressors of participating in violent activism.[11]

Barrier factors to leaving an extremist group include fear of reprisals from the group that might consider defectors as traitors with a potential risk of betraying group secrets.[12] A sense of belonging to and identity with the group also motivates an individual to continue both their membership and radical behavior.[13] Leaving the group may mean breaking ties of loyalty and close friendships, but also to lose protection against external enemies and opponents. They may also risk criminal prosecution for their involvement in violent extremism. Many fear stigmatization and end up in a social vacuum[14]. The repercussions of group memberships vary; having been involved with neo-Nazism seems to be more stigmatizing than to have been a militant antiracist.

Each one of these three factors may alone obstruct disengagement: Both push and pull factors have to be sufficiently strong to motivate an activist to leave the group. However, if the barriers are too high, they may still feel trapped in the group, despite wanting to leave.

Leaving the group and reintegrating into mainstream society is usually a long and complex process, with many returning to the group more than once before finally breaking all ties.[15] Doubts and disillusionment about the ideology and group is often experienced long before an exit, particularly among women.[16] Some succeed in leaving both their extremist views and group behind, and establish a firm foothold in mainstream society with a family, job, and social network. They are deradicalized, disengaged, and reintegrated. Others are disengaged, but keep extremist views, or sustain some friendly relations with group members but no longer believe in the ideology. A partial exit process such as this may impede full reintegration. However, even those who make a clean break with their extremist past may experience a variety of difficulties in their attempts to reintegrate, such as marginalization, stigmatization, identity residuals, shame and/or regret, and mental health issues.[17]

What role does gender play in the far right?

Inger Skjelsbæk, Eviane Leidig, Iris Beau Segers, and Cathrine Thorleifsson

- Gender dimensions have a role in far right ideology in terms of embracing masculinity (for men) and femininity (for women).
- Although some far right actors and organizations promote the idea of gender equality and are LGBTQ-friendly, most emphasize biological differences between men and women and traditional gender norms that fulfill these biological attributes.
- While most members of far right organizations are male, women play critical roles as supporters, activists or even sometimes as leaders, as well as symbols in far right propaganda.

Integral to the far right

Gender refers to the roles, behaviors, activities, attributes, and opportunities that culture, ideology and society considers appropriate for girls and boys, women and men. Gender dimensions are integral to the far right in terms of ideologies, identities, values, norms, and behaviors. Both men and women are supporters and members of far right parties, organizations, and movements, and gender norms shape the roles they play in politics. Knowledge about the intersection of gender and far right politics come from studies such as women in the Ku Klux Klan in the US,[1] racism, sexism, and antisemitism as masculine reassertions in Western countries,[2] and gender and fascism in Europe.[3]

Gender and far right ideology

Scholars have noted that discourses and practices pertaining to gender are integral to far right nationalist ideology.[4] Notions of "masculinity" or "femininity" are deployed as symbolic capital, ideological resource, and as a rhetorical device to problematize the identities of those against whom they believe themselves fighting.[5] Marking differentiated others as ethnic, religious, or gendered threats to imagined sameness can legitimize and validate prejudice, and hence produce images of the "good and innocent nation", righteous and tolerant.[6] During the so-called refugee crisis of 2015, a range of far rights actors propagated images of "hypermasculine" dark-skinned migrants, violently imagined as "rapefugees" that threatened the purity of "our women", as well as of feminine nationhood. Such racialized and gendered imaginaries of the perceived menace of Middle Eastern enemies can be used to mark white masculinity and morals more desirable.[7]

Discourse of gender equality

Ideas about masculinity and femininity—to protect women (and children)—fuels particular forms of male empowerment, but also particular forms of gendered violence.

Anti-immigrant groups characterized by Islamophobia or at least opposition towards Islam, such as the English Defence League (EDL) and Stop Islamization of Norway, as well as parties like the Norwegian Progress Party and the now defunct Pim Fortuyn List in the Netherlands,[8] have mobilized on a rhetoric of progressive gender values.[9] Although organizations like the EDL rarely discuss gender equality in its own right, their anti-Islam agenda is strongly based on conceptions of Islam as inherently unequal and oppressive to women.[10] In order to situate themselves as different from the perceived imminent Islamic threat linked to immigration, the far right espouses Western liberal "values", including gender equality and (white) women's emancipation.[11] Some far right political parties, such as the French National Rally and For Britain, as well as figures such as Norwegian activist Hege Storhaug, prior Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn, and American alt-right celebrity Milo Yiannopoulos, also position themselves as LGBTQ-friendly or identifying. Mobilization along progressive gender policies, therefore, serves an anti-immigration and anti-Islam purpose,[12] and is often described as femonationalism or homonationalism. Despite these developments, traditional gender roles largely dominate dynamics among far right movements and actors.

Discourse of biological difference

Mobilizing against gender equality is more common. Gender equality and pro-gender norms, which include increased acceptance as well as legal rights for LGBTQ communities, are framed as part of a globalized and liberal multicultural agenda, often described as "gender ideology" by far right groups, movements and ideologues. Within the extreme right, it is viewed as a "race war", in which Western civilization is seen as under threat from declining birth rates. Traditional gender values and roles for men and women are foundational of this resistance, where the ideals of "Kinder, Küche, Kirche" (children, kitchen, church) finds support across various far right groups. By taking the stance that femininity is a result of biology, far right ideology holds that women should assume traditional gender roles such as childbearing, maternal caregiving duties, and domestic labor. Women are considered to be vulnerable and in need of a protective family unit headed by a man with "natural" leadership abilities. This also holds true for women-only far right organizations in countries such as India, where motherhood is viewed as fulfilling a sense of patriotic duty. At the same time, these women are engaged in paramilitary drills and combat training exercises in order to strengthen themselves to defend against Muslim men seeking so-called "love jihad" (i.e., the seduction of Hindu women in order to convert them to Islam).[13]

Recruitment and membership of far right organizations

Gender has proven to be a strong and constant predictor of far right support[14] in the sense that members and supporters (including voters) of far right organizations are overwhelmingly male. However, this gendered aspect of the far right remains largely remains unquestioned, and hence obscures the connection between masculinity and the far right.[15] In response to this gap, scholars have more recently emphasized the importance of masculinity as one of the key drivers of young men's involvement in far right organizations.[16] In particular, (young) men's attraction to far right environments

needs to be situated in a broader context of declining (white) male privilege.[17] These experiences of loss of privilege are distinctly gendered, in the sense that they may evoke a sense of emasculation and loss of manhood among young men.

The sociologist Michael Kimmel[18] argues that young men's attraction to violent far right extremism is at least in part driven by a need to reclaim manhood and restore a sense of masculine entitlement. 'Aggrieved entitlement'—a gendered sense of entitlement—makes men feel thwarted by political and economic change, making them feel frustrated and emasculated. Membership of a violent far right extremist group helps to restore their sense of manhood through comradery, male bonding, and violence. Research shows a clear connection between white masculinity and violence in the US context, where the combined effect of the rise of "identity politics" and the loss of while male privilege provides a cultural impetus for social (largely gun-based) violence, where the perpetrators are predominantly young white men.[19]

Regardless of the prevalence of men in far right movements, women still have critical roles as supporters, activists, and sometimes even leaders, as well as symbols and rhetorical figures in political propaganda, as was documented in earlier studies.[20] The far right assumes that femininity equates with women, and masculinity equates with men, and as such, reproduces these concepts in designating women and men different tasks within organizations. Although women are often portrayed as followers of male leaders, or as innocent homemakers, recent studies have documented women's roles as active proponents of ideology and practices in far right politics.[21] Such involvement has been observed in far right organizations across national contexts, including Europe,[22] the US,[23] and India.[24] Some far right political parties and groups have women serving in leadership positions, as is the case with National Rally under Marine Le Pen in France, Alternative for Germany under Alice Weidel, and Pauline Hanson of the Australian One Nation party.

This is not to exclude the fact that women in far right politics often advocate for traditional gender norms. These norms are viewed as under threat due to liberal feminism, multiculturalism, and immigration. Further, these threats are seen as deteriorating to society and thus the far right advocates for a nostalgic, mythic past in which women and men are destined to fulfil biological roles.

What is the relationship between the far right and the media?

Karoline Ihlebæk, Tine Figenschou, and Birgitte Haanshuus

- While established news media are often critical to far right actors, they have several times played a vital role in mainstreaming far right actors and their beliefs.
- Far right actors often criticize "mainstream" media and communicate through alternative news media, as well as blogs, websites, forums, and mainstream social media platforms.
- Far right actors were early adopters of digital communication technology and they are currently in the forefront of online "attention hacking" through offensive speech, hate campaigns, memes, and mis/disinformation.

The far right and established news media

As primary arenas for public debate, professional news organizations reflect and define boundaries of legitimate versus deviant views and actors.[1] An extensive literature addresses the relationship between the far right political populist actors and the established news media. A key question is to what degree far right actors should be given media attention and on the basis of which conditions, and the relationship between the two has been ambiguous. Previous studies have shown that the established media, in some cases, have given far right actors extensive visibility and played an important part in normalizing and mainstreaming far right beliefs, for instance in countries like Brazil, Hungary, India, Israel, and the US.[2] Media visibility can overstate the popular support of such actors, as well as grant them legitimacy and political momentum. To illustrate, the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) was given disproportionate exposure in the mainstream press throughout the 1980s, which gave them impact on the Austrian political arena.[3] At the same time, far right actors regularly argue that they are censored and misrepresented by what they believe to be a biased left-wing press.[4]

Beyond the political arena, there is a plethora of radical and extreme right actors for which access to the established editorial-driven media is limited. To gain media visibility, far right groups arrange demonstrations, as well as take part in staged confrontations and terror attacks, however, they have very little control over the media coverage.[5] For established news organizations, violence, extremism and terrorism are highly newsworthy topics; at the same time, journalists face a number of dilemmas when covering such issues, including the scale of coverage, the framing of events, and which sources to include.[6] To illustrate, journalists have to decide whether or not to use staged photos and messages published by perpetrators of violent attacks in their coverage.

At the same time as they seek media attention, far right actors' criticism of the "mainstream media" (or MSM for short), have been frequent and vocal. Among key criticisms are the claim that journalists are biased, corrupt, or deceitful elites distanced

from the people; that access to news media is limited and conditional, particularly as actors on the far right are misrepresented and scandalized; and consequently, that the established media promote some perspectives and withhold vital information to manipulate the public.[7] Far right actors criticize the media from many angles, representing multiple perspectives on media and power, reflecting different degrees of anti-system-ness.[8]

The far right and the Internet

Because of limited media access, the far right has been identified as early adopters of digital communication technology. Since the 1990s, several far right actors have been active and successful in utilizing online communication structures to produce and distribute their messages; for instance, one of the earliest and largest extreme right online forums, Stormfront, was established in 1995.[9] Engaging in collaborative and networked production and distribution practices, a variety of far right groups have strengthened their linkages, internally and transnationally, and gained visibility and impact in the online environment.[10] Key communication strategies include agenda-setting tactics to spread propaganda and disinformation online and "networked brigades" that target particular individuals or groups. Far right actors also engage in "mainstreaming" processes of extreme content through the use of coded language and humor.[11] A particular phenomenon is the production and spread of memes.[12] Memes refer to digital items that use humor, by conveying a picture or illustration with simple captions. The meaning can be multifaceted and more or less accessible for particular in- or out-groups. 'Pepe the Frog' is one example of how a meme can move from the sub-cultural sphere to the mainstream: It originated in a comic, but later became a symbol of the alt-right movement and interpreted as a hate symbol by many organizations. Online platforms have also been identified as arenas for violent radicalization.[13] For instance, extreme right terrorists have distributed manifestos and live streamed violent attacks in online spaces.

Far right groups disseminate their messages and mobilize followers through a number of online services, for instance on their own websites, blogs, or alternative news media sites, but also on mainstream social media sites, anonymous forums and instant messaging services.[14] *Ideologically driven websites* consist of a variety of textual, visual and participatory elements. Many sites mimic the lay-out of online newspapers and publish alternative news and voices on political affairs aiming to counter the hegemony of the mainstream media.[15] In many Western countries, such far right alternative news media specifically emphasize the negative impact of immigration, Islam and the left-wing establishment, including the news media.[16] Well-known examples are Breitbart in the US, Fria Tider in Sweden and Westmonster in the UK. A strategy often utilized by far right alternative media is to reframe and recontextualize news stories selected from other sources to fit their ideological agenda. In practice, recontextualization occurs by making a small, but significant symbolic editorial amendments, and consequently, seemingly "neutral" news items can be manipulated into partisan information, disinformation and propaganda.[17]

Social media platforms are used actively by far right actors to spread their message.[18] Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have been utilized to increase visibility

through strategic framing of content, offensive speech, and organized campaigns that enhance engagement. Several studies have also identified how YouTube has functioned as an effective platform to display everyday activities of far right groups, as well as more confrontational content.[19] A public debate about whether or not social media actors should reject extreme actors on their platforms led to the no-platforming by Apple, Facebook, and YoutTube of the far right conspiratorial website, Infowars, run by Alex Jones. Extreme right groups are also known to be active users of the Russian social media platform, VK, which has less rules for the kind of content they allow.

User-generated discussion forums like 4chan, 8kun, Voat, and Gab have become important hubs for extreme actors. Such forums allow anonymous participation and have little or no rules for what can be expressed. 8kun gained massive negative attention after right-wing extremists used the forum to discuss and get support for their attacks. *Instant messaging services* like Telegram have also become popular among the extreme right. The main advantage of Telegram as a communication channel is that messages are encrypted, making it more difficult for the police/national authorities to monitor members of such groups.

What can democracies do to prevent extremist violence?

Håvard Haugstvedt and Tore Bjørgo

- Universal (primary) prevention efforts that aim at building general democratic attitudes and pro-social values should target broad categories, such as all school children.
- Selective (secondary) prevention measures should specifically focus on individuals (or small groups) at risk of getting involved in extremist activities.
- Indicated (tertiary) prevention measures target those that are already involved in extremist activities, aiming at reducing their harmful behavior, or at facilitating their disengagement from such activities and their reintegration into mainstream society.

Prevention work is a continuum

In the aftermath of acts of violent extremism and terrorism, societies want to know how future events can be prevented. Trying to prevent something from happening demands extensive and deep knowledge into complex factors and mechanisms that influence and lead individuals and groups into carrying out acts of violence. Unfortunately, these mechanisms and factors, as well as the interplay between them, has not yet been fully uncovered and understood. Prevention work is a continuum, directed at several different target groups, which we describe as *universal*, *selective*, and *indicated prevention strategies*.[1]

Universal (primary) prevention strategies

Universal (primary) prevention strategies target everyone within a broad category, e.g., all schoolchildren. Two of the broad and well-established strategies that especially the Nordic countries apply in this effort is through education and public health approaches. The school system is the main institution tasked with promoting democratic values and equality, helping to foster resilient democratic citizens, with the capacity to tolerate and include those with diverging worldviews.[2] Schools are therefore given a key position within universal prevention work. Among the objectives are to develop pupils that have critical thinking skills[3] and are resilient against totalitarian ideologies, conspiracy theories, and extremist mindsets.[4] This may build pro-social, democratic values, and moral barriers against violence, extremism, racism, and group-based hatred.[5] One example of this is the Tolerance Project, developed and utilized in Swedish municipalities during the last two decades.[6] In addition to school efforts, the public health approach aims generally at ensuring that children and youth are raised to become healthy and productive citizens.[7] Universal prevention perspectives also include societal measures to alleviate conditions that may give rise to grievances and radicalization, such as discrimination of minorities, group conflicts, or corruption – so-called root causes of terrorism.[8]

Selective (secondary) prevention strategies

Selective (secondary) prevention strategies target those deemed at risk of negative development or, where possible, early signs have been identified, such as a developing extremist ideology or criminal mindset and behavior.[9] Interventions are usually directed towards individuals, but (small) groups at risk could also be targeted. The goal is to interrupt and redirect negative developments before the individuals in question cross the line into serious crime or become caught up in extremist groups, with all the negative consequences this may entail. Such proactive preventive interventions will often include combinations of "soft" helping measures in combination with a portion of warnings and control, but avoiding or minimizing the use of more severe criminal justice sanctions at this stage. It should be kept in mind that very few of those with extreme ideology actually become involved in violent activism or terrorism.[10]

At this level, interventions might include support services to help deal with issues of housing, education, employment, and economic support, aiming at reducing vulnerability. Social workers, counsellors, and psychologists play main roles here.[11] Training courses for such prevention workers, aimed at making them more prepared to handle this task, have been established in many European countries.[12] It has been found that strong adult bonds, with marriage as the classic example, have the potential to restrain extremists from using political violence.[13] Therefore, and as an indirect strategy, efforts to bolster partners or other family members may be a path to follow in selective prevention work. From the police's perspective, interventions can focus on informing about possible consequences if someone continues to take part in violent organizations.[14] In combination, these efforts to both support and provide an element of control is one way that democracies can utilize agencies in selective prevention efforts.

Indicated (tertiary) prevention strategies

Indicated (tertiary) prevention strategies are aimed at those already involved in extremist groups or formerly involved in extremist violence. At this stage, prevention may take the form of disrupting violent plots before they cause harm, and incapacitate through detention or other repressive means.[15] Police, security services, and the criminal justice system – and the prison and probation services in particular - are the main actors here. However, indicated prevention strategies do also involve efforts to facilitate deradicalization, disengagement from extremist groups and activities, and rehabilitation and reintegration into mainstream society.[16]

The rehabilitating efforts aim at facilitating either—or in combination—disengagement or de-radicalization. The clearest example of disengagement efforts are so-called EXIT programs, first developed in Norway during the late 1990s, and later adapted and developed further in Sweden, Germany, and a number of other countries.[17] To create dialogue with and influence individuals with extremist ideology, the use of mentors and peers with a similar background can be one strategy to follow as well at this level.[18] There is also evidence that the cognitive processes of de-radicalization may take a long time, even after individuals' exit from violent groups.[19] This knowledge should encourage prevention workers to develop resilience to little or slow progress.

At the far end of the prevention spectrum is criminal prosecution of either individuals or groups, based on their ideology or actions. For example, Finland banned

the Finnish chapter of the Nordic Resistance Movement,[20] and Germany had a constitutionally condoned banning of parties and groups to preserve free democratic order.[21] While this may raise the concern for un-democratic government strategies and overreach, it may be overcome by grounding the work in criminal code, with demand of evidence, or considerations of imminent danger of direct harm in order to take action.[22] However, banning a group does not necessarily mean dismantling or removing it. Findings from a UK case study shows that some members of National Action (NA), a violent national-socialist group, was deterred from participating, while others continued to operate clandestinely until the police disrupted their activities.[23] This highlights the dilemma authorities are facing when considering such actions; individuals and groups may go underground to avoid the public's and authorities' spotlight.

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What is right-wing extremism?

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C-REX Compendium: Knowing what's (far) right

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