



CHARLES UNIVERSITY

Far-Right Radicalisation in Britain

**Applying A Socio-Historical Theoretical Framework to
Explain Contemporary British Far-Right Movements.**

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This research analysis is an investigative effort at applying a methodological theory of Islamic extremism to Britain's far-right. Using four assigned categories—the defined 'puzzle pieces' of Hafez and Mullins theory—the research presented will draw heavily from recent history and contemporary societal examples to demonstrate how far-right radicalisation takes place. By looking at grievances, ideology, networks and enabling environment the aim of such an exercise is to demonstrate the intricate processes involved in radicalising someone to support far-right parties and ideologies. One of the most important themes of this analysis is the increasing politicisation of 'culture' by both the government and the far-right. Consequently, there will be discussion on Britain's Prevent programme and the far-right's adaptability in using culture to promote a 'new racism' that presents itself as different from traditional, fascist styles of Othering.

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Introduction

As incidents of homegrown terrorism dominate headlines and redirect national security strategy it raises a multitude of questions on what factors of Western society encourage people to radicalise.¹ It is as much frustration and disbelief as it is a security matter that motivates the enduring questions of why and how people become extremists. The 2005 7/7 attacks, in which four British citizens—three of whom were born and raised in the UK—killed over fifty people by detonating explosives in highly congested public transport areas in London², has been referred to as one of the landmark incidents of homegrown terrorism in Britain that alerted Britain's security institutions to the problem of home radicalisation.³ This terrorist incident was the result of radical Islamism; a subject that has unreservedly received an extensive amount of research attention since events like 9/11 and the 7/7 attacks. However, the nature of this research inquiry is to investigate another form of extremism; that of Britain's far-right. The far-right can be defined as "politically active groups or individuals which fall at the end of the...right political spectrum. Their ideologies often include nationalist, xenophobic, and/or extremely reactionary elements."⁴ The specific nuances of what makes up the far-right will be addressed in later stages of this thesis. The primary task of this analysis is to apply an existing methodological framework that was created to explain the radicalisation process of extreme Islam to Britain's far-right instead; the specifics of which will be outlined momentarily. Ultimately, the aim of this research inquiry is twofold:

1. To provide much-needed analysis that help answer the 'why' and 'how' people are encouraged to support far-right ideologies.
2. To highlight the importance of prioritising far-right radicalisation as a security matter that needs nuanced, effective, and responsive counter-extremism measures.

These are the two guiding questions that have shaped this analysis. The primary approach of answering these questions will be an investigative approach to examine if a theoretical framework designed for Islamist extremism can be applied to similar social, historical, and political patterns influencing far-right recruitment in Britain.

The British government's 2015 definition of extremism is "...the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs...[i]t's important to remember that not all extremist groups, whether Islamist, far-right or other, will commit terrorist or violent acts. However, some groups pose particular threats, both online and offline."⁵ White supremacist terrorist attacks have ensured that far right radicalisation has made headlines, but there is a need to now go beyond just acknowledging its existence and to actually assess the

¹ This publication will use the British spelling of 'radicalisation' except when referencing a source that spells with the US 'radicalization'.

² BBC, "7 July bombings: what happened that day?" 03/07/15, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-33253598>

³ Aidan Kirby, "The London Bombers as 'Self-Starters': A Case Study in Indigenous Radicalization and the Emergence of Autonomous Cliques," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 30:5, 2007, 415.

⁴ Jacob Davey and Julia Ebner, "The Fringe Insurgency" London: *Institute for Strategic Dialogue*, 2017, 4.

⁵ HM Home Office, *Counter-Extremism Strategy*, London: Williams Lea Group, 2015, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-extremism-strategy>, 9.

factors and processes that cause individuals to radicalise to support the extremist beliefs behind it. The need for a better understanding has never been more urgent. A distinct era has formed around the recent EU referendum—a palatable atmosphere of uncertainty over the future and hostile attention on immigration is evident.⁶ The murder of Jo Cox on June 16th, 2016 by an individual that had read far-right material online was a tragic event that encapsulated the capabilities of the extreme-right throughout Brexit.⁷ The June 2017 Finsbury park attack, while not directly related to Brexit, is a result of increasingly vocal Islamophobia and xenophobia plaguing the country.⁸ In addition to violent extremist attacks such as these, there have been reports of alarming increases in hate crime and online racism since the referendum.⁹ Western democratic centrist politics have seen some of their biggest challenges recently with the success of Brexit and the election of Donald Trump. Both events are indicative of a polarization of the ‘Left’ and the ‘Right’ in which the latter has galvanized support based off zealous nationalism and xenophobia.¹⁰ It would be of course be inaccurate to claim that today’s far right movements and their underlying ideologies are solely a product of Brexit or that it represents a particularly new phenomenon in Britain. The significance is that the far-right proves a challenge for security studies and institutions that have, since 9/11, been consumed with prioritising the study of *Islamist* extremism. This paper’s application of a methodology originally created to understand the Islamist extremism radicalisation process is itself an attempt to push the boundaries of radicalisation studies. Evidence that will be presented throughout this thesis will gradually demonstrate how applicable this theory is to far-right extremist patterns in Britain.

Methodology

“The answer to the question ‘How do we prevent terrorism?’ may be as complex as trying to answer ‘What causes it?’.”¹¹ Indeed, this quote frames an essential question for creating effective counter-terrorism strategy. The reasons why people adopt extreme worldviews has encouraged various methodological approaches assessing radicalisation. For example, after 9/11 there were significant efforts to create personality profiles of terrorists. These have been largely discredited in recent years, only adding to government frustrations at

⁶ Melanie Smith and Chloe Colliver, “The Impact of Brexit on Far-Right Groups in the UK: Research Briefing,” London: *Institute for Strategic Dialogue*, July 2016.

⁷ BBC, “Labour mp Jo Cox ‘murdered for political cause’,” 14/11/16, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-37978582> ; Robert Mackey, “Clear Evidence Killing of British MP Jo Cox Was Politically Motivated,” *The Intercept*, 18/06/16, <https://theintercept.com/2016/06/17/far-right-britain-first-party-tries-avoid-blame-lawmakers-assassination/>

⁸ BBC, “Finsbury Park attacker Darren Osborne jailed for minimum of 43 years,” 02/02/18, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-42920929> ; BBC, “Finsbury park: Man ‘wanted to kill Muslims in van attack,’” 22/01/18, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-42778184>

⁹ Aoife O’Neil, “Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2016/17,” Home Office: Statistical Bulletin 17/17, 17/10/17, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/652136/hate-crime-1617-hosb1717.pdf ; Smith and Colliver.

¹⁰ Tony Blair, “We require a new politics which builds bridges,” *Tony Blair Institute for Global Change*, 10/01/18, <https://institute.global/insight/renewing-centre/tony-blair-we-require-new-politics-which-builds-bridges>

¹¹ Johan Horgan, “From profiles to pathways and roots to routes: Perspectives from psychology on radicalization into terrorism,” *The Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 618:1, 2008, 82.

being unable to identify consistent character or background traits of extremists.¹² Since then there have radicalisation research has made the effort to study the issue beyond only the individual level;¹³ encouraging a distinct change in study approach from the idea that extremism is a ‘condition,’ to instead a ‘process.’¹⁴ The change was significant in recognising external factors that shape extremism, as opposed to an internal mindset that an individual may have innately. In fact, there are not only debates over specific types of profiling but also on whether or not it is even accurate to assume terrorists can be profiled at all. Significantly, one of the biggest pitfalls of profiling is the overgeneralization created and the dangers associated with following a profile too rigidly.¹⁵ That said, there are a number of methods that have been created to try and aid in creating theories that explain extremism, most of which can be divided into either a psychological approach or one that focuses on socio-economic factors. Some self-described psychological approaches are as follows.

John Horgan focuses on “risk factors” that contribute, in varying capacities, to the radicalisation of a person. These are: emotional vulnerability,¹⁶ dissatisfaction with the status quo, feelings of victimization, an acceptance of violent opposition, believing the reward will outweigh the costs, pre-existing kinship and social ties. Horgan labels these as risk factors that encourage the “‘openness to socialization’ into terrorism” and that can occur in any order over any time period.¹⁷ Similarly, Randy Borum notes consistency with the themes being studied since the 1960s—“individual, group, network, organization, mass movement, socio-cultural context, and international/interstate contexts.”¹⁸ There is also Fathali Moghadam’s ‘staircase’ framework for assessing radicalisation processes. In this model the emphasis is what factors appear at different stages that may or may not encourage an individual to become increasingly radicalised—or to ‘climb,’ so to speak, through the five stages of the staircase.¹⁹ Each stage sees an individual take on and exhibit increasingly extreme behaviour through the following factors: “psychological interpretations of material conditions,” “perceived option to fight unfair treatment,” “displacement of aggression,” “moral engagement,” “solidification of categorical thinking and the perceived legitimacy of the terrorist organization,” “the terrorist act and sidestepping inhibitory mechanisms.”²⁰ There is are noticeable similar themes throughout these methodologies of categorising social, emotional, and political factors that are commonly believed to be important influencers

Some pathways that draw from socio-economic and political analysis are as follows. Max Taylor and John Horgan draw from “...psychological factors within their political context,”²¹

¹² Ibid, 83.

¹³ Randy Borum, “Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories,” *Journal of Strategic Study*, 4:4, 2008, 14.

¹⁴ Borum, 14-15.

¹⁵ Horgan, 84.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Horgan, 85.

¹⁸ Borum, 14.

¹⁹ Fathali M. Moghaddam, “The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Explanation,” *American Psychologist*, 60:2, 2005.

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Max Taylor and John Horgan, “A Conceptual Framework for Addressing Psychological Process in the Development of the Terrorist,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 18:4, 2006, 587.

and analyse how people enter terrorism using models such as the 'Community of Practice,'²² which seeks to explain how an individual's social setting may encourage them to radicalise. They also use a typology that ultimately underscores the complex relationship between factors of setting, personal circumstance, and social and political particulars.²³ However, their assessment is unnecessarily convoluted and fails to provide a cohesive framework. Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalkenko choose to focus on political radicalisation and the role of self-identity, beliefs and feelings towards intergroup conflict in a process they identify as a 'pyramid'. One of the aims of this methodology approach is to provide alternative frameworks from psychology to explain why people become radicals. Describing political radicalisation as "...increased preparation for and commitment to intergroup conflict,"²⁴ their framework places political beliefs at the centre of the analysis—at the base are people able to sympathise with terrorists' goals, while at the top of the pyramid is the actual terrorists themselves. Their research also articulates the importance of group influence on radicalising individuals to uphold extreme ideologies.²⁵ One final example of a methodological framework is Zeyno Baran's 'conveyor belt' for explaining the radicalisation of terrorists. This framework focuses on how both formal and informal terrorist networks can radicalise people into supporting extremist ideologies. Some of these more loosely structured networks are the starting point in a 'conveyor belt;' after people are exposed to a radical ideology in more informal settings, they may progress on to become fully fledged terrorists through a process of increasing exposure to radical ideas.²⁶

Each of these approaches represent efforts by academia to move away from the immediate post 9/11 attempts at personality profiling. This is an important development in industry research in recent years. Additionally, and as Peter Neumann has noted also, the bulk of extremist frameworks today make sure to describe radicalisation as a process that occurs across several indicators over time; the making of a terrorist is not immediate and due to one sole reason.²⁷ This assumption is visible from the listed methodologies—almost all emphasize time and the interaction of factors in radicalising people. While personality profiling has largely been deemed as an inaccurate measuring tool, the other methodologies presented are not necessarily undisputed. The different weight placed on push and pull factors in social and economic factors, for instance, varies depending on the researcher.²⁸ Some experts have approached the topic speculating the importance of socioeconomic factors such as poverty in being a reasonable 'risk factor' in the creation of an extremist.²⁹ Others maintain the importance of such factors and have conducted research investigations specifically using

²² Ibid, 590.

²³ Ibid, 591.

²⁴ Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalkenko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20:3, 2008, 416.

²⁵ Ibid, 417.

²⁶ Zeyno Baran, "Fighting the War of Ideas," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 84:6, 2005, 68.

²⁷ Peter Neumann, "The trouble with radicalization," *International Affairs*, 89:4, 2013, 874.

²⁸ Ibid, 87.

²⁹ James A Piazza, "Poverty, minority economic discrimination, and domestic terrorism," *Journal of Peace Research*, 48:3, 2011.

socioeconomic patterns as a guiding tool for understanding radicalisation processes.³⁰ One expert has commented that gender needs to contribute more to the study of extremism— both Islamic and right-wing—due to issues such as “aggrieved entitlement” and men struggling with their masculinity.³¹ Given the Toronto van attack this year, which was done in the name of a male supremacist ideology known as the ‘incel movement,’ this line of research is growing more and more necessary.³² All these examples serve to illustrate the large range in methodologies and sociological approaches to this subject.

The Puzzle

This analysis will use a recent methodological framework to assess the radicalisation development of a white supremacist. Mohammed Hafez and Creighton Mullins published ‘The Radicalization Puzzle: A Theoretical Synthesis of Empirical Approaches to Homegrown Extremism’ with the Department of National Security Affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. The 2015 paper is one of the most recent contributions to the growing body of work on radicalisation socioeconomic processes and patterns. Hafez and Mullins are unique in their insistence that the process description is not apt as it implies too much of an orderly, linear experience for the individual that undergoes radicalisation.³³ Specifically created to explain why European Muslims radicalise, the theory looks at grievances, networks, ideologies, enabling environments and support structures as four separate ‘puzzle pieces’ that interact and influence a person. Grievances may be personal loss, feelings of economic or cultural marginalization, and overall sentiments of being victimized; these are triggers that may lead an individual to “...seek a new path in life.” Networks are the assessment of friend and family connections that can indicate how extreme views are spread and reinforced. Ideologies, meanwhile, often involve understanding the narratives and political views that are shaped from the grievances that individuals have, and understanding how an ideology encourages a specific worldview that engages in extensive ‘othering.’ Lastly, enabling environments and support structures includes a range of both physical environments—such as prisons, training camps, community centres—and online forums. These are realms where individuals can gain access to extremist material or “deepen their commitment to radical milieus.”³⁴

Like Taylor and Horgan’s, it focuses on the importance of an individual’s environment and external social and political factors. They outline in their methodology overview how networks of pre-existing connections and enabling environments such as training camps contributed to the radicalization of Provisional IRA members.³⁵ Hafez and Mullins model has been selected as the primarily tool of analysis for this research because of its breadth in

³⁰ Kamaldeep Bhui, Nasir Warfa, Edgar Jones, “Is Violent Radicalisation Associated with Poverty, Migration, Poor Self-Reported Health and Common Mental Disorders,” *PLoS ONE* 9(3): e90718. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0090718.

³¹ Michael Kimmel, “Almost all violent extremists share one thing: their gender,” *The Guardian*, 08/04/18, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/08/violent-extremists-share-one-thing-gender-michael-kimmel>

³² Amarnath Amarasingam, Jacob Davey, “Fringe internet culture can’t stay in the fringes,” *CBC News*, 27/04/18, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/opinion/fringe-internet-culture-1.4636614>

³³ Mohammed Hafez and Creighton Mullins, “The radicalization puzzle: a theoretical synthesis of empirical approaches to homegrown extremism,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 38:11, 2015, 959.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 961.

³⁵ Taylor and Horgan, 594.

assessment factors and emphasis on the interdependence of each puzzle piece. While the breadth of disciplines involved can result in an overwhelming range of interpretation, drawing from such a range can also produce the most nuanced understanding of the topic.³⁶ The Radicalization Puzzle takes into account social, economic, psychological, political and digital factors that can contribute to the radicalisation of an individual: such a range is incredibly relevant in explaining radicalisation beyond just Islamist extremism, as this paper seeks to demonstrate. Consequently, the structure of this thesis will be each chapter delving into a puzzle piece. Brief introductory remarks will be made at the beginning of each chapter on how Hafez and Mullins applied that particular puzzle piece to radical Islam in Europe. Each chapter will then focus on the recent historical developments related to that category before delving into recent social and political evidence.

Significantly, a challenge that is posed with these methodologies is that they almost always choose to apply their framework to radical Islamism. For example, Taylor and Horgan note how their theory can make sense of why individuals choose to become jihadi suicide bombers.³⁷ Moghaddam's staircase has factors that focus on grievances developed from state involvement abroad and perceived credibility of terrorist organisations³⁸; two factors that do not have the same significance for far-right radicalisation, as later discussions will demonstrate. Baran's methodology also chose to focus on Islam; his approach to assessing ideology as a radicalising factor is done primarily by exploring how Islamism has developed in contrast to Western European society.³⁹ The six methodologies outlined previously each reflected on the relevance of radical Islam to some degree in their framework. Therefore, while improvements have clearly been made on diversifying the research from personality profiling, there is a substantial industry bias with focusing on Islam as opposed to other forms of extremism, such as the far-right.

While the white supremacist terrorist attacks against Jo Cox and Finsbury Park are events alarming enough, there is distinct political polarisation on the rise and, with it, a pattern of increasing populism. Increasingly, political parties can be labelled as ascribing to populist ideals and has adopted the unique ability to "...[monopolise] the political arena with a nationalism that caters to nativist and protectionist impulses, and with a conservatism that rejects multiple decades of social progress for minorities and frames empowerment as a matter of personal responsibility."⁴⁰ The recent Cambridge Analytica scandal provides further context on the importance of this political polarization—it is significant not only because of the revelations in privacy infringements of Facebook users but also because it highlights how important manipulating public mood and opinion has become for the right.⁴¹ While details of the scope of the breach and responsible party are still being investigated, the process of

³⁶ Borum, 8.

³⁷ Taylor and Horgan, 594.

³⁸ Moghaddam, Fathali M. "The Staircase to Terrorism: A Psychological Explanation," *American Psychologist*, 60:2, 2005.

³⁹ Baran, 68.

⁴⁰ Martin Eiermann, "Confronting Populist Anxieties: How the Centre-Left Can Quell the Far-Right Surge," *Institute for Global Change*, <https://institute.global/insight/renewing-centre/populist-anxieties>, 07/03/18.

⁴¹ BBC, "Facebook's Zuckerberg speaks out over Cambridge Analytica 'breach,'" 22/03/18, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-43494337>

mobilizing support based off a disgruntled public mood is a symptom of populist, fascist tendencies.⁴² These are significant elements of the ideological puzzle piece in the radicalisation process of the far-right, and will be addressed in greater detail in the corresponding chapter. Raising this issue serves to demonstrate how some of the ideological elements of the far-right—that of fascism and populism—have seeped into everyday politics and ensured that the discussion is not solely focused on just terrorist attacks.

Consider the country's Prevent programme, the counter-extremism wing of the government's national counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST. Created in 2003 the program aims to tackle the root causes of radicalisation amongst British citizens.⁴³ The program has shown signs of trying to adapt to the evolving nature of counter extremism, such as the decision to educate staff at schools and health sectors on how to spot an individual that is potentially undergoing the radicalisation process.⁴⁴ It has made headlines for several failures however; not only has some of the money it provided for community projects ended up in extremist groups but it has been slated for its counter-productive activities that overwhelmingly target Britain's Muslim population. Earning it the nickname 'MI5 Islam,' some of its efforts have only encouraged Muslim distrust in government institutions.⁴⁵ Islamist extremist attacks in the West like 9/11 and 7/7 have undoubtedly increased national and public awareness of radicalisation and have clearly shaped the national counter-extremism strategy. However, some of the Prevent program's original focuses—such as citing al-Qaeda networks in Britain as the biggest threat of radicalising citizens—do not necessarily reflect the most pressing issues with present day extremism.⁴⁶ Recently has there been a notable rise in far-right referrals to Prevent—an increase of 25% from the 2015/2016 - 2016/2017 year.⁴⁷ A similar pattern has occurred this year, with a reported 28% increase from 2017-2018.⁴⁸

One theme this analysis will shed light on in regards to Britain's far-right is the tension around contemporary British identity: there is an anxiety amongst voters about not just economic and political concerns but cultural issues also. "Voters who support populists," says

⁴² Ishaan Tharoor, "The scary truth that Cambridge Analytica understands," *The Washington Post*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/03/22/the-scary-truth-that-cambridge-analytica-understands/?utm_term=.c123c3952267

⁴³ BBC, "Reality check: what is the Prevent strategy?" 04/06/17, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-2017-40151991>

⁴⁴ Reuters, "Far-right referrals to UK's counter-terrorism scheme soar," 27/03/18, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-security-prevent/far-right-referrals-to-uks-counter-terrorism-scheme-soar-idUSKBN1H31HF>

⁴⁵ Rachel Shabi, "UK counterterrorism strategy does not just 'prevent,'" *Al Jazeera*, 23/02/16, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/02/uk-counterterrorism-strategy-prevent-160221133827418.html> ; The Economist, "Driving away the shadows," 20/08/16, <https://www.economist.com/britain/2016/08/20/driving-away-the-shadows>

⁴⁶ HM Government, *Prevent Strategy*, London: The Stationary Office, 2011, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf ;

⁴⁷ HM Home Office, "New figures show improved referrals to Prevent and a rise in far-right concerns," 27/03/18, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-figures-show-improved-referrals-to-prevent-and-a-rise-in-far-right-concerns>

⁴⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-security-prevent/far-right-referrals-to-uks-counter-terrorism-scheme-soar-idUSKBN1H31HF>

Martin Eiermann of the Institute for Global Change, “tend to feel more uprooted, more isolated, more politically marginalised and less optimistic about the future...” The twin issues of identity and culture are challenging for politics to reckon with when address far-right concerns. While economic marginalization can easily be addressed with changes in economic policy, a population feeling anxious about its identity and culture being threatened is far more nuanced.⁴⁹ The discussion of British ‘values’, British culture, and ‘Britishness’ itself have morphed into a politically charged catch-all term of Fundamental British Values (FBVs).⁵⁰ In November 2014, under Michael Gove, the Department for Education released a ‘how-to guide’ for the promotion of FBVs for teachers and staff and then in February 2015 the country’s new Counter Terrorism and Security Act made it a legal requirement of teachers to report extremist behaviour in their students as part of integrating FBVs in their teaching methods.⁵¹

There is a distinct “cultural supremacist binary” that has developed with the prioritization of FBVs within which British Muslims are presented as “pre-disposed” to extremism and that the ‘fundamental values’ of the white British native are the key solution to preventing this extremism.⁵² The very use of the term FBVs enforces Britishness as racist nativism, in which “[r]acism and nativism converge...when we consider both as mechanisms operating to justify the perceived superiority of whites as natives, thereby reproducing and reinforcing the existing hegemony.”⁵³ The fact that culture has been securitized by the British government is not insignificant—this paper will demonstrate how the theme of cultural supremacy has been utilized by the far-right to promote its agenda in a more sanitized and politically correct manner. Culture has become one of the few critical tools of the far-right in recent years—a full and in-depth analysis of the issue is unfortunately outside the scope of this thesis. However, this paper foresees that culture will become an increasingly contested topic in the security realm and will need to be carefully assessed in the near future.

Layout of paper

In tangent with the layout of Hafez and Mullin’s puzzle piece theory, this paper will assess each puzzle piece in chapters. Prior to addressing these pieces in the radicalisation development, a comprehensive literature review will be conducted in the first chapter. It has two key aims. Firstly, to define ‘radical’ and ‘extreme’ and provide a brief overview of how these terms have evolved in use throughout recent history. Secondly, the meaning of far-right and extreme-right will be assessed. This chapter serves to provide a definitional groundwork for this analysis while also highlighting how complex and relative the concept is. Chapter Two covers the theme of grievances. For this puzzle piece, Hafez and Mullins assess the particulars of Muslim disenchantment,⁵⁴ sentiments of alienation and discrimination, as well as identity

⁴⁹ Reuters, <https://institute.global/index.php/insight/renewing-centre/populist-anxieties>

⁵⁰ Claire E. Crawford, “Promoting ‘fundamental British values’ in schools: a critical race perspective,” *Curriculum Perspectives*, 37, 2017, 198; Heather Jane Smith, “Britishness as racist nativism: a case of the unnamed ‘other,’” *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 42:3, 2016.

⁵¹ Smith, 306.

⁵² Crawford, 199.

⁵³ Smith, 300.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

clashes⁵⁵ and ‘moral outrage’.⁵⁶ Many of these topics can be used as a lens through which to understand the far-right. There is vast evidence of a similar experience of disenchantment with the perceived status quo as well as feelings of being marginalized in an increasingly multicultural country. This chapter will show how these issues have contributed to an identity crisis that has made white supremacist ideology more appealing

The third chapter will address networks of the far-right. Similar to Hafez and Mullins’ research on the relationship between networks and radical Islam, white supremacist radicalisation demonstrates a history of a “...convergence of marginality, criminality, and connectedness...”⁵⁷ and general success in the dissemination of ideology through pre-existing networks.⁵⁸ Football hooliganism is a frequently referenced example in Britain’s far-right community; other examples include veteran associations and communities with distinct socioeconomic and demographic trends. Ideology is the puzzle piece of focus in the next chapter—this theme is centred around the narratives and the process of ‘Othering’ to cement a sense of identity. Much of this chapter will focus on how the contemporary has sanitized its traditionally fascist rhetoric to appeal more to arguments on culture than those of the most explicitly racist ‘race’ or ‘ethnicity’. The last puzzle piece of enabling environment and support structures will reflect Hafez and Mullin’s analysis of arenas like social media and prisons for recruitment and radicalisation, but will focus on how online hate forums have been used as a tool to mobilize disenchanted British people, as well as some similar environments like prisons and community centres.

As Hafez and Mullins note, there are significant interdependencies between some of these puzzle pieces; their factors are not exclusive to that particular realm. For instance, the supposed Islamification of Britain and feelings of being marginalized as a grievance has directly contributed to the developed of white supremacist ideology. Additionally, social media and online forums have played a critical role in recent years in successfully ‘sanitizing’ hate speech and racism, thereby greatly aiding contemporary British far-right ideologies to disseminate a narrative of cultural supremacy. While networks and enabling environments are presented as two distinct categories, the importance of socioeconomic backgrounds—and the particular communities that may have a higher neo-Nazi presence—is a feature of both kin and friend groups as well as specific support structures. These are three of many relationships between radicalisation factors that will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters. The purpose of highlighting these overlaps and interdependencies is to demonstrate how complex and non-linear the process of radicalisation is.

Limitations & Contribution to Field

There is a significant body of literature on many of the relevant themes for this topic: nativism, fascism, racism and xenophobia are some key examples. The literature review section will demonstrate how much of this scholarship has important roots from the post WWII era, when there was a clear effort to understand how fascism had evolved throughout the late 20th

⁵⁵ Ibid, 962.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 964.

⁵⁷ Hafez and Mullins, 966.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 964.

C. Whereas more recently, research has begun addressing white supremacist movements and how they have responded to contemporary situations, such as the Syrian refugee crisis and how that has played out in Europe, in particular. Consequently, there are two distinct types of research groups that pertain to today's extreme right: that of its relation to traditional fascist ideologies and also that of modern day xenophobia and racism. What is missing, however, is a thorough analysis of the development of these extreme views that people adopt. Where research has been conducted on radicalisation processes broadly, it is inconsistent and largely focused on Islamic extremism. Later stages of this paper will address how these biases have influenced Britain's national security also—the Prevent programme and its decision to prioritise cultural learning and the promotion of British values and 'Britishness' is one such example.

Prior to engaging with this analysis, it is critical to consider the potential limitations and biases of this author and this line of research. While the research for this dissertation has been carried out with the aim of providing the highest standard of breadth and quality of sources and insights, the author is an intern at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD). This organisation is a think-tank with the aim of "...powering new generations against hate and extremism."⁵⁹ Readers should consider this fact for two key reasons. Firstly, the author clearly has an interest in counter-extremism and in preventing the rise of the far-right in Britain. Secondly, there are a number of sources used that are from the Institute for Strategic Dialogue or from researchers who previously worked there and/or are affiliated with the organisation. Every effort has been made to try and provide a balanced selection of sources—research publications from academia and other think tanks and media commentary and reports have all been used to ensure that this analysis is not skewed to just one interpretation of the issue of Britain's far-right.

In addition, there are some limitations that need to be taken into account regarding this form of research. Firstly, no interviews were conducted. This limitation is due to the extremely challenging nature of gaining access to far-right members as a researcher in a counter-extremism organisation; it would also be hard to gain a meaningful and honest perspective when the researcher clearly has a bias towards countering that individual's mindset. When considering the particular topic under assessment, it is understandably difficult to approach individuals and gain a genuine response on people's views related to issues of immigration, minorities, and white supremacy. A second and important limitation to consider is the fact that this analysis does not employ quantitative research—although it does draw from research that has used quantitative research methods, such as DEMOS' Centre for the Analysis of Social Media. The decision was made to instead use an investigative approach in testing a known theoretical framework by applying it to an understudied topic. The focus on social, historical and political factors influencing the radicalisation process are very clearly the focus with the methodology of employing a theory. Interviews and quantitative data would have been able to provide valuable details—interviews can shed insight into more nuanced perspectives and bolster credibility to an analysis and data provides important numerical evidence to further advance an argument. However, with research being conducted at an MSc level there are inevitable limitations. For the sake of making a cohesive and well-argued analysis, this dissertation chose to use one method of a theoretical application.

⁵⁹ *Institute for Strategic Dialogue*, <https://www.isdglobal.org/isdapproach/>, accessed 25/05/18.

Literature Review

Radical Concepts and Contexts

The analysis conducted in this paper is carried out on the premise that radical, as it relates to white supremacy, is a state of supporting the broad ideals of racist nativism, Nazism, fascism, populism, and xenophobia. This literature review intends to demonstrate how these ideals participate in the radicalisation process. While scholars of radicalisation regularly discuss the prevalence of ambiguity on defining radical,⁶⁰ there are tools we can employ to create parameters of assessment. For example: determining what is radical depends upon a society's understanding of what is classed as moderate. This distinction invokes relative and absolute interpretations of radical.⁶¹ Mark Sedgwick suggests the use of a "continuum of organised opinion" in which the definition of radical is understood in contrast to where the moderate concept sits.⁶²

The relative sense of 'radical,' then, is useful so long as it is specified what is meant by 'moderate,' so long as the continuum along which the line is being drawn is carefully considered, and so long as it is recognized that some other continuum may be more important to the group or selection of groups being analysed.⁶³

Indeed, there is a large range of ideologies that the far-right draws from. The reality of today's far-right is that it is a product of different aspects of all of these ideologies that each feed into an overarching white supremacist narrative. Hafez and Mullins assess radicalisation as it pertains to extremist religion; this means that the puzzle pieces for their study were focused on topics relating largely to Islam. However, the analysis of the far-right and white supremacy is essentially the study of ethno-nationalist extremism, which is defined as "the dehumanization of individuals who are of a different ethnic or national group."⁶⁴ The difference means that more factors will be used to gauge the 'extreme' on this continuum.

One of the key issues this paper will be examining about ethno-nationalist extremism in Britain's contemporary far-right is its use of a 'softer' cultural supremacist narrative to convey white supremacist ideology. As this analysis will demonstrate, ethno-nationalism is conveyed heavily through themes of racism, nativism and xenophobia; the far-right's tactic of doing so

⁶⁰ Neumann, 873; Sedgwick, 480; Paul Hainsworth, *The extreme right in Western Europe*, London: Routledge, 2008, 2.

⁶¹ Mark Sedgwick, "The Concept of Radicalization as a Source of Confusion," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 22:4, 2010, 481-482.

⁶² Sedgwick, 481.

⁶³ Sedgwick, 482.

⁶⁴ 'Youth Led Guide On Prevention of Violent Extremism Through Education,' *United Nations Education, Society, and Cultural Organization and Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development*, 2017, 60.

has often been through a populist and fascist style of appealing to the British population. The range of ideological themes is reflected in the labels far-right scholars use in their work. Cas Mudde describes these groups in Western Europe as the 'populist radical right.' Paul Hainsworth employs the 'extreme right,' Klaus von Beyme—whose research is embedded in understanding the concept in the post WWII era—claims that in order to qualify for the label extreme right wing, violence or the willingness to use violence must be involved.⁶⁵ Similarly, Jacob Aasland Ravndal claims that "...right-wing extremism is understood as the support of using illegal violence to promote right-wing policies."⁶⁶ There are other scholars who study the same groups but from a fascist standpoint, and subsequently use terminology associated more closely with fascism, such as Matthew Goodwin. With this focus the history of Nazism and its specific terminology is engaged with. Indicative of the underlying ideology and motivations of contemporary extreme right movements is the fact that most inquiries into the subject begin with an investigation into fascism. It is not just that there are significant similarities between the two; but in there is in fact *continuity* in the issues and grievances of the far-right in Western Europe.⁶⁷ The relevance of fascist ideology and Nazism will be addressed in the later chapter on Ideology.

Radical Section

Peter Neumann from the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence notes the prevailing consensus that there are two fundamental forms of radicalisation: believing in radical ideas can be referred to as cognitive radicalisation, whereas the actual activity that exhibits it is behavioural radicalisation.⁶⁸ The difference between the two is important because some governments treat both cognitive and behavioural radicalisation as a security threat while other nations focus only on the behavioural development. The British government's definition that was raised in the introduction notes that extremism does not necessarily have to have translated to an action to be considered a 'extremist.' Typically, cognitive radicalisation is what has prioritised in the European security agenda while the latter is the Anglo-Saxon approach.⁶⁹ The British government has usually performed in line with the latter category and has only recently demonstrated a desire to address the cognitive radicalisation process, recognizing its importance by funding programs like Channel.⁷⁰ This analysis will demonstrate how Hafez and Mullins' factors of grievances, ideology, enabling factors and networks partake in the cognitive radicalisation of a person.

One of the key criticisms of the traditional Anglo-Saxon approach is that focusing solely on extremist activities (behavioural radicalisation) overlooks other significant impacts cognitive radicalisation can have on a society: hate speech is a prime example.⁷¹ Neumann argues that a

⁶⁵ Klaus von Beyme, "Right-wing extremism in post-war Europe," *West European Politics*, 11:2, 1988, 1.

⁶⁶ Jacob Aasland Ravndal, "Thugs or Terrorists: A Typology of Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe," *Journal for Deradicalization*, 15:3, 2015, 15.

⁶⁷ Hainsworth, 13.

⁶⁸ Neumann, 873;

⁶⁹ Neumann, 873; Sedgwick, 482.

⁷⁰ The Economist, "Driving away the shadows."

⁷¹ Neumann, 890.

focus only on behavioural extremism leads to the tendency of individual terrorists to be studied without a proper engagement of the social and political context in which they radicalised⁷²; mirroring some of the concerns about personality profiling scholars like Roger Borum have articulated.

Stressing behaviour, legality and violence, the Anglo-Saxon approach towards counter-radicalization is cleaner, clearer and less politically controversial than the European approach. It does not raise complicated questions about freedom of speech, nor does it blur the line between law enforcement and politics. But this clarity is gained at the price of turning a blind eye to non-violent extremists and their efforts to undermine and threaten democracy and societal cohesion. While it may be effective at stopping violence in the short term, the Anglo-Saxon approach is difficult to reconcile with the vision of a robust democracy that stands up for its values.⁷³

Sedgwick agrees with Neumann, saying “[i]nvariably, if radicalism is defined as what disparate groups have in common, the results of any analysis of radicalism will reflect the basis on which those disparate groups were chosen in the first place.”⁷⁴ One of the ultimate aims of radicalisation research is to understand the relationship between how an idea is conceived and its evolution into violent action takes place.⁷⁵ Therein lies the importance of tackling both cognitive and behavioural radicalisation. However, the relationship between the two is not to be considered linear necessarily, as there are “...researchers who claim that cognitive extremism is just one of many ‘pathways’ into extremist action, and that not all terrorists are motivated by extremist ideas.”⁷⁶ The idea that the radicalisation process is not linear is an argument made by Hafez and Mullins—the authors of the framework used for the methodology portion of this paper—who, in fact, disagree with the use of the term ‘process’ altogether when describing developments of radical notions in individuals.⁷⁷

The importance of contexts in determining the meaning of radical and extreme is a theme of recent literature also. Sedgwick writes about three different agendas. Security institutions, for instance, will focus on the behavioural elements of radicalisation and prioritise the concept insofar as it is a threat to national security. In this capacity, symptoms of radicalisation such as hate speech and online propaganda are not considered a threat⁷⁸ and the concept ‘radical’ is associated with terrorist activity—such as Neumann’s assessment of the Anglo-Saxon approach to behavioural radicalisation. By contrast, foreign policy agendas will focus more on how the idea of ‘radical’ is employed in a different national context; this approach is particularly noticeable when western governments have to consider the status of an allied government from areas such as the Middle East. For example, many Arab regimes have traditionally defined opposition groups as radical in justification for harsh policing

⁷² Neumann, 892.

⁷³ Neumann, 892-893.

⁷⁴ Sedgwick, 481.

⁷⁵ Neumann 2013, 875.

⁷⁶ Neumann, 876.

⁷⁷ Hafez and Mullins, 2015, 959.

⁷⁸ Sedgwick, 485.

measures⁷⁹. Most relevant to this research inquiry is the idea of the integration agenda, in which the focus of government is to prevent segregation along racial or cultural lines. Most recently, this agenda has been at odds with growing ultra-nationalism in Western Europe and has resulted in the increased politicization and securitization of topics such as immigration and culture.⁸⁰

Ethnicity and Nationalism

Thomas Eriksen's 1993 work on ethnicity and nationalism draws significant conclusions about the relationship between ethnic ideologies and nationalism.⁸¹ Eriksen notes the importance of political movements depending on cultural identity to articulate a nationalist agenda⁸²:

According to nationalism, the political organisation should be ethnic in character in that it represents the interests of a particular ethnic group. Conversely, the nation-state draws an important aspect of its political legitimacy from convincing the popular masses that it really does represent them as a cultural unit.⁸³

He discusses the importance of specific ethnic tools and symbols being used for nationalist narratives to "...stimulate reflection of one's own cultural distinctiveness and thereby to create a feeling of nationhood."⁸⁴ Max Weber engages with similar discussions on the importance of ethnic identity in nationalism. He goes into depth to describe how race identity encourages people to create groupings of people based off perceived racial differences—usually with a negative effect and the encouragement of othering in society.⁸⁵ An ethnic group is defined as:

...those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both...this belief must be important for the propagation of groups formation...⁸⁶

Just as ethnic identity can be formed around the "...existence of a contemporary political community...",⁸⁷ nationality can be formed around shared ideas of a common ancestry, Weber claims.⁸⁸ Eriksen and Weber's assessments of race identity and ethnic group formation contribute to the broad discussion of Othering, a topic that scholars in this field consistently talk about.⁸⁹ The theme of Othering and the formation of identity around ethnicity for the

⁷⁹ Sedgwick, 487.

⁸⁰ Sedgwick, 486.

⁸¹ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, 1993, 99.

⁸² Ibid, 100.

⁸³ Ibid, 101.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 103.

⁸⁵ Max Weber, "What is an ethnic group," in *The Ethnicity Reader: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Migration*, ed. Montserrat Guibernau and John Rex, 1997, 18.

⁸⁶ Weber, 18-19.

⁸⁷ Weber, 22.

⁸⁸ Weber, 24.

⁸⁹ Eriksen, 111.

purposes of engaging in nationalist political sentiment are critical to keep in mind for the section on ideology.

Mudde is a well-known expert on populist far right parties in Western Europe. His research covers a multitude of important themes in the discussion on the far right. The populist radical right is integral to identity politics; it engages in an ingroup-outgroup differentiation to establish what the prevailing 'native' identity should be.⁹⁰ Mudde's research focuses on understanding how far-right political groups form a native identity by engaging in typical othering politics of nativism, populism and authoritarianism.⁹¹ Through these politics, attributes are assigned to the outgroups in order to help define what constitutes as nativeness or the ingroup.⁹² Mudde has developed a highly useful typology that assesses who the portrayed enemies are of the far-right that has the intent of understanding the Othering process by studying different types of outgroups across Western Europe.⁹³ The two most relevant to this analysis are 'within the state, within the nation,' and 'within the state, outside the nation'—both will be engaged with in the chapter on grievances. Although it is most effective when knowing the issue the continuum is assessing⁹⁴—such as religion or political leanings. Using the continuum is therefore a challenge with far-right groups in Britain as very few are genuinely single-issue groups, making the assessment of 'radical' and 'extreme' difficult.⁹⁵ These are some massive themes to assess. For the purpose of this dissertation, it is important to bear in mind how populist far right parties engage with native identitarian politics, how it aids then in stoking ethno-nationalism, and how we are to assess both of these things as 'extreme' on Sedgwick's continuum. For example, Mudde notes how non-European migrants in Western European countries had been a prominent migration group since the 1980s. During the Cold War the western European far-right supported Eastern European migrants and refugees coming to the west because of anti-communist sentiments—to accept this group of foreigners happened to be in line with their political agenda at the time.⁹⁶ This example demonstrates how far-right parties were willing to accommodate individuals that did not fit in with their native politics, but they did so in order to fulfil an ulterior political agenda that was still heavily nationalist (anti-Russia) at the time. This accommodation quickly changed once this political obligation was no longer necessary, and far-right groups actions were then able to be identified as more 'extreme.'

In addition to understanding what qualifies as radical there are also clarifications that need to be made regarding different *forms* of radicalisation. While the continuum notion addresses how an individual can be described as a moderate versus a radical, "conceptual fault-lines" take it further to address what types of radicalisation may have taken place. One of the ultimate aims of radicalisation research is to understand the relationship between how an idea

⁹⁰ Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, Cambridge University Press, 2007.

⁹¹ Mudde, 2007, 89.

⁹² *Ibid*, 89.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 64.

⁹⁴ Sedgwick, 481.

⁹⁵ Joel Busher, "Why Even Misleading Identity Claims Matter: The Evolution of the English Defence League," *Political Studies*, Sage Publications: 2017, 2.

⁹⁶ Mudde, 70.

is conceived and its evolvement into violent action.⁹⁷ However, this relationship is not to be considered linear necessarily, as there are "...researchers who claim that cognitive extremism is just one of many 'pathways' into extremist action, and that not all terrorists are motivated by extremist ideas."⁹⁸ The idea that the radicalisation process is not linear is an argument made by Hafez and Mullins also who, in fact, disagree with the use of the term 'process' altogether when describing developments of radical notions in individuals.⁹⁹ The following section will investigate this matter further.

Far-Right & Extreme-Right

When considering different manifestations of far-right ideology, it is important to think about the specific different types of groups that are mobilising off similar issues. Vidhya Ramalingam, formerly of the Institute for Strategic Dialogue and now a co-founder of Moonshot CVE, concluded in 2014 that there were four key types of far-right groups that have developed in Western Europe in recent years:

1. Youth gangs, white power and skinhead groups
2. Terrorist cells and lone actors
3. Political movements and paramilitary groups
4. Nativist, identitarian and Islamophobic movements¹⁰⁰

Ramalingam claims that these groups "...form what has been called the 'tip of the iceberg,' the visible agents of extremism, which are underpinned in each country by a complex infrastructure (history, socio-economic context, public attitudes and politics) which contribute to the challenge in their own way."¹⁰¹ Similarly, Matthew Goodwin, who has written about the rise of the British National Party and fascism in the UK, categorizes the far-right using British specific examples. He assesses these prevailing patterns as:

1. Registered political parties
2. Grassroots movements
3. Neo-Nazi groups
4. Lone wolves¹⁰²

The two typologies are very similar in how they differentiate between the different groups that have formed around far-right ideologies. Goodwin breaks-down the core themes that make up the far-right. He notes the importance of populist elements in these groups, as they often aim to "...[dichotomize] issues into good and evil, and [aim] to position the majority against

⁹⁷ Neumann, 875.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 876.

⁹⁹ Hafez and Mullins, 2015, 959.

¹⁰⁰ Vidhya Ramalingam, "Old Threat, New Approach: Tackling the Far Right Across Europe," *Institute for Strategic Dialogue*, 2014, 7-8.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 7.

¹⁰² Matthew Goodwin, *New British Fascism: Rise of the British National Party*, Oxton: Routledge, 2011, 6.

minority on sensitive issues such as asylum or human rights.”¹⁰³ While many far-right parties are built on the ‘national identity’ crisis—ensuring a fascist/populist style of thinking—this is not always the case. To be far-right does not necessarily equate to fascist.¹⁰⁴ Ramalingam discusses wide range between her identified groups: while youth gangs and skinhead groups are less likely to have fully formed ideologies, nativist and identitarian movements are more capable of galvanizing support based off racist and xenophobic sentiments.¹⁰⁵ Lone actors can be radicalised through far-right ideology and may or may not have official ties with far-right groups.¹⁰⁶

An even more recent typology on far-right groups in Western Europe has been conducted by right-wing terrorism expert Jacob Aasland Ravndal. Currently based at the Norwegian Centre for Research on Extremism, Ravndal conducted an assessment of the different types of right-wing actors in Western Europe in the mid to late 20th C. He concludes that there are three main traditional types: elite-sponsored groups, sub-cultural networks, and lone actors.¹⁰⁷ His approach differs from that of Goodwin and Ramalingam in that it analyzes differences in strategy and organisation, believing that this approach creates a more nuanced analysis that just researching ideology.¹⁰⁸ Most central to the focus of this research is the sub-cultural networks. These groups emerged in the 80s and 90s when there were large numbers immigrants arriving in Britain. The 80s was characterized by an unorganized targeting of migrants with little to no strategy while the 90s saw better strategy by anti-migrant, far-right groups, who also started targeting the left-wing and government.¹⁰⁹ The different groups this analysis will cover will be covered at the end of the literature review.

Definitional challenges exist with understanding the ‘right,’ ‘far-right,’ and ‘extreme-right.’ Broadly speaking, distinguishing between the right and extreme right is challenging in Western Europe due to overlap between the two and the growth of coalition parties that are composed partly of extreme-right elements. The existence of such a wide range of groups—governmental and non-government groups, for instance—broadens the scope of extreme right ideology impacting society.¹¹⁰ As Ramalingam and Goodwins’ typologies exemplify, both political parties and street movements are just as capable of adhering to the same far-right ideologies. Despite some political parties efforts to “distance themselves from the toxic fascist brand” there remains a consistency with extreme/far right themes:

...[T]he extreme right may share themes and issues and even coalition government with other parties, notably those on the mainstream right...[b]ut, despite this, they belong to

¹⁰³ Goodwin, 6.

¹⁰⁴ Goodwin, 8.

¹⁰⁵ Ramalingam, “Old Threat, New Approach: Tackling the Far Right Across Europe,” 8.

¹⁰⁶ Ramalingam, “Old Threat, New Approach: Tackling the Far Right Across Europe,” 7.

¹⁰⁷ Jacob Aasland Ravndal, “Thugs or Terrorists: A Typology of Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe,” *Journal for Deradicalization*, 15:3, 2015, 21.

¹⁰⁸ Ravndal, 4.

¹⁰⁹ Ravndal, 23.

¹¹⁰ Hainsworth, 7-8; Ramalingam, 7.

different political families. Moreover, they tend to value populist democracy more highly than representative democracy.¹¹¹

Elisabeth Carter and Cas Mudde have conducted some of the most extensive assessments of far-right parties in Western Europe and their political and ideological development from the post WWII period up to today. The most common features of far-right parties are nationalism, xenophobia, racism, anti-democratic sentiment and calls for a strong state.¹¹² It is possible for the extreme-right to mobilize off a range of issues but the most frequent are nationality, race, ethnicity and religion. They are characterizations of right-wing extremism: they do not define it, the principle of fundamental human inequality does. This idea—of the ultimate inequality—is an important theme because it has replaced inequality based on ‘race’ with inequality due to ‘culture.’¹¹³ This will be a prevalent theme throughout this paper.

Fascism is clearly a prevailing theme in studying the far-right. Klaus von Beyme’s research on post WWII fascism from the late 80s is a frequently referenced body of work for contemporary scholars on this topic. Part of von Beyme’s research saw him categorize three distinct phases of neo fascism and right-wing extremism since the end of the war. Most relevant to this analysis is the third phase, which identifies themes of xenophobia and racism that mirror some features of today’s right-wing extremism. Other scholars, such as Paul Hainsworth, would go so far as to say today’s far-right is just a continuation of the fascism of the late 20th C.

This third phase was defined by the rise of right-wing intellectuals in the mid to late twentieth century alongside “...the revival of right-wing terrorism as an answer to, or under pretext of, opposition to the growth of left-wing terrorism in many countries.”¹¹⁴ The efforts by intellectuals was aimed at making far-right parties more appealing politically to voters.¹¹⁵ Although interestingly, the actual voting base for these parties was low in the UK and Germany.¹¹⁶ It was, overall, a period of “increased respectability” for the far-right.¹¹⁷ Even after this stage of post-war right-wing there was a significant change after the end of the Cold War when the Berlin Wall fell down and anticommunism did not have to be a defining feature of radical right parties. Consequently, there was a different attitude: up until the end of the Cold War, the extreme right in general was more accepting of Eastern European asylum seekers due to their political anti-communist leanings.¹¹⁸ The xenophobia of this third phase is present still today in the far-right.

The Other

The racism and fear stoked towards outsiders is based off nativism and populism and is ultimately a process of ‘Othering.’ Cas Mudde describes this process as ingroup/outgroup

¹¹¹ Hainsworth, 22.

¹¹² Elisabeth Carter, *The Extreme Right in Western Europe: Success or Failure*, Manchester: Manchester University Press: 2005, 15.

¹¹³ Mudde, 70.

¹¹⁴ von Beyme, 11.

¹¹⁵ von Beyme, 12.

¹¹⁶ von Beyme, 12.

¹¹⁷ von Beyme, 13.

¹¹⁸ Mudde, 70.

differentiation. To highlight how the Other has shaped far right groups across Western Europe, Mudde has created a typology of four different types of ‘threats’ that far-right groups perceive in national ethnic minorities and foreigners. This approach is similar to Thomas Hyland Eriksen and Max Weber’s discussions on race identity and ethnic groups.

For example, his “within the state, within the nation” category outlines how the far-right makes an enemy out of a country’s political and economic elite. This group of people is responsible for large-scale immigration; which is viewed as a tool through which leftist parties and large businesses maintain cheap labour at “the expense of the nation.” In this worldview the terms “leftist” and “progressive” are criticisms employed by the populist radical right discourse,¹¹⁹ with the media being viewed as a tool of this group of elite, exacerbating many anti-Semitic conspiracy theories and ensuring that elites are viewed also as “cultural elitists”.¹²⁰ Thus, immigration—a key issue on the far-right’s agenda—is “blamed” on the elite. Often these perceptions encourage anti-government, anti-establishment sentiments. Another relevant category of Mudde’s typology is “within the state, outside the nation” which focuses on populist radical right views of ethnic minorities and the immigrant community.¹²¹ This particular typology is noticeably recent Mudde claims due to the focus on non-European migrants that were prominent in the 1980s throughout Western Europe.¹²² This category highlights how immigrants are targeted as responsible for “all evils of society” such as “unemployment, crime, and terrorism.”¹²³ The three most pertinent groups of minorities that experience this stereotype in contemporary Western Europe are the Jewish population, Muslims, and the Rom.¹²⁴ Anti-Semitism is not quite as explicit a feature of West European populist radical right parties; this is a significant change from the WWII era, although there are still examples of it in Eastern Europe and there has been a somewhat revival at certain phases in the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict.¹²⁵

There have been suggestions that the current prominence of Islamophobia mimics the anti-Semitism that plagued Europe in the 20th century.¹²⁶ Mudde notes some significant differences between the two dealing with specifically numbers and racist notions of capability. For example, the Jewish population in Europe is small in number but is viewed by the far-right to be highly capable whereas the fear with the Muslim population is that there is a growing number present in Europe that are outnumbering the white population.¹²⁷ Mudde also notes an important nuance of far-right behaviour today:

¹¹⁹ Mudde, 66.

¹²⁰ Mudde, 67.

¹²¹ Mudde, 69.

¹²² Mudde, 70.

¹²³ Mudde, 71.

¹²⁴ Mudde, 78.

¹²⁵ Mudde, 80.

¹²⁶ James Renton and Ben Gridley (ed.), *Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Europe: A Shared Story?*, London: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2016.

¹²⁷ Mudde, 84.

Interestingly, it is particularly in their Islamophobia that populist radical right parties present themselves as fierce defenders of liberal democracy, including various freedoms that until recently have been secondary to these parties.¹²⁸

One of the consequences of this broad process of Othering has been a noticeable pattern of the far right to reference some sort of “clash” or “race war” that is inevitable to take place in the near future. Mudde notes this theme of the far-right,¹²⁹ and it is evident in the agendas of various far-right groups in Britain such as Generation Identity.¹³⁰ Since the 90s, the far-right in Western Europe has often emphasized the Christian roots of Europe.¹³¹

Who is far-right?

Research related to the far-right is a behemoth: there exists clearly a huge range in themes and ideological influence that are each important contributors to the far-right. When we consider what groups to assess, it is important to acknowledge that Britain’s experience is unique compared to mainland Western Europe in that while the far-right has not necessarily fared well electorally in the country since the key period of post-WWII, widespread public support of far-right ideologies have very much endured and remain highly active today.¹³² This support has manifested in a multitude of ways. Goodwin and Ramalingam’s categorisations both identify the existence of street movements, political organisations, terrorist activities and lone actors that can be found in Britain. Examples of street movements are the (EDL) English Defence League, Pegida, and the more recent Football Lads Alliance (FLA). Political groups or organisations with a more politically-driven agenda are the (BNP) British National Party, Britain First, and newcomers For Britain. Then there are known terrorist groups and organisations such as National Action and Scottish Dawn that have been banned by the British government.¹³³ For the purposes of this assessment, all of these groups fall under the umbrella of ‘far-right.’

There are other considerations. It is more difficult to categorise and assess Ukip as a far-right group: politically, it is definitely right of centre and has agenda items—such as immigration controls and anti-multicultural policies— that are clearly in line with other far-right groups in Britain. It is also a party that was a key champion of Brexit, but Ukip is not an extreme party¹³⁴ and it is inaccurate to assume that British citizens that voted to leave the European Union can be all labelled ‘racist’ or ‘far-right.’

¹²⁸ Mudde, 78-79.

¹²⁹ Mudde, 85.

¹³⁰ Generation Identity, ‘Our Demands,’ <https://www.generation-identity.org.uk/demands/>

¹³¹ Mudde, 85.

¹³² Vidhya Ramalingam, “The Drivers of Far Right Extremism in Britain,” *Integration, Disadvantage, and Extremism*, Pears Institute for the Study of Antisemitism, 2014, 25.

¹³³ Ross McCafferty, “Who are Scottish Dawn? Banned group profiled,” *The Scotsman*, 28/09/17, <https://www.scotsman.com/news/who-are-scottish-dawn-banned-far-right-group-profiled-1-4572949> ; *Hope not Hate*, “National Action,” <https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/research/the-hate-files/national-action/> .

¹³⁴ Matthew Goodwin, “Ukip shares more with the far right than it admits,” *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/mar/12/ukip-far-right-bnp> 12/03/12.

II

Grievances

Hafez and Mullins define grievances as “...economic marginalization and cultural alienation, deeply held sense of victimization, or strong disagreements regarding the foreign policies of states...[they] could also entail personal disaffection, loss, or crisis that leads one to seek a new path in life.”¹³⁵ These are traits that encourage feelings of “disenchantment” towards British society.¹³⁶ In Hafez and Mullins’ assessment of Muslim populations, they point towards socioeconomic trends that indicate Muslims’ higher unemployment rates alongside discrimination, segregation and poor housing. Being subjected to intense minority discrimination has manifested negative attitudes towards Western European societies and exacerbated a clash of identities. The rise of Islamophobia has further contributed to experiences of disenchantment, and has ensured that second and third generation European Muslims continue to feel marginalized.¹³⁷ Social and political contexts are an essential part of understanding how grievances contribute to the radicalisation process; grievances are essentially push factors that may explain *why* people choose to support the far-right.

Grievances as push factors are political or social reasons given by far-right groups, and the individuals that subscribe to them, for supporting far-right ideology. Whereas the ideology puzzle piece chapter will delve into the details of particular belief systems, the grievances chapter assesses broader social issues that people mobilize off of. Disgruntlements are important factors in understanding the development of extreme outlooks—Hafez and Mullins have already outlined how this happens with radical Islamism. Within the realm of far-right support, there is a broad base of the social and political motivating factors such as “legacies of the Second World War and the Soviet regime, the history of immigration and demographic change, and wider public attitudes”.¹³⁸ Similarly, this chapter will make a case for two key grievances that contribute to the far-right radicalisation process: immigration and feelings of a ‘threatened British culture.’

Immigration

Britain has an extensive history of immigration, resulting in a highly multi-ethnic country. One consequence of this has been that contemporary far-right groups “...have shifted the targets of their hate dramatically over the decades from ‘classical’ target groups (e.g. Jewish, Black and Asian communities) to Muslim, Roma and even Eastern European communities.”¹³⁹ The “wider public attitudes” that Ramalingam discusses refers to the large-scale societal opinion British people have on issues that the far-right has proved it can mobilize off, such as Islam and immigration. The National Centre for Social Research’s thirty-fourth

¹³⁵ Hafez and Mullins, 961.

¹³⁶ Hafez and Mullins, 961.

¹³⁷ Hafez and Mullins, 962.

¹³⁸ Ramalingam, “Old Threat, New Approach: Tackling the Far Right Across Europe,” 10.

¹³⁹ Ramalingam, “Old Threat, New Approach: Tackling the Far Right Across Europe,” 11.

British Social Attitudes Survey noted that British people “have become slightly more sceptical about the cultural benefits of immigration.” And while statistics from that time period do not indicate that Britain had become necessarily more supportive of stricter immigration regulations, the public had become increasingly *selective* regarding the background of migrants and whether or not they conformed to British cultural norms.¹⁴⁰ Historically, immigration has been an important tool of the far-right in promoting a xenophobic and fascist agenda; understanding xenophobic patterns and wide public attitudes to immigration is thus very important for this type of analysis.¹⁴¹ Widespread unemployment was a strong contributing factor to growing xenophobia in the 60s and 70s¹⁴² and played a significant role in subsequent restrictive immigration policy formation. Opposition to migrants continued through the late 20th C—by the late 1980s, Britain was one of three countries in the EC that hosted some of the largest numbers of non-EC migrants.¹⁴³ Immigration historian Sarah Spencer has studied the relationship between immigration policies and race relations in Britain throughout this time period:

[t]he bi-partisan consensus that firm immigration control is the prerequisite of good race relations rests on the assumption that the hostility which some white people feel towards black and Asian people would be exacerbated if they believed that their entry into the country was not effectively controlled.¹⁴⁴

Spencer argues the government’s typical response was to reassure the public that “immigration controls are effective” and that “...the number of (black and Asian) immigrants will not rise more than is absolutely necessary.”¹⁴⁵ Much of the national mood in Britain and Western Europe surrounding migrants and foreigners had to do with recruitment efforts to hire migrants in response to labour shortages due to post war-time economic slumps. Consequently, there were significant changes in nations’ ethnic composition from the 50s-80s; at the start of this period most migrants were from other Western European countries, however towards the end they were increasingly from Eastern Europe.¹⁴⁶

Eastern Europeans had been admitted to Western European countries on the basis of escaping communism, which at the time fitted neatly into most Western countries political agendas. In fact, during the Cold War many far-right parties were anticommunist and consequently *supported* accepting refugees and migrants from Eastern Europe. There was a noticeable change in this attitude when the Berlin Wall was taken down and the anticommunist agenda was no longer a priority.¹⁴⁷ Thereafter, the 1990s were characterized with an effort to halt migration due to the change in climate with the end of the Cold War and a clear pattern of

¹⁴⁰ Robert Ford and Kitty Lympelopoulou, ‘British Social Attitudes: Immigration’, *NatCen Social Research*, 34: 2017, 2.

¹⁴¹ Betz, 69.

¹⁴² Betz, 71.

¹⁴³ Betz, 69.

¹⁴⁴ Sarah Spencer, “The Impact of Immigration Policy on Race Relations,” *Race Relations in Britain: a developing agenda*, London: Routledge, 1998, 74.

¹⁴⁵ Spencer, 74.

¹⁴⁶ Betz, 74.

¹⁴⁷ Betz, 78; Mudde, 2007, 70.

migrants making their way to the U.K. for economic purposes.¹⁴⁸ “It should come as no surprise,” says Betz, “that the emergence and rise of radical right-wing populist parties in Western Europe coincided with the growing tide of immigrants and particularly the dramatic increase in the number of refugees seeking peace, security, and a better life...”¹⁴⁹

These patterns of public attitude towards migrants bear some striking resemblances to many contemporary views on immigrants in Britain. The large-scale hostility towards migrants in the 80s and 90s there was a distinctive large-scale hostility towards migrants for some of the same reasons as today: that there was a large-scale abuse of the system, the negative effect on the economy, and that migrants significantly contributed to crime and violence.¹⁵⁰

British Culture

Around the WWII era there was a palpable “national anxiety” about British identity and culture; immigrants and their non-British background were viewed as a threat to that identity and culture.¹⁵¹ Just as xenophobia has been prevalent in shaping attitudes to immigration, it has also contributed to the debate surrounding what Britishness exactly is. To draw from more recent studies, the 2017 British Social Attitudes survey concluded that “[t]he UK’s divide in attitudes about immigration’s cultural impact is...one of the deepest in the continent.”¹⁵² The study’s acknowledgement of the importance of culture in shaping public opinion on immigration reflects much of the discourse circulating around the issue at the time of Brexit.¹⁵³ Evidently, widespread British concern about migrants being able to adhere to a “British way of life,”¹⁵⁴ despite the fact that Britishness itself is often a contested and unclear subject.¹⁵⁵ It is important to emphasize this detail: that Brits have increased their preference for migrants of a similar *ethnicity* to themselves, not necessarily fewer migrants.¹⁵⁶

But the preference for similar ethnicity is no less problematic. This is not a recent phenomenon; Matthew Goodwin has written about the adaptability of the British National Party in the 80s and 90s and its use of culture and not ethnicity as a justification for anti-immigrant policies.¹⁵⁷ This was a pattern across Western Europe in the mid to late 20th C, where efforts were made by far-right parties to reinvent themselves with the aim of distancing their image from Nazism. Often this process included—and continues to include today—softer rhetoric emphasising¹⁵⁸ culture, and not race, in today’s far-right to achieve their aim of establishing the undesirable traits of the Other. Far right groups have demonstrated an ability to articulate what they perceive to be the undesirable attributes of a particular group while the contours of their own identity remain vague.¹⁵⁹ Culture has been used as a tool through which

¹⁴⁸ Betz, 79.

¹⁴⁹ Betz, 81.

¹⁵⁰ Betz, 85-88.

¹⁵¹ Spencer, 83.

¹⁵² Ford and Lymperopoulou, ‘British Social Attitudes: Immigration’, 2.

¹⁵³ British Social Attitudes, “Key Findings,” 4.

¹⁵⁴ British Social Attitudes, “Key Findings,” 5.

¹⁵⁵ source

¹⁵⁶ BSA, “Key Findings,” 5.

¹⁵⁷ Goodwin, 4.

¹⁵⁸ Betz, 25.

¹⁵⁹ Mudde, 63-64.

differentiation of ingroup and outgroup distinctions are made. The English Defence League (EDL) and its corresponding international network of the European-Counter Jihad Movement are one such example of a far-right group employing culture as a tool for their agenda.¹⁶⁰

Commenting on today's society, Biku Parekh writes about how problematic defining Britishness is. There are two ways in which the term 'British' is employed: in an essentialist or empirical sense. The former focuses on history while the latter is centred around the concept of values.¹⁶¹ This distinction means that ultimately it is next to impossible to define what it means to be 'British.' The significance of this argument is twofold in the context of this research: first, that far-right efforts to articulate their desire to preserve British culture is more elusive than the movement would perhaps care to admit. Secondly, the British government's agenda of pushing FBVs as a counter-terrorism measure, as was addressed earlier, may not be the most effective method of sifting out potential terrorists. Yasmin Alibhai-Brow's phrasing is extremely accurate:

...the new racism of the right [at this time], which no longer voiced views about racial or cultural inferiority but the more acceptable worries about the erosion of British values and of a historical core identity.¹⁶²

Indeed, in the late 90s experts were commenting on the importance of changing attitudes to culture. The discussion on racism revolved around Britain's experience in a post 1976 Race Relations Act atmosphere, an atmosphere of a time that saw the first census that actually asked a question involving ethnic background in 1991.¹⁶³ Anthony Lester claims that this is a significant starting point from which to understand the desire by Britons to define what it means to be British/English.¹⁶⁴ He says, "The challenge for the next century will be to rethink the concept of 'Britishness,' to find values that each of these communities...can share, without losing their cultural, religious and ethnic diversity."¹⁶⁵

Far-right perceptions of multiculturalism in Britain today can be described through Ben Pitcher's "facticity of difference": referring to the existence of cultural difference—whether understood in terms of race, ethnicity, or religion—has become fully acknowledged as a constituent part of the societies in which we live today. This is the significance of this is that there is the idea that Britain will one day 'return' to a homogenous society.¹⁶⁶ After the labour shortages in the post WWII era encouraged the hiring of Eastern Europeans, Britons believed

¹⁶⁰ Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens and Hans Brun, "A Neo-Nationalist Network: The English Defence League and Europe's Counter-Jihad Culture," London: *International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence*, 2013, 1.

¹⁶¹ Biku Parekh, "Being British," in *Britishness: Perspectives on the British Question*, Andrew Gamble and Tony (ed.) Wright, Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, 32.

¹⁶² Yasmin Alibhai-Brow, "The media and race relations," in *Race Relations in Britain: a Developing Agenda*, 1998, 114.

¹⁶³ Anthony Lester, "From legislation to integration: Twenty Years of the Race Relations Act," in Blackstone, Parekh, and Sanders *Race Relations in Britain: a developing agenda*, London: Routledge, 1998, 22.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 23.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 28.

¹⁶⁶ Ben Pitcher, *The Politics of Multiculturalism: Race and Racism in Contemporary Britain*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 2.

labour migrants would eventually leave the country.¹⁶⁷ It is an enduring theme in Britain that the far-right has identified: Generation Identity demands the preservation of Britain's 'ethno-cultural identity' by 'reversing the effects of British immigration policies.'¹⁶⁸ The British National Party has a whole section of its website concerned with the Islamisation of Britain and articles outlining the 'demise' of British white society.¹⁶⁹

The issue of FBVs that was raised in the introduction translates to this topic—Smith claims these efforts of enforcing Britishness as racist nativism, in which "[r]acism and nativism converge...when we consider both as mechanisms operating to justify the perceived superiority of whites as natives, thereby reproducing and reinforcing the existing hegemony."¹⁷⁰ The defensive nationalist attitude that is so integral to nativism has only encouraged the perception that there is a disconnect between Western values and Islam.¹⁷¹ The subject of British culture, British values and Britishness has in fact been vital in recent years in the rhetoric surrounding extremism, terrorism and British national security. David Cameron's 2014 article after the Charlie Hebdo attacks is a frequently cited example of the increasing securitisation of British culture, in which he calls for a "muscular promotion" of British values.¹⁷² Gordon Brown has also published a similar paper in 2007, entitled "The Governance of Britain" in which he argued that there were a recognised set of British values that make up a distinct British culture. Brown released this in line with a large-scale report, highlighting the importance of this agenda item to the British government as far back as a decade ago.¹⁷³

The defensive nationalist attitude that is so integral to nativism has only encouraged the perception that there is a disconnect between Western values and Islam.¹⁷⁴ This issue of culture—and all its interpretations—is a massive theme of this line of research due to how frequently the term is employed in place of 'race' and 'ethnicity' to sanitize the far-right's xenophobic agenda. Far right agendas are also known to encourage political distrust and protest voting: there was a distinct lack of trust in national political institutions throughout Western Europe, which encouraged citizens to use their vote as a means of protest in the 80s and 90s.¹⁷⁵ There are country-specific factors, of course (such as Germany's experience with reunification and the fall of the Berlin wall), but ultimately Betz claims that "[i]t is within this context of growing public pessimism, anxiety, and disaffection that the rise and success of radical right-wing populism in Western Europe finds at least a partial explanation."¹⁷⁶ This theme of anti-establishment is massively important in the far-right.

¹⁶⁷ Tahir Abbas, "Introduction," *Muslim Britain: Communities Under Pressure* London: Zedd Books Ltd., 2005, 9.

¹⁶⁸ Generation Identity, 'Demands,' <https://www.generation-identity.org.uk/demands/>.

¹⁶⁹ British National Party, 'Islamisation,' <https://bnp.org.uk/category/islamisation/>.

¹⁷⁰ Smith, 300.

¹⁷¹ Smith, 303.

¹⁷² HM Government, "British values: article by David Cameron," 15/06/14, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/british-values-article-by-david-cameron>

¹⁷³ Oxford University Press, "Gordon Brown and the 'Governance of Britain' Green Paper: The Right Approach to Constitutional Reform?"

<http://global.oup.com/uk/orc/politics/countries/kavanagh5e/01student/commentary/200707/>

¹⁷⁴ Smith, 303.

¹⁷⁵ Betz, 37.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 41.

Concluding Remarks

Grievances are typically heavily divisive issues that the far-right have mobilised around; using Hafez and Mullins theory, this chapter has demonstrated exactly how this has been done through controversial issues such as British culture, immigration concerns, and frustrations with the status quo. As Ramalingam states:

Under the guise of nationalism the far right has been quick to pick up on issues that divide Britain, rather than issues that unite the country. Far-right movements, whether street based or political, are particularly adept at mobilising support during times of local or national trauma.¹⁷⁷

The two themes of immigration and British culture go hand in hand as grievances for the far-right to mobilise off. Historically, we can see patterns of xenophobia as a prevalent feature through British history that has often not been aided by the actions of the British government. The fear caused by immigration also causes parallel concerns over the preservation of British culture. Considering the evidence from this chapter and that of the previous Literature Review, it is reasonable to draw conclusions on how ethno-nationalism is able to take hold when these are public concerns. The racist, nativist tendencies are a key central part of the far-right radicalisation process.

Ramalingam's comments on how these grievances are exploited by the far-right can bring us back to the analogy of Sedgwick's continuum. The topics of immigration and culture can be reasonably acted upon by political parties. But when far-right movements use them to advance nativist principles and to Other some of the British population, we can see extreme views taking hold and a distancing from a more moderate form of political expression. The following conclusions are the author's own. We witnessed this kind of difference in mobilisation throughout the Brexit vote, as was raised earlier. This example of a significant, large-scale national event drew out both extreme and moderate events that mobilised off the same grievances. So while this is a category that certainly contributes to the far-right radicalisation process, it is important to consider that there are a range of political expressions that manifest from these issues. Consequently, making a reasonable inference from the evidence presented in the Literature Review and this chapter, we can gauge that 'radical' regarding immigration and culture, is when Othering is extensively used for the sake of maintaining a racist, ethno-nationalist agenda that seeks to exclude individuals who do not fit a particular identity framework.

¹⁷⁷ Vidhya Ramalingam, "Reclaiming Britishness from the Far Right," *From Global Empire to the Global Race: modern Britishness, The Progressive Conscience*: 2014, 12.

III

Ideologies

Ideologies “...refer to master narratives about the world and one’s place in it. Usually they frame personal and collective grievances into broader political critiques of the status quo.”¹⁷⁸ This chapter will be addressing three key ideologies as fascism, British nativism, and racism, each of which feed into the British far-right. Just like the puzzle pieces of Hafez and Mullin’s theory, these ideologies are not isolated from one another and do not function exclusively. This chapter will discuss that particularly of various ideologies have helped construct the narratives of the far-right in Britain and how they have influenced its political tone and social commentary. Historically, there is huge significance in understanding how these ideologies have evolved and become intertwined with the far-right’s agenda. Therefore, each ideology’s history in the late 20th C. will briefly be assessed before addressing more contemporary evidence.

One of the most pertinent features of any ideology is its role in creating new world views and to “...encourage individuals to question the precepts of the prevailing order.” Hafez and Mullins outline the role radical Islam has played in the West since 2000 and demonstrate its importance as an ideology and key features such as its promotion of “intolerance, antidemocratic attitudes, and anti-integration and isolationism.”¹⁷⁹ Far-right ideologies share many similarities: the increasingly populist tendencies of anti-status quo sentiment and the prevalence of xenophobia are just two examples that resonate with Hafez and Mullins’ puzzle piece theory. Much overlap will be visible between this chapter and the previous; their interdependent nature will be elaborate on in concluding remarking for this chapter. While grievances, as a category, addressed specific societal issues, ideology looks at detailed political and social thought that has developed in Britain extensively in the country’s history since the pivotal WWII era.

Fascism

Fascism is a prevailing feature of the far-right across Europe today. Hans-George Betz is an expert on the subject of the development and adaptability of fascism in Western Europe; most notably on its rise and reestablishment in post war Europe. Fascism’s adaptability in Europe ultimately indicates how far-right parties responded to changing socioeconomic patterns since the end of WWII in order to secure wider support. Betz argues:

...fascism was successful because it managed to exploit the middle class’s immediate fears evoked by the economic crisis...[it] managed to appeal to the survival instinct of a class that the accelerated pace of industrialization, rationalization, and capitalist modernization in the early part of the twentieth century objectively threatened with extinction.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Hafez and Mullins, 691.

¹⁷⁹ Hafez and Mullins, 967.

¹⁸⁰ Betz, 24.

The success behind exploiting middle class fears has been disputed in academia. For instance, Betz has commented on the Nazis strategically employing a “dual electoral strategy” which targeted the anxieties of both the working and middle classes.¹⁸¹ The themes of exploiting middle class economic anxieties on the subjects of increased industrialisation and globalisation has been discussed at length by far-right researchers.¹⁸² Historically, a similar pattern has played out in Britain and Western Europe: the increasing rift that was occurring in the late 20th century encouraged a “dual society” where one group of people was not benefitting from globalisation, resulting in a “two-speed society” and encouraging important changes in voting patterns.¹⁸³ The history in Britain of issue-style voting based off a starkly divided society lays some important groundwork for contemporary populist .

Fascism has very much been able to reap the benefits of this divide through adapting; Matthew Goodwin is one expert that has written on the post-war experience of British fascism and neo-Nazism. The premise of his research inquiry notes that the experience of British National Party not as successful electorally as fascist parties in Europe, but he disputes the notion that fascism will not be successfully able to root itself in British society just because it could not garner enough seats. He argued eight years ago that there was evidence the extreme right looked like it would “...become a permanent fixture on the political landscape.”¹⁸⁴ It is in this particular avenue that fascism has become particularly skilled at adopting a softer stance in rhetoric and replaced an explicitly ethno nationalist agenda with one that focuses on culture.

Goodwin has noted this particular skill in adaptability of the British National Party, particularly regarding its ability to replace explicit ethno nationalism with cultural nationalism. an important distinction of the far-right. Important to recognize BNP is an ethnic nationalist party that “[stresses] the important of birth and blood to citizenship and belonging.”¹⁸⁵

Far-Right

Right-wing ideology is of course different depending on individual countries’ specific national experiences, consequently ensuring that there are differing interpretations across Western Europe.¹⁸⁶ The terminology associated with them can be: neo-Nazi parties, neo-fascist parties, authoritarian xenophobia parties, neo-liberal xenophobic parties, and neo-liberal populist parties.¹⁸⁷ Elizabeth Carter and Cas Mudde agree on the far-right’s most common features are nationalism, xenophobia, racism, anti-democratic sentiment and calls for a strong state. It is possible for the extreme-right to mobilize off a range of issues—such as those just listed—but the most frequent are nationality, race, ethnicity and religion and are the enduring,

¹⁸¹ Betz, 25.

¹⁸² Martin Eiermann, “Confronting Populist Anxieties: How the Centre-Left Can Quell the Far-Right Surge,” *Institute for Global Change*, <https://institute.global/insight/renewing-centre/populist-anxieties>.

¹⁸³ Betz, 32.

¹⁸⁴ Goodwin, 3.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 7.

¹⁸⁶ Elisabeth Carter, *The Varying Electoral Fortunes of the West European parties of the extreme right*, University Press Scholarship, 2011, DOI: 10.7228/manchester/9780719070488.001.0001, 21.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 14.

core features of far-right ideology in Britain.¹⁸⁸ Carter, Mudde, and Betz all agree that far-right parties and movements have the consistent feature of challenging liberal, democratic values with fascist, populist ones.

The definitional nuances are highly important to understand not just for the sake of establishing parameters for analysing the far-right, but because it is this very challenge that extreme groups will manipulate to make them seem more moderate to voters. This process of rebranding is especially relevant to the topic of new/neo-fascism as right-wing extremist parties try and distance themselves from the legacies of fascism and Nazi ideology. “Most authors,” she argues, “instead argue that fascism or neo-fascism is a sub-phenomenon of the extreme right and that fascist or neo-fascist parties are therefore only a particular type of extreme right party.”¹⁸⁹

Assessing the details of how British fascism was unsuccessful and had completely different experiences from mainland Europe helps understand the nuances of British society that the far-right has evolved with through to today. Herbert Kitschelt attempts to explain why there was not the same success for British fascism from the 70s-90s. In arguing that the lack of success is largely a result of the particular activities of British political parties at the time, he debunks two prevailing arguments. One argument is that British public opinion did/does not challenge the status quo and is thus unlikely to support new political ideas or groups. The second argument is that where there was a desire for a change in politics it was challenging to act on because of the first-past-the-post electoral system. He debunks these by providing examples of far-right success in similar political situations, such as the Scandinavian countries and their own public opinion situations.¹⁹⁰ Kitschelt notes that while there may have been a lack of strong political representation for the far right, there is ample evidence to demonstrate strong public opinion in support of the extreme right at the time and an endorsement of racist views.¹⁹¹

The next claim—dealing with the particulars of the electoral system being an obstacle for the far Right—can be disputed when looking at how the Right has clearly grown over time: “...whenever the external political opportunity structure for extreme-rightist activism improves, in Britain and other countries, such sects appear to be capable of cooperation.”¹⁹² Major political parties in Britain at the time were aware of xenophobic attitudes at the time and were trying to figure out how to form policy on the issue. There was a lack of certainty in the 50s and 60s with both the Labour and Conservative parties on whether or not adopting a harsher stance on immigration would either guarantee or lose votes.¹⁹³ A distinctive change was the Thatcher era of the 70s, when the Tories made a conscious effort to appeal to the radical Right to win more votes, especially on the issue of immigration.¹⁹⁴ “The party’s tough stance on immigration and immigrants removed a critical catalyst that might otherwise have permitted

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 15.

¹⁸⁹ Carter, 21.

¹⁹⁰ Herbert Kitschelt, *The Radical Right in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis*, University of Michigan Press: 1997, 244.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 245.

¹⁹² Ibid, 245.

¹⁹³ Ibid, 247.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 249.

the crystallization of a right-wing protest party,” Kitschelt says, “[c]onservative party strategy thus at least partly explains the failure of the extreme Right in Britain.”¹⁹⁵ The history of party stances on immigration and their responses to xenophobia in the country is important to how the far-right has grown in Britain.

British Nativism

Considering this clear history of xenophobia and anti-immigration sentiment that has been so important for Westminster to respond to, it is worth understanding the details of British Nativism. Nativism is a term that refers to the public backlash to immigration¹⁹⁶ and is an important concept for understanding how British culture has been ingrained into the far-right’s discourse on cultural supremacy. Thomas Hylland Eriksen assesses the important links between ethnicity and the state and nationalist ‘sentiment’.¹⁹⁷ Building on Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson’s theories on nationalism, Eriksen articulates the importance of ethno nationalist sentiment being efforts to create a clear and direct link between a sense of native culture and the state.¹⁹⁸ “Nationalisms are, in this view, ethnic ideologies which hold that their group should dominate a state.”¹⁹⁹ He elaborates:

Research on ethnic identity formation and boundary maintenance has indicated that ethnic identities tend to attain their greatest importance in situations of flux, change, resource competition and threats against boundaries. It is not surprising, therefore, that political movements based on cultural identity are strong in societies undergoing modernisation, although this does not account for the fact that these movements became nationalist movements.²⁰⁰

This kind of nationalism dictates that groups and politics should represent the predominant ethnicity of a country and should therefore “[convince]...the popular masses that it really does represent them as a cultural unit.”²⁰¹

Ethnic nationalism bases itself upon these ideas of nativism. To do this, tools and symbols are strategically employed to promote nationalist narratives and the nuanced way in which their meanings can then change. “The use of presumed typical ethnic symbols in nationalism is intended to stimulate reflection of one’s own cultural distinctiveness and thereby to create a feeling of nationhood.”²⁰² We can see this with groups like the EDL’s use of the St. George’s Cross to reinforce the Englishness that they seek to protect in the country. Significantly these national and ethnic identities are formed in contrast with the ‘other,’ resulting in “nationalist dichotomisation.”²⁰³ These processes have played out in Britain’s far-

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 249.

¹⁹⁶ Uri Friedman, “What is a Nativist?” 11/04/17,

<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/04/what-is-nativist-trump/521355/>.

¹⁹⁷ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, 1993, Pluto Press, 99.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 100.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 99.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 100.

²⁰¹ Ibid, 101.

²⁰² Ibid, 103.

²⁰³ Ibid, 111.

right through the formation of identity boundaries, which have categorized what is and what is not included in an acceptable British identity and typically contrasted against minorities or 'threatened' groups. The significance of which is that nationalism based on ethnicity is "...an ethnic ideology which demands a state on behalf of the ethnic group."²⁰⁴ Minorities are defined against these established national identities and ethnicities.²⁰⁵ Again, we are able to see how this process of Othering can take place effectively against an ethno-nationalist backdrop.

Racism and Ethnicity

Max Weber's discussion on 'race identity' sheds further light on how the formation of ethno-nationalism can easily manifest into racism. Race identity, which is "...common inherited and inheritable traits that actually derive from common descent,"²⁰⁶ encourages the creation of groupings of people based off perceived racial differences—usually with a negative effect and the encouragement of othering.²⁰⁷ Similar to Eriksen's interpretation, Weber defines ethnic groups as:

...those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists.²⁰⁸

Significantly, within these frameworks of race identity and ethnic group formation, there is the idea of the 'chosen people,' or the dominant group that perceive themselves to be the rightful people to politically control their country.²⁰⁹ In forming this ethnic group: "[c]ommon language and the ritual regulation of life, as determined by shared religious beliefs, everywhere are conducive to feelings of ethnic affinity, especially since the intelligibility of the behaviour of others is the most fundamental presupposition of group formation."²¹⁰

Subsequently, just as ethnic identity can be formed around the "...existence of a contemporary political community...,"²¹¹ nationality can be formed around shared ideas of a common ancestry or shared descent.²¹² The emphasis on shared ethnic identities in countries like Britain form white supremacist thinking and perpetuate racist stereotypes. Michel Wieviorka provides valuable research on the subject, noting that:

²⁰⁴ Eriksen, 118.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 122.

²⁰⁶ Max Weber, "What is an ethnic group?" in *The Ethnicity Reader: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Migration*, Montserrat Guibernau and John Rex (ed.) Blackwell Publishers: 1997, 15.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 18.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 18-19.

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 21.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 20.

²¹¹ Ibid, 22.

²¹² Ibid, 24.

...racism is the expression, as well as the refusal, of a situation in which the actor positively values modernity, but lives, or is afraid he/she will be exposed to a form of expulsion which will marginalize him/her. The actor then assumes a reflex or an attitude of 'poor white', particularly common in contexts of²¹³ economic crisis or of retraction from the labour market.

Wieviorka's research sheds light on how new forms of racism take place using the same kind of ideologies as more traditional racism. This "new racism" can correctly be referred to as "cultural racism" and is more differentialist than "classic, inegalitarian racism".²¹⁴ Older, more traditional racism "...considers the Other as an inferior being, who may find a place in society, but the lowest one....[t]he second kind [cultural racism] considers the Other as fundamentally different, which means that he/she has no place in society, that he/she is a danger, an invader, who should be kept at some distance, expelled or possibly destroyed." This "new racism" has been the most predominant in recent years. However, it is important to recognize that the use of culture as a tool in racist discourse is not a *new* phenomenon, although it has been employed with particular fervour for a renewed far-right agenda in recent years. For instance, Nazis adopted rhetoric that asserted Judaism corrupted Aryan culture.²¹⁵

When considering a revamped, new approach to pitching racist ideologies, it is important also to recognize that the Other can ultimately be exclusively defined in terms of culture. While this is not necessarily racist at face-value, the dialogue is often focused on aspects of that different culture that makes that person inferior—an important distinction. All these researchers that have been noted in this chapter ultimately recognise the pattern of culture and ethnicity being used as an avenue to project racist discourse. one racism though. Wieviorka argues:

The general analysis that has been presented for contemporary Europe helps us to refuse the idea of a pure, cultural racism, corresponding to a new paradigm that would have taken the place of an old one. The sources of European contemporary racism...are in the crisis of national identities and in the dualization of societies, which favour a differentialist logic. But they are also connected with phenomena of downward social mobility and economic crisis, which lead to populism and exasperation and have an important dimension in appeals for an unequal treatment of migrants.²¹⁶

Wieviorka argues four levels of racism that, when outlined, assist providing clarity on how racism is evolving as a tool for white supremacist ideologies:

1. Infraracism—this form of racism is more about "...opinions and prejudice, which are more xenophobic and populist than, strictly speaking, racist...[a]t this first level, racism is not a central issue and it is so limited, quantitatively and qualitatively..."
2. Split racism—this form of racism is a bit more obvious and explicit to infraracism. "At this stage, racism becomes a central issue, but does not give the image of a unified and integrated phenomenon, mainly because of the lack of a strong political expression."

²¹³ Michel Wieviorka, "Racism and Xenophobia," in *The Ethnicity Reader*, 292-293.

²¹⁴ *Ibid*, 299.

²¹⁵ *Ibid*.

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, 299.

3. Political racism—this is a more structured category with a stronger “political force” and a clearer agenda of state-sponsored racism.

4. Total racism—this level is when “...the state itself is based on racist principles. There is nowadays no real threat of total racism in our countries, and we may now simplify the distinction into four levels of racism by reducing them to two main ones, the infrapolitical levels, including infra and split racism, and the political one.”²¹⁷

It is the infraracism level that Wieviorka argues has taken hold of much of Western society today and is effective in its ability to be less explicit. Interestingly, it is this author’s conclusion that new forms of racism such as this one are also able to perform better by discussion such grievances as the ones previously outlined because they are so engrained in the public psyche and are such contentious issues that the British public wishes to talk about.

These categorizations are made in the context of understanding contemporary European racism, which is a development that has taken place due to its beginnings in the infrapolitical level and then its ascent into politics.²¹⁸ Increasingly, extreme right parties are more inclined to “...avoid overtly flagrant expressions of racism” in an effort to appear more respectable.²¹⁹ Wieviorka notes that there is also the important trend of racism not just appearing in political contexts but social themes also. This assessment is in line with much of the chapter on grievances, which looked at how public issues like immigration and cultural preservation have been hijacked and exploited by the far-right:

There is a growing opportunity for extreme-right forces to capitalize on fears, frustrations, unsatisfied social demands and feelings of threat to national identity. Even worse, there is a danger that these forces will introduce new elements into infrapolitical racism.²²⁰

Wieviorka even employs the term “popular racism” to reference how widespread xenophobic attitudes towards immigrants and ethnic minorities have been displayed widespread in social settings. Populism is a clear theme of this research and has important connections to new fascism and contemporary far-right capabilities in mobilising public support. Currently,

...the development is dominated by a process of populist fusion in which popular affects and political discourse converge, but which, paradoxically, protects our societies from extreme and large-scale racist episodes. However, populism is never a stable phenomenon and is always potentially open to more frightening processes.²²¹

The theme of populism is important in recognising how it has the impact to influence public opinion and the extent to which it has done that for far-right ideologies today. While it is clearly a theme that this research is able to address, the topic needs to be better researched in its current far-right context. Mudde notes the problem with the recent research on populist radical

²¹⁷ Ibid, 300.

²¹⁸ Ibid, 300.

²¹⁹ Ibid, 301.

²²⁰ Ibid, 301.

²²¹ Ibid, 301.

right parties: too often, it looks at individual and micro patterns as evidence of large-scale processes. This problem leads to an “ecological fallacy” that are inadequate and factually incorrect theories.²²² Unfortunately, deeper analysis of this concept is outside the scope of this paper but would be a worthwhile pursuit in this area of research.

Concluding Remarks

This is a complex chapter; the three ideological issues presented are large concepts and have been presented with the aim of focusing on the details that influence far-right thinking specifically. Fascism, as a political movement, has demonstrated its ability to adapt and evolve since the post WWII era in an effort to remain more politically correct and to continue attracting supporters. Part of its ability to survive is in maintaining a watchful eye on public attitudes towards immigration, and picking up that disgruntlement in a way the government does not. Britain dodged the European experiences of fascism after WWII due to the Tory government under Thatcher being able to effectively act on the topic of immigration. Ethno-nationalism is an ideology that clearly resonates with the far-right. It embraces themes of dominant ethnicity, superior culture, white supremacy and is all done under the umbrella of ‘nationalism.’ Lastly, we saw how racism has evolved and been able to adapt language that is focused on culture in order to appeal to a broader audience.

The interdependent nature of Hafez and Mullins puzzle pieces is significantly demonstrated with these issues of grievances and ideology. Many far-right groups use the theme of ‘preserving British culture’ as a new, sanitised method of justifying anti-foreigner attitudes and deeper white supremacist ideologies. Generation Identity (GI) is one such group that embodies an ethno-nationalist approach to frame its agenda.²²³ By suggesting that Britain’s white population is in decline—through a process GI refers to as ‘the Great Replacement’—the organisation subtly recommends that white lives should be put first in order to “reverse” the cultural diminishment of white Brits. The group even recommends that greater humanitarian assistance should be provided in developing countries with the aim of “...helping people to remain in and develop their homelands.”²²⁴

There is an important role ethnicity clearly plays in nationalist sentiment—in understanding cultural values related to a nation, and in what values should not be assigned as part of a national identity. Frequently, however, it is easier to decide what should *not* be part of a national identity rather than articulating what is.²²⁵ What the far-right has been able to do in recent years is mobilise off particular grievances and mould a palatable narrative around these issues that support extreme ideologies. How these two puzzle pieces feed off one another is an important part of the radicalisation process. The approachable language of concerns of cultural similarities and concerns over immigration rates to the country are both facets that make white supremacist and far right ideology more accessible to individuals. Thus, a critical part of the radicalisation process is the manipulation of key socioeconomic grievances in order to aid in convincing Brits of the merits of far-right ideologies. This kind of cooperation is visible with

²²² Mudde, 201.

²²³ Generation Identity, ‘Our Demands,’ <https://www.generation-identity.org.uk/demands/>

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ramalingam, “Reclaiming Britishness from the Far Right.”

increasing coordination between different far-right groups worldwide. For instance, some groups will specifically cater to freedom of speech, while others will collaborate along lines of white cultural preservation.²²⁶

The adaptability of the far-right is a very important theme in the puzzle piece of ideologies. Hafez and Mullins conclude their own analysis of this category with “[t]he act of strategic framing combines tradition and innovation—inherited ideas could be presented in new ways that appear to be applicable in contemporary times, and new ideas could be cloaked with a veneer of authenticity to mask their departure from tradition.”²²⁷ The evolution of new-fascism, the increasing cooperation of far-right groups across various ideological divides, and the clear theme of cultural racism replacing traditional forms of racism are all examples of this ability to adapt.

²²⁶ Davey and Ebner, 5.

²²⁷ Hafez and Mullins, 968.

IV

Networks

Hafez and Mullins claim networks “refer to pre-existing kinship and friendship ties between ordinary individuals and radicals that lead to the diffusion of extreme beliefs.”²²⁸ Frequently, individuals that have family or friends in extremist groups are more likely to join themselves. Networks are a crucial part of the radicalisation process due to the following reasons. Firstly, they encourage a sense of “collective identity” where people organise—formally or informally—around similar beliefs and shared socioeconomic experiences. The assumed similar identity encourages people to feel at ease in exchanging and receiving more radical ideas. In addition to this identity is the importance of trust and commitment that are facilitated with networks; recruiters are more likely to reach out to people they know: “...potential recruits are more willing to entertain radical ideas when they have shared experiences and bonds of kinship and friendship with their interlocutors.”²²⁹ Hafez and Mullins outline the importance of peer pressure and groupthink; “extreme interdependency” and the high cost of exiting a group or movement; and the continued influence of networks in discouraging radicalised individuals from rejoining or participating in mainstream society. In their assessment of Western Europe’s Muslim communities, Hafez and Mullins acknowledge the importance of how ostracized communities formed, mobilized around similar grievances, and encouraged hotbeds of radicalisation to form.

Radicalised Muslims in Europe have demonstrated an ability to coordinate and communicate with networks spanning across the Middle East and Central Asian.²³⁰ Recruiters have made particular use of these kinds of networks have tapped into these networks and targeted recent immigrants and second or third generation immigrations. “The convergence of marginality, criminality, and connectedness to radical networks is part of the explanation of how European Muslims have become radicalized,” Hafez and Mullins explain.²³¹ This section will discuss the themes of football as a network and to a lesser extent, veteran associations and international connections as networks that participate, in varying capacities, in the far-right radicalisation process.

Football

Hooliganism can be defined as “disorderly, aggressive and often violent behaviour perpetrated by spectators at sporting events.” In Britain, this almost always refers to football. Football hooliganism was first recognised as a problem in the 1960s,²³² but it was the 80s were a particularly prominent decade for hooliganism.²³³ The exact meaning of ‘football hooliganism’ is not definitive as it has been shaped by the media and government legislation more than any

²²⁸ Hafez and Mullins, 691.

²²⁹ *Ibid*, 691.

²³⁰ *Ibid*, 965.

²³¹ *Ibid*, 966.

²³² Politics.co.uk, “Hooliganism,” <http://www.politics.co.uk/reference/football-hooliganism>

²³³ Matt Hopkins and James Treadwell, “Introduction,” *Football Hooliganism, Fan Behaviour and Crime: Contemporary Issues*, ed. Matt Hopkins and James Treadwell. Palgrave MacMillan, 2014, 1.

particular sociological or actual scientific inquiry.²³⁴ One of the most significant are groups that is frequently under assessment for football hooliganism and Islamophobia is the EDL. The EDL was created in 2009 in Luton through loosely structured football hooliganism networks.²³⁵ Its first protest was a response to an extremist Islamist group demonstrating in Luton against British soldiers who were returning home from the war in Afghanistan.²³⁶ Since then, the group has solidified an “overarching nationalist message with street activism” and has branches in Sweden, Denmark and Norway.²³⁷

Joel Busher’s analysis of (EDL) is a frequently cited source of research on this issue. In 2017, he interviewed EDL members to gain insight into whether or not the group can be classed as a ‘single-issue movement.’ Whether or not these groups that we assess as far-right are single-issue is important to consider because these labels influence how a group forms objectives and evolves.²³⁸ Busher’s exercise was to assess the EDL’s relationship with Islamophobia in particular. For instance, the EDL actively tried to increase its membership of ethnic minorities by denouncing Nazism and burning the swastika flag.²³⁹ Busher assesses these efforts of the EDL—those of making it seem one-issue focusing on the Islamification of Britain—are part of its aim to appear less racist.²⁴⁰ There is a distinct careful management of the speeches made at protests and social media as part of this effort, Busher claims. He says, ““It is quite possible that the EDL has socialised a cohort of people into contentious politics who otherwise would have been unlikely to be involved with such activities.”²⁴¹ Ultimately, Busher’s conclusion is that while the EDL has demonstrated itself to be an effective radicalising tool, it may not be because its members identify with the group’s broad label.

Recent analysis on the use of social media by football fans in Britain indicate a significant correlation between football networks and Islamophobic commentary on sites like Twitter.²⁴² Social media will be discussed later in the Enabling Environments chapter of this dissertation; but for now, it is important to note how football, as a network, has a presence online as well as an actual physical space. More recent developments indicate the importance of football culture and networks in mobilising around issues relating to much of the far-right agenda. Last year, a group formed calling themselves the ‘Football Lads Alliance’ (FLA). The founder cites the reason for forming the group as a response to the rise of Islamist extremism in the U.K.²⁴³ The group has organised marches in protest to the perceived Islamification of Britain—one of these took place in London last year and ended at the site of the London Bridge

²³⁴ Ibid, 3.

²³⁵ Vidhya Ramalingam, “The Drivers of Far Right Extremism in Britain,” 26

²³⁶ Meleagrou-Hitchens and Brun, 11.

²³⁷ Ibid, 12.

²³⁸ Busher, 2.

²³⁹ Ibid, 4-5.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, 6.

²⁴¹ Ibid, 10.

²⁴² Carl Miller and Josh Smith, “Anti-Islamic Content on Twitter,” *Demos*, 24/04/17, <https://www.demos.co.uk/project/anti-islamic-content-on-twitter/>.

²⁴³ BBC Three, “Football Lads Alliance: ‘We could have a civil war in this country,’” 09/05/18, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/e5ee9e0a-18d7-49a4-a3c2-80b6b4222058>

attacks. They also have members that comment on the likelihood of a civil war breaking out in Britain; it is a common theme with the far-right to comment on impending 'race wars.'²⁴⁴

Busher's research approach uses three different frameworks of movement cultures to assess exactly how the EDL may or may mobilise around Islamophobia as a main issue for group formation.²⁴⁵ Ultimately, he argues that while it is important to continue critiquing how groups self-identify it should "...not come at the cost of overlooking how activists claimed identities may, and often do, shape the trajectory of these groups."²⁴⁶ Acknowledging this nuance serves to highlight how complex group formation can be, and that networks like the EDL may indeed prove to attract far-right mentalities but it is incorrect to say that football fans, as a group, are Islamophobic. And it is wrong to label all EDL and FLA members are Islamophobic also. For example, some have supporters of these groups have even commented on being accepting of Islam, but being concerned with radical Islam specifically.²⁴⁷ However, some commentators have noted the lack of explicit condemnation groups like the FLA have demonstrated during events such as the Finsbury Park attack, when these groups are normally extremely vocal over extremist attacks motivated by radical Islam.²⁴⁸

Veterans

There are also smaller networks associated with Britain's veterans; the army and its former members make up a noticeable theme in the far-right. It is the author's own assessment that this particular network is influenced by recent far-right history. One of the defining moments for the birth of networks like the EDL was when an extreme Islamist group was protesting British veterans activities in the Middle East upon their return to the U.K., as was discussed earlier. The outrage this caused—whether or not it was due to anger over the disrespect towards veterans or because the protest was being conducted by an extremist Islamic group—ensured that groups like the EDL were juxtaposed in their support for veterans against extremist Islamic groups opposition towards them. A recent year-long investigation into radicalisation patterns online found that 9% of Britain's far-right were veterans or current members of the British armed forces.²⁴⁹ National Action, which was banned in 2016 after being deemed a terrorist organisation, made headlines not only because of its far-right neo-Nazi ideology but also because it was uncovered that some of its active supporters were actually serving in the British army.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁴ BBC Three, "Football Lads Alliance: 'We could have a civil war in this country,'" <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/e5ee9e0a-18d7-49a4-a3c2-80b6b4222058>

²⁴⁵ Busher, 6.

²⁴⁶ Ibid, 13.

²⁴⁷ BBC Three, "Football Lads Alliance: 'We could have a civil war in this country,'" <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/e5ee9e0a-18d7-49a4-a3c2-80b6b4222058>

²⁴⁸ James Poulter and Simon Childs, "Are the Football Lads Alliance Another Street Movement?" *Vice News*, 23/03/18, https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/kzx8jw/are-the-football-lads-alliance-another-far-right-street-movement

²⁴⁹ Jacob Davey, Jonathan Birdwell and Rebeca Skellett, "Counter Conversations: A model for direct engagement with individuals showing signs of radicalisation online," London: *Institute for Strategic Dialogue*, 2018, 6.

²⁵⁰ James Grierson, "Five men held over alleged membership of banned UK neo-Nazi group," *The Guardian*, 05/09/17, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/sep/05/four-held-on-suspicion-of-being-members-of-outlawed-neo-nazi-group-national-action>

Veterans Against Terrorism (VAT) does not have the same kind of extreme far-right rhetoric on their website as other key groups that were listed in the literature review. Their mission statement, for instance, makes sure to denounce violence against Muslims with inclusive language of “[w]e are totally opposed to any violence against Muslims or the incitement violence against Muslims, attacks against any part of *our community* [emphasis author’s own] are totally wrong and they must not happen.” VAT’s mission statement also references the UN’s Declaration of Human Rights and acknowledges the right to freedom of speech and freedom of religion, making sure to voice its support for the ideals.²⁵¹ However, the group endorsed their support for Ukip this past January and claimed that they appreciated the work of the FLA.²⁵² The FLA and VAT have held joint marches together in cities across the UK.²⁵³ Yet the Royal British Legion—another veterans support group—returned a donation last year the FLA made to the organisation due to disagreements over FLA values.²⁵⁴

Research has noted that globally, there is a pattern of far-right groups recruiting former members of national armies due to their skill-set, experience, and potential sympathy for ultra-nationalist and far-right ideologies.²⁵⁵

International

Hafez and Mullins’ highlight the importance of international connections to their theory; similar patterns exist with Britain’s far-right. There are some differences though—a lot of the networks formed in radical Muslim networks are tied to friendship and kinship relations that span across different migration patterns.²⁵⁶ Far-right international connections, instead, appear to depend on making connections solely due to other groups having similar white supremacist ideologies. Britain’s security services are becoming increasingly concerned with national far-right groups making an effort to seek help from other like-minded groups in Europe and North America.²⁵⁷

The EDL itself has helped create a larger network called the European Counter-Jihad Movement (ECJM); this network “...constitute an identifiable pan-European movement that has been emerging since the late-2000s.”²⁵⁸ The EDL has successfully helped launch similar groups in Scandinavia, and has received in help in doing so with far-right activists from the US that

²⁵¹ Veterans Against Terrorism, ‘Mission Statement,’ <https://veteransagainstterrorism.blog/about/>

²⁵² Veterans Against Terrorism, ‘Veterans Full Statement Relating to Support for Gerard Batten and UKIP,’ <https://veteransagainstterrorism.blog/2018/01/28/veterans-full-statement-relating-to-support-for-gerard-batten-and-ukip/>

²⁵³ Stephen Steward, “Military vets back far-right footy bams and claim hug leader has been ‘demonised,’ *The Daily Record*, 04/11/17, <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/military-vets-group-back-far-11464071>

²⁵⁴ BBC Three, “Football Lads Alliance: ‘We could have a civil war in this country,’” <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/e5ee9e0a-18d7-49a4-a3c2-80b6b4222058>

²⁵⁵ Jacob Davey, “We must act fast to stop far-right groups targeting military personnel,” *The Guardian*, 06/09/17, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/sep/06/far-right-military-personnel>

²⁵⁶ Hafez and Mullins, 965.

²⁵⁷ Michael Holden, “Britain is facing serious far-right terrorism threat, says UK top officer,” *Reuters*, 26/02/18, <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-security/britain-is-facing-serious-far-right-terrorism-threat-says-top-uk-officer-idUKKCN1GA2K9>

²⁵⁸ Meleagrou-Hitchens and Brun, 1.

support the EDL mission.²⁵⁹ Undercover reporting found that the recently relaunched Generation Identity has been establishing a training network with like-minded groups in Europe to send UK supporters, such as Norway.²⁶⁰ Similar investigative reporting has found links between Scotland's far-right Scottish Dawn and far-right groups in the Balkans.²⁶¹

Concluding Remarks

These networks form different from the radical Islam groups that Hafez and Mullins outline; they are formed not around religion but in more complex settings. The street movement culture that has grown out of football hooliganism occurred due to loose networks that were in place prior mobilising off Islamophobia in areas like Luton back in 2009. Veterans associations clearly have strong links to Britain's football culture, but these ties are contested over some values that are deemed too extreme. The targeting of military veterans is an alarming pattern that should be noted by Britain's security apparatus. Lastly, the international connections that are being established by far-right groups provide alarming evidence of far-right goals to strengthen their tactics and innovate their approach. These network forms are of course not prescriptions for the radicalisation process to begin; but they are examples of environments or groups in which far-right ideologies can easily take hold, be reinforced, or networks in which recruitment is more simple to conduct. Each example given—football, veterans, and international connections—contains a different potential in contributing to the radicalisation process and in appealing in different ways to individuals to follow far-right ideologies.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, 2.

²⁶⁰ Lizzie Dearden, "Generation Identity: Far-right group sending UK recruits to military-style training camps in Europe," *The Independent*, 09/09/17, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/generation-identity-far-right-group-training-camps-europe-uk-recruits-military-white-nationalist-a8046641.html>

²⁶¹ Andrew Learmonth, "Probe links Britain First founder Jim Dawson to anti-Muslim group in Balkans," *The National*, 02/05/18, <http://www.thenational.scot/news/16197745.Probe links Scots Britain First founder to anti-Muslim groups in Balkans/?ref=twtrrec>

V

Enabling Environments and Support Structures

The last puzzle piece of Hafez and Mullin's radicalisation theory is 'enabling environments and support structures.' These are listed as factors that "...encompass physical and virtual settings such as the Internet, social media, prisons, or foreign terrorist training camps that provide ideological and material aid for radicalizing individuals, as well as deepen their commitment to radical milieus."²⁶² The recent Cambridge Analytica scandal is a recent example that highlights the growing importance of online activities in manipulating public mood and opinion for the purposes of influencing political developments has become for the right.²⁶³ This analysis has acknowledges how the process of mobilising support based off a disgruntled public mood is a critical symptom of populist, fascist tendencies.²⁶⁴ Online forums are increasingly important for this purpose: they are demonstrating their ability to act as an incubator for far-right ideological developments and also as a platform for far-right recruitment.

In the context of Hafez and Mullins' assessment of Islamist extremism, the enabling environments of particular importance have proven to be foreign terrorist training camps such as those of ISIS and al-Qaeda.²⁶⁵ They also note how important highly accessible social media outlets have become for communicating radical jihad ideals to a wide audience.²⁶⁶ At the time of Hafez and Mullin's research, there were debates on how significant the internet can be in self-radicalising individuals and the extent to which terrorist networks are involved in most attacks.²⁶⁷ A lot has happened since 2015 however: fringe internet cultures and ever-evolving online forums have demonstrated their abilities to encourage and enable extensive social harm.²⁶⁸

Method and Material

For instance, Thomas Mair was found to have read far-right material online in the weeks leading up to murdering Jox Cox.²⁶⁹ Alexandre Bissonette's 2017 attack on a mosque in Montreal was also precluded with a substantial amount of online far-right material being read.²⁷⁰ There is a significant amount of research on the role of the internet in radicalising individuals to support

²⁶² Hafez and Mullins, 691.

²⁶³ BBC "Facebook's Zuckerberg speaks out over Cambridge Analytica 'breach' <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-43494337>

²⁶⁴ Tharoor, "The scary truth that Cambridge Analytica understands," https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/03/22/the-scary-truth-that-cambridge-analytica-understands/?utm_term=.c123c3952267

²⁶⁵ Hafez and Mullins, 968.

²⁶⁶ Hafez and Mullins, 969.

²⁶⁷ Hafez and Mullins, 970.

²⁶⁸ Davey and Amarasingam, "Fringe internet culture can't stay in the fringes," <http://www.cbc.ca/news/opinion/fringe-internet-culture-1.4636614>

²⁶⁹ Ian Cobain and Matthew Taylor, "Far-right terrorist Thomas Mair jailed for life for Jo Cox murder," 23/11/16, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/nov/23/thomas-mair-found-guilty-of-jo-cox-murder>

²⁷⁰ Andy Riga, "Inside the life of Quebec mosque killed Alexandre Bissonnette," *The Montreal Gazette*, 23/04/18 <http://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/alexandre-bissonnette-inside-the-life-of-a-mass-murderer>

a wide array of extremist views—the far-right, radical Islamism, and, most recently, ‘incels,’ or the misogynistic ‘involuntary celibates’ that has gained significant attention after one such Toronto local killed ten people.²⁷¹ Consequently, this section will focus primarily on how the internet has been a particularly important enabling factor for white supremacy ideology to gain traction. This is a category that clearly overlaps with networks; the support that the British far-right has received from abroad can be classed as much a network as it can an enabling factor. Using online networks, the far-right has increasingly coordinated and aided other like-minded groups. Research has found this kind of collaboration has a global reach, across Europe and between Europe and North America.²⁷²

It is not just the availability of material online that gives cause for concern when considering factors impacting radicalisation, but it is also the method in which the material is delivered. As previous chapters in this analysis have outlined, there is an importance to the language the far-right is using. Clear efforts are being made to make far-right ideologies more accessible, and how language is used on far-right websites is a crucial. Chris Atton has examined how the British National Party has used a specific type of discourse on its online media forums and concludes that group uses “...radical reformation of the concepts of power, culture and oppression” to perpetuate new concepts of the other.²⁷³ Interestingly, Atton outlines similar themes to Wieviorka on newer forms of ‘acceptable’ racism that are prevalent with the BNP’s emphasis on British values and British cultural preservation in the ‘Heritage and Culture’ section of the website. “The BNP is an anti-multicultural, anti-equality and anti-freedom,” he notes, “yet its discourse uses the tropes of multiculturalism, equality and freedom to maintain an ideological space where racism and repression may appear natural and commonsensical.”²⁷⁴ The accessibility of online sources, pitching these forms of cultural racism, or ‘new racism’ as was discussed earlier, are a critical component of the internet being an enabling factor of the radicalisation process.

Alternative Sources

The following examples will demonstrate how social media and the internet are enablers in promoting and disseminating extreme right beliefs. One example demonstrating how important online tools are for the far-right is the clear pattern of the far-right rapidly adapting to policy measures restricting their online activity. More and more research is asserting that it is no longer effective enough for government and social media companies to just block the twitter accounts and shut down the facebook pages of far-right users. After Britain First was banned from Twitter, they almost immediately signed up to Gab, and encouraged their supporters to do the same.²⁷⁵ Hatreon has become the far-right’s alternative to Pateron for raising funds. Launched last June, it is a response to the increasing regulation of

²⁷¹ Davey and Amarasingam, “Fringe internet culture can’t stay in the fringes,”

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/opinion/fringe-internet-culture-1.4636614>

²⁷² Davey and Ebner, 5-6.

²⁷³ Chris Atton, “Far-right media on the internet: culture, discourse, and power,” *New Media and Society*, 8:4, 2006, 573.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 586.

²⁷⁵ Sarah Marsh, “Britain First signs up to fringe social media site after Twitter ban,” 20/12/17, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/20/britain-first-gab-social-media-twitter-ban>

online fundraising campaigns.²⁷⁶ Reddit and Facebook both banned users and removed online message boards last year, but the response was for far-right website the Daily Stormer to move to the dark web²⁷⁷, and fringe social media like WrongThink and Mastadon have arose to replace Facebook and Twitter, respectively.²⁷⁸ It is this author's conclusion that these changes in social media providers and tighter restrictions only embolden pre-existing far-right views that their freedom of speech is being infringed upon and that they actively need to seek out alternative sources to protect it.

The servers that provide the platform for certain far-right groups to operate online are also important to consider. For example, the UK government's decision to ban internet access to certain far-right websites can easily be side-stepped by using either a VPN or when the organization uses a server overseas. Such was the case with National Action, whose website can be viewed using an external IP address. Increasingly, far-right groups are choosing to use US registered servers as they protected under the 1st amendment freedom of speech.²⁷⁹ The Daily Stormer is trying to re-enter the open web, and has been able to use a Hong Kong domain for now, after several unsuccessful attempts with Albania (.al), Iceland (.is), and Russia (.ru).²⁸⁰ These are further examples of far-right adapting to restrictions on their online activities.

But beyond servers and domains, there is the enduring importance of social media such as Twitter. CASM (The Centre for Social Media Analysis) is a think-tank operating out of London that regularly conducts research on the far-right use of social media; they found that Leave campaigners were far more active on Twitter throughout Brexit, using the platform to propagate and share xenophobic and racist language.²⁸¹ Platforms like Twitter highlight one of the most important features that makes the internet an enabling environment for the far-right: a phenomenon known as echo chambers. Facebook news feeds, google searches and our online advertisements are catered specifically to individuals based on their previous internet browsing history. This process only further reinforces a person's worldview, as they find similarly-minded individuals and material online, thus creating an 'internet bubble.' It is a feature of the internet that encourages misinformation and polarisation to take place.²⁸² Research from New York-based Data and Society Research Institute has uncovered exactly how important these forms of online opinion manipulation have become for the far-right in recent years. Just as Davey and Ebner's research concluded how effective far-right fringe internet forums and platforms are at collaborating across ideological divides across Europe, Data and Society too found that far-right

²⁷⁶ John Bonazzo, "The 'Alt-Right' Is Now Using 'Hateron' to Crowdfund Its Projects," *The Observer*, 08/07/17, <http://observer.com/2017/08/crowdfunding-alt-right-hatreon-richard-spencer/>

²⁷⁷ Samuel Gibbs, "Daily Stormer jumps to dark web while Reddit and Facebook ban hate groups," *The Guardian*, 16/08/17, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/aug/16/daily-stormer-forced-dark-web-reddit-facebook-ban-hate-groups>

²⁷⁸ Sites at: <https://wrongthink.net/>; <https://mastodon.social/about>

²⁷⁹ Lorand Bodo, "The UK Extreme Right on Twitter: Restricting Access To Extremist Content Online," *Vox-Pol*, 18/10/17, <http://www.voxpol.eu/uk-extreme-right-twitter-restricting-access-extremist-content-online/>

²⁸⁰ Maura Conway with Michael Courtney, "Violent Extremism and Terrorism Online in 2017: The Year in Review" *Vox-Pol*, December 2017, 8.

²⁸¹ Carl Miller, et. al, "Brexit: The Digital Aftermath," *Centre for the Analysis of Social Media, Demos*: London, 2016.

²⁸² David Robert Grimes, "Echo chambers are dangerous—we must try to break free of our own bubbles," *The Guardian*, 04/12/17, <https://www.theguardian.com/science/blog/2017/dec/04/echo-chambers-are-dangerous-we-must-try-to-break-free-of-our-online-bubbles>

'subcultures' make use of multiple far-right agendas, ensuring they "...generally package themselves as anti-establishment in their reaction against multiculturalism and globalism, while promoting racist, anti-feminist, and anti-Semitic ideologies."²⁸³ For example, the far-right has chosen to utilise young, white mens' frustration with political correctness with white supremacist ideologies through a savvy use of internet subcultures and tools such as bots and memes.²⁸⁴ This kind of research critically underscores how ideological adaptations have made use of the internet to not only convey their agenda, but to advance it.

However, assessing the specific contribution of online materials to the radicalisation process has its challenges. These are sources that are undoubtedly important—and research on them has expanded massively since Hafez and Mullins theory was published. But some recent reviews of the available research have noted common conceptual problems, particularly with a lack of actual data on the subject. Some of the challenges of assessing the realm of the internet specifically in relation to studying radicalisation are the following. There is a massive breadth: from accessing extremist information, viewing propaganda videos, and suspicious comments on blog posts and social media forums have all been classed as radical online behavior at various points.²⁸⁵ One of the dangers of this line of research is that a large amount of unjustifiable weight can be placed on the role 'online radicalisation' in the creation of a terrorist,²⁸⁶ alongside the danger of generalising with some qualitative analysis methods.²⁸⁷ Some key assessments have been made about radical activity online from this past year by leading think-tank on online extremism, Vox-Pol.

A huge amount of attention circulated around the role policymakers and tech companies play in monitoring extremism online.²⁸⁸ The far-right's proven ability to grow²⁸⁹ motivated governments across the West to enact stricter legislation about extremist content monitoring standards.²⁹⁰ Pressure exerted resulted in major social media companies to announce a Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism in June last year, designed to create policy responses to the problem.²⁹¹ However some social media outlets have since been criticized for not managing the far-right as effectively as radical Islamism. For instance, in December when Donald Trump retweeted Britain First's deputy leader Jayda Fransen's Islamophobic tweets on Muslims in the UK, Twitter was criticised for not removing it.²⁹² Ultimately, the far-right online undoubtedly plays an important role in attracting people to white supremacist ideologies, but it is difficult to gauge the exact impact this part of process has on the development of extremist beliefs. With research indicating that 43% of Brits feeling

²⁸³ Alice Marwick and Rebecca Lewis, "Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online," *Data and Society Research Institute*, New York, 05/15/17, 3.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 1.

²⁸⁵ Paul Gil, et al., "What are the Roles of the Internet in Terrorism? Measuring Online Behaviours of Convicted UK Terrorists" *Vox Pol*, 2015, 5.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 4.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 29.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 1.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 8.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 10.

²⁹¹ *Ibid*, 11.

²⁹² Conway and Courtney, 13.

that news media is important to society but only 32% saying they trust news media,²⁹³ online manipulation of the grievances that were discussed earlier is an important consideration in the radicalisation process.

Concluding Remarks

Clearly the internet is an enabling environment for extremism to utilise. Research and governments are noting its role in both Islamic and far-right radicalisation. However, the far-right appears to be outmanoeuvring the government and tech companies with finding alternative internet platforms to use for its aims. The wide list of alternative sources that was provided in this chapter is just an example of the most recent research on other avenues the far-right has pursued. The list is sure to grow—and quickly. The range and scale of available far-right sources online undoubtedly is an important consideration in the radicalisation process. Research is clearly still unfolding on how exactly to quantify the impact some of these sources have on extremist thought development.

The last two chapters had a notably different tone than the first two puzzle piece assessments. Grievances and ideology saw this analysis delve into the history of far-right movements and the issues and ideals attached to it. Networks and enabling environments focused on more contemporary examples that demonstrate how the far-right has made use of its contemporary settings. Football is an example of a feature of the puzzle that has a presence in networks and the internet. This means that there is one theme that can draw individuals into the far-right radicalisation process through two different avenues. All four puzzle pieces have—in some capacity—articulated how far-right groups and movements have adapted. The use of culture is a strong example of this and is a clear theme in the research on the subject. For instance, this analysis addressed how themes of fascism, nativism and ethno-nationalism have all contributed to the non-traditional discourses of racism. Changing rhetoric has played an important role in the effectiveness of online far-right groups, as Chris Atton has demonstrated in his research on the British National Party's website.

²⁹³ Pew Research Centre, "New Media and Political Attitudes in the United Kingdom," 17/05/18, [http://www.pewglobal.org/fact-sheet/news-media-and-political-attitudes-in-the-united-kingdom/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=paidpost&utm_campaign=news media&utm_content=uk fact sheet](http://www.pewglobal.org/fact-sheet/news-media-and-political-attitudes-in-the-united-kingdom/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=paidpost&utm_campaign=news%20media&utm_content=uk_fact_sheet)

Conclusion

This research analysis was an investigative attempt at applying a theory to Britain's far-right. Drawing heavily on recent history and contemporary societal examples, this dissertation applied the four puzzle pieces of Hafez and Mullins' methodology to the far-right. The aim of such an exercise is to demonstrate the processes involved in radicalising someone to support far-right parties and ideologies. The fact that Hafez and Mullins' framework, which was originally created to explain Islamic extremism, can be applied to patterns in Britain's far-right today is a fact the author finds compelling. Similar patterns in how we can detect extremist mindsets developing suggests commonalities in societal issues that the government can use to tackle radicalisation processes across the spectrum. Interestingly, Hafez and Mullins appear on the verge of noting this pattern themselves when they note the existence of an apparent:

...a self-reinforcing dynamic of exclusion: Muslims accentuate their Islamic identity in opposition to the dominant culture, which further reinforces in the minds of Europeans that Muslims are inherently different and detached from them all.²⁹⁴

Their comment points to how xenophobia and strong attachments to Islamic identity can feed off one another, only exacerbating the polarised tension between the two extremes.

The variety of indicators raised in this analysis are complex forces at work. At different time periods, British media and academia have reported on how incapable and disorganised individual far-right groups and movements-at-large in Britain have been in mobilising effectively.²⁹⁵ It may be accurate to assert their ineffectiveness, but the sentiment and ideologies are undoubtedly influencing Brits and their society at large. The 2016 Brexit vote is not necessarily proof of this, but this analysis has demonstrated how trends in British society are important contributions to the process of extremist thinking. Fear of a declining British culture, desires for stricter immigration policies and easy access to radical or disinformation online are three examples that each play an important role in the radicalisation theory outlined in this analysis. Alone, however, they are innocuous, harmless and unlikely to immediately generate a white supremacist terrorist.

This dissertation has outlined historical patterns and societal developments that contribute to far-right support. Applying socio-political theories like Hafez and Mullins to the study of white supremacist developments highlights also the importance of addressing very specific societal issues when it comes to tackling home extremism. Cognitive radicalisation stemming from the previously presented 'puzzle pieces' has been demonstrated with the murder of Jo Cox and the Finsbury Park attacks. Such developments warrant the immediate attention of Britain's security apparatus. It is additionally important for Westminster to be aware of behavioural radicalisation patterns. The Prevent program is clearly designed to tackle this issue. As outlined in the introduction, its role in Britain's national counter-terrorism strategy has been contentious from the beginning and in constant development as new forms

²⁹⁴ Hafez and Mullins, 963.

²⁹⁵ Dominic Casciani, "Far right in UK 'weakest for 20 years,'" 14/01/15, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-30802767>

of extremism emerge. However, the government may want to be wary of its approach, particularly on an issue such as FBVs and overall discussions on British culture and 'Britishness.'

This analysis finds the trend of culture being a tool of both the government and far-right groups an alarming dual feature of British society. It is an important time for Britain to be aware of its complicated relationship with this topic. It is arguably a particularly dangerous irony when the government makes understanding Britishness a necessary CT measure at the same time as far-right groups are increasingly engaging pursuing an ethno-nationalist agenda by citing cultural differences as one of their biggest contentions. As was addressed in the introduction, the Prevent program mandates teachers be aware of potentially radicalised students in their classrooms. One education tool for teachers to use is 'education against hate'—a website that is the result of a partnership between the Department for Education and the Home Office. The website's purpose is clear: it is designed to try and articulate how the government sees the implementation of FBVs taking place in its schools. Included in the website is a section telling teachers how to identify warning signs of radicalisation, it lists twelve 'outward appearance' indicators, such as "becoming increasingly argumentative," "refusing to listen to different points of view," and becoming abusive to students who are different." Then there is a section just below outlining warning online behaviours such as "spending a lot of time online or on the phone," "accessing extremist content online," and "joining or trying to join an extremist organisation."²⁹⁶ The only concrete articulation of what British values are in this website is a 'Top tips' pamphlet for teachers. It says that to help "build resilience" against extremist ideology amongst students in British schools, teachers should actively "promote the fundamental British values of: democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs."²⁹⁷ These supposed 'British' values outlined in this online resource tool for teachers are clearly designed to reflect the government definition of extremism that was visited in the introduction of this thesis.

Theories and methodologies are important tools for understanding radicalisation and extremist developments. Yet, as this paper has demonstrated in its discussion on the evolvment of fascism, the far-right is very capable of adapting and morphing its identity to advance its agenda and suit the climate in which it wants to operate. Last summer, fascist group Generation Identity (GI) was launched in the UK. With founding roots in France and groups operating across Europe,²⁹⁸ the UK branch has been in the paper for its appeal to youth and its rebranding efforts to distance itself from the skinhead look so often associated with neo-Nazis.²⁹⁹ Jacob Davey and Julia Ebner similarly expressed concern with the government's ineffective responses to the far-right's ability to adapt and evolve today:

²⁹⁶ Educate against Hate, 'Radicalisation and Extremism,' <https://educateagainsthate.com/teachers/radicalisation-and-extremism/>

²⁹⁷ "Top Tips to help teachers to discuss radicalisation with pupils" *educate against hate*, accessed 26/05/18 under 'resources,' 2.

²⁹⁸ Hope not Hate, "Generation Identity," <https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/research/investigations/undercover-inside-britains-far-right/generation-identity/>

²⁹⁹ Arwa Mahdwi, "When 'hipster fascists' start appearing in the media, something has gone very wrong," *The Guardian*, 22/05/18, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/may/22/when-the-media-starts-celebrating-hipster-fascists-something-has-gone-very-wrong>

New measures that prevent and counter the emergence of extreme activities online and offline must match the sophistication of the extreme right. Positive alternative narratives have been ruthlessly mocked and assaulted by the extreme-right, and have the effect of reinforcing their narratives. In order to disrupt these groups we must understand both their psychological drivers and strategic directions.³⁰⁰

The obscure, multi-faceted and fast-moving nature of today's extreme right has led to a significant shortage in academic research on this issue and reinforced worryingly slow and ineffectual policy responses. Attempts to map extreme-right landscapes have often been hindered by key influencers' rapidly changing online ecosystems and communication methods, as well as their outmaneuvering of traditional communication channels. Increasingly, extreme-right movements create their own new networks, social media platforms, funding structures and chat applications to replace those are banned or deemed too heavily regulated.³⁰¹ The Prevent program and increased regulation of social media are, quite simply, not sufficient enough. Consequently, this dissertation serves as an important—albeit small—contribution to the field of counter-extremism and radicalisation and deradicalisation research.

This dissertation has applied Hafez and Mullins 'Radicalization Puzzle Piece' theory to the British far-right in an effort to engage with some of the major factors that contribute to Britain's growing problem of the far-right. The puzzle pieces—grievances, ideology, networks and enabling environments—provided four valuable categories of assessment. In the analysis of these categories, a thorough exploration of social, political and historical factors relating to far-right radicalisation has been conducted, proving that Hafez and Mullins theory can be used for other variations of extremism outside of Islam. Grievances addressed how concerns over immigration have traditionally been a factor manipulated by the far-right and continues to be. Xenophobia is a defining feature of this grievance and plays hand-in-hand with the second critical grievance—that of the preservation of British culture. While the idea of 'British' and 'British values' remains elusive and unclear, the concept of cultural nationalism has clearly been an effective tool for the far-right and remains an important tool in the sanitisation of rhetoric. Ideology is a complex category for this assessment as it embodies a great range—fascism, ethno-nationalism, nativism and 'new racism' each contribute to far-right ideological formations. These ideologies are often fluid and overlap greatly with one another; the defining feature being their abilities to encourage white supremacist ideals to flourish.

The chapter on networks established that there are important internal examples—such as football and veterans associations—as well as increasingly prominent international connections for the far-right. These networks can be loosely structured and are not necessarily made up of individuals subscribing to one particular ideology. Yet there are clearly similar anti-immigrant, Islamophobic themes; and the trend for UK based groups to collaborate with other European far-right groups is a worrying pattern on the rise. Lastly, the role of the internet as an enabling environment for far-right radicalisation is a critical contributor to the process. Online extremist content and social media use by the far-right are both highly evolving and ever-adapting tools that are being used in Britain.

³⁰⁰ Davey and Ebner, 6.

³⁰¹ Davey and Ebner, 8.

The analogy of the puzzle is apt: these are pieces that can be independently assessed to gain a deeper understanding of a particular angle to the radicalisation process. However, no one category is responsible for the full transformation of an individual, no one piece is owed more attention, and it is altogether that they make up the troubling process of radicalisation. These pieces are likely to continue shaping according to changing social circumstances; national counter-extremism measures must recognise this and respond accordingly.

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