COUNTRY-LEVEL REPORT ON DRIVERS OF SELF-RADICALISATION AND DIGITAL SOCIABILITY

Norway

DARE
Dialogue About Radicalisation & Equality

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Country-level reports on drivers of self-radicalisation and digital sociability

Norway

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Executive Summary

Norway is currently experiencing upward trends of radicalisation, and there is an urgent need to improve our understanding of these trends. In this timely report, we present an empirical study on how supporters of radical Islam and the radical right interact on Twitter. The study is based on ethnographic and automatic text and network analyses of big data from Twitter accounts belonging to Norwegian women and men.

General findings from our study on Twitter in Norway:

- Online activity amongst the radical right and radical Muslims is multilingual, with extensive use of English.
- Radical views are expressed in text, symbols, posters and images on some online profiles, amongst some influencers and in conversations on Twitter.

The study does not offer definitive evidence on the drivers of self-radicalisation. We do not know for certain, for example, whether themes that create engagement, including videos and texts shared on Twitter, serve as drivers of self-radicalisation. The study has, however, produced some indications that can be further researched through qualitative analyses to obtain more definitive knowledge.

Findings from analyses of the radical right on Twitter in Norway:

- Twitter plays a role in the lives of the radical right and the Norwegian data sample can be considered a digital milieu. Yet there are also users who interact in English on the edges of this milieu and who may bring influences from these interactions into Norway.
- In our data sample, the radical right mainly comprises anti-Islamists and/or supporters of Donald Trump.
- The themes that generate engagement amongst anti-Islamists are the economy, government and elections, Islam and crimes involving Muslims.
- The themes that generate engagement amongst Trump supporters are American politics, borders and migration, terror, sex and freedom of speech.
- Signs of extremist positions and support for violence are visible.
- Our results support the need for an action plan against hatred towards Muslims in Norway.

Findings from the analysis of radical Muslims on Twitter in Norway:

- Twitter does not seem to play a major role in the lives of radical Muslims. The Norwegian data sample cannot be considered a radical Muslim digital milieu.
- There are no connections to users in other countries within our data sample in the DARE project, just to countries elsewhere.
- The themes that generate engagement amongst Muslims are politics in Pakistan, life and religion in general, Salafism and refugees and war in Muslim countries.
- There are no signs of support for violence, only some support for radical positions.

Possible drivers of self-radicalisation amongst the radical right on Twitter in Norway:

- Themes of polarising discussions and conversations: Islam and Muslims, immigration and the white race.
- Influencers, videos, images and text promoting hate speech against Muslims and immigrants.
- International interaction.
- The staging and framing of radical and extremist online identities.

Possible drivers of self-radicalisation amongst Muslims on Twitter in Norway:

- Influencers, videos, images and texts promoting Salafism.
- International interaction.
- The staging and framing of radical online identities.

1. Introduction

The role of the Internet and social media in violent extremism has been a burning issue since al-Qaeda started using the Internet actively (Thomas, 2003; Rogan, 2006), but especially after the rise and expansion of the so-called Islamic State (von Behr et al., 2013; Conway, 2012; Pearson, 2015; Klausen, 2015; Alava, Frau-Meigs and Hassan, 2017; Conway, 2017; al-Rawi, 2017; Awan, 2017; Meleagrou-Hitchens and Kaderbhai, 2017). The rise of the extreme right in Europe and elsewhere (e.g. the United States and Latin America) has also attracted much attention with regard to Internet usage in general and social media in particular (Neudert, Kollanyi and Howard, 2017; Medina-Serrano et al., 2018) as well as its role in the self-radicalisation process (Koehler 2014).

In this report, we present a study of digital sociability and drivers of self-radicalisation on Twitter amongst radical Muslims and the radical right in Norway. Radicalism, in this report, refers to active support for fundamental – system-changing – political change (Schmid, 2013) or support for fundamental religious change[1]. Radicalism can relate to beliefs/attitudes or actions/behaviour, and radicals are not necessarily violent. They might share characteristics with (violent) extremists (e.g. alienation from the state, anger over foreign policy, sense of discrimination), but there are also important differences (e.g. willingness to engage in critical thinking). Holding radical beliefs/attitudes means advocating sweeping political or religious change, and it is based on the conviction that the status quo is unacceptable and that a fundamentally different alternative is available.

The report starts from an understanding of self-radicalisation as a process wherein the individuals themselves are the instigators of the radicalisation process, in which they come to embrace attitudes – or engage in actions – that support violence in the pursuit of extremist causes[2]. Furthermore, in this report, the drivers of self-radicalisation include various online interactions that may contribute to a process of self-radicalisation, such as the staging and framing of online identities, themes in online conversations, events, influencers and networks.

1.1 The role of the Internet in self-radicalisation in Norway

Norway is currently experiencing upward trends of radicalisation. There is an urgent need to improve the understanding of these trends, as explained in the Norwegian government's action plan against radicalisation and violent extremism (Regjeringen, 2017). In particular, we need to expand our knowledge of media assisted self-radicalisation. The 2019 Norwegian Police Security Service threat assessment (Police Security Service, 2019) emphasises that the Internet will continue to be the main source of, and arena for, spreading right-wing extremist propaganda. The Police Security Service also assumes that there will be local and foreign radicalisers who operate independently, with no affiliation to an organised milieu on the Internet, to radicalise individuals into extreme Islamism. Yet, to date, few studies have employed empirical evidence to draw firm conclusions about online radicalisation. 'Use of empirical evidence to draw convincing conclusions remains scarce, and this has negatively impacted on the strength of research on this topic' (Meleagrou-Hitchens and Kaderbhai, 2017: 4).

Most of the knowledge relating to online self-radicalisation in Norway has been derived from the single case of terrorist Anders Behring Breivik. Using the Internet, Breivik developed and strengthened his extreme worldviews (Ravndal, 2013). In particular, he was inspired by Fjordman's blog (Enebakk, 2012; Slatta, 2014). Breivik also attempted to spread his own ideas on the Internet through a manifesto (Bangstad, 2014; Fangen, 2014) and a video (Nilsen, 2014). He was careful, however, not to attract the attention of police and, thus, never wrote openly about violence (Stormark, 2012). Breivik planned and carried out his terror activities alone. He has been described as a lone wolf coming from a pack (Strømmen, 2011: 32). Jupskås (2012: 42) notes that 'the internet

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[1] http://www.dare-h2020.org/concepts.html
[2] This understanding is adopted across the DARE project. See: http://www.dare-h2020.org/concepts.html

and social media (most notably Facebook) seem to function as recruiting and cultivating platforms for a growing array of Islamophobic groups'. Haanshuus and Jupskås (2017: 145) note 'a clear shift from an Islamophobic to an ultra-nationalist interpretation of "the problem"'. Nevertheless, a very recent attack shows that anti-Muslim sentiments are still relevant. In August 2019, a young man named Peter Manshaus killed his adopted sister from China before he set off to a mosque. There, he had planned to kill as many Muslims as possible, but was overpowered by people at the mosque. Negative attitudes and perceptions of Muslims were also found in this study, but negative attitudes are of course also more widely held than intentions to kill.

In Norway, extant knowledge of the Internet's role in self-radicalisation amongst Islamist extremists is mainly related to the Prophet's Ummah, which is the only network of Norwegian jihadi Salafists that has legitimised the use of violence – claiming the ongoing crusade against Islam as its reason (Michalsen, 2016: 290-91). The group existed between 2012 and 2016 and had a website and a Facebook group. Their rhetoric was anti-democratic and violent, expressing support for Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda and the Islamic state (Michalsen, 2016: 282, 300). In 2014, their Facebook group was reported for hateful utterances and symbols and was subsequently closed (TV2, 2014), but it was reported re-open in 2016 (Michalsen, 2016: 284). Lia (2013: 106) notes that their Facebook group seems to have an identity-building function and that the group's members are using YouTube very actively (for examples of their use of YouTube, see: Nilsen, 2019; and Kvinnegård, 2017).

1.2 Methodological choices

In this report, we present a study, based on so-called big data from Twitter, exploring digital sociability and drivers of self-radicalisation. The research comprises an ethnographic pilot study and a cross-disciplinary study drawing on automatic text and network analyses. The aim of this research is to shed light on whether the use of Twitter represents a threat with respect to processes of self-radicalisation in Norway. We focus on Twitter – rather than Facebook, which has more users in Norway, or 4chan, which is more common amongst the far right – for technical reasons, as explained in the general introduction to this series of country reports. Thus, the analyses presented in this report follow a mixed-methods approach based on empirical evidence. Our data consist of the most extremist and radical Twitter accounts that we could find on Twitter in Norway amongst Muslims and the right wing – in total, 83 Twitter accounts.

We present our findings from the ethnographic phase of the study as well as the results derived from quantitative and qualitative analyses of data retrieved using the big data approach in the second phase of the research. The study is part of a larger study on media assisted self-radicalisation under the umbrella of the EU-financed project DARE (Dialogue About Radicalisation and Equality[3]) with parallel studies carried out in the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Greece, Norway and Great Britain. The study was designed by our French partners in the DARE project, as explained in the general introduction to this study.

The research question guiding this study is: what can big data and ethnography tell us about digital sociability and self-radicalisation amongst radical Muslims and the radical right wing in Norway?

To answer the research question, the ways in which supporters of radical Islam and the radical right wing use Twitter and how they interact are explored. Based on big data and ethnographic analyses, the study provides new insights into radical Islam and the radical right wing online, how supporters of radical Islam and the radical right wing stage and frame their identities on Twitter, as well as what they talk about online and the events and influencers to which they are exposed.

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[3] http://www.dare-h2020.org/

1.3 Structure of the report

In the second section of this report, the key characteristics of the data sample are presented. The third section describes the staging and framing of identities on Twitter. In the fourth section, themes and influencing factors are presented and, in Section Five, we present the networks. The sixth section, rather than simply summarising the results, builds on the research findings to explore their implications for the wider academic field to which this report is directed.

2. Sample characteristics

This section describes the data sample that was used to investigate digital sociability and self-radicalisation. We detail the characteristics of the sample: the distribution, periods of participation, volume of activity and modalities of participation.

The data were collected in a pilot study from September to December 2018. The aim of the pilot study was to analyse 120 accounts – 60 accounts from the radical right (25 male, 25 female and 10 forums) and 60 accounts from radical Islam (25 male, 25 female and 10 forums). The data collection was based on an ethnographic approach, relying on direct observation. We targeted accounts that met a large number of criteria (as specified in the general introduction) corresponding to extremist and radical ideologies (see 3.1 for a more comprehensive description of the accounts in our data sample).

As shown in Table 1 (below), we were only able to find 21 female Muslim accounts. Thus, the data sample included 24 Facebook accounts and 92 Twitter accounts.

ACCOUNTS FROM PILOT STUDY		NORWAY			
		FACEBOOK		TWITTER	
		Personal	Forum	Personal	Forum
60 RIGHT WING	Men	2	4	23	6
	Women	2		23	
56 MUSLIM	Men	2	10	23	0
	Women	4		17	
TOTAL number of accounts		10	14	86	6
		24		92	

Table 1 – Twitter accounts from pilot study in Norway

The types of pages selected on Twitter and Facebook were different in nature and, as explained in the general introduction, it was decided that, across all countries in the wider project, the full study would be conducted based on data and observations from Twitter alone. Thus, the analyses in the Norwegian study are based on accounts detailed in Table 2 below. Table 2 thus indicates that the 96 original personal accounts from the pilot study were reduced to 83 personal accounts for the full study. This was because personal Facebook accounts - four right-wing and six Muslim accounts – were removed from the sample while the Twitter accounts initially recorded as 'forums' (6 right-wing accounts) were included in the sample. Finally, due to the suspension and deletion of accounts during the three-month account scraping campaign for the full study, from December 2018 to February 2019, three Muslim accounts and six right-wing accounts were lost.

TWITTER ACCOUNTS IN THE STUDY FROM NORWAY		
46 RIGHT WING	Men	16
	Women	20
	Unknown[4]	10
37 MUSLIM ACCOUNTS	Men	22
	Women	15
TOTAL number of accounts		**83**

Table 2 – Twitter accounts in the study from Norway

For the Norwegian study, the Twitter pages were scraped as far back as possible, collecting posts from 2009/05/02 to 2019/02/14.

In 2018, when the data were collected, 24% of the population in Norway had a Twitter account, as shown in the statistics below from IPSOS (2019). Furthermore, in Norway, Twitter is more popular amongst men and users between the ages of 18 and 22 (37%). Hence, an important factor that impacts on the representativeness of the data is that the data are based on accounts from a platform where only 24% of the population had an account when the data were collected.
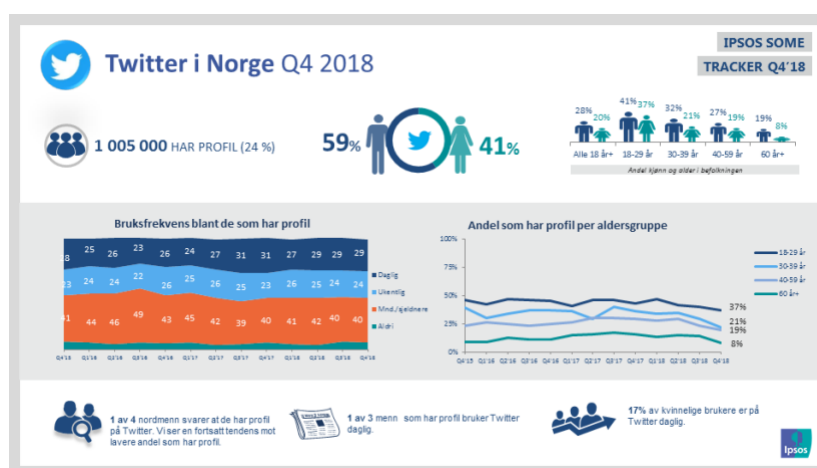
Figure 1 – Twitter in Norway 2018

2.1 Distribution and representativeness of samples

Finding data for Norway proved to be difficult. It was not possible to find any Muslim Twitter or Facebook accounts that could fit many of the selection criteria. As described in the general introduction, Twitter has suspended large numbers of ISIS-supporting accounts (Berger and Morgan, 2015). The only suitable criteria were Islamism in general and Salafism. Salafism is a fundamentalist Islamic movement focused on practising Islam as it was practised by the Prophet Muhammad and his companions.

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[4] These 'unknowns' were automatically assigned to accounts where users had not listed their gender. They do not appear in Table 1 because during the pilot study the researcher was able to check the account and determine gender based on content

The radical right data sample was easier to detect. All the accounts in the Norwegian data sample from the radical right are either strongly anti-migration or anti-Islam, or both. In addition, there are accounts that are racist and ultranationalist with a focus on purity, and there are two militaristic accounts.

As stated in the introduction, in Norway, the combined sample of both Islam and the right wing comprises a total of 83 Twitter accounts: 34 Muslim accounts and 49 radical right accounts.

The in-depth descriptions below demonstrate that the data sample is fairly gender balanced and that the radical right is slightly overrepresented. Furthermore, the activities in this Norwegian data sample are highly multilingual.

2.1.1 Representativeness of gender

The overall distribution is fairly gender balanced, as demonstrated in Figure 2 below: 46% of the overall sample is female, 42% male and 12% unspecified, meaning that the owner of the account has not registered a gender on the profile. However, the gender balance for each form of radicalisation is slightly off: for the radical right side (RW), there are 43% women and 35% men, and 22% unspecified accounts (nan); for the Muslim side (IS), there are 41% women and 59% men. Yet when we look at these accounts, we see that the unspecified accounts represent four forums and six males. Adding these six male profiles gives us a gender balance in the data sample for the right wing: 45% women, 45% men and 10% forums. An obvious methodological weakness in using data based on self-registering of gender is that online identities can be deceptive (Parekh et al., 2018).

Figure 2 – Gender distribution Muslim (IS) and right wing (RW) sample
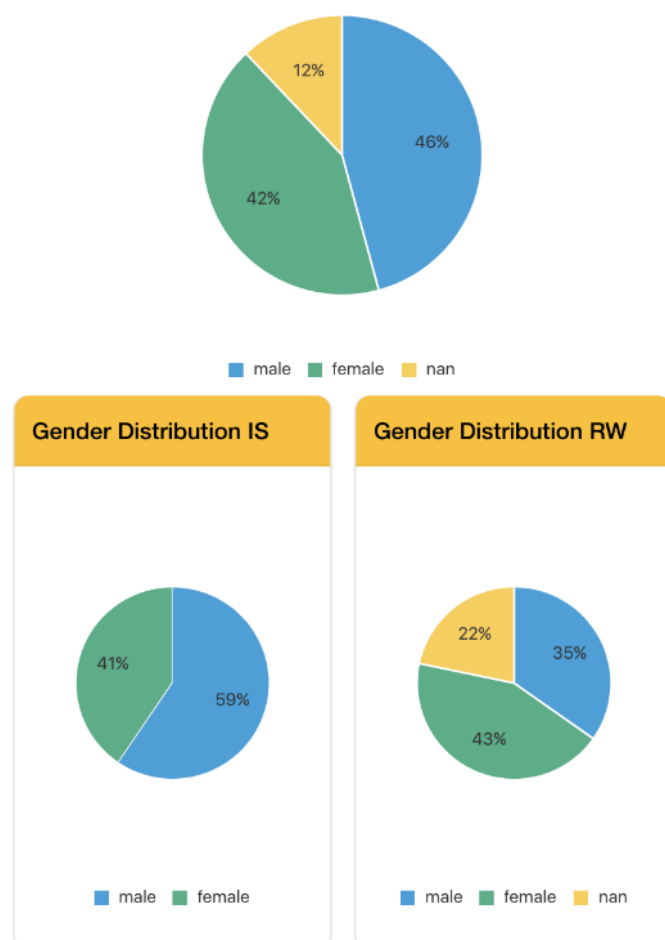
2.1.2 Representativeness of radical ideologies

Figure 3 below represents both radical ideologies analysed in this study: 55% of the data sample covers the radical right (i.e. 46 accounts, RW); 45% covers Islam (i.e. 37 accounts, IS).
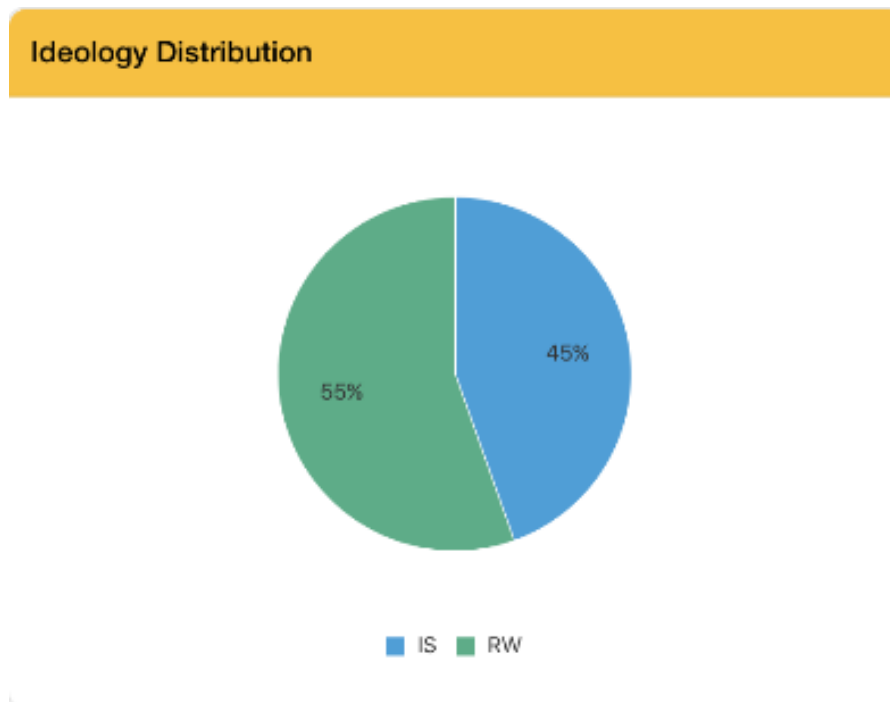
Figure 3 – Ideology distribution for Muslim (IS) and right wing (RW) sample

2.1.3 Language distribution

The vast majority of users in the Norwegian data sample chose English as the default language of their account, as illustrated in the Figure 4 below.
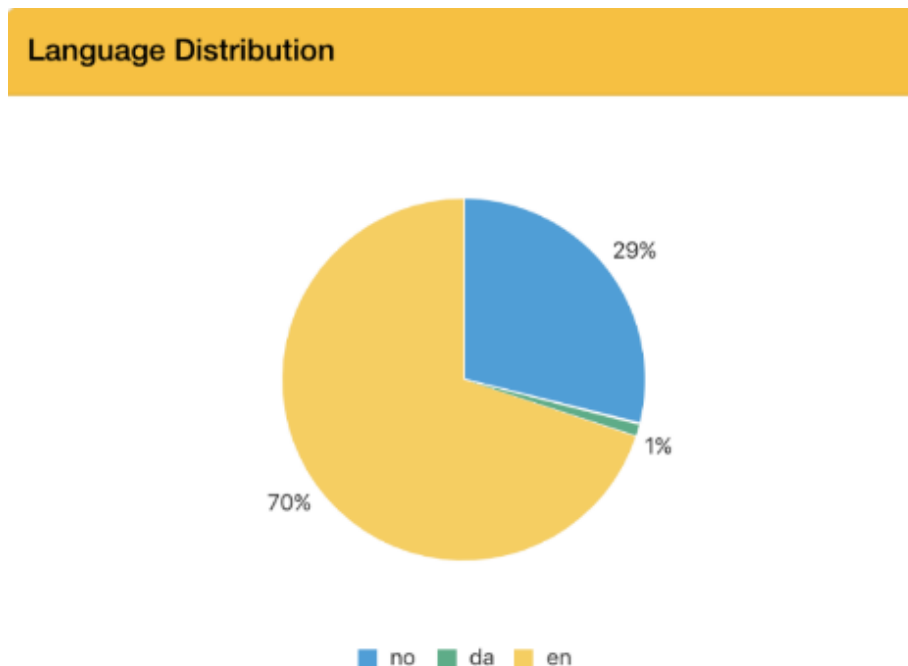
Figure 4 – Language distribution in tweets

Within the Norwegian sample, 1% of the Twitter users use Danish as the default language; however, this percentage is too low to bear any significance. Further, 70% use English as their primary language, while 29% use Norwegian. As the figure below illustrates, there are more English writers amongst the Muslims (IS 81%) than the right wing (RW 61%).
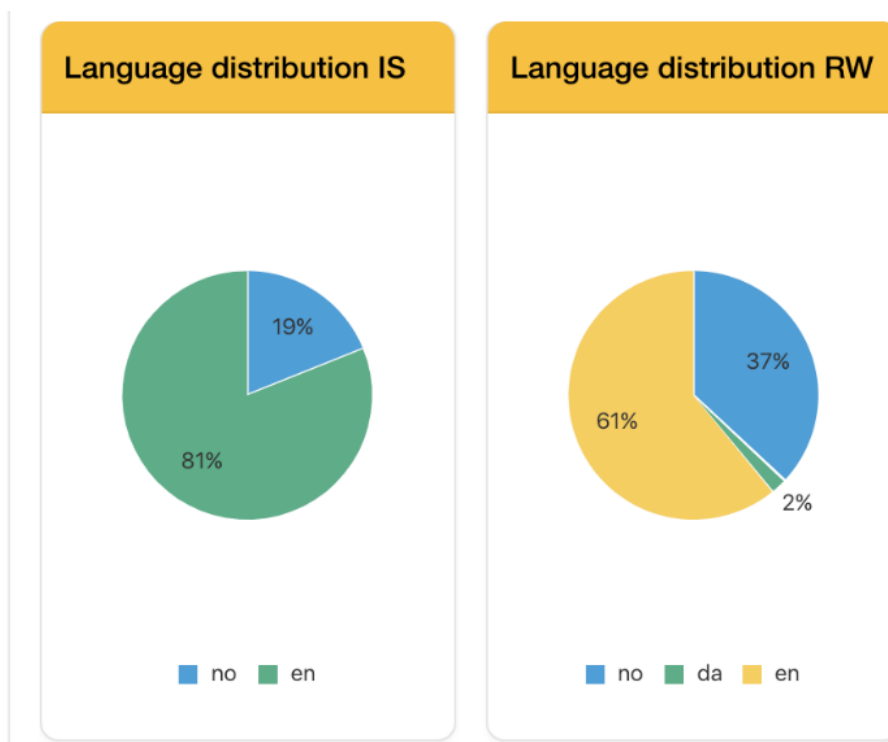
Figure 5 – Language distribution for both samples, Muslim (IS) and right wing (RW)

The dominance of one language over another affects the algorithm of the platform. A user's choice to use English over Norwegian may be indicative of what types of content the user wishes to favour on his/her timeline and/or the language in which the Twitter user tweets.

2.1.4 Language distribution in tweets

The total number of tweets from the radical right in Norway is 15,847. Of these, 1,588 (10%) tweets are in an unknown language, which likely means that the tweets only share a link where a language cannot be detected, 8,549 are in Norwegian, as shown in the green bar furthest to the right in Figure 6 below, and 2,607are in English, as shown in the blue bar to the right. There are 1,859 tweets in Swedish and Danish, as shown in the pink and orange bar to the right and 1,244 tweets are in 30 other languages, as demonstrated in Figure 6 below.
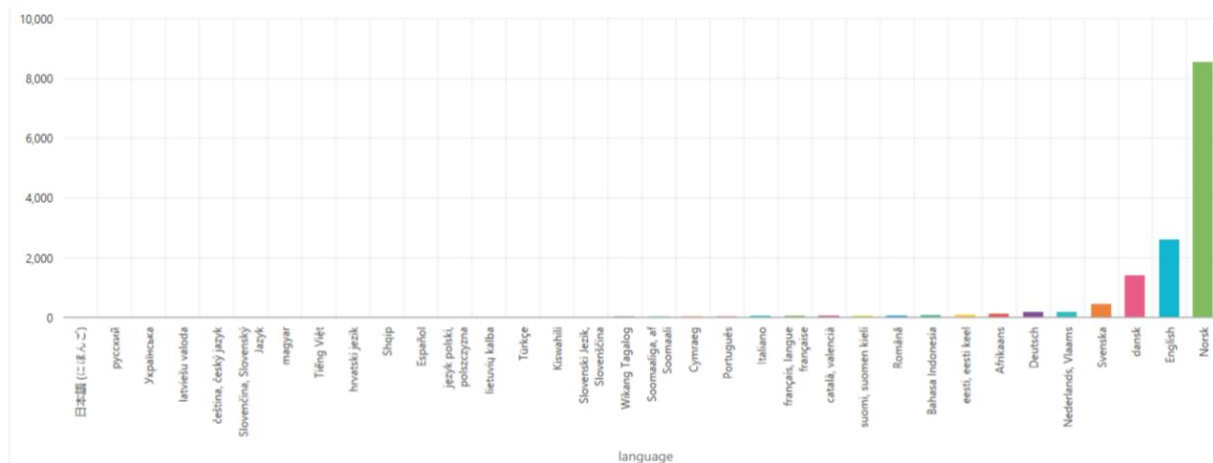
Figure 6 – Language distribution in right wing tweets

Thus, our analyses are based on 11,156 tweets – the 8,549 tweets (76.63%) in Norwegian and the 2,607 tweets in English (23.37%) – representing 72% of the total number of tweets in the data sample. The remaining tweets in the data sample are 1,859 tweets in Danish and Swedish and 1,028 tweets in 30 other languages. To conduct the analyses, the corpus was separated into an English and a Norwegian corpus.

The total number of tweets from Muslims in Norway is 5,952, and 1,946 of these tweets are in an unknown language, which, similar to the right wing, likely means that the tweets only share a link where a language cannot be detected. Further, 2,922 of the tweets are in English, as shown in the red bar furthest to the right in Figure 7 below, and only 300 tweets are in Norwegian, as shown in the orange bar to the right in Figure 7 below. There are 784 tweets in 30 other languages. The analyses are based on the 2,922 tweets in English, which represent 49% of the tweets. Since there are only 300 tweets in Norwegian, we chose not to analyse these.
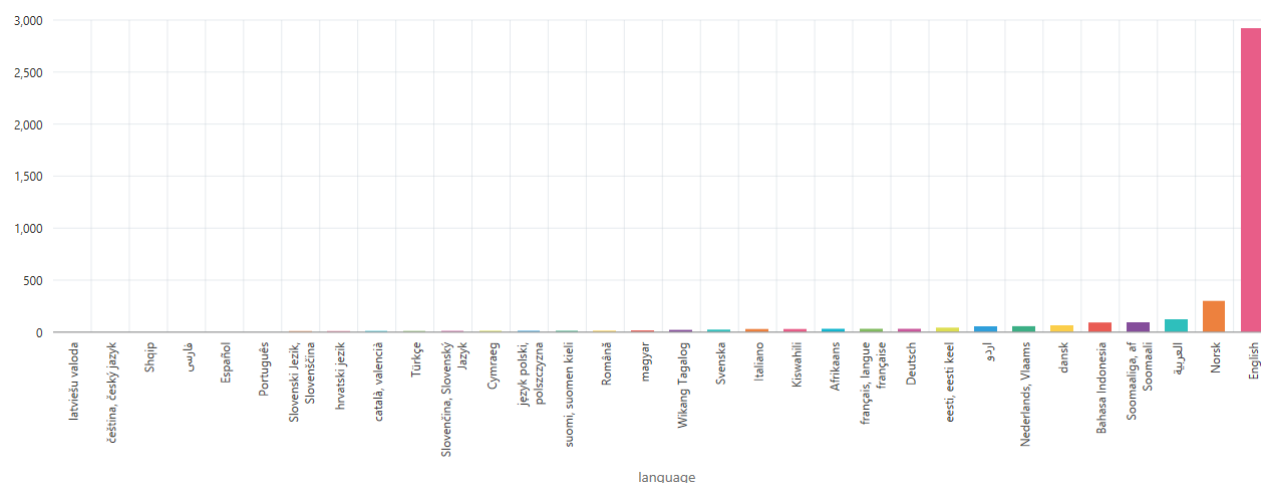
Figure 7 – Language distribution in Muslim tweets

2.2 Time periods of participation

The data collection on Twitter was done to retrieve data from the first tweets and retweets of each account until the end of the data collection campaign (23 February 2019). As Twitter was launched in 2006, it is interesting to note that the first tweets in the data sample are from 2009.

To provide an understanding of the period and numbers of tweets and retweets in the data sample, two timelines are placed below, Figure 8 and Figure 9. The timeline in Figure 8 covers a shorter, recent period: 2016–2019.
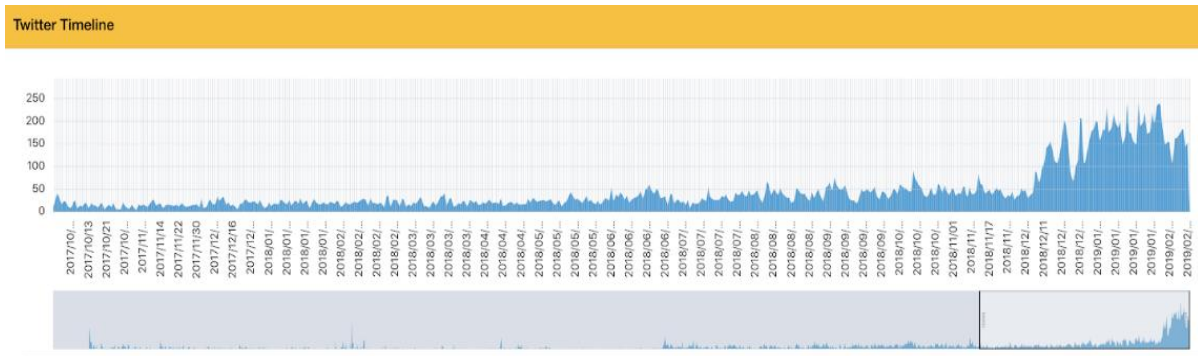
Figure 8 - Timeline of Twitter activity from 2016 to 2019

The second timeline below, Figure 9, zooms out and covers all tweets and retweets from 2011 to February 2019.
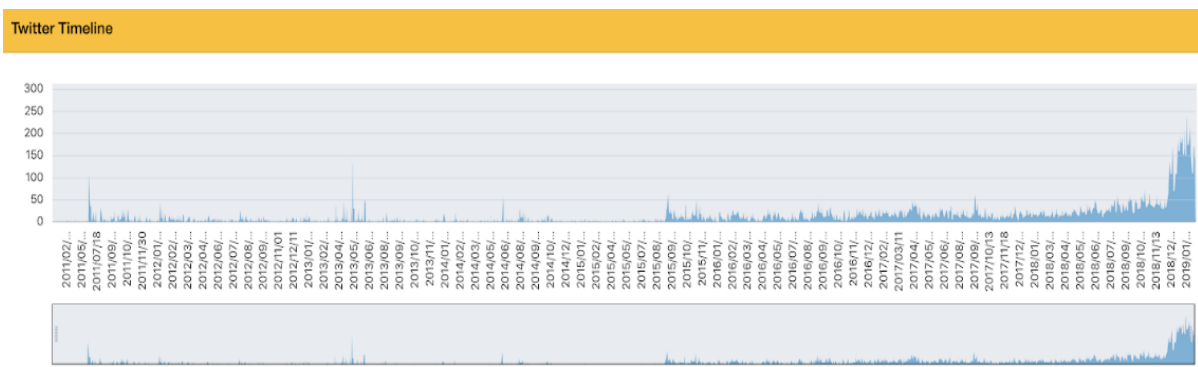
Figure 9 - Timeline of Twitter activity from 2011 to 2019

In the two timelines, we can see quite a flat line of low tweet activity over several years prior to 2018, when there is a substantial increase in activity. Hence, most of the tweets in the data sample are from 2018 to February 2019.

The Muslim and right-wing accounts are approximately equally old. The first tweet from a Muslim account in the data sample is from May 2009, while the first tweet from a right-wing account is from October 2009.

The Muslim tweets were published from 2009 to 2018 with a spike in 2013, probably related to elections in Pakistan that year.

In the radical right case, activity is low until 2018.

Both the Muslims and right-wingers in the data sample have, for the most part, only been active in recent years. However, this does not allow us to conclude that the use of Twitter is an emerging and growing phenomenon for the radical right wing and radical Muslims alike. It is well known that many Muslim Twitter accounts have been taken down (Pearson, 2018). Therefore, we may assume that Twitter activity amongst Muslims was going on in Norway prior to 2018. It may also be that there are radical Muslim and right-wing accounts on Twitter that we did not find. It may also be that radical right-wing tweet activity is on the rise, as these Twitter accounts have not been taken down to the same extent that Muslim ones have.

2.3 Volume of activity and patterns of participation

This section presents analyses of the volume of tweet activity in the data sample, levels of engagement and homogeneity of behaviours. The findings from these analyses show that the

Muslims retweet much more than they tweet, and the right-wingers tweet much more than the Muslims do. The volume of tweeting and overall activity lead us to believe that far right Twitter users are more committed than Muslim Twitter users.

2.3.1 Volume of tweets/retweets and levels of engagement

Tweets are messages created by the publisher of the tweet. Retweets (RT) are messages created by another user. The 83 Twitter accounts represent a total of 21,799 tweets and 30,896 retweets for both Muslims and the radical right.
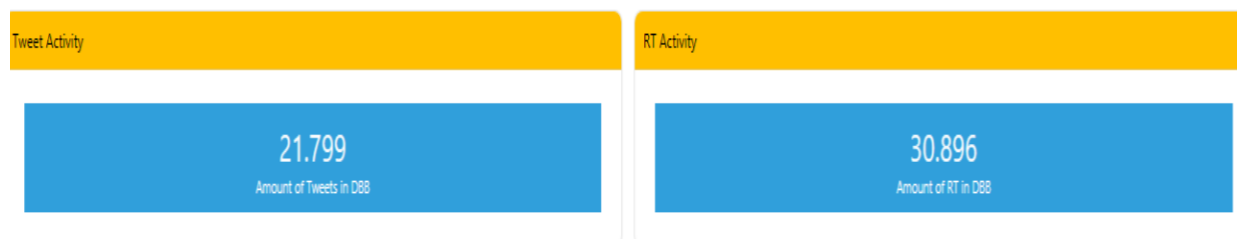
Figure 10 – Tweet and retweet activity for both Muslim and right wing sample

The radical Muslim (IS) data sample represents 20,666 tweets (5,952 tweets and 14,714 retweets) in the database, as demonstrated in Figure 11 and 12. The radical right (RW) data sample represents 30,896 tweets (15,847 tweets and 16,182 retweets). Thus, the number of tweets amongst the radical right is much higher than that amongst the Muslims. We also see that the Muslims retweet (14,714 retweets) much more than they tweet (5,952 tweets). Compared to the radical right, we also see that there are far fewer tweets from the Muslims than from the right wing in the data sample. One reason is that the sample is based on fewer accounts, but this does not explain the very big difference.
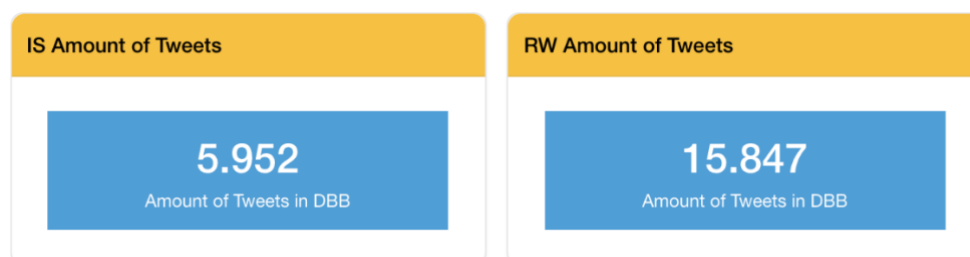
Figure 11 - Volume of tweets for each sample
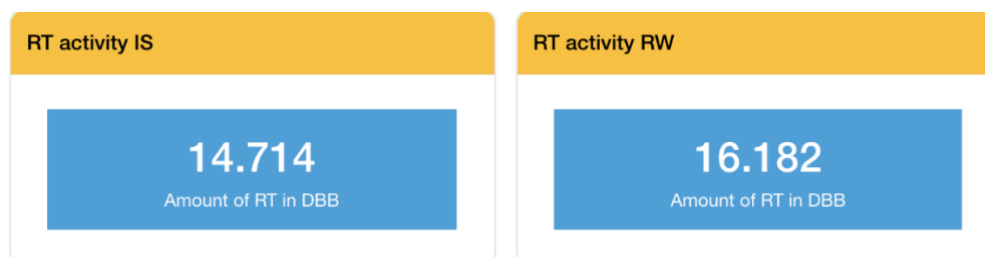
Figure 12 - Volume of retweets for each sample

2.3.2 Homogenous vs scattered patterns of behaviour

The box plot below, Figure 13, is commonly known as a box-and-whisker plot, and it represents the distribution and the dispersion of a data set. When examining the box plots below, it is evident that the surface of the rectangle for the radical right (RW) data sample is more dispersed, whereas the Muslim (IS) rectangle is more concentrated. This means that there is more dispersion in the number of tweets amongst users in the radical right data sample. We also see that the Muslim sample is

slightly more left skewed – that is, the rectangle is placed farther to the left – which means that there is less activity, or fewer tweets, in the Muslim data sample.
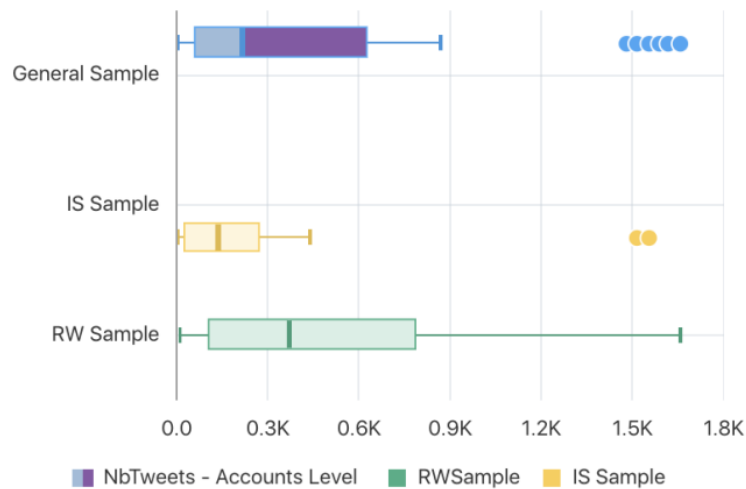
Figure 13 – Box plot of the distribution and dispersion of the data set, right wing (RW) and Muslim (IS) sample

Looking at the bold line in the rectangles in Figure 13 above, we see that in the case of Muslim accounts, the bold line is close to the middle, which means that there do not seem to be particular users who publish much more than others. Amongst the right wing, however, we see that the bold line is closer to the left of the rectangle, which means that there are users who produce more than others. Thus, we see that the Muslim data sample contains users with homogeneous behaviour, compared to the radical right data sample, which is more heterogeneous.

In short, the analysis conducted via the box plot shows that, on one hand, the Muslim data set contains similar types of accounts, meaning that the sample is rather homogeneous; on the other hand, the radical right accounts are more diverse, heterogeneous and possibly poorly related to one another. Based on these findings and the analysis above, it appears that the radical right sample cannot be understood as a single pattern of behaviour but as a wide range of individual practices and digital activities. Thus, contributors within the radical right data sample do not use Twitter in a single manner.

2.4 Modalities of participation and levels of integration

In this section, we present an analysis of modalities of participation to explain how people are taking part in this online environment. Specifically, we ask to what extent are Twitter users sharing original content (a tweet) or sharing other users' content (retweet)? The answer to this question will indicate levels of engagement and whether we are dealing with online milieus or individual patterns of behaviour. Modalities of participation, in terms of tweeting or retweeting, offer a way to understand levels of engagement. When retweeting rather than tweeting, people are less exposed and more disengaged (Cha et al., 2010).

2.4.1 Statistical distribution of tweets/retweets and levels of integration

We examined the difference in volume between tweets and retweets for both the radical right and the Muslims, and we saw that the samples contained different numbers of tweets: 5,952 tweets in the Muslim data sample and 15,847 tweets in the radical right data sample. However, the numbers of retweets were similar in both samples: 14,714 amongst the Muslims and 16,182 amongst the far right.

Below, the box plots in Figure 14 show the statistical distribution of tweets and retweets for each sample. The left-hand side depicts tweet activity and the right-hand side, retweet (RT) activity.
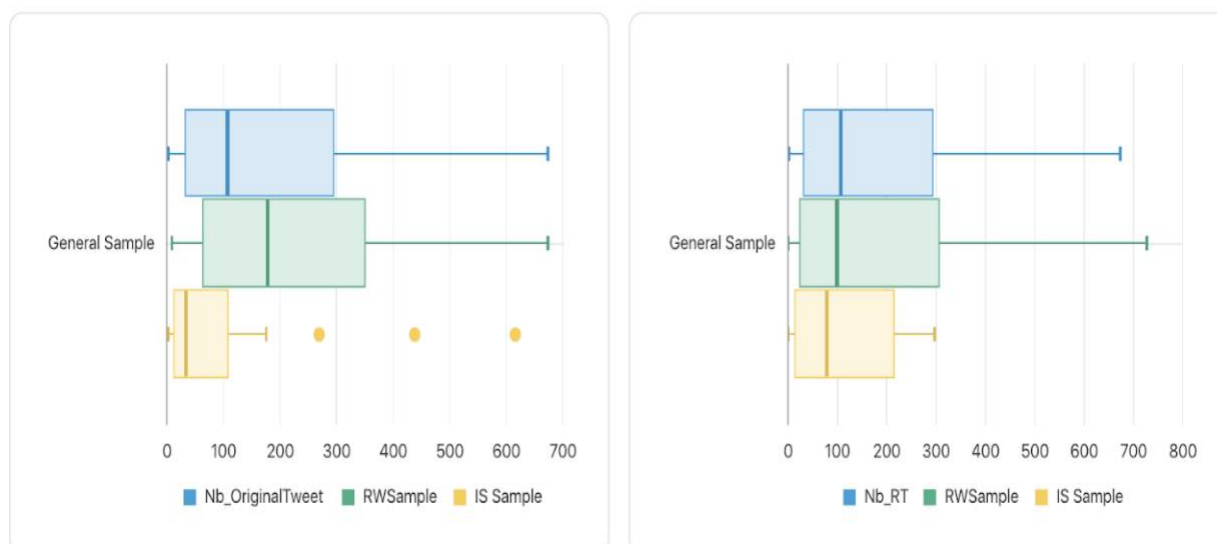
Figure 14 – Box plot of statistical distribution of tweets and retweet: right wing (RW) and Muslim (IS) sample

Given what was noted above about the relationship between modalities of participation - tweeting or retweeting – and degree of engagement, the data suggest that Muslim users are less connected than the radical right. However, if we consider these results in the context of typical Twitter use patterns, republishing content rather than generating original content is a normal pattern of behaviour for users on this platform (Park, Kaye, 2018). Given that retweeting is typical behaviour, it is more relevant to question the large number of tweets from the right wing.

2.4.2 'Likes' and levels of integration
The overall volume of likes for both radical Muslims and radical right-wingers illustrates another form of media participation in Figure 15 below. Liking content is even less engaging than retweeting, but it nonetheless shows a manner in which participants can actively contribute to the existence of digital milieus.
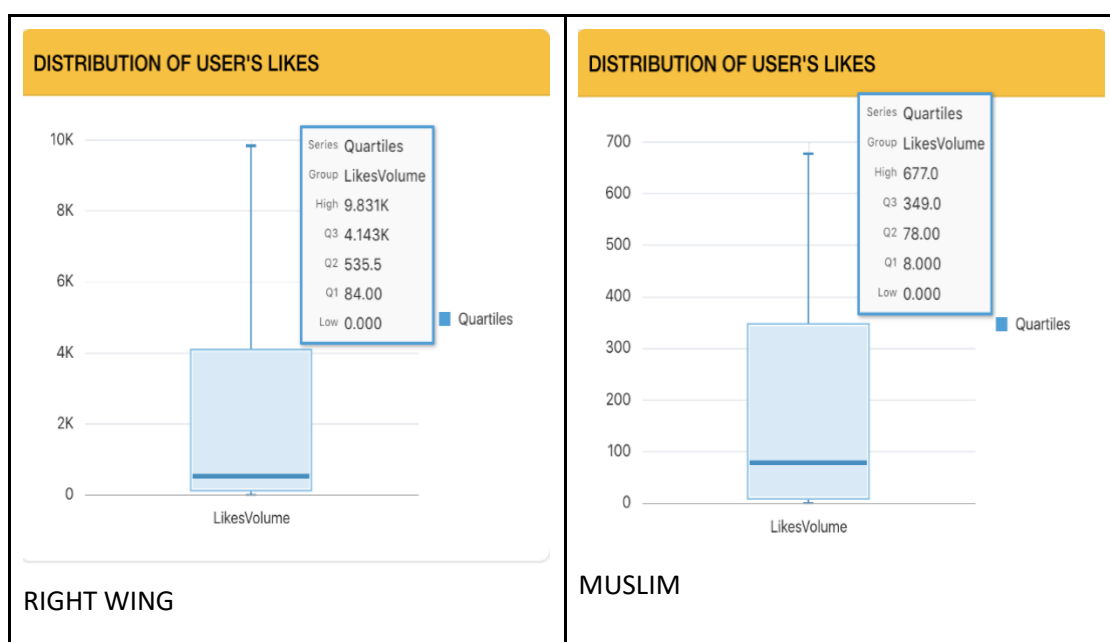
Figure 15 – Distribution of 'likes'

As the box plots above indicate, likes are strongly disproportionate between the radical Muslim and radical right-wing data samples. On the left, the radical right sample shows that 50% of users like

between 84 and 4,143 tweets, with a median value of 535.5 tweets liked. On the right, 50% of the likes in the radical Muslim sample are between 8 and 349 tweets liked, with a median value of 78 tweets liked.

These figures confirm that the radical Muslim account activity is mainly output – meaning that these users are directing their tweets at a general audience – rather than an interactive meaning exchange or construction of reciprocal relationships with others. Overall, the inflow of information is notably low – even on its own, without any comparison to the radical right – to the extent that the inflow of information seems non-existent for a number of accounts in the radical Muslim sample. Within a median value of 373 liked tweets, users do not tend to like content published by other users.

2.4.3 Followers/followings and levels of integration

The last series of indicators that we will look into to highlight modalities of participation and evaluate online engagement are the number of followers and followings for each sample, as demonstrated in Figures 16 and 17 below. These two figures show, first, the distribution of followers and, second, the distribution of followings.
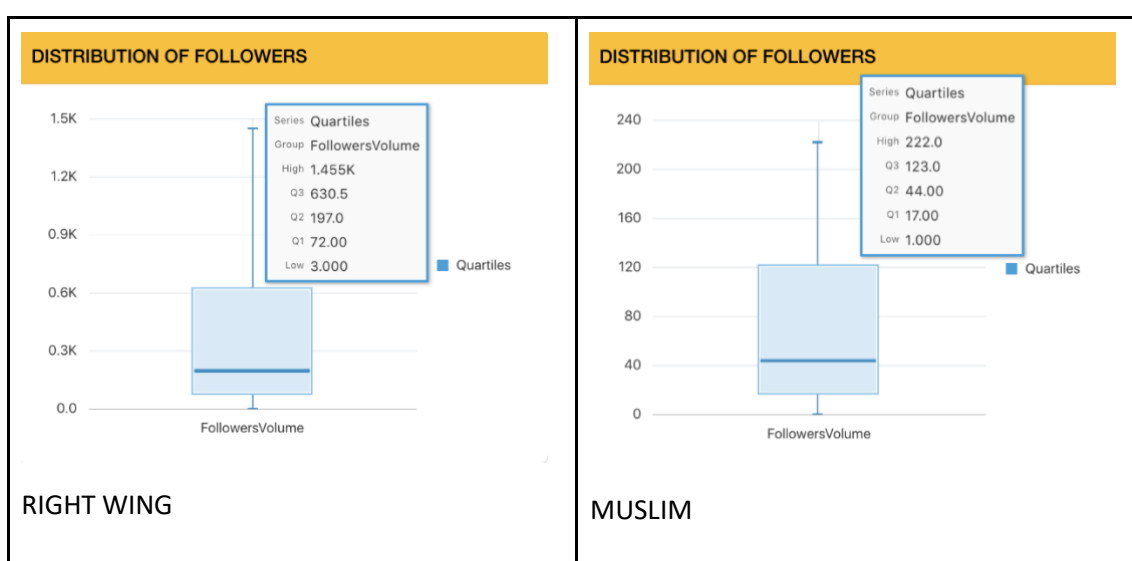
Figure 16 – Distribution of followers
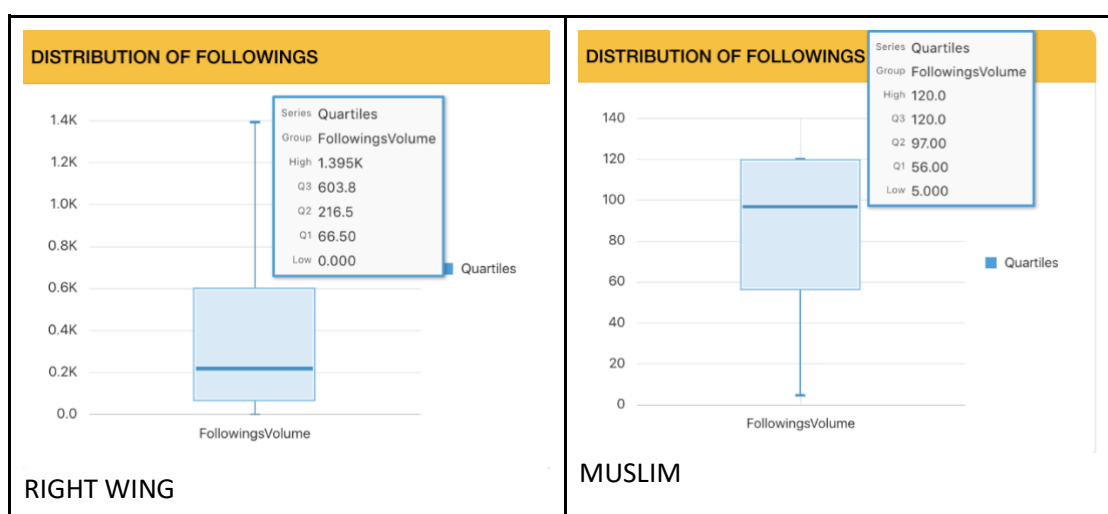
Figure 17 – Distribution of followings

For the radical right wing, the median level is around 197 followers and 216.5 followings. For the radical Muslims, median values are considerably lower with 44 followers and 97 followings. Followers

and followings are good indicators of whether people have any echo when they post or if they are well-connected. They can also help pinpoint strategies of communication. For example, are users trying to get their message out there or simply using Twitter to monitor domains of interest and, therefore, are not interested in the connectivity potential of the platform? Without going into great detail on whom people are following, what we can note in the case at hand is mainly more of the same; if the users in the Muslim sample demonstrate online engagement in publishing original content, they do not use Twitter to take part in an online milieu. They may express themselves publicly, but for the most part, they lack any actual visibility with low numbers of followers. As Boyd (2010) points out, publicity is not visibility; publishing online does not mean that anyone is reading or seeing the material a user is sharing. The radical Muslims' levels of followings and followers seem to indicate that we are dealing with a sample of active contributors who lack a strong echo. In comparison, the radical right sample appears to be a connected group of individuals with a strong level of participation.

2.4.4 Integrated vs disconnected contributors

Given the different findings outlined above, we can describe the radical Muslim sample as users who are disengaged from a larger online community, yet nonetheless active and engaged at an individual level of participation. This finding allows us to suggest that radical Muslim contributors do not appear to support or engage in an online milieu shaped around radical ideologies; in other words, they may individually share radical content, but this form of participation is unrelated to an online milieu or carried out in relationship to a larger network. We will confirm this observation in the network analysis section of this report (see Section 5).

Findings presented for the radical Muslim sample do not apply to the radical right wing. In this latter case, we can sense the existence of an online milieu: 'liking' other contributors' tweets; following one another; spreading content by retweeting; these are all signs that tend to indicate online engagement and connectivity, possibly tied into an actual milieu.

The findings from this analysis in section 2.4 show that the radical Muslim Twitter users are individualistic and disconnected in their activities, and they seem disengaged from the online community. Therefore, we may conclude that these users do not appear to represent an online milieu. Twitter users from the radical right wing, however, do appear to represent an online milieu. These users seem integrated. They like other people's tweets, follow one another and spread content.

3. Staging and framing identities

Social media offers a space in which people can – in an anonymous and undisturbed way – contact and interact with extremists and gain new friends and acquaintances who share their support for ISIS, as noted by researchers in the Counter Extremism Project (Waters and Postings, 2018). In this study, we also observed that Twitter offers an arena where people can anonymously adopt radical identities and self-presentations. Many of the accounts in the data sample seem to be anonymous or partly anonymous. The threshold for expressing extreme opinions or hateful statements may be low when people participate in discussions and exchanges of opinions anonymously online (Bjørgo, 2018: 31). As we shall see, some of these anonymous accounts carry radical and extremist markers of identity, as expressed in profile pictures, names, screen names and in the 'About' section.

This third section presents the analysis of what Twitter users in the data sample communicate through their online profiles and self-presentations and how they stage their identities to present themselves to an audience (Goffman, 1965). The profiles are not exclusively analysed as images or texts. Instead, they are analysed as user-generated multimodal utterances – paying attention to how the profile pictures, text, names and handle names appear as a combination of semiotic resources,

such as images and written language. The methodology used here is that of qualitative multimodal textual analysis (Kress, 2010; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006; Van Leeuwen, 2005), where we demonstrate how certain patterns of semiotic representations in the Twitter users' profiles carry ideological meaning (Veum and Undrum, 2018; Machin, 2016). A multimodal approach implies that visual semiotic resources may create and express moods and attitudes and convey ideas in the same way as linguistic resources. A key assumption in this approach is that textual meaning cannot be separated from the context. The meaning of the profiles rests in their usage in their specific situation.

In the analysis that follows, all personally identifiable information is strictly removed. The examples used are rewritten and/or translated from Norwegian so that the Twitter users in the data sample cannot be identified. The images that we present are not images from the actual Twitter accounts in our data sample but images that represent the same genre and symbolic content as in the Twitter accounts.[5]

In Sections 3.3.3 and 3.3.4, we present some reflections on how the radical right and radical Muslim samples are framed as 'radical' or 'extremist'. That is, by what means and on what terms is the labelling of 'radical' or 'extremist' carried out by outsiders? However, we shall first explain how we selected the online accounts for this study.

This section will provide answers to the following questions:

- What political and religious opinions do the Twitter users express on their profiles and how do they express these opinions? (Section 3.1)
- How do the Twitter users stage and frame their identities? (Section 3.2)
- What differences do we find between male and female Twitter users? (section 3.3.1 and 3.3.2)
- To what extent do the Twitter users label themselves as radicals? (Section 3.3.1 and 3.3.2)
- How are the radical Muslims and radical right wing perceived and portrayed in mainstream media? (Section 3.3.3 and 3.3.4)

3.1 Expressing political and religious opinions

To compose the data sample, accounts that tended to build profiles supporting Islamism (Eikelman and Piscatori, 1996), Salafism (Meijer, 2009) and radical right-wing ideologies (Bjørgo, 2018; Sultan and Steen, 2014) were collected. The online identities of those in the data sample, thus, are more ideological than individual.

The data collection relied on an ethnographic approach focused on direct observation. We were, however, originally targeting accounts that met a large number of criteria –as specified in the general introduction – corresponding to extremist ideologies. One criterion of particular importance was the call for violence. In the case of the radical right, we found some accounts that fitted this criterion. In these accounts, we discovered negative posts about Muslims and, in the comments following these negative posts, people expressed their anger in violent hate speech. We even found calls for murder. Typically, these posts aimed to appeal to people's emotions, inciting their anger and other negative feelings against immigrants and Muslims. Such appeals to negative emotions are typical of hate speech (Nilsen, 2014). In these posts, we observed an escalation in violent speech. Thus, seeking an outlet for anger may be a driver of self-radicalisation amongst the radical right in the data sample. Also worth noting is a report from VOXPOL 2019 highlighting that 'much of the online content produced and disseminated by extreme right Internet users shares certain core values and commitments that can be described as 'hateful'' (Conway, 2019: 12) and that 'hateful online content

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[5] The personally identifiable information is more strictly removed in this report from Norway than in the other country reports. The reason is that the author of this report follows ethical guidelines from Norway and these are stricter than in the countries where the other researchers work.

has a great many targets, chief amongst them are people of colour, Jews, Muslims, immigrants and refugees, the LGBTQI community, and women' (Conway, 2019: 13).

Amongst Muslims on Twitter, we did not find accounts that openly supported or encouraged violence, nor did we find particularly radical views or opinions. This is probably because those expressing Islamic extremist ideologies have been driven away from Twitter and may be expressing their opinions elsewhere, in more private and protected settings, such as Telegram and other forms of social media (Parekh et al., 2018; Bloom, Tiflati and Horgan, 2019). The radical Muslim social media participation on which we are focusing here, therefore, concerns contributions that are far less radical than those of the radical right wing.

3.1.1 Radical right-wing sample

All radical right-wing accounts in the Norwegian data set are either strongly anti-migration or anti-Islam, or both. In addition, some accounts are ultranationalist with a focus on 'purity', and there are two militaristic accounts. Negative perceptions of Islam, Muslims and immigrants are visible in the data. As noted, we even found explicit calls to kill, as in the following tweet translated from Norwegian by the author:

- Cannot be integrated. Kill all of those who do not go home. Bomb women and children #visomstøtterlisthaug#frp

The hashtags refer to people who support the Progress Party and Progress Party member Sylvi Listhaug, who, in 2019, became the Minister for Elderly and Public Health in Norway. Hashtags are manually entered keywords with the prefix '#' that 'enable users to communicate with an ad hoc community around the hashtag topic' (Bruns and Burgess, 2012: 804).

Negative posts about Muslims seem common. In the comments following these negative posts, we found some people expressing their anger using violent hate speech, as illustrated in the following examples (author's translation from Norwegian):

- 'A good nigger is a dead nigger.'
- 'Bring a bat and make them paralysed for a long time to come.'
- 'Rise up and take back what belongs to us.'
- 'Kill the crap! Something must for fuck's sake happen soon. Getting nauseous.'
- 'Shoot the scum or deport?'

In the above tweets, we may observe an escalation in violence, as in the first example. This is followed by a commentator suggesting beating Muslims with a bat; then, in the next comments, the violent speech continues with calls for killing and shooting. Such escalation has already been noted by Klein (2010). Gullestad (2017) discusses the case of the Norwegian terrorist Anders Behring Breivik from a psychoanalytic perspective and claims that there is a possibility that demonising Muslims and Eurabia 'fits' into Breivik's psychologically threatened universe and murderous lust for revenge. The 2020 Norwegian Police Security Service threat assessment (Police Security Service, 2020) emphasises that although immigration and Islamist hostile environments outwardly abstain from violence, those active in the communities' online forums express hatred, threats, and crude characteristics towards minorities, politicians and opponents.

3.1.2 Radical Muslim sample

When collecting the Muslim data sample, we looked for: religious fundamentalism; support for ISIS, al-Qaeda or other Islamist organisations; Salafism; support for violence; and hostility against the West. The only selection criterion found was support for Salafism and Islamism, either in the construction of profiles or in tweets or retweets on such accounts. We did not find any signs of Salafi-jihadism. Worth noting, however, is that Salafism often implies intolerant attitudes towards non-Muslims as well as other Muslims (Meijer 2009).

Several Muslim Twitter users present themselves as Salafists in the 'about' section. Examples found on their postings, include links to videos and Salafist literature. We also find a posting about the evils of music, the use of the derogatory term kafir (an Arabic term meaning infidel) and a posting mocking men who shave their beard. One Muslim Twitter user states in the 'about' section on his account that he follows the pious forefathers, which can be read as a reference to Salafism. Another Muslim Twitter user refers to Salafist Dawah written in Arabic in his 'about' section. A number of others also express support for Dawah in the 'about' section. We do however not know anything about the type of Dawah that the Twitter users are supporting, but recent research from Norway (Linge, 2013), shows that Islam Net, an Islamic youth organisation in Norway influenced by Saudi Arabian Wahhabism, has profound roots in the much broader Arab and Indo-Pakistani reform movements and that the Salafi Dawah is an emerging phenomenon. Its aim of 'countering misperceptions about Islam' is a mean to 'defend Islam' in a Norwegian social and political environment increasingly critical towards Islam and practising Muslims (Linge, 2013: 29). In a posting from April 2018 on Islam Net's webpage we can read that the easiest way to do Dawah is on social media.[6]

3.2 Staging identities

Human communication, offline as well as online, is about exchanging information, getting things done, expressing feelings and emotions in addition to conveying to one another who we are and what kind of people we are; where our loyalties are in religious and political terms and which social communities we belong to (de Fina 2006, 263). Thus, we may distinguish between individual and collective identities. The Twitter profiles we are studying here mainly express collective identities conveying loyalties in religious and political terms. We may therefore assume that these accounts are mainly used for participation in communities that share their world views.

On Twitter, individual and collective identities are expressed through names and handle names, profile pictures, banners and text. These elements on Twitter profiles are mostly constructed using symbols, photos, posters and text. We have identified semiotic resources and the discourses that the radical Twitter users are drawn to, and how they exploit these in setting up a Twitter profile. As we shall see, these semiotic resources and discourses are associated with religious and political ideas and in turn relate to social groups of individuals sharing these ideas. This process of indexical associations is called indexicality (Silverstein 1976) and is based on the idea that semiotic resources point to elements of the social context.

Social media is an arena where people can experiment with extreme identities anonymously and, through these identities, get in contact with milieus or individuals holding radical and extremist views. However, Antaki and Widdicombe (1998) note that the way people present their identity not only depends on the context, but also shapes that context – a process that they capture in the concept of local occasioning. It is also well known that group dynamics can intensify processes of radicalisation online and offline (Conway 2012). Thus, the continuous repetition and citation of specific symbols and discourses connoting extremist ideologies and opinions may reinforce and normalise these ideologies and opinions and, in this manner, contribute to a process of radicalisation. Ideologies are here defined as systems of ideas shared by the members of a social group. These ideas will influence their interpretation of social events and situations and control their discourse as group members (van Dijk, 2006: 380). Ideologies are expressed in, and reproduced, by discourse.

Below we present analyses of radical right wing and radical Muslims self-presentations on Twitter.

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[6] https://www.islamnet.no/bidra/gi-dawah-pa-sosiale-medier

3.2.1 Right wing self-presentations

The results of the analysis of self-presentation amongst the radical right show that of the 46 accounts, 27 appear to be anonymous (59%). Most of these anonymous accounts do not bear names but, rather, words or compound words. These words mainly refer to discourses of patriotism and nationalism, but also to mythology, religion, war and aggression. Furthermore, the anonymous accounts do not show photos of people but of nationalistic symbols, such as the Norwegian flag, national costume, Vikings, Norwegian nature, the Nordic Resistance Movement's flag or symbols referring to war. The location does not tell us much either, as these accounts are mostly registered only with the country and city.

In the 'about' sections on these Twitter accounts, the most common discourse is related to patriotism and extreme nationalism, but there may also be references to mythology and religion. We also found discourses around European heritage and culture, hatred towards Muslims, freedom of speech and integration and inclusion. In the hashtags in the 'about' sections, we found discourses of nationalism and white genocide.

3.2.2 Muslim self-presentations

The most noticeable feature of the Muslim accounts in this data sample is also the anonymity. As with the right-wingers, the locations specified on these accounts tell us very little, as they are mostly listed under just a country and city. Furthermore, very few users are identifiable due both to the absence of profile pictures of the account owners and the extensive use of *kunyas*. A *kunya* is an Arabic teknonym consisting of the word *umm* or *abu* (Arabic for 'mother' and 'father', respectively), followed by the name of their offspring or an identity marker. We also found *kunyas* based on *bint* and *ibn* (Arabic for 'daughter' and 'son', respectively). By extension, the *kunya* may also have hypothetical or metaphorical allusions, such as Abu Sayfullah (father of Allah's sword). Further, in the *kunyas*, we found reference to the user's gender, as in mother or father, daughter or son. Seven of the users had written their name or screen name in Arabic and the rest were written in the Roman alphabet.

Only two of the Twitter users seem to have profile pictures of themselves. As profile pictures, the others mostly use religious posters with quotes in Arabic from the Quran or from Salafi scholars, such as Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani. Photos of mosques or religious books are also used, in addition to photos of mountains. The Combatting Terrorism Center (2006: 26) has noted that mountains are a common motif in jihadi propaganda and that they allude to the divine and are, thus, implicitly linked to notions of martyrdom and sacrifice.

In the 'about' sections on the Twitter accounts, 16 (42%) have not listed anything. Amongst those who have registered something in the 'about' section, we found that the most frequently used discourse relates to devotion to Salafism, Dawah[7], Islamism and Islam in general. Approximately one third of the text is written in Arabic. The other two thirds are written in English and Norwegian. Hashtags and 'mentions' are not used, and very few symbols are used. However, we did find images of the *Kaaba* (a building at the centre of the Great Mosque of Mecca), prayer beads and a minaret.

3.3 Co-production of content through framing

Labelling is a two-step process (Becker, 1963). First, to form part of a group or category of people, one must acknowledge the label for oneself and by oneself. Second, bystanders must label the person in a similar manner. In other words, being considered a radical is the result of a double process: an endogenous process consisting of self-labelling and an exogenous process consisting of labelling someone from the outside. This approach to radicalisation reminds us that radical

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[7] Inviting people to Islam and spreading knowledge about the religion.

ideologies are not a set of characteristics but a process of interaction (Schmid, 2013) between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic movements, which is strongly dependent on the context and situation of the symbolic productions.

In this section, we present the labelling processes and co-production of these processes. We give examples of online account holders who label themselves as radicals and extremists as well as some examples of how the Norwegian media presents Muslims and the radical right. The latter are examples of external framing.

The findings for the sample of right-wingers show that accounts exist that seem to label themselves as extremist, and not only as radical, through self-labelling as a person with an extreme ideology. The self-labelling is done through written and visual means in the profiles. In the Muslim data sample, we did not find explicit self-labelling as extremists.

3.3.1 Right-wingers embracing the label of 'radical'

In the 'about' section of one right-wing account, there is an example of self-labelling as a racist, which may be described as extremism. In two accounts, we found self-labelling as an extremist done through visual means. The profile pictures in both accounts were of soldiers in brown military uniforms, connoting Nazism, as demonstrated in the image below, Plate 1.

Plate 1

The most common self-labelling as an extremist, however, occurs in combinations of visual and written means. In one example, the profile picture is a poster with a photo of a weapon in the background and the text 'defend Europe' in the foreground. This poster may be interpreted as a call for violence and, thus, extremist. Another profile picture (see Plate 2) shows a poster with Viking symbols.

In the 'about' section, the text calls for the defence of European heritage and DNA. This may also be interpreted as a call for violence, since the Vikings were well known for the wars they waged. Furthermore, Viking symbols and Norse mythology has frequently been used in right wing extremist discourses (Fangen, 1998).

Plate 2

Mattheis (2018) shows how the narratives of the alt-right leader Lana Lokteff connect to non–extremist women's movements and how extremist ideologies using gendered stereotypes can be normalised into more mainstream cultures by drawing on features from Viking culture.

Yet another example is an account with a profile picture of a bombed-out location and carrying the screen name *chargeandbeprepared* (author's translation). When we look at the image of the bombed-out place and the screen name in combination, this account may be interpreted as a call for violence – specifically for charging a weapon and perhaps even firing that weapon.

There seem to be few differences in self-presentation between women and men, except that some of the male Twitter users have more extreme profiles. The racist and Nazi profiles belong to men.

3.3.2 Muslims embracing the label of 'radical'

Amongst the Muslims in the data sample, we did not find explicit self-labelling as radicals to the extent that we found this tendency amongst the right-wingers, and there do not seem to be calls for violence. We did, however, notice that the colours black and white feature prominently on the posters used by Muslims as profile pictures. Six of the profile pictures with posters have a black background with white Arabic writing, as demonstrated in Plate 3 above. These black and white posters may connote the black and white battle flag. The black and white poster genre is exemplified in the poster in Plate 3, where peace is written in Arabic on a black background. In a study from 2018, the authors (Wignell et al., 2017a:12) note that the contrast between the black and white and the Arabic text make the battle flag 'instantly eye-catching and recognisable, creating a powerful, highly visible symbol, even for people who cannot read Arabic.'

Plate 3

Plate 4

In the radical Muslim sample, there is also an account with a profile picture of a raised male forefinger on a black background, as demonstrated in Plate 4 below. In Islam, raising the forefinger signifies the oneness of God (*Tawheed*), and it is used to express that there is no god but God (Allah), as illustrated in the photo in Plate 4. The gesture has become widespread among supporters of Islamism and jihadism (Wignell et al, 2017b).

There are no major differences between men and women, except that women seem to use more colours in their profile pictures than men.

3.3.3 External framing processes of Islam and Muslims

In a recent study in the United States (Kearns, Betus and Lemieux, 2019), the researchers argue that when violence occurs, the perpetrator's religion is the largest predictor of news coverage. They claim that attacks by Muslim perpetrators receive, on average, 357% more coverage than other attacks in the United States.

On 22 July 2011, Norway was attacked by an extreme right-winger. The Norwegian state news outlet, NRK,[8] framed it as follows:

> On the 22nd of July 2011, the leader of the Islamic Council of Norway was on a work trip in Tanzania. On this day, the centre of Oslo was shaken by a powerful explosion at 15:25 on Friday afternoon. In the streets lay dead and injured people. The area around the government quarter looked like a battlefield. Nobody knew what had happened – was there a gas explosion? A bomb? Before anyone had heard of Anders Behring Breivik, before frightened witnesses on Utøya had described the perpetrator as blond and blue-eyed, no one talked about right-wing terrorism. Instead, journalists from around the world called Mehtab Afsar, the leader of the Norwegian Islamic Council. Did he know anything about the terrorist attack? Did he perhaps know who was behind it? Or why Norway was attacked? 'Just because I'm a Muslim, should I understand such an act? I think that is disgusting', says a clearly upset Mehtab Afsar to NRK.[9]

This is an example of journalists expecting terrorist acts to come from the Muslim community and no other communities in the Norwegian society.

A review conducted by the Norwegian Anti-racism Centre shows that several major media outlets did not use the words 'terror' or 'terrorist' in their coverage of the massacre at a Pittsburgh synagogue in October 2018, where 11 people were shot and killed by a right-wing terrorist. Some of the articles that they reviewed had been written at an early stage, before we knew much about what had happened. Others were written later, when the perpetrator's anti-Semitic, conspiratorial and right-wing views and agenda had become known.[10]

Furthermore, in the Breivik case, we saw that the right-wing terrorist attack was largely explained in Norway by psychology. Accordingly, it was perceived as an act by a single disturbed person with no affiliation and with no political ideology. However, when Muslim perpetrators are behind terror, it seems less often explained by psychological and individual causes. It is assumed that behind Islamist terror there is a group and a religion – a view that is supported by Norwegian anthropologist and author of the book, *Anders Behring Breivik and the Rise of Islamophobia*, Sindre Bangstad, who claims that Norway is in denial about the threat of far-right violence.[11]

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[8] https://www.nrk.no/norge/_-motbydelig-a-skylde-pa-muslimer-1.7730140
[9] Author's translation from Norwegian
[10] https://antirasistisk.no/hvorfor-ikke-terror/
[11] https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/sep/16/norway-denial-far-right-violence-breivik

3.3.4 External framing processes of the radical right

Like many other countries, Norway has seen the rise of 'partisan' news sites in the last few years. Resett.no, document.no, and rights.no, are among the most used, all with a tough stance on issues of immigration and Islam, and all causing public debates that extend beyond their relatively small audiences, thus influencing the wider news agenda. These sites are, however, much less trusted than mainstream media, with the public broadcaster NRK still topping the list in our survey. (Reuters, 2019: 98)[12]

In section 5.3.1, we shall see that the radical right-wing news outlet Document.no holds a central place in conversations amongst the radical right, while the news outlet resett.no also plays a role. 'There is an ongoing debate about partisan media, such as Document and Resett, and whether they should be part of Norway's self-regulatory regime. In 2018, the Association of Norwegian Editors granted membership to the editor of Document.no, but denied an application from the editor of Resett, based on repeated violations of ethical guidelines' (Reuters, 2019: 98). Thus, there are many negative postings about these partisan media in the mainstream press, such as the screen shot below from Dagsavisen, Plate 5: 'Partisan media fuel hate against Muslims', as noted by the Norwegian media researcher Karoline Andrea Ihlebæk in a lecture at Oslo Metropolitan University in October 2019. These negative postings may contribute to the framing processes of the radical right.

Alternative medier gir næring til muslimhat

Plate 5

4. Key themes and influencing factors

Key themes and influencing factors that may support claims that the Internet harbours triggers for self-radicalisation are presented in this section in the following order: (1) content, (2) events and (3) influencers. The findings highlight themes of conversations on Twitter, gender differences and how these themes are influenced by national or international developments and incidents.

These analyses provide answers to the following questions:

- What are the Twitter users in our data sample talking about? (Section 4.1)
- Are there themes that women are more interested in than men, and vice versa? (Section 4.1.3 and 4.1.6)
- Are there particular events offline that create engagement online? (Section 4.2)
- Who are the influencers in the networks? (Section 4.3)

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[12] https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/inline-files/DNR_2019_FINAL.pdf

4.1 Content

In this section, the main themes of conversations amongst female and male Twitter users in the Norwegian corpora and the relationships amongst these themes are presented. The themes and relationships amongst them were determined by conducting two types of statistical analyses of text using the Reinert method (Reinert, 1983, 1990), implemented via the free software IRaMuTeQ (Ratinaud, 2014; Ratinaud and Marchand, 2012). To determine the themes in the corpora, we performed a descending hierarchical analysis (DHA) (Camargo and Justo 2015). In this analysis, the vocabulary in the corpora was clustered according to lexical co-occurrences. That is, those words that frequently occurred close together in the corpora were grouped together. These clusters gave us an overview of word associations and, by interpreting the clusters of words, based on an investigation of the concordance of the most occurring nouns in each cluster, we identified the themes in the corpora.

To determine the relationships amongst these themes, we used a similarity analysis (Camargo and Justo, 2015) based on graph theory. The similarity analysis identifies co-occurrences of words, providing information on the words' connectivity. This enabled us to identify the structure of the corpora's content. Both analyses focused on nouns and adjectives in the corpora. Gender specifications were identified via a chi-squared analysis.

4.1.1 Radical right themes in Norwegian Twitter conversations

The results of the detection of themes amongst the radical right are presented below in a dendrogram, which segments the online conversations into clusters of words. The dendrogram also provides information regarding the size of each cluster by percentage and the lexicon represented in each cluster. The higher a word is situated at the top of a branch, the more overrepresented it is in a cluster.

In Figure 18 below, we see that the themes of tweets mainly concern public affairs. While some have the theme of 'republic versus monarchy', these represent a very low percentage of tweets (only 1.83%). When we examine the theme of public affairs, we see that the public affairs that seem to engage the radical right most in the data are *economy*, *elections and government* and *crimes and Muslims*. Economy and debates and elections are central, which indicates an interest in, and support for, democracy. This result confirms the claim that politics and social media have become increasingly interlinked in Norway (Reuters, 2019: 98).
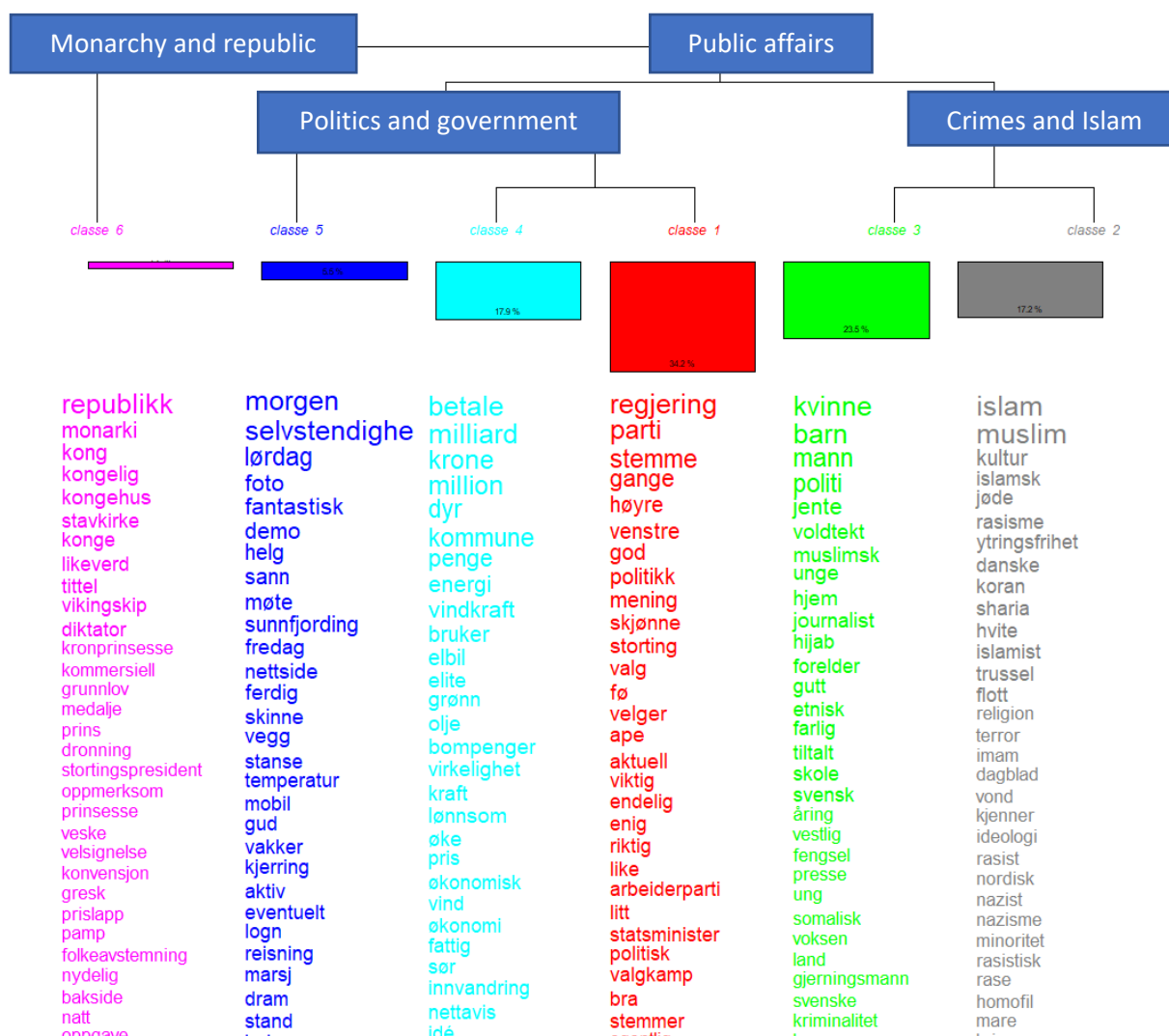
Figure 18 - Classification tree for the Norwegian right-wing corpus of distinct tweets, sizes of clusters (classes) and percentage of the corpus and over-represented words in each cluster[13]

Given that 'Muslims and Islam' is a prominent theme in this analysis (17.2%), and that this theme is related to the theme of 'crimes' (23.5%), as we can see in Figure 18 above, it seems that many of the discussions and conversations are based on anti-Islamism. Hafiz (2014: 479) claims that hostility towards Islam and Muslims is rising in Europe suggesting Islamophobia has become *the* most powerful new form of racism or even 'a kind of 'accepted racism''. Islamophobia has provided populist radical right parties in Europe a common ideological basis. Alongside the incorporation of anti-Islam discourse into pre-existing extreme right parties, there has emerged a distinctively anti-Islam(ist) or 'counter-jihad' scene consisting of a loose collection of parties, organisations and individuals convinced they are witnessing an attempted Islamic takeover of the West (Lee, 2015: 248). Thus, 'anti-Islamist' refers to groups opposing 'radical Islam' and 'Islamification' and which often uphold antipathy towards all Muslims. 'Anti-Islamist' differs from 'extreme right' groups insofar as, although frequently espousing nationalism, racism and xenophobia, they do not pursue the same anti-democratic, revolutionary agenda. Nor is their racism of a biological variety but instead centres upon the supposed 'cultural' incommensurability of Islam and Muslims with European (Christian) societies.[14]

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[13] The dendrogram includes only the most frequent words, below which the list is cut off.

[14] This understanding is adopted across the DARE project. See: http://www.dare-h2020.org/concepts.html

Figure 19 below displays English translations of the themes of radical right Norwegian conversations on Twitter.

Economy 17,89%	Independence Party 5, 46%	Elections 34,18%	Crimes 23, 52%	Islam 17, 2 %	Republic 1, 74%
Pay	Morning	Government	Woman	Muslim	Monarchy
Billion	Independence	Party	Child	Culture	King
Million	Saturday	Vote	Man	Islamic	Royal
Expensive	Photo	Right wing	Police	Jew	Stave church
Kroner	Fantastic	Left wing	Girl	Racism	Equality
Elite	Demonstration	Good	Rape	Freedom of speech	Equality
Municipality	Weekend	Policy	Muslim	Danish	Title
Money	True	Parliament	Young	Quran	Viking ship
Energy	Meeting	Election	Home	Sharia	Dictator
Wind energy	Sunnfjording	Voter	Journalist	White	Crown princess
User	Friday	Labour party	Hijab	Islamist	Commercial
Electric car	Web page	Current	Parent	Threat	Constitution

Figure 19 – English translation of Norwegian word clusters in Figure 18

In the above English translations, we find the following themes: economy, the Independence Party, elections, Crimes, Islam and republic. The theme of economy concerns costs, expensive goods, the elite and energy. The Independence Party is a blockchain-independent national conservative centre party which aims to promote and preserve the Norwegian people's interests, culture and identity. This theme mostly relates to the demonstrations in which they are involved. The theme of elections contains conversations about the government, the left wing and the right wing. Crimes refer to crimes towards women and children, where the most frequently mentioned crime is rape. The theme of Islam concerns culture, Jews, racism, freedom of speech, etc. In the conversations about Islam, we also notice the word 'threat'. The theme of republic seems concentrated in conversations about monarchy versus republic and in relation to the commercial activities of the Norwegian princess.

The analysis presented below is a graphic representation of lexical clusters in which words are bound by their co-occurrence and their position with regard to one another (see Figure 20). If conversations are created around several clusters – and depending on whether or not these clusters of conversations are connected to one another – there is either a lack of clusters or a disconnection among clusters. By understanding how conversations are structured, we can determine whether conversations intersect, are parallel to one another or are mainly peripheral and isolated.

The size of the font is proportional to the importance of the words in the corpus. The colours represent communities identified automatically. This provides another reading of the word 'clusters' – one that is more focused on lexical proximity and on the relationships amongst topics.

The graphical representation below was generated by selecting the 200 nouns and adjectives that appeared most often in the corpus. The spatialisation layout is called Fruchterman-Reingold; this algorithm emphasises clusters of discussions. The coloured areas of the graph were generated by means of the Louvain method – an algorithm specifically designed to detect interpretative communities and extract them from large networks.

In the results of this analysis in Figure 20, we see that the news and news-related debates are at the centre of the conversations. Meanwhile, conversations about Islam, Muslims and crimes are off to

the right, where we also find conversations about 'republic versus monarchy'. Interestingly, we also find another conversation about Islam and Muslims in the middle left in purple. When we look at the other words, the conversations seem to be related to freedom of speech, debates and Sweden.
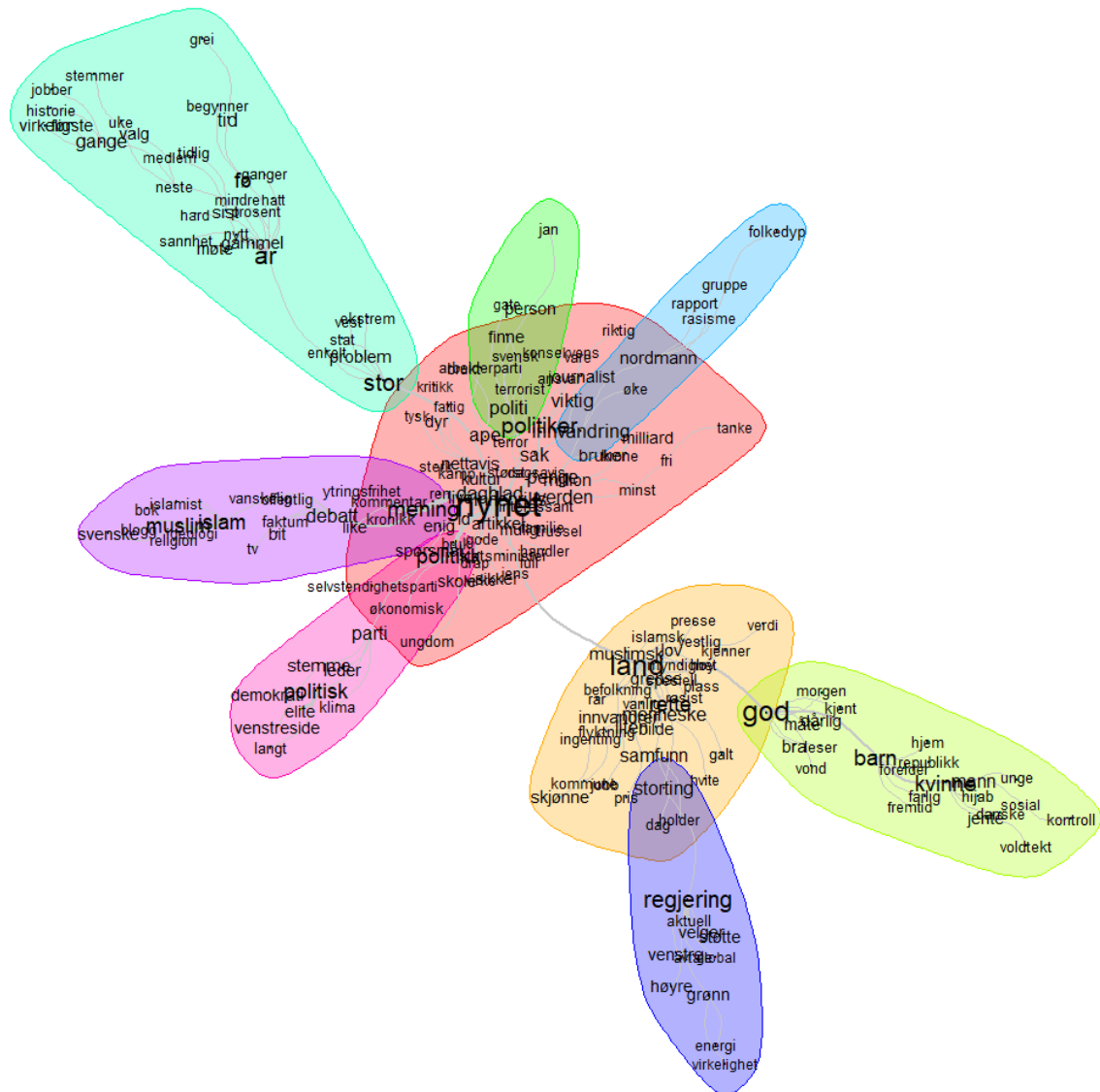

Figure 20 - Network of co-occurring words: Structure of debates in Norwegian conversations

4.1.2 Radical right themes from English conversations

An analysis of the English tweets in the Norwegian radical right data sample was also conducted (see Figure 21). This was because, as described in section 2.1.4, approximately 25% of the tweets are in English. This analysis is presented in the dendrogram below, where we see that there are two superordinate themes at the highest level: borders, migration and terror (clusters 3 and 4, representing 43% of the tweets) and ideology (clusters 1, 2, 5 and 6, representing 47% of the tweets). The largest cluster under ideology – cluster 1 in red – concerns American politics and President Trump (28% of the tweets). The other three clusters are smaller: cluster 6 (in purple) is about sex and gender, cluster 2 (in grey) is about the white race and cluster 5 (in blue) is about freedom of expression.
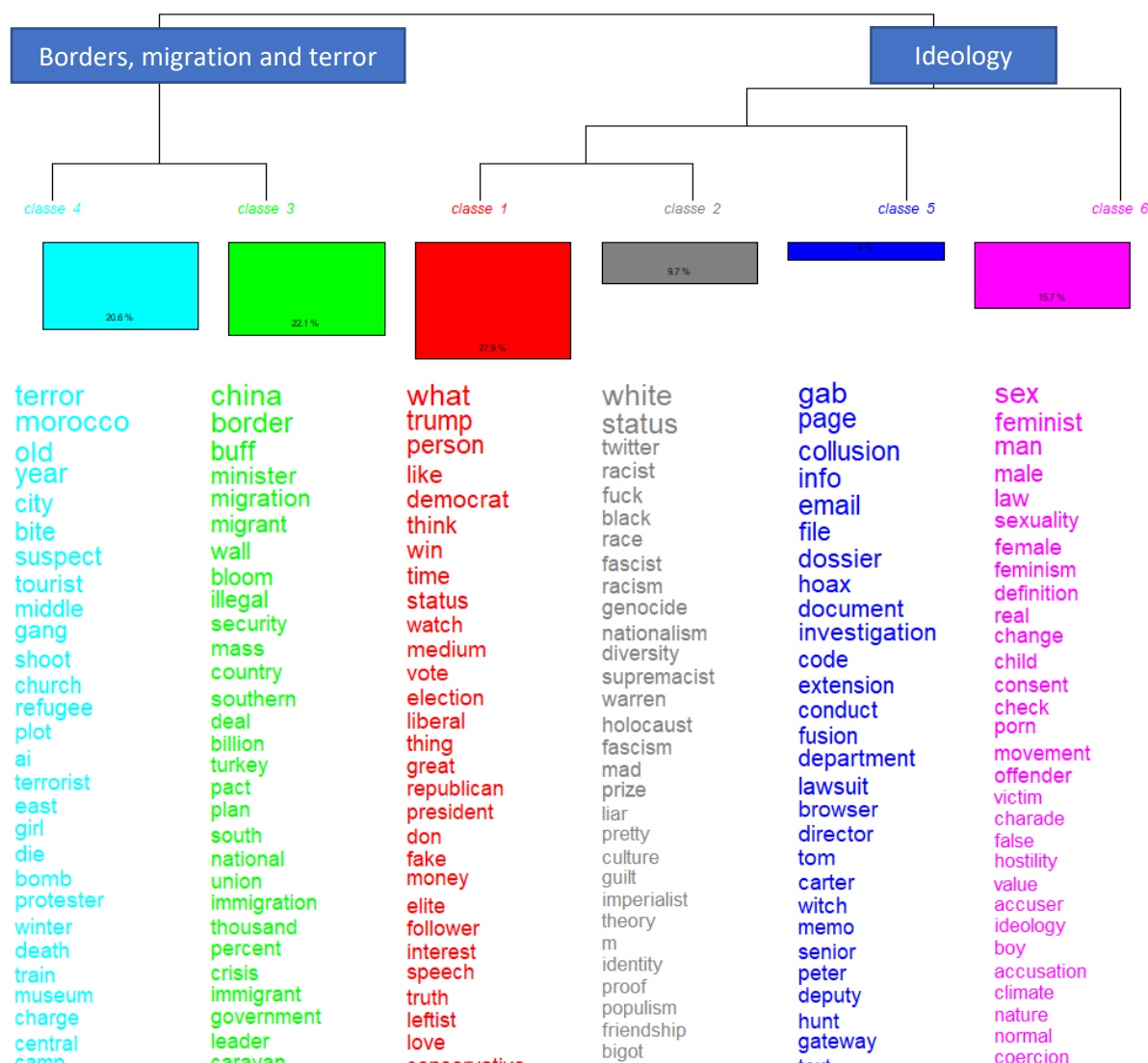
Figure 21 - Classification tree for the English right-wing corpus of distinct tweets, sizes of clusters (classes) and percentage of the corpus and over-represented words in each cluster[15]

The analysis presented below of the structure of debates in the English conversation (see Figure 22) is conducted in the same manner as the analysis we did above for the radical right wing themes in the Norwegian Twitter conversations. It is a graphic representation of lexical clusters, where words are bound by their co-occurrence and their position with regard to one another.

In the results of this analysis, we see that the conversations are barely connected to each other. This network of words also confirms the conclusion of the cluster analysis above. At the centre of the conversations (the green shape in the middle) is Trump, although the visibility of Trump is low due to the density of the green shape. This means that the other themes are influenced by Trump and American politics; they are found at the periphery of this main theme.

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[15] The dendrogram only includes the most frequent words, hence being cut at the bottom.
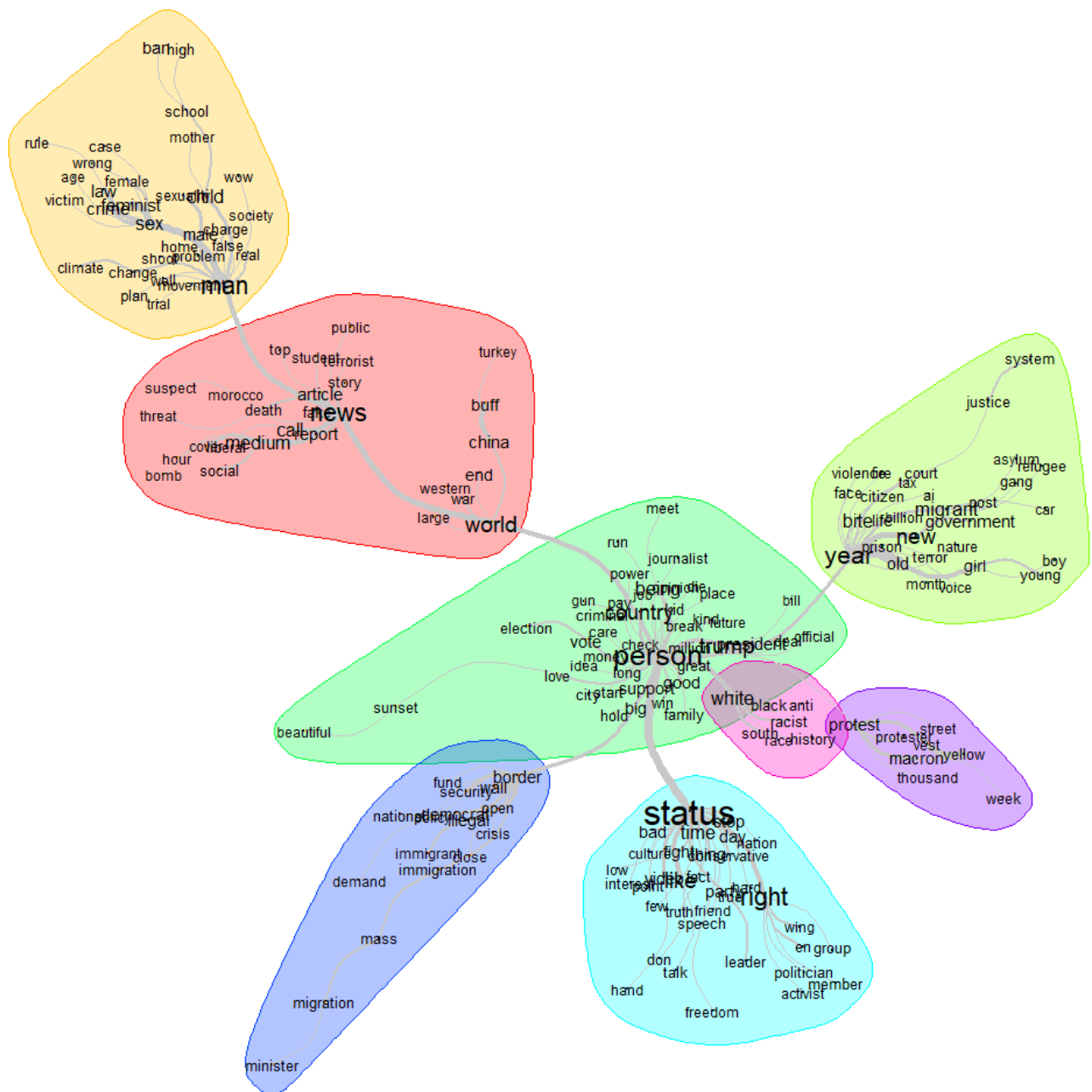
Figure 22 - Network of co-occurring words: Structure of debates in English conversations

4.1.3 Radical right discussions according to gender

The chart below (see Figure 23) shows which lexical clusters are discussed more by men (green bars) and by women (red bars) in Norwegian language tweets. Specifically, chi-squared is used to estimate links, reflecting the probability of finding, in a given cluster, a statistical overrepresentation (a higher proportion) or underrepresentation (a lower proportion) of tweets produced in each data set. The bars going upwards signal an overrepresentation of tweets from one gender over another in the cluster; the bars going downwards highlight an underrepresentation. In this chart, we see in the green bars above 0 that there are two themes that men tweet about far more often than women do. These are the theme of economy in cluster 4 and 'monarchy versus republic' in cluster 6.

Figure 23 – Discussion according to gender right wing Norwegian tweets

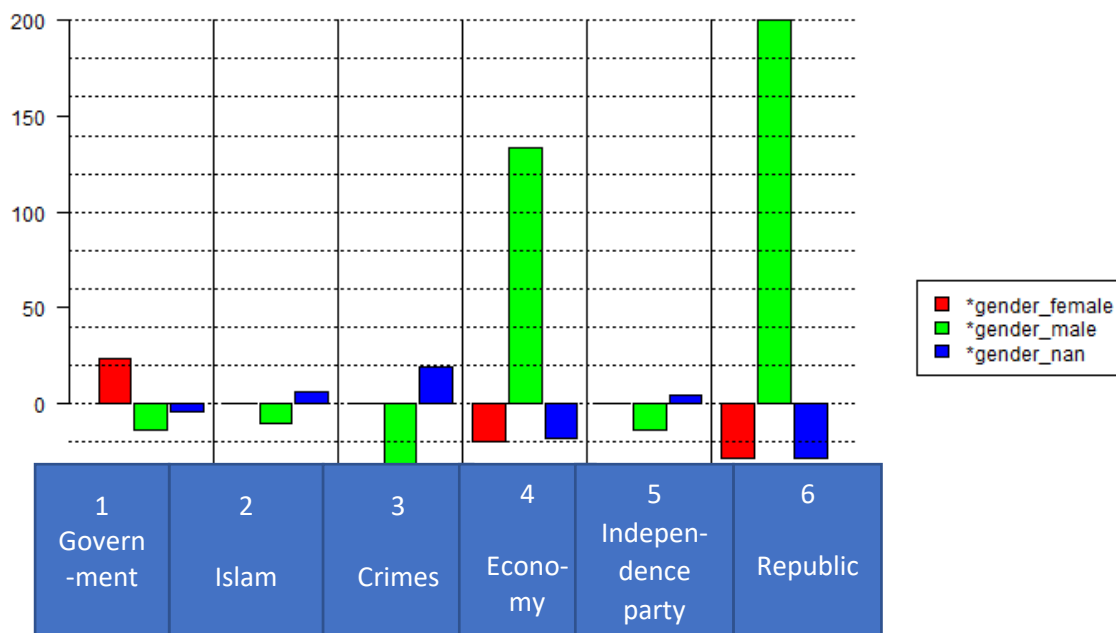Cluster 1 is represented in the yellow word cloud (Figure 24) below for a different visual representation, while cluster 6 is represented in the pink word cloud (Figure 25).

Figure 24 – word cloud of Government discussion   Figure 25 – word cloud of republic discussion

Women, however, tweet more often than men about government and elections (cluster 1, represented in yellow word cloud above, Figure 24).

Users that have not specified their gender seem to be most interested in cluster 2, concerning Muslims and Islam, which is represented in the turquoise word cloud below (see Figure 26). Yet, as already explained, we know that none of these accounts belong to women. When we look at the profiles that have not specified a gender, we see that approximately half appear to represent men (5 profiles) and the other half represent organisations (4 accounts). We may, therefore, conclude that men and women seem equally interested in the theme of Muslims and Islam, represented in a word cloud in Figure 26 below. Men and women also seem to have an equal interest in the Independence Party. Moreover, men seem to be less interested in the theme of crimes in cluster 3, as shown in Figure 23 where we can see clearly that men are underrepresented in this cluster.

Figure 26 – word cloud of discussion about Muslims and Islam

The chart below, Figure 27, shows which lexical clusters are discussed more by men (green bars) and women (red bars) in English. As in the analysis of Norwegian tweets, the bars going upwards signal an overrepresentation of tweets from one gender over another in the cluster; the bars going downwards underline an underrepresentation. In this chart, we notice that women are more interested in American politics than men are.
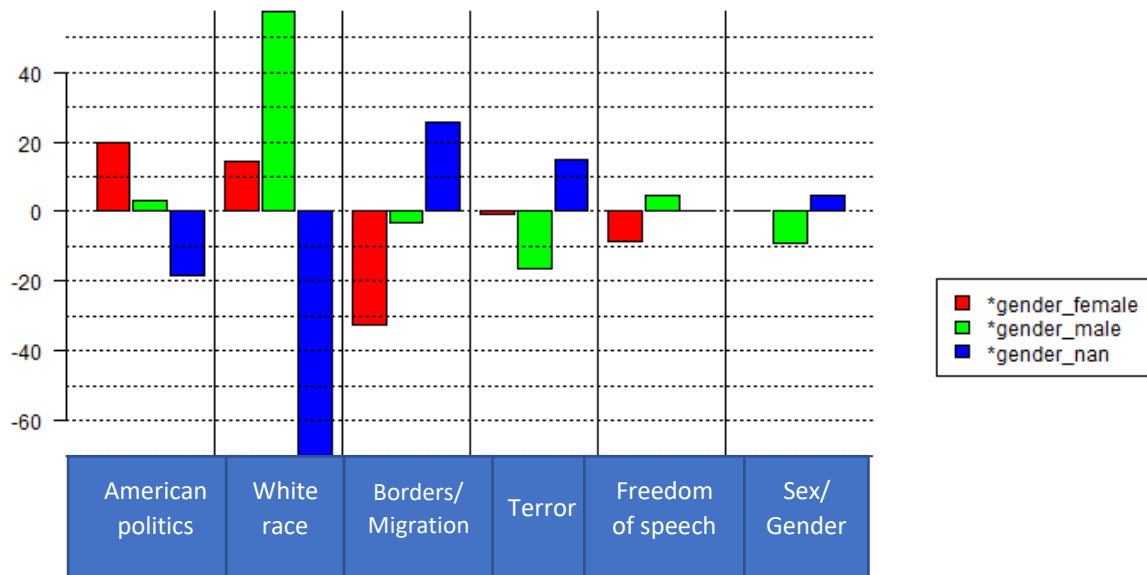
Figure 27 – Discussion according to gender right wing English tweets

This is seen in cluster 1, which is also represented in the red word cloud below, Figure 28.

Since we know that some of the accounts in the unspecified gender category in blue are male, we may assume that men are considerably more interested in cluster 2 regarding the white race (also represented in the yellow word cloud, Figure 29) and in cluster 3 regarding borders and migration (also represented in the green word cloud, Figure 30).

Figure 28 – word cloud discussion of American politics

Figure 29 – word cloud discussion of white race
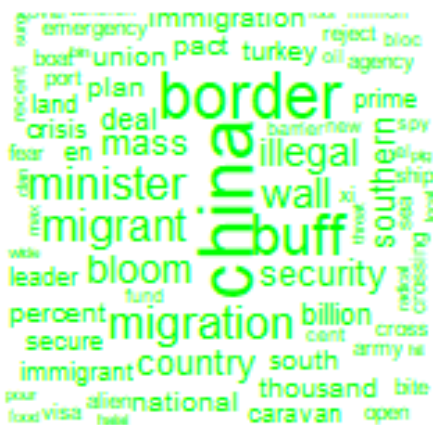
Figure 30 – word cloud discussion of borders and migration

Figure 31 – discussion of terror

In addition, men seem more interested in terror (cluster 4), as represented in the turquoise word cloud below, Figure 31, and in Gab (a social media website catering to the radical right; in cluster 5), which is also represented in the blue word cloud below (Figure 32). Females and males may be equally interested in sex and gender, as shown in cluster 6 and in the pink word cloud below (Figure 33).

Figure 32 – discussion of Gab

Figure 33 – discussion of sex and gender

4.1.4 Radical Muslim themes

The results of the analysis of themes discussed amongst radical Muslims are presented in Figure 34 below. For the Norwegian radical Muslim corpus, we selected a classification of eight word clusters to generate the dendrogram, in which we see that these eight clusters can be interpreted as falling under two broad main themes: politics in Pakistan and religion. The theme of religion can be further interpreted as containing two subthemes: religious life and retweets and pictures. The retweets and pictures shared are about Salafism and refugees and war. The theme of refugees and war relates to Syria, Israel, Palestinians, children and Yemen. Life and religion concerns God and the prophet Muhammad and how to lead a good life by following God and the prophet. The theme of Salafism consists of recommendations from sheikhs and scholars, *dawah* and references to Salafi centres and conferences in Norway and London. The theme of politics in Pakistan focuses on support for Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri, who founded the Pakistan People's Movement, as well as elections, corruption and revolution.
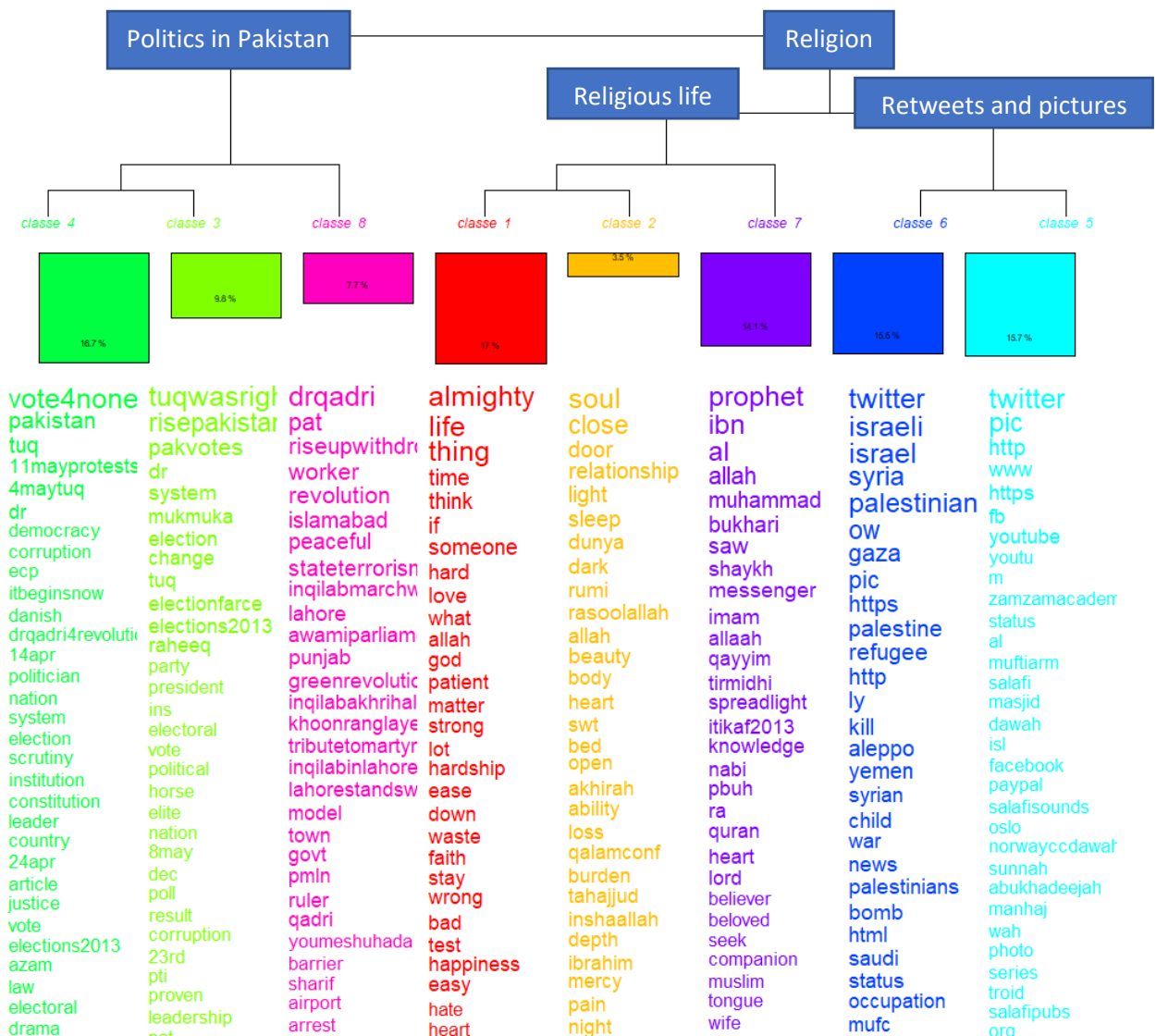

Figure 34 - Themes discussed amongst Muslims

4.1.5 Lexical proximity and relationships amongst themes

A similarity analysis was conducted on the basis of the 250 most common words in the data sample. The boldest words can be understood as being of high significance for interpreting the lexical communities.

The results of the similarity analysis (see Figure 35), reveal the existence of communities around the following terms:

- Pakistan
- Vote4none
- Tuq
- Person
- Allah

The three first themes are related to politics in Pakistan. Tuq is an abbreviation for Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri, who founded the Pakistan People's Movement[16], a political party in Pakistan with connections to Norway through Minhaj-ul-Quran International. According to Amer (2018: 5), Minhaj-ul-Quran activists have embraced the mobilisation techniques of more revivalist movements and, like them, fight for what they call classical Islam. In their intellectual defence of classical Islam, they counter-attack the reformist and Salafi groups. According to their Manifesto, the Pakistan People's Movement:

> is devoid of the Right and Left exploitative division and is above narrow, stagnant and conservative thinking. It is also opposed to every kind of sectarianism, extremism and terrorism and is treading the democratic, welfare, and Islamic path of moderation, development, friendliness and peace. (Pakistan People's Movement, 2002: 6)[17]

We see, however, that there is no overlap between these themes. The themes related to the word 'person' are mostly about moral issues. The community relating to 'Allah' is mostly about faith. There is some overlap, however, between the two communities, articulated around the words 'person' and 'Allah'. Individuals' personal religious lives do not seem to be connected to politics.

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[16] https://www.pat.com.pk/english/index.html
[17] http://www.pat.com.pk/download/PAT_Manifesto_en.pdf

Figure 35 - Network of co-occurring words: Structure of debates

4.1.6 Muslims' discussions according to gender

The chart below (see Figure 36) shows which lexical clusters are discussed more by men (green bars) and by women (red bars). The bars going upwards signal an overrepresentation of tweets from one gender over another in the cluster; the bars going downwards underline an underrepresentation.
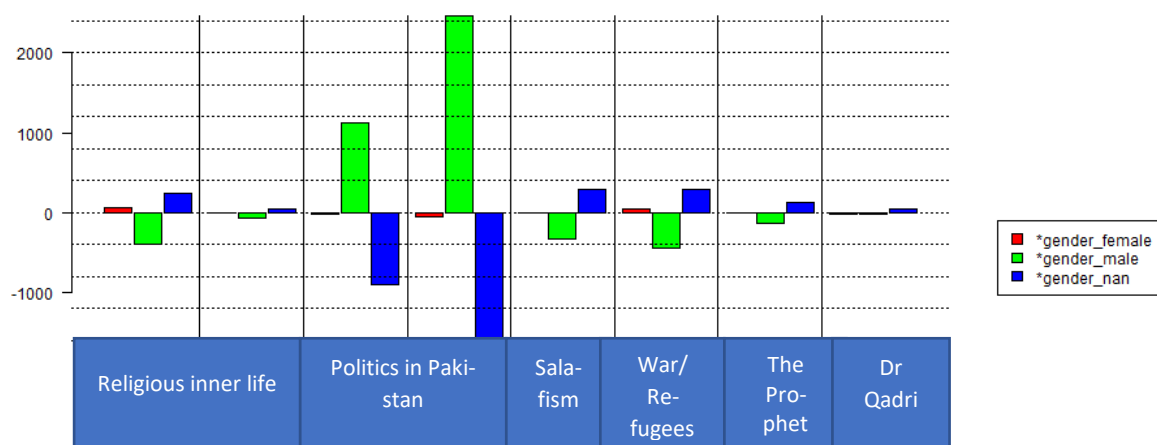

Figure 36 – Muslims' discussions according to gender

First, in the chart above, we see women's lack of participation in all themes. Furthermore, the green bars above 0 indicate that men tweet a lot about two themes: politics in Pakistan; and Dr. Qadri. We also notice that people who have not registered a gender in their profile are much less interested in

these two themes. Women seem interested in religious inner life (see the orange word cloud below, Figure 37) and war and refugees (in the blue word cloud below, Figure 38).

Figure 37 – Discussions of religious inner life

Figure 38 – Discussions of war and refugees

4.2 Events

Offline events may provoke engagement and response in the form of tweets and fuel radicalisation online. In this section, we present our analyses of the themes identified in section 4.1 over time to see if these themes relate to particular events. The analyses are presented in heat maps. These heat maps are chronological representations of the themes from section 4.1, where we visualise the topics that were discussed the most within the timeframe of the study. The cluster numbers are listed in the column on the right. The months and years are indicated on the bottom line under each column.

### 4.2.1 Tweets by the radical right triggered by events

What follows is a presentation of the analysis of themes over time from the radical right in English and Norwegian. The Muslim text corpora did not allow for a similar analysis.

In section 4.1.2, the six themes from the radical right in English were presented. These themes are presented in the diagram below (see Figure 39), which shows the themes over time. In the diagram, we see that clusters 4 (Morocco and terror) and 5 (Gab) dominate the conversations in 2016. According to Wikipedia, Gab is a social media website known for its far right user base.[18] In 2017, we see that clusters 1 (Trump) and 5 (Gab) dominate the conversations.

In 2018, we see that clusters 1 (Trump), 5 (Gab) and 6 (sex and gender) dominate the conversations. In 2019, we see that clusters 4 (terror and Morocco) and 3 (migration, borders and China) dominate the conversations. The theme of terror and Morocco is probably linked to the reporting on two Norwegian and Danish girls who were killed in the Atlas Mountains in Morocco on 17 December 2018. As we see below, the theme is also apparent in 2016, but it is difficult to say if that relates to a certain event. There were, for example, no terror attacks in Morocco that year.[19] The topic of migration, borders and China in 2019 is probably connected to conversations about what has been referred to as the refugee crisis in Europe. Sex and gender is also a significant topic in 2018 and may be connected to the #metoo campaign.

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[18] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gab_(social_network)
[19] https://www.refworld.org/docid/5981e428a.html
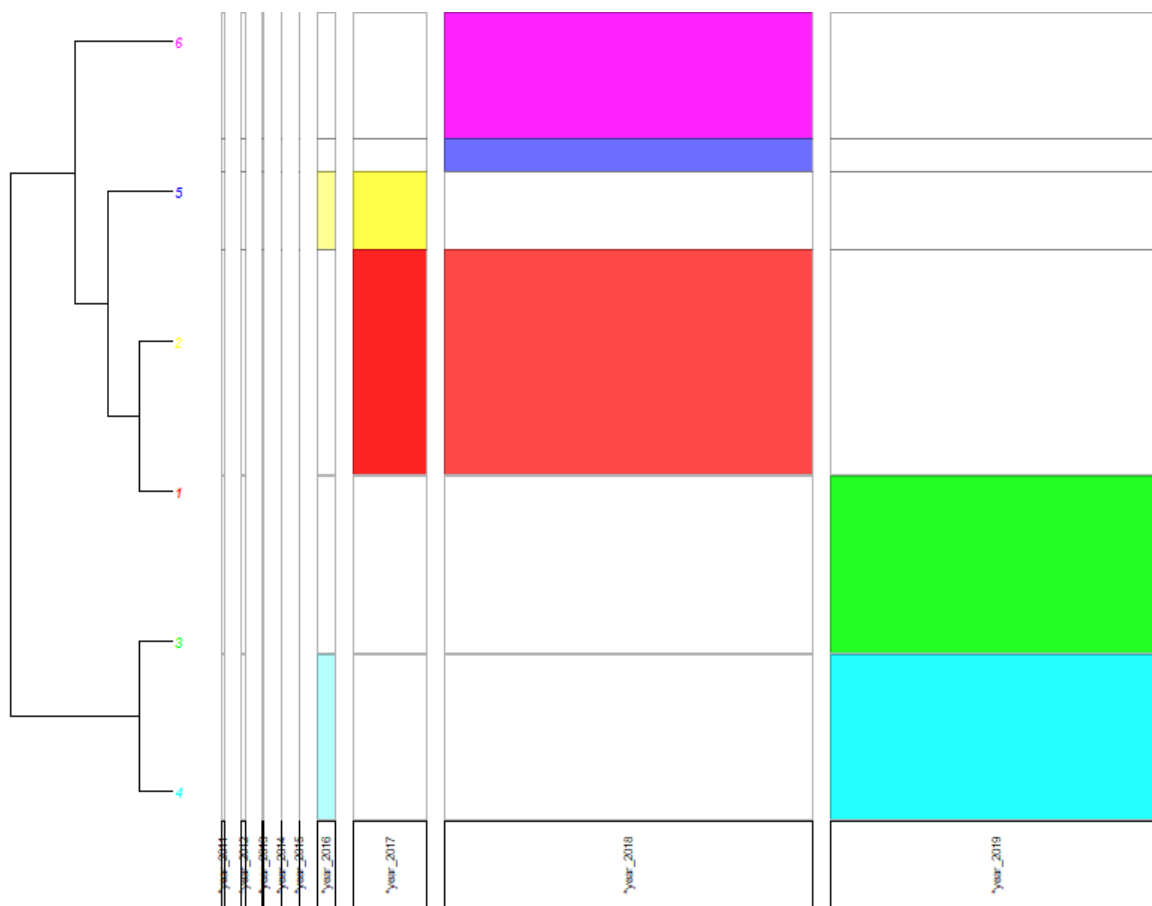
Figure 39 - Right wing in English: Evolution of categories over time, as per overrepresentation of clusters by year

In section 4.1.1, the six themes from the radical right in Norwegian were presented. These themes are presented in the diagram below, Figure 40, which shows the themes over time. In this diagram, we see that cluster 1 (government) dominates the conversations in 2011. Muslims and Islam dominate in 2016. Cluster 3 concerning crimes against women and children dominates the conversations in 2019. The theme of government may be connected to municipal elections in 2011, but these were also held in 2015 and 2019. It does not seem possible to detect particular events that would have triggered these conversations. The reason is that the analysis was done on a yearly basis, and not on a monthly basis as in the other country reports.
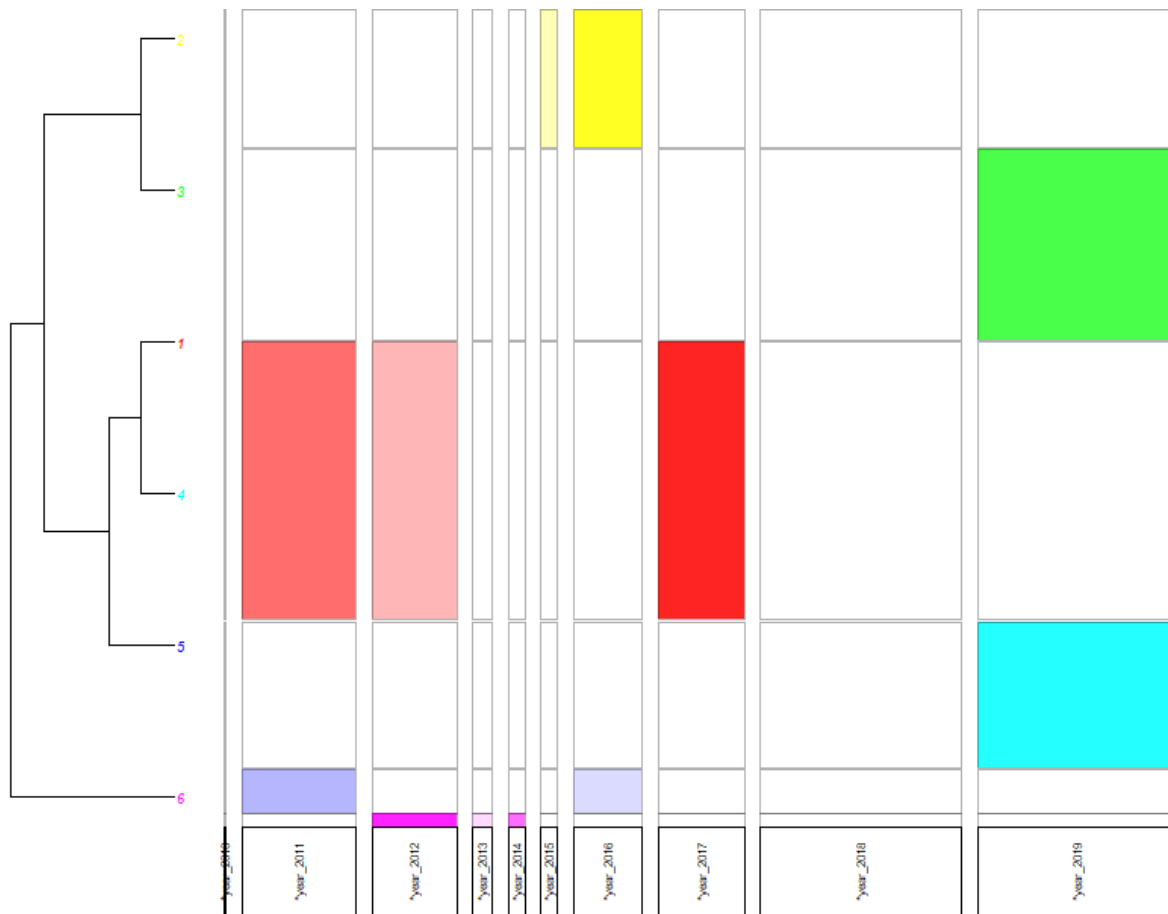
Figure 40 - Right wing in Norwegian: Evolution of categories over time, as per overrepresentation of clusters by year

4.2.2 Events as means of participation

The news triggers online activity and engagement. Above, we saw that Twitter users on the radical right comment on what is going on in the news, reacting to political and journalistic information, but we cannot conclude that the news triggers radicalisation. The themes discussed amongst the radical right are not only right-wing topics but are discussed widely in the Norwegian public sphere. However, it seems that the theme of Muslims and Islam is not connected to what is going on in the news, except when there are connections to reported crimes in the news.

Since our analyses were made on a yearly basis, and not on a monthly basis, as in the other country reports, we were not able to make a more detailed connection with specific events which might be shown to trigger debate. This makes it difficult to make conclusions about whether or not Norwegian Twitter users are responding to news events.

4.3 Influencers

In this section, we present analyses of influencers in our data sample. We pinpoint those who have received the most exposure in relation to the most replies to their tweets. By defining influencers in this manner, those who have the largest platforms and the highest levels of visibility are taken into account.

Looking into users whose content spreads the most and reaches the highest scores in retweets to better understand the role of influencers must be done at the level of Twitter and not at the level of the Norwegian sample because of its very small size. Thus, the main focus will be on the users who are retweeted by the sample and who are the most shared at the level of the Twitter platform as a whole.

4.3.1 Key influencers on Twitter

The findings from this section show that influencers amongst the radical right are mainly Donald Trump and the New Right, an ultraconservative movement. The most important influencer amongst the Muslims seems to be the King of Saudi Arabia, King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud.

Key radical right influencers

By far the most visible influencer amongst the radical right is American President Donald Trump (see Figure 41). Following the president are: Jim Jordan (an American politician); James Woods (an American actor expressing his political views on Twitter); Charlie Kirk (leader of Turning Point USA or TPUSA); the Voice of Europe (a conservative news network), which was found to be one of the top domains used by alt-right Twitter users in a recent study (Berger, 2018: 34-6); Paul Joseph Watson (a YouTube personality who considers himself part of the New Right[20]); PrisonPlanet (a British free speech extremist, part of the New Right); Donald Trump Jr.; First Lady Melania Trump (FLOTUS); Ann Coulter (an American writer and political commentator); and Peter Imanuelsen (or PeterSweden7, a Swedish journalist and political commentator).
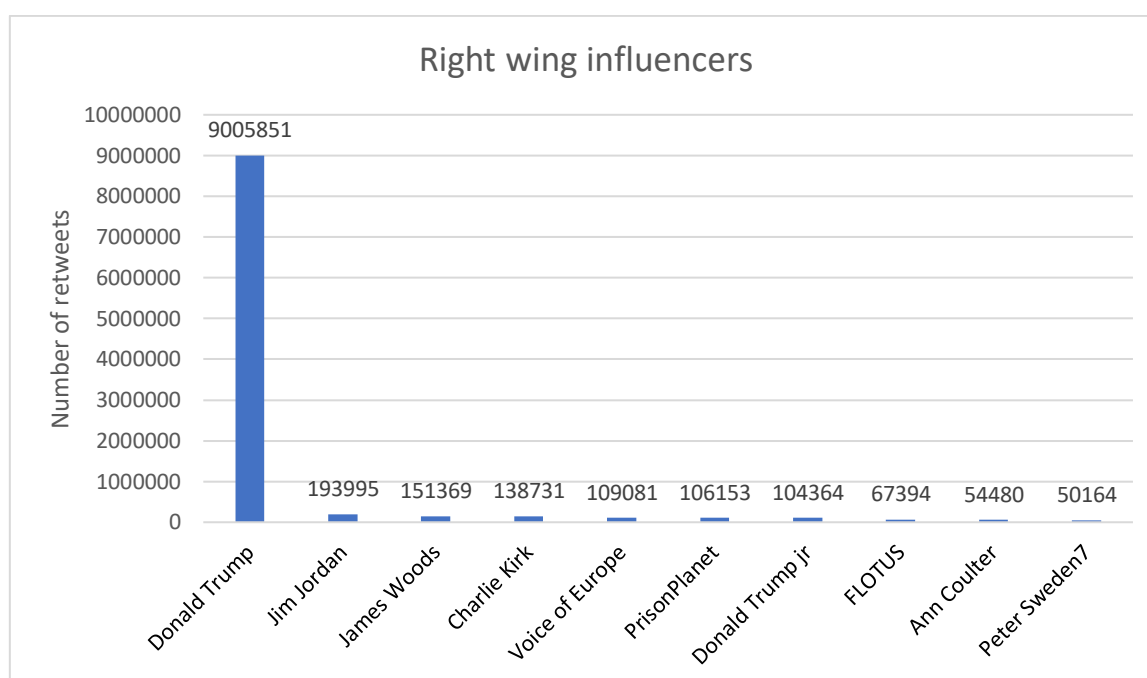
Figure 41 - Right wing influencers

It is important to note that the influencers are not ranked according to their level of approval, but according to how visible they are. The attention received by individual tweets may be both positive and negative feedback. Donald Trump's tweets, as noted above, reach a level of visibility that significantly exceeds the others. This result is not surprising considering that Trump is the President of the United States and, as such, receives a lot of attention.

We may conclude that radical right conversations on Twitter in Norway are not restricted to national contexts, but are also part of international conversations.

Key radical Muslim influencers

When looking at the Muslim data sample, the results are very different (see Figure 42). The foremost influencers cannot be perceived as sharing a particular world view. The top influencer within the Norwegian data sample is King Salman of Saudi Arabia – a Muslim, a globally recognised political

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[20] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Right
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Joseph_Watson

leader and the head of one the most authoritarian regimes in the world, founded on Shariah law. The second most influential tweeter is pop singer Justin Bieber, followed by another pop singer, Zayn Malik and Hillary Clinton. Mesut Özil is a football player for Arsenal. Mufti Ismail Menk[21] is a preacher who studied Shariah Law at the Islamic University of Madinah in Saudi Arabia, which follows the Salafi ideology that is prevalent in that country.
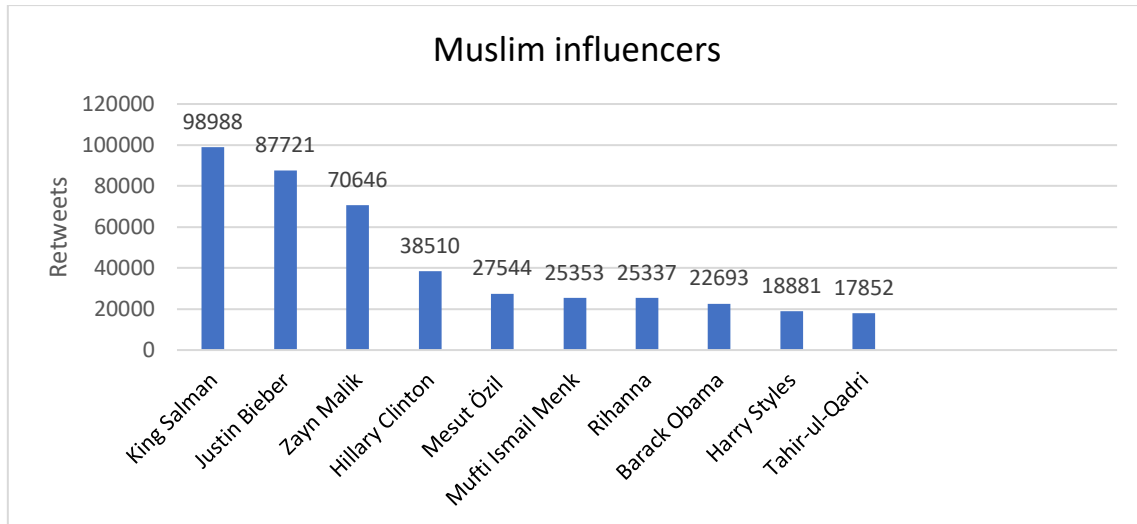

Figure 42 - Muslim influencers

There is no distinct pattern nor perceptible characteristic that links these accounts. Amongst the influencers, only two can be potentially defined as radical – namely, the King of Saudi Arabia and Mufti Ismail Menk. King Salman is the head of a country where Shariah law is the basis of justice. In Saudi Arabia, judgements are usually meted out according to the Hanbali tradition of Islam. The law tends to be conservative and advocate severe punishment – including amputation for crimes such as theft and execution for crimes that are deemed more severe (e.g. drug trafficking and practising witchcraft).[22]

4.3.2 Influencers as means of participation

Mufti Ismail Menk, who studied law at a university in Saudi Arabia that supports Wahhabism, and the king of the Wahhabi Kingdom of Saudi Arabia may influence Norwegian Twitter users who espouse a politico-religious Wahhabi ideology.

Furthermore, the politics of Donald Trump and the ideology of the New Right may influence Norwegian Twitter users who hold radical right-wing views.

Yet, although President Trump, the New Right and supporters of Wahhabism, like the King of Saudi Arabia, all seem influential, we cannot determine whether these Twitter users serve as drivers of self-radicalisation. We do not know what they tweet about or how people respond to what they tweet. Therefore, we may consider these findings as indications of possible drivers of self-radicalisation.

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[21] https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/11/11/islamic-preacher-ismail-menk-liverpool-university_n_4254854.html?guccounter=1
[22] https://www.britannica.com/place/Saudi-Arabia/Government-and-society

5. Networks

People use the Internet in different manners and depending on their uses, their networks vary. Some people use Twitter to bond with like-minded people, creating echo chambers that amplify their message and suppress any contrary opinions. Others enjoy very large audiences of people with whom they share no real-life ties, as their relationships are primarily uni-directional. There are also Twitter users who primarily follow world leaders and celebrities of different sorts - while having few to no followers themselves, and therefore possibly communicating on Twitter without an actual audience. Such variation in Twitter use offers insightful information about how processes of radicalisation might take place online, which influencers these processes can be tied to, and how well people are included into digital networks of people openly supporting radical ideologies. Network analysis reveals how connected people are online, who they are connected with and how conversations are being conducted on the web.

Relationships and group belonging may fuel processes of self-radicalisation (Vergani, 2018). As an example, Vestel's informants (2016: 104) report that they recognised other people's personal descriptions of people from immigrant backgrounds on social media and sensed that they were part of a larger collective that strengthened their identity and self-image. Meleagrou-Hitchens and Kaderbhai (2017: 5) claim that 'Extremists seek to insert people into echo chambers that amplify their message and suppress any contrary opinions. Thus, by its very nature, social media creates for its users an environment that, in some cases, is conducive to radicalisation'. In this chapter, network analyses are presented to further the understanding of the roles of digital sociability and self-radicalisation online.

The analyses will provide answers to the following questions of how conversations are being conducted and whether there are online milieus of radicalisation on Twitter:

- How connected are the Twitter users in the data sample to one another? (Section 5.1)
- To whom are the Twitter users in the data sample connected? (Section 5.2)
- What are the institutions and/or who are the leaders taking centre stage in the networks? (Section 5.3)

In this report, milieu is defined as follows:

> A milieu includes the people, the physical and social conditions, the significant events and networks of communications in which someone acts or lives and which shape that person's subjectivity (identity), choices and trajectory through life. (DARE project[23])

The network analyses are conducted at three levels to examine digital ties in the Norwegian data sample: (i) at the sample level (Section 5.1); (ii) at the retweet level (Section 5.2); and (iii) at the 'mention' level (Section 5.3). Analyses at these three levels are complementary, as explained in the presentations of each level. For privacy reasons, the names of accounts do not appear on the graphs presented below.

Throughout the presentation of our analyses, there is a distinction between 'our samples' and the 'full scale of the sample'. When we refer to 'our samples', we mean users hand-picked by the Norwegian researcher to compose the Norwegian sample. The phrase 'Full scale of the sample' refers to the followers and followings of the country-level sample as well as the samples of the other seven countries within the DARE study (Greece, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Germany, France and Belgium). Thus, we are not only extending the focus beyond the 40-plus people represented by each of the two Norwegian samples – that is, the Norwegian Muslim and anti-Islamist samples – we are also considering the networks of all seven country samples, with their respective followers and followings.

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[23] http://www.dare-h2020.org/concepts.html

5.1 On the sample level

The network analyses at the sample level provide insight into connectivity: how Twitter users in the data sample are connected with one another, their level of online visibility, who is following whom and who is being followed. In addition, this approach provides information as to whether people constitute points of passage or hubs of some sort.

To analyse connectivity, the followers and followings of the country-level sample as well as the other country samples within this study are considered. The analyses are presented in two graphs in 5.1.1 and in 5.1.2: one for the Muslims and one for the radical right. In these two graphs, the size of each node is representative of in-degree relationships: the bigger the node is, the bigger the following that account has. Large nodes imply that a person has a strong reputation and has other people's attention. In the graphs, the colours represent different countries.

The spatialisation layout is a force directed algorithm (Force Atlas 2), which visualises the level of connectivity of the sample and the people who are central to the network. This algorithm heightens interrelationships and, therefore, helps us determine whether the Twitter users in the data sample have close bonds or not.

5.1.1 Network of the radical right sample

Below is a graph produced from the network analysis of the Norwegian radical right sample (see Figure 43). In this graph, we see that the Norwegian radical right Twitter users are not solely nationally based. There are connections to Twitter users in the data sample from Great Britain (32.35%), identified by the colour orange, and to the data sample in Germany (1.4%), identified in green. However, the distance between many pairs of nodes is relatively long. Thus, the connections between these users are not strong. Great Britain, therefore, seems to play a role in the Norwegian radical right realm on Twitter.

The larger orange node in the graph represents a British Twitter user and is one of the most followed accounts within the network of the Norwegian sample. In addition, there are rather large nodes in blue, which represent influential Norwegian Twitter users. Thus, the most followed accounts are Norwegian, with this one exception from Great Britain.

The Twitter user which is one of the most followed accounts within the network, is Lana Lokteff, a female 'alt-right' leader. Lokteff is one of the movement's most high-profile women and she operates RedIce, a media company, with her husband (Gallaher, 2020: 8). Findings from Carolyn Gallaher's study of how 'alt-right' is using Twitter to mainstream its politics, suggest that Europe is a geographic anchor in alt-right discourse and that the alt-right in Europe is trying to normalise white identity politics. Furthermore, the study finds 'that the movement is turning away from blatant misogyny on Twitter, instead strategically mimicking conservative tropes about women needing male protection.' (Gallaher, 2020: 1). Findings from a study of videos made by Lana Lokteff, published via the online outlets 3Fourteen Radio and Red Ice TV, show that in her videos Lokteff simultaneously articulates women's proper role – their unsuitability as 'leaders' – and her call for women to rise in support of Far/Alt-Right defenses of White culture (Mattheis 2018).

|		
NOR	(66.18%)	
GBR	(32.35%)	
DEU	(1.47%)	
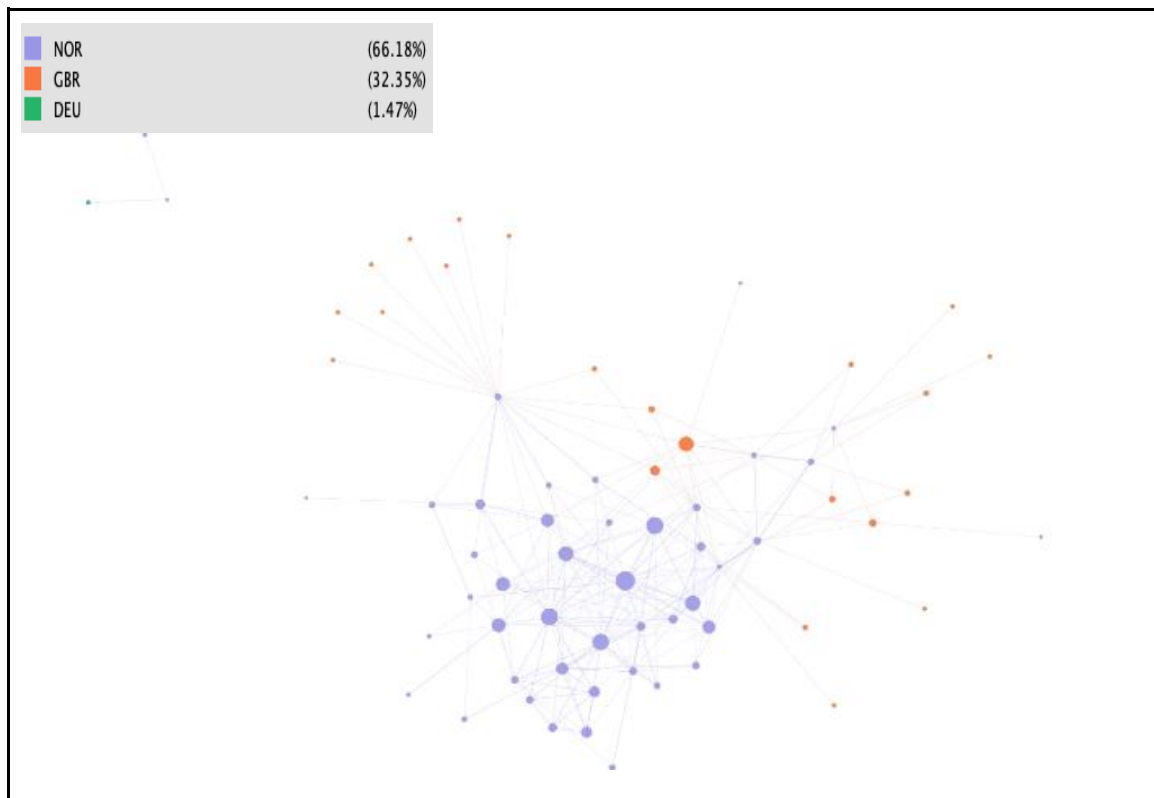
Figure 43 – Network analysis Norwegian radical right

The graph is quite dense and concentrated if we disregard the accounts from Great Britain, which are mostly peripheral, except for Lana Lokteff who is the most frequently cited in accounts from Great Britain and the node below, slightly to the left, which represents a woman of Swedish origin who is an activist of the Nordic resistance movement[24]. The density is an indication of interconnectivity, and what we see here is a graph that is quite dense, but not very dense. A number of users are directly connected to each other without intermediaries. At the heart of these interactions are the most connected users. Due to the levels of interactivity and connectivity, we may consider the Norwegian data sample as an integrated concentrated radical right digital milieu – but not a very integrated and concentrated milieu. A number of the Twitter users in the sample have access to what many others know and share.

5.1.2 Network of the radical Muslim sample

Below is a graph produced from the network analysis of the radical Muslim Norwegian sample (see Figure 44). In this graph, we see that there is only one connection to another nationality – namely, the Dutch (3.75%) – represented in a green node. This connection is not strong, as the distance is long between the Dutch Twitter user and the Norwegian Twitter user. We also notice that this user is represented in a small node and is, therefore, not influential. Looking at the size of the other nodes, we see that there are a few influential Twitter users in the Norwegian data sample. As explained already, the larger the node, the greater the following of that account.

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[24] https://nordicresistancemovement.org/
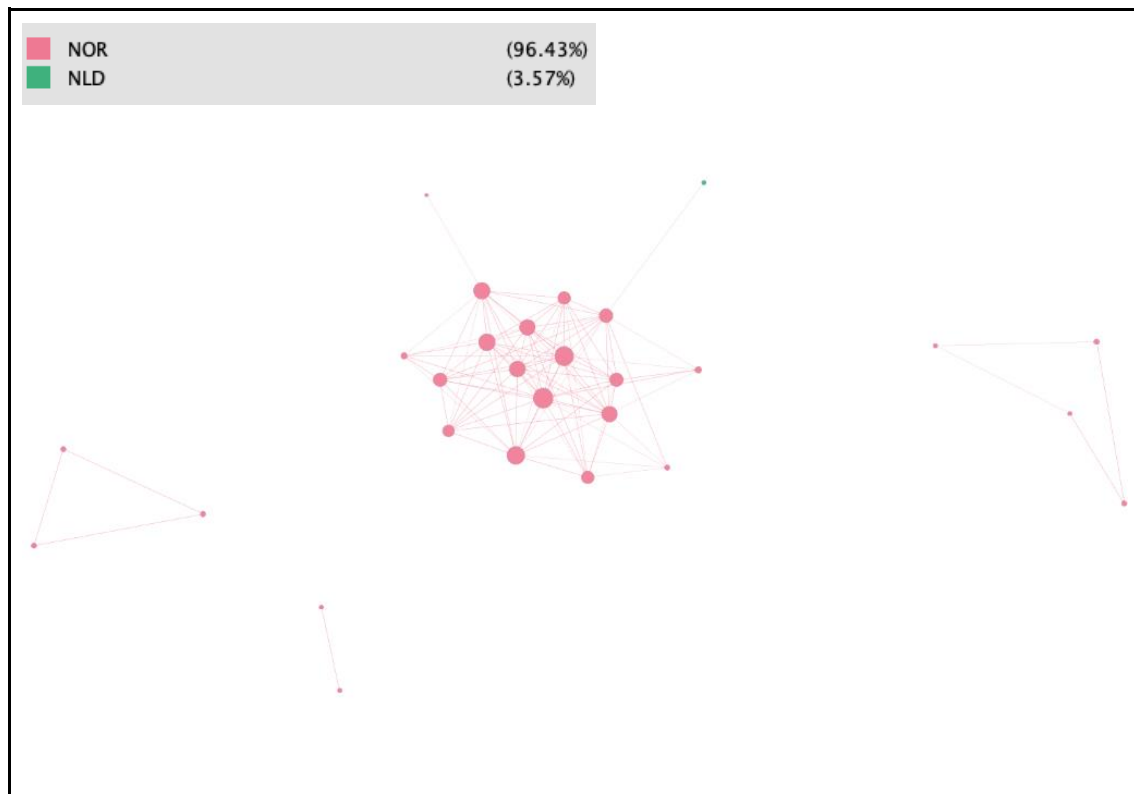
Figure 44 – Network analysis Norwegian Muslims

The graph is not concentrated, as we see that there are four small networks with a lack of integration; three very small networks and one larger network. In the three smaller networks, the density is very low and the distances between nodes are long. This tells us that these users have few and weak connections. This does not necessarily mean that these Twitter users do not have many strong connections in general. They may have them amongst Twitter users outside of our data sample.

The larger network, however, shows much more density and connectivity; users have more, and closer, connections. Many of the tweeters communicate and retweet amongst themselves, as indicated by the density and concentrated nature of the graph. There are few intermediaries between two users; that is, people are connected to one another directly or with very few intermediaries, showing interconnectivity.

We cannot consider the Norwegian data sample as a concentrated radical Muslim digital milieu. Several Twitter users in the sample do not have access to what many others know and share. There is, however, a smaller community of online actors who interact on a regular basis.

5.2 On the retweet level

In this subsection, analyses of who retweets whom within the Norwegian sample are presented to map out interactions and understand conversation patterns. For users to be considered in the analysis of this subsection, two conditions must be met: the person who is retweeting must be part of the country-level sample; and the person who is retweeted must be part of the full sample (any of the seven countries in the wider DARE study of digital sociability and self-radicalisation online).

The size of the nodes represents the in-degree of the node; in other words, the more the account is retweeted, the bigger the node is. Colours represent countries and, therefore, highlight which countries are most central to the conversation.

As noted, the spatialisation layout is a force directed algorithm (Force Atlas 2). It allows for visualising the level of connectivity of the sample and the people who constitute points of passage – possibly leading to the observed online network or connecting people outside of the network.

It is important to keep in mind that high numbers of retweets – and this is the same for 'mentions' (section 5.3) – of a given account do not automatically indicate the popularity of a message. Likewise, it does not imply the popularity of a user's or influencer's account, in the case of mentions. Sharing a message can very well be a strategy to shed light on a conflictual topic. Therefore, it may be used to engage in controversy.

Our findings show that the radical right conversations are not limited to the national context. Rather, they interact with influences from Great Britain, as we also saw in the previous section. Based on the analysis from this section, we cannot conclude that there is a radical right milieu. As for the Muslim retweet network, there is little-to-no interaction. This, again, is an indication that there is no Norwegian radical Muslim milieu on Twitter.

5.2.1 Radical right wing retweet network

The graph below presents the retweet network of the Norwegian radical right sample (see Figure 45). In this graph, we see that 17.02% of the retweets originate from Great Britain. This means that the Norwegian radical right is influenced by Great Britain, as we also saw in the graph at the sample level. We also notice a green node in the network from the Netherlands, which means that there is also a small influence from the Netherlands (2.13%). Hence, again, it is confirmed that the Norwegian political scene is not limited to national debates.
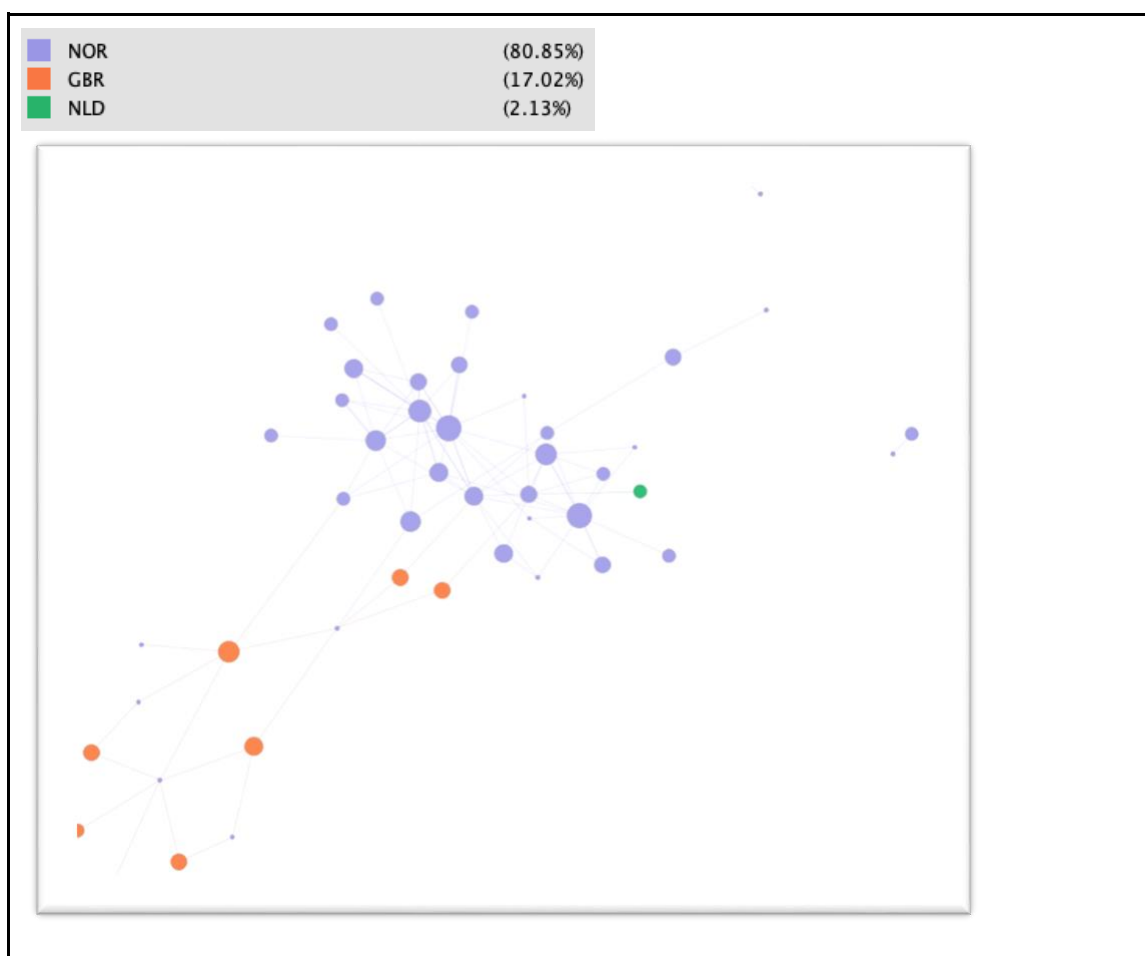

Figure 45 – Retweet network of the Norwegian radical right sample

Nevertheless, almost 81% of the retweets come from Norwegian users, demonstrating that conversations are mainly held amongst Norwegians. While the foreign accounts are few, they nonetheless generate a great number of retweets. This is indicated in the size of the nodes. Again, we see that there is a long distance between the Norwegian Twitter users and those from Great Britain, and that there are a few Twitter users who may bring influences from Great Britain.

Many of the users are connected in this retweet network, but it is not a very integrated network. This indicates that we cannot conclude that there is a radical right milieu shaping the Twitter users' identities, choices and trajectories through life, but we may state that there is a network in which they interact.

5.2.2 Radical Muslim retweet network

In the graph below of the radical Muslim retweet network (see Figure 46), we first notice that the retweet network is not connected to any of the other country samples in the study. Furthermore, we can see that the network is smaller than that of the radical right. We also notice that there is little-to-no interaction between users, with the exception of four particular accounts. These are represented in the large nodes and are similar in the sense that they are central to the network and seem to act as points of passage. However, all in all, there are very few connections in the retweet network of the Norwegian Muslim sample. This finding adds to the previous findings from the network analysis at the sample level; there may be a network, but these patterns of interaction cannot be described as a milieu.

We cannot, however, conclude that Twitter users from the Norwegian Muslim sample use Twitter less often to converse and exchange ideas or information than they do to publicise content. They may have retweet networks elsewhere. This is because, as noted in section 2.3.1, the retweet activity of the Norwegian Muslims in the sample (14,714 retweets) is much higher than the tweet activity (5,952 tweets.). This indicates the formation of social ties, but we do not know where these ties are. The languages represented in the tweets may be an indication. We presented these languages in section 2.1.4.

Furthermore, in section 4.3.2, we noted that the foremost influencers are King Salman of Saudi Arabia and the pop singers Justin Bieber and Zayn Malik followed by Hillary Clinton.
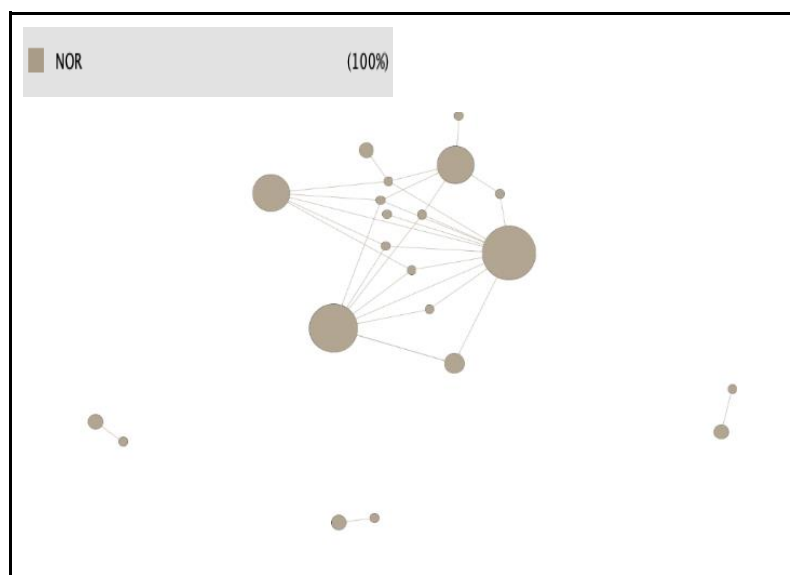

Figure 46 – Retweet network of the Norwegian radical Muslim sample

5.3 On the mention level

Analyses at the 'mention' level are presented in this section. This includes the level of interconnectivity as well as the centrality and reputation of accounts that are interlinked through mentions. On Twitter, mentions are signified with the symbol @, immediately followed by the screen name of an account. Mentions are employed to notify users of posts and can be understood in two ways. First, mentions can be direct conversations between two people. Second, individuals may be mentioned by users to offer support, to challenge them or to gain attention from them. In this respect, mentions do not represent systematic engagement in a conversation. They can serve to endorse a message or, on the contrary, be used for conflictual ends to generate disruption. The analysis at the mention level can show whether individuals within the networks acknowledge other users and actively interact with them. Identifying which users receive the highest number of mentions sheds light on those individuals who are most central to online conversations and who are most often acknowledged by others.

As mentions can be conversation tools, endorsement signs or conflict indices, or even none of the above and that, in the context of this study, we are dealing with huge amounts of data, it is impossible to know the exact reasons behind the network of mentions without providing additional analytical perspectives. Therefore, we should be careful not to assume that a user's centrality in a mention network implies either positive or negative popularity, unless the context provides sufficient indicators as to whether we can lean one way or the other in the analysis.

The analytical approach is slightly different from the analyses in the last two subsections. Here, we analyse every single 'mention' – no longer restricting mentions to someone within the full DARE sample nor within the Norwegian sample. In other words, we consider all mentions in the Norwegian sample, whether the account is part of the DARE full sample or not.

The layout below is the same as in the graphs above (i.e. Yifan Hu)[25]. The node size represents the PageRank – an algorithm that outputs a probability distribution, used to represent the likelihood that a person randomly mentioning one person will arrive at this particular person. The colour of nodes corresponds to the community of a given node. Interpretative communities are generated by the Louvain algorithm (modularity calculation). The colours represent the results of the modularity algorithm implemented in Gephi. This algorithm tries to detect communities, but those communities are a mathematical construction, not 'reality'. The results obtained through this algorithm can be clues for deeper investigation but should not be considered results per se.

5.3.1 Radical right mention network

In the analysis presented in the graph of the radical right mention network below (see Figure 47), only accounts that have been mentioned more than once are included. At first glance, we can see that the radical right mention network is dispersed, spread out and full of small clusters built around individual accounts. There are no large hubs of conversation and there are very few mentions. Based on this graph, we may claim that Twitter users within the sample do not mention one another, nor do they share the same sources. Clusters are not composed of interconnected accounts but centre around a single account that mentions other accounts, with the exception of accounts situated at the centre of this graph.

The clusters on the periphery of the graph – those whose shapes are very close to a triangle built around individual accounts – are out-degree. This means that a given account mentions others in their tweets, but the relationship is not reciprocated; those whom they mention do not respond. Moreover, the people contacted in such a way do not interact amongst each other. What we see

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[25] The Yifan Hu multilevel layout algorithm is an algorithm that brings together the good parts of force-directed algorithms and a multilevel algorithm to reduce algorithm complexity. This is an algorithm that works really well with large networks.

here, then, are people generating volumes of activity by tweeting, but without any response nor any sense of reciprocal relations. In short, this shows us is that there is a poor level of connectivity in parts of the radical right Norwegian scene on Twitter.

Figure 47 (below) shows a central cluster that is slightly denser and has a few larger nodes. Most discussions revolve around this central cluster and the larger nodes inside this cluster. The larger nodes are politicians, such as Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg and American president Donald Trump and the news outlets Klassekampen, Aftenposten, NRK and Dagbladet. Thus, this graph tells us that online discussions using mentions are mainly public debates among recognised opinion leaders.
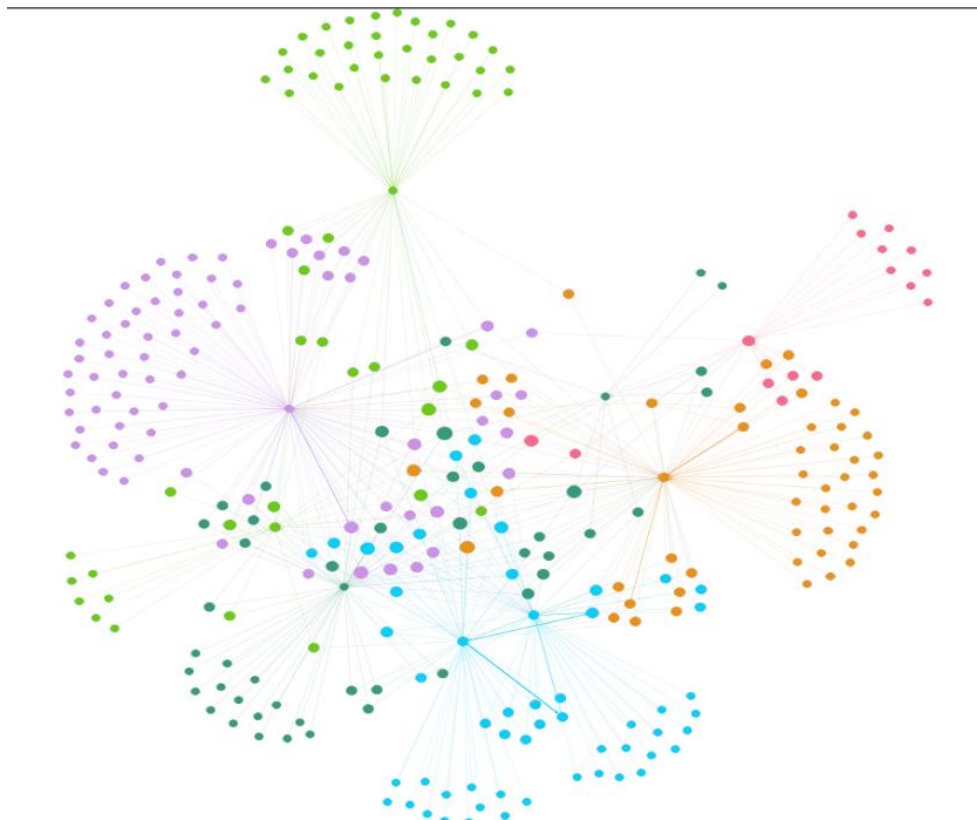
Figure 47 – Filter Rules: All nodes with an in-degree < 2 were removed (i.e. nodes that have been mentioned fewer than two times)

To complement the network analysis of mentions amongst radical right Twitter users in the data sample, the Table 3 (below) summarises the number of times an account is mentioned. The table was created at the level of the full scale of the sample. It confirms that mentions mainly target institutions – including right-wing media outlets like Document.no and Resett – and public authority figures, such as American President Donald Trump, Hans Lysglimt, the leader of the far right political party The Alliance (Alliansen), and Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg. In addition, there are many mentions of Visit Oslo, which is an official travel guide to Oslo, and the Twitter account Photo Hour, which connects professional and amateur photographers and accounts relating to meteorology. This table generates two new results:

1. Conversations revolve around far right media outlets and officials, but also around other sites that seem politically neutral, such as Visit Oslo and weather sites. Or perhaps the interest in weather sites is due to the fact that some far right-wingers are supporting the idea that climate change is not real.

2. The users in the data sample seem to be equally interested in Erna Solberg, Norway's prime minister and leader of the Conservative Party, and Hans Lysglimt, leader of the far right party The Alliance.
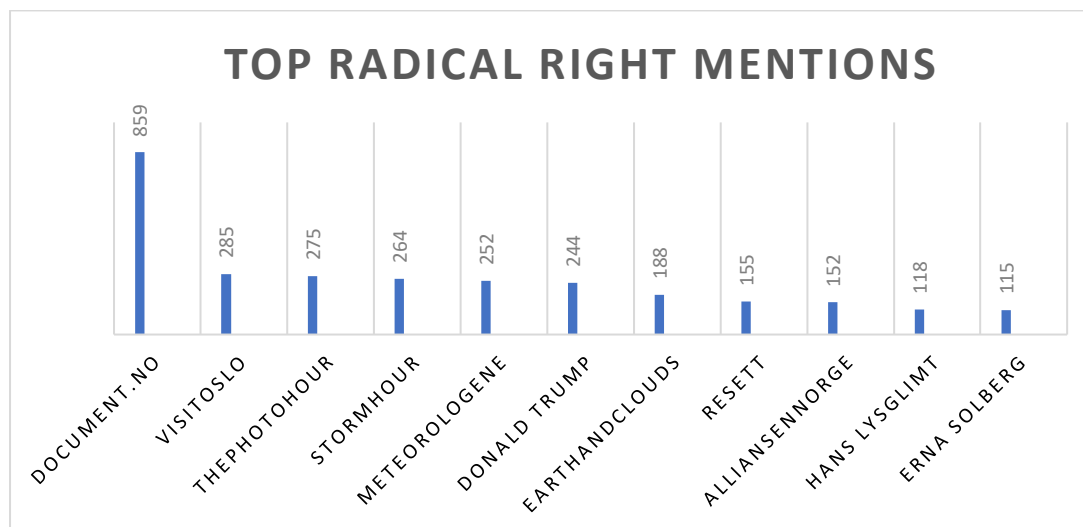

Table 3 – Top radical right mentions
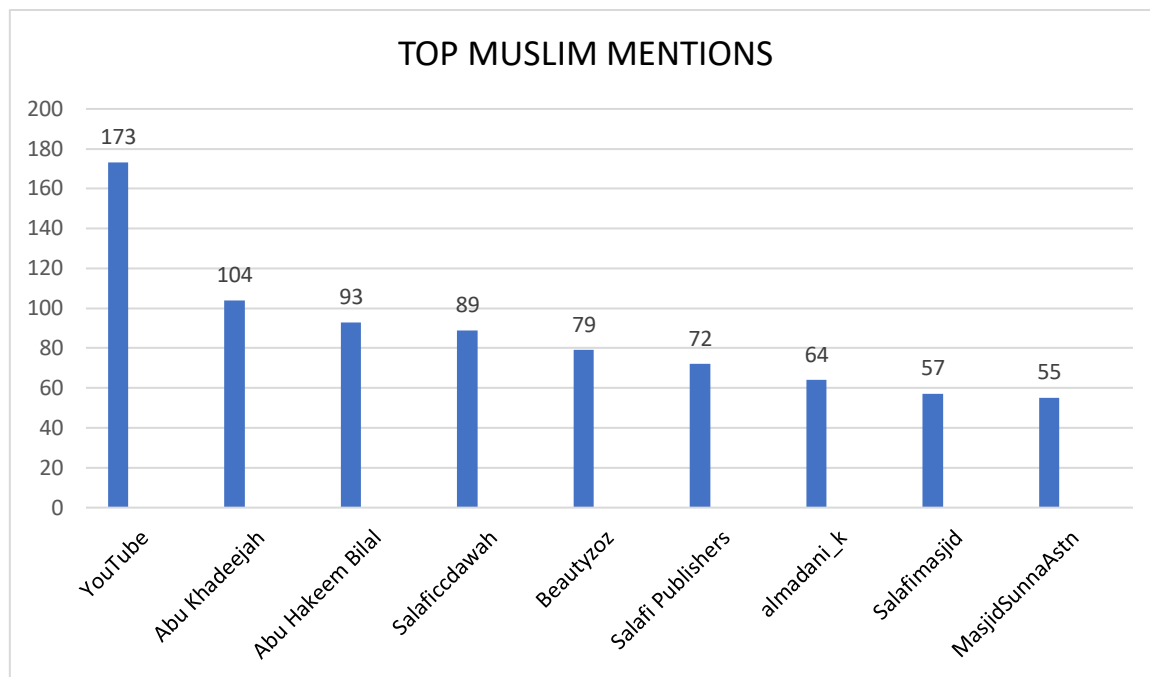
5.3.2 Muslim mention network

In the analysis presented in the graph below (see Figure 48), there seems to be little-to-no interaction within the overall network of accounts.

Figure 48 - Filter Rules: users that have been mentioned less than one time (0/1) have been removed from the graph (using Gephi in-degree filter)

To complement the network analysis in the graph presentation above, the most popular accounts are identified. These are presented in Table 4 (below) summarising the number of times an account is mentioned at the level of the full scale of the sample, based on the Norwegian Muslim sample. By moving away from the structure of the conversation generated by mentioning people and examining the number of mentions, we can see that all of the top nine accounts, except YouTube, are related to Salafism. We do not, however, know what people refer to on YouTube. These may well be videos promoting Salafism, and it would be interesting to research that question through qualitative analyses of the data. Those with the most mentions are all men or Salafi institutions. For instance, there are mentions of Abu Hakim Bilal and Abu Khadeejah, a Salafist preacher in Birmingham, who established the website Salafi Publications (Bowen, 2014: 65).

TOP MUSLIM MENTIONS

Bar chart values: YouTube 173, Abu Khadeejah 104, Abu Hakeem Bilal 93, Salaficcdawah 89, Beautyzoz 79, Salafi Publishers 72, almadani_k 64, Salafimasjid 57, MasjidSunnaAstn 55. Y-axis from 0 to 200.

Table 4 – Top radical Muslim mentions

Salafists can be divided into three groups: religious purists, who avoid politics, comprise the largest group; activists, who are involved in politics; and jihadi Salafis, a very small minority who support violent jihad. A common trait amongst the Salafists is that they look at how the early Muslims (Prophet Muhammad and his companions) led their lives to understand how Muslims should practice their faith. Khadeejah's group is at the separatist and purist end of the British Salafi spectrum. He defends, for example, the practice of taking four wives in countries where it is legal (Bowen, 2014: 71). In addition, Salaficcdawah is a Birmingham-based Twitter account promoting *dawah* (inviting people to Islam and spreading knowledge about the religion).

6. Conclusion

This report presents new knowledge about radical Muslim and radical right-wing interactions on Twitter in Norway. This includes knowledge about the themes these two groups are discussing in online conversations but also about events and people who influence those conversations and the presentations of self and the networks that users engage in.

The findings from the study in Norway presented in this report show the following:

- Radical views are expressed in the text, symbols and images of some online self-presentations and probably also in conversations on Twitter.
- Some influencers in Norwegian Twitter networks - on the right this includes President Trump and the New Right, among the Muslims it includes supporters of Wahhabism such as the King of Saudi Arabia - hold radical views. However, we cannot determine whether these influential Twitter users serve as drivers of self-radicalisation. We do not know what they tweet about or how people respond to what they tweet. Therefore, we may consider these findings as indications of possible drivers of self-radicalisation.
- Radical right Twitter users seem to engage in digital sociability in the Norwegian language because they are interested in the following themes and debates: the economy, government and elections and Muslim-related crimes.

- Radical right Twitter users seem to engage in digital sociability in the English language because they are interested in the following themes and debates: American politics and President Donald Trump, borders and migration, terror, gender and freedom of expression.
- Radical Muslim Twitter users seem to engage in digital sociability in the English language because they are interested in the following themes: politics in Pakistan, life and religion in general, Salafism and refugees and war in the Middle East.
- The volume of tweets lead us to believe that radical right Twitter users are more committed than Muslim Twitter users.
- We did not find any extreme Muslims on Twitter.
- There is no evidence of 'echo chambers' for radical ideologies and hate speech.

6.1 The radical right

Due to the levels of interactivity and connectivity found in the network analyses of the radical right, we may consider the Norwegian data sample as an integrated, concentrated radical right digital milieu – but not a very integrated and concentrated milieu per se. A number of the Twitter users in the sample have access to what others know and share, but not many. This indicates that we cannot conclude with any certainty that there is a radical right milieu shaping the Twitter users' identities, choices and trajectories through life, but we may state that there is a network in which they interact. In this network radical right Twitter users from Great Britain also play a role in the conversations.

In the Norwegian data sample from the radical right, there also seem to be two groups using different languages and engaging around different themes. The group using the English language represents 23% of all tweets, while the group using Norwegian represents the remaining 77%. We have done a more thorough analysis of the Norwegian tweeting group because this group is the largest.

This report's findings on the radical right are in line with some of the findings regarding alt-right Twitter content in a Vox-Pol report from 2018[26], according to which four overlapping themes dominate the alt-right network: pro-Trump content, white nationalist content, general far-right content and anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim content.

The English-language tweeting group engages mostly in conversations about borders, terror and American President Donald Trump. However, they also seem particularly interested in the white race, sex and gender and freedom of speech. Donald Trump is by far the most retweeted user, and he has received the largest number of replies at the level of the Twitter platform as a whole. He is also amongst those who are most often mentioned on Twitter. His son, Donald Trump Jr., and his wife, First Lady Melania Trump, also figure high on the list of the most retweeted and of tweeters with the largest number of replies. Thus, this group of English-language tweeters may best be characterised as Donald Trump supporters.

The Norwegian-language tweeting group mostly engages in conversations about the economy and Muslims and Islam. Yet themes like government, elections and crime also create engagement on Twitter. It is, of course, not surprising that Islam and Muslims are a central theme in conversations amongst the radical right on Twitter, since anti-Muslim sentiments and perceptions were amongst the selection criteria for the data collection. Muslims and Islam are also already known to be a central theme of interest amongst many radical right-wingers. However, Cora Alexa Døving argues that the increase in anti-Muslim discourses that has developed at the margins of the public sphere has affected attitudes in the general population (Døving 2020). According to the Police Security Service (2019) in Norway[27], the 'enemy images' held by right-wing people and groups primarily involve Muslims, immigrants and government figures whom right-wingers consider to be

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[26] https://www.voxpol.eu/download/vox-pol_publication/AltRightTwitterCensus.pdf
[27] https://www.pst.no/temasider/trusler/

'immigration-liberal'. Islamophobia seems to be on the rise in Norway (Bangstad, 2014; Bayrakli and Hafez, 2019; Hoffman and Moe 2017). The findings from this study lend support to this claim. An interesting finding is that men and women seem to be equally interested in the theme of Islam.

The Norwegian government has recently started working with an action plan to counter hate against Muslims. This study supports the need for such a plan. Since negative perceptions of Muslims and Islam seem to characterise the Norwegian-language tweeters in the data, we chose to define and name the radical right-wingers tweeting in Norwegian in the data sample as 'anti-Islamists'.

6.2 The radical Muslims

Finding data for Norway proved to be difficult. It was not possible to find any Muslim Twitter or Facebook accounts that could fit many of the selection criteria. The Muslims in the data sample cannot be described as a milieu but, rather, as a much looser network sharing an interest in the same themes, key Figures and events. In this network, Salafism is found to be a central feature in the data. This is not surprising, since the accounts were selected using Salafism as one of the criteria.

Amongst Muslims on Twitter, we did not find accounts that openly supported or encouraged violence, nor did we find particularly radical views or opinions. The radical Muslim social media participation on which we are focusing here, therefore, concerns contributions that are far less radical than those of the radical right wing. Our findings from this study is in line with the findings of Conway et al. (2019), who note that Twitter has largely resolved its ISIS problem.

The results of the analysis of themes discussed amongst radical Muslims show that people engage in conversations about politics in Pakistan and religion. The theme of religion can be further interpreted as containing two subthemes: religious life and retweets and pictures. The retweets and pictures shared are about Salafism and refugees and war. The theme of refugees and war relates to Syria, Israel, Palestinians, children and Yemen. Life and religion concerns God and the prophet Muhammad and how to lead a good life by following God and the prophet. The theme of Salafism consists of recommendations from sheikhs and scholars, *dawah* and references to Salafi centres and conferences in Norway and London. The theme of politics in Pakistan focuses on support for Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri, who founded the Pakistan People's Movement, as well as elections, corruption and revolution.

We have also seen that Twitter does not seem to play an important role amongst radical Muslims in Norway, but we identified traces of radicalism in the self-presentations and amongst the foremost influencers in the networks. Mufti Ismail Menk, who studied law at a university in Saudi Arabia that supports Wahhabism, and the king of the Wahhabi Kingdom of Saudi Arabia may influence Norwegian Twitter users who espouse a politico-religious Wahhabi ideology. Yet, although supporters of Wahhabism, like the King of Saudi Arabia, all seem influential, we cannot determine whether these Twitter users serve as drivers of self-radicalisation. We do not know what they tweet about or how people respond to what they tweet. Therefore, we may consider these findings as indications of possible drivers of self-radicalisation.

6.3 Radicalisation

The identification of themes, self-presentations, events, key figures and networks provides a deeper understanding of digital sociability. However, we cannot draw any definitive conclusions about drivers of radicalisation. What we studied are various forms of drivers of engagement. These engagements are also possible drivers of radicalisation because these engagements may reinforce participants' radical worldviews, but we do not yet know whether the various forms of engagement identified in this study serve, or may serve, as drivers of radicalisation or whether some of them do and some do not. Research must still be done to explore engagement versus radicalisation. We do not, for example, know much about how the themes identified as creating engagement are framed. However, as the theme of Muslims and Islam is connected to the very negative theme of crime, these conversations may include hate speech. Such conversations promote hate and other negative

feelings and perceptions of Muslims, and they contribute to damaging the status and reputation of Muslims in society (Nilsen, 2014; Waldron, 2012). We also found support for this claim in the comments made on some accounts in the data sample from the radical right, where people used violent hate speech to express their anger towards immigrants and Muslims. These were, however, only single incidents, and we do not know how common they are. The question of how common violent hate speech is amongst the radical right in the data sample should be researched using qualitative methods on the corpora of tweets. Do conversations on the theme of Muslims and Islam mostly contain justified critique or do these conversations promote hate speech against Muslims? Engagement is, of course, not the same as radicalisation, although engaging in radical themes may be a sign of radicalisation, as noted, for example, by Hassan et al. (2018) in a systematic review focused on the relationship between the impact of extremist online content and violent radicalisation. This review provides 'tentative evidence that exposure to radical violent online material is associated with extremist online and offline attitudes, as well as the risk of committing political violence among white supremacist, neo-Nazi, and radical Islamist groups' (Hassan et al., 2018: 71). Furthermore, the review claims that active seekers of violent radical material seem to be at higher risk of engaging in political violence as compared to passive seekers. Thus, 'the Internet's role seems to be one of decision-shaping, which, in association with offline factors, can be associated to decision-making' (Hassan et al., 2018: 71).

Hence, we cannot, with any certainty, determine whether the identified themes in the Twitter conversations may also serve as drivers of self-radicalisation or whether the networks serve as 'echo chambers' for radical ideologies and hate speech or extreme digital speech (Bright and Ghanesh, 2019). It is worth noting, however, that a study on Twitter in Norway concludes that there is very little evidence for the existence of 'echo chambers' in the observable structure of follower/followee connections in the Norwegian Twittersphere. This study detects densely connected regions of the overall network and describes these as communities of accounts that address shared themes and topics of interest. However, the study also notes that 'Norwegian accounts generally also choose to follow a large number and diverse range of other participants in the national Twittersphere, avoiding the trap of settling into purely homophilous networks' (Bruns and Enli, 2018: 146).

To determine whether there are drivers of radicalisation amongst Muslims and the right wing on Twitter, it is necessary to do qualitative analyses of the conversations in the text corpora, for example, to better understand the contexts in which themes occur and how participation in conversations develops over time. Such research could make an important contribution to the research on self-radicalisation online, since the influence of online interactions and propaganda on processes of radicalisation is still a highly contested subject (Meleagrou-Hitchens and Kaderbhai, 2017: 5). An important research question that remains to be explored is thus: how and where do we draw the line between engagement and radicalisation?

The Twitter platform itself may, of course, also serve an important role in self-radicalisation, as shown in many studies on online radicalisation (Meleagrou-Hitchens and Kaderbhai, 2017). In their recent study on foreign fighters, Amarasingam and Dawson (2018) find that the parents noticed changes in their children's clothing, behaviour, attitudes and friends before they left for Syria or Iraq and that they chose to keep their new identity a secret, leaving parents and others with little opportunity to intervene. Anonymous accounts carrying extremist identity markers may, thus, be a sign of radicalisation. It would be interesting to explore some Twitter accounts to see if we find processes of self-radicalisation over time in the conversations in which these accounts engage as well as in the self-presentation of their online identities.

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