YOUNG PEOPLE'S TRAJECTORIES THROUGH ANTI-ISLAM(IST) AND EXTREME RIGHT MILIEUS: COUNTRY LEVEL REPORT NORWAY

Globalisation, identity and nationalism – the case of radical right-wing youth in Norway

DARE
Dialogue About Radicalisation & Equality

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Contents

Executive Summary: The report explores experiences and situations that are likely to have become some of the main drivers in trajectories towards or away from radical right wing positions in a Norwegian context. In the present situation of globalisation and the multicultural - amplified by terrorism, wars and the possibilities of new technology - strong polarisations have emerged, with immigration and Islam at their centre. Our informants tend to experience this situation as confusing, as a crash, as if well-established borders are breaking down, and as if values, ways and persons that represent the unknown are threatening the ordered world that was once felt to have existed.

Here, a need to *state and defend one's identity* are strongly felt; differences regarding religion and faith, cultural orientations, gender practices, geographical origin, and not least history and relations to the past were all mentioned as phenomena to which one feels a pressure *to relate to, defend and stand up for*. These grievances, uncertainties, fears and tensions, manifested in what Griffin has called a 'nomic crisis', seem to be *central drivers* in the informants' trajectories toward a radical right wing position. In this process, a range of *ideological frames* are mobilised, including: the search for inspiration from the past as reflected in an interest in the Norse; the tendency to long for earlier times of homogeneity and order; the 'Traditionalism' of Julius Evola, extended with ecological perspectives; the idea of 'ethnopluralism' and the uniqueness of the nation as seen by the Identitarians; the classic national socialism - Nazism - of the Nordic Resistance Movement; the call for an attitude where more traditional gender roles are celebrated – or contested. All these frames of interpretation reflect a will to 'defend' the country, the culture, the 'original' inhabitants and the assumed 'Norwegianness'.

We also describe a series of relationships, personal morality, knowledge, experiences and emotions that seem to have had a role in orienting our actors *away* from extremist positions. A crucial question raised – although its answer remains outside the scope of this report - is *how to draw on our findings to facilitate the necessary social relations, situations and circumstances where such 'movements away from' can occur*.

In the final section, we address Fukuyama's claims that *identity politics* has become a *new paradigm*, that threatens to divide societies and dissolve societal cohesion. Simultaneously he recognises that identity politics has its *origin in important societal injustices*, that also need to be addressed. We argue that the only way to resolve that paradox is to manage *both* the necessities of identity politics *and* the problems of fragmentation that they eventually create. However, to flesh out the guidelines to realise such a task must be seen as a *project on its own*.

Fukuyama's paradoxical diagnosis is finely in line with the notion of a 'nomic crisis' where grievances are pushing the informants into a need to defend their identity, and in the extreme, to radical right wing positions. In so far as similar tendencies are also found in the more mainstream layers of the public, a term like the *Age of identity* may seem more appropriate to describe the present condition, and as such to somehow move beyond the diagnoses of a post-, high-, late- or liquid modernity. Perhaps…

1. Introduction

Social scientists have tried to encapsulate recent social conditions with terms such as post-, high, late- or liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000, 2006). Here *individualisation* is a key concept, understood as 'the burden of pattern-weaving, and the responsibility for failure falling primarily upon the individual's shoulder' (Bauman, 2000: 7-8). According to Bauman, this social condition is characterised by its complexity, in which we, as citizens, experience unprecedentedly fast, continual and far reaching changes that reflect a high level of uncertainty and unpredictability. These features are summed up in the concept of *'liquid modernity'.* This includes the process of *globalisation*, where money, goods, cultural impulses and persons are moving at seemingly increasing speed from one part of the world to another. Bauman claims that a feeling of insecurity and lack of control and understanding of the society of which one is a part, is a main feature of these conditions, resulting in what he terms *liquid fear;* liquid because it is so formless and hard to grasp (Bauman, 2007:2; see also Griffin, 2012:3-4).

This uncertainty is reflected on different scales, from the effects of the geopolitics of wars with all their consequences – for citizens as well as nations – to the uncertainties faced by individuals under rapid societal change in work, housing and the search for meaning to their lives. In most European countries, the increased influx of immigrants and refugees represents - for some - one more instance of 'too much change, too fast'. Add the myriad connections and rapid flow of information generated by the internet and social media, and the chaotic forces of climate change, and the picture of society is set.

In such a complex and tension filled situation, a sensation of unease and fear is heightened by another feature: *terror and political extremism* (i.e. Bauman, 2007; Griffin, 2012).

The attacks on the Twin Towers in 9/11 can be seen as a highly critical event in terms of the current climate of fear. It was followed by acts of terrorism on varying scales in several areas of the world, both by right-wing extremists and by extremist Islamists[1] (Vestel, 2016; see also Andersson, Jacobsen, Rogstad and Vestel, 2012 for an overview relevant to the Norwegian context).

Even Norway – small but one of the richest countries in the world, due to its hitherto oil-driven economy – has had similar experiences. Three events and developments in the last decade, here listed chronologically, have shaken Norway's public sphere: the emergence of an extremist Islamic group, and two acts of right-wing terror.

The Prophet's Ummah, a radical group of young Muslims, emerged in Norway in 2010. The members support violent jihad, and celebrate 9/11, the bombings in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005, the murder of British soldier Lee Rigby who fought in Afghanistan, and other terror acts around the world. They also support IS and the attempt to create an Islamic state in Syria, where extreme acts of violence were perpetrated against civilians (see: Napoleoni, 2017; Vestel, 2016; Lia and Nesser, 2016; Michalsen, 2016). According to The Norwegian Police Security Service (PST) as of 2018 around 100 people had gone to Syria from Norway to join IS, Al-Nusrah or similar groups. Of these, 40 have returned to Norway, while it is assumed that 30 have been killed and 30 are still in Syria.[2]

However developments within the extreme right wing have also heightened fears of terrorism in Norway.

On 22 July 2011 Norway was shattered by its most devastating terror attack of modern times. Anders Behring Breivik, a 32-year-old right-wing extremist, detonated a bomb at the Government Headquarters in the centre of Oslo killing eight people. He then travelled to the Labour Party Youth Organisation's

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[1] Extremist Islamists are here understood as Muslims who support the radical fusion between Islam and politics and where religious laws and practices are the basis for the governance of society or states. Extremist Islamism is also often used as a synonym for violent expressions of Islamism such as jihadism.

[2] See: https://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/aktuelt/aktuelle-saker/2018/hjemvendte-fremmedkrigere.html.

(AUF) summer camp on the small Island of Utøya – a one-hour drive from Oslo – where he shot and killed 69 people, most between 15-19 years old (see: Borchgrevinck, 2012; Bangstad, 2014; Vestel, 2016; Bjørgo and Gjelsvik, 2018). Breivik had been in his twenties when he began to plan the attack which was his protest against immigration and the political establishment that had allowed it. Although the attack is often described as a 'lone-wolf' action, it was inspired by his contact with various right-wing milieus around the world - primarily through the internet. He was especially driven by the 'Eurabia' theory, according to which a conspiracy of Muslims and political leaders are planning an Islamic takeover of Europe, including Norway (see: Sætre 2013; Bangstad 2014, 2018).

Eight years later, on 10 August 2019, in a protest with similar motivation to Breivik's, 22-year-old Philip Manshaus shot and killed his 17-year-old adopted sister of Chinese origin, and then went to the Al-Noor mosque in the municipality of Bærum where he opened fire. He is reported to have explained that the killing of his adopted sister was necessary to protect his parents in a future race war, in which he feared that people who had been in contact with 'non-whites' would be in danger.[3] In his statements, he celebrates the terrorist Brenton Tarrant (28) who killed 51 people at the Al-Noor mosque in New Zealand a few months before, in March 2019.[4] At the time of writing Manshaus's trial has not concluded.

As all three examples underline, acts of terrorism are never purely 'domestic' but involve macro level relations and processes that must also be addressed in our analyses.

After a series of major terrorist attacks by extreme Islamists on several European cities, Muslim terrorism was seen as the most acute threat to Norwegian society. This was confirmed in the annual reports of the Police Security Service until 2019 (PST 2019a, 2019b, 2018). It was not until 2020 that the threat from right wing extremists was judged to be equally as serious (PST 2020). This stands in stark contrast to the fact that Norway itself has never experienced an Islamist terror act, while the deadliest terrorist attack in recent years was carried out by a young right-wing extremist (Breivik) nearly ten years ago.

It would be advantageous to explore the extreme right wing and extremist Islam positions together, as they are clearly related, although in ways that are complex and far from obvious (i.e. Busher and Macklin 2015; Eatwell 2006; Macklin and Busher 2015; Vestel 2016). However, this report aims primarily to explore and understand the life worlds and attitudes of a number of informants associated with *radical right-wing groups and networks in Norway*. This is to address the question, how could such events as those described above happen in an otherwise peaceful northern European country?

Eatwell and Goodwin see the rapid demographic change in the ethnic composition of the population in most countries in the Western world as a core driver in an overall process of *polarisation*. As a response to this change, populist groups and impulses, especially in the shape of right-wing groups, are emerging in many European countries, and also in the US, exemplifying what the authors call 'national populism' (Eatwell and Goodwin 2018). Along these lines, *immigration* has become perhaps 'the' key dividing issue for the populations of many Western countries. As the examples above indicate, this issue has an especially prominent role among some actors and milieus that use extremist violence in their political struggles.

The extremist milieus that support or even celebrate violent actions such as those of Breivik and Manshaus are not the primary focus of this study, but rather those groups and actors who occupy more of a *grey zone* in the radical right-wing landscape. Most interviewees distance themselves – at least in

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[3] Fanny Bu published 17.09.2019: https://www.tv2.no/a/10854267/
[4] See: https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/JoRo0R/polititeori-ville-kopiere-moskeangrepet-paa-new-zealand. Published 13 August 2019.

public[5] – from the use of violence to achieve political change. Nevertheless*, a core criterion for their selection for this report is that the informants have had some contact with actors who are oriented in more violent directions or that they have been more closely exposed to such actors than is the ordinary citizen.*

Against this background this report aims to explore the following research questions:

- What are the main drivers of the informants' trajectories toward - or away from - a radical right-wing position?
- How do inequalities, injustice and grievances - as subjectively perceived by the informants - impact the processes of radicalisation?
- In what ways do macro-, meso- and micro-level relations interact in the processes of radicalisation?
- What role do extra-ideological relations play in the processes of radicalisation?
- In what ways can the meaning-making, attitudes and world views of the radical right be seen as related to, confirming or eventually moving beyond the social conditions of post-, high-, late- or liquid modernity?

1.1 The milieu chosen

In Norway the groups and networks in today's landscape of radical right-wing actors are very small. Nevertheless between them there is a relatively wide range of profiles, often with important similarities to groups in other European countries. Within Norway we find: an organisation to stop Islamisation; a well-organised group of Neo-Nazi/national socialists; an emerging network of Identitarians; a new nationalist political party led by an eccentric charismatic; another new group which characterises itself as 'national conservative'; and a milieu working for what it speaks of as the right of 'white people', the defence of 'European identity' and the struggle for their ethnic and cultural survival.

In addition, although considerably more moderate, and until recently part of the governmental coalition, The Progress party, belongs within this right-wing landscape. It can be seen as mainstreaming some of the attitudes found in radical milieus into more moderate positions, especially attitudes critical of immigration generally, and of Islam in particular.

The groups and networks, such as those mentioned above, can have quite different profiles and are often in some ways antagonistic toward each other. However, that they also recognise some important commonalities is evident from the fact that membership of groups overlaps and individual trajectories over time may involve several groups - as formal members, close associates or just general supporters. *These interconnections, the flowing of ideas and persons between the groups, and the small numbers of persons involved, can therefore be seen as comprising the overall milieu that will be explored in this report*.

These groups either know or know about each other, or have had direct contact through their trajectories in the radical right-wing landscape. This is also, perhaps, an indication that these actors are in a process of *becoming more similar* including, to some extent, ideologically. The seemingly growing experience of identifying commonalities may be the reason why several of the right-wing informants in the DARE project in Norway have attended one if not both of two recent conferences in Oslo: The 'New Political Reality' conference on 27 May 2017, with speakers including Identitarian ideologue, Martin Sellner; and in July 2017 the 'Scandza Forum', a rotating conference, attended by radical nationalist, identitarians, alt right associates and Islam critics from various parts of Scandinavia (see also: Bjørgo and Magnæs Gjelsvik, 2018:130-131; Sellner, 2018).

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[5] This expression does not imply a suspicion that the informants do hide alternative attitudes toward violence, but simply means that such a possibility exists.

This milieu is chosen because such a broad spectrum of right-wing connections, contacts and trajectories is ideal for discussing both the landscape as a whole, as well as the different profiles of each of the groups and networks, and the individuals connected to them. Thus the study is not one of more or less clearly bounded organisations or networks. Instead it focuses upon individuals whose trajectories in the overall landscape relate to their various roles as members, formers, sympathisers, antagonists or just those 'hanging around'. They meet, comment and have contact with each other to various degrees online and/or offline.

2. Setting the scene

To set the scene for an analysis of the present situation and before exploring the research questions, I will give an outline of the history of right-wing actors in Norway. The main developments here are described in detail in Bjørgo and Gjelsvik's excellent publication from 2018 (Bjørgo and Gjelsvik 2018). A more schematic overview of related critical events in the Norwegian context, which also includes radical Islam, is found in Andersson, Jacobsen, Rogstad and Vestel (2012:242-248).

2.1 Historical sketch

According to Bjørgo and Gjelsvik (2018), the extremist right wing groups that started to emerge in Norway at the beginning of the seventies and spread during the eighties and nineties, had their roots in the remnants of the Norwegian national socialist groups left after World War II. Some of these new groups supported violence. In 1979 two bombs were thrown at the First of May march, seriously wounding one person. In 1981, two associates of a nationalist group were killed during an internal fight. In the eighties, immigrants and Norwegian Jews were attacked, and a bomb was detonated in one of the country's early mosques, causing a Muslim woman to lose her hearing. In the nineties, 'skinhead' youngsters formed Neo-Nazi groups (such as 'Boot Boys'), for whom Jews were the core target. This 'nationalist' milieu, in which young women were also members, is assumed to have had around 150 activists in 2001. In around 2000, the 'Vigrid'[6] group emerged. It was a race revolution oriented, anti-Semitic organisation, which mixed old Norse mythology into its rituals (Vestel 2016:94-102). Vigrid reached its height in around 2005 with 150-200 active members (Bjørgo and Gjelsvik, 2018:61-67). In January 2001, three central participants from these two milieus killed 15-year-old Benjamin Hermansen, son of an African father and Norwegian mother, in Holmlia, a high-rise suburb where a high number of immigrant families had settled. This became a turning point for the Neo-Nazi milieu. The reaction against the killing created what were at the time some of the largest popular demonstrations in post-war Norway, one mobilising around 40,000 people in Oslo alone (Holen 2018). In the years immediately following this event, there was a decline in activity by the more extreme right-wing groups, until a resurgence in the last decade. According to Bjørgo and Gjelsvik, there was hardly any research on the radical right-wing milieus in Norway between 2002 and 2011 (2018:29).

2.2 Immigration in Norway

In the years since the murder of Benjamin Hermansen, immigration has become the most salient political topic in Norway, as in most other European countries (see, for example: on the Netherlands, van der Valk, 2013; on Great Britain, Pilkington 2016; on France, Gandilhon, 2013; on Germany, Miller-

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[6] The group appropriated its name *'Vigrid'* from Norse mythology (Vestel 2016:94; Bjørgo and Gjelsvik, 2018:61) in which the word *'vigr'* means 'willingness to fight'. It is also the name of the hill where, it is said, the two groups of supernatural beings, representing order and chaos – the *'æser'* and *'jotner'* – will meet in a grand final combat and mutually extinguish each other and the world ("Vigrid", Store Norske Leksikon, published 05.10.2009; Bæksted, 1978:186).

Idriss, 2017 and Koehler, 2018; see also: Leiken 2012; Khrosrokhavar 2017). As this is also the core issue for the milieus and networks that we focus upon in this report, some basic information about immigration in Norway is needed.

In 2020, Norway had around 5 million inhabitants, of whom 18.2 percent – 979 254 persons – have immigrant backgrounds[7]. To give a better idea of the composition of this immigrant group, in 2018, 14.1 percent of inhabitants were immigrants, while 3.2 percent were born in Norway to immigrant parents[8]. Although there are immigrants in municipalities all over the country, most immigrants and people with an immigrant background live in the municipality of Oslo. Currently they comprise 33.1 percent of Oslo's inhabitants.

The first wave of immigrants in recent times arrived in the 1970s, and most had a Pakistani background. In 2019 the origins of the five largest groups of immigrants and Norwegians born to immigrant parents are: Poland 2.10 percent (111,985); Lithuania 0.84 percent (45,415); Somalia 0.80 percent (42,802); Sweden 0.73 percent (38,770); and Pakistan 0.71 percent (38,000).[9]

Among the immigrant groups, since 9/11. Muslims have been the core targets of critique in Norway- as they have been in many European countries.

2.3 The contemporary context

The milieu chosen, the informants and their connections and movements in the radical right-wing landscape cover a broad spectrum of profiles and organisational features, as seen below. The larger of these groupings and networks are described below: *The Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet); SIAN; The Nordic Resistance Movement; The Alliance; The Identitarians; The Independence party; and This is Europa.*

The Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet) is the oldest immigration-critical political party in Norway Listhaug 2018; Tybring Gjedde 2014; Bangstad 2014**).** It has its origins in Anders Lange's Parti, founded in 1973, the main aims of which were to work against taxes, public fees, and bureaucracy. The name was changed to the Progress Party in 1977. The party has had several phases, but in recent years, the critique against what is seen as a too open and welcoming immigration policy has been salient. There are two wings to the Progress party: one is mostly conservative, and more immigrant sceptical; the other is more characterised by economic and political liberalism, and often has younger associates. However, the key characteristic of the party is that it attracts voters critical of immigration. The party is also associated with several popular issues such as care for the elderly, improving car-based infrastructure and scepticism towards theories of man-made climate change. It may be seen as an antagonist to the more radical left-oriented parties - especially SV (The Socialist left party), Rødt (Red) a declared communist party, and MDG (Miljøpartiet de Grønne – The Green party). In recent times, a female politician from the Progress Party, named Sylvi Listhaug has been especially important in representing a hard stand on immigration, often accompanied by harsh expressions that are popular among some, but often seen as highly provocative, and even vulgar, by the party's critics (Vestel, 2016; Listhaug, 2018; Tybring Gjedde, 2014).

In the municipal election in 2019 the Progress party won 8.2 percent of the vote (Source: NRK Valgresultat 2019). When the party left the governing alliance in January 2020 in protest against the government allowing an IS-associated Norwegian woman with two small children to return to the

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[7] See: Statistisk sentralbyrå 9 March 2020: https://www.ssb.no/innvbe

[8] Figures from IMDI: https://www.imdi.no/om-integrering-i-norge/innvandrere-og-integrering/innvandrerbefolkningen-i-norge/

[9] All figures from:
https://www.kommuneprofilen.no/Profil/Befolkning/DinRegion/bef_innvandrere_land_region.aspx

country, a poll showed that support for the party had risen to 17.5 percent of voters (MSN news, downloaded January 29, 2020). In comparison the Labour party (social democrats and the largest party in Norway), in the 2019 municipal election won 24.8 percent of the vote; the Right party (traditional right wing conservatives) 20.1 percent; the Centre party (orientated toward decentralisation and rural regions) 14.4 percent; The Socialist Left Party 6.1 percent; the Left (traditional liberal party) 3.9 percent; the Christian People's party 4.0 percent; the Green Party 6.8 percent; and the Reds (far left) 3.8 percent (ibid.).

*SIAN (*the acronym of 'Stop Islamisation of Norway') is similar to groups found in other countries, and has much the same content; a radical critique and highly negative attitudes towards Islam (van der Valk, 2013). In Norway, today's SIAN originates from an organisation set up in around 2000 objecting to mosques broadcasting the 'call to prayer'. In 2008 the name SIAN was appropriated to show a link with 'Stop Islamisation' groups in many other countries. Sometimes these groups make a distinction between 'moderate Muslims' and extremists, often spoken of as 'Islamists' (Vestel, 2016), but in recent times, such nuances have seemed lacking. In 2019, two SIAN members were accused of hate speech, and convicted to 30 days suspended sentence (Filter nyheter v. Skymoen and Klungtveit, downloaded 8 November 2019). SIAN claims to be against racism and every school of thought that does not accept elementary democratic and humanist ideology. The group sees Islam as what it terms a 'religious-political ideology' that is threatening the country and the rest of the world through 'Islamisation'; that is the importation of Islamic rules, attitudes and beliefs into the countries in which Muslims have settled (see also Bjørgo and Magnæs Gjelsvik, 2018:97-101).

The Nordic Resistance Movement (Den Nordiske Motstandsbevegelsen) is a self-declared National Socialist organisation, celebrating Adolf Hitler and the Aryan race (see The Nordic Resistance Movement, 2016). Its name is in Scandinavia abbreviated as NMR, referring to the Swedish name Nordiska Motstånds Rørelsen. I will in this report use the English acronym - NRM - that the organisation itself is using in their English publications. It was formerly called Nordfront. The NRM originated in Sweden in 1997, as a fusion of several Neo-Nazi, white-power and extreme right-wing groups. The movement wants to create a Nordic republic, consisting of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland, where the organisation also has groups. The Baltic countries are also sometimes mentioned as potential associates. The Norwegian branch of the movement was not very active until 2011, when it was reformed under Haakon Forwald, a former black metal musician (Klungtveit 2020:119-129; Vestel, 2016:41-43). The NRM is critical of what it sees as Jewish influences and the Jews' plans to control political change in several countries in the world. The Nordic Resistance Movement is a strictly closed and hierarchical organisation. It forbids alcohol, recreational drugs, and psychiatric medications, since psychiatry is seen as a threat from the 'modern Jewish system'. It also has very conservative views on gender relationships, with the place of the female being at home, taking care of the house and the children. The movement sees immigrants as a threat to the original inhabitants of the Nordic countries and advocates for immigrants to be remigrated in 'a humane way'. The groups also demand of their members a willingness to use violence to defend their country, the organisation and their comrades. In Norway, The Nordic Resistance Movement is estimated to have around 30-40 activists and an unknown number of members and supporters, but in Sweden the movement has assembled demonstrations of up to 500 participants (Bjørgo and Magnæs Gjelsvik, 2018:68-91). The NMR has a well-developed website called 'frihetskamp.no' ('the freedom struggle'.no).

The Alliance (Alliansen) is a political party founded in 2016 by its present leader Hans Jørgen Lysglimt Johansen. The unusual middle name – Lysglimt (literally 'flash of light') – seems to have provided him with a mysterious aura, and this is the name by which he is often referred. However, his name is taken from an old sailing ship associated with his family (personal communication). The party originally did not have a clear agenda. At first, he was frontline in the media as a dedicated supporter of Donald Trump. He was well known for his slogan 'nationalism with a smile and lots of fun', and he underlined the importance of humour in the politics of his party, of which he was the only formal member. He was

often portrayed holding a large sword (which he sees as a symbol of the old Norse values), and with a large smile and holding up the V-sign. In line with Lysglimt's celebration of Trump and his deep nationalist opinions, 'Norway first' is one of the Alliance's central slogans. Ideologically the party's main aim was originally stated only as getting Norway to leave the EOS and the Schengen network. Gradually the party's politics, and especially Lysglimt's utterances, moved to more extreme right standpoints. Lysglimt has become known for referring critically to the use of what he calls the 'Holocaust narrative', and comments against the bad influence on Norwegian youth of 'negro cultures' - probably meaning hip hop. He is also known for some Tweets in which he said he longed for 'more hate' in the public debate, and that the 'traitors should hang'; the traitors being mainstream politicians with their liberal immigration policy, which he sees as ruining the country. He is also reported to have complimented two members of the Labour Party Youth on their 'beautiful Aryan looks'; a comment to which the two young men strongly objected.[10] He has also admitted that members from the Nordic Resistance Movement probably voted for the Alliance. Because it was seen as a disseminator of hate speech, the party was not allowed to participate in the 'Arendals uka' in 2019 – a week when most political parties and NGOs assemble in the coastal town of Arendal.[11] Therefore, the Alliance has developed from a party with an unclear profile, into a radical right-wing nationalist party with connections and contacts with considerably more extreme groups (see also Bjørgo and Magnæs Gjelsvik, 2018:128-130). The party received 3,311 votes, that is 0.1 percent, in the parliamentary election in 2017. In the 2019 municipal elections, the party fielded candidates in two areas, winning 0.1 percent of the vote in Oslo and 0.5 percent in Drammen.

The Identitarians, also called Generation Identity, emerged in France in 2002 (Sellner 2018; Dalland, 2020). According to Teitelbaum, the Identitarians today have groups across Europe, in countries including Portugal, Italy, Serbia, Germany, Austria, Hungary, England, Sweden and Ireland (Teitelbaum, 2017:45). It is primarily a youth organisation, and refuses membership to anyone over 30 years of age. The movement is particularly large in Austria where Martin Sellner is a prominent figure (see: Sellner, 2018). The Identitarians see themselves as patriotic and conservative, and support what they conceptualise as 'ethnopluralism'. This implies the recognition that every country/nation has a more or less unique identity, culture and history, which it should struggle to preserve and which should not be disturbed by there being too many immigrants. Identitarians claim not to be racist or against all immigration, but nevertheless oppose multiculturalism and 'mass immigration', which they see as disturbing factors. The Identitarians also figure in some of the novels by the French writer Michel Houellebecq, especially in 'Submission', in which French society is politically transformed by accepting moderate Muslims into the political apparatus (Houellebecq, 2018). Even if the Identitarians have some similarities with the Alt right movement in the US, they indicate there is a sharp divide between them (see Bocchi 2017, published Oct 8, 2017). The Identitarians have no official organisation in Norway. However, there are milieus where the ideas of Identitarianism have been promoted and discussed (see Bjørgo and Magnæs Gjelsvik, 2018:122-132). One well-known associate of Identitarianism in Norway is Tore Rasmussen, who was denied entry to Great Britain where he had been living in 2018 after he was held to be a central activist. According to *The Independent* Rasmussen *'…is among Generation Identity activists to be blocked from entering the UK because their presence is 'not conducive to the public good', following Austrian leader Martin Sellner and his American girlfriend and far-right blogger Brittany Pettibone.'*.[12]

The Independence party was founded in 2015 by a former Progress Party member and SIAN supporter. However, the party seems to have barely existed until 2018, when several members, of the Alliance, SIAN and other parties, joined, declaring support for the party. *The Independence party* declares itself to

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[10] See: https://www.dagbladet.no/nyheter/du-er-et-prakteksemplar-av-den-ariske-rase/70944789

[11] See: https://www.nettavisen.no/nyheter/alliansen-og-sian-kastet-ut-av-arendalsuka/3423691656.html

[12] See: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/generation-identity-uk-tom-dupre-quits-tore-rasmussen-Neo-Nazi-far-right-extremist-a8488786.html

be *'national conservative',* working to *'preserve the interests, culture and identity of the Norwegian people', 'where the welfare of the family is in the centre'*. The party's main political cause is immigration policies, and it works for a 'remigration' – a process where immigrants are stimulated to return to their countries of origin. In recent times the party's website[13] has used terms such as 'ethnopluralism', 'ethnonationalism' and the like, to describe the *Independence Party's* standpoints (see Rødal's article 'En verden av nasjoner'[14]. As the party has only recently raised its profile, it is not possible to estimate its number of supporters.

This is Europa (the letter 'a' seems consciously used, probably to differentiate it from organisations with similar names) is what its associates see as a think tank. It originated in Sweden as a Facebook group in 2012, dedicated to promoting European values and to countering the threat to demographic composition and national values represented by mass immigration to European countries (see its homepage: https://www.thisiseuropa.net/). *This is Europa* seeks to show that 'alternatives exist' to the chauvinism of which such nationalist positions are usually accused. According to its homepage, the group aims at:

> …spreading a positive outlook on our identity as Europeans, using beautiful and inspirational photos and non-hateful content. We wanted to set an example and show that you can cherish your own heritage without having a negative view of others. We gradually started focusing also on the political climate, discussing topics such as why there is so much hostility towards indigenous Europeans wanting to preserve their ethnocultural identity, and exploring good ways to respond. In the politically correct worldview, you are either a good multiculturalist or an evil racist. We want to show that this is a false dichotomy, that you can care about your own people while also caring about others.

> We have tried to be a source of inspiration for people who see that our societies are moving in the wrong direction, but struggle with a way to articulate it because no such way is offered within the politically correct mindset. The only role you are given in the politically correct narrative, if you oppose the current immigration policies, is that of the nasty chauvinist. Our mission is to show that other options exist. (http://www.thisiseuropa.net/aboutus/)

The number of supporters to This is Europa is unclear.

As mentioned, the milieu chosen for this report consists of participants who have connections to most of the groups and networks described above, and who have moved in, out and within this landscape.

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[13] See: https://selvstendighetspartiet.no
[14] A world of nations: https://selvstendighetspartiet.no/

3. Field Research

3.1 Data collection

Table 1: Data set

	Number	Total length or brief description (as appropriate)	Average length
Respondent memos	13	n/a	n/a
Audio interviews	23	2 325 minutes	120 minutes
Field diary entries * (total)	4	1577 words	n/a
Other data	Not specified	There are many YouTube videos related to or created by networks and actors mentioned in the text. Search for the names: Alliansen, Lysglimt, SIAN Norge, Bjørn. Chr. Rødal, Selvstendighetspartiet, Lilith Keogh, Den Nordiske Motstandsbevegelsen.	n/a

*Field diary entries are provided in detail in Appendix 8.2.

Observations of political activity were undertaken on four occasions. Three of these observations occurred during the so called 'Arendal Week' in August 2018. This is a week where politicians and NGOs from all over the country gather for rallies, discussions and media shows and was arranged for the seventh time in 2018. In the streets and on the presentation stands one can meet all kind of VIPs in the shape of ministers (including the prime minister), politicians, business leaders, journalists, media workers and NGO representatives, who are all participating one way or another in more than 1000 different arrangements during the week. Smaller groups and parties participate also here, including SIAN and the Alliance. In this context I observed and 'hung around' the SIAN presentation stand on two different days, and the presentation stand by the Alliance on one day. A fourth observation event was during a small SIAN demonstration in Oslo.

3.2 Access and researcher-respondent relations

Gaining *access* to informants has been an important issue in the DARE project. I previously worked on a project about youth and extremism – in which both right-wing actors and radical Muslims were engaged - which resulted in the book, '*I gråsonen. Ungdom og politisk ekstremisme i det nye Norge*' ('In the grey zone. Youth and political extremism in the new Norway', 2016; see also Vestel 2018). This study encountered a similar problem with gaining *access* to the milieus in question. This issue has led to some distinctive characteristics of the Norwegian case study.

The milieu studied in Norway consists of informants at the upper range of the target age range for exploration within the DARE project, that is people from their late twenties to 35. The study also included some *older informants* who talk about the development of their political orientations or comment on the younger informants' positions. These older informants include: the father of one of the

informants; an older friend of an informant; and an older acquaintance of another informant. They are all important members of the wider milieu. The number of informants interviewed for this study was 13 – 11 men and 2 women, compared to the target number within the DARE project of 20 informants. The report also contains relatively few descriptions of actual events and participant observations in the empirical material.

The *low number of informants* and *low number of observations* here reflect three characteristics of the situation for those affiliated with the radical right wing in Norway.

First, the milieu(s) in Norway is very small. At recent demonstrations, for example by SIAN, only 20-30 people have been present, and, despite using past observations and YouTube evidence, it is not always immediately apparent who among them are sympathisers of the groups and who are just onlookers. The Nordic Resistance Movement was estimated to have only around 40 active members in Norway in 2018 (Bjørgo and Gjelsvik, 2018:38). It also has a strictly hierarchical organisational structure which prohibits rank and file members from speaking with the press and researchers. The NRM has rarely held demonstrations in Norway, but there are examples of marches of around 70 persons – as in the city of Kristiansand in 2017 – although most of the marchers are believed to have been Swedish (Bjørgo and Gjelsvik, 2018). More recent actors, such as the Alliance and the Independence Party (ShP), have not, to my knowledge, organised larger demonstrations or assemblies in Norway during the time of the DARE project, but have mostly had small presentations in public space where representatives have presented the parties or groups using flyers, banners or other information material (observations).

Second, the very low number of members and supporters in the right-wing milieu (s) in Norway, also makes it easier to for them to be identified, and therefore it is harder to ensure anonymity. There have been several instances where radical right-wing actors have lost jobs or have experienced other problems – including regarding their children at schools – when their politics became known. The fear that anonymity cannot be guaranteed contributes significantly to the difficulties in recruiting informants.

Third, the small number of right-wing milieus, of members and of associates, implies that by giving first-hand descriptions of events, demonstrations and so on, there is a high risk of revealing the identity of the informants. Such observations in this report are therefore very few.

The difficulties with finding *a sufficient number of younger informants* must partly be seen in the context of the difficulties mentioned above, but are also in line with the findings from what little contemporary research there is on recent right-wing milieus in Norway. Bjørgo and Gjelsvik conclude, for example, that one of the most noticeable changes in the right-wing milieus in Norway since the nineties and up to the around 2005, is the *lack of younger associates*, and that the milieus today almost exclusively consist of adults (Bjørgo and Magnæs Gjelsvik, 2018: 30).

The informants who were willing to meet me, were recruited through a number of strategies. Some were contacted after they had featured in the media. Some were contacted directly at public political events/presentations. Others were contacted through other informants through the so called 'snowball method' where one informant asked others to participate. In several cases, although I managed to get in contact with people who knew the milieu and actors in the various groups and networks very well, they still did not succeed in recruiting other informants who were willing to meet me. Here, one obvious problem was that it is not easy for an untrained volunteer to explain and present the research project in a convincing way. On one occasion I overheard several such attempts when one informant tried to phone up other potential informants who then refused. There were also examples where potential informants refused to be interviewed when they heard that DARE was an EU-financed project, as the EU is not very popular in the targeted milieus.

The initial interviews usually went well, and in most cases I was able to develop a rapport with the interviewee, which led to further interviews with the same person. Often the informants expressed a willingness to ask others to participate, but mostly said this was met with a refusal. The meagre success

with informants recruiting other informants, may also reflect the small number of associates in each group or network.

I was completely open with the participants about my work as a researcher and about the DARE project, as shown in the information sheet given to all informants. I tried to emphasise that this was a chance to communicate to the EU - and others - how the situation was perceived from a radical right-wing side, through speaking directly to such milieus. I also emphasised that ideally, I would *quote directly* a lot of what they said, so that the report would be more 'alive' and present a 'truer' representation of their ways of seeing things. It would also be easier for the reader to judge my interpretations. At times the informants expressed appreciation for being interviewed directly instead of being the subject of 'experts', journalists and others who they felt were simply commenting on things, without knowing much about what they were talking about.

I also interviewed *eight experts*. Two policemen, one youth worker who had good contacts, four persons employed professionally as coordinators in the work against political extremism in their respective municipalities, and two advisors at a public municipal office that distributes welfare services to young people - financial support, help with getting work, personal advice and more. All of these experts had close contacts with young people in different radical right-wing milieus.[15] They nevertheless were very reluctant to put me in contact with any young people that they knew, simply because this would easily be seen as betrayal to the young people and risk the breakdown of the confidence that these actors had worked hard to achieve over considerable time. This also underlines the significant difficulties with gaining access.

3.3 Ethical practice

In accordance with ethical practice protocols, all informants received an information sheet in Norwegian explaining the project. This underlined that all participation was voluntary, that the informant could withdraw from the project at any time and that anonymity was guaranteed. All consent was given verbally before each interview started.

3.4 Data analysis

The agreed procedure for data analysis in DARE was followed although, due to time pressure, some of the later interviews were not coded through Nvivo, but analysed, their parts categorised thematically and included directly into the node memos. The final number of Level 2 nodes is 15. The final number of Level 1 nodes is 44.

The length of the quotes from the various informants is often longer than in other case studies. This is to give a fuller impression of each informant and their lifeworlds. The intention of using longer quotes was also appreciated by the informants who saw it as reflecting a will to take their views and descriptions more seriously and 'as true', in contrast to how they saw themselves presented in the media by journalists or other 'experts'. The total number of pages of Node memos and Respondent memos is 434 pages.

3.4.1 Level 2 Nodes not used or integrated in other Level 2 Nodes

There are thirteen WP 7 level 2 Nodes listed in the Skeleton Coding Tree that I have not used. This is for two reasons: 1) there was no data that fitted some Level 2 Nodes as it did not feel right or natural to consider those themes in the interviews; or 2) the content of those Level 2 Nodes had been included in another Level 2 Node.

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[15] They also worked with radical young Muslims in the municipality.

- The Level 2 Nodes Growing up, Familial relationships, Education, Employment and training are all integrated into Level 2 Node: Parents and family background.
- The topics envisaged as being included in the Level 2 Node: Everyday life are integrated into Level 2 Node: Peers and friendship relations.
- Themes related to Level 2 Node: Stigmatisation and representations of "us" are dealt with in Level 2 Node: Ideology and Politics.
- Level 2 Node: Conflictual relationships was hardly touched by the informants. Some discussions about these themes are found in Level 2 Node: Ideology and Politics.
- Topics related to Level 2 Node: Responses to radicalisation are dealt with in Level 2 Node: Ideology and Politics.
- Level 2 Node: Ideologised enemies and their attributes is covered in the Level 2 Node: Ideology and politics.
- Level 2 Node: Networks of radicalisation. This theme is a common thread in Level 2 Node: Ideology and Politics.
- Level 2 Node: Future is handled under level 2 Node: Ideology and Politics.
- Topics envisaged under Level 2 Node: Dreams, ideals and utopias were not referred to explicitly in the interviews. Some of the actual ideals are described in the Level 2 Node: Ideology and Politics.
- Level 2 Node: Death was not related to explicitly in the interviews.

3.4.2 Additional Level 2 Nodes

Two new Level 2 Nodes were added in WP 7 Norway. These are:

- Violence. As the willingness to use violence to obtain political change is a defining criterion in DARE's understanding of extremism, the relationship to violence in a broad sense fits naturally into a discrete Level 2 Node.
- Aesthetics, art and popular culture. The introduction of this Level 2 Node is motivated by the finding that several informants explicitly relate to a wide range of aesthetic, artistic and popular cultural expressions in the articulation of their political positions.

3.5 Socio-demographic portrait of the respondent set

This report is based on 23 interviews with 13 informants, 11 men and 2 females. The first interview was done in March 2018 - the last in April 2020. Ten of the informants were between 19 and 35 years of age, three were between 46 and 56 years old. The interviews varied in length from 30 minutes to 3 hours; the total amount of interview data was 2,325 minutes (see Table 1).

At the time of interview, five informants were in full time employment, four were in part-time employment, two were unemployed and two were students with unknown additional part time employment. Their employment included working as: a waitress, a shop assistant, an office worker, an engineer, a mechanic, a teacher, an economist, a businessman, an IT expert, a real estate agent, a cook, a social worker and a healthcare worker.

In terms of educational status, two informants were in academic education. One had dropped out of secondary education and another had completed only secondary education. Five informants had completed a university degree (two finished with Master's degrees). One had dropped out of university. Three informants had completed post vocational education.

There is no clear class profile of the respondents as the respondent set incorporates a relatively broad range of social profiles. This is also confirmed when comparing with what is known about their parents' education and employment.

Not included in the respondent set are nine interviews with experts including: four coordinators of youth related issues - including radicalisation - in four different municipalities; two policemen; one youth worker; and two public employees in a public office dealing with employment and social services for young people.

4. Key Findings

4.1 Theoretical approach

According to Franc and Pavlović's recent research review on social inequality and radicalisation, undertaken within the framework of the DARE project, from a wide range of published quantitative and mixed-method empirical studies, the overall conclusion is:

> …the *more consistent patterns were found between cognitive radicalisation and varied measures of perceived social inequality. Higher perceived inequality was related to more radicalised attitudes in different contexts, regardless of ideological orientation of radicalisation…subjective perception at an individual level may play a more important role than economic inequality in the inequality-radicalisation nexus.* (Franc and Pavlović, 2018:3).

This conclusion points to the necessity of focusing explicitly on *subjective perceptions, experiences and interpretations of the world*, if we aim to understand the dynamics and trajectories of right-wing radicalisation, in the context of Norway. From such an exploration we hope to paint a more detailed and dynamic picture of their trajectories towards and away from radical positions (Franc and Pavlović, 2018; i.e. Vestel 2018).

Let us start with some comments by one of the informants that mirrors a key theme in this exploration: identity.

> Viggo: ...you said that Lysglimt (the leader of the Alliance) was very interested in the Norse… also black metal[16] people are concerned with the Norse, the Nordic, how is it that it has developed, do you think?
>
> Anita: It is because…all our roots have become so much more important these days…we are going back to our origins…You can ask about Christianity, when did it come? What was Norway before those times?...For some it goes right back to our roots, and for Norway, why not the time of the Vikings?... *Identity has become the big new thing*. Not only politically but also regarding the cultural and gender, see what I mean, it has come to a point where everything should be identified these days…. Everyone feels sort of… either you are this way or that way, and if you are not that way or the other then who are you then? You must identify yourself, … For example, "Oh you don't believe in anything…?" Or if you do believe in something, "what do you believe in?"...And if it is not Christianity, and there is a God, and if it is something, what do you call it? And it is the fact that the borders are in the process of breaking...we have an open Europe and religions are starting to divide people, at the same time as they too are beginning to crash more than before…then it becomes like we have to identify ourselves to *know what we are standing for*, in a way… Because it has disappeared for us, the things with identity…and when things are starting to crash, then we have a stronger need to find a way back to it, to be able to hold onto something, then…

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[16] Black metal is an originally Norwegian genre within extreme metal music that at first focussed upon so called 'satanism', but in later years has become more concerned with the Norse, and at times with hard core nationalism (Vestel 2016; Moynihan and Søderlind 1998; Klungtveit 2020).

> Anita's father: It is the politicians who want to peel away everything that has to do with identity…it is the multicultural that is the problem…we are not allowed to be someone…I have been collaborating with those Identitarians...

Anita is 28 years old, has a Bachelor's degree in Economics and works in a restaurant in a small town in Eastern Norway. She and her father have been members of SIAN for several years. Her father claims that it was his daughter that made him wake up politically.

How are we to understand these statements? And in what ways may we see them as connected to the emergence of the new radical right?

Young people seem to have a certain sensitivity to tensions and new developments in society, as they are in an earlier phase of socialisation than older age groups. They may thus be in a position to see and experience things from different angles, in line with the conceptualisations of what anthropologists have called the 'liminoid', meaning that they are positioned on the 'limen' which means on a border, that is in a transitional state (Vestel, 2018; Beck, 2015:93). Examples of such sensitivities include: the countercultures of the seventies which protested against the older generation's authoritarian attitudes and gave attention to ecological issues and women's liberation; the social conscious genres within hip hop that criticise racism, police brutality and poverty among African Americans; the punks' critique of the despair and social problems in Thatcher's Britain. Within youth research this sensitivity has been seen as expressing itself through subcultural features that enable young people to handle, comment and reflect on power-related situations and the experience of being marginalised, to express resistance to the ways and attitudes of the dominant culture, but also to *sense new tendencies and changes* that are emerging in society (Williams, 2011; see also Mudde, 2014:15).

However, while youth and their subcultures often tend to be romanticised and seen in a positive light as representing changes to come, it is easy to forget that deeply problematic features of new societal developments may also be registered and even celebrated by young people. Could Anita's and her father's responses be understood in light of such an overall framework?

4.1.1 Fukuyama and the politics of identity

In recent times social theorist Francis Fukuyama has drawn attention to the seemingly expanding concern with *identity* in today's public sphere (Fukuyama, 2020; see also Honneth 2008:70-72). Thus, Anita's claims of identity as 'the big new thing', seems well in line with Fukuyama's suggestion. This concern with identity obviously also has its roots in earlier societal developments. At the beginning of the 2000s, Bauman and several other social theorists identified what seems to have been the foundation of these recent developments in the focus upon 'individualisation'. According to Bauman:

> …individualisation consists of transforming human 'identity' from a 'given' into a 'task' charging the actors with the responsibility for performing that task and for the consequences (also the side effects) of their performance. (Bauman, 2000:32)

For Anita, her relationship to this new situation seems ambivalent. She experiences pressure from many sides; the demand for identification is felt both through history (pointing at origins, the Norse), culture, religion, nationality, and also gender, well matching Bauman's claim that identity has become a 'task', a burden, a demand on the individual to choose or perform. But identity also seems to be something that Anita needs and longs for; that it is felt to be something that has disappeared and that therefore has to be re-established, to be found anew. This is even more clearly expressed by her father when he states that identity is something that has been 'peeled away', lost and 'not allowed' by the politicians who steer a path towards 'the multicultural'.

Anita's statements take her understanding and hunches even further when she sees the situation as related to *the pressure on national borders,* which she perceives as threatening to break down, caused by the influx of refugees and immigrants. As a result, she tends to experience or feel that religion, and

probably also norms and attitudes of the immigrants ('if you are not this way or another, who are you then?'), are 'crashing' or conflicting with the religion and attitudes that she associates with 'us', that is the 'we' group to which she feels she belongs (see Berger, 2018). Under this tension, and the emerging of awareness of the differences she seems to experience, the questioning of identity seems to be a logical outcome.

Fukuyama is famous for his claims in 1992 that the world – especially after the fall of the Soviet Union – had reached what he in positive terms called 'the end of history' (Fukuyama, 1992). He theorised that the world could now only develop towards the high values of modernity such as liberal democracy, a free market, peacefulness and individual freedom. However, by 2020, he seems to recognise that historical processes in recent times have taken us in quite a different – even the opposite – direction. He mentions, for example, that authoritarian countries such as China and Russia have become more assertive, and countries that earlier seemed to be successful liberal democracies, such as Hungary, Poland and Turkey, are developing more into authoritarianism, representing a populist nationalism also manifested through the United Kingdom's Brexit and, not least, the 'America first' attitudes represented by the election of Trump (Fukuyama, 2020). This situation is far from the positive images of liberalism, democracy and peacefulness which he sketched out nearly three decades before.

According to Fukuyama what he calls 'the politics of identity' is the other, and highly problematic, side of that same coin:

> Again and again, groups have come to believe that their identities – whether national, religious, ethnic, sexual, gender, or otherwise – are not receiving adequate recognition. Identity politics is no longer a minor phenomenon, playing out only in the rarefied confines of university campuses or providing a backdrop to low-stakes skirmishes in 'culture wars' promoted by the mass media. Instead, identity politics has become a master concept that explains much of what is going on in global affairs. (Fukuyama, 2020: 2)

He further states that it is the processes related to the rapid economic and social change created by globalisation that has created these demands for recognition on the part of groups that once were invisible to mainstream society. In other words, Anita's undoubtedly relatively precisely articulated perceptions of the situation – where all these strands tend to meet – seem well in line with Fukuyama's diagnosis.

But identity also seems to be a core dimension to the experience of uncertainty, confusion, a feeling of being threatened by cultures and communities far from the known, and a fear that the society in which one lives is changing so fast that it is on the brink of breakdown.

Here, recent studies of social movements seem relevant, where *emotions* are seen as a driving motivational force for engaging in political protest and in the struggle for social change (Flam and King 2005; Jaspers 1998; Tarrow 1999; Rogstad and Vestel 2011; Staiger et al. 2020). In accordance with such a perspective we aim in the following to capture what we may call the *emotional structures* that are created and activated in the lifeworlds of the informants. These may be seen as the structures generated by repeated experiences and critical events which result in an overall *emotional ambience* – a social emotional 'atmosphere' – that marks the lifeworlds of the informants and provides a framework for their choices, actions and articulated feelings.

Against a background of such an emotional ambience, political extremism may be felt as a way of handling the situation.

4.1.2 Griffin's modes of radicalisation

Fascist historian Roger Griffin has suggested a theory of three stages in the radicalisation process (Griffin, 2012: 88-110). As theories that assume 'stages' have been criticised for simplifying such processes and making them more linear than they are, I prefer to see Griffin's stages as 'modes' that the

actors may move to and from in trajectories that are not necessarily linear (Borum, 2011). Based on Griffin's articulations, these modes can be described as follows:

1. *Nomic crisis*

Here Griffin refers to Peter Berger's use of the word *'nomos'* to denote an ideal type for the cosmological, cultural and social 'meaningful order' into which people are born, and that is deepened, processed, modified and transmitted to the next generation; it is a 'shield of meaning' with which to protect one's lifeworld. This nomos also provides meaning to the world in a wider sense including the personal experiences of the individuals and their need for an existential order. When this order no longer works or is threatened – for example when society no longer manages to provide a relevant guide for orientation to the individual – a so called 'nomic crisis' related to Durkheim's concept of 'anomie', develops. According to Griffin this may be seen as a foundation for a process that may end up in extremism. Supplied with our perspective that emphasises the *importance of an emotional ambience*, this experience is obviously heavily emotionally charged, and may imply strong feelings of grief, confusion and of injustice.

2. *Splitting and a Manichaean world view[17]*

A possible result of the experience of a nomic crisis, is, according to Griffin, an increasing need to defend or to re-establish an original 'nomic home', or to find or create a new one. This may imply counteracting a feeling of humiliation, and of being threatened by eventually seeking some sort of revenge through a struggle that feels meaningful and 'real'. In these processes the phenomenon of 'splitting' emerges. This is a simplifying assumption of a universe where 'the others' – those who do not share the nomos of the protagonist, or who threaten this nomos – are demonised, dehumanised and are seen as of less worth in a strictly dualist world view.

3. *The bliss of completion*

The last mode in Griffin's understanding of the phenomenon of radicalisation is one where the conviction of the importance of the aim has become so internalised that violence against society/the enemy/the other can be undertaken, not only without a feeling of guilt, but also with a feeling of grandiosity and of having achieved the goal. Violence is here perceived as sacralised, even if the goal is not necessarily anchored to religion. The perception of being threatened, on edge with society or being marginalised is now transformed to a feeling of having achieved some sort of 'bliss'.

The content of these three modes will be used as a base for our exploration of the research questions. In the following analysis, *none of our actors could be said to reflect the third of these modes* where real acts of terror could be realised. It is nevertheless presented here as it provides us with an overall frame that indicates the content, situation and state of mind that the DARE project seeks to understand and to counteract.

4.1.3 Extra-ideological relations

It is important to also underline that in addition to the points mentioned above in which ideologised suggestions and attempts to understand, see patterns and to change the world are salient, there is a large variety of what we may term *extra-ideological relations* that may play an important role in the trajectories towards radical or even extremist positions. In its most elementary forms, the human need for friendship and community, loneliness or even love relations may work as moving forces that take a person into communities and positions where strongly problematic attitudes and actions are cultivated and valued. Therefore these dimensions are also important to consider in the following pages.

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[17] Manicheism is an old Persian religion known for an extremely dualistic world view where good fights against evil (i.e. Jonas 1963).

4.1.4 Style, focus and structure

The report focuses in particular upon the informants' own stories about themselves and their lifeworlds, and use this as a base for further analysis.

I also emphasise the need to present *direct quotes*.[18] By doing this it becomes easier for the reader to judge the interpretations than if I just had referred to the comments without quoting them – more or less – as they were uttered.

Such an approach, nevertheless, runs a risk of becoming merely a microphone stand for the informants. However while the overall idea is exactly to explore the informants' subjective perceptions, and that by necessity demands listening to what they have to say, the hope is that such a *person-centred approach,* where one gets close to the informants' subjectivities, will provide some important analytical perspectives that will enable us to better understand and illuminate the ways in which the informants make meaning of their lifeworlds.

In the following sections we will explore a range of phenomena where *the quest for identity manifests and gives direction* to the lives and attitudes of various actors in the right-wing landscape of today's Norway. In exploring these worlds, in each section attention is paid to the following themes: structural relations - perceived inequalities and injustice; social relations; and extra ideological moving forces.

The two core questions addressed are: How do the informants experience the situation? And, how do their reactions to this situation manifest as political attitudes, viewpoints and practices?

The exploration will be undertaken under the following headings: The quest for identity: history and the longing for the past (Section 4.2); Defending the nation – handling the threats against ethnicity, culture and true Norwegianness (Section 4.3); Trajectories and motivations – ways in and ways out (Section 4.4); Gender relations: Alternative sexualities, Islam and the nuclear family (Section 4.5); and Views on radicalisation, extremism, violence and Breivik (Section 4.6).

4.2 The quest for identity - history and the longing for the past

In this section we focus upon how, for some informants, the quest for identity manifests in an interest in history and in a longing for the past.

In a situation where identity is a core axis of orientation and experienced as something in *crucial need of being defended*, the importance of some connections to the past are no surprise. Here, for Anita the interest in origins stands out. She mentions Christianity, as an important marker of identity. But she also digs deeper into the past – well in tune with today's cultural mentality – to expressions of the old Norse culture.[19]

This must be seen as resonating with a larger trend in present popular culture, where monsters, magic, fights between good and evil, romance, archaic gender relations, and celebrations of both the heroic and beliefs in supernatural beings, are seen in countless forms, from Harry Potter to 'Game of Thrones'. Anita points, for example, to the Irish-Canadian television drama 'Vikings' – inspired by historical events, and legends about the mythical Norse king, Ragnar Lodbrok – now in its sixth season. She enjoys it, she tells me, and comments that 'it is not coincidental…why that series was produced right now, and why it became so popular'.

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[18] A pause in the conversation/utterances is marked with "…", while a "(…)" means text left out.

[19] An interesting parallel here is young Muslims' interest in and attractions toward the fundamentalist version of Islam in the shape of Salafism, where the ways and practices actualised by the Prophet Mohamed and his helpers at the time they lived – many hundreds of years ago – are seen as the most correct and relevant (i.e. Khosrokhavar 2017; Linge and Bangstad 2020).

She also indicates that the reason for its popularity is that 'there is a little nationalism in it…it was something with the belief in the *necessity of defending their people.. their territory'*. This matches her own political position.

When I ask, she tells me that she has not read 'Edda', the oldest known Norse poetry, but that she prefers 'those romanticised paperback pocket books', even if both the books and the television series do not hide the Vikings' barbaric side, she says. The interest and fascination with Norway's historical and mythological past, in other words, seem to be well in line with her nationalist position and Fukuyama's 'politics of identity' that it seems to reflect.

We find similar fascinations in the case of Tina (27), an early school dropout who now lives off temporary jobs and social welfare, and who has had a close relationship with the Alliance. She speaks of herself as a 'Nazi', a 'fascist', a 'hardcore nationalist' and the like. She tells of her childhood and her memories from the kindergarten:

> We were told about Nordic folk tales and Norwegian mythology. I was very lucky regarding that. We were told about Huldra[20], Nøkken[21] and all these trolls, and also Askeladden[22], and about Tor, Freya and Odin[23]*,* all those figures…so when I was out in nature during summers and on vacations, I got lots of food to fantasise about these forces... (Tina)

The old fairy tales and popular culture around these supernatural beings, are an important part of many Norwegians' childhood – and can also be seen as basic 'knowledge' in many Norwegians' more intuitive *feeling of identity*. They also seem to match well with Tina's later interest in various 'new religiosity' beliefs and attitudes, which are discussed further below.

But these fascinations are also found in Tina's interest in another, more recent popular cultural expression that has a strong relationship to the Norse; black metal music. The genre was originally associated with so called 'satanism', but later endorsed heathendom and especially pre-Christian beliefs and origins. In Norway the genre is closely associated with the suicide of a legendary vocalist, and two well-known murders in the last three decades, as well as to the burning down of a series of old churches and places of Christian worship in Norway, and for desecrating gravestones in churchyards. It is also perhaps the only popular music genre that is held to have originated in Norway, in the early nineties, but that now has spread world-wide (Moynihan and Søderlind, 1998; Rem, 2010; Vestel, 2016:42-43; 1999).

In recent times, an important subgenre has been NSBM (national socialist black metal) where Nazi ideology and extreme nationalism is present. Such links are also reflected in the fact that the Norwegian leader (Haakon Forwald) of the self-declared neo Nazi/national socialist group, the Nordic Resistance Movement, is a former black metal bass player in the bands 'Myrkskog' and 'Disiplin' (Klungstveit 2020:123). Tina comments on her relationship with black metal, where she also endorses the aesthetics of the music itself – likening it to the natural phenomena of thunder – as mirroring important parts of the ethos and identity with which she associates:

> …it carries much of the philosophy that I stand for. So there is a spirit of *self-defence* in it. Absolutely. There is hatred there, very explicitly. And a strength in it. The purest form of black metal that you meet is a thunder-organ, when you are outside and you see thunder and lightning close to your body. That is the best form of music that I know! Last time it was thunder and lightning I was out walking, and then lightning struck quite close to me. I felt the sound in my body, it really vibrated. I got so incredibly satisfied in that moment. I have

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[20] An attractive female supernatural with an animal tail who tricked men into captivity inside mountains.
[21] A water demon living in lakes in the forest.
[22] Literally the 'the man – the lad – of ashes', who just stirred the embers of the fire, but who was also very creative, collecting what other people threw away and who often 'won the princess and half the kingdom', as it is often expressed in old fairy tales.
[23] Old Norse gods.

never been that satisfied. It is such things that I really like, the power of nature. Black metal is trying to make music that reflects thunder, plain and simple. Music to worship Tor or Zeus or whatever they call it. (Tina)

Tina's comments sum up her attitudes, in which she in many ways idolises the strong. She declares tellingly, when I ask, that she has deep contempt for weakness. She also warns about being steered too much by emotions. Both features must also be seen as related to her involvement in martial arts in the shape of karate. However her reverence for the strong also corresponds with the popular images of the ethos of the Vikings, and the Norse, as evident in the descriptions of the next chain in her political standpoints.

Tina has had close contact with the milieu around the political party The Alliance, which is led by the eccentric Hans Jørgen Lysglimt (literally 'flash of light') Johansen. As already mentioned, Johansen earlier promoted his party as fighting for 'nationalism with a smile', and gladly posed with a big smile and the V-sign in selfies taken with him by seemingly fascinated youth on a party convention stand (observation in Arendal, summer 2018). He nevertheless has more recently expressed ideas in the direction of Nazism, including positive attitudes toward the well-known ideologist and Norwegian Nazi collaborator during World War II, Vidkun Quisling (ibid). According to Tina, she sees The Alliance and the so called 'alt right' (see below) as '…much the same thing…that is as Nazism and perhaps Identitarian…it is just Nazism with hatred against Muslims in their luggage.' Lysglimt is, as mentioned, often portrayed carrying a sword, which he holds to represent the Norse heritage. In the programme of the party, the Norse is highlighted as an ideal, as articulated in a text on the party's home page entitled 'The party's core issues':

> The Norse cultural inheritance. Consciousness around Norwegian history, language, people, religion and identity. Consciousness around Norway's and the Norwegian people's unique role as handler of the Norse cultural heritage and ideal demands of dissemination of this cultural heritage to the world, with a special focus on the western world which emerges directly from the Norse heritage. (from the web page of the Alliance: http://www.stemalliansen.no/hjem/kandidater/hans-jorgen-lysglimt-johansen/, downloaded February 6, 2020)

Here, the Norse is seen as an important impulse of Norwegian identity and is given an especially prominent role, as it is seen as something of a gift that the Norwegian people are almost obliged to pass to the rest of the world.

In December 2018, two young girls, one from Norway and one from Denmark, were found murdered in the Atlas Mountains in Morocco. A group of young Jihadists associated with IS was found to be responsible and convicted of the gruesome murders. Lysglimt comments on the murders in an intense and – understandably - highly emotional YouTube video, where references to Nazi ideology, nationalism and even Trump's recognisable expression, are clear. He says:

> Responsible Norwegians, responsible patriots must know their moment. We, grown up Norwegian men, we who have parents and grandparents in Norway, three generations in Norway, who can be trusted, we must collect ourselves…They are coming, every day, people come to Norway and Sweden who have it in them, who are capable of doing these things… Globalism is such a strong power, it is Satan, it is the Death Star, it is hell itself and it is so strongly oriented against the light and the kindness, that these people choose this hell… Either you are with death and the Death Star or you are with the sun and life and the way forward… we will keep together, we who are nationalists, we who are Norwegian of flesh and blood…blood and earth – we will stick together… Norway first! [24]

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[24] Translated from YouTube, published December 20, 2018, downloaded January 9th 2019: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wILoIxKoqP8

His reference to 'blood and earth', is a translation of the well-known Nazi slogan *'blut und boden'*. According to Frøland this refers to the race-eugenic-ecological ideal of German biologist and early 'vølkish' ideologue Hentschel; Hentschel writes in around 1906 that, 'The Aryan man will be purified in his blood and with his returning back to nature, secure a rooted lifeform in homely earth' (Frøland 2017:110, my translation). The nationalism of the Alliance thus not only refers to the Norse heritage as an ideal, but also sees the world through Nazi-related terminology and attitudes in its struggle against 'globalism', which in pathos-filled expressions are associated with no less than 'Satan' and the 'Death Star'. When he states that 'They are coming every day…who have it in them, who are capable of doing these things', he is obviously referring to immigrants, essentially generalised as potential murderers and IS associates. The expression 'we who have parents and grandparents in Norway, three generations in Norway' is most likely referring directly to the criteria for being accepted as a real Norwegian, as stated by the Neo-Nazi group the Nordic Resistance Movement. This clearly emphasises Lysglimt's ongoing radicalisation into a more explicit national socialism and Neo-Nazism, with deep roots in both the distant past of the Norse, and the recent past of World War II Nazism. And in this project the Norse dimension of Norwegian history is seen as highly important, providing an impulse to Norwegian identity, and giving it a heroic aura of the past.

Lysglimt's expressions divide into 'Satan, hell and the death star', on the one hand, and the 'sun and light' on the other. This is completely in tune with Griffin's mode two, where the universe is 'split' into two – good and evil, and where the others/antagonists are completely demonised and dehumanised.

The last actors in the right-wing landscape to be mentioned here as referring to the past in their self-identification, are the Nordic Resistance Movement (see The Nordic Resistance Movement 2016; Vestel 2016:41-42; Bjørgo and Gjelsvik 2018; Klungtveit 2020).

The most immediately striking reference to Nordic heathen times is the Nordic Resistance Movement's use as its main symbol of the old Norse rune called 'Tyr' – a 'T' with its arms bowed downwards. The rune is said to stand for victory in combat and for courage and power. The movement aims at the unification in a pan-Nordic unit, where national socialist principles are its primary guide of the original countries in the Nordic area; Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Finland, and also mentions the Baltic countries.

While reference to Norse heritage may nevertheless appear relatively superficial, it should also be seen in the context of the use of Norse symbols and references in traditional Nazism. The aesthetic presentation of the letter Tyr clearly evokes the Nazi's use of the swastika. It is also known that it was used by the SS division 'January' during World War II.[25] In such a context the letter Tyr must be said to be a well-functioning unifying symbol for the Nordic.[26] The use of the rune Tyr in these contexts has been highly criticised by several academics, historians and anti-racist groups who emphasise the necessity of taking back the rune from groups associated with Nazism.[27] This need to 'take it back' underlines the importance of Norse history and culture in the overall Norwegian identity.

One of the informants – introduced later on – has explicitly expressed a fascination for the Nordic Resistance Movement, and went through a long period trying to make contact with the NRM and to become a member. He eventually gave up the attempt for several reasons, and seemed to be motivated more by a search for community than for any clearly defined ideological reasons. His case is presented in greater detail below.

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[25] http://www.klassekampen.no/article/20170807/ARTICLE/170809969

[26] See also Frølund's (2017) discussion of the Nazis' references to Norse mythology in the shape of Tor, Odin and Ragnarok, and also the German so called 'vølkish' publications with names like 'Mittgart', 'Heimdall', 'Gjallarhornet' and 'Hammer', 'Mjøllner'.

[27] URL: http://www.klassekampen.no/article/20170807/ARTICLE/170809969

4.3 Defending the nation – opposing the threats against ethnicity, culture and true 'Norwegianness'

A core feature of the quest for and experience of identity relates to with whom one associates and with whom one does not associate; that is the difference between 'us' and 'them', the in group and the out group, and their relationships (see Berger 2018).

Anita's father's complaint that politicians have wanted to 'peel away everything that has to do with identity', demonstrates that, for him, the identity of the 'we' group is somehow *threatened*. It is also felt as if this identity is not allowed to be held, or to develop, as something valuable. He further complains that in multicultural Norway, the culture, identity and needs of immigrants are given more attention, space and opportunities than those of people he would see as Norwegians. Immigrants, and for SIAN, Muslims in particular, are seen also as people who stand for values and attitudes that are very different from 'ours'.

In a situation framed in this way, the answer to threats and feelings of unease, loss, breakdown and even confusion seems to be the need *to re-find, explore, deepen, cultivate and defend* what we usually call *the nation*. *A nation is here loosely understood as an imagined community that is built on a more or less common sharing of history, language, culture – values, ways of being, worldview, customs – including feelings and intuitions, and often also, territory (Anderson 2016).* In the next section we explore a variety of ways in which our informants perceive what they see as the Norwegian nation, and how they – in different ways – can be seen to be engaged in the *project of defending it*.

4.3.1 Defending the nation: Traditionalism, ecology and the refusal of 'synthetocracy'

The need to cultivate and to defend the identity of what we usually speak of as 'the nation' is also found in the narrative of Ulf (30 years). Here we will undertake a deep dive into this informant's rather peculiar spiritualistic and intellectualist universe. It is also of special interest because it exemplifies an informant who clearly connects to an old tradition in radical right wing thought that can be traced back to the time even before the second world war (Hakl 2019: 54-69).

Ulf works in the IT business, has a higher education and grew up on a farm. He is a devoted sympathiser of the Alliance, and recently of ShP. He starts our conversation by pointing to what he sees as an emerging alienation among 'many people':

> I see that there is an alienation emerging. Many people are experiencing that, and it shows itself on two levels. The first level is in people's everyday life; they are not able to identify with the people around them when you get people from radically different cultures that arrive in your neighbourhood, and Norwegian people are moving out, then it is difficult to identify. On the second level they experience alienation in relation to the political elite and you experience that what they are talking about does not reflect what they experience in their everyday life. …You are alienated in your everyday life, and you are alienated in relation to authorities and politicians, and suddenly they are categorised in a way that they cannot recognise. That is what I believe is the most radicalising, that people do not experience that they are taken seriously. (Ulf)

In Griffin's terms, he sketches people's feelings as related to what we have called a 'nomic crisis'.

Ulf sees the presence of immigrants 'from radically different cultures' as something that creates difficulties for local communities, especially when the original inhabitants – 'Norwegian people' – move out. The 'Others' are taking over, so to speak, resulting in a feeling of alienation and threat both in everyday life and in relation to authorities for the 'We'. When the people who are feeling alienated and threatened also find themselves being 'categorised' – presumably as racists – they do not recognise themselves in several ways. Their identity is thus threatened from two directions - the politicians and

the immigrants. According to Ulf, the Alliance as a party is 'trying to give people a platform and some space where they can discuss these things'.

But Ulf also has a larger – and somehow esoteric – frame of understanding the situation regarding ethnicity and identity on several levels which he sees as heavily connected to *ecology*. He sees *society as an extension of the ecosystem*; that man is a part of the ecosystem and all man's creations are a sediment of nature and a sediment of ourselves. As I understand it, he sees each country/nation as part of an organic evolutionary process, that also includes human consciousness, and that is constantly evolving as a part of what he calls a 'cosmic' dimension. He states that these views are also found in pre-Christian traditions in 'the whole of heathen Europe'. He says: 'Much of it you can re-find in those traditions. In that way it is right to call what we stand for *'Traditionalism'* or '*perennialism'*. The reader may find these concepts and ideas as rather strange, not exactly self-evident, and perhaps surprising to find in today's radical right-wing landscape. Thus, a further exploration of what these concepts and ideas imply is necessary.

According to the historian, Mark Sedgwick, the ideas of what is commonly called 'Traditionalism' have been an important recurring theme among the more intellectual theorists of the recent wave of the radical right. Originally 'Traditionalism' was articulated by the French philosopher and esotericist/occultist Rènè Guenon (1886-1951) and was further developed by Italian philosopher and spiritualist thinker, Julius Evola (1898-1974) (Sedgewick 2019: xxiv; Hakl 2019: 54 -67; Evola 2017:35-45). Neither the names of Guenon nor Evola are mentioned by Ulf. But as we shall see, the ideas he expresses in our conversation seem strongly related to these thinkers.

The content of the concept of tradition in the sense used by Evola and Guenon is difficult to grasp. According to Hakl, it is seen as a something universal and timeless (that is perennial) that has originated from something transcendent and divine that is beyond humans and of history. This represents Evola's idea of what Hakl calls 'the primacy of the transcendent' (Hakl 2019:61). As I understand Ulf, this is part of what he sees as the 'cosmic' dimension, and is something like the goal or the ideal that society/the nation/the developing unit ('a node' as Ulf calls it) strives toward. According to Evola, such beliefs are found in most pagan – that is pre-Christian – traditions of the world, finely resonating with Ulf's claim of there being similar views in 'the whole of heathen Europe' (Hakl 2019). The esotericism of these ideas also resonates with the fact that Evola was well acquainted with sacred texts from the Far East, such as Chinese Taoist classic, Tao The King, and the Hinduist Bhagavad Gita, all celebrated in his book 'Essays on Magical Idealism' (ibid).

But how are these ideas connected to the political standpoints of Ulf and the Alliance? The answer seems related to this rather complex view on the developments of a nation that also relates to a metaphysical or cosmic dimension, as we have already seen:

> We should work for a situation where every nation can express its godlike image through being in line with its own nature, with its own logic …And the purpose of the nation is to search to be a part of a higher principle, of principles that lie higher in the hierarchy… (Ulf)

The idea of tradition existing in the process of approaching a stage that is 'higher in a hierarchy', is also in line with Evola's teachings. So, in Evola's view, the nations must seek to develop in accordance with that principle, which gives it a certain place in the cosmos.

This seems perhaps clearer in the next quote where nationalism is seen as a vehicle for achieving such a development:

> In practice we see for example that what in very simple terms is called 'nationalism', in a way is a tool or a vehicle that can be used to achieve a part of this. That you see that nature, the people, the animals, history and culture, are all in one sphere, all in an organic unity. If modernism, the modern global liberal capitalism can mess around freely, then it ends up with spoiling things that have developed into an organic whole over generations…I

see society as an organism…as nodes and that there is established a balance between the nodes. If you disturb that balance, then you threaten all that balance, the health of the organism, you might say.' (Ulf)

The scepticism he expresses towards modern global liberal capitalism is also shared by Evola – and several other new right ideologists – as shown in the title of one of Evola's most well-known books: 'The revolt against the modern world: Politics, Religion and the social order in the Kali Yuga'. In Hinduist terminology the Kali Yuga is the name of the dark ages when human beings go through a period of spiritual 'devolution' – the opposite of evolution - and where the ideal state of the world is far away, well in line with a situation of a 'nomic crisis', (Hakl 2019: 60, see also Teitelbaum 2019: 273; Griffin: 2007: 16-17). The world and the nations in today's world, are, in other words, threatened by 'the modern'. Such a diagnosis seems highly resonant with Ulf's views on today's state of being in the Western world and the salient problem in the 'disturbance' created by mass immigration. He continues:

> That is why we say that we want many nations that have their own, unique expressions….I am thinking about immigration… if it is too large, then you get that alienation we talked about in the beginning. When the pressure becomes so large that it becomes an alien element in an organism, then it is harmful to the organism as a whole…But when we speak about closing the borders the ideal is not a hermetic seal. The reason is that the immigration has been so large over so much time that we do not have capacity to handle more. If we are to keep up what has been done to make us a unique sphere, a unique node, without losing ourselves, then we do not have the capacity to take in more people. (Ulf)

In other words, by being exposed to too much immigration, the receiving country risks losing its uniqueness and its identity, manifesting in a breakdown, in several senses:

> It disturbs in a way the biological, ethnic, cultural too… culture is in a way a part of the collective consciousness in a country, the folk soul. And that is something that is so unique for each nation, that if you disturb that balance, you get something potentially very negative… you get trouble, to put it crudely. It becomes an imbalance. (Ulf)

We recognise the concern with the 'folk soul' from both the German romanticism in a more general sense, and also the so called 'vølkish nationalism', described by Griffin as a '…revitalization movement made of hundreds of associations, magazines, books and a highly variegated ideology, but bent on the common goal of bringing about the birth of a new Germany purged by the symptoms of decadence.' (Griffin 2007:139).

For the Nazis their concern with the 'vølkish' as the core – the soul – of a nation, can be considered of high importance. According to Hakl, Evola also approached both the Nazi ideologists as well as the Italian fascists, to make them adopt his ideas, but with little response. According to Hakl, this was because Evola put a strong emphasis upon the spiritual aspects of his philosophy, and that did not fit either the Nazis or the Italian fascists (Hakl 2019:62-63). Interestingly, Griffin refers to Paul Lagarde who in 1878 wrote about what Griffin articulates as the need to 'preserve the spiritual essence of the organic German nation, whose rebirth naturally involved a process of cleansing' (Griffin 2007:139).

The result of immigration is thus for Ulf seen as a disturbance of the organic development of each nation, of its 'folk soul' and its 'cosmic' meaning. This is, for Ulf, also interpreted within another frame of explanation; he sees the problem as a tension between *the organic* versus *the mechanical*, the latter probably to be understood as the process of physical mixing:

> If we get a world that is mechanical, globalised, mixed together in a sauce, then there is no space for the spiritual or the aesthetic. There is no room for things that are particular, no room for anything then. There you get a mechanical robot-world that probably won't survive itself, even. You miss what it means to be a human. Ultimately the human being then has failed in his or her cosmic dimension, if we let it go that far. (Ulf)

We find a similar view on the organic versus the mechanistic - here called the 'synthetic' – in an article written by Rødal, formerly the second leader of the Alliance, who is now a central ideologue in the newly re-started Independence Party (Selvstendighets partiet, abbreviated ShP). Ulf also highlights this article as something he sympathises with. The article is tellingly called 'Synthetocracy and its traditional and sustainable replacer' (all quotes my translations). Rødal writes:

> The modern world order seeks at any time to suppress even more sides of existence. It works to centralise more power under its superstructure, at the same time as it ignores the need for local adaptions and skills. This process undermines itself, and will continue until the synthetocracy collapses under its own weight… [28]

Rødal then lists several of these dimensions that are threatened by the synthetocracy:

> The collapse that modernism brings forth will dominate many dimensions. Ecologically this is well under way… This happens because the soil is reduced solely to a 'medium for growth' and not as a living whole that we humans are in a symbiotic relationship with….Love is also something that is reduced to its lowest common denominator. Love is solely seen as chemical and 'mechanistic' processes in the brain, without its metaphysical dimensions. Therefore also art suffers the same destiny as the rest of society. Nobleness in modern art is almost non-existent. Two other important dimensions where synthetocracy ignores local adaptions is culture and politics. Culturally we are confronted with a *dissolution of traditions and identity*. Tradition and identity is what gives us direction and a community as a people….The real opposition is between the local and organic on the one hand, and the centralised and synthetic on the other. In other words The Natural Order against Synthetocracy. (ibid)

For both Ulf and for Rødal, immigration is associated with the modern – the synthetic – where different cultures are mixing in a mechanical, non-organic way. Again we see a world view in a Manichaean-like split between two oppositions, the one preferred to the other: the negative side, which is a threat to love, art, culture, the local, ecology, tradition etc.

The alternative –using Rødal's expression from another article, and the answer to the situation where tradition and identity of the nation/society are in a process of dissolution – is the following:

> …we fight for *ethnopluralism;* a real plurality where Europe's and the unique peoples have their ethnocultural identity and self-determination[29]

In my interviews with Ulf, he did not use the word ethnopluralism. Nevertheless the word seems to cover exactly the content of this ideal. Ulf says:

> Through evolution we have certain premises in so far as we enjoy ourselves, and identify ourselves with those we share a genetic and cultural origin with. …why disturb this balance, why try through a political programme and social engineering to try to change this then, when one rather can work for a situation where every nation can express its godlike image through being in line with its own nature, with its own inner logic. Here we are touching *imperialism* and a part of capitalism that I am really against. I really support that Africans should have the possibility to build their own, strong, unique country where they live, and that we shall not be involved in exploitation of those countries. (Ulf)

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[28] Rødal published March 28 2018, downloaded from: https://resett.no/2018/03/28/syntetokratiet-og-dens-tradisjonelle-og-baerekraftige-avloser

[29] Rødal: En verden av nasjoner [A world of Nations], published October 27 2019, downloaded from the homepage of the Independence Party, https://selvstendighetspartiet.no/artikler/2019/10/7/en-verden-av-nasjoner

It is important to note that Ulf clearly distances himself from the ideas of imperialism and colonisation that are usually associated with both the old right wing in the shape of Nazism and Italian Fascism, and also the Empires of earlier European nations.

The concept of ethnopluralism is held to be rooted in the theories of French philosopher, Alain de Benoist, who is also seen as the forefather of the 'Identitarian' movement in Europe (Camus 2019:73; Rasmussen 2020; Benoist and Champetier 2012).

Ethnopluralism is the idea that all ethnic groups should develop and maintain their unique qualities and identity more or less in separation from other ethnic groups (Teitelbaum 2017:44; Dalland 2018¸ Sellner 2016). Often integrated in such a view is also the idea of what is called '*the grand replacement*', pointing to the fear that a country is threatened by the process where its original inhabitants are replaced by immigrants. The consequence of these attitudes is the aim of remigrating, that is, to make immigrants leave and return to their countries of origin. This is, of course, a radical project, in so far as its ultimate consequence appears to be *cleaning* the country of other ethnic groups. Ideally, according to Ulf, this remigration should be undertaken *without the use of violence*. I point out to him that remigration nevertheless would be a drastic process. We continue:

> Viggo:…but you want to send most of the immigrants out of the country…that is a quite big thing to do…?

> Ulf: Yes it will be big. *A new landing on the moon*. I don't say that I have a perfect answer to how it should be done, and it will for certain be some single destinies that will be not so good. But we have to try to compensate for that as best as possible, to create consensus. I envision that we have to create in the long run a consensus in the same way that we have consensus about the liberal paradigm that we have today, between many people who… In a country, for example like Uganda… ok… we really want that the ones who have higher education and that live in Europe, who are doctors and medical experts and so on, can return to Uganda and build up that country…

The idea of remigration obviously fits very well with the critique of the phenomenon of 'brain drain'. This is the process where skilled and highly educated citizens deprive their native country of their needed expertise, by emigrating – for example to Europe – to enjoy the advantages of a better functioning state and living conditions. For Ulf, an important advantage of his aim for remigration is that these actors return to their original countries, reversing the 'brain drain'. Does he really mean it? Or is it just some form of hidden racism? The answers require a broader discussion that will be undertaken below.

Ulf perceives a threat, potential breakdown, disturbance and insecurity resulting from the modern, the 'synthetocratic', the inorganic and not least the 'illness' in the societal organism created by mass immigration. His answer to this is to develop a policy *to defend the nation* – in several senses such as the cultural, the ethnic, and even the cosmic. This is founded on 'Traditionalism', where the more modern concept of 'ethnopluralism' also has a prominent place.

4.3.2 Defending the nation: Identitarians and ethnopluralism

Many of these ideas and attitudes are also found in the world view of Gunnar (35), who strongly associates with the Identitarians. In common with Ulf's approach he believes in the need to defend Norway (Europe), European cultures and nations, while working for the ideals of ethnopluralism. He is nevertheless far from referring to the more esoteric ideas and concepts that Ulf proposes.

Even if there is no declared and organised Identitarian group in Norway, several of our informants share similar ideas with the Identitarians. Gunnar strongly supports the politics and world view of the Identitarians, and complains that he is well over 30 years of age, which is the formal age limit for being a member of an Identitarian group (Generation Identity, abbreviated GI). He was introduced to these

ideas by some friends in 2015, and also noticed the references to the Identitarians in the novels by the French writer Michel Houellebecq whom he likes (see Houellebecq 2018:125-16). According to Gunnar, there are four core elements in the aims of the GI:

1. Stopping mass migration,

2. Remigration,

3. De-Islamisation and

4. Help in the areas of origin for those remigrated.

Gunnar and I discuss the problems with the idea of remigration. I point, for example, to the difficulties for young people who have grown up in Norway and the pain of breaking their emotional ties to the country and to their friends. He underlines the ideal of abstaining from violence, but it seems to imply that it could be necessary.

> Gunnar: GI has never used the word 'repatriation', because that might imply the use of violence. We prefer the word remigration. It should be *as voluntary as possible*. And we think that if we sort of make society European again, then Islamists won't feel at home, and that implies, for example, to end halal slaughtering. I mean, if you in fact keep up the law against animal abuse and refuse the financing of mosques, and… so we use the word remigration.

> Viggo: But remigration may mean that many young people who have been growing up here should leave the country and their friends and get totally uprooted…?

> Gunnar: If you support for example *Islam net[30]*, then just buy your ticket! If you want to live in a Muslim society, then just go. And if that is painful, then you have to put up with it! That is not our problem, then. Of course there will be single destinies and cases… And yes, one and a half million Frenchmen were forced to move to France when France gave up Algeria. Was that nice? No! Obviously not. But such movements have existed in many versions earlier, so…

Both Ulf and Gunnar show clear similarities in their views on remigration, which they both see as a necessary aim. When Ulf compares remigration to a new 'landing on the moon', he underlines the difficulties, and also admits that there will be destinies 'that will be not so good'. Gunnar admits that it might be painful to leave Norway, but if one wants to live in a Muslim country, such pain has to be accepted.

The idea is that the way to get people to leave voluntarily is to *'make society European again'.* This implies and even explicitly aims at making sure 'the Islamists do not feel at home'. In other words, both Gunnar and Ulf seem very well aware of the pain, the likelihood of despair and hard problems that will be caused on several levels for the immigrants of today (especially Muslim), if the process of remigration were to be realised.

Nevertheless, they both see this as something necessary. Gunnar even compares it to the hardships experienced when a large number of French or people of other European origins – the so called 'pieds noirs' (the correct number is around 1 million) had to return to France after it gave up its colony in Algeria. However he underlines this as a parallel that shows remigration to be possible. For Gunnar there are the implications of what he terms 'a real hard cultural war going on', in which Europe has to be defended.

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[30] Islam net is a declared non-violent Salafi group in Norway (i.e. Vestel 2016: 125-129; Linge 2013).

He holds up the Eastern European countries with very few immigrants as an ideal, because these are places where he regards the prospects of a civil war to be very low because of the small number of immigrants:

> We have to secure that Europe remains European, or we end up like the Christian Copts in Egypt. Civil war? If we have it and the fact that some believe that Western European societies may end up in a civil war, is just an argument to stop immigration, and get on with remigration. Because this is not a subject you have in Eastern Europe. There is no one who talks about civil war in Poland, in the Czech Republic, in Slovakia or Hungary; there is no worry about extreme parties taking up their guns and dragging the larger society with them… (Gunnar)

In other words, Gunnar sees remigration as a prevention of civil war. The Copts are an old Christian minority in Egypt which has experienced much persecution and also terror attacks from IS in recent years, according to GOV.UK.[31] Gunnar thus compares the possibility of all-Norwegian inhabitants being persecuted by radical Muslims – if mass immigration continues – to the situation of the Copts in Egypt.

I ask Gunnar if what he and the Identitarians aim for can be understood as some sort of cultural purity?

> No. No one talks about it...no national conservative nor anyone known to be Identitarian. No one believes in a race war. Only the Neo-Nazis use that concept. No one in Alternative for Sweden, no one in the Swedish Democrats. But some people use it against us and accuse people who talk about remigration… And we, European patriots, and GI especially, we talk about ethnopluralism, meaning manifold ethnicities. If you go to Cambodia, you do not want to be met with a McDonalds at the street corner. That is American and belongs in America… So ethnopluralism is about unique, special cultures and how people recognise a place that they can call home.

> And there the leftists and the globalists are meeting themselves in the mirror, because they are so supportive of the rights of indigenous peoples. But they refuse to recognise that Europeans also have a distinct culture. And what is the definition of 'aboriginals' and why are Sapmis seen as aboriginals but not ethnic Norwegians?… If you say that to be Norwegian is to eat brown cheese, then it is completely wrong, because to be Norwegian is five thousand small things that in total sum up what it is to be Norwegian… and that is accused of being a thought of purity and culture…?...a sly way of giving people a Nazi stamp! (Gunnar)

The 'brown cheese' he refers to is a type of sweet, brown cheese traditionally made from goat's milk, which is often seen as a national speciality that 'every' Norwegian loves to eat. As such it is often mentioned as something typically Norwegian along with the 'bunad', the regional costumes worn for feasts and various national celebrations. By saying that Norwegian culture is so much more than these traditional national markers, he underlines the more complex history, events and competence that lie behind what he sees as Norwegianness and that this – as is implied - is hardly possible for immigrants to fully master. So, the complexity and uniqueness of – in this case – Norwegian culture is seen here as an element that excludes the possibility of immigrants becoming 'true' Norwegians.

Here one could argue that while most anthropologists would confirm that cultures may be difficult to master in all their details and aspects, they would also underline that cultures are always shifting to some extent. That is, they develop and change over time, and at times develop strong and creative impulses based on interactions, and even confrontations with other cultural communities, not least through the phenomenon known as hybridisation (see Pietersee 2004; Vestel 2009a, 2009b).

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[31] See: https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/egypt/terrorism.

In several countries with a large number of immigrants, 'multiculturalism' has been a topic of discussion for several years. Multiculturalism is the idea that various ethnic groups - especially as represented by the immigrants – should be permitted and enabled to preserve, celebrate and follow the cultural practices of their areas of origin, in the country to which they have migrated. The support of such attitudes can be seen as an expression of the will to welcome and accept the differences that the immigrants represent, in a spirit of generosity and in recognition that a multicultural situation demands some degree of tolerance of difference, both by the immigrants and by the majority in the countries in which they have settled (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010).

In Norway, this also has some resonance with the view in recent decades that in the recent past Norwegian society has supressed and mistreated the Sapmi people. The Sapmi are an indigenous people living in the Northern parts of Norway, primarily associated with reindeer herding and fishing. Sapmi cultural expressions and symbols, including the use of their own language and dress, were dismissed and at times heavily supressed, and they were forced to assimilate to the ways and culture of the majority. These injustices have been much debated and compensation has been sought through public apologies from the Norwegian authorities, the creation of a special political institution – the Sapmi Parliament – allowing a certain degree of self-government, and several other measures designed to heal the relations of the past (i.e. Hovland 1999).

The discussion about how far Norwegian society and institutions should adapt and accept customs, attitudes and cultural practices associated with various immigrant groups has been ongoing since the late seventies, when the presence of immigrants – especially from the Middle East – started to be experienced by the Norwegian public.

When Gunnar points out that it is not cultural purity and a corresponding race war that he aims for, but the rights for any ethnic group to preserve their culture, he apparently meets the arguments of 'the leftists and the globalists' in two ways.

First, in many West European countries in recent decades there has existed an ideal of 'the colourful community'[32], where cultures can both mix and cultivate their ability to tolerate the differences between the immigrants and the majority, which is the opposite of the idea of cultural purity. When Gunnar denies that an emphasis on purity is an ideal for the political groups with which he sympathises, he seemingly accepts this standpoint (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010; Pieterse 2004; Vestel 2009a, 2009b).

Secondly, he supports the right for any culture to develop its ways, practices and uniqueness as a group without being interfered with or forced too strongly in different directions by the majority. This position is also in relative harmony with the ideal of multiculturalism as mentioned above. In this way, he presents a view that reflects tolerance and even encouragement for cultural differences, and in that sense, appears to support cultural diversity.

Both these arguments seemingly fit the ideals of what the right wingers usually call 'the politically correct'.

A dissonance with these ideas of multiculturalism nevertheless emerges in so far as the celebration of the diversity of cultures and the right for each ethnic group to follow and develop their own cultural identity implies that ethnic groups should preferably do this *within their own physical or cultural areas*. Such a standpoint cannot be understood as anything other than an ideal of at least *relative purity.* It is 'relative' because the presence of representatives from other cultures is held to be tolerable, and even welcome, in as far as they can be seen as resources and do not create 'problems' for the country to which they have migrated. This is the standpoint of both Ulf and Gunnar. But it also resonates well with their views that what they term mass immigration must be avoided, and preferably eliminated through remigration.

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[32] This is a popular name for a multicultural society.

Again we see that the answer to what is seen as the threat of a 'replacement' of the original inhabitants (the 'Norwegians'), of cultural and societal breakdown, alienation, disturbance, insecurity and nomic crisis, is a call to defend the nation by achieving the ideal of ethnopluralism through remigration. In one of its aspects, this implies making the nation 'European' again by, among other things, making everyday life, especially of Muslims, so unpleasant and unbearable that they leave the country voluntarily. The defence of the nation, in other words, implies the 'elimination' of too much of the Other.

4.3.3 Defending the nation: Fighting racism against 'whites' and 'Europeans'

For some informants a feeling that they are the subject of negative generalisations -– that people with immigrant backgrounds have 'racist' attitudes against the majority - and also in the form of the so called 'ethnomasochism' from actors who support the multicultural society, has emerged. This is also mentioned as an expression of the politics of identity as problematised by Fukuyama (2020:9). Negative generalisations – whether built on culture, 'race'/genetics or other markers – do not only operate in one direction; any group or individual from any cultural community may express or become a victim of this phenomenon, as we shall see below.

Tina also sees immigration as something that mostly causes trouble for Norwegian society. This is clear when we talk about her schooldays while growing up in a multicultural inner-city area. She complains about her classmates of Pakistani background who were highly offended when Tina commented on their religion in humoristic ways:

> A thing that shaped me during those days was that around 50% of my class were Pakistanis. And it was completely impossible to talk with them in the same ways as I was talking to the others in my class. I could not say anything humoristic about their religion, about Islam. I just thought that I should say what I meant just to see how they reacted to it. And they said that I should be killed! And at that time I was only 9 years old! So that said quite a lot about what they learnt at home. Then there was one of my classmates who had grown up in the countryside, who was very racist. My mother said it was because he was raised that way. And then I said the same about the Muslims, but then she would not comment on it (laughs). Because one is supposed to accept Islam and such things… (Tina)

Here we sense noticeable tensions in her class at a very early age. It is likely that many Muslims - even the very young – have developed a *sensitivity to criticism of their religion*. This is particularly true in the current environment where terror attacks by extreme Islamists worldwide and cultural practices that are alien to many groups within the country's majority, have contributed to negativity and suspicion. Tina here assumes that her classmates' reactions must be seen as something learned from their parents, which is not unlikely in such an overall situation. But even if threats of killing are more a figure of speech rather than a true threat among young people in recent years, such language nevertheless must feel disturbing, even for a presumably tough, nine-year old girl like Tina.

But judging from several hours with interviews with her, Tina appears to have a strong inclination for provocation and opposition, not least as she nowadays speaks of herself as a 'fascist,' 'Nazi' and 'hardcore nationalist'. Whatever the nature of the mix between the overall political atmosphere regarding Islam, Tina's childhood experiences with her Muslim classmates and her own long-term provocative attitudes, her own conclusion is that immigration – and especially Muslim immigrants – means trouble for the Norwegian society on several levels; they do not 'fit' in the society where they have arrived.

Interesting also is the glimpse into her relationship with her mother – whom she speaks of as 'politically correct'. When her mother complains about the racism directed against immigrants by another pupil of majority background in Tina's class, Tina turns it around by saying that youngsters and families with Muslim backgrounds are also racists. In other words, racism and crude generalisations appear from

many different directions, both from and against various groups of immigrant backgrounds, and also as directed against the 'white' majority.

The network *'This is Europa'* is another actor in the radical right-wing landscape that also points to the need to defend the majority against generalisations about being racist, including from the 'politically correct'. 'This is Europa' (the 'a' in the spelling is consciously used, probably to stand out as different from other organisations) is described as a think tank dedicated to promoting European values and to countering the threat against demography and values seen as represented by mass immigration to European countries.[33]

Per (27) has for several years been associated with the network. He emphasises that its members nowadays see themselves as in a transitional phase, where they want to shift their focus to something more 'positive':

> We wanted to shift the focus from the negative to the positive. We wanted to say that there are some good things about us Europeans, and also, at the same time, raise the problem with demography. We were fed up with focusing on all these negative things, about rape, and violence coming with the immigrants…. That is not exactly wrong, but that was not what we would like to do. …There seems to be an unconscious negativity against white people… I struggle to put it into words… I often feel that they…the left side….unconsciously connect white people to negative things, they associate whites with racism and that it is like we have something that is in our nature,…that is bad… But we do have a kind of feeling of identity that may also be positive, and that is the same feeling that we see as a good thing in other groups… (Per)

Per's complaint that there is a tendency for 'white people' to be one-sidedly associated with 'negative things' and racism is what the French right-wing philosopher, Guillaume Faye, terms 'ethnomasochistic'. This view is to some extent reflected in debates in the Norwegian media, where similar complaints are laid out by various actors on the right-wing side in Norway (see: Joachim Lund's comments in Aftenposten, May 23 2019; Francois, 2019: 95; Kimmel, 2018; Faye, 2016). The aims represented by 'This is Europa' can thus be understood as an expansion of such views.

Per also holds forth remigration as a positive aim, and sees several advantages with such a policy, if it is realised with more sensitivity. He underlines that his worries are mostly about the prospects of *demographic change*. At the same time, he also expresses a wish to avoid polarisation and what he sees as demonisation of other positions. He puts much weight on the emotional side of these aims, admitting that this landscape is complex and filled with much tension:

> When things get polarised then things become more either or… and I also mean that all these emotions that we have are very important to get a grip on… it is not just the other side that is full of hate. That's more how it is on both sides; negativity and frustration… also among the politically correct people, when they feel they are working against Nazism. …And it is also possible to find people who are quite Nazi like, so they can feel that they have things right and…. For example, the Resistance movement, they are important to fight…How to make an arena where we can meet and be able to see that we are despite everything, we are human, in a way…? (Per)

Per seems genuinely to wish for dialogue, to reduce the demonisation of the others 'on both sides' and to instead emphasise the *sharing of a common humanity*. He also points to the difficulties when strong emotions have resonance to the history of the Second World War:

> But there are such easy trigger words and questions that we are dealing with… traumas in history, the second world war and then everything is seen through those lenses… So how to

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[33] See: https://www.thisiseuropa.net/

avoid that? I wonder about that. But I believe it is possible. I see so much negativity among the right-wing side, thoughts about civil war and such things…. That is created by the emotional state that people are in… that everything is hopeless and… I think that if we had thought along different lines, then perhaps something could have been possible… to find good and positive solutions… (Per)

The 'tone' in my dialogues with Per is softer and somehow more exploratory than my conversations with Ulf and Gunnar. Whether this has to do with personality, or with Per's more humble and exploratory attitudes toward the themes we discuss, is hard to tell.

In Tina and Per's accounts, as we have seen, their expressions of a need to defend the nation, culture and the majority seem to be experienced as a struggle against negative generalisations, at times made by people of immigrant background and also by 'the politically correct'.

4.3.4 Defending the nation: The Nordic Resistance Movement, Nazism, race and controversies

At the hard end of the spectrum within the radical right in Norway, we find the Nordic Resistance Movement. Their celebration of Hitler and Nazism makes the resonance with ideologies, attitudes and events of the Second World War far from hidden; indeed, it is quite explicit. Here the wish for dialogue, the idea of a common humanity and for reducing polarisation referred to above, especially by Per, are strongly contrasted with clear Nazi references both in ideology and in a public image of military-style marches, the use of uniforms, the swastika-like aesthetics of the Tyr rune – as discussed above – and the explicit concern with race (Bjørgo and Gjelsvik, 2018; Vestel, 2016; The Nordic resistance Movement, 2016; Klungtveit 2020).

The NRM's version of its defence of the nation and also what it sees as the national 'race', is probably the most explicitly extreme and ideologically violent of all the networks that are represented among our informants. In the following, primarily the other informants' relationships with and ideological judgements of the NRM will be discussed. Through the analysis of those relations and reflections, the profiles of 'our, informants will also become clearer.

None of my informants speak from an inside position in the NRM, as fully in line with the organisation's guidelines where no members are allowed to talk with journalists or researchers without approval from the leadership in this strictly hierarchic organisation. Nevertheless, one informant – Arne – was fascinated by the organisation and attempted, at some point in time, to approach them for membership. This will be explored further below.

Most informants – with the one possible exception as mentioned above – tend to distance themselves, to varying degrees, from the NRM. Anita put it this way:

They are concerned with race and they want to have a white Scandinavia and that is something that I am not concerned with at all….There I feel they overstep a limit. But I can understand why they cross that limit…thinking that there is so much mixing of races, I almost said… and if it continues like this we, as a society, will be washed out, thinned out more and more, so that is a fact. But I do not at all feel that it is a solution, to make Scandinavia white...I understand the thought that if one has a problem with seeing that the 'pure race' is being annihilated or thinned out… but I really do not support them, absolutely not… (Anita)

Anita, like most of the other informants, here expresses some understanding of the reasons behind the emergence of NRM, which is understood as a reaction against the threat posed by the multicultural society. This view is even more clear when her father – who has had some contact with NRM associates – comments:

> I know some people in the Nordic Resistance Movement. I don't know them well – but some of them have been growing up in Islamic hotbeds like Drammen.[34] And they had been completely beaten up by these foreigners, simply grown up in such warlike tension, and then it is quite natural that they move around in the directions that NRM stands for. So it is the politics that are to blame. They have been squeezed out of their own areas! And it is especially true for our boys. They – the immigrants – they attack like a pack of hyenas, and then you do not have much to argue with. After some experiences like that, then you are so beaten up that you are completely ready for NRM! (laughs). Simply to survive! (Anita's father)

Tensions between various youth groups in the multicultural areas in Norway are well known (Vestel, 2004; Rosten, 2015). In some areas the relations between youths with majority backgrounds and young people with different immigrant backgrounds are peaceful and well-functioning, in other areas there are tensions. If animosity develops further, then the conflicts may well develop in the directions that Anita's father sketches out. For him the blame lies solely with the youth of immigrant backgrounds, in line with SIAN's and other groups' overall critique and negativity towards the multicultural situation. For Anita's father, rightly or wrongly, Drammen seems to have become something like a microcosm of what he fears is happening in society as a whole, where the immigrants are replacing and squeezing out the original majority. If such things happen, then violence – here represented by the NRM – is likely to follow, he seems to say.

Gunnar provides another example of the NRM being understood as a result of a situation where the politicians do not address the problems of the multicultural:

> NRM? …I do not wish to have anything to do with them. They are mad, and they may be forbidden, like they are in Finland. And there is some reason for that. It is a Swedish phenomenon.[35] In Sweden the situation has become so precarious and in the Nineties there were no serious actors who did anything about it… And society has changed from being a high-trust, homogenous, as in the 'Happy street' song[36], peaceful society, to being a society with lots of 'no go' zones, as they are often called on the right-wing side….I believe that Stefan Løfven (Sweden's present Prime Minister) and the politicians from earlier times, they are responsible for what is happening here. When you let a pressure cooker boil too long, then you get trouble…

> Then the debate was hijacked by revolutionary national socialists. And that is very sad for society and also for all these people who ended up in those groups, because they could easily have ended up in a much more moderate group. At the personal level it is so meaningless when you have some young people who get to a phase when they want to do something in life, and they have real concerns, and then they end up going down a rabbit hole of conspiracy theories. (Gunnar)

Again we see the combination of a critique against the NRM and what its stands for, with the view that its extremist messages are more or less the consequence of misguided immigration politics.

But how is the NRM seen by an actor who is closer to the group?

Arne is 26, dropped out of school at an early age, became a petty criminal, but is now trying to make a living after having spent some time in prison. He is now associated with SIAN, and is one of the informants who most clearly expressed an attraction toward the NRM. As discussed later, his political standpoints are somewhat ambivalent and his sympathy toward NRM has come and gone over time. For

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[34] Drammen is a larger city in Eastern Norway known for especially one high rise area suburb, named Fjell, with a large number of immigrants.
[35] The NRM has its origins in Sweden (Bjørgo and Gjelsnes, 2018)
[36] The song was originally called 'Lyckliga gatan', a well-known popular song from the sixties.

some period he sympathised with the ideology of NRM and was especially attracted to what he assumed were their *social qualities*. When we discuss his relations with NRM and the theme of immigration at the time when he was most strongly positive towards their position and declaring himself to be a Nazi, he says:

> The thing is quite simple… You hate what you don't like. And you want to get rid of what you do not like. And that is the foundational point for NRM, we want to get rid of all those who do not have a part in society. Those who do not come from here. Of course one could ask who do you mean is Norwegian enough then? Is it those with Norwegian parents? Those that are born in Norway? And then I said just simply… if their parents do not have their origins in Norway, then they have nothing to do in this country. It is that simple, and that is how I mean it should be done… (Arne)

Again we see an extremely dualistic view of the world: 'Those who do not come from here' are completely split from the 'we group', the true Norwegians who NMR define as having at least three Norwegian-born generations behind them. It is the 'white' versus the' black', in the sense of any immigrant background.

How does he relate to the idea of the NRM's wish for a white Scandinavia, I ask. Arne continues:

> Arne: It is more of a cleansing. Everyone without a Nordic origin is to get out …

> Viggo: But why? Or… what is the point of it?

> Arne: They are not from here. This is our country. We do not have a large country but we mean that the country is a lot better without these people, because they bring their culture. A culture we don't need at all.

The statements are clear. The country should be cleansed of immigrants and people who do not have their parental and long-term kinship in Norway. A crucial question is whether the NRM is ready to use violence to achieve its goal? Arne says:

> Yes, that is very clear. They now seem to have more members who are becoming activists. They wish for more violent acts. I have watched lots of videos about things in Sweden and such things. It is like, no one shall dare to come in our way… If someone comes in our way, then we hit, we'll beat them. This is a fight that we are going to win … (Arne)

Here we get a glimpse of Arne's tendency – at this time – to romanticise violence, and to identify with the NRM clearly as his own 'we' group that will 'beat them' and which is 'going to win'. He also admits that the NRM's style, uniforms and banners are exciting, and expresses the wish that the NRM used the swastika rather than the Tyr rune. Regarding the latter suggestion, he adds that 'that is just me, though…', as if he recognises the problems there would be with the open use of a symbol that is so clearly associated with the atrocities of the Second World War.

Providing a contrast to Arne's attraction to and positive relations with NRM, is Tina. Tina – as mentioned above – declares herself to be a Nazi (as well as a 'fascist' and a 'hardcore nationalist'), and was reading Mein Kampf at the time of our interview. However, she utters the following tirade when I ask her what she thinks of the NRM:

> Tina: They are not innovative at all, they don't impress me, they are not thinking beings at all…they have nothing to say… I have tried to speak with them, to discuss Mein Kampf, and they have not got anything of what is written there. They are completely braindead, it is like talking to someone in *Høyre* [the traditional conservative party], it is nothing…. To me there are no differences because it is so predictable…they just say what they have been taught to say…they are not flexible in relating to the times we live in today. They have made Nazism stupid, made such a silly version of it and then they keep to it as a kind of confirmation that they are suppressed …and they feel so sorry for themselves and they are such a small and

tiny gang….and that's really it…I think they look like clowns…They can't dress, they can't talk, their stunts are completely unnuanced, they are completely predictable and boring…!

Viggo: …so you are not touched by … people who march in sync, military style, with uniforms and those things…?

Tina: Yes, I think that is nice. But they don't do that. Yes, they were uniformed and with banners and shirts and those extremely small ties, but I don't find that nice. A military parade has to be aesthetic, but they have no aesthetic sense… I would rather see film clips from Nazi Germany, I find them very aesthetic… and it is so very beautiful that film by Leni Riefenstahl…

Leni Riefenstahl (1925-2002) was a dancer, photographer and highly innovative filmmaker who made propaganda films for Hitler and the Third Reich. She is particularly known for grandiose scenes of Hitler's speeches, and enormous military marches with well-developed choreography, banners and ecstatic audiences (Riefenstahl 2009). We sense Tina's well-developed talent for irony and angry provocation in her characteristics when she contrasts the physical and intellectual characteristics of the NRM with the captivating aesthetics she perceives in the films of Riefenstahl. She clearly sees herself having a better understanding of Nazism, and grasp of the whole situation than the NRM, tending to associate herself more with an *intellectual elite*. This becomes clear when she strives to clarify her position:

If one supports a natural hierarchy and one is pro-socialism, then it is fascism. Or is it not?…Isn't it those things that fascism consists of? Am I not a fascist, Viggo? …I believe that, in Nazism, Hitler decided everything. I do not really know how I would have done it all different, but I know at least that there are *two types of human beings*. There are the people who just need to have a job, and who just need an ultimately comfortable and secure family life, and that is the masses… Most people are just *worker ants*, and those who are worker ants should not have a bad life, a cruel life, just because they are worker ants. They are the foundation of a nation.

Then you have the people who have got something more, and they are very few… Some will have more interest in learning and a better ability to learn, others won't have time, or have other types of gifts, and then it is completely wrong when they are not interested in learning. That is a problem. So to sum up, *those who know the most should decide*. Therefore I believe that the Greek democracy was quite ok. It is fascism, the Greek democracy…So no matter what, you cannot have a system for all, because there are two types of human beings, and that is the two foundational types… (Tina)

Tina repeatedly refers to Ancient Greek democracy that in a positive sense she sees as fascist because it largely consisted of what she assumes to have been 'reasonable' old men, even if it excluded women and slaves. This ideal is acclaimed by Tina, although she ideally sees herself as part of the deciding elite, as well as refusing the traditional female role of being primarily concerned with childrearing and the home. Along these lines she also demands her right to 'date blacks' as she puts it, and also points to Lilith Keogh, an 'enfant terrible' of Norwegian right wingers, who also has strongly similar views.[37] Among the usually very traditional right-wing milieus, such controversial gender practices have created much negative reaction toward both Keogh and Tina. The issue of gender will be discussed later. Sufficient to say here is that the NRM is extremely conservative regarding these themes.

Another informant who views the NRM in slightly more positive terms is Ulf, who is associated with the Alliance and ShP. He says:

We in the Alliance do not have contact with them formally or officially. But I have talked with some members, and at times, when we have public presentations then they

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[37] See for example the episode of Keogh's vblog: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fs54NSC8BI4

approach us…We do not turn them away and we have a chat. I believe they appreciate that, because they have no others to talk to…They understand that we take many of their concerns seriously. We share some of their worries, but we have very different methods and ways of doing things. We also have a quite different analysis of the world situation than them, but we *share some concrete worries regarding our wish to preserve people and nation and tradition and the wish for an ethnically homogenous society*…The NRM, as I see it, wants a kind of ethnically white North-Korea! I think what they stand for is too synthetic once more. They are a product of the modern world. That model of society is too synthetic. (Ulf)

We remember Ulf's more spiritual arguments for an ethnopluralism inspired by Traditionalism along the lines of Julius Evola. He here applies the critique against the 'modern world' in his relationship with the NRM, which he views as more on the side of the 'synthetic' and the 'modern' – using the terminology from Rødal's article – than the pre-modern and organic that reflects Ulf's ideological ideals.

Nevertheless, Ulf and the Alliance, are to some extent open to some contact with the NRM, as they are held to share at least some of the concerns regarding immigration and the wish for a more homogenous society. This is also in line with the Alliance's leader, Lysglimt, who admits some contact with the NRM, although in general this is an organisation that almost no political actors want to be associated with, even those on the radical right.

A recent example of the radical – and also more moderate – right wing wanting to distance themselves from the NRM is the FPU expulsion of a former NRM member. A group within the youth organisation of the Progress party (Fremskrittspartiets Ungdom, abbreviated FPU), found out that one of their young leaders had been an active member of the Swedish branch of NRM for a period in 2018. He was immediately removed as an FPU leader. However, after he convinced the FPU that he had left NRM, and was repentant, he was allowed to re-join the organisation. Anne (21), one of the FPU members who knows the case very well comments on the situation:

My impression is that he may not have had a good network around him, and that he maybe felt a little bit alone in the world. He also had little money. And then there is someone who invites you with open arms, like the NRM. I have heard that he really regrets it today…And remember there are Norwegians, Danes and Swedes who leave their homes to fight for IS in Syria. And they are very often people who have felt excluded. And that underlines our responsibility as a society, and how much that feeling of exclusion means. Just look at Breivik. If you look at what is known from his journals then it becomes clear how the system had let him down as he grew up. And even if that is no excuse for anything, then it shows clearly that there are many people who do things like that, and that they have had a bad childhood or have had bad experiences that shape their opinions. (Anne)

All the three FPU informants express an understanding for how easy it is to 'do something stupid', especially when you are young and perhaps insecure, have little money and feel excluded. They even see the situation as similar on the Muslim side for youths who go to Syria to fight for IS. Even if the viewpoints and actions of the young FPU members regarding the former NRM member may be seen as both generous and reasonable, the example also underlines the stigma of having any contact with the NRM among conventional political parties in Norway, even a moderately right wing oriented one such as the Progress Party.

The NRM associates must be seen as the most extreme among our informants, in so far as they emphasise the potential member's willingness to use violence, and also that the NRM's overall attempt to defend the nation rests on its declared Nazi sympathies and the appropriation of Hitler's ideological standpoints. What is also clear is that several of the other actors and networks in the right-wing landscape tend to distance themselves from the NRM, with some exceptions. The world view of the

NRM, as we have seen, is emphatically dualistic, clearly matching Griffin's conceptualisation of 'splitting'.

4.3.5 Defending the nation: The uniqueness of ethnic identity versus an advertisement from Scandinavian Airlines

Our next example shows several aspects of the process of meaning-making from a radical right-wing standpoint related to the need to defend the nation – Norwegianness, culture and cultural markers, through an analysis of two informants' reactions to a very recent case regarding advertising.

On February 11, 2020, the airline company, Scandinavian Airlines (SAS), released a short – 2.43 minutes long – English-language advertising film aimed at getting people to travel on its planes.[38] The film made several statements about Scandinavian identity. Here certain objects, held to be markers of Scandinavian identity, were said to have their origins, not in Scandinavia, but in other countries. The original film evoked strong protests on the very day that it was released.

In response to these reactions, the following day SAS published what seems to be a moderated, clearer and shortened version of the film, this time 0.46 minutes long[39]. This second version starts with the question:

> Voice: 'What is truly Scandinavian? The answer is: absolutely nothing. Everything is copied.'

> A voice asks: 'Our democracy?[40]' A voice answers: 'Credit goes to Greece'.

> A Dane asks: 'What about rye bread?[41] (in Danish)' Answer: 'It's Turkish'.

> A Swede says: 'Midtsommarstången?[42] (In Swedish)' Answer: 'It is German'.

> A young boy with pink dyed hair says: 'Even the Danish isn't Danish (showing Danish pastry)[43]'. Answer: 'It's from Austria'.

> Voice: 'What about the pride of Norway?' (shows a paper clip) Answer: 'The paper clip was actually invented by an American[44]'.

> Voice: 'Just take everything we like on our trips abroad, adjust it a little bit, and voilà, it's a unique Scandinavian thing. In a way Scandinavia was brought here, piece by piece, by everyday people. (A board with the words 'We are travellers' is shown) We can't wait to see what beautiful things people will bring home next'. A bright SAS logo then appears on the screen.

The video sparked series of angry reactions. My informant, Gunnar, with whom I still had some contact at the time, pointed to an article published by Identitarian sympathiser, Tore Rasmussen, in one of the most used of the Norwegian right-wing digital media – Resett. Here Rasmussen comments on the

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[38] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ShfsBPrNcTI

[39] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ijhh5J48X9k

[40] The Scandinavian countries are often held to be especially strong bearers of democracy, and the roots of democratic practices are also associated to the times of the Vikings when the peasants met in the so called 'Tings' to discuss and decide societal issues.

[41] A dark bread made mostly from rye, considered to be especially Danish.

[42] A several meters high pole erected in the midst of summer – it is also called the Maypole – decorated with a ring of flowers in the top, around which people dance. Considered to be a central Swedish custom.

[43] As seen in its English name, Danish pastry is strongly associated with Denmark. In Danish, it is called 'wienerbrød' – literally meaning 'bread from Vienna' – thus pointing also to its Austrian connection.

[44] The paper clip is claimed to have been invented in Norway.

advertisement in the article entitled 'Why did SAS believe they had made a good advertisement?'.[45] Rasmussen writes that: 'The fact that they believed that this was a good idea, shows how much the elites have distanced themselves from the people, and how mainstream ethnomasochism has become in the West'.

'Ethnomasochism' is, as mentioned, a concept used by – among others – the French right-wing philosopher, Guillaume Faye, and denotes the tendency among Europeans to dismiss their Europeanness as something negative and not deserving positive support (Francois, 2019: 95; Faye, 2016). Faye is further presented in another recent article by Rasmussen (see below).

Rasmussen also quotes a publication by another central right-wing theorist Alain de Benoist, 'Manifesto for a European renaissance' (Benoist and Champetier 2012). He writes that Benoist: '…tracks the origin of the thought that humans in their fundamental form are alike. He says one can find the seed of many of the ideas ordinary today in Christianity and that universalism is one of these.' [46]

Here the idea of *universalism* is held to reflect a dismissal of human diversity and therefore the uniqueness of each culture or people. Rasmussen continues to quote Benoist:

> In this perspective the world's multiplicity is a hindrance, and everything that make humans different is seen as accidental or contingent, outdated or even dangerous. To the degree modernity not only is a set of ideas, but also a way of action, it tries with all thinkable means to dig the individuals away from their roots, to dig them out of their community, to make them submissive to a universal association…We have always defended the genuine multiplicity: The uniqueness of the peoples, the uniqueness of cultures, the difference of the sexes – all differences that today are denied in an increasing degree by the political universalism, defined as the idea that all humans are alike, all cultures are alike – what I call the *'indifferentialist'* ideology. [47]

What have these thoughts to do with the SAS advertisement, one may ask?

The answer is, first, that the video seemed to reduce Scandinavian identity to a list of what have tended to be seen as original Scandinavian products, while revealing that they actually originate from somewhere else. As Gunnar previously said: Norwegian culture is so much more. The result as articulated in the conclusion of the film is that *the truly Scandinavian does not exist*. This is seen as a highly provocative statement that for some is perceived as offensive, as it claims that a unique Scandinavian identity does not exist because it is made up from external elements. The video seems to 'peel away their identity', so to speak, finely resonating with Anita's father's perception, cited earlier.

Here one could also argue that people's identity is not necessarily threatened by the fact that many objects or phenomena that one sees as markers of a certain identity, have at one point in time been imported. It is perfectly possible through use and customs to integrate things into highly revered markers of identity. This underlines that identity is something that evolves and changes over time, while at the same time having a strong continuity.

An example of something taken from outside but made distinctively Norwegian, is the *Hardanger fiddle,* which is the flagship instrument in Norwegian folk music. Assumed to have been used in Norway since the 17th century, this is a highly decorated and adapted violin, with a layer of resonating strings. It is a marker of an important difference in Norwegian (folk) culture, and is often seen as a marker of

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[45] Hvorfor trodde SAS at de hadde laget god reklame? Published on Resett 18.03.2020: https://resett.no/2020/02/18/hvorfor-trodde-sas-at-de-hadde-laget-god-reklame/, all quotes are translated by Vestel.

[46] (Hvorfor trodde SAS at de hadde laget god reklame? Tore Rasmussen published on Resett 18.03.2020)

[47] (Benoist quoted in Rasmussen 2020, downloaded from https://resett.no/2020/02/18/hvorfor-trodde-sas-at-de-hadde-laget-god-reklame/)

something that is typically Norwegian[48]. Despite it being obvious that it was developed from the imported conventional violin, it surely is a well-recognised marker of Norwegian identity for most Norwegians.

In contrast to such uniqueness, the video emphasises what humans have in common as opposed to what makes them different.

The strong reactions against the advertisement are completely in line with Rasmussen's references to Faye and Benoist who both defend and celebrate the different, and dismiss the similar. Benoist complains of the dismissal of difference in what he terms the 'indifferentialist' ideology.

This touches a core idea in the overall landscape of the new right, where the *differences and the uniqueness of peoples and cultures are strongly idealised/emphasised as the very centre-point of orientation.* This also reverberates in Anita's introductory remarks, where she states that 'identity has become the next new thing', and also expresses her celebration of Trump, in so far as he is seen as giving weight to 'difference' instead of similarity.

In the sense that identity is what makes one person, a group of people, or an ethnic group different or even unique – as Benoist and Faye would put it – and marks the borders versus 'others', the SAS advertisement comes into direct conflict with the core message of the new radical right and their cult of the unique and different.

The importance of identity - that is of difference – is, of course, also mirrored in the very concept of the Identitarian, and in the idea of ethnopluralism where each culture or ethnic group is encouraged to cultivate, practice and celebrate their own ways, attitudes, cosmology and aesthetics in the area and arenas more or less separated from each other.

The controversies around the SAS advertisement must therefore be seen as one more example of how right-wing radicals – like Gunnar and also Rasmussen – feel provoked. It highlights why they feel the need to engage in some sort of defence when the very uniqueness of the identity of the nation, culture and history, are challenged by actors that instead put weight on universalism, similarities and 'what we have in common'.

Our next question is then: *How did the informants arrive at their political positions?* What were their motives? What was the nature of their trajectories into these radical right-wing political waters? How did they change directions?

4.4 Trajectories and motivations – paths toward and paths away from radical positions

The trajectories into, and at times out of, a radical position show large variations among our informants. For some it seems relatively clear how it happened; for others it is not so clear. How much we know about their trajectories also varies between informants. Let us start with Anita who had not been especially interested in politics as she grew up, but came to join SIAN after she, in common with several others, saw a large influx of refugees in around 2015:

> It was during the refugee crisis where they showed more and more refugees on their way... and all the boats that came... I just heard what people were thinking… what was said in the media... who are these refugees? So many came in the beginning... I talked a lot with my father about it... what is it that is really happening? When I saw that this was not only a passing problem, but that it is likely to continue over many years to come... and at that time there were so many terror attacks...! It was so many things together and...who are these

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people who come, where do they come to settle, from which countries do they come...? (Anita)

I interject that many said it was mostly people in need that came:

> Yes, that was also what I thought in the beginning, that now it must be so really bad down there when people start to emigrate to Europe in such big numbers. But then I got to know more about the human traffickers and wow, suddenly it was revealed that it was a business ... on a much larger scale than it has ever been before... (Anita)

Anita was overwhelmed by the situation. She clearly was not without empathy for the refugees at the start, but she also got the feeling that something was wrong, amplified by the terrorism that was shattering Europe. She also noticed a series of immigration-critical statements expressed by Progress party member Sylvi Listhaug, the Minister of Immigration and Integration at the time (2015-2018).[49] For example, among her repertoire of statements, Listhaug has: protested against the reduced use of pork in public institutions because of the increased number of Muslims in Norway; criticised what she has termed the 'tyranny of kindness' in the debate about immigration; stated that Jesus would have helped the immigrants in the areas where they come from; that immigrants cannot be carried on a 'golden chair' into the country; criticised a well-known Christian politician for 'licking the imams on their backs'; criticised the Labour Party for implying that the rights of terrorists are more important than the security of the nation, and so on .[50]

Many people with more positive views on immigration saw Listhaug's statements as very problematic and she was the target of much critique. Anita, on the contrary, saw Listhaug as someone who was able to express what she herself, and many others felt, especially regarding the wave of refugees. Anita then participated in a demonstration in support of Listhaug. She seems to have felt that Listhaug was pointing out the most important problems with the refugees. Anita remarks:

> And the smugglers were earning lots of money from them. On the TV we saw a couple who came with their children, they did not escape from war and they said things like 'we are not going to return because we have sold everything we owned just to get a better life here'. You see what I mean, there were so many other people than the refugees who escaped from war. Then I understood that this was big business. (Anita)

Anita searched the internet together with her father who soon came to share his daughter's worries. They both became members of SIAN:

> My dad and I discussed a lot, he was very much into Facebook and started to discuss, then I jumped in and he started to search for organisations… he had lots of time because he had been sick for 4-5 years and did not have a job… so just naturally he entered the pages of SIAN and then it was done… and I joined them too… (Anita)

But Anita's entrance as an activist in SIAN was also an *important social event*, on the personal level:

> You may say that it was a very large world that opened up, after me being quite ignorant for many years… I was very nervous when I first made contact with SIAN…. Before I started to get active, *I was no one, but then when I started to become more active, I became someone!* But I felt it was good that I was not very well acquainted with the milieu, and that it was good that I was just an ordinary girl who supported SIAN… (Anita)

Thus, for Anita and her father, the trajectories into radical right-wing standpoints seemed to have been shaped by the feeling of something overwhelming and threatening created by the large wave of

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[49] Listhaug's autobiography bears the title 'Where others do not dare to speak' (2018).
[50] All quotes from https://www.nrk.no/norge/her-er-11-listhaug-utspill-som-har-satt-fyr-pa-norge-1.13958713, published 14.03. 2018)

refugees. They also tended to see it as a bad thing that people who just wanted to get a better life were mixing with the refugees. But whether refugees or economic migrants, the immigrants were seen as connected with criminals and the slyness of people traffickers. In addition, the fear of terrorism – as indisputably conducted by extreme Islamists, such as Al Qaeda – also translated into a feeling that the religion of Islam was a major part of these threats.

For Odd (43) the wave of refugees that came in 2015 was also an important point in his journey toward a radical position. However, he had started in that direction much earlier, and in a much slower and more low-key manner. He says:

> I was liberal and leftist-oriented as I grew up. We moved to the East side of Oslo – to Furulia – to be able to buy a bigger flat. In 2004 Furulia was a nice place, with an ok mixture of people, I thought. Not many immigrants in our stairwell. I started then to think that our immigration policies perhaps were a little bit too liberal… But then in 2011, we moved to another part, to Steinbakken in the same city, with even more immigrants. We thought nevertheless that that will also work out well. But every time some Norwegians moved out, some immigrants moved in.

> So we took part in that development all the way. And you sort of get a little uneasy through it. I started to ask: where will this end? What will Norway be in a hundred years, to put it that way?... Regarding Muslims, it is my impression that they feel they have lots of time, so to speak. I just felt that this exchange was going on. I still voted socialist and even for the reds. The basic thought about sharing goods was fine… And I have to say I am not against immigrants. We have immigrants where I live now in our neighbourhood. Many mixed marriages. My children are playing with immigrant children, and I have nothing against it.

> But it really took off in 2015, when all the refugees came to Europe. It really made me feel deprogrammed, that I had been sort of brainwashed earlier on. (Odd)

As in Anita and her father's case, how Odd perceived the immigrant wave of 2015 was important. He then started to get into contact with more radical groups. He even 'had a sniff at the Nordic Resistance Movement', as he put it, but strongly condemns them as Nazi, and ended up in the Independence party which has an explicit aim of starting remigration.

> So I was associated with the Democrats in 2015.[51] I did not take much initiative, but I felt that they were too low key, they did not do much. Then I got more interested in the Alliance, I voted for them. But then Lysglimt came with all his famous talks, about Holocaust and so on. And that became just too much! He does it to create fuss and attention and in doing that he is clever. But it just was too much. Many people reacted to it. And some of them just broke away, and started the Independence party (ShP). I feel that is a party where to a greater extent I belong. (Odd)

In Odd's story one gets the impression of him being quite calm, originally leftist-oriented, not especially against immigrants – he also has several friends of immigrant background. However, he experienced that the 'Norwegians' in the places where he lived were increasingly being replaced by immigrants. He seems quite far from wishing 'purity', and Lysglimt's utterances were important impulses that moved him away from the Alliance. Then, when the wave came in 2015, he ended up in the more moderate Independence party.

For Gunnar, his start was in a more rough and violent milieu. He had a family member who was into the radical right, and in the 1990s when Gunnar was 13, he was 'soaked into it' as he said. Gunnar describes this family member as a cool guy who was dressing tough, having lots of style and playing white power music, that originated in Sweden 'where things were more professional'. He became a 'role model' for

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[51] The Democrats was another immigration critical political party placed to the right of the Progress Party.

Gunnar. The family member was in jail several times 'because of fighting and all these things', and was associated with the groups 'Blood and Honour' and 'Vigrid'.[52] 'They were more explicitly national-socialist, self-declared, just like the NRM is today…', as Gunnar describes them. There was only one problem:

> In the town where I lived, there were no problems with immigrants, there was no such situations of crime that you find in Norway today… (…) There were the A-gang and the B-gang[53], so…you had sort of Pakistani gangs who were shooting at each other in the capital, so there were always good reasons. But at that time, in the nineties, there was more focus upon conspiracy theories based on Jewish world domination… it was the Jews. That is a little funny, because there are perhaps only 600 Jews in Norway… (Gunnar)

Gunnar and his friends in these more hardcore milieus expected a race war to start:

> We were very militant, we expected that the war should start at any minute, and people that do not think like you are tending to be seen as 'civilians', then. While people in these groups are more like soldiers. And there were lots of weapons in the national socialist groups in Norway at that time, because many of them were criminals, so they had access and close contact with traditional criminals. Lots of guns and stuff… It was very macho. (…) There was at least a romanticism around violence. In many songs of the white power music there are lines that say that the traitors should hang. It is not uncommon. (…) My personal impression is that it was mostly petty criminal rebels who ended up in Blitz[54] or their right-wing counterparts. (Gunnar)

But the milieu evolved in a more extremist direction, and Gunnar, after some time, got out of the milieu and moved to another city.

> …but then it became too militant, and the security police smashed it, and some people got prisoned, so…and I became more moderate. (…) I moved to another city and got new friends… and I never had problems with the old milieu, I think it just dissolved…No attempts at revenge or anything, there was quite a lot of movement in the milieus at that time… (Gunnar)

After some years while he was more moderate, as he describes it, Gunnar discovered the Identitarians around 2015. An important source of information for him was a series of talks by Martin Sellner, on YouTube:

> Then I watched all his English language series on YouTube. So, ok, he distances himself from National socialism, that seem genuine, they are non-violent, they want to change the meta-political landscape, that seemed reasonable and moderate, then, even if they are quite edgy to get media attention. So during the election in the US Sellner made this series, then, where he was talking about meta-politics and things like that. When I saw it I thought this seemed good. And, yes… (Gunnar)

The outcome was that Gunnar became more explicitly associated with the Identitarians.

Tina's story is different. She was very clever at school and, at times, she acted as a teacher for her classmates. She grew up in a relatively rough milieu on the inner East side of Oslo, with crime, drugs and mentally unstable people in her neighbourhood, she tells me, and points to this as a background for her early interest in martial arts. But as she grew up she was increasingly frustrated at school, and felt there were so many questions that she did not get a reasonable answer to. She says:

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[52] Two well-known Neo-Nazi groups in Norway at that time.

[53] Youth gangs of immigrant, mostly Pakistani, background, very well-known from the Oslo newspapers.

[54] Blitz is the name of a radical left wing associated squat situated in the centre of Oslo, that for several years has been seen as a core milieu for the antifa and anarchists.

> You understand that there is so much information that you do not get through conventional channels…you feel there are missing links… I always felt that during my college years… I asked very much in the history lessons, and I never got good answers… very meagre… if you are curious and really want to know things… I got my political standpoints during my youth. But that was because I grew up in a milieu where I had to protect myself… even if I was never 'bullied'… (…) … everyone in that milieu had to protect themselves. In any centre in a city there are such milieus. That is why the best martial arts people come from very urban areas…they grow up with lots of noise around them, lots of fights… (Tina)

From her descriptions of the milieu in which she grew up, it is possible to interpret her later political position, where being strong and also being a part of an elite was important, as having received important impulses from that milieu. She became engaged in politics quite early, it seems. She mentions that her mother's feminist attitudes may have stimulated this. Socialism, feminism and the struggle for a society more in tune with ecological principles were important in her early political development. But she found that they did not achieve results:

> … so there was a lot of politics, for 1-2 years. I was leading the pupils' council at school, both in primary school and at college, I took part in boards, I was also a youth representative in the council of the local municipality. But it was just boring, because for most youth it was mostly about getting pizza! Then I was active in different socialist organisations. I went on courses on 'bullying' for girls. I participated in an ecological youth organisation, until I finally discovered that as long as there are humans, taking care of the environment would never succeed. (Tina)

At this point Tina became disappointed. Was it because her fellow pupils seemed so little engaged? Or that she saw that the promises that the political organisations she was involved with did not lead to anything? Whatever the answers, frustration was building up and she became heavily depressed:

> Then I became a misanthrope. But I was inactive in the two years before I met my master. I had one year of severe depression when I was 17. In my teens I was probably just under-stimulated. But I had some hope about finding someone to talk to in the future. I think it was when I met my boyfriend, and I found out that he was hopeless too. It was then that I could not stand anything anymore. And when I was depressed, people liked me better, I was more socially accepted than earlier, when I was just challenging them all the time…that is the way I am when I am healthy and sound…they like me better when I am weak… (Tina)

Unfortunately it is unclear exactly which questions she struggled with. My impression of Tina is that she is very engaged and may be very insistent, highly energetic, provocative, ironic and at times bordering on aggressive in her ways of being. It is not unlikely that these ways of being may be a little too much for some of her social surroundings. At this point, when she was falling into a deep depression, she found the one she terms 'her master' – a relationship she will not say much about – but he seems to have been some sort of mentor, therapist or even 'guru' who guided her to a better life. At this point her political positions manifested in a more radical direction. She got in contact with the Alliance:

> I just started to hang out with them. They picked me up on Twitter because I was a Trump supporter, so we thought it could be fun if we could do something politically together. I was fascinated with the Pepe meme[55], which is a concept that has been very much watered down nowadays. I got support from the guys in those milieus, and then I saw the pictures by Lilith Keogh, which I liked… (Tina)

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[55] Pepe is the name of a cartoon figure much used as a meme in the 4Chan forum of a green frog who through a complex story has become a symbol of right wing attitudes (Beran 2019:114-15)

I ask her about the relationship between the Alliance and the alt right, the latter being a milieu that she also had had some contact with via the net:

> The alt right and the Alliance are very much the same thing… I would say that alt right is Nazism, in fact, and perhaps Identitarian… it is just Nazism with hatred against Muslims in their trunks. They want to build a white Nordic area…yes, a white Europe, white as things can be, colonial rule and of course the nuclear family, against abortion and the whole package… (Tina)

But Tina did not accept the traditional gender role that these milieus were promoting, and several conflicts emerged. This will be discussed in more detail below. She had some contact with the Alliance, and that network still seems to be the actor in the right-wing landscape that she has the closest relationship with, even if she is critical of it on several points.

For Arne his trajectory into the radical right-wing landscape is very different from Tina's. Arne – who is now a SIAN associate – is the informant who had had the strongest attraction to the NRM. He recounts his childhood:

> I grew up in a rich municipality and there it was very calm. It was a nice childhood, everyone was Norwegian and one had good areas around oneself, no asylum centres …so things were quite nice. But then we moved to another city and there was an asylum reception centre close by. Then we saw the foreigners on public transport and such things. In 2010 I noticed more of those things. Many places got their mosques. Then I got the feeling …to put it a little extreme… that we had become vandalised and that they were taking over the whole city…. (Arne)

He says that seven bicycles of his were stolen while he was growing up in that city, and assumes the thefts were by some asylum seekers. He was also influenced by his parents' divorce. He felt excluded, developed mental problems and also became involved in petty crime:

> Yes it was very difficult for me when my parents divorced, that is true. I have been a little in and out of psychiatric care because of that. I have grown up with only my mother and three brothers. My father remarried someone from a different country. That might have been the reason why I started to be involved in crime, because one feels perhaps a little displaced by society… I cannot really find my place… (Arne)

Arne dropped out of compulsory schooling, and received disability benefits, which meant that he had very little money. This became the start of his criminal career, and also of his problematic relationship with people of immigrant backgrounds:

> It started quite gradually when I got those disability benefits. I had very little income and when one is in town one meets many different cultures and becomes perhaps a little aggressive because others have *a better car and such things, so one feels envy*. Then I went into some right-wing extreme milieus, read about the foreigners who get free driving licences, help with this and that, money here and there. Then I go on welfare and try to get a little furniture. And you get 'no, no, no' from them. So crime became a reality that was easy to slip into because there are no consequences and you have nothing to lose. And I feel that I have tackled the time in jail quite well, also given the fact that no one came to visit me. But at the same time that wasn't the normal, you know… (Arne)

He had few friends as he grew up and the fact that no one visited him in the jail underlines his despair:

> In my childhood I did not have many friends. Nowadays I have some, but they are quite mixed. Some are quite criminal, some are more stable, some are gays and some dislike very much the kind of work I am doing (about politics). So I try to find a way of getting them to understand, but some won't understand, and that is difficult. (…) One tends to give up, you

In other words, for Arne the importance of the ideology of the NRM seems to have shrunk considerably. Instead it was clearly extra-ideological matters that seemed to be the real attraction; the wish for community. But nowadays, he seems to get this from his association with SIAN.

In Ulf's ecological-metaphysical views, Traditionalism was an important ideological framework, as it was for his work in the Alliance. Ulf describes a background where both the rural world of farming and also the super-modern high-tech world of the online *gaming milieu* seem to have been important for his political radicalism:

> I grew up on a farm very close to nature, and that caused me to have a strong anchorage, and love for nature and the interrelations between cultivated nature and non-cultivated nature. I see in the time since then that I have got a more developed conceptual apparatus, implying a more organic view on things, and on society. I see things as going in circles, things that have a growing phase, then a mature phase, then entropy, and also that things are returning back to nature and rot, then into new life again. This organic approach has also made me have sympathy for what you may call 'a natural order'. The thought of a natural order, and about man's place in the cosmos, and all those things, that are in sharp contrast with the modern, mechanical, progressive and linear way of looking at the history of man… (…) You might say that I think that modern society has gone too far in some directions, and that *I see myself as a part of its immune system* or that counter reaction. That is the way I see myself in that cosmic play. (Ulf)

For Ulf, as we have seen, immigration is a disturbance that creates imbalance in the ideal development of a healthy society. His background from growing up on a farm, and his orientation towards the organic and the circular rhythms of the seasons – seem to have been important impulses for the development of his political views. But he also points to a quite different pool of inspirational impulses, in the shape of gaming.

> I also grew up with games. I participated in what you may call second-generation games, or third-generation, (…) I played in the nineties. For example when 9/11 happened, I came home from school to play, then we got that news, and that was the generation who grew up with internet, and with games, and we experienced that shift when one got access to enormous lots of information. (…) I was exposed to a lot of things that my parents didn't know about, a mess of things, some things that have proved to be true, some things that are just rubbish… conspiracy theories but also some conspiracy theories that have been shown to be quite substantial… (Ulf)

The access to technology in the shape of the relatively new internet, and also the fascinating world of video games, seems to have been of enormous importance and a crucial source of information as Ulf grew up. Here the *4Chan forum* emerged as especially important:

> There was so much that came via those gamer communities…. So there were formed communities, online, the early net societies (…) for example 4Chan came out of the gamer world, and ended up being a decisive political platform without censorship, that became completely decisive for *the election of Trump*. He had never been elected without that forum… Much of this started with the gamer-world… it was originally a forum about gaming. And who plays games? Yes, young boys. Mainly young white boys, and young Asian boys. These are a type of boys who are a little nerdy that at least in the early games were gaming very much. (Ulf)

As an arena for socialisation, the gaming milieus and the 4Chan forum seems to have played an important role in many respects. Here politics emerges as an important dimension:

> And from that milieu there were a lot of people who became grown-ups from the net because they used it so much. It went hand in hand, and from that milieu you have in a way

got much of the new right wing side, coming from a time when they were apolitical to becoming more political after a while. Many of the things that radicalised or that made many young people a little angry were when political correctness started to penetrate the game worlds, because the gamers were the last group to have politically correct attitudes. (Ulf)

These links do exist according to journalist Dale Beran, who has written a meticulously detailed book on the development of the gaming milieus, especially 4Chan and the heavy right-wing positions (Beran 2019). According to Beran – and supported by Ulf's statements – it was particularly *female feminist groups breaking into the boys' world of gaming* that elicited extreme reactions, giving rise to the development of problematic attitudes:

> … the 4Chan boys said things that were racist, non-egalitarian and so on… While these girls entered the gamers world many of the young boys, and perhaps all those who became a little older, they just had enough! And that you see through all the *memes* that they made. I will show you one that is typical. Here it is… (Ulf shows me a meme with Pepe, the green frog, that has become a central symbol for the radical right, speaking to a female figure. It says: 'Why did you force me to do this? I just wanted to play a video game…') She is what we call (…) an *angry social warrior*, you see. And when they started to enter this world, which is the last bubble that these boys had for themselves, and where they in a way could be free with their humour and all… with this typical teenage humour for boys, then they just had enough… (Ulf)

In other words, 4Chan developed into a radical right-wing forum, where extreme misogyny, racism and worse were also given an arena (Beran 2019). When Ulf some years later got into contact with the milieu around Lysglimt and the Alliance, his background as a gamer and 4Chan associate in complex ways seems to have been very important, as he himself believed.

Espen (23) speaks about the importance of 4Chan in which also The Norwegian Defence League (NDL) was active (Vestel 2016: 44-47; Bjørgo and Gjelsvik 2018). NDL started in 2010 as a sister organisation to the English Defence League (Pilkington, 2016). NDL claims that it is only against extreme Islamists, and not Islam in general. Its members present themselves as both anti-racists and anti-extremists, and as against violence. Nevertheless, their connections to EDL which has been associated with violence and large demonstrations, contributed to their categorisation as 'radical'. Espen followed their development while living in a small town in Eastern Norway:

> I started my political awakening when I was in Junior High school. I was quite 'unfiltered', I would say, and I used Facebook a lot. It is difficult to say exactly why I started to orient myself in a nationalist direction and was concerned with Norwegian identity… I have old communists in my family, and also others with lots of temperament, we have always discussed a lot at home. At some point I became very concerned with immigration, and had quite sharp opinions against Muslims. Then I discovered the Norwegian Defence League. I was not a member, but I sympathised with them, but that was before July 22, when Breivik did what he did. I was only 14. The English Defence League also had live streams on 4Chan, that I visited often. (Espen)

For Espen, as for many others, the terror attack by Breivik on 22 July 2011, was a turning point, where many of the right-wing milieus felt much under pressure and suspicion, as public opinion was so concerned with what had happened (Vestel, 2016). NDL was also suspected of having been in direct contact with Breivik, something it has strongly denied. Espen tells more about his attraction toward NDL:

> …I must admit that NDL was a bit exciting when I was that young, just 13, I think. And when I made contact with them I felt very well received. They really appreciated that that young persons wanted to become involved. I was young in mind, and you don't ask so many

critical questions at that age. I spoke with them on messenger on Facebook. NDL was very up and coming before July 22nd, I would say. But at that time I was very easily influenced. (…) But it was a typical echo chamber. And I liked to discuss things. So I did not get much out of it after a while. Then came July 22nd, and then I just went out of it. (Espen)

But the gaming milieus were also important in Espen's development. He continues:

I was heavily into gaming. The attitudes that were typical among the gamers were to the right. But there was lots of kidding, of course. About nationalism, the Second World War, the Third Reich, with memes around Hitler, and swastikas. There was lots of humour, but it probably was also *pulling people into directions so that they accept more incorrect standpoints then*. I believe that internet has meant a lot for my own orientation toward nationalistic values, and my interest in identity. Everything was pretty mixed, also with more serious things then. And also a little anti-feminism. (Espen)

I ask him if he still sees 4Chan as an important source for information and politics:

Yes, it has very much importance, I believe, and especially for young people. I use 4Chan a lot because there is news there, for example, if there is a terror attack, then you can see videos about it hours before it is presented on the ordinary media… and, so it happens very fast on 4Chan… And there are so many different people there. Lots of terror people are there also…[56] (Espen)

Espen then made contact with the Alliance. He appreciated the early meetings with Lysglimt. But soon he came to see the party as not sufficiently serious, and was also distancing himself from Lysglimt's more extreme utterances, as presented earlier. He then became a member of the ShP.

4.5 Gender relations - alternative sexualities, Islam and the nuclear family

Gender relations have long been a sensitive theme in discourse on immigration in European societies, and especially around the role and nature of Islam. Many see the cultural background of many immigrant groups as especially dominated by female suppression and values regarding gender that are fundamentally different from values and attitudes held to be salient in Western societies.

The paradox is that radical right-wing groups and networks are also widely known to promote very traditional attitudes regarding gender (Kjøstvedt 2013). A striking example is Neo-Nazi groups that regard the role of females as primarily to stay at home and to take care of children. This is represented in Norway by the national socialist Nordic Resistance Movement. However, several of the other groups and networks in Norway are accused, by some informants, of having very traditional and archaic views upon gender, especially the role of women.

This section explores the question: how do the informants associated with various radical right-wing milieus regard gender relations? In what ways are their views and attitudes related to their understanding of gender relations in immigrant groups?

One of the most controversial themes around gender relations in recent Europe is the phenomenon of *transgender*, that is where a person undertakes a transition from one gender to another. This is also related to theories around the 'queer', that is gender-related practices or imaginaries where the gender of the subject is non-binary, that is neither covered by a clear male nor a clear female identification, but rather in between. In Sweden this has been expressed in the promotion of the word 'hen', that is a construct that seeks to fuse or disturb the traditional words for the two genders 'han' (him, in Swedish

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[56] According to Beran also people who supported or even were involved with real terrorist actions as well as advertising both terror and suicide use 4Chan (Beran 2019: 116-122)

honom) and 'hun' (her, in Swedish hon). These themes have long been the subject of much public discussion, and radical right-wing associates have tended to be the more conservative.

But here, Anita seems to be an exception. She has known a transgender person since they both were a child, and has much understanding for such a situation. She also underlines that the current strong emphasis upon identity is also related to gender. She says:

> I have a lot of understanding for people who feel that they have been born into the wrong body. I know a person who feels that way… from when she was three years old, when she started to talk and have her own opinions, then she was a boy. She refused to wear girls' clothes, she behaved like a boy, and when it was carnival she would either be a dinosaur, Batman or Spiderman… And that was so strange because everybody around her, almost, were girls… so there was almost nothing around her that made her have those interests… She grew up and in her teens she started to dress in boys' clothes, cut her hair completely short, refused to use bikini top when she was on the beach… she didn't have much breasts, but anyhow… and at the end she came out and said that she was born in the wrong body. Then she was old enough to get hormone treatment. I have seen documentaries about people, both girls and boys who feel that they are born in the wrong body. But when it comes to this 'hen' gender that they speak of in Sweden…I think that society has made a mistake with placing us so far from each other, so that the boys like blue and tough things…and the girls…there should be something in between. (…) Can't we just have broader room for boys and girls? Gender roles that are not so stiff? (Anita)

Anita thus shows much empathy and understanding for the phenomenon of transgender practices. And both Anita and her father strongly underline that they are liberal regarding various 'alternative' sexualities, and emphasise that there are several gay men who are members of SIAN. Anita also mentions her interest in the American reality TV series the '*Kardashians'*, in which a male member of the family underwent a gender operation, which also mirrors her attitudes. I have reported similar attitudes among SIAN members in an earlier publication (Vestel, 2016:106). Here it turned out that several of SIAN's statements put together illustrated their positive standpoints regarding both gender relations such as homosexuality, lesbianism and feminism, and also freedom of speech, human rights, support for Israel and more. This appeared to be the very opposite of those values and attitudes that they assumed to be associated with Islam.

To Anita and her father, Islam is the central problem. Her father utters a strong statement regarding Muslim men:

> …those who rape our girls. It is to show muscles. They just sit and laugh about these Norwegian weaklings…they come from cultures where it is only family and clan that exist, sharia… but when they do these abuses, it is not only that they are just sex-hungry animals, it is also a way of saying that (smacks his hand in the table) 'It is us who are the bosses here!'. And like in Sweden, they laugh and scream, they put out things on YouTube where they write that 'you don't take care of your ladies', they just lack that respect…and that clashes totally with our society…(…) and you mustn't believe what some politicians say that it is only because they have gone through wars and that they are traumatised…*it is their identity, they are that way,* and until you understand that, you'll never get a clue about what is happening… (Anita's father)

Here, Anita's father presents a strongly stereotypical image of the male Muslim, heavily engaged in a power game where Western males are regarded as weaklings. Similar images are mentioned by several informants who point to the well-known example of what happened in front of Cologne Cathedral, and in several other German cities, on New Year's Eve in 2015 when several hundred young men, assumed

to be of Middle Eastern background, are said to have assaulted, raped and harassed a large number of young women.[57] Similar acts of group harassments are cited by Odd:

> And you have what is called 'Taharrush', an Egyptian word meaning group rape or something like that. It is a kind of game where the women are encircled by a group of men and then raped or harassed sexually. It is terrible. One may ask if women have any value at all, in the Middle East. I have read that in Pakistan 70 percent of the women in jail are rape victims. And they don't quit their culture even if they come to Norway. And there are also examples from Norway, women and young girls have been harassed sexually in the cities of Narvik and in Alta, but the refugees are not thrown out, they are just moved to other places. So they don't leave their own culture behind. It is just trouble. In Sweden they let in 100 000 each year, so there it is surely a replacement. (Odd)

Some of these events are also discussed in an article in Huffington Post where the author Alex Shams mentions that the phenomenon of group harassments – the confirmed meaning of the Arab word 'taharrush' – is found in a many cultural settings around the world, but that it is also far from an ordinary cultural practice in the Arab world.[58]

But a similar representation of the Muslim male is also found in reports of honour killings, such as the story of Swedish woman of Turkish-Kurdish background who was killed by her own father in 2002 (i.e. Wikan, 2008). There is no doubt that there have been such terrible incidents, but they have also resulted in the general demonisation of Muslims, especially of the Muslim male. The religious scholar Sophie Rose Arjana has, for example, written about what has been called the *'monsterising'* of Muslims, and here the idea of what we may call the *'Male Muslim Monster'* has been salient. [59]

In the quote from Anita's father we also register strong undertones of the fact that radical right-wing actors have long accused Western feminists of undermining the masculinity of Western males, by imprinting 'female' values, such as softness, non-aggression and egalitarian norms in young men. Such accusations are well known from both the ideologue called 'Fjordman' – Breivik's central source of inspiration – and from Breivik's own manifesto (i.e. Sætre 2013; Borchgrevink 2012).

For Anita, the critique of gender-related practices in Muslim milieus continues with her opinions about the hijab. She illustrates this by engaging in a discussion with an imagined Muslim girl:

> She explains that it has to do with her relationship with God and this and that…Then I think: How nice, and she says she has chosen it herself…Ok but what about the day when she will not use it anymore… is that ok for the family? Does she really have a choice? There are also very large differences within Muslim families. You have the girls who have chosen it and who take it off and on as they want, but you also have those that do not have that choice…and in the same family, it might be that the young girls that are unmarried, they take it off and on as they choose, but one of them who is married perhaps must have it on? (Anita)

Anita here shows that she admits some nuances, and that she admits that there are differences within Muslim families. This sense of nuance and the recognition of difference and variations is found in several of my conversations with Anita. But even if she has such attitudes, she also has a basic doubt about what the practices imply:

> … I mean it does not bother me what someone wears on their head, but I do not think it is right for the girls who do not have that choice. And when I go out to bars or cafès, there

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[57] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35231046
[58] See https://www.huffpost.com/entry/sexism-isnt-an-arab-cultural-practice_b_9022056?guccounter=1
[59] I.e. Al Jazeera, 31 Oct. 2019: https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/muslims-men-monsterising-racial-191030111111453.html

are rarely any Muslim girls there…not a single girl with hijab. That is not random and I think it is all too simple when they say 'no I do not enjoy drinking'…how is it then really? (Anita)

Arne also mentions the lack of liberalism towards gayness that he claims to have experienced in his encounters with what he assumes to have been Muslims:

I have become very hostile to Islam because they have a big hatred of homosexuals. If I am with a boy and I see Muslims looking at me, then I go into attack mode, "What is your problem?" You are touching a man, sort of… but in my religion it is permitted! (…) And I have been harassed, they scream "fucking gay!", such a gang of young boys. Especially in some areas, there are people who shout "goddam homos!". But I am quite hard in general, so I just say "Shut up, I do whatever I'd like whenever I want to. This is a free country!" (Arne)

Gunnar follows up when he claims that the accusations of negative attitudes toward gays on the right wing, is wrong, and that instead Islam is far worse:

The last example is the media's focus on the gays who are said to be threatened by so-called right-wing extremists, and they manage to find some Neo-Nazis in Germany to prove that. This has to be done against their better knowledge, and they try to convey the image that it is the right wingers who are the greatest threat to Jews and gays in Western Europe, or in Europe in general. And we know statistically that this is not so. The largest threat of harassment and violence against homosexuals and against Jews in Europe, comes from Islam, and not from the right-wing extremists. (Gunnar)

He also points out that gayness or even transgenders are not unusual in a well-known right-wing milieu in Norway:

You know that some writers in Norway's largest alternative media, *'Resett'*, are transgender. So just take a look at the hundreds of positive comments on the writings of Marie Zahler (a journalist in Resett) when she came out and said that she had done a gender change, she shifted from male to female. So much for the antigay attitudes on the right-wing side in Norway! (Gunnar)

Gunnar further claims that there is a tendency – even among feminists – to prefer traditional gender roles. Here he echoes Anita's father's complaints that Norwegian males are seen as weaklings and 'feminine':

You see Pakistanis usually marry other Pakistanis, because they don't want to marry a feminist, atheist Norwegian woman. They want a religious, conservative Muslim woman! I understand it very well. *I would have done the same thing if I was a Muslim.* And we also see that – if we return to the nuclear family – we see that the Norwegian feminist women do not want feminine men. On the contrary you see that female feminists, atheists, they often seek the masculine, not least in some marriages where they find African men. And you have Norwegian men who find themselves marrying Thai women. That is because Norwegian men want, obviously traditional women with traditional views on the family. And in the end, Norwegian women wish also for the more macho man. (Gunnar)

From these arguments it is clear that Gunnar approves of the more traditional gender roles, with some modifications, and the traditional nuclear family. Here – as he also remarks himself – he has much in common with what he sees as more traditionally oriented male Muslims. Against such a background, two actors usually assumed to be opposites and even antagonists, in Gunnar's views *meet each other in the acclamation of conservative gender roles*. Gunnar describes his ideal situation regarding gender:

I support equal rights, but I don't want women in the military service, and no female priests, no divisions into quotas. We should stimulate them financially and morally to be at home with the kids. It is good to build up a strong nuclear family as a core cultural feature. It would have been better, if it were a value in society and from the elite that men should be masculine and women should be feminine, that would be good, but nowadays, the cultural elite pushes the opposite. That men should show emotions and that women should be strong. And of course you can have strong women who are also feminine, but… The Viking women were strong, but they were not feminist… (Gunnar)

Ulf seems to have a similar ideal:

I see a difference between gender roles and gender relations. Gender relations are given by nature. Gender roles are a social expression, a social construction that have the natural gender relations as a starting point. That means that there are some things that men are better equipped to do, and some things that women are better equipped to do, on the average, that is. And some of those things, only females can do, like becoming pregnant, giving birth and so on. The next generation is the future of land and society. So I see it as problematic that women are forced … that women are under pressure to choose between having a family, giving birth, because that is perhaps the most important and largest societal responsibility that you have regarding society, to bring forth the next generation… That the woman is under pressure to make that choice, that I think is very bad, and that the feminists are mistaken when they want women to be liberated all the time. (Ulf)

As a contrast to these traditional and rather conservative messages, we find Tina, who has rather composite views on these matters. Seen from the view point of both Gunnar's and Ulf's ideals, Tina must be perceived, as earlier remarked, as something of an '*enfant terrible*'. On the one hand she supports the completely traditional views on the female gender role. This is seen as she comments on the views of Jordan Peterson[60]:

He says that (…) women in general have no interest in or something to win from working their asses off to be on top of some concern. Very few women would get something out of it, except the feeling that they had won over the patriarchy, sort of. And so what? (…) You can't say to a woman that ok, you are interested in being feminine, you are interested in being in a relationship and having kids, but that is not ok! You're not allowed to do that because we will fight patriarchy, so then you have to be interested in becoming a top leader! That is very wrong. That is very dictator-like. Ok, if a woman really is interested in doing such things, it is of course not a problem, but one cannot flatten out the differences on a larger scale when that is not interesting for people as a starting point. (Tina)

She continues, while also complaining about what seem to be her very traditionally oriented female friends:

I have had many female friends, very ordinary people, and they are only concerned with being feminine, and I don't kid you, no matter how strong they are, no matter how smart they are, they are just talking about how they will be more feminine (shakes her head)! Seriously – most of them, their main worry in life is to make sure that they are not masculine, because then they will not have a boyfriend, and then they will not have a family. That is what most women are thinking about. And it seems there is nothing one can do about it! But that has got to be for the masses. The ordinary female in the streets… (Tina)

[60] Jordan Peterson is a controversial Canadian psychology professor who has been described as right wing oriented (i.e. https://www.theguardian.com/science/2018/feb/07/how-dangerous-is-jordan-b-peterson-the-rightwing-professor-who-hit-a-hornets-nest)

Her feelings here seem split. On the one hand, she accepts her friends' inclinations, even if she doesn't identify with them at all, as we soon shall see. On the other hand, she strongly refuses the traditional female gender role, not least in her personal interests in the shape of martial arts and also in her general attitudes. But this is further complicated by the fact that she also holds the views that feminism represents something passive, and 'cowardly'. As she puts it:

> I have always felt at home in discussions and conflicts and… I did martial arts from childhood, I did also football and was very active and very tough in many things. I have always liked challenges… and I felt that feminism was almost the opposite to enjoying challenges. That it was like everything that needed a little effort, or that was tiresome, there we just put the blame on men sort of… yes I think that is a little cowardly! I didn't want to be spared or protected, I have never had the wish for being protected from anything, I have always just wanted to be exposed to reality and learn from it. (Tina)

She repeatedly rejects what she terms 'feminism', and says that the worst thing about it was that she saw it as representing some form of 'self-pity'. I found that strange, and in the following rather friendly quarrel I confronted her with her own characteristics:

> Viggo: …but after all you have told me, and all the impressions you have given me, it is hard to think that… I mean you are very feminist, as I see it, as I see you… but then I don't have that idea of feminism as a self-pity thing…
>
> Tina: …and what is it that makes you see me as feminist then…?
>
> Viggo: …for goodness sake, you are insisting on your rights all the time, you are very assertive, you began doing martial arts and you do it very well, it seems, you are not submissive or giving in to someone in any way and that I think is very good… all that comprises the core of feminism as I see it…
>
> Tina: …yes that is good, but…

Tina seemed to be a little confused here. I tell her that her position must be seen as relatively special, and to me, quite surprising. She replies by pointing to her uniqueness:

> I see, I see. *I am just one percent in myself. There is no certain percentage of women in Norway who agree with me. They don't exist.* But that is how it is, then, to be outside the karma.[61] I react in the same way as you do, regarding myself, and that I think is interesting. (Tina)

As we have seen earlier, Tina is dividing the world into what she terms 'worker ants' and the elites, and that she sees herself as part of those elites. This seems to be fully supported by the Nazi ideology with which she associates. But this contradicts her own approach to gender, according to the radical right milieus she frequents. It further becomes clear that her position, and not least her insistence on her own sexual freedom, has created strong reactions in the conservative right-wing landscape, and especially in the milieu around the Alliance:

> Tina: …well I like the humour in the Alliance…but they have no self-irony (laughs). I mean if you make fun of others, then you must take it when someone is making fun of you… The alt right and the Alliance are just classical Nazism in new package and very like …macho…at the bottom, I would say. That is what I found out. It is really impossible to be a female in that movement… Because you are to be a mother, you should not have shagged blacks, there are so many rules… so there are very few women that fit in, or who have the possibility to

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[61] Tina is also very interested in Indian philosophy, and repeatedly mentions the importance of karma, seen as the layered results of what you have done and experienced in your life, being the orienting track in your life. But she also insists that some people – like herself – are able to transcend their karma, and to break out of the more obvious role acquired in life.

fulfil these demands… (laughter)…so for a woman like me who has grown up in the nineties, it is terribly difficult to fit into that thing…they are against abortion… they won't get any women on that team… So related to the question of getting women on the team for hard nationalism, then the alt right or the Alliance is just not a fit at all!

Viggo:…and then you enter that scene…martial arts included, and you prefer to have the right to date black men…

Tina:…yes, and I am pro-abortion and against Christianity…

Viggo….and you don't care much about the straight housewife thing…

Tina:…(laughter) no that would never have worked…

Viggo:…probably not (laughter, shakes his head)…

Tina: …But it happens that I have fantasies about it… I have thought that it could have been very comfortable if I found a man that was strong enough…but I don't think he exists…

To sum up: the views and practices regarding gender relations among our informants are very varied and at times complex. Informants associated with SIAN seem to be very liberal regarding alternative sexuality, transgenderism and feminism. Their main antagonist is Islam, which they heavily criticise on several issues. But they also have at times extreme stereotypical views about the ways of doing gender in Islam. These latter views tend to be repeated by informants connected to the Independence party (ShP). Associates of both Generation Identity and the Alliance seem to have very conservative and traditional gender roles as an ideal. The Nordic Resistance Front even more so. Tina, who is a declared Nazi, fascist and hardcore nationalist seems to have a position on her own, as – at least to some extent – she supports the traditional female gender role, while insisting that this is not for her, and she demands to have the freedom to have relationships with men of immigrant background.

In other words, the overall picture of attitudes toward gender relations within this radical right-wing milieu is not very clear. Nevertheless, traditional and conservative views appear to be most salient.

4.6 Views on radicalisation, extremism, violence and Breivik

The willingness to use violence to obtain political change is the defining criterion of extremism used in DARE (i.e. Berger 2018; Schmid 2013; Griffin 2012). None of the informants openly support the use of illegitimate violence to achieve such change. The word 'illegitimate' however indicates that there may be situations where its use may be contested. And there are some variations as to how far one finds it acceptable to go. This chapter explores some informants' relationships to radicalisation, extremism, violence and Breivik's acts of terror.[62]

I ask Anita how she views the use of violence to gain political influence. She is clear in her dismissal of such violence:

I see no reason for using violence…it is a cowardly thing…and I feel that many people, no matter what side you are on…if you use violence in one situation or another or… to show your political standpoint, then it is just to threaten your counterpart…to frighten them, it is a frightening thing, to frighten someone into silence…violence is a threat against the freedom of speech… (Anita)

The quote tells us that Anita sees the use of violence within such a frame as a way of threatening your counterpart to do or accept things she/he otherwise would not have accepted; it is seen as threat

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[62] Most interviews with the informants were done before the attempt by Philip Manshaus to attack a mosque and to shoot the assembly in August 2019. Comments from the informants on his attempted acts are therefore not available.

against freedom of opinion and of speech. She then points at NRM as an example of a group she associates with such attitudes:

> They are concerned with race and that they want to keep Scandinavia white and that is not my concern at all! Because I feel that they have crossed a boundary. It is definitely crossing a boundary… I do understand why they have such thoughts…because there is much mixing of races, I almost said, and if this development continues then we as a society will be 'washed out' even more, so that is a fact. But I do not feel that it is a solution, to make Scandinavia white. I understand the thought of having problems with the fact that the 'pure race will be extinguished or washed out. But I definitely do not support them, definitely not… They are also against democracy and will rather have a dictator at the top than a democracy… that I do not support either. (Anita)

But her rejection of the use of violence goes further in her dismissal of NRM's wish for a white Scandinavia, and its refusal of democracy. Here Anita seems to be able to see that what she terms the 'mixing of races' may be problematic for some and that society may become somehow 'watered down'. But despite such willingness to understand this viewpoint, she refuses clearly the standpoints of the NRM. The cleansing of the country of non-whites, the rejection of democracy and the use of violence to obtain such change seems to be too much morally and politically, to get her support.

In my earlier project, I was told by my informants that there had been people who wanted to become SIAN members who supported Breivik's actions (Vestel, 2016). They were refused membership immediately. Arild (44) – Arne's friend – claims to know several people on the radical right who approved of Breivik's actions.[63] When I ask Anita if she knows about such examples, she says that she doesn't really know any; some people in the NRM come to mind, but she does not know anything for sure.

Gunnar strongly denies supporting the use of violence to obtain political change and says that this is not a valid view within GI. He sees GI as a much more moderate actor, not least compared to what he knows about the alt right in the US:

> I would not be comfortable with most of what happens within the alt right in the US. GI is absolutely more moderate, you also see it in the demos. The alt right in the US use baseball bats and shields, and has a very liberal attitude regarding who is allowed to participate under a common umbrella. That is unthinkable in Europe because we are explicitly non-violent; so if you come with that kind of gear you are in trouble. You attract completely the wrong members. (Gunnar)

Gunnar then claims that compared to the radical Muslims who travel to Syria, even radical right wingers such as national socialists, are much less violent.

> We have a situation in Norway nowadays where The Prophet's Ummah (extremist Salafi Muslim group in Norway) …have several people who have been killed in Syria or are in jail. And you have never had such a situation even among the national socialists. There has not been a situation where a whole group of around seventy men have died in a warzone, in warlike circumstances or in an act of terrorism or who are in jail. (Gunnar)

As earlier mentioned, according to the most recent figures from the Police's Security Services, the correct number of people who have gone to Syria is around one hundred. So, in so far as we see traveling to Syria as supporting violence to obtain political change, Gunnar's statement is right.

Political extremism in Norway cannot be discussed without looking at the subject of Breivik's gruesome actions. While many radical right wingers tend to see Breivik primarily as a disordered person with many

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[63] Arne and Arild were interviewed together.

social and psychological problems, Espen admits that some of Breivik's political statements can also be found among the radical right with which he himself associates:

> What can I say… I understand that there must have been lots of personal psychological disorders there. And also so much 'outsiderness', as it often is, for example with the terrorist from Australia.[64] That you are lonely and not included… I mean Breivik talked about these Knights Templars and such things, that are not real, and then you know that there is something more… But there are similarities in the manifesto to opinions that we who are anti-globalists share. But that is not radical enough to do the things that he did, I say…. I think it would have been much more effective to win through political conviction… that you could present good arguments against globalism and pro-nationalism. Because the great counterargument is now Anders Breivik, or the 'ABB card'[65], as they say… that it is not possible. (Espen)

In the previous project mentioned earlier, there were several reported examples where radical right wingers complained that Breivik had put the political struggle against multicultural society back many years (Vestel, 2016). Espen tends to see it similarly, and he also dismisses the extremism of the NRM, and especially their anti-Semitism, as something that has little relevance in the Norwegian context:

> No, violent actions are nothing that I would support. The struggle for the nation… such things as Breivik's actions make everything more difficult…But now we have started to see traces of some possibilities again. To get on track again, sort of…. But regarding the Resistance Movement, they are talking about Jews and genetics and such things, and that is of very little relevance for Norway. There are very few Jews in Norway, and that is of very little interest as I see it. (Espen)

Espen also speaks about the fact that he was associated with the Norwegian Defence League before Breivik's attack:

> It was like an inflammation, the 22 July thing. I thought of what it could mean for my future. And my whole social life. I did not want to lose that because of me being in the NDL…And like I said, four years afterwards I was told that I was like Breivik at Junior high school, and such things. That was a very hostile thing. I said that we absolutely do not support terror and his actions, but we (in the NDL) could support many of the things that he expressed. But not the violence, of course not. But many people are not able to separate those things. So I became a bit more silent when I grew older. (Espen)

But Espen has definitely returned to politics. After some connections with the Alliance, he now associates with the Independence Party (ShP). He still uses 4Chan as a source for news and information. But he also clearly sees that this forum also has some supporters that plainly support real terrorism, and that the forum could be seen as an arena for radicalisation:

> Espen: So it happens very fast on 4Chan… And there are so many different people there. Lots of terror people are there also… for example the guy from Australia, he posted links long before he did it… there are lots of things that have been taken very far on 4Chan, to put it that way… Everything from the Nordic Resistance Movement to…lighter conservatives in a real mixture… So I believe that it seems much easier for young people to get radicalised through the Internet. Or they get more cynical regarding the ordinary media, I'd say.

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[64] Espen here refers to the Australian terrorist Brenton Tarrant who murdered 51 people in a mosque in New Zealand and who also was mentioned explicitly by Manshaus as an inspiration for his terror attempts in Norway in 2020.

[65] This is an abbreviation for the 'Anders Behring Breivik card', which is understood as a critique of the tendency for left-wingers or people who oppose the radical right, to hold up Breivik and his deeds as a cardinal example of the situation to which the right wing political agenda would lead.

Viggo:….regarding the ordinary media…

Espen: Yes, yes, and that is a war in itself…

It is clear that Espen distances himself from violence. He also sees the danger for eager young people who might be attracted to various real violent extremist actors. Here he sees that his own potential to influence is an important responsibility:

> I have some contact with a group of youngsters that I try to keep a little bit on the straight and narrow. (…) … I mean when The Nordic Resistance Movement is growing it is easy for some young people to be attracted to them… I try to turn them onto a more peaceful and democratic path through Snapchat and such channels… I try to have some responsibility there. They are very much into the typical 4Chan thing, with frogs with swastikas and such things, that gaming humour… but it is quite exciting too, nationalist youngsters… I try to keep them in an ok direction, so that they don't develop into something wrong. Especially if they have positive things to say about Breivik and the guy from Australia. Then I really tell them what I mean… And maybe they listen to me… (Espen)

Here Espen exemplifies that actors in the 'lighter' radical right wing position also try to calm down and give advice to young people who might tend to 'exceed the limit' (or 'cross the boundary' as above) in their support of violence and plain terror.

Arne recounts how he is seen by some as being at risk of taking more extreme action. He explains that a person he knows from the milieu around SIAN who has an eye on him.

> …she sees it as possible that some people might undertake a terror attack in Norway. She also wants to watch me because *she sees me as a ticking bomb* and believes that I am capable of undertaking such things. But *I have too much love for other people* to be able to do such a thing. I cannot do that, and I am not smart enough to think such thoughts. And… I think that that is not a job for just anyone… (Arne)

People in the Police's Security Services have also expressed similar concerns regarding Arne:

> The police say to me: '*you have contacts with guns, you have been aggressive, you have been angry at society, you have all the reasons to do it, because you are angry at the authorities and society.*' …" (Arne)

One of Arne's worst experiences has been with his own father:

> Regarding Breivik, several people, among them my father, have said that I am the new 'him', because I have extreme opinions. But I say, who does not? You cannot believe a person has it in him just because he has opinions… I am not fond of guns… (Arne)

Being repeatedly suspected of such extreme actions as planning and engaging in terrorism must be hard to bear. Arild asks him the relevant question: 'could such an attitude from the police provoke you to do a violent act, you think?' Arne replies:

> But then one feels that one gives up… I thought the opposite, they are completely mistaken. *Very mistaken!* But… I have to confess that when one sits in custody then one gets angry at the authorities… but to hear that one resembles him (Breivik), that I think is to push it far too far… (Arne)

I ask Arne more directly:

> Viggo: Arne, this is something I have to ask you. Could you use violence, like exploding a bomb in a setting like this, sort of? If it was a situation where you thought it was…

> Arne: You had to have a reason for it at least. Of course, if my life quality was totally bad, and if one believes that it is this or nothing, you see… But as of today, no. But I can

understand someone who might have done it…But then I put Breivik into perspective. He didn't really have much. He had his mother. He had a father who did not care. He did not have very much to live for. I think that people who in a way think like 'if I do this, then I just don't care if I have to go to jail, because it is…' You don't have it, sort of. And I have been there when I was in jail too. That was the reason why I started with crime because I didn't have anything to lose. But of course, when I feel alone then I think 'yes, why not?' But then you put it into perspective. I have been angry many times, of course I… (…). And of course, if I had been really depressed and you said to me 'Here is a ticking bomb. Go with the car tomorrow', you see… Then it is lots of things… we humans are really stupid at times… We don't think - right? (Arne)

Then we have Tina, who claims not to have had any strong reactions when Breivik carried out the killings. She says:

Tina: You must not try to get such responses from me, I will never say that I feel sorry for those kids or that it was a bad thing to do. You don't need much imagination here to say that he was a bad boy, sort of. What shall one say? The only thing that I know is that he planned it and did it and one has to see it the way one wants to (…). I will never get a shock from something like that. When I was a kid and came home when the World Trade Centre had been bombed or broken into pieces, I did not have any reaction to that either. My mother was completely in shock.

Viggo: But one gets morally upset, then. Lots of people…young kids that were very little responsible for anything, they got killed…

Tina: I just don't see death as something very spooky. I don't see death as a problem. Not that one should go and kill people, but if someone dies, it is not… I think there is something called a soul, and if one does not die of one thing, then one will die of something else. Everybody will die sometime…

We remind the reader that Tina emphasises that she does not to give into emotions, and that may be likely to have something to do with her involvement with martial arts. She states directly that she has contempt for weakness, and she is also influenced by various aspects of Indian philosophy and esoteric conspiracy theories. Perhaps it is these influences that lie behind what appears to be her lack of empathy for Breivik's victims.

5. Conclusions: Crisis, grievances and radicalisation

Let us now return to our research questions which are as follows:

- What are the main drivers of the trajectories of the various informants toward – or away from – a radical right wing position?
- How do inequalities, injustice and grievances – as subjectively perceived – impact the processes of radicalisation?
- In what ways do macro-, meso- and micro-level social relations interact in the processes of radicalisation?
- What role do extra-ideological relations have in the processes of radicalisation?
- In what ways can the meaning-making, attitudes and world views of the radical right be seen as relating to, confirming or eventually moving beyond the social conditions outlined in the broad characteristics of post-, high-, late- or liquid-modernity?

Some answers to these questions will be given and commented on as we proceed. Looking at our exploration of the world views, grievances and political trajectories of our informants, the following situation appears to be a starting point.

In line with Fukuyama's diagnosis presented earlier, the *experience of identity* stood out as a core theme in the lifeworlds of most of our informants. The situation described appears as complex and filled with many tensions, and a need to state one's identity seems to have been strongly felt. Differences regarding religion and faith, cultural orientations, gender practices, geographical origin, and not least history and relations to the past were all mentioned as things to which one felt a pressure *to attach, relate to, defend and stand up for*. Explicitly or implicitly our informants saw this situation as related to the phenomenon of *globalisation*, that is the moving of people, items and impulses from one corner of the earth to the other. These features of globalisation are the most obvious ways in which *macro-level relationships* – such as the Syrian war, the living conditions of poor farmers in Africa, or fundamentalist religious practices – are moving in the shape of people, attitudes, ideas and objects that are entering into new and local, micro- and meso-level contexts, such as, in this case, the countries of Europe.

To some, including our informants, this situation is experienced as confusing, as a crash, as if well-established borders are breaking down, and as if things and persons that represent the unknown are threatening the ordered world that was once felt to have existed. *Who am I, and who are we, in all this mess*, seem to have been very relevant questions.

All of our informants in one way or another seem to have been relating to these questions, and their political positions and trajectories can be interpreted *as reactions to or attempts to handle the overall situation*. For our informants, this can be understood as what Griffin termed a 'nomic crisis', where people feel that the cosmological, cultural and social 'meaningful order' into which they were born is threatened, questioned and about to be lost, along the lines sketched out above (Griffin, 2012; Vestel, 2016). The feeling of a *threat to identity* may thus be seen as core to such a crisis. The grievances, uncertainties, tensions and overall complexities of such a crisis, in a general sense, seem to be *central drivers* of the informants' trajectories toward a radical right wing position.

The titles of three books written in recent times by right-wing oriented authors indicate the *emotional tone* of such an experience. A well-known politician from the Progress party, Christian Tybring-Gjedde has written 'While the orchestra continued to play' ('Mens orkesteret fortsetter å spille', 2014); the title referring to the orchestra continuing to play on the deck of the Titanic, as the ship went down. The sociologist Halvor Foslie's book 'Towards national breakdown. Norway in the age of mass immigration' ('Mot et nasjonalt sammenbrudd. Norge i masseinnvandringens tid', 2019), was distributed by a right-wing publishing house, Document forlag. Lastly, Hege Storhaug, the leader of a right-wing think tank, tellingly named Human Rights Service, has written 'Islam. The 11th plague' ('Islam. Den 11. Landeplage' 2015), now in its 7th edition; the title strongly indicating the role of Islam in the perception of such crisis.

Here we claim that the political orientation toward radical right-wing positions may primarily be seen as *strategies – answers – for handling this perception of crisis*, and its corresponding grievances. In line with Berger, a grievance may be understood as a perception of having been humiliated, treated unfair or inappropriately (Berger, 2018: 129). Several researchers have pointed to grievances of various kinds as a central 'moving force' in processes of radicalisation (Franc and Pavlović, 2018: 3; Berger, 2018: 127-131; Tarrow, 2009: 110-112; Borum, 2011; Gould 2010 on emotion and protest). In the following we will sum up in a more concentrated suggestion how grievances created by the crisis of identity seems to be moving the informants toward a radical position.

A core intention of the DARE project has been to enlighten both the trajectories *towards* and also trajectories *away* from radical positions; the ways in and the ways out. This touches some crucial questions regarding the understanding of radicalisation processes. Why is it that among people who share many of the same life conditions some evolve into extremist positions, while others do not? Such a question relates to Berger's claim that, 'all extremists have grievances, but not all people with grievances become extremists' (Berger 2018:129).

As I see it, the ideal group to address to explore the latter question, is a group of informants who have *not* become violent extremists, but who nevertheless have had significant exposure to actors or events

that have such inclinations. This – as earlier stated – is the primary criterion for the selection of our informants.

But first, we will point more strictly to some of the paths likely to lead toward a radical right-wing position.

5.1 Paths towards, revisited – ideological and extra-ideological relationships

The most striking element and identity marker in any radical or even extremist group is *ideology*. As a system of ideas it tends to be an important and supportive driving force toward a radical position as it provides order and a frame of meaning from which to make sense of a situation of crisis, in parallel with what Beck writes:

> The ideology of fascism helped make sense of the economic and political chaos caused by World War I and charted a path towards stability and geopolitical power through nationalism and racism. The potential appeal of radical ideologies thus might be due to how well they seem to address unsettled times. (Beck, 2015: 92)

There are several ideological frames that are actualised by our informants, but the common feature is that they all may be seen as attempts in one way or the other - as we here have called it - *to defend the nation*: the search for inspiration from the past in the shape of an interest in the Norse; the tendency to long for earlier times when the country was more homogenous and ordered; the 'Traditionalism' of Evola extended with ecological perspectives; the idea of 'ethnopluralism' and the uniqueness of the nation of the Identitarians; the plain national socialism - Nazism - of the NRM; the call for an attitude where traditional gender roles are celebrated. All these frames of interpretations reflect a will to 'defend' the country and the assumed 'Norwegianness'.

In addition there are more concrete events and developments that are interpreted within ideologised frames and that seem to have been especially strong in causing reactions.

Several informants point, at times, to the overwhelming sense of confusion and threats to the nation caused by the influx of *refugees,* many from the Syrian war, in 2015. This year is also pointed out, for the same reason, in the report from PST (The Police's Security Services) as a peak where many people became radicalised into right wing directions (PSTb, 2019: 5). In such a situation, *politicians* who were felt to be addressing the potential problems of immigration, stimulated such radical movements further. For some, the disappointment of discovering that the immigrants were *not all refugees but also people who just wanted better lives*, also contributed to their movement toward the radical right, as did the assumed involvement in immigration of corrupt *businessmen and people smugglers*.

The *fear of terrorism* by extreme Islamists directed much negative attention towards Islam.

Some expressed an uneasiness created by immigrants' *unfamiliar gender roles,* where the more conservative gender roles associated with immigrants and especially Islam were seen as in strong opposition to the liberal attitudes of the West. (For others, the assumed traditional ways of doing gender among various immigrant groups were seen as positive as they matched similar highly conservative attitudes among our radical right-wing informants.)

A fear of the possibilities of introducing *sharia laws* was an underlying feature for all. In sum the informants reacted negatively and fearful of ways of being that were very different from the assumed culture of northern Europe or even a more generalised Western culture. The immigrants' wish to maintain much of their different cultures and customs, perceived as alien to the country's original majority the 'we' group – added to their strangeness and difference. This includes also the perceived strictness around the religion of Islam. One informant complains, for example, about how she, as a young child, got threats of being killed from her Muslim classmates, because she had said something humoristic about Islam. She refers to the incident as something that had 'shaped me' and that she still

remembers very well. All those concrete expressions of both hostility (terror) and radical difference seemed to have contributed strongly to move the informants in directions of the radical right.

However, also more *extra-ideological* motives and possibilities can move people into radicalisation. For one informant moving into a radical right-wing group created a highly positive feeling of becoming 'a person'; there was a shift *'from being no one to becoming someone'*, as was said. She became, in other words, more visible and probably also gained more prestige as she entered the new 'we group'.

Another informant seemed to be more concerned with *becoming part of a community*, finding friends and a group with which he could feel at home, than in the group's extreme ideology, which required the willingness to engage in violence. He nevertheless had had a series of bad experiences with immigrants that clearly also influenced his development, thereby illustrating the *interaction between ideological and various extra-ideological forces* on the path to the radical right.

Another example of extra-ideological moving forces, was *the appeal of a cool older relative* associated with a youth-culture tinged Neo-Nazi milieu, where style and music was important. In addition, there can also be assumed to be a powerful feeling of resistance, rebellion and power that the accompanying norm-breaching ideology was able to provide. Similar appreciations of becoming 'dangerous' in a rough right-wing milieu is also described by Vestel (2018: 25).

The strength of *family ties* may also have played a role in the development described above. This is also well known in the literature.

One informant describes a *troubled adolescence* in a rough inner-city milieu, where she never really felt at home and where she lacked a lot of the answers to questions she felt were important. She developed an admiration of the strong as opposed to the weak, probably also stimulated by her involvement in martial arts. She seems to have evolved into an eccentric where also *personality* can be assumed to have played an important role in her development into relatively extreme political attitudes. For her, - and also for other informants - a common *interest in Donald Trump*, became another bridge into a radical milieu. One informant points to the importance of the *online gaming community* in which he participated, and the strongly right-wing oriented positions that developed within that forum as an important driver toward a radical right-wing position. Such positions were said to have developed further in the net forum *4Chan* where also real hardcore terrorists – in line with what another informant states – at times have announced their violent deeds (Beran, 2019: 118-122; Griffin, 2020: 116). This points clearly to how the potential destructiveness associated with certain Internet fora, may develop, and also how a well-developed right-wing oriented *subculture* may orient young people in such directions.

5.2 Paths away from, revisited – ideological and extra-ideological relationships

As mentioned, one of the most important aims of the DARE project is to achieve some understanding of the paths *away from radical or extremist positions*. In our empirical cases we find several examples of such movements.

The struggle by the national socialists for a white Scandinavia, has been pointed out as going beyond the limits of acceptability, even if understanding of the frustration over the mixing of 'races' is to some extent present. The reason for this informant's rejection of the dream of a white Scandinavia is not clear, but it is likely that the exclusion of one 'race' to the advantage of another was felt to reflect injustice and a breach with an *ideal of equality*. It may also be amplified by the fact that such a standpoint had too close an association with the Nazi regime of the Second World War. This implies that the *interpretation of historical events* and processes – not surprisingly – influences the directions of the informants' movements. This is underlined by the tendency among most informants to reject contact with declared national socialists. It is also reflected in the negativity that several informants express

toward the statements of the Alliance leader where the importance of the Holocaust is denied, and where they see the demand for the violent treatment of 'traitors' as 'too much'.

Another event that moved one actor out of a national socialist youth culture milieu was simply the fact that *the police managed to dissolve the group*, as it was also heavily involved in various forms of crime. This underlines that such an intervention by the police, in some cases, must be seen as fully appropriate to move young people away from extremist milieus.

But also plain *logical reasoning* may have a role for moving in a different direction. This was seen in the experience of an ideological mismatch, exemplified in an exaggerated concern with anti-Semitism when the number of Jews was extremely small. Such a discovery seemed to have been important in moving the actors to some extent away from that milieu.

A *discontent with gender roles* makes an interesting example about the movement away from a milieu. One informant expressed, at least in some ways, frustrations with the very traditional gender attitudes in a radical right milieu. Here the ideal was to have women stay home with the children, to only have relationships with men from the majority, and in many ways, conform to a traditional and very conservative female role. For a young woman who cultivated the strong, and had a confrontational, analytic and intellectual curiosity, and also had liberal relationships with men of immigrant backgrounds, such attitudes were seen as highly problematic. They clearly made her to some extent move away and keep a distance from the milieu in question.

One of the most striking examples of associations that created pressure to move away from radical right-wing milieus, was the comparison of some of the political statements of one of our informants with those *associated with Breivik;* our informant likens this to an inflammation. Even four years after July 22nd, he was being told that he was 'like Breivik'. This accusation led to our informant leaving the radical right-wing group he was associated with at the time, and keeping a low profile for several years afterwards. This is in line with results from my earlier project, where it was repeatedly underlined that Breivik's actions had set politics in the radical right-wing groups back by several years, because right wing radical ideas had been heavily stigmatised by his deeds (Vestel, 2016: 77-78).

The last example of a path away from a radical position, is simply an informant who had been attracted to a violent milieu of national socialists. When I ask him to reflect on the possibility of carrying out violent acts, as an extremist standpoint may require, he simply says that he had found out that he had *'too much love for other people to do such things'*. In other words, a clearly extra-ideologised inclination, such as simple empathy and love for one's fellow humans, may – not surprisingly – have an important role in the actor's movement away from extremist positions. This informant has now left his national socialist milieu.

As mentioned earlier, while most radical right wingers are exposed to these grievances, only a very few actually become extremists. Why? Some answers we may sketch by summing up the relationships and experiences that led our actors in directions *away from a radical or extremist position* to some degree:

1. The negative emotional reaction generated towards the national socialist's racist ideal of a white Scandinavia.
2. The negative emotional reaction generated towards the association with various markers of the Nazi regime of the second world war.
3. The negative emotional reaction generated towards actors who question the severities of the holocaust.
4. The negative emotional reactions generated by the demand for violent treatment of politicians held to be responsible for globalisation and its support, such as in the statement that 'the traitors shall hang'.
5. The intervention of the police to dissolve an extremist milieu.
6. The logical mismatch between ideology and reality, such as the weight put on anti-Semitism in a context of very few Jews.

7. The discontent with very limiting gender roles, where women ideally should stay home and take care of children.
8. The discontent with gender roles where relationships to partners of a different 'race' or genetic inheritance are forbidden.
9. The provocation of being associated with Breivik's deeds and thereby stigmatised.
10. The feeling of empathy and love for one's fellow humans when one is confronted with a demand to be willing to carry out violent acts.

As indicated here, it is a long and complex list of relationships, personal moral, knowledge, experiences and emotions that seems to have had a role in orienting our actors away from extremist positions. A crucial question then will be *how to facilitate the necessary social relations, situations and circumstances – with such a list, eventually, as providing some indications - where such 'movements away from' can occur*.

Such a project can only be realised outside the frame of this report.

5.3 Fukuyama's paradox and a nomic crisis in an 'age of identity'

Let us now return to the issue of *identity* that has been present throughout the whole of this exploration. This is clearly related to our last research question: In what ways can the meaning-making, attitudes and world views of the radical right be seen as relating to, confirming or eventually moving beyond the social conditions outlined in the broad characteristics of post-, high-, late- or liquid-modernity?

Fukuyama's claims that identity politics has become a new paradigm, is also a critique of policies that he claims are causing the *'endless fragmentation'* of societies and dissolving the societal coherence that he sees as necessary to the existence of a democratic nation (Fukuyama, 2020: 15). The ideal of so called 'differentialism' of the Identitarians, and of others, of a radical developed autonomy of local areas, may be seen as an example of what may create such fragmentation (Benoist and Champetier, 2016; Griffin, 2020: 116-119). If every group wants a nation of their own, where will a more united, overall identity exist?

But Fukuyama also recognises that identity politics has its *origin in important societal injustices*. He mentions, for example, a long list of groups in which identity politics are manifest, and also *needed*, we may add *inter alia*: the recent Black Lives Matter movement; Me Too groups; feminists; the old Civil rights movement; Native Americans; working class groups in various areas – for example the Rust Belt supporters of Trump; various groups of immigrants; gay men and women; the disabled; transgender (Fukuyama, 2020: 2,5,7). Fukuyama recognises that these are groups to which injustice has been done, and which he sees as having good reasons for fighting for their rights. He writes: ' *…there is nothing wrong with identity politics as such; it is a natural and inevitable response to injustice'* (Fukuyama, 2020: 7).

In some ways the multitude of groups involved in identity politics can be seen as related to the process of overall *individualisation,* where identity - from being more taken care of by a collective – developed to become something that was the responsibility of the individual. Liberal rights, human rights, universalist institutions and the flows of capital and people in various globalisation processes, may be seen as important societal results and as consequences of such developments *away from the grip of traditional collectives of previous times.* This is also to some extent the consequence of the processes that Fukuyama celebrated in his, perhaps a little bit too catchily-titled, 'end of history' diagnosis (Fukuyama, 1992).

But as this report has shown, the increasing complexity generated by the flows of refugees and immigrants, the distance felt between people and the political elites, and the technological and economic shifts of globalisation may also result, for some of the actors involved, in an experience of

crisis, confusion, grievances and a feeling of threat against identity. Immigrant groups may also experience something similar. These experiences may be seen as a reaction against – and perhaps also as enhancing a moving away from – some of the core characteristics that have been covered by labels like high-, post- late- or liquid modernity.

It is important to mention that the experiences of crisis from a more right-wing tinged position is also something that Fukuyama seems to recognise. He writes for example that:*'…people living in rural areas who are the backbone of populist movements, not just in the US but also in many European countries, often believe that their values are threatened by cosmopolitan, urban elites'*. He refers to nationalists who feel that: *'foreigners, immigrants, and elites have been conspiring to hold them down. 'Your country is no longer your own', they say, 'and you are not respected in your own land'* (Fukuyama, 2020: 4,8).

So, both in groups that often have been associated with the *left wing critique of social injustice*, *and* in groups that are clearly associated with *right wing positions* in various degrees we find deep feelings of unease and of grievances. As seen in this report these grievances – at least for the latter group – seem to be subsumed in a feeling that *their identity is under threat*, in one way or another. If one adds the feeling of threat that also young *Muslims* tend to experience into this picture – as is also explored in the DARE project - then the number of actors for which the threat against identity seem strongly felt, is even greater. Thus, in line with Fukuyama's own diagnosis, *the politics of identity thereby seem to sum up the diagnosis of the present state of being to a very strong degree*.

The problem is the *paradox* in that on the one hand he holds forth that the concern with identity and the engagement in identity politics are something *unwanted, destructive, and to be avoided*. But on the other he also states that it is *'a natural and inevitable response to injustice'*!

This points to the conclusion that identity politics in today's world simply *cannot be avoided*, *nor ignored*. And if the eventual problems with such an 'identity politics' - that also in some ways must be seen as real – should be avoided, the only way to handle that paradox, must, in some way or another, be to handle *both* the necessities of identity politics *and* the problems of fragmentation that the identity related grievances eventually create. However, to flesh out the possibilities, urgencies and guidelines to realise such a task must necessarily be seen as a project on its own.

While somehow recognising all these reactions as the situation - that we, following Griffin, have termed the nomic crisis - the solutions Fukuyama proposes do not seem very convincing. He points for example to the attempts in the US to create a new and more universal identity as citizens for immigrants who can prove they have lived in the country for five years:

> …new citizens are expected to be able to read, write, and speak basic English; have an understanding of US history and government; be of good moral character (that is having no criminal record); and demonstrate an attachment to the principles and ideals of the US constitution by swearing an oath of allegiance to the United States. European countries should expect the same from their citizens (Fukyuama, 2020: 11).

Such declarations may be easily accused of being formalist, superficial, optimistically bureaucratic and just shallow attempts to create a new version of something that has a very long list of impulses, intuitions, events, history and experiences as its foundation; that is, *identity.* This is simply *something that does not change by making a declaration*, we may add.

This is not the occasion for us to go further into Fukuyama's other attempts to sketch remedies for the fragmentation of society that identity politics are held to cause. The whole article gives, nevertheless, the impression that he tries to argue against something he also recognises as a valid thing for which to fight.

If the main drivers towards radicalisation and the development of extremist positions – as we have argued here – may be seen as emerging from a generalised nomic crisis, where large societal processes

are at work, then the fight against radicalisation and extremism has to address these problems on a *much larger scale* than through formalist declarations of citizenship .

A better place to start, as I see it – must be to engage in the considerably larger *struggle for elementary and reasonable rights for the groups that are in need of recognition*; if a sense of grievance is recognised as real and justified, the only way to change this feeling of mistreatment and the identity of being someone who is mistreated, is to treat people justly and to take their subjective experience of the situation seriously. *That will probably imply some considerably larger steps than the interventions usually undertaken in programmes and procedures designed to prevent or combat political extremism.*

The focus upon and the quest for identity may also be seen as a not surprising *reaction* to a societal development where *individualisation* for several decades has been seen as a core characteristic in post-, high-, late- or liquid modernity, well in line with for examples Bauman's analysis (2000, 2007; Griffin 2012). On such a background, and at times strongly felt longing for *community and an identity that to larger extent is collective*, is highly understandable. And in the societal state of globalisation where the emerging crest of polarisation charges the corresponding quest for identity with the energy of power struggles - and at times even with the atrocities of terror and plain violence - perhaps a better name for the present social condition could be the *Age of identity*? In that case our radical right-wing informants must be seen to be not only well in tune with the overall emerging and new 'zeitgeist', but also as exponents of a time diagnosis that is *something new, different and perhaps beyond* the radical individualisation of high-, post-, late-, or liquid modernity. Perhaps…

6. Acknowledgements

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8. Appendices

Appendix 8.1: Socio-demographic data of respondents

Name (pseudonym)	Age	Country of Birth	Education	Employment	Ethnicity	Family status	Gender	Religion	Religiosity	Residential status	No. in household
Anita	27	Norway	Cmpl academic sec. edu	Full time	Norwegian	single	female	Christian	medium	Own flat	1
Anita's father	54	Norway	Cmpl post sec voc edu	Part time employment	Norwegian	widower	male	Christian	medium	Own flat	1
Arne	26	Norway	Dropout sec edu	unemployed	Norwegian	With girlfriend	male	none	none	Own flat	2
Arild, Arne's friend	44	Norway	Cmpl voc sec edu	unemployed	Norwegian	married	male	none	none	Own flat	3
Gunnar	34	Norway	Cmpl university	Pt time empl	Norwegian	unclear	male	none	none	unclear	unclear
Tina	28	Norway	Cmpl school	Pt time empl	Norwegian	single	Female	New religiosity	medium	Own flat	0
Ulf	30	Norway	Cmpl university	Full time	Norwegian	unclear	male	New religiosity	medium	unclear	unclear
Espen	23	Norway	Cmpl post grad edu	Full time	Norwegian	unclear	male	none	none	unclear	unclear

Jens	28	Norway	Cmpl post.voc.tr	Full time	Norw.	unclear	male	none	none	unclear	unclear
Nils	19	Norway	In ac.sec.edu	unknown	Norw	unclear	male	none	none	unclear	unclear
Anne	21	Norway	At university	unknown	Norway	unclear	Female	none	none	unclear	unclear
Odd	43	Norway	Uncmpl post grad edu	Full time	Norwegian	married	male	none	none	Own flat	4
Per	27	Norway	Cmpl post grad edu	Part time	Norwegian	Living with partner	male	none	none	unclear	unclear

Appendix 8.2: Observed events

8.2.1 Field diary entries:

1. SIAN in Oslo in front of the government building (the 'Storting') 26 May 2018

A sunny mid-Saturday in front of the *'Storting'* (the government building) in the middle of Oslo. The heat is remarkable. I watch SIAN doing a small demo. Around 10 activists are standing in front of their banners, that are portraying a blue wolf howling, marked with a white stripe around its profile, and with a red background, referring to the red, white and blue in the Norwegian flag. This symbol points to the well known fable of Esop, where a young herdsman is several times calling out that the wolf is coming, just for fun. He is not believed because his alarm has been false so many times. Then one day the wolf is really coming, and the people still do not react because they believe it is false this time too. The result is that the wolf eats all the sheep. The wolf, obviously, is - from SIAN's view - symbolising Islam; they see themselves as an actor who is warning society against Islam that they claim is threatening Norway and Western societies.

Some of the activists are doing speeches. X (a woman in her 50ies) is passionately telling about the rape of young women by Muslims, claiming to have spoken with several young females who have experienced this. A group of around 20 people is partly listening, partly just passing them, through the small circle of benches surrounding the crowd. The two Lion sculptures carved out in granite stone, one on each side of the Storting building – assumedly symbolizing both the power of the nation represented by the politicians within the building, and also the will of the Norwegian state to defend that power – make a curious frame around the activists, who tellingly criticise the same power and politicians for allowing the nation to be intruded with the suspicious religion of Islam, around SIAN's agitational core. The female speaker points angry at the building and says: "We have a bunch of idiots who govern our country". Most of the public do not seem to react very strongly to the words of X. Maybe it is the heat that makes all so passive in their response. Nevertheless, two young girls of some immigrant background are yelling back: "It is you who are the idiot!" The dialogue becomes aggressive, but gradually calms down.

An Iranian refugee is speaking about the problems with the Iranian government and their extremist ayatollahs. One of SIAN's leaders continues with heavy accusations against Islam. Then, suddenly, one of the activists of the counter demonstration that has now assembled encircling the demo, tears down one of the loudspeakers in SIAN's arrangement, before he runs away. It is not damaged, but are erected up again and the demo continues…

2. SIAN presentation stand Arendal 13-14 august 2018

Arendal - a small southern coastal city – is upside down. The so called «Arendal Week» is going on.[66] This is a week - inspired by the Swedish «Almedalsveckan» - where politicians and NGOs from all over the country gather for rallies, discussions, and media shows, and is arranged for the 7th time in Arendal in 2018. In the streets and on the presentation stands one can meet all kind of VIPs in the shape of ministers (including the prime minister), politicians, business leaders, journalists, media workers and NGO representatives, who are all participating one way or another in more than 1000 different arrangements during the week. It is also nicknamed «The feast week of the lobbyists», indicating the importance of the week as a meeting place for actors wanting to influence Norwegian political decisions.

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[66] https://arendalsuka.no/6240

Others have ironically called it «a summer camp for grown ups», and «the Eldorado of the talking-class».[67]

All hotels are full, and local houseowners are renting out their houses for very good prices, as the ordinary facilities in the city are all too small for such an arrangement. In the streets and in every available open space, long rows of presentation stands are filling up this sunny coastal town, after a long very hot summer, where many Norwegian families and other tourists have taken delights in eating freshly cooked shrimps in the cafes and benches around the large lagoon – called «Pollen» - , that for hundreds of years has been the social centre of this once so important maritime coastal city.

SIAN has their presentation stand on the corner of one of the streets, not far from the newly erected town hall/house of culture. Some of the smaller streets leading down to the city centre, are blocked with concrete arrangements to prevent eventual terror actions, underlining the security risks that also are part of this gathering. The atmosphere is nevertheless fine. And in the SIAN's presentation stand, «Geir» and «Selma» are standing with friendly smiles, ready to discuss what they see as the problems of Islam with anyone who passes. On his black t-shirt, the text «Mohammed was a terrorist», is seen under what appears to be a reproduction of one of the caricatures, published by the Danish newspaper, Jyllandsposten, in 2005, that created so much anger among Muslims in so many countries, and that still have some repercussions today. Books about Islam with lots of personal markers visible – indicating intense reading - and also a Koran, are lying behind the desk where high gloss colour flyers are being offered to the one who will receive.

3. *SIAN presentation stand, Arendal 13th of August 2018.*

On my second day at the Arendal Week, I present myself and the project and have a chat with Geir and Selma as they put the SIAN presentation stand in shape before it is opened for the audience. They tell me that the stand has been harassed during the night. All the Norwegian flags and posters are stolen, and some of their equipment has been damaged. «There you see», Selma says, «that is how freedom of speech is being treated in this country». Later on, six people from a leftist group are reported to have been arrested by the police, for attacking some of the right wing stands. The year earlier, two 18 year olds were arrested after having attacked SIAN's presentation stand, Selma is telling. «This is what we are used to», she says. «The violence from left wing groups are increasing in many countries» Geir adds, «you should focus on them too!»

4. *The Alliance stand, Arendal 14th August 2018.*

Just around the corner from the SIAN presentation stand, we find the presentation stand of The Alliance. The party was founded in 2016, and it is the first time they have a stand on the Arendal week. With the logo in orange and white, they are easily spotted. The small tent is curiously fronted with an old, red sofa, quite nice, probably dating from around the 1930ies, which Lysglimt in a videoblog, speaks of as a sofa with «soul», representing what he terms, the real, the authentic and the true, as if sitting in grandma's sofa discussing important things.[68] Here, caps in catchy colours – like Trumps famous «America First» cap - with the logo, and other one liners, stickers and small Norwegian flags are lying together with an orange female bathing suit, and a bikini panty, also with the Alliance logo on its back. One of the caps bears the text: «Norway for Norwegians». This is a line made famous by the long time defunct anti-immigrant organisation «Folkebevegelsen mot innvandring» (The people's movement

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[67] See Sigrun Aasland, https://tankesmienagenda.no/post/arendal-for-alle/details

[68] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POe1syVFlfw

against immigration), whose leader, Arne Myrdal, in a controversial trial, was sentenced for 1 year for planning to blow up an asylum centre in an island (Tromøya) close to Arendal in 1988 (Bjørgo and Gjelsvik 2018:45).[69]

I ask the well known leader of the Alliance, fronting the presentation stand, how he took the quite curious name «Lysglimt». He tells me his name stems from the fact that someone in his family in the 18th century was owning a larger sailing ship named «Lysglimt». We had a talk. I point to the unfamiliarity of having a radical right wing political party that emphasizes humour to such an extent as the Alliance. Lysglimt says this is deliberate and that it is confusing to many people in a positive way. He welcomes my initiative to do interviews with members of the party's youth organisation, saying that the Alliance regards young people as the most important to ensure the future of the party. As we talk, several from the passing audience ask to have their selfie-picture taken together with Lysglimt, who seems to enjoy this picturing, posing deliberately with a big smile, and his arm stretched forward doing a V-sign. The caps, the merchandise and not least the smiling style of Lysglimt himself, underlines the deliberately shaped aura around his party, with what he calls «nationalism with humour». People from the neighbouring stand confirm that the Alliance stand, especially during the evening, is visited by a considerable number of young people. In other words, the humorous aura and Lysglimt's relatively spectacular style, seem to be successful in attracting young people.

I ask Lysglimt about his relationship to the Identiarians, whom he approves as interesting for the Alliance. He also speaks of Vidkun Quisling in positive expressions. I remark that it would be very difficult to get Norwegians to have positive relations to Quisling on the background of his support for the German occupiers during the war. One of the audience nods to this comment. Our talk is ending as new audiences are approaching…

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[69] https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/OLybb/arne-myrdal-er-doed