Far Right and Islamist Radicalisation in an Age of Austerity: A Review of Sociological Trends and Implications for Policy

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This policy brief provides an overview of the sociological issues underpinning the issues of far right and Islamist reciprocal *or* cumulative radicalisation in the Western European context. That is, these groups radicalise each other by mutually reinforcing their hate, intolerance, or indignation towards each other. The nature of reciprocal radicalisation between far right and Islamist extremist groups reflects a range of sociological phenomena affecting political identities, citizenship, and questions of nationhood in relation to young men experiencing social alienation and cultural discontent. These social fissures can lead to oppositional group formations in a climate of widening structural inequality, political polarisation, and direct structural and cultural racism and racialisation. This paper argues the importance of grasping the landscape of extremism, radicalism, and political violence from below, in particular assessing the importance of local area urban social issues, where the problems of radicalisation are local in the making—and so, therefore, are the solutions.

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Setting the Scene

This Policy Brief is a sociological perspective on the nature of the reciprocity between violent Islamist and far right groups in Western Europe in recent years and the implications it raises for social policy in this area. The paper argues that both sets of groups make claims to notions of purity, exclusivity, and omnipotence. However, crucially, they engage in configurations of reciprocal hate, demonisation, and violence due to the structural dynamics of economic, political, and social division, where notions of collective intra-ethnic identities are undermined by widening structural and cultural fissures across society.

While interest in radicalisation has grown exponentially since the events of 9/11, much of the focus has been on Islamist extremism. However, since this time, a range of other extremisms have come to the fore. Examples of this include the idea of reciprocal radicalisation when elements of the far-right rally around a certain 'counter-jihad' sentiment. The English Defence League in the UK, Pegida in Germany, or the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands all exhibit anti-Islam rhetoric—all of which loosely relates to the idea of protecting the nation from further apparent encroachment by 'Muslim others'. Such sentiment has been growing in Western Europe since the events of 9/11 but specifically since the late-2000s when austerity gripped many of the nations of the EU.[1]

For the purpose of this discussion, radicalisation refers to both the *processes* and *outcomes* of violent extremism, but no two countries define 'radicalisation' in the same way. For some, violence is the main concern. For others, an ideology that may or may not lead to violence is the primary focus, and much of the academic research since the events of 9/11 focuses on the 'pull' of ideology as the driving force in radicalisation.[2] All definitions, nevertheless, recognise the notion as a being both a highly individualised and largely unpredictable process.[3] Thus, radicalisation is a complex notion, with a range of variables vital in determining the nature of the radicalised, but in other cases, a single trigger is a reason for the tipping point to radicalisation. As new tribalisms emerge, radicalised groups develop a core narrative at the heart of their newfound identities.[4] Inclusion into this new tribe is determined by virtue of membership of the group. But, it is also aspirational, as members of the group instrumentalise their positions as a way in which to demonstrate solidarity within the group. In today's climate, much of these processes occur virtually, shaped by young people whose radicalisations occur predominantly on the internet.[5]

The difference between reciprocal and cumulative radicalisation, however, also needs clarification. For the purposes of the arguments put forward in this paper, the idea of cumulative radicalisation suggests that groups are responding to what they see as the problems of growing Muslim populations in urban areas and the potential it has to encroach on their lives and social norms. This builds on fear of immigration, xenophobia,

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1 Zúquete, J.P. (2008) 'The European extreme-right and Islam: New directions?', *Journal of Political Ideologies* 13(3): 321-344.

2 Vergani, M., Iqbal, M., Ilbahar, E. and Barton, G. (2018) 'The Three Ps of Radicalization: Push, Pull and Personal. A Systematic Scoping Review of the Scientific Evidence about Radicalization into Violent Extremism, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, iFirst.

3 Bailey, G. and Edwards, P. (2016) 'Rethinking 'Radicalisation': Microradicalisations and Reciprocal Radicalisation as an Intertwined Process', *Journal for Deradicalisation* 12: 255-281.

4 Furlow, R.B. and Goodall, H.L. (2011) 'The War of Ideas and the Battle of Narratives: A Comparison of Extremist Storytelling Structures', *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 11(3): 215-223.

5 Kaplan, J., Lööw, H. & Malkki, L. (2014) 'Introduction to the Special Issue on Lone Wolf and Autonomous Cell Terrorism', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26(1): 1-12.

and anti-Muslim hostility that has grown in the light of politics and policy over the last decade or so, especially in the Western European context. Reciprocal radicalisation suggests a more evenly balanced relationship between how groups feel and express hate and indignation for each other in different social contexts, leading to incremental growth in radicalisation on both sides of this constricted divide. Disdain and hate are ratcheted up in every interaction. This generally occurs in a context of widening political and economic polarisation, leading to a sense of permanent enmity that has no outlet. These are theoretical conceptualisations based on observations by the author over a two-decade period, reflecting on the change and continuity relating to economic and urban social policy and the effects it has on community and social relations. Over the following pages, several arguments are advanced in order to explain the reciprocal radicalisation phenomenon.

In the proceeding pages, this paper argues the following. First, that the problems of growing inequality exacerbated by the post-2008 economic crash policies of austerity have led to downward social mobility affecting both indigenous majorities as well as Muslim minority groups, in particular in urban post-industrial localities. This increases tensions in relation to identity, citizenship, and belonging—especially in those parts of Western European countries where the industrial cities have faced decline and eventual restructuring, for example Birmingham, Aarhus, and Lyon. Second, it is contended that wider transformations to local economies have led to a crisis of masculinity, where traditional practices of patriarchy are being challenged by the liberalisation and casualisation of labour markets compounded by questions of inter-generational disconnect. Third, these concerns affect uncertainties over identity, in particular, notions of citizenship, belonging, and the nature of religio-ethnic group mobilisations. Fourth, the impact of these wider structural and cultural realignments has led to divergent group actions, with far-right groups aiming to 'get their country back' based on claims to local-area social geographies and the apparent risks posed by diversity and multiculturalism.[6]

Concurrently, historical and ongoing patterns of withdrawal, alienation, and marginalisation encourage radical Islamists to allude to a global inward-looking identity politics that focuses on its own variations of exclusivity. These structural factors encourage the cementing of supra-national bonds that appeal because of their politico-ideological associations with an absolutist utopian vision. They reveal local area tensions in relation to space, place, and identity, in particular in areas of existing ethnic and Muslim minority concentration; such is the contestation over questions of belonging and citizenship affecting all groups facing limitations to equality of opportunity and equality of outcome.[7]

'Othering' as Radicalisation

Unquestionably, a historical process of the 'othering' of groups has evolved over time, which includes an increase in the dichotomisation of an 'us' and 'them' and, consequently, the intensification of separating these 'othered' groups from what is perceived as the main or dominant culture in a number of Western Europeans nation-states, in particular parts of 'Old Europe'.[8]

For majority groups, to 'other' is a process of objectification based on notions of structural and cultural racism, ethnic nationalism, exclusivity, and exceptionalism. In the

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[6] Burnett, J. (2017) 'Racial violence and the Brexit state', *Race and Class* 58(4): 85-97.

[7] Nayak, A. (2010), 'Race, Affect, and Emotion: Young People, Racism, and Graffiti in the Postcolonial English Suburbs', *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 42(10): 2370-2392.

[8] Mishra, P. (2017), *Age of Anger: A History of the Present*, London: Allen Lane; Hirsch, A. (2018), *On Race, Identity and Belonging*, London: Jonathan Cape.

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twentieth century alone, this has included Jews, African Caribbean groups as part of the Windrush Generation, and East African Asians in the early 1970s to today with the catchall term Muslims. Although its intensification has transformed during this time, the 'self' (the nation) has remained consistent in its approach, with notions rarely shifting away from the idea of immigrants as being problematic *per se*.[9] Structural and cultural racism continues to reinvent itself, even as diversity naturally develops through globalisation and the internationalisation of capital and labour. These pockets of resistance help to undermine racism and radicalisation, the dominant political climate, however, is increasingly exclusivist, exceptionalist, and elitist, exhibiting a gradual but sustained shift to the political right and the authoritarian, repressive and exclusive strains of thought and praxis it brings in reality.[10]

As the spectre of right-wing populism and ethnic nationalism takes an ever-greater hold in Western European societies, there is also a growing problem of a general yet persistent move to the right in mainstream politics in contemporary Europe,[11] with the speeches of far-right political leaders supporting a wider transnational far right discourse.[12] This is the case not only in developed Westerns democracies such as the UK, Germany, and the Netherlands but also in newer liberal states such as Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia.[13]

The end of the Cold War is a useful starting point for appreciating this development. Here, the long-standing post-war order changed irrevocably, leading to a period of centrist politics between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the start of the 'war on terror' over a decade later. From the grassroots of these societies, a range of social movements emerged—including fascist groups that carried out an 'ideological facelift' in the 1990s, with each successively problematising the issues of Muslims.[14] Until recently, the electoral successes of the right have been negligible, leading to a sense of political disenchantment.[15] This was the case until the Brexit vote in the UK, the result of which was partly motivated by negative discourses on immigration, refugees, and questions of national political identity.[16] In the Netherlands, electoral support for Geert Wilders' Party for Freedom and the more recently established Forum for Democracy continues, indicating that right-wing politicians continue to attract up to one-fifth of the voting age population.[17] The Alterative for Germany Party has been gaining momentum in the recent years, helping to shift the rhetoric in the country in relation to anti-immigration and anti-Muslim sentiment.

A shift within broader right-wing extremism is emerging, with many groups and individuals—including terrorists such as Anders Breivik—condemning Nazism, fascism,

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[9] Rattansi, A. (2007), *Racism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[10] European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (2019) *Annual Report On Ecri's Activities: covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2018*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

[11] Wagner, M. and Meyer, T.M. (2016) 'The Radical Right as Niche Parties? The Ideological Landscape of Party Systems in Western Europe, 1980–2014', *Political Studies* 65(1S): 84-107.

[12] Froio, C. and Ganesh, B. (2018) 'The transnationalisation of far right discourse on Twitter', *European Societies*, iFirst.

[13] Halikiopoulou, D. (2017) 'A Right-wing Populist Momentum? A Review of 2017 Elections Across Europe', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56: 63-73.

[14] Lee, M., (1999) *The Beast Reawakens: Fascism's Resurgence from Hitler's Spymasters to Today's Neo-Nazi Groups and Right-Wing Extremists*. London: Routledge

[15] Pupcenoks J. and McCabe, R. (2013) 'The Rise of the Fringe: Right Wing Populists, Islamists and Politics in the UK', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 33(2): 171-184.

[16] Swami, V., Barron, D., Weis, L. and Furnham, A. (2018) 'To Brexit or not to Brexit: The roles of Islamophobia, conspiracist beliefs, and integrated threat in voting intentions for the United Kingdom European Union membership referendum', *British Journal of Psychology* 109, 156-179; Rzepnikowska, A. (2019) 'Racism and xenophobia experienced by Polish migrants in the UK before and after Brexit vote', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 45(1): 61-77.

[17] van Holsteyn, J.J.M. (2018) 'The Dutch parliamentary elections of March 2017', *West European Politics* 41(6); 1364-1377; Vossen, K. (2016) *The Power of Populism: Geert Wilders and the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands*, Abingdon: Routledge.

and anti-Semitism but defining their cause as a defence against the perceived threat from Islam.[18] The March 2019 attack in Christchurch, New Zealand, aptly illustrates this shift among right-wing extremists to a defence against the perceived threat posed by Islam. The primary suspect was a self-identified white supremacist, who viewed the world in Manichean terms, regarding Islam as a movement and its people, not merely as a blot on the landscape, but as deserving of depopulation. This is because they somehow present a risk to the survival of the white nation itself. However, there is no perspective on the nature of this whiteness; that is, its own internal diversity or the historical legacies of class formation, colonialism, orientalism, or Eugenicism that have defined the space occupied by whiteness. Moreover, this perspective is also an odd combination of the palpable fear presented in relation to the 'other', whose motivations are to 'take over' through 'population expansion'. At the same time, there is a decrying of these 'others' for their primitive, backward, and hateful natures, thus legitimising ethnic nationalism and white supremacism as espoused by right wing sympathisers, extremists, and terrorists.

It is apparent therefore that an anti-Muslim outlook plays a part in the broader radicalisation of far right extremists.[19] In Britain, the English Defence League historically operated as an ethnic nationalist group with links to the British National Party and football hooliganism.[20] It exposes the wider notion of 'reactive co-radicalisation'[21] or 'cumulative extremism'[22], which is a response on the parts of states, organisations, groups, and individuals to the apparent threat of 'Muslim others'. These sentiments have also become a defining feature of current forms of Islamophobia,[23] much of which also demonstrates a correlation with rising populism and nationalism.[24] Because of these recent developments, research on extremist identity politics in Western Europe is increasingly focused on the intersection of violent radical Islamism and far right extremism among young men. Both extremisms often emerge locally due to narrow definitions of citizenship, belonging, and nationhood, where sharp political polarisations exacerbate existing ethnic and class struggles.[25] Space and place can compound existing exclusionary discourses on differences based on ethnicity, religious identity, socio-economic status and politics. In local urban areas, deep-rooted contestations can exist over the struggle for hegemony based on a hyper-imagined 'them' and 'us'.[26]

Economy and Society Transformed

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[18] Archer, T. (2013) 'Breivik's Mindset: The Counterjihad and the New Transatlantic Anti-Muslim Right', in Taylor, M., Currie, P.M. and Holbrook, D. (eds.) *Extreme Right-Wing Political Violence and Terrorism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 169–86

[19] Feldman, M. (2013) 'Comparative Lone Wolf Terrorism: Toward a Heuristic Definition', *Democracy and Security* 9(3): 270-286.

[20] Copsey, N. (2010) *The English Defence League: Challenging Our Country and Our Values of Social Inclusion*, London: Faith Matters.

[21] Pratt, D. (2015) 'Islamophobia as Reactive Co-Radicalization', *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 26(2): 205-218.

[22] Feldman, M. (2015) *From Radical-Right Islamophobia to 'Cumulative Extremism'*, London: Faith Matters.

[23] Hafez, F. (2014) 'Shifting borders: Islamophobia as common ground for building pan-European right-wing unity', *Patterns of Prejudice* 48(5): 479-499; Massoumi, N., Mills, T. and Miller, D. (2017) (eds.) *What is Islamophobia? Racism, social movements and the state*, London and New York: Pluto.

[24] Mishrar, P. (2017) *Age of Anger: A History of the Present*, London and New York: Allen Lane.

[25] Eatwell, R. (2006) 'Community Cohesion and Cumulative Extremism in Contemporary Britain', *Political Quarterly* 77(2): 204-2016.

[26] Bailey, G. and Edwards, P. (2006) 'Rethinking 'Radicalisation': Microradicalisations and Reciprocal Radicalisation as an Intertwined Process', *Journal for Deradicalisation* 12: 255-281; Bartlett, J. and Birdwell, J. (2013) *Cumulative Radicalisation between the Far-Right and Islamist Groups in the UK: A Review of Evidence*, London: Demos; Ebner, J. (2017) *The Rage: The Vicious Circle of Islamist and Far-Right Extremism*, London and New York: IB Tauris.

Various Western European societies and economies have transformed profoundly since the deregulation of the financial sector and the dominance of privatisation of public utilities and economic neoliberalism that began in the 1980s.[27] This has had repercussions for youth identities, particularly in urban spheres.[28] Men who experienced their rite of passage from young person to adult in the work places of factories and plants, increasingly face the reality of unemployment or under-employment due to the decline of industry and manufacturing compounded by an inability to upskill for a service sector economy. These downward social pressures exacerbate existing problems, especially in the inner cities, which are oft-forgotten by urban planners and policymakers until the deleterious conditions facing disadvantaged 'underclass' groups cannot be neglected any further. They are also sites of diverse communities.[29] Here, residential concentration, for majorities and minorities, emerges largely through a lack of choice.[30]

Post-war ethnic minorities cluster in specific urban areas to utilise social, economic, and cultural capital for group survival. Simultaneously, the spatial concentration of deprived marginalised majorities is also an opportunity to protect the norms and values associated with the group identity, which, in the light of present politics, perceives a threat from the dominant 'in-group'. Neighbourhoods such as parts of inner-city Birmingham in the UK or Molenbeek in Brussels suggest danger and menace when in fact the reality is more about poverty and housing policy.[31] The general overriding discourse, however, is to present 'self-styled segregation' among Muslim minorities as a self-induced rejection of integration. This discourse, though, is harmful to many who are on the receiving end of vilification, alienation, and discrimination.[32] It is also devoid of historical content in relation to the effects of transformations to the economy and the role of housing policy during this period.[33]

The importance of the economic context cannot be under-estimated. The transformations occurring within local economies have also led to a crisis of masculinity, where traditional practices of patriarchy—such as authoritarianism within the domestic sphere—are being challenged by the liberalisation and casualisation of labour markets that are compounded by questions of inter-generational disconnect, combined with economic insecurity.[34] A crisis of masculinity is at the centre of many of the predicaments facing marginalised communities, underpinned by a lack of social mobility, persistent unemployment, and political disenfranchisement. Since the global financial crash of 2008, growing inequality exacerbated by the policies of austerity has led to downward social mobility affecting both indigenous majorities as well as Muslim minority groups, in particular in post-industrial urban localities.[35] Post-industrialisation and globalisation affect Muslim minority groups in the inner cities of Britain, but these concerns also affect majority groups who can turn to far right political views for solace.[36] Majority white

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[27] Ferrera, M. (2014) 'Ideology, Parties and Social Politics in Europe', *West European Politics* 37(2): 420-448.

[28] Sassen, S. (1998) *Globalization and its Discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money*, New York: The New Press.

[29] Rex, J. (1988) *The Ghetto and the Underclass*, Aldershot: Gower.

[30] Harris, R., Johnston, R. and Manley, D. (2015) 'The changing interaction of ethnic and socio-economic segregation in England and Wales, 1991–2011', *Ethnicities* 17(3): 320-349.

[31] Johnston, R., Manley, D. J., and Jones, K. (2016) 'In search of Britain's Muslim ghettoes', *Environment and Planning A* 48(9), 1684-1690.

[32] Peach, C. (1994) 'The meaning of segregation', *Planning Practice and Research* 11(2): 137-150.

[33] Johnston et al. (2016) op. cit.

[34] McDowell, L. (2000) 'The Trouble with Men? Young People, Gender Transformations and the Crisis of Masculinity, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24(1): 201-209.

[35] Dorling, D. and Tomlinson, S. (2019) *Rule Britannia: Brexit and the end of empire*, London: Biteback.

[36] Hans-Georg, B. (1993) 'The Two Faces of Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe', *The Review of Politics* 55(4): 663-685; Saull, R. (2015) 'Capitalism, crisis and the far-right in the neoliberal era', *Journal of International Relations and Development* 18(1): 25-51; Dorling, D. (2015) *Inequality and the 1%*, London and New York: Verso; Goodwin, M. (2013) *The Roots of Extremism: The English Defence League and the Counter-Jihad Challenge*, London: Chatham House Briefing Paper.

communities can and do suffer the economic and sociological predicaments that can lead to extremism, radicalisation, and violence, but media and political discourses concentrate less on such groups, markedly skewing the debate.[37]

The combination of these imbalanced discourses on the social and economic disadvantages of both groups and the importance that identity formations have at the local and global levels leads to an intense struggle for the crumbs of society. In some cases, the effects are anger, fear, loathing, intimidation, and violence. Islamist radicals are anti-globalisation, while far right extremists are pro-localisation, but both are pro-totalitarian. These groups wish to instil a sense of purist identity politics and both have a utopian vision of society. Furthermore, both have a narrowly defined vision of the self, which is exclusive of the other. In the case of far-right groups, much of their motivation stems from a counter-jihadist discourse. Here, radical Islamists experience status inconsistency along with their far-right extremist counterparts. Both groups are the structural and cultural outsiders of society *and* directly opposed to each other. In many ways, these two sets of 'left behind' groups are in direct competition with each other, one racialised and alienated and the other marginalised and alienated, but both emerging in the context of neoliberalism and economic restructuring in post-industrial urban settings.

Race is the signifier here, but an imagined race, as is perennially the case when it comes to ethnic nationalism.[38] In both cases, apprehensions arise over multiculturalism, dislocation, and identity conflict. A lack of hope leads to psychological conundrums, leaving countless young men vulnerable, exposed and then pliable to external influences.[39] With limited educational and employment opportunities due to entrenched patterns of discrimination and disadvantage (ethnic and class), the uncertain futures facing various young men in inner-city areas, minority and majority, create challenges with limited opportunities.[40]

Britain First, the English Defence League, and what were organisations such as Al-Muhajiroun and Islam4UK consisted of young men with limited education, employment, or social status. Men who join such organisations are outraged and simultaneously embittered by the spiritual or material challenges of their existence. Many of the recruits to the Islamic State heralding from the inner cities of Western Europe displayed similar anxieties and aspirations. Thus, inter-generational disconnect and the importance of the socio-economic and socio-cultural context are critical considerations in the experiences of both 'white' majorities as well as Muslim minorities. A broad sense of alienation transpires among a wide range of communities due to the political, religious, and cultural transformations to the social milieu.

But—in the midst of material challenges facing young men (and women) in Western European and North American societies—particular concerns arise over hypermasculinity and hypersexuality (an over-concentration on sexual activity).[41] This apprehension refers to unrealistic expectations placed upon young people. Such

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[37] Beider, H. (2015) *White Working Class Voices: Multiculturalism, Community-Building and Change*, Bristol: The Policy Press.

[38] Anderson, B. (2006) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition, London and New York: Verso.

[39] Vergani, M., Iqbal, M., Ilbahar, E. and Barton, G. (2018) 'The Three Ps of Radicalization: Push, Pull and Personal. A Systematic Scoping Review of the Scientific Evidence about Radicalization Into Violent Extremism', *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2018.1505686

[40] Sullivan, A., Parsons, S., Wiggins, R., Heath, A. and Green, F. (2014) 'Social origins, school type and higher education destinations', *Oxford Review of Education* 40(6): 739-763.

[41] Papadopoulos, L. (2010) *Sexualisation of Young People: Review*, London: Home Office.

expectations create fear, anger, and anguish—impairing the smooth transition from youth to adulthood. Hypermasculinity diminishes the confidence of young men. The consequences are that some young people become encouraged to prove themselves—to seek recognition, to become somebody—and, by using any means necessary. The question of the associations between two sets of social and economic similar experiences points to local area considerations. The failures of the government to introduce policies that bring about equality and fairness to limit the deleterious consequences of neoliberalism are evident. This disappointment is also about the loss of the imagination of the nation in a global climate of inequality and competition, where national elites hold onto an imagined notion of the nation as well its peoples.[42]

Rethinking Deradicalisation Policy

Both social structure and identity politics are essential to consider in the radicalisation and extremism of far-right extremists as well those drawn to Islamist extremism. Understanding radicalisation is all about appreciating context and perspective. However, while radicalisation refers to both pathways and outcomes, radicalisation does not always equate with terrorism.[43] This lack of clarity over what is radicalisation distorts the insights into violent extremism, in particular where there is confusion over clearly problematic social outcomes that are high priority security threats.[44]

Supporters of far-right political agendas founded on ethno-religious uniformity face targeting by sections of the left based on historical associations with fascism and racism. While space matters for identity formations and a sense of conflict towards the immediate most differentiated 'other', the question of ideology is a weighty consideration. In an ironic twist, far right thinking wants to reclaim and reshape local territory in its own image whereas radical Islamists have abandoned the local in preference for the global, or rather the idealised notion of the caliphate, which is conceptual and for the most part illusory. Pitted against each other in the most difficult of social and political conditions, leading to a sense of enmity in the most extended of terms, they are fighting for different political outcomes. For example, both groups project resistance against aspects of left-liberalism such as is found in the pages of *The Guardian*, the alleged pro-government bias presented in the BBC, resistance against the LGBT, or a misogynist attitude towards women per se. Yet, what is clear is a sense of personal grievance that leads to hate supported by an ideology, which is then wrapped around a doomsday scenario. For radical Islamists, it is the end of times and for far-right groups, it is the idea of a race war, with both sets of groups as somehow victims in their respective shadowy scenarios.

Over time, the consistent theme is that what 'we' must resist most that which is furthest away from who 'we' do not see ourselves as, while 'we' are an *indivisible unitary whole* facing further pressure as a result of localisation, globalisation, neoliberalism and the backlash against diversity. In considering local area concerns, the local and global intersect at the point at which groups are furthest apart culturally, socially, and politically—but closest together economically. All of this points to wider issues of economic inequality, social immobility, structural marginalisation, and patterns of

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[42] Anderson, op. cit.

[43] Borum, R. (2011) 'Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories', *Journal of Strategic Security* 4(4): 7-36.

[44] Sedgwick, M. (2010) 'The Concept of Radicalization as a Source of Confusion', *Terrorism and Political Violence* 4(4): 479-494.

discrimination in the labour market that affect the former white working classes as well as visible minorities, namely Muslim groups.

It is crucial not to rely solely on deep theory or emotional responses to this malaise. Arguably, this has been part of the problem all along. Virtually all of the young people who variously enter into the theatre of radicalisation and violence do so due to emotional, psychological, ideological, and sociological factors. Measures targeting such acts of crime must recognise the multi-layered nature of the processes involved in radicalisation, and hence introduce more joined-up policy thinking at a much earlier stage of the process. It is thus vital to acknowledge the intersecting paths towards radicalisation affecting far-right and Islamist extremists in order to achieve the necessary impact on research, policy, and practice. The need to appreciate the dynamics of radicalisation as embedded in social processes at the structural level, where concerns over identity, belonging, and self-realisation, remains fundamental.

Invariably, critical thinking and the need to prevent the dehumanisation of the 'other' are valuable solutions, particularly in the crucial area of mentoring and support for vulnerable young men at the heart of de-radicalisation policy. Research on the topic of reciprocal radicalisation confirms that processes of 'othering' exist in the minds of young, angry, and disillusioned young men suffering the consequences of the decline of masculinities in an age of globalisation. [45] However, instances of mental illness, psychological breakdown, and issues concerning self-actualisation and self-realisation are also of importance.

Concluding Thoughts

In conclusion, both far right and Islamist extremist groups feed off the 'otherisation' of groups presented as oppositional to their local and global identity formations. Far-right groups are wanting to reclaim particular locales as part of a process of 'taking back' 'their country', whereas Islamist have little or no claim on the local, focusing their attention on globalised identity politics. Nevertheless, both groups are experiencing the fragmentation of masculinities, where men—displaced because of the shifting economic contours of post-industrial societies and the impact of deindustrialisation upon traditional labour market practices, as well as the withering of national identities due to neoliberal globalisation—
are retreating into violent hegemony as solutions to their malaise. The response on the part of the state is to reinforce a narrow historical reading of society relating to diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism rather than to focus on equality, integration, and social interdependence in the light of widening inequalities, a decline in political trust and increasing cultural division.

Young people aged 18 to 24 are susceptible to numerous challenges, but while hate crimes spike due to acts of violence after various terrorist events, the reality is that this loathing does not necessarily abate over time. This suggests that something far more fundamental is going on in relation to the deeper problems of structural and cultural racism and exclusion. Implications for further research include ensuring that far right and Islamist extremists are regarded as similarly problematic, and ensuring that researchers in this area remain cognisant that the path towards radicalisation is often local and urban in both nature and outcome. There is a need to recognise that these kinds of extremisms are two sides of the same coin, where limiting one will invariably reduce the other. Both extremisms feed off each other's rhetoric, compounded by an elite discourse that seeks

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[45] Kimmel, M. (2013) Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era, New York: Bold Type.

to maintain a divide and rule approach to dealing with differences in society. It is combined with the issue of the diminished status of the privileges of whiteness for many facing downward pressures on social mobility.

This Policy Brief has argued that issues of social structure and identity politics are crucial to take into consideration when attempting to appreciate the nature of radicalisation and extremism among those who engage in far-right extremism as well those drawn to Islamist extremism. It is also essential to examine how identifying these concepts can determine how best they can feed into policy development. Moreover, the approach needs to engage with extremism as a wider societal issue, not simply as a task for particular communities. It ultimately places accountability on government and authorities to take greater responsibility for the problems *and* the solutions to violent extremism. In the current political climate, violent radical Islamism is seen as a function of Muslim communities, in which lie all the problems *and* all the solutions. Further research is required to recognise the intersections of these variables in specific situations.

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