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A Case Study of Generation Identity and Fortress Europe

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EUROPEANIZATION OF THE FAR RIGHT

A CASE STUDY OF GENERATION IDENTITY
AND FORTRESS EUROPE

BY
ANITA NISSEN

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED 2019



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AALBORG UNIVERSITY
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ENGLISH SUMMARY

The thesis explores the Europeanization of the two far right transnational coalitions Fortress Europe and Generation Identity during the ‘refugee crisis’ (2015-2017). While a growing literature has considered progressive extra-parliamentary actors’ mobilization around EU-related policy issues, there is a lack of research on the Europeanization of Eurosceptic and far right mobilizations. With the rise of the far right in the last two-three decades, not least within the European Parliament, we need to learn more about their European mobilization and cooperation, especially at the extra-parliamentary level. The far right transnational networking has a long history, but there is limited knowledge of: 1) their transnational strategies, 2) the coordination of contention, and 3) the development of shared conceptions of ‘Europe’. These aspects are fundamental to consider, as the far right’s transnational alignment may lead to a stronger European far right public sphere, in opposition to the one envisioned by the EU.

The thesis thus investigates **‘How and why did the European far right extra-parliamentary actors in Fortress Europe and Generation Identity Europeanize their contention during the 2015-2017 ‘refugee crisis’?’**

The main theoretical framework consists of Europeanization, social movement, and far right literature, and focuses on collective action and network Europeanization, while also including their frames. The model for analysis expects that a group’s political and discursive opportunity structures and its material and symbolic resources (independent variables) influence its Europeanization strategy (dependent variable), both in terms of networks and collective action.

The study is a case study of the national members of the two transnational coalitions *Generation Identity* and *Fortress Europe* that differ highly in their compositions, aims, and worldview alignments. *Generation Identity* (GI) was created in 2012 by the French *Identitarian Bloc*, and currently consists of around 12 New Right national groupuscules. Conversely, *Fortress Europe* consists of 12 members, including both parties and extra-parliamentary groups that unite around their aversions towards Islam and the EU. The coalition was initiated in the autumn of 2015, and organized a few transnational protests in 2016, where after it largely dissolved. The case study both compares the two coalitions with each other, but also includes a *within case* study of the national groups and their different trajectories during the ‘crisis’. The thesis uses three methods: protest event analysis (to analyze their collective action), frame analysis (to analyze the groups’ collective action and collective identity frames), and a method akin to process tracing (for analyzing the groups’ coalition building). The data mainly consists of primary sources retrieved from the groups’ respective websites and Facebook-pages in the years 2015-2017. Additionally, eight key informant interviews with FE and GI leaders and spokespersons have been conducted. The

secondary sources consist of background and contextual data gathered from scholarly literature, government reports, newspaper articles, anti-racist organizations, and expert interviews with scholars studying the groups.

The key findings are as follows:

Europeanization of Collective Action:

- The Europeanization of collective action for far right groups only involves European targets, participants, and events to a limited degree. Instead, most mobilization takes place at the domestic level, frequently in the form of ‘domestication’ (i.e. the direct targeting of domestic decision-makers on an issue where the EU is either the source or indirect target).
- The roles of the political opportunity structures (POS), the discursive opportunity structures (DOS), and the material and symbolic resources are significant for an extra-parliamentary actor’s Europeanization.
- Despite mobilizing with the same main collective action frames, the groups’ domestic protest forms and issue foci differ, depending on their POS and DOS, just as ongoing domestic debates and the domestic far right’s focus points influence the groups’ domestic mobilization.
- Confirmation of the role of national far right *parties* as indicative for the frequency and success of a Western European far right extra-parliamentary actors’ domestic mobilization (hydraulic relationship).
- The Western and Eastern European groups use different mobilization strategies around EU-related policies, due to their different antagonist constructions.

Europeanization of Networks:

- The far right transnational mobilization potential is strong due to the ability of (some, but not all) far right actors to bridge ideological disagreements around anti-Islam positions.
- The far right organizes in ‘transnational movements’ at the European level. They mobilize in the transnational space; yet, do not approach the EU directly. Instead, they focus on the mobilization of support from the domestic public.
- Experienced leaders and ‘movement intellectuals’ are important for far right coalition survival due to their ability to create inter-group unity at the ideational and strategical levels.
- Social media is important for far right communication, networking, support mobilization, and for transnational organization and coordination.
- The far right constructs transnational collective identities around the need for nationalists (or patriotists) to heroically defend Europe as a means to safeguard the European civilization, and thus the various nation-states, despite facing strong opposition (i.e. they construct their identity around victimhood and battle frames).

DANSK RESUME

Afhandlingen undersøger europæiseringen af de to højreradikale transnationale koalitioner Fortress Europe (Fæstning Europa) og Generation Identity (Generation Identitet) under 'flygtningekrisen' (2015-2017). Mens en voksende litteratur har undersøgt progressive ekstra-parlamentariske aktørers mobilisering omkring EU-relaterede politiske spørgsmål, er der mangel på forskning i europæiseringen af euroskeptiske og højreradikale mobiliseringer. Med den politiske fremgang for det ydre højre i de sidste to til tre årtier, ikke mindst i Europa-Parlamentet, har vi brug for at lære mere om deres europæiske mobilisering og samarbejde, især på det udenomsparlamentariske niveau. Højreradikale transnationale netværk har en lang historie, men der er begrænset viden om: 1) deres transnationale strategier, 2) deres mobiliseringskoordination, og 3) deres udvikling af fælles forestillinger om 'Europa'. Det er fundamentalt at overveje disse aspekter, da de højreradikales transnationale ensretning kan føre til en stærkere europæisk højreradikal offentlig sfære, som står i modsætning til den, som EU repræsenterer.

Afhandlingen undersøger således **'Hvordan og hvorfor europæiserede de europæiske højreradikale udenomsparlamentariske aktører i Fortress Europe og Generation Identity deres mobilisering under' flygtningekrisen 2015-2017'?**

Den teoretiske ramme er hovedsageligt bygget op omkring europæiserings-, social bevægelses- og højrefløjslitteraturen. Den fokuserer på europæiseringen af kollektiv handling og netværk, mens den også inkluderer rammeanalyse. Analysemodellen forventer at en gruppes politiske og diskursive mulighedsstrukturer, samt dens materielle og symbolske ressourcer (de uafhængige variabler) påvirker gruppens europæiseringsstrategi (den afhængige variabel) med hensyn til både netværk og kollektiv handling.

Afhandlingen er et casestudie af de nationale medlemmer af de to transnationale koalitioner Generation Identity og Fortress Europe, der er meget forskellige i deres kompositioner, mål, og verdenssynstilpasninger. Generation Identity (GI) blev oprettet i 2012 af den franske *Bloc Identitaire* (Identitære Blok) og består i øjeblikket af omkring 12 nationale nye højre grupper. Fortress Europe (FE) består af 12 grupper, herunder både partier og udenomsparlamentariske grupper, der samarbejder omkring deres modvilje mod Islam og EU. Koalitionen blev indledt i efteråret 2015 og organiserede et par transnationale protester i 2016, hvorefter den stort set blev opløst. Casestudiet sammenligner de to koalitioner med hinanden men inkluderer også et inden-for-casestudie af de nationale grupper og deres forskellige forløb under 'krisen'. Afhandlingen benytter tre hovedmetoder: Protestbegivenhedsanalyse (til at analysere deres kollektive handlinger), rammeanalyse (til at analysere gruppernes kollektive handlingsrammer og kollektive identitetsrammer) og en metode, der minder om proces-sporing (til at analysere gruppernes koalitionsopbygning). Dataet består

hovedsageligt af primære kilder hentet fra gruppernes respektive hjemmesider og Facebooksider i årene 2015-2017. Derudover er der gennemført otte interviews med nøgleinformanter bestående af FE- og GI-ledere og talspersoner. De sekundære kilder består af baggrundsinformation og kontekstuel data indsamlet fra videnskabelig litteratur, regeringsrapporter, avisartikler, antiracistiske organisationer og eksperksamtaler med forskere, der studerer grupperne.

Hovedresultaterne er som følger:

Europæisering af kollektiv handling

- Højreradikale gruppers europæisering af kollektiv handling involverer kun europæiske protestmål, deltagere og begivenheder i et begrænset omfang. I stedet foregår det meste af mobiliseringen på nationalt plan, ofte i form af 'domesticering' (dvs. det direkte mål er de nationale beslutningstagere, selv om EU enten er kilden til problemet eller det indirekte mål for protesten).
- Understregning af betydningen af de politiske mulighedsstrukturer (POS), de diskursive mulighedsstrukturer (DOS) samt de materielle og symbolske ressourcer for en udenomsparlamentarisk aktørs europæisering.
- På trods af at de mobiliserer med de samme primære kollektive handlingsrammer, er gruppernes nationale protestformer og emnefokus forskellige, afhængigt af de politiske og diskursive mulighedsstrukturer, ligesom at løbende nationale debatter og den nationale højrefløjs fokuspunkter påvirker gruppernes nationale mobilisering.
- Bekræftelse af de nationale højreradikale partiers rolle som vejledende for hyppigheden og succesen for en vesteuropæisk udenomsparlamentarisk højreradikal aktørs nationale mobilisering (hydraulisk forhold).
- På grund af deres forskellige antagonistkonstruktioner benytter de vest- og østeuropæiske grupper sig af forskellige mobiliseringsstrategier omkring EU-relaterede problematikker.

Europæisering af netværk

- Det højreradikale transnationale mobiliseringspotentiale er stærkt på grund af evnen hos (nogle, men ikke alle) højreradikale aktører til at bygge bro over ideologiske uoverensstemmelser omkring anti-islamiske holdninger.
- Det ydre højre organiserer sig hovedsageligt i 'transnationale bevægelser' på europæisk plan. De er aktive i det transnationale rum, men de prøver ikke at skaffe sig direkte adgang til EU. I stedet fokuserer de på mobilisering af støtte fra den nationale offentlighed.
- Understregning af betydningen af erfarne ledere og 'bevægelsesintellektuelle' for højreradikale koalitioner overlevelse på grund af deres evne til at skabe en enhed mellem grupperne på det idémæssige og strategiske niveau.

- Understregning af de sociale mediers vigtighed for højreradikales kommunikation, netværk, støttemobilisering samt for deres transnationale organisering og koordinering.
- Højreradikale konstruerer transnationale kollektive identiteter omkring behovet for, at nationalister (eller patriotister) heroisk forsvare Europa som et middel til at beskytte den europæiske civilisation og dermed de forskellige nationalstater, på trods af at de møder stærk modstand (dvs. de konstruerer identiteten omkring offerstatus- og kamprammer).

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During the research process, I had several challenges related to the different European national contexts and languages. I would therefore firstly like to thank the scholars, who allowed me to pose them questions about the role of the far right either in their respective countries or in the EU institutions. Several of these interviews involved groups and contexts, which I had struggled to find much data about myself, and the fact that these experts took the time to discuss the domestic and/or EU contexts, and the different groups involved, was immensely important for my findings.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Due to the EU's increasing supranational influence on, and power over, the national legislative frameworks, numerous scholars have explored the effects of the European integration process on the various political entities in the EU Member States (MS) through the theoretical lens of 'Europeanization'¹. A vast array of analyses and theoretical nuancing have ensued, and as new approaches towards analysing the phenomenon developed, so have the number of conceptualizations. As 'Europeanization' is a "complex and multiform phenomenon" (Almeida 2010: 238), it is hard to give an encompassing definition of the term. Yet, in short, Europeanization measures the EU's (possible) impact on the EU MS' political systems and actors (della Porta & Caiani 2009: 10). At the more general level, della Porta (2009) defines Europeanization as the "processes of resistance, transformation, and adaptation to EU policies and norms in member states" (2009: 1).

The signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 brought EU policies and institutions much closer to the European population, due to the increase in the EU's judicial and political competences (Graziano & Vink 2012: 36). At the same time, the new Treaty also meant that the European Union increasingly became a political space of contention for social movements and other collective actors, as they began turning their claims towards the European polity². Hence, research started exploring how the challengers maneuver the EU's multi-level governance structure (della Porta 2007), and its particular rules and norms (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009; Monforte 2014). The various mobilizing actors thus need to appropriate their strategies and policy outputs according to this particular setting, if they wish to gain influence in the decision-making process, be it at the national or EU-level. In other words, social movement Europeanization analyses explore "whether, how, and with what consequences Europeans mobilize to make claims against policies made in their names" (Imig & Tarrow 2001a: 7).

¹ The explorations of Europeanization range from the domestic institutional levels (such as MS' legislative systems, governments (see e.g. Goetz & Meyer-Sahling 2008), or party systems (see e.g. Mair 2000)) to a more actor-based approach. The latter involves political parties (see e.g. Ladrech 2002; 2010), civil societal organizations (see e.g. Salgado 2014), interest groups (see e.g. Eising 2008; Dür & Mateo 2014), and social movements (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009; McCauley 2011; Caiani & Graziano 2018).

² These mobilizations have for example surrounded specific EU-policies, such as agriculture, fishery, the environment, or migration. Yet, they have also focused on issues related to the EU polity, like the austerity crisis of 2008 (Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015), referendum campaigns (e.g. the 'Brexit' vote in 2016, the Dutch and French referendums in 2005, etc.) (see e.g. FitzGibbon 2011), and the anti-TTIP campaign in 2016 (see e.g. Caiani & Graziano 2018).

Bourne and Chatzopoulou (2015) argue that social movement Europeanisation “occurs when movements collaborate, or make horizontal communicative linkages with movements in other countries, contest authorities beyond the state, frame issues as European and claim an European identity” (2015: 34). Hence, scholars expect that collective actors will begin changing their strategies by both targeting and involving actors from the EU-level and other EU member states (Ibid.). In other words, the EU arena offers new possible protest targets, but also a shared space of contention for collective actors from across the EU member states (Monforte 2014).

Currently, we know a lot about the different varieties of *left-wing* bottom-up Europeanization, both with regards to the actors’ strategies, frame shifts, and transnational collaborative relations in response to the new opportunities offered by the European polity setting (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009; Monforte 2014; Parks 2015; Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015). Yet, while this literature is continuously expanding (see e.g. Caiani & Graziano 2018), so far, there has not been much exploration of the Europeanization of *far right* extra-parliamentary³ mobilization (for partial exceptions, see e.g. Caiani & Kröll 2015; Denes 2012). While the conceptualization of the ‘far right’ is highly contested, scholars broadly agree upon several defining features, namely that they adhere to nationalism, authoritarianism, and are against immigration. More elaborately, Fielitz and Laloire (2016) conceptualise far right actors as subscribing to a “notion of inequality among human beings, combining the supremacy of a particular nation, ‘race’ or ‘civilization’ with ambitions for an authoritarian transformation of values and styles of government” (2016: 16). This will act as the temporary definition throughout the introductory section (a further conceptualization of the ‘far right’ follows in Chapter 4)⁴.

Just as it has been relevant to explore the changing configurations of left-wing extra-parliamentary mobilization due to the EU, in order to get a better understanding of the Union’s effect on European civil society, so it is relevant to explore the changes for far right mobilization. Considering the topic of far right Europeanization more generally, there is nothing indicating that far-right actors do not Europeanize their contention to the same degree as the left (albeit most likely not in the same manner). For one, many “movements on the right” strongly criticize the EU, as they “feel that national identities are under threat, not only as a result of loss of national sovereignty, but also due to EU policies that foster immigration and cultural pluralism and

³ Due to the plethora of different far right organizations active outside of party politics, I conglomerately define these groups as ‘extra-parliamentary’ (for a similar use of the term, see e.g. Caiani et al. 2012).

⁴ In the subsequent overview of the existing literature, the text will refer to other terms used to define specific types of far right actors, if and when necessary. For instance, further below, I refer to a finding by Kriesi (2005) about the ‘populist right’. This wording was not changed to the ‘far right’ as the two concepts do not refer to exactly the same group of actors.

integration” (Flesher Fominaya 2014: 4). Yet, aside from the far right *parties*’ Europeanization (through e.g. EP-participation and deliberation) (see e.g. Brack & Startin 2015; Brack 2014; Almeida 2010), and more general European far right transnational cooperation (see e.g. Hafez 2014; Zúquete 2015), we do not actually know a lot about the Europeanization process of far right actors in terms of protest politics (Hutter 2014a)⁵. Thus, the following thesis sets out to explore how and why far-right extra-parliamentary actors Europeanize their mobilization, with a focus on their collective action, networks, and frames.

1.1. IDENTIFYING THE RESEARCH GAPS

EUROSCEPTIC EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY ACTORS AND THE EU

Even though many left-wing groups are pro-EU, certain groups mobilize around issues, or hold views on Europe and European integration that conflict with the EU decision-makers’ political visions for the continent. The most commonly explored instance of such sentiments relates to the groups’ transnational discussions about, and calls for, an ‘alternative Europe’ (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2007; 2009; Agustín 2017). This critique mainly targets the “design of the European institutions, as well as the EU’s policy choices,” and is voiced by both local, national, and transnational actors (della Porta 2006: 1; See also FitzGibbon et al. 2016).

Della Porta and Caiani (2009) refer to these actors as *Critical Europeanists*, as they advocate for alternative policies, yet still call for more EU competences in a given area. Hence, they “do not call [...] for a return to the nation state, but for a process of Europeanisation from below” (della Porta 2006: 16). Yet, we also find the *Eurosceptics* among the critics. These actors “want to limit European competences and are critical of the EU’s specific policies” (Ibid: 16; See also Andretta & Caiani 2005), and often argue against the idea of an ‘Ever closer Union’. Most previous research on Eurosceptic social movements or protest groups has either focused on these actors in their own, *national* settings (see e.g. FitzGibbon 2011; Usherwood 2013) or considered the Europeanization of transnational *progressive* mobilizations (see della Porta & Caiani 2009; Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015; Monforte 2014; Agustín 2017). Moreover, there is a tendency in the literature to focus on the mobilizations that, while being critical, still largely agree with the EU’s general *raison d’être*, thereby omitting the actors who oppose the international organization and its *raison d’être*. These actors often belong to the European far right, a group of actors

⁵ Dieter Rucht defines protest politics as “usually denot[ing] the deliberate and public use of protest by groups or organizations (but rarely individuals) that seek to influence a political decision or process, which they perceive as having negative consequences for themselves, another group or society as whole” (as cited in Hutter 2014a: 27).

that “represents an important reservoir of contestation against the European polity” (Almeida 2010: 250),⁶ but whose contestation is still somewhat underexplored.

While the French debate around the EU Constitution in 2005 has been identified as one of the first times left-wing Eurosceptics mobilized (see e.g. FitzGibbon & Leruth 2016), the far right was “provided little to no opportunities” to mobilize on this issue compared to the EP-elections of 2004 (Minkenberg & Perrineau 2007). However, more recently, both at the Dutch referendum on the ‘Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement’ in 2016⁷ and the referendum on the British EU-exit (the so-called Brexit)⁸, far right non- and institutional actors were very vocal, and to some extent determining for the negative end-results of the votes. Similarly, the 2018 debates about the ratification of the UN’s ‘Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration’ was also strongly contested by the far right across Europe, and several member states abandoned the agreement, including Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Austria (Gatti 2018).

The far right thus increasingly challenges the EU institutions and their ethos, thereby also opposing the EU and its role as one of the main European decision-making polities. Combined with the EU’s more or less self-created various crises within the last decade (financial, legitimacy, and migrant crisis, to name a few), a strong Eurosceptic far right presents itself as an “inconvenient solidarity” for proponents of the EU (Caiani & Pavan 2017). Its various “alliance structures [...] oppose and distort current efforts towards transnational democratisation, particularly at the European level” (Ibid: 147) thereby endangering the project of an ‘Ever Closer Union’ as set out in the Treaty of Rome in 1957. It is thus of high relevance to consider if, how, and when European far right extra-parliamentary actors mobilize against, or around, EU policies, to better understand the (potential) challenge posed by such actors.

⁶ Historically, numerous far right parties were actually pro-EU. As late as 1993, for instance, *Front National* still argued that there should be “‘a coherent political project’ that comprised foreign and defence policy, common immigration controls, a common currency and a common European border agency” (McGowan 2012: 671). Yet, together with other political activists, the far right increasingly began problematizing the political output of the EU after the introduction of the Maastricht Treaty (see e.g. Usherwood 2013).

⁷ The initial campaign to collect the required signatures for the referendum was organised by *GeenPeil*, a cooperation between the blog *GeenStijl* (Literal translation: *No Style*), the hard Eurosceptic *Burgercomité EU* (*Citizens Committee EU*) organization, and the then far right think tank (now party) *Forum voor Democratie* (*Forum for Democracy*) (Teffer 2016).

⁸ Particularly the far right hard Eurosceptic *UK Independence Party* (*UKIP*) campaigned strongly for a ‘leave’, and its political group in the EP, the EPDD, co-financed some of the *Leave.EU* and *Grassroots Out* campaigns’ events and activities (FitzGibbon & Leruth 2016). Moreover, ‘immigration’ was a major topic of the referendum campaign, and UKIP underlined the need to “take back control of our borders” (see e.g. UKIP poster in Stewart & Mason 2016).

FAR RIGHT EUROPEANIZATION OF PROTESTS, NETWORKS, AND IDENTITIES

Since the early 1990s, immigration has become one of the most salient topics of political contention at the civil societal level, mainly due to the role of the ‘populist right’ (Kriesi 2015: 8). Based on protest event data, Hutter and Kriesi (2013) show that while cultural liberalism was the main reason for protests up until the 1990-2000s, by 2013, immigration was in the lead. Hence, even though these protests include both pro- and anti-immigration events, the general right-wing turn in European politics means that far-right extra-parliamentary actors have opportune possibilities to voice their concerns as the political “climate” has become “less repressive” (Mudde 2017a: 609). Moreover, the left-wing’s lacking ability to agree on a common future direction provides further opportunities for far right gains (Halikiopoulou in Sheehy 2017).

Within the last decades, an approachment has occurred between the political parties and the extra-parliamentary far right, both due to issue-congruence, but also because they at times form broad coalitions (Ruzza 2017). Yet, even though “[s]treet politics have become a more integral part of the broader [populist radical right] movement” (Mudde 2017a: 609), far right protest politics is still under-explored (for exceptions see e.g. Ruzza 2017; Caiani et al. 2012; Castelli Gattinara 2018; Fielitz & Laloire 2016). Most social movement researchers instead tend to focus on left-libertarian collective actors and have “been slow to address the ‘bad side’ of social movement activism” (Caiani et al. 2012: 3). This ‘bad side’ is continuously expanding and changing its expression forms across Europe (see e.g. Fielitz & Laloire 2016; Berntzen 2018a), creating its own specific identities, organizational set-ups, political viewpoints, activities, repertoires, aims, and spaces for contention.

The extra-parliamentary actors not only count protest groups, but also online media platforms, subcultural groupuscules, vigilante groups, football hooligans, think tanks, publishing houses, etcetera (see e.g. Veugelers & Menard 2018 for an overview). These various organizations can be used by the far right actors to establish strong social roots, linking the cultural with the political (Ruzza 2017) but also to influence the general population through protest actions (see e.g. Caiani et al. 2012). Yet, while the far right *institutional* actors, i.e. the parties, are experiencing a surge in electoral gains in most European countries (see e.g. BBC 2019b), far-right extra-parliamentary mobilizations still face many obstacles and much hostility in several European countries. This includes both their protests (in the shape of e.g. the police not permitting the demonstration, counter-demonstrations, threats from anti-fascist activists, plus the reputational costs for the participants), their more general political opportunities, and the organization of events (like hotels or conference centres refusing to host the gathering (see e.g. Berntzen et al. 2017)). Yet, in recent years, new far right expression forms challenge these suppressive attempts, making it even more relevant to explore the extra-parliamentary far right level further, to gain a deeper understanding of its current articulation.

Hence, there is a more general lack of explorations of far right activism; both in terms of the national and transnational level, and with the employment of social movement theories (see e.g. Caiani et al. 2012). Concerning their approach and protest actions towards the EU and more general European level, it is of great interest to explore how (and whether) these actors strategize to gain more influence on this particular decision-making polity, either through national or transnational avenues. This is relevant in order to gain a deeper understanding of the mobilization patterns and strengths and weaknesses of far right extra-parliamentary contention. Moreover, the anticipated varied strategies by the far right actors across the member states can also shed more light on the (continued) relevance of the national context in terms of far right mobilization.

Returning to a consideration of the far right's views on 'Europe' and the EU, many actors contest the EU's policy output (if not the entire institution), yet, at the same time, they also frequently refer to the need to uphold European unity. As Bar-On (2011) states, "the stances of most of the extreme right-wing political parties within the European Union have become identical: support for pan European unity, and rejection of the contemporary 'technocratic' EU" (2011: 208). This has puzzled many scholars, as this seemingly infers a departure from their nationalist ideologies, which usually involves a discursive attempt to distinguish their own nation-state from all others. Thus, while it seems rather logical that left-wing movements and parties look for international allies (due to their internationalist outlook), from a purely ideological viewpoint, it appears as an "implicit contradiction" that far right actors should cooperate transnationally (Caiani 2014: 15; see also Minkenberg & Perrineau 2007). While some scholars contend that researchers tend to "inflate" the ideological alliances and networks amongst the European far right parties (see Mudde 2017b), others have demonstrated their rather close relations to actors abroad (see e.g. Zúquete 2015; Hafez 2014). Therefore, there is a need for more research that explores the transnational links between the different European far right actors, in order to evaluate their commitment to a (potentially) shared agenda.

One must keep in mind, however, that this transnational networking by far is nothing new. Conceptualising 'transnational' movements as consisting of groups that retain their rooting "in national political contexts, which they transcend in order to collaborate with other nationally rooted groups and organizations to form transnational networks" (Flesher Fominaya 2014:40), far right transnational interaction in fact has a long trajectory. One can *at least* trace it back to the European interwar period, where especially the fascist organizations attempted to create closer European ties and shared European visions of society (see e.g. Camus & Lebourg 2017; Mammone 2014; Schlembach 2011). This neo-fascist 'radical Europeanism' is still expressed today, and visible through:

[...] increasing networking attempts on organisational levels that contradict the exclusive juxtaposition of nationalism and internationalism. It is certainly the case that both far right political parties and the militant neo-Nazi scenes are building European connections not solely on the basis of co-operation but with reference to a perceived common ‘destiny’. (Schlembach 2011: 1332)

The far right thus also refers to a common ‘European identity’, albeit of a very different, and much more exclusionary, sort than the left-wing mobilizations.

Thus, increasingly, and especially since the turn of the century, the far right has begun defending a society that “transcends the nation-state (for example, the focus of ‘native’ Europeans)” (Zúquete 2015: 81). The ‘us’, many current far right actors wish to protect, refers to a culturally and ethnically homogenous European civilization, whose culture is perceived threatened by the *Muslim* ‘other’ particularly (Hirsch-Hoefler & Mudde 2013). According to Berntzen (2018), the far right has undergone an anti-Islamic turn, involving two processes: the pre-existing far right actors have re-oriented their attention, and the whole scene has expanded, due to the rise of new initiatives and mobilizations (particularly at the extra-parliamentary level). Moreover, since the early 2000s, several far-right actors have begun cooperating transnationally around the topic of anti-Islam (Zúquete 2015; Hafez 2014; Meleagrou-Hitchens & Brun 2013). This has led to the formation of e.g. the *Counter-Jihad Movement* (mainly active online, and includes U.S. actors), which also included transnational networks, such as *Stop the Islamization of Europe* and the *European Defence League*. Their coalition-building frequently takes place around anti-Islam (see e.g. Zúquete 2015), and Hafez (2014) argues that Islamophobia has become “the cornerstone for building pan-European right-wing unity” (2014: 496). Presently, one can thus observe “an emergent anti-Muslim Europeanism” (Denes 2012: 289; see also Berntzen 2019), which aims to “assure the survival of a wider, cross-border, trans-state community” (Zúquete 2015: 81).

Yet, while these ideological links have been explored rather thoroughly, we still do not know much about the actors’ transnational street mobilization endeavours, particularly in relation to the EU. This is somewhat puzzling, especially in light of the growing awareness of their (historical) transnational ambitions (see e.g. Schlembach 2011; Camus & Lebourg 2017), and the very apparent transnational links between many of the groups. Moreover, while there is knowledge of these various cross-actor and -national connections, the insights on the ways they utilize these transnational extra-parliamentary contacts across Europe to further their cause is largely missing. Similarly, while coalition dynamics have received extensive coverage in terms of left-wing mobilization, right-wing coalitions “have been the subject of surprisingly few studies of coalition dynamics. Research has yet to explore the extent to which their formation and longevity is influenced by factors similar to those shaping progressive coalitions” (Van Dyke & Amos 2017: 11). Literature on the far right thus mainly considers the EU-critique of single actors or organizations and not as part of

transnational mobilizations, while the transnational relations of extra-parliamentary far right actors has been considered without a specific research focus, i.e. without attention to their actual strategical goals, nor identity constructions as part of a transnational group.

This becomes even more pertinent to explore further, when considering the current ‘convergence’ of the Western and Eastern European far right. In the far right literature, there has been a tendency to see the two sides of the continent as distinct far right spaces, most likely because of the very different developments of the two scenes (see e.g. Kopecky & Mudde 2003; Pytlas 2018; Minkenberg 2018). However, within the last two decades, there has been an increase in attempts to bridge the two geographical areas, both in terms of drawing far right comparisons, and of including both ‘scenes’ in one framework (e.g. Minkenberg (2015) and his typology of the far right). Yet, so far, there has not been much focus on the transnational connections between the two parts of the continent, besides from some brief mentions (e.g. Merkl 2004 on the German neo-Nazis and their use of the Czech Republic as mail-delivery place; Mareš 2006 on the Hungarian extreme right and their transnational connections more broadly). This lack in research is not particularly surprising, considering the various antipathies and animosities that exist between distinct Eastern and Western European far right actors, such as e.g. the Polish and German far right (due to the WWII legacy) (see e.g. Jajecznik 2015).

However, recent research has shown that the actors cooperate, or at least network, around anti-Islam; both online (Berntzen 2019) and offline (see e.g. Hafez 2014). The role of technological developments for the far right, particularly the evolution of social media, has already garnered rather extensive scholarly attention (see e.g. Caiani & Parenti 2013; Berntzen 2018a). There is no doubt that this online space has furthered the various groups’ mobilizations, by spreading, or *diffusing*, far right initiatives abroad. This has, for instance, been visible in the spread of various new far right group formations to Eastern Europe, such as e.g. the *Autonomous Nationalists* (see Mareš 2012) and the *English Defence League* (see e.g. HopeNotHate n.d.d.; Hafez 2018). These transnational links require further scholarly attention, especially considering the broadening of anti-Islamic discourses to Eastern Europe. This is, in fact, a research topic, which has not amassed much scholarly attention in general, despite the virulent nature of Islamophobic expressions in this part of Europe (see e.g. Narkowicz & Pędziwiatr 2016; Hafez 2018). Its spread through networks with Western European actors is thus worth exploring closer, as these alignments of political views may have repercussions on EU policy-making, for instance in the European Parliament.

Hence, as Zúquete (2015) more broadly states, there is a “lack of systematic research on the agents, dynamics, and networks of this nationalist international” (2015: 370). We already know that the far right cooperates to a high extent transnationally (see e.g. Zúquete 2015; Berntzen 2018a; Caiani & Kröll 2015), however, we still do not know very much about the exact process of this cooperation, including its triggers,

mechanisms, and incentives. Obtaining more knowledge on this aspect of far right mobilization can aid the understanding of the more general strength of the far right in Europe. As argued by Durham and Power (2010), “learning with whom they seek alliances; when and why these alliances work; or, as is more common, when and why they fail, helps us to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the Right” (2010: 5).

Certain research on civil societal Europeanisation has considered the extent to which these various European actors develop ‘European identities’ through their cooperation (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009). Through the voicing of opposition to the EU, the far right in a sense constitute a ‘counter-public’ (Fraser 1993; Agustín 2017), going up against the ethos and *raison d’être* of the EU and its supranational decision-making powers, while at the same time propagating illiberal policy proposals. Yet, most of the analyses of the potential formation of European identities fail to take into account that these identities might not support closer European ties in terms of political integration and ‘ever closer Union’, nor lead to a European citizenry that necessarily agrees with the ethos of the EU. Denes (2012) has already rightly pointed this out concerning the far right through his examination of the *Stop the Islamization of Europe* network. He argues that European ties also may start appearing amongst actors that stand for “illiberal exclusions, vitriolic EU scepticisms, and fierce chauvinisms” (2012: 290). This closely relates to Imig and Tarrow’s (2001a) argument that “Instead of producing a common collective identity, contention over Europe’s future may actually be creating or crystallizing diverse identities around the opportunities and costs of the integration process” (2001: 22), including by actors that promote ‘bad civil societal’ values (Chambers & Kopstein 2001).

This becomes particularly relevant to explore when considering the democratic challenge posed by the far right, and the illiberal measures they advocate, particularly towards third-country immigrants. Not only would these actors’ success likely lead to a re-nationalization of European politics, but also to an even stronger ‘fortification’ of, but also within, Europe (Geddes 2000), as the freedom of movement right could be at risk, while a sort of ‘exclusionary Europeanism’ could rise in its stead (Risse 2015). It becomes even more important to explore, when considering the rise in anti-immigration sentiments across the continent, which has made hostility towards migration an “electorally popular diffuse interest” at the national level (Geddes 2000: 4). Moreover, the left-wing moves towards a more ‘Social Europe’ would most likely be curtailed, if the far right continues its advances, both at the extra-parliamentary and institutional level. In this sense, the question of the far right’s closer cross-border relations around an opposition to the EU and its policies has a strong normative relevance, posing fundamental questions about European democracy and the maintenance of the EU in its current form.

The following thesis thus sets out to explore the far right’s transnational relations further, including how and whether the transnational cooperation evolves around the EU institutions, and the extent to which the different groups develop a shared

collective identity at the transnational level. The period of the so-called ‘refugee crisis’⁹ (2015-2017) provides a good test case for this exploration, as will be further explained below.

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTION AND AIMS

It is the aim with the thesis to answer the following research question:

How and why did the European far right extra-parliamentary actors Fortress Europe and Generation Identity Europeanize their contention during the 2015-2017 ‘refugee crisis’?

In order to begin filling the above outlined research gaps, the thesis sets out to explore the various Europeanization paths and forms of the European far right at the extra-parliamentary level, i.e. in terms of protest politics (Hutter 2014a). As it is the aim to focus on the more strategical side of their contention, the research considers the meso-level of the various organizations, rather than e.g. the microlevel, which often involves the subjective accounts of individual activists (such as e.g. done by della Porta & Caiani 2009). It is thus the aim to explore how the leaders and spokespeople rationalize and justify their groups’ European endeavours, plus which strategies they make use of in order to attain their goals. This entails the acquirement of more knowledge about the groups’ protest repertoires, resources, and strategies, plus their (pan-)European networking and cooperation, and whether and how these activities take place in or around the European institutions, plus the effect it has on the actors’ collective identities. In order to explore these facets, the study will draw on social movement and Europeanization theories, plus the scholarly output about the far right.

One of the main theoretical approaches employed to examine social movements’ and other extra-parliamentary actors’ Europeanization paths is the role of *political opportunities* (see e.g. Caiani & Graziano 2018; Marks & McAdam 1996; Imig & Tarrow 2001a; della Porta & Caiani 2009). Scholars use the approach to analyse the opportunities for mobilization in terms of the ‘open-’ or ‘closedness’ of the domestic and EU political systems (Kriesi 2004), in order to explain the groups’ choices in terms of mobilization. With time, scholars have also begun emphasising the significance of *discursive* openings at both the political and public levels, which influence the mobilizing frames’ resonances (McCammon 2013). This study also employs the political and discursive opportunity structure approaches (POS and DOS), which both work from the assumption that a national extra-parliamentary

⁹ The term ‘refugee crisis’ (also referred to as ‘migrant crisis’) is highly contested. In this thesis, it refers to the European ‘crisis’ that erupted in the summer of 2015, where the arrival of an unprecedented number of refugees led to “an administrative melt-down in several European countries and a breakdown of the European asylum registration system as a whole” (Gerhards et al. 2018: 23).

group will choose its Europeanization path based on an evaluation of the best decision-making body to approach for achieving claim success, or at least resonance (Kriesi 2004). At the same time, many scholars also agree upon the importance of *resources* for extra-parliamentary actors, in terms of successful mobilization (see e.g. McCarthy & Zald 1977). These resources can be of various sizes and types, and there is much scholarly debate about what exactly constitutes a resource (see e.g. McCauley 2011). Yet, financial, human, organizational, and structural resources are frequently mentioned as being amongst the most important, just as cultural, political, and informational resources all have been found to be conducive to a social movement's progress (see e.g. Bandy & Smith 2005). The level of resources also matter highly in terms of a group's Europeanization strategy. Research has thus found that particularly an extra-parliamentary group's *symbolic and material resources* influence its options for gaining access to the EU-powerholders (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009).

Hence, these two aspects (POS/DOS and resource mobilization) are expected to act as independent variables, which influence the groups' distinct mobilization strategies in terms of Europeanization (dependent variable), both in terms of networking and collective action (Monforte 2014). Due to the rather varied domestic POS and DOS across the European continent, the analysis should also shed more light on the cross-contextual responses to the refugee crisis, and how and why the distinct groups decided to instigate cooperation with actors from abroad.

As stated above, we already know that there is a lot of transnational cooperation and networking taking place on the far right (see e.g. Berntzen 2018a; Caiani & Kröll 2015). Yet, it is no easy task to sample the most appropriate research objects to examine such developments. The far right political spectrum consists of a multitude of different actors, both in terms of ideology and organizational forms (see e.g. Fielitz & Laloire 2016; Minkenberg 2018), making it hard to explore the entirety of the actors in one study. However, as we still do not know much about the transnationalization *process* as such, i.e. the rationales and steps involved in the initiation of transnational cooperation, plus how it develops over time, from the outset, I decided to focus the research on already established transnational far right coalitions. I have thus decided to delimit the focus of the investigation on the national groups that participated in two transnational coalitions,¹⁰ which were both highly active in the 'refugee crisis' period, namely *Fortress Europe (FE)* and *Generation Identity (GI)*. *Fortress Europe* is a coalition consisting of both European political parties and protest groups with various

¹⁰ Based on social movement literature, I define a transnational coalition as a *more or less densely connected and means-oriented alliance* between *nationally based groups and actors* (who may derive from both the non- and institutional level), who *pool (certain) resources*, in order to *target a shared opponent* at the *transnational* level. Besides from the *instrumentality* of the cooperation, they do not necessarily share any *closer identity-based affinities* (see Chapter 3 for conceptualization).

political viewpoints (rather akin to the *Counter-Jihad Movement (CJM)*¹¹), while *Generation Identity* is a coalition of similar-minded groupuscules (Griffin 2003), which used the French *Génération Identitaire* (created in 2012) as their blueprint for contention. This choice of sample is a rather unorthodox approach in terms of the existing Europeanization literature. Most of the research either focuses more broadly on the Europeanization of national protests in general (Imig & Tarrow 2001a; Chabanet 2011; Uba & Uggla 2011) or on national case studies (e.g. Rucht 2002 (Germany); Císař & Vráblíková 2010 (Czech Republic); Andretta & Caiani 2005 (Italy); della Porta & Caiani 2006 (Italy)). Some *do* compare a number of EU MS (e.g. Reising 1999 (Germany, France, and Belgium); della Porta & Caiani 2009 (6 MS); Monforte 2014 (France and Germany)), yet, so far, only a few have ventured to focus the research around an already established transnational coalition. In fact, della Porta and Caiani's (2009) research on the *Global Social Forum*, and Agustín's (2017) article on *Diem25* and *PlanB* practically stand alone in this endeavour. With this choice, I thus wish to propose a more innovative framework that considers far right transnational networking in depth, while still maintaining a focus on the national context, in order to deduce the role of the domestic context for far right Europeanization and collective action more generally.

One could argue that to obtain a better understanding of the far right in its complexity, it would be more beneficial to consider the far right actors in one to two national settings, in order to deduce the different Europeanization paths, depending on the type of organization and its resources (such as e.g. Monforte (2014) has done). Yet, as it is the pre-defined aim to consider how exactly the far right networking takes place amongst the different national actors, plus to explore their forms and rationales for transnational collective action, I deemed this approach to be the most suitable. Focusing on the organizational meso-level, it is thus the aim to consider how the organizers and/or leaders of the groups making up the two coalitions (GI and FE) rationalize their participation in the transnational coalitions, and the activities pursued in order to maintain the cooperation. At the same time, this case selection also makes it possible to consider (certain of) the groups in their domestic settings, and explore their collective action strategies, and reasons for setting up and/or joining the coalitions. As a delimitation, I have decided to focus solely on the collective action of the *extra-parliamentary* groups that make up the two coalitions (for more on this choice, see Ch. 2).

As mentioned above, far right collective action is a rather understudied research area, including explorations of the protest actions at the European level, both surrounding the EU, but also more general transnational collective action on the far right (for exceptions, see e.g. Hutter 2014a; Zúquete 2015). To begin closing these research

¹¹ The CJM included both protest groups, single activists, political associations, and political parties (such as *Vlaams Belang* and the *Sweden Democrats*), which found common ground in their anti-Islam stances (see e.g. Berntzen 2018a; Meleagrou-Hitchens & Brun 2013 for more).

gaps, this thesis wishes to both explore the action repertoires and strategies of the different groups more broadly, and to investigate the ways in which they (potentially) include the EU in their protests, either by targeting the institutions, protesting about EU-policy related issues, or approaching the institutions in other ways. This is done by both analysing *all* the extra-parliamentary groups' actions together, and their various mobilization paths and strategies, but also by focusing in on some of the different groups' national contexts and their (potential) influence on the groups' Europeanization of collective action. The analysis will thus examine the groups' political and discursive opportunities at both the domestic and European level, together with particularly their *material* resources, as a means to explain the chosen strategies. This also entails a study of the role attributed to the EU by the different groups, in order to understand the groups' manoeuvring in the 2015-2017 period, and the rationale behind their strategies, which may, or may not, involve contention directed at the EU. Moreover, by choosing two transnational coalitions from the outset, we already know that Europeanization of networks has taken place. Yet, in order to investigate the extent of this collaboration further in terms of street mobilization, the research will explore the scope of the participants at each protest event, in order to deduce the extent of the cooperation. All of these aspects will be considered through a *protest event analysis* (see e.g. Hutter 2014b), based on data drawn from the national groups' own sources, to ensure as encompassing a data set as possible.

The *networking-section* of the thesis will particularly draw on (transnational) coalition-building theories, both developed in relation to the EU-level (Europeanization literature), but also deriving from the broader social movement coalition literature (involving scholars such as Van Dyke (2003); Levi & Murphy 2006; Tarrow 2005; etc.). These theoretical findings are employed to develop a conceptual framework, which guides the analysis of the groups' networking endeavours, both in terms of the initiation, maintenance, and (possible) survival of the coalition. It is expected that the groups will begin coalescing, when they deem that the political and discursive opportunities are open at either the EU- or the European level as such. Moreover, the framework also relies on theoretical expectations drawn from scholarship on the far right, particularly concerning the initiation of the coalitions, and the groups' deliberations in terms of joining forces with actors from abroad. This is not only due to possible respectability and legitimacy concerns (Ahrne et al. 2005), but also due to the differences and feuds between certain Eastern and Western European far right nationalists (e.g. the Czech and Polish far right, and their animosities towards Germany). In a similar vein, it is also the aim to continue the work of Berntzen (2018) and examine the extent to which the 'refugee crisis' led to a further bridging of the Western and Eastern European far right, also at the offline level.

The *framing perspective* has been a prominent feature of several more recent explorations of social movement Europeanization (see e.g. Monforte 2014; della Porta & Caiani 2009), and it is also included in this thesis. However, unlike the aforementioned works, it is not the direct aim here to explore the effect of Europeanization on a movement's frames (i.e. if said frames change due to the new political realities brought by the EU, for instance due to the change in the target of mobilization (see e.g. Monforte 2014 for such an approach)). Instead, the study employs frame analysis for two main purposes. On the one hand, to investigate the issues around which the various groups instigate collective action (as a means to explain the group's Europeanization strategies in terms of collective action). On the other, to explore the extent to which the groups that make up the two respective transnational coalitions develop 'Europeanized' and shared collective identities.

Hence, the analysis includes an exploration of the distinct national groups' political viewpoints and alignment of identities with their European counterparts in relation to their transnational cooperation. This entails the exploration of the groups' *collective action frames* and *collective identity frames* (Snow & Benford 1988; Benford & Snow 2000). The collective action frames involve a collective actor's diagnosis (what is the problem and who is to blame), prognosis (how it should be solved), and motivational frames (why should one act). In order to examine whether the coalition-members develop joint transnational collective identities, the research considers their (potential) creation of a joint, European, protagonist 'us,' which must act united against the antagonist 'them'. This will be done by exploring how the distinct groups construct protagonist identities to define themselves and their supporters, and the juxtaposed internal and external antagonists, who are blamed for the perceived problems (see e.g. Weiß 2017).

APPROACH TO THE STUDY

The theoretical framework briefly outlined above draws on insights developed from both structuralist (political process theory), rationalist (resource mobilization), and culturalist (frame analysis) research approaches. Ascribing to the consideration that "Social problems are not objectively given, but socially constructed" (Hjelmar 1996: 170), the study is placed within a constructivist framework, which integrates the structural and rational theories, as these are considered to interact with each other (see e.g. Oliver et al. 2003). I thus place myself as a social constructivist, yet, also drawing upon rationalist and structuralist approaches.

In alignment with most social movement Europeanization theories, this study considers both political opportunities and resource mobilization as vital for understanding a group's mobilization options and potential strategies. This infers that the research objects are believed to act based on (more or less) rational decision-making capacities. Yet, while "the constraints of structure and the problems of organizing" in terms of resources are vital to take into consideration (Oliver et al.

2003: 226), the actors' reasoning for mobilizing is also very much founded on their subjective perception of reality, or 'what is out there'. They thus act based on their subjective readings of politics, and are strongly impacted by ideas and perceptions, plus the context in which they are situated (in terms of both time, place, and persons).

Hence, the research acknowledges the subjectivity of the individual movement leaders and entrepreneurs, which infer that these actors may pursue other options than the theoretically expected, dependent on their own deliberations. It is thus presumed that other factors guide the actors, aside from structures and rationality. For instance, as also argued in the Theoretical Framework further below, in certain situations, the leaders may not *perceive* the available openings in the system, and thus do not act upon them. Moreover, following the example of Poletta and Jasper (2001), extra-parliamentary groups' *identities* are also doted much importance, especially in terms of their frames and rationales behind their protest actions, which also partly explains why certain actors mobilize despite closed opportunities. These identities may influence the actors' chosen action repertoires and tactics, and thus infer different trajectories than what POS and DOS might expect. In the words of Oliver and her colleagues (2003):

[M]ovements not only develop rational and strategic actions, they continuously draw from cultural memories and repertoires, from values and moral principles to redefine situations, events, and relations in ways that would legitimate action, sanction inaction, gain bystanders' sympathy, reduce governments' ability to use social control resources, and attract media attention to reach distant publics. (2003: 226)

It thus becomes a matter of deducing how the actors perceive their realities, including the consequences of their actions. For one, the actors' *perceptions* of the EU as a political construct may influence their strategies towards the institutions. Moreover, "social institutions" such as the EU, are "not just constraining behaviour, but also affecting the identities, interests, and preferences of actors" (Risse 2018: 128). Simultaneously, the various (trans)national ideas, identities, and structures affect each activist's mindset through different forms of internalization (Olsen as cited in Bache 2003), and this also infers that the groups and actors construct their own visions of 'Europe' and 'European cooperation,' based on their perceptions of reality. Hence, it is important to keep the actors' 'frames of reference' in mind throughout (Eyerman & Jamison as cited in Hjelmar 1996). Such 'frames of reference' can for instance be analysed through 'Frame analysis' (Snow & Benford 1988), an approach, which is frequently employed by social movement scholars as a means to deduce a group's meaning attribution. Movements' frames thus affect and mediate their resources and opportunities (Oliver et al. 2003).

In order to gain a better understanding of the groups' worldviews, mobilization claims, and transnational strategies, there is thus need for extensive amounts of data from several types of sources. This research mainly relies on primary sources,

including accounts about the coalition-building and collective action from the extra-parliamentary groups themselves, both retrieved from their written data and from semi-structured interviews. This will be explained further in the Methodological Framework.

After having accounted for the research question and analytical approach to the research objects, the following section will shortly outline the occurrences during the ‘refugee crisis,’ and explain why this is a good period to investigate the potential for far right Europeanization.

1.3. THE ‘REFUGEE CRISIS’: OPPORTUNE PERIOD FOR FAR RIGHT EUROPEANIZATION?

The European ‘refugee crisis’ involved refugees crossing the EU’s external border, and their distribution across the EU once they arrived to an EU MS. It thus quickly became a pan-European policy issue (for an overview, see BBC 2018). During the ‘crisis’, the EU MS were incapable of finding a common stance, and instead, “the influx of refugees [...] turned nation against nation and exposed the institutional shortcomings of the union’s structure to address questions like external and internal security” (Yardley 2016). The European Commission initially tried to maintain a more humanitarian policy towards the refugees, just as Germany’s Chancellor, Angela Merkel, advocated for a welcoming approach. Yet, several EU member state governments instead wished to restrict the numbers of refugees admitted into their country, plus strengthen the overall immigration legislation. This led to rather polarized perceptions of the right solution to the crisis. As Hartevelde and colleagues (2017) argue, “Many citizens, commentators and political parties, irrespective of their ideology, seemed to blame the EU for the refugee crisis” (2017: 157), either due to its lacking response to aid people in need (mainly left-wing actors) or because it did not do enough to close the external and internal EU borders (mainly the right).

European Context in the 2000s: EU and Europe in Crisis

However, in order to truly understand the ‘refugee crisis’ and the national(ist) responses throughout Europe, one needs to consider it in its political and historical context. Here, particularly four *critical junctures*¹² (i.e. major political crises or turning points with lasting policy effect) are worth mentioning, namely the terrorist attack in New York on September 11, 2001, the economic crisis of 2008, the EU’s crisis of legitimacy, and the 2014 EP-elections.

¹² In the macro-political sense of the word, a ‘critical juncture’ refers to a moment of deep change, involving “(1) a major episode of institutional innovation, (2) occurring in distinct ways, (3) and generating an enduring legacy” (Collier & Munck 2017: 2).

Starting with 9/11, 2001, the Jihadist terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in New York City provided a crucial ‘moral shock’ (see e.g. Monahan 2010)¹³. The attacks led to growing public concern about Muslim immigration, just as the issue received high media coverage, making anti-Muslim discourses an electorally strong political position. During the following two decades, the ‘West’ has witnessed a gradual mainstreaming of the far right claims about Islam (see e.g. Kallis 2013), and various governments have tightened the immigration legislation and the monitoring of Muslim environments (see e.g. Renton 2015). The far right has thus obtained increased political space to voice their claims, inferring a simultaneous moderation of the employed frames and action repertoires by certain actors (consider e.g. the rise of the non-violent *PEGIDA* movement in Germany) (Vorländer et al. 2018). While the Islamist terrorist attacks had become rather sporadic (but not less volatile) in the years since 9/11, ISIS’ proclamation of the caliphate in 2014 (BBC 2014) led to a string of Jihadi terrorist attacks across Western Europe in the 2015-2017 period.

The financial crisis erupted in 2008, and led to a Eurozone debt crisis in 2010, which entailed the bailout of Greece, Ireland, Spain, Cyprus, and Portugal (Walker 2018). The political climate in Europe soured, as the member states fought about how to solve the crisis and what to do next with the Euro-cooperation (see e.g. Hewitt 2012). These conflicts only aided the far right in terms of exhibiting the problems regarding supranational governance and economic unity between such diverse countries and displayed a divided EU-leadership in terms of the best solutions (Ibid.). Yet, while this development meant better opportunities for far right policy influence at the national levels, at the EU-level, the institutions became increasingly inward-looking and closed off for civil societal access of any political colour (see e.g. della Porta & Parks 2018).

Moreover, since the economic crisis (i.e. from around 2010 onwards), the EU has faced a strong level of public distrust in its institutions (European Commission 2017). In the decades preceding the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, European integration was mainly considered an elite-driven process, where the population largely acted with a ‘permissive/tacit consensus’ towards its policy output (i.e. the decisions were either simply passively approved, or at least not contested) (Hooghe & Marks as cited in della Porta 2006). Yet, while deeper integration was accepted acquiescently in the 1980s, by the 1990s, the public, including scholars, started questioning the EU’s democratic legitimacy (Imig & Tarrow 2001a: 7; see also della Porta & Caiani 2009). This criticism only became even more vocal in the aftermath of the Euro, the

¹³ The concept of ‘moral shocks’ was introduced by Jasper, and refers to an occasion, “when an event or situation raises such a sense of outrage in people that they become inclined toward political action, even in the absence of a network of contact” (as cited in Jasper & Poulsen 1995: 498). This could for instance be due to “suddenly imposed grievances,” such as was the attack on 9/11 (Walsh as cited in Ibid: 498; see also Monahan 2010).

Constitutional, and the Lisbon Treaty agreements, which were adopted without much consultation with the national citizens¹⁴. This disquiet further developed during the financial crisis, leading to plummeting levels of support for the Union (see European Commission 2017). The sudden rise in public Euroscepticism across Europe had never been so intense, and it led to a gradual politicization of ‘Europe’ and the ‘European Union’ (see e.g. Risse 2015).

By 2014, the various EU-related crises, plus a fervent debate in some Western European EU member states about Eastern European mobile workers’ access to their welfare benefits (so-called ‘welfare tourism’) (see e.g. Sørensen 2014), the EP-elections showed a remarkable rise in votes for the far right (Halikiopoulou & Vasilopoulou 2014). Moreover, similar results were visible at the national levels. Parties such as the *Danish People’s Party*, the French *Front National* and the Dutch *Freedom Party* made strong gains in their countries’ national elections¹⁵.

All these crises combined meant that the mid-2010s became an opportune moment for the far right extra-parliamentary actors to ‘gather the forces’ and mobilize with the overarching goal of curbing third-country, especially Muslim, immigration, while also criticizing the EU’s supranational powers. Hence, unsurprisingly, the so-called ‘refugee crisis’ led to a strong right-wing mobilization. While progressive and cosmopolitan activists created pan-European pro-refugee movements (such as *Refugees Welcome*), so have more regressive and protectionist movements become exceedingly vocal on the right, leading to a rise in anti-immigration street protests of various natures (Mudde 2017a). With the arrival of thousands of asylum seekers from 2015 onwards, huge anti-immigration demonstrations were organised both by political parties and protest groups in several EU member states, with varying degrees of success (see e.g. Hafez 2018). In the words of Cas Mudde, the ‘refugee crisis’ provided a ‘perfect storm’ for the populist radical right parties. It contained “the refugee crisis, which went together with the nativism. The terrorism attacks, which go together with the authoritarianism. And the European crisis goes together with the populism” (as cited in Beauchamp 2016). It thus provided fertile grounds for actors calling for the retraction of EU competences, and a return of sovereignty to the nation states (i.e. negative Europeanization (Dehousse 2013)).

¹⁴ It was, for instance, only Ireland, which decided to hold a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty in 2008. It led to a majority vote for ‘No’ (see e.g. FitzGibbon 2011), yet, after minor concessions, the Treaty was ratified in Ireland as well.

¹⁵ The explanations for these strong electoral gains to the European far right observable across the continent are very diverse, depending on the scholarly perspective taken. Goodwin and Eatwell (2018), for instance, explain it through 4 historic shifts (or the four D’s): Destruction of historical identities and way of life; De-alignment between the traditional parties and the electorate; Distrust in politics and politicians; and (relative) Deprivation (2018).

This was also the case in Eastern and Central Europe, despite the relatively small Muslim population compared to Western Europe (e.g. 0.1% Muslims in Poland, Czech Republic, and Slovakia) (Minkenberg 2018: 16). Yet, several political parties already voiced anti-Islam sentiments prior to the ‘refugee crisis’, just as public opinion on the topic was very similar to that of Western Europe (Ibid.). As the ‘crisis’ unrolled, especially the governments of the Visegrad countries began expressing very strong sentiments against Muslim immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

The period of the European ‘refugee crisis’ (2015-2017) is thus considered an opportune moment to investigate far right collective actors’ Europeanization process, due to its pan-European policy dimension and the debates regarding the delegation of the refugees and immigrants amongst the EU member states, plus the reinforcement of the EU’s external borders and the (potential) re-establishment of the national ones. These factors infer that the scope of the issues of immigration and asylum became ‘European’, and that the EU MS were required to come up with common solutions, leading to possible opportunities for far right mobilization at the EU-level to attempt to change the policy-outcome. Hence, the period is chosen due to the expectation that *if* far right extra-parliamentary groups Europeanize their contention, then this is the most likely period for them to do so.

1.4. THESIS OVERVIEW

The thesis consists of ten chapters. **Chapter 2** consists of the methodological framework. It explains the research design, which consists of a collective case study of the two transnational coalitions. Their Europeanization will be analysed with the help of protest event analysis, a moderated version of process tracing, and frame analysis. The chapter also outlines the data collection, which mainly consists of primary sources gathered from the distinct groups’ websites, Facebook pages, and through semi-structured interviews, plus secondary sources in the shape of newspaper articles, anti-racist groups’ reports, and expert interviews with scholars of far right politics. **Chapter 3** explains the theoretical framework, which guides the analysis of the far right extra-parliamentary actors’ Europeanization paths. It mainly consists of social movement, far right, and Europeanization theories, and focuses on the metalevel of political organization, i.e. the distinct groups’ leaders and spokespersons and their collective action and network strategies.

In order to situate the two cases within the far right spectrum, **Chapter 4** conceptualizes the term ‘far right,’ and explains which *European* actors, this study considers as belonging to that particular group. The ‘far right’ will be divided into two sub-categories, namely the ‘radical’ and the ‘extreme’ right, which again will be further divided into the ‘Populist right’, ‘Anti-Islam’, and ‘New right’, plus ‘(Neo-) Fascist’ and ‘(Neo-)Nazi’ groups. The final part of the chapter places the investigated groups in their respective categories, together with other European groups that exemplify the distinct categories.

The ensuing analysis starts out with a consideration of the likely Europeanization strategies for the *extra-parliamentary* national groups taking part in the two transnational coalitions GI and FE, based on certain of their organizational and ideational facets (**Chapter 5**). The chapter outlines the groups' material and symbolic resources, and includes an exploration of their protest tactics, argumentation style, and political viewpoints, illuminated through an analysis of their main collective action frames. The chapter concludes with a discussion that aligns the findings with existing Europeanization literature, in order to determine the actors' most plausible Europeanization paths.

The remaining four chapters are divided into two sections, which focus on the Europeanization of collective action and networks respectively. **Section 1** involves **Chapter 6 and Chapter 7** and consists of an exploration of the groups' collective action during the 'refugee crisis' (i.e. the 2015-2017 period). The section begins with an introduction that 'sets the political scene' in the period, by outlining the EU and the EU MS' decisions (or lack thereof) and conflicts during the 'crisis', and the (potential) political and discursive opportunities that ensued. Moreover, as the analyses in Chapters 6 and 7 also focus in on the collective action of six distinct groups,¹⁶ which are based in Germany, the Netherlands, France, and the Czech Republic, the introduction will also shortly outline the POS and DOS for the extra-parliamentary far right in these countries, before beginning the actual analyses. Chapters 6 and 7 consist of analyses of the protest events carried out by the participating *extra-parliamentary* groups in GI (Chapter 6) and FE (Chapter 7). These chapters mainly draw on the method of protest event analysis (see e.g. Hutter 2014b). At the same time, the groups' blame attributions in their respective protest actions will be deduced with the help of frame analysis, in order to gain a better understanding of their particular mobilization aims. Both chapters are outlined accordingly: The first part compares the groups' action forms and frequencies in the 2015-2017 period; the second focuses on the groups' various Europeanization paths and strategies; and the third considers the three selected groups and their domestic contexts. Finally, the chapters sum up the findings and explain the groups' Europeanization strategies.

Section 2 includes **Chapter 8 and Chapter 9**. It considers the transnational networking between the various GI and FE groups by analysing their coalition-building endeavours and the developments of their cooperation. The section begins with a brief introduction, which recaptures the main aspects from the theoretical framework. The chapters are again divided according to the coalitions (Chapter 8 for GI and Chapter 9 for FE). They both consider how the distinct groups initiated, maintained, and (potentially) sustained their cooperation, both through various diffusion processes and coalition-building activities, such as resource pooling, transnational communication, joint social and protest events, plus their more general

¹⁶ PEGIDA Germany, PEGIDA Netherlands, and Blok against Islam for FE, and GI France, GI Germany, and GI Czech Republic for GI (see more about this selection in Chapter 3).

strategic deliberations about the aims of the coalition. Moreover, the chapters also explores the two coalitions' (potential) development of shared collective identity frames, as such joint perceptions can aid the survival of a coalition.

Finally, **Chapter 10** consists of the conclusion. It sums up the findings, draws comparisons between the two cases, and broadens out the discussion to the general findings regarding social movement Europeanization, and the European far right.

Table 1.1: Thesis Structure.

Section/Chapter	Title
Chapter 1	Introduction
Chapter 2	Methodological Framework
Chapter 3	Theoretical Framework
Chapter 4	Introducing the 'Far Right'
Chapter 5	Generation Identity and Fortress Europe: Resources and Likely Europeanization Strategy
Section 1 (Chapter 6+7)	Europeanization of Collective Action: Protest Event Analysis
Section 2 (Chapter 8+9)	Europeanization of Networks: Coalition-Building Analysis
Chapter 10	Conclusion and Discussion of Findings

CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The thesis analyses the Europeanization of the far right during the ‘refugee crisis.’ In order to do so, I utilise a multiple case study research design, which explores the two transnational coalitions *Fortress Europe (FE)* and *Generation Identity (GI)*, and the national groups that make up these two coalitions. The study mainly draws on Europeanization theories, which will be outlined in Chapter 3. This chapter outlines the methodological framework, and explains the methods required to analyse the Europeanization of the national far right groups’ networks, collective action, and collective identities, and the strategic deliberations involved in these processes, including the role of the domestic and European contexts. The analysis takes an actor-based approach, and explores the *meso-level* of contention, i.e. it focuses on the organizational leadership and their deliberations and frame constructions within a specific, and ever-changing, context. By taking this very context-sensitive approach to the research (both in terms of geographical setting and time), my scholarly contribution is not so much to say anything general about how transnational far right coalitions work, but rather how these two *specific* coalitions worked in the European context. At the same time, it *will* permit me to say something more specific about far right *Europeanization*, and the research thus aims at furthering the understanding of the various processes and events involved in *far right Europeanization*.

The actor-focused and context-specific approach signifies that the research focuses on the role of people, situations, and events and their mutual influences, placing it firmly within qualitative approaches (Maxwell 2013). In order to deduce the groups’ frames, protest events, and networking strategies, the research employs mixed methods, namely frame analysis and protest event analysis. The data consists of a variety of different sources. The primary data was collected from both on- and offline sources, and consists of the national groups’ Facebook ‘pages’, their websites, and semi-structured interviews with key informants from the groups. The secondary data instead consists of newspaper sources, reports by anti-racist organizations, scholarly analyses of the groups, and expert interviews with scholars of the far right. The following chapter further explains the decisions regarding the research design, methods, and data collection.

2.1. RESEARCH DESIGN: CASE STUDY

In order to explore the Europeanization of the far right at the extra-parliamentary, protest political level, and to obtain as deep an understanding as possible of the phenomenon, I have decided to base the research around two transnational far right coalitions, which consist of national groups from across Europe. I selected the two

most fitting cases after a thorough investigation of the European far right extra-parliamentary scene in the period under investigation (i.e. 2015-2017). The participating groups in both coalitions 1) are considered part of the far right (see e.g. Fielitz & Laloire 2016), 2) mobilized rather strongly through various protest actions during the so-called ‘refugee crisis,’ and 3) contain groups from both Western, Central, and Eastern Europe. The following section further introduces the ‘case study approach,’ and explains how the approach is applied in this study.

Qualitative Case Studies: What is a ‘Case Study’?

In the words of Creswell (2013), a case study “explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, indepth data collection involving multiple sources of information [...] and reports a case description and case themes” (2013: 97). A case study is thus an unobtrusive and context-sensitive approach to social science (Yin 2003). Miles and Huberman similarly define the unit of analysis, i.e. the ‘case,’ as “a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context” (as cited in Baxter & Jack 2008: 545). Hence, in qualitative research, particularly the emphasis on context is important, as an occurrence may not appear or act in the same way in Setting B as it did in Setting A. This is especially important here as the research considers numerous national political, social, and historical settings. One must therefore account for, and understand, the domestic contexts, as their particular natures are likely to affect the outcome for the various groups under exploration.

Instrumental Collective Case Study

The research focuses on two cases, making it a *collective case study* (Stake 1994). The cases are *instrumental*, as they are chosen in order to gain more insight into a given phenomenon (Ibid.), i.e. the Europeanization of the far right. Hence, as Grandy (2010) explains, in instrumental case studies, the study focus tends to “be known in advance and designed around established theory or methods” (2010: 474).

One frequently employs case studies as a means to test or create theories (Yin 2003). This is also the partial goal of this thesis, namely, to explore the explanatory power of (transnational) social movement and Europeanization theories on *far right* mobilizations. It is also often the purpose of collective case studies to compare the differences and similarities between the researched cases. This is not the *explicit* aim of this thesis, due to their great heterogeneity in terms of both organizational set-up, timing of coalition-building, membership base, and actor types (see Case Selection below). Yet, at the same time, they *do* have certain overlapping features, which make a comparison possible (such as their worldviews, resources, collective identity frames, collective action strategies, and protest repertoires). Hence, they neither fit into the framework of ‘most similar’ nor ‘most different’ cases (Yin 2003).

The limited number of cases makes it impossible to draw firm and general conclusions about the developments and outcomes of far right transnational coalitions. This also relates to the importance of the given context at the time of exploration, as the particular occurrences of events are expected to shape the actions taken by the actors under exploration (Maxwell 2013), thereby making it hard to transfer the findings to other (similar) cases. In this sense, the case exploration *period* also forms part of the ‘case’, as the ‘refugee crisis’ period was intentionally chosen, due to the expectation of Europeanization taking place. Moreover, their distinct natures of having developed during a *particular* European crisis and context of general EU malaise more generally (see Chapter 1) of course also infers limitations to their generalizability. Hence, it is thus the partial aim to “elucidate local processes, meanings, and contextual influences in *particular settings or cases*” (Ibid: 99, *emphasis added*). Such a context-specific approach entails a lacking ability to produce generalizable findings. This makes Grandy (2010) argue that instead of aiming towards this goal, one should instead work towards achieving *richness*, in order to be able to use the established knowledge to develop further theoretical propositions. The research thus aims to identify certain patterns and themes, which can be employed at a later stage to both compare with other cases (in order to explore its *transferability*), and to build theory.

Hence, this first step in terms of exploring far right Europeanization can be employed by future research as a starting point for further investigation of the far-right extra-parliamentary scene and its relationship to Europe and the EU. At the same time, the provision of an understanding of how the groups justify and negotiate coalition-work and protest actions both at the national and transnational level gives stronger insights into European far right mobilization more generally. This especially relates to the groups’ arguments for transnational coalition building, their protest targeting, and their transnational protest strategies (for instance, in terms of avoiding repression).

Selecting the Cases

The sampling strategy for the cases was *purposive* (Maxwell 2013), as I deliberately chose the two coalitions in order to obtain the most relevant information in relation to my research questions and ambitions with the study. The two far right transnational coalitions were first and foremost chosen based on their adherence to the same overarching mobilisation, namely against non-European (mainly Muslim) immigrants and their descendants. Other criteria included their high protest activity levels in the period of investigation (2015-2017), their geographical scopes (including both Northern, Western, Southern, and Eastern European members), and the varieties of organizations, protest strategies, and coalition goals. This, of course, has certain implications for the findings, as the fact that I chose the groups based on the knowledge of their cooperation, means that I exclude actors, which do not partake in such transnational networking activities, and thus, undergo a different path of Europeanization, or do not Europeanize at all.

With all these deliberations in mind, the choice has fallen on the two transnational far right coalitions *Generation Identity* (GI) and *Fortress Europe* (FE).

*Case 1: Generation Identity (GI): A Coalition of Identitarian Groupuscules*¹⁷

Generation Identity derives from the French groupuscule *Identitarian Bloc* (*Bloc Identitaire*). In 2012, it created the youth division *Génération Identitaire* (GI France). After *GI France*'s first public protest on the roof of a mosque in Poitiers in October 2012 (*Génération Identitaire 2012*), several *Generation Identity* groups started appearing across Europe, both at the local and national level. Today, there are 12 official national GI groups across the continent (plus two in the U.S. and Canada) (see e.g. HopeNotHate n.d.c). A growing literature focuses on particularly the German and Austrian groups (see e.g. Bruns et al. 2017; Goetz et al. 2017; Ajanovic et al. 2016), but also the French (Zúquete 2018), and Czech groups (Dlouhý 2016a; 2016b) have received scholarly attention. Yet, there is hardly any literature on the movement as a transnational phenomenon (see Zúquete 2018 for a partial exception).

Table 2.1: List of national GI groups in Europe

GI National Groups	Country	Founded (and joined GI coalition)
Génération Identitaire	France	2012
Identitäre Bewegung Österreich	Austria	2012
Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland	Germany	2012 (formally 2014)
Generazione Identitaria	Italy	2012
Identitäre Bewegung Schweiz	Switzerland	2013
Generace Identity	Czech Republic	2013
Generacija Identitete	Slovenia	2014
Identitás Generáció	Hungary	2014 (Website 2016)
Ruch Tożsamościowy Polska	Poland	2017
Generation Identity UK & Ireland	UK & Ireland	2017
Generation Identitær	Denmark	2017
Generatie Identiteit ¹⁸	Belgium	2017

As a matter of simplicity, and to avoid confusion, in the thesis, I will refer to all of the national GI groups as ‘GI country name’, i.e. ‘GI France’ or ‘GI Czech Republic’.

¹⁷ French researchers tend to define both BI and GI as ‘groupuscules’. Griffin (2003) defines the groupuscular right as “a non-hierarchical, leaderless and centreless (or rather polycentric) movement with fluid boundaries and constantly changing components” (2003: 30). The autonomous actors making up these groups tend to act as a counter-culture against liberalism.

¹⁸ The Belgian group shares its name with the Dutch branch of the GI network. Yet, as the Dutch activists do not share the same ‘corporate identity’ as the other GI groups listed, this particular group has not been included in the case study.

Case 2: Fortress Europe: A Coalition of Protest Groups and Political Parties

In January 2016, 12 European extra-parliamentary actors and political parties signed the so-called *Prague Declaration*, and set up the *Fortress Europe* (FE) coalition. FE was initiated by a protest movement, *PEGIDA Germany* (*PEGIDA Deutschland*), and the Czech alliance between the political party *Dawn* (*Úsvit*) and the protest group *Block against Islam* (*Bloc proti Islamú*). Except for *PEGIDA Germany*, all the groups had rather small electoral and/or protest support and membership levels at the time. Several studies have considered the rationale, ideology, and participant demography of *PEGIDA Germany* and the Dresden protests (see e.g. Rippl et al. 2016; Daphi et al. 2015; Dostal 2015; Druxes 2016; Vorländer et al. 2018). Yet, the FE-coalition has hardly received any scholarly attention so far, except for some brief explorations in studies focusing on *PEGIDA Germany* (see e.g. Vorländer et al. 2018) or the Czech *IVČRN* (see e.g. Prokupkova 2018b).

Table 2.2: List of national FE-groups.

(Official) FE members	Country	Type of Actor	Joining FE¹⁹
PEGIDA Deutschland	Germany	Protest group	23.1.2016
Blok proti Islamú (BPI)	Czech Republic	Protest group	23.1.2016
PEGIDA Österreich	Austria	Protest group	23.1.2016
PEGIDA Nederlands	Netherlands	Protest group	23.1.2016
PEGIDA Bulgaria ²⁰	Bulgaria	Protest group	23.1.2016
Úsvit	Czech Republic	Political party	23.1.2016
NGO ISIS/ Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond (EKRE) ²¹	Estonia	Blog / Political party	23.1.2016
Lega Nord	Italy	Political party	23.1.2016
Ruch Narodowy	Poland	Political party	23.1.2016
Odvaha	Slovakia	Political party	23.1.2016
PEGIDA UK	UK	Protest group	24.1.2016
For Frihed	Denmark	Protest group	24.1.2016

¹⁹ Based on the date of signing the *Prague Declaration*.

²⁰ It was very difficult to find any data on *PEGIDA Bulgaria*, besides from its Facebook page. All, I could deduce, was that it organized a protest in January 2015 (HopeNotHate n.d.a.), and based on the lacking information, I decided to not include the group in Chapter 7, which considers the collective action of the extra-parliamentary FE-groups.

²¹ Georg Kirsberg and Maria Kaljuste set up *NGO ISIS*, or *NGO International Stop Islam/Immigration Society*, in August 2015, in response to the ‘refugee crisis’. Kaljuste was also a member of *EKRE*, and through her participation in *Fortress Europe*, both *NGO ISIS* and *EKRE* was represented and participated in FE-related events.

Later Accessions			
Respeto	Spain	Political party	16.5.2016
Identity Ireland	Ireland	Political party	16.5.2016
Résistance Républicaine	France	Political blog	16.5.2016
Riposte Laïque	France	Political blog	16.5.2016
SIEL	France	Political party	16.5.2016
Nacionalinis Interesas	Lithuania	Political association	16.5.2016

Cases with Embedded Cases: Transnational Coalition Units with National Subunits

When exploring the Europeanization of extra-parliamentary far right actors, it is also the aim to consider the individual national groups making up the transnational coalitions, in order to get a more holistic understanding of the Europeanization process. Case study research also allows for such an approach by permitting the consideration of embedded subunits within a given case (Yin 2003). In this study, the subunits consist of the national groups making up the two coalitions (i.e. *PEGIDA Germany* is a subunit of *Fortress Europe*, while *GI Germany* is a subunit of *Generation Identity*). These subunits can be explored by either analysing the data separately within each subunit (a ‘within case analysis’), between the subunits (‘between case analysis’), or across the subunits (‘cross-case analysis’).

In order to limit the sample of embedded cases, I have chosen a sampling logic, which focuses on those GI and FE groups, which I could identify as being an *active* part of the *offline* coalition (i.e. not GI groups that only have an online presence, or groups that participated in the FE-meetings, but did not sign the *Prague Declaration*). For the *Generation Identity* coalition, it is frequently only *GI France*, *GI Austria*, *GI Germany* and *GI Italy*, which are mentioned as members of the European GI ‘movement’. However, I decided to expand this selection to other GI groups, which I quickly discovered to have both adopted the GI-logo and *raison d’être*, plus cooperated with the four groups in the explored period. I thus collected data for *GI France*, *GI Italy*, *GI Austria*, *GI Germany*, *GI Czech Republic*, *GI Slovenia*, *GI Hungary*, and *GI Poland*. For *Fortress Europe*, I focused on the main coalition partners that took part in the January and/or May 2016 meetings in the Czech Republic (see above for full list of actors). This involves 12 groups in January and 6 in May. I only included the main organizations plus groups that were relatively straightforward to identify (unlike e.g. *PEGIDA Bulgaria*, the Finnish participants, plus smaller parties mentioned in various sources).

The analysis of the coalition groups’ collective action developments in the 2015-2017 period would ideally entail an exploration of *all* of the national groups for which I have collected data. Yet, due to various constraining factors, the analysis has certain limitations. For one, because of the focus on the Europeanization of *extra-parliamentary* far right actors, plus the rather limited importance of the political

parties in terms of setting up and coordinating the activities of the FE-coalition (see Ch. 9), I have decided to discard a closer analysis of the parties' Europeanization processes in terms of protest politics. This infers that the parties will not be included in Chapter 5, which introduces the distinct groups making up the two coalitions, and their protest activities are not included in the 'Collective Action' chapter (Chapter 7)²². Yet, as they were members on equal footing with most of the extra-parliamentary groups in the FE-coalition, they are included in this analysis (Chapter 9). Chapter 5 will therefore introduce all of the *extra-parliamentary* GI and FE groups, and account for their material and symbolic resources, their views on the EU, and protest repertoires. Chapters 8-9 will analyse the coalition-building process, focusing on the main drivers of the coalitions (the movement entrepreneurs/leaders and most actively involved national groups), but it will also draw on the other groups when relevant.

Chapters 6-7, on the other hand, consider the Europeanization of the national groups' collective action, and as will be outlined in the Theoretical Framework, this requires a close examination of the domestic historical, political, societal, and economic contexts, which vary greatly across Europe (see e.g. Klandermans & Mayer 2006; Caiani et al. 2012). Hence, aside from an analysis of *all* the extra-parliamentary groups' protest forms, tactics, issues and Europeanization paths in the 2015-2017 period, both chapters also include a closer examination of certain of the groups' national contexts. In order to fulfil the criteria for conducting a case study (in depth and context-sensitivity), I have thus assessed that a narrow case-selection (small *n*) is required. I chose the selected groups based on their roles in the GI and FE coalitions, and with an eye on the comparative aspect of Eastern versus Western European groups, i.e. they were selected based on their protest intensity and geography. This entailed that I chose *GI France*, *GI Germany*, and *GI Czech Republic* from the GI coalition. Hence, even though *GI Austria* arguably has a greater role in the coalition than *GI Czech Republic*, I decided to focus on the Czech group, in order to increase the geographical scope of the analysis. Moreover, as I chose *PEGIDA Germany*, *BPI*, and *PEGIDA Netherlands* for FE, due to their importance in the coalition and protest intensity, choosing a Czech GI-pendant to *BPI* also means that I can compare the cases within the (German and Czech) national settings²³. These six groups will thus be in focus in Chapters 6-7, while I will also analyse the other groups' protest data, albeit without the same close contextual analysis.

²² There are certain exceptions to this though, especially *Dawn*, which formed an electoral alliance with *BPI* in a part of the 2015-2017 period.

²³ I could also have chosen *GI Austria* and *PEGIDA Austria* for the comparative purposes, yet as Ajanovic and colleagues (2016) have already explored the different mobilization potentials for these two groups, I decided against this choice.

In summary, the thesis consists of the following subunit analyses:

Table 2.3: Sub-unit case study analyses.

Chapters	Type of case analysis	National groups involved
Chapter 5 (Introducing the groups)	Case and within case analysis	All <i>extra-parliamentary</i> groups (i.e. the political parties involved in <i>Fortress Europe</i> are not included here)
Section 1 Ch. 6 and 7 (Collective action)	Within, between, and cross-case analysis	All <i>extra-parliamentary</i> groups, but contextual analysis only for certain groups (For GI: <i>GI France</i> , <i>GI Germany</i> , and <i>GI Czech Republic</i> ; For FE: <i>PEGIDA Germany</i> , <i>BPI/Dawn</i>), and <i>PEGIDA Netherlands</i>
Section 2 Ch. 8 and 9 (Transnational coalition-building)	Between and cross-case analysis	All groups (including political parties), but focus on the main coalition drivers. (For GI: <i>GI France</i> , <i>GI Austria</i> , and <i>GI Germany</i> ; For FE: <i>PEGIDA Germany</i> , <i>BPI/Dawn</i> , Tommy Robinson (<i>PEGIDA UK</i>)) and Edwin Wagenveld (<i>PEGIDA Netherlands</i>)

Binding the Cases: Period, Place, and Activity of Investigation

In order to answer the research question satisfactorily, and without derailments, I have bound the cases according to time period and protest action issues. The research focuses on the European far right mobilization during the ‘refugee crisis’, which had its height in the period 2015-2017. The main period of investigation is thus 2015 to 2017 (i.e. from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2017). The period of investigation of the collective action remains 2015-2017 (Chapters 6-7). Yet, in order to account more fully for the coalitions’ emergences and the coalition-building processes, I need to draw on earlier developments. The preceding period thus needs to be extended concerning Chapters 8-9. While FE’s coalition was initiated in October 2015, and thus, within the 2015-2017 period, some of the national GI groups began cooperating in late 2012 already. Hence, I will cover a wider period (2012-2017) in order to explore the coalition-building process in its entirety for *Generation Identity*.

Protest Activity Delimitations

Due to the great combined number of organizations involved in the research, I will only focus on the *national* groups and their data output, i.e. not regional *GI*, *BPI*, or *PEGIDA* chapters, etcetera. However, when these groups' activities are mentioned by the main national groups, they will be drawn into the overarching analysed data (e.g. when *GI Germany* mentions a protest event or other activity by a regional *GI* group, this will be used as part of the data set as well). Due to this decision, I have also included a figure in the analysis, which shows the regional dispersion of *GI*'s protest events across the European groups. This, however, is not the case for the local '-*GIDAS*' in Germany, as they all act more independently of *PEGIDA Germany*.

Moreover, as the research explicitly focuses on *GI* and *FE* as two transnational coalitions, I only *focus* on the individual groups' transnational activities with other *FE* or *GI* member groups. Nevertheless, in order to explain certain strategical decisions made by the given groups, there will be sporadic mentions of other transnational connections, such as e.g. creations of transnational coalitions aside from *GI* or *FE*, cooperation with other European actors, etcetera. One example of this could be the Polish *National Movement's (Ruch Narodowy)* cooperation with the Hungarian extreme right party *Jobbik* (Jajecznik 2015).

2.2. METHODS OF ANALYSIS: MIXED METHODS APPROACH

The research utilises mixed methods. I employ both *frame analysis* and *protest event analysis* as explicit research methods, while I draw on the main analytical features and data collection tools from *process tracing* to analyse the transnational coalitions, albeit in a somewhat moderated form. Employing such varied methods permits me to consider the research subjects' Europeanization paths from different angles, and with different foci. This should ensure a more encompassing and in depth examination of their transnationalization endeavours.

I employ protest event analysis (PEA) to analyse the national groups' collective action, both domestically and at the transnational level. Protest event analysis elicits data from qualitative sources, in order to conduct a quantitative analysis (Hutter 2014b). For this study's purposes, it is the intention with the PEA to deduce the extent to which the various scopes of the collective actions 'Europeanized' in the 2015-2017 period, together with the intensity of the mobilization in the various national settings.

The frame analysis approach is utilised as a means to unravel the groups' key collective action frames, and their (potential) construction of 'Europeanized' collective identities. The approach is a recurring feature throughout the thesis' chapters. In the first chapter of the analysis, which introduces the two coalitions (i.e. Chapter 5), I use the approach to analyse the various national extra-parliamentary groups' key collective action frames, in order to introduce the groups' main

arguments, and to deduce their issue focus and expression styles, i.e. parts of their symbolic resources. In the collective action chapters (i.e. Chapters 6 and 7), frame analysis is used to analyse the groups' blame attributions as expressed in their protests during the 'refugee crisis,' in order to further explore their expression forms, and to deduce their rationales for mobilization. Finally, in the coalition-building chapters (i.e. Chapters 8-9), I employ the approach to analyse the extent to which the groups' leaders and spokespersons construct joint transnational collective identity frames.

The analysis of the two transnational coalitions will be based on a method somewhat akin to process tracing, yet, without the approach's rigid consideration of 'causality', 'mechanisms,' and 'outcomes' (see e.g. Beach 2016). It is the aim to analyse the development of the coalitions over time, plus whether and how the national groups ensured that the coalition survived. This entails a consideration of both *how* and *why* the different actors acted as they did in the given situation. This will be answered by considering their situational contexts (Maxwell 2013), and the strategic considerations related to their political aims. This requires a qualitative analysis that considers the meaning making of the actors (Ibid.), based on the leaders' intentions, perceptions, and perspectives (deduced based on primary sources), plus a more general analysis of the political context at the time.

The following three sections will introduce the methods further and explain how I employ them in the study.

PROTEST EVENT ANALYSIS

The study of protests has a long history within social movement research, and over time, protest event analysis (PEA) has become a research method or technique in its own right (Hutter 2014b). A PEA consists of several steps, including the collection of qualitative data, which can be converted into graphs and figures that display the development of protest events over time with the use of statistical tools (Ibid.). This allows a researcher to consider a certain collective actor's participation levels, targets, and levels of counter-mobilisation during a given time period. With time, the surge in research has led to numerous explorations of protest activities, frequently employing a cross-national comparative framework (e.g. Caiani et al. 2012; Andretta & Caiani 2005; see Hutter 2014b for more examples). Several scholars exploring the Europeanization of particular campaigns and movements have also employed protest event analysis for their research (see e.g. Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015; Parks 2015; Caiani & Graziano 2018)²⁴. These scholars are particularly interested in the scope of the protest target(s), participants, events, and issues, just as is the research interest in this study (see the Theoretical Framework for more on this).

²⁴ Alternatively, scholars have also employed political claims analysis for the analysis of Europeanization (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009; Andretta & Caiani 2005).

PEA is an unobtrusive research method, which is carried out similarly to a content analysis. One most commonly applies it in order to “assess the amount and features of protests across various geographical areas [...] over time” (Hutter 2014b: 335). PEA’s systematic process of analysis aims at making it easier to handle unstructured and large bulks of data. Usually, it involves the schematic property quantification of a large number of *protest events*. This infers that the researcher(s) look(s) through data systematically, in order to collect, summarize, map, analyse, and interpret the data on the required, and pre-defined, parameters (Koopmans & Rucht 2002). These parameters, or properties, may involve the “frequency, timing and duration, location, claims, size, forms, carriers, and targets, as well as immediate consequences and reactions (e.g. police intervention, damage, counterprotests)” of protests (Ibid: 231).

Defining the Unit of Analysis: What is a ‘Protest Event’?

The unit of analysis is the protest event as such. ‘Protests’ are defined as tools consisting of “messages directed to political adversaries, sympathizers, decision makers, and the wider public,” which either appeal to, or threaten, these adversaries and decision-makers (Koopmans & Rucht 2002: 231). It can be rather difficult to delimit the particular types of ‘protest events’ included in a given study. Prior protest event analyses have focused on a variety of protest repertoires, particularly those pertaining to public claims making (e.g. petitions, demonstrations, strikes, etc.). Far right organizations tend to employ a broad range of protest repertoires (see e.g. Caiani et al. 2012; Castelli Gattinara 2018), largely depending on their non- or institutional position and their type of organization (see e.g. Caiani et al. 2012). These activities range from participation in elections, organization of petitions, hosting of demonstrations, organisation of conferences, violent attacks on political adversaries, etcetera.

Protest Event Analysis of the Fortress Europe and Generation Identity Groups

The present study is mainly interested in the *extra-parliamentary* activities of the different groups, i.e. their participation in *protest politics* (Hutter 2014a). It utilizes Giugni’s (2004) definition of a ‘protest event’ as an “action by a social movement that attempts to influence the political decisions and/or sensitize the public opinion” (2004: 241). This definition is deliberately very broad, permitting for the collection of protests with various forms, issues, and targets, as the partial goal is to learn more about far right collective action more broadly.

Employing a similar classification system as Caiani and colleagues (2012) in their exploration of extreme right protest forms, the following types of actions are included in the gathered data set:

- *Conventional* (such as open letters, lobbying, and press releases),
- *Demonstrative* (like rallies, petitions and banner-drops),
- *Confrontational* (such as sit-ins, blockades, and building occupations), and
- *Violent* (both symbolic, such as flag desecration or defamatory language, and physical, such as attacks on political opponents or their belongings).

Moreover, besides the protest events, I also included two other types of data in the initial Excel data sheet, namely:

- ‘Expressive events’: (Transnational or cross-border) meetings, conferences and (social) gatherings²⁵.
- ‘Organizational events’: Organizational changes for the specific groups, such as new leadership, election results, etc.

I included the ‘Expressive events’ to get a better understanding of, and overview over, the groups’ transnational activities, besides the form of transnational collective action. I mainly used these events for the analysis of the transnational coalitions, which is why I did not include expressive events only involving domestic activists. Additionally, to assess the obstacles to far right Europeanization in relation to resources, repression levels, and cooperative problems, I also found it important to include (ac)counts of planned events, which did not occur. (Please consult the Protest Event Codebook in Appendix B for more information about the Protest event dataset).

Data for Identifying Events: The Distinct Groups’ Own Sources

As many PEA studies concentrate on country-case studies, and thus, not on specific, pre-identified organizations, as is the case here, most protest event analyses use newspapers as their sources (see e.g. Hutter 2014b). This is not surprising, seeing as “the printed media are one of the most important areas of public claim-making, and [...] most actors, will, at one stage or another, try to make their views public” (della Porta & Caiani 2009: 30). Scholars thus conduct a (usually computerized) newspaper search on a restricted number of country cases, a specific issue or time span, and usually search for one to three days of the week in a specified period (for examples, see Rucht 2002; Imig & Tarrow 2001b; Caiani et al. 2012). Police reports are another commonly employed source for studies of far right contention (see e.g. Koopmans & Olzak 2004).

²⁵ Other scholars often include some of the events in this category in their PEA dataset (see e.g. Caiani et al. 2012; Caiani & Borri 2013). Yet, as I do not place events such as meetings, social gatherings, and conferences under the ‘Collective Action’ heading for the purposes of this research, I decided to place ‘(Historical) commemorations’ and other similar protest action types under ‘Demonstrative actions’. The meetings, social events, training sessions, etcetera were gathered under ‘Expressive events’.

This study, however, does not rely on newspaper data, but instead uses the primary sources from the groups themselves. This choice has several reasons. For one, research has found that newspapers suffer from several shortcomings, when it comes to protest event information. There is often an inherent ‘selection bias’ (Hutter 2014b), as newspapers tend to prevalently report about big and/or violent demonstrations and events, plus to focus on mobilization issues that fit into the ‘media issue attention cycle’ at the time (Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015; see also Koopmans & Rucht 2002). This infers that newspapers do not account for all events that have taken place, especially not the ones in smaller places, nor with a limited number of participants (such as e.g. GI’s local banner drops). Moreover, the media also do not necessarily inform very thoroughly about the actual aims with the given event, the participating actors, nor the targets. Additionally, the journalists may also report false information about the given event (for various reasons), also referred to as ‘description biases’ (Hutter 2014b).

As it is the aim to get as thorough an overview of the level and type of protest events as possible, plus the groups’ own accounts in order to note the groups’ intentions with the events, I instead chose to use protest event information produced by the specific groups, in the form of activist-based internet data (see Almeida & Lichbach 2003)²⁶. This provides more exact information about the rationale for the event, and as Hanna argues: “Instead of only getting data from mobilization events that the press considers newsworthy, we can receive reports from activists in real time” (cited in Mosca 2014: 400). Almeida and Lichbach (2003) made a similar finding in a comparison between activist-based and media data, where they found activist-based data to be “less positively influenced by the intensity properties of protest events” and, highly relevant to this study, the activists reported about a higher number of transnational protest events than did the media. Moreover, as I focus on a pre-defined list of actors, I deemed this approach the most feasible in terms of obtaining the exact data sought.

I thus ended up with a rather similar approach as Monforte (2014), who relied on the analysed associations’ websites, mailing lists, and other internal literature to identify the events for analysis. Yet, as I do not have access to their mailing lists and internal organizational data, I instead mainly made use of the groups’ webpages, backed up by the gathered Facebook data, to identify their various events (See more about the utilised sources in the section ‘Online Sources’ below). Using primary sources from the research objects themselves thus provided me with first-hand accounts of both the time leading up to the given event (such as the invited and anticipated participants, the protest issues, the (potential) organizational problems involved), live accounts of the event, and its aftermath.

²⁶ Van Dyke (2003) took a similar approach, when she analyzed student events, identified in various campus papers.

Limitations of Using Primary Sources for Protest Event Data

Just as searches in newspapers have certain limitations, so does this approach. For instance, one cannot see the event in its national context as is possible in (most) media accounts (e.g. in relation to other far-right actors, counter-mobilizations, or other political actors’ reactions to the events). Moreover, just as newspapers express a certain level of description bias (Hutter 2014b), so do the actors themselves, especially in terms of the actual size of the protest, the level of counter-protesters, plus responses from state authorities. Hence, a group may refer to ‘a peaceful protest’, for example, which was, in fact, violent, or a ‘huge crowd’, which only amounted to 50 people in reality, etcetera. In order to counter these biases, plus to fill the gaps for groups, where it was either not possible to find primary data,²⁷ where data was missing for a period (for instance due to website changes)²⁸, or where the websites and Facebook data was not sufficiently exhaustive²⁹, in certain instances I also relied on secondary sources. This was both collected from national newspapers and reports made by national anti-Fascist and –racist associations (see more in the section on Secondary Sources below).

Table 2.4: Information collected in the protest event dataset.

Date of the event	Date (plus specifying in the ‘Event information’ box, if it is e.g. on a national holiday, in response to a terrorist attack, before or after an important political decision by the government or the EU, etc.)
Place of the event	City and country
Group involved	National FE or GI group or actor hosting/taking part in the event
Other actors involved	All actors mentioned as taking part in the event (national or foreign activists or groups, etc.)
Host of event	Only if the given group is not a FE or GI group
Size (if specified)	(Approximate) Participant numbers
Counter-protest (if mentioned)	Numbers and type of opposition (e.g. violence, blockade, counter-demonstration, etc.)
Scope of participants	National/cross-border (i.e. from neighbouring country)/ European
Issue of event	E.g. ‘Anti-immigration,’ ‘Anti-Islamization,’ ‘Anti-EU,’ ‘Anti-refugee quotas,’ ‘Suppression,’ etc.
Scope of issue	National or European

²⁷ Such as e.g. *PEGIDA UK*, which website was closed down prior to the data collection.

²⁸ This was for example the case for *PEGIDA Netherlands*.

²⁹ Yet, particularly in the case of *PEGIDA Germany*, it was very difficult to find data about all its protests. Its regular protest frequency meant that the media stopped reporting about each demonstration after a certain period, just as the group itself did not report about all of its weekly demonstrations. This explains some of the missing data in the analysis in Chapter 7.

Scope of target (if specified)	Such as national and/or European political decision-makers, CSOs, minority groups, etc.)
Blame attribution	Same type of actors as directly above
Event information and Content of speeches	More elaborate information about the event

For more information about the Protest Event Analysis, please consult Appendix B for the PEA Codebook.

METHOD FOR TRACING COALITION-BUILDING PROCESSES

It is the aim of the coalition-building analysis to explore how the two coalitions *Generation Identity* and *Fortress Europe* were created, what the national groups do and/or did to maintain them, and whether these coalitions survived or not. The theoretical framework is based on a synthesis of existing literature on (mainly left-wing) trans- and national social movement coalitions, and the factors found to be key for the further development of a coalition, both in terms of degree of cooperation (the closeness of the relationships) and the coalition's durability over time. Hence, while the framework, in a sense, outlines the expected facets of a coalition-building *process*, the identified factors are not necessarily determinant for its further development. One can thus not define them as rigidly as process tracing's 'mechanisms', which are conceptualised as the causal link between a dependent variable and its outcome, usually with the aim of testing or creating theories (see e.g. Beach 2016; Checkel 2005).

Instead of this more positivist approach to the research, which "fundamentally" is "at odds with more interpretative epistemologies" (Checkel 2005: 5), I suggest a more *exploratory* approach, which utilises the identified factors as guiding for the analysis, i.e. without any assumption of causality. As an example, a coalition may continue existing, even though the groups do not develop solidaristic ties towards each other, do not communicate frequently, or do not establish shared norms and rules for the cooperation. Moreover, other factors may also influence the development of the coalition, such as more subjective deliberations by the various movement entrepreneurs, just as they may have very diverse underlying rationales for the transnational cooperation. One can better explore such perceptual influences without a too-rigid analytical framework in terms of causality. Hence, as prior research has shown (see e.g. McCammon & Moon 2015; Van Dyke & McCammon 2010), the exact 'activities' involved in transnational coalition-building is likely to vary from case to case, depending on the actors involved, and the degree of commitment between the actors. Moreover, as argued by Van Dyke and Amos (2017), unlike left-wing coalitions, we still do not know much about the actual factors influencing coalition-work on the right.

Hence, as the application of social movement coalition literature to far right groups and actors is still a rather unexplored territory, I have decided to use the same factors for the analysis of the ‘outcome’ of the two coalitions, or at least their statuses at the end of the year 2017. For instance, a seeming ‘end’ of a coalition may only be periodic, as it may be revived, if the circumstances call for renewed action. I therefore wish to provide an analysis that both entails a more descriptive account of the occurrences leading to the establishment of the coalition and its further developments, while drawing on the theories where appropriate. By employing a qualitative approach, I am also more flexible in terms of redirecting the research focus, if this is deemed required due to unanticipated findings, entailing the opportunity “to pursue new discoveries and relationships” (Maxwell 2013: 30). Aside from providing a better understanding of the given case, this should also make it possible to use the analytical findings to further refine, or elaborate upon, the already established theories, by adding findings about far right groups.

Sources for Analysing the Transnational Coalitions

Even though I am not utilizing process tracing (PT) as my research method, I still draw on the approach as a pragmatic tool to determine the required data for the analysis. Process tracing requires an extensive amount of data, mainly of a qualitative nature, usually collected in the form of evidence *proxies* (instead of personal observations), such as documents, interviews, historical accounts, and newspaper articles (Checkel 2005). Another key objective of process tracing is to ensure that one has accounted for all possible alternative explanations or interpretations of a given finding (Beach 2016; Checkel 2005), thereby limiting the potential for wrong deductions, and thus, the provision of incorrect findings. This is important to keep in mind, when analysing the underlying rationales of the decisions and outcomes of the coalitions, again due to the difficulty of obtaining substantial and substantiated data.

It is therefore not sufficient to have a lot of empirical data if it derives from sources that are questionable in terms of reliability and potential biases, just as *all* available sources should be explored (Beach 2016). This, however, produces something of an issue in terms of exploring the far right from the ‘outside’, as not all primary data is accessible for people that are not part of the groups. It of course poses certain questions as to the reliability of the research findings, when key sources (such as meeting minutes, internal communication documents, etc.) are either inaccessible or untrustworthy and/or biased (e.g. interview data with key informants, see more below). Yet, there are certain measures, which one can take to prevent such an occurrence, for instance, through triangulation of the data, e.g. by ensuring that the interview data is ‘backed up’ by either other respondents and/or less subjective sources. Moreover, another means to ensure the validity of the findings is by including *all* identified data, i.e. also the evidence that potentially speaks against my own interpretations or preconceptions, thereby avoiding the fallacy of researcher bias or subjectivity.

Employing the framework, which will be further explained in Chapter 3, the following table outlines the various theoretical findings with the evidence required to consider.

Table 2.5: Identifying evidence for the factors involved in coalition building.

Theoretical Factors	Dimensions to Consider
Coalition Initiation	
POS/DOS at time	Open/closed domestic and European political opportunities
Establishing links between groups (Existing network and/or Movement Entrepreneurship)	Recruitment process, (prior) contacts between the groups
Value homophily/shared views	Political views of the groups
Respectability deliberations	Perception of the role of the groups in their domestic settings (e.g. considered ideologically ‘extreme’)
Diffusion	Adaption of other coalition-member’s frames, organizational set-ups, protest repertoires, etc.
Coalition Maintenance	
Shared activities (to foster in-group unity)	Type of activities (collective action, meetings, conferences, etc), rationales for, and perceptions of, participation
Resource mobilization (role of groups)	Actors financing joint activities, leading groups in the given coalitions, other groups’ contributions
Creation of a European Collective identity (?)	Use of similar collective identity frames (constructions of protagonist/antagonist identities)
Shared goals with coalition / Overlaps in expectations	Statements about the coalition cooperation, contextual information (does the group for instance cooperate with other European far right actors?)
Coalition Survival/End	
Rules of membership	Membership proscriptions, invited participants, potential exclusions of groups

Ideological divergences	Disparate views on certain crucial issues
Leadership quarrels	(Potential) conflicts and fights between the coalition leaders
National contextual changes	National elections leading to new power-holders, stronger repressive measures by the state, etc.

Evidencing Transnational Diffusion Processes

As will be further elaborated upon in the theoretical framework (see Chapter 3), it is likely that certain *diffusion processes* take place between the different groups of the coalitions, which may make them become more homogenous as a group of actors. As the exact ‘diffusion process’ is rather difficult to trace empirically (compared to e.g. the establishments of contacts between the various groups), it requires some further explanations in terms of the methods employed.

It is expected that parts of the national groups’ transnationalization processes (both in terms of coalition-building and collective action) take part through various types of diffusion mechanisms, both before, during, and after they instigate closer cooperative relations with actors from abroad. With this, I do not wish to argue that diffusion is the *main* mechanism involved in the transnationalization of contention, but that it *may be* a key component of both the transnationalization of collective action and coalitions. This is, in fact, already known to have played a vital role in terms of the creation of the various *Generation Identity (GI)* and *PEGIDA* groups, as *GI France* and *PEGIDA Germany* provided the blueprint for the entire organizational set-ups of the other European groups, including the main frames and symbols (see e.g. Berntzen & Weisskircher 2016; Bruns et al. 2017). However, it is not so clear what relationship there was, and potentially currently is, between the groups that make up the various national *GI* and *PEGIDA* groups, and how this may relate to their creations. Depending on the level of involvement of the transmitting group in the receiving groups’ composition, activities, and etcetera, it can reveal a lot about the different roles of the groups in the respective coalitions.

Yet, while it is rather easy to show that a diffusion process has taken place, it is much trickier to *demonstrate* empirically how such diffusion occurred. It thus necessitates a strong operationalization, in order to unravel which exact form of diffusion has taken place (for instance, whether it was through emulation or learning) (Van Hauwaert 2014b). This means that the ‘before’ and ‘after’ of a specific diffusion process must be established, and one must confirm what was in the given place prior to diffusion (i.e. what changed, why, and how?). In the analysis, I am particularly considering the (potential) diffusion of organizational set-ups, frames, and protest tactics.

Organizational Set-Up

While it is often rather self-evident and easily observable that a transnational diffusion process of the entire organizational set-up has taken place, due to for instance the adoption of the name of the transmitter (e.g. *PEGIDA Austria* adapting *PEGIDA Germany's* name to its national setting), it is harder to unravel the more cognitive or strategic rationales behind this adoption. Hence, it is often much easier to demonstrate that a diffusion process has taken place, rather than exactly why or how. Therefore, when identifying the empirical data, I will look for data that conveys information about the (potential) relationship between the transmitter and adopter prior to the adoption of the organizational set-up in order to deduce whether it took place through emulation or learning. For instance, if I find proof that *PEGIDA Austria's* initiator was in contact with *PEGIDA Germany's* Orga-team prior to setting up the Austrian offshoot, this is a rather strong indicator of diffusion through direct channels, most likely through learning. Conversely, if such connections cannot be evidenced, and the initiator, for example, stated that he heard about *PEGIDA Germany* in the news and then decided to set up an Austrian branch, then this indicates emulation through indirect channels. Moreover, in order to answer *why* the adoption took place, I will look for statements from the adopting actors, explaining why they chose to utilize another group's name and action repertoire in their own national setting. I will also utilize statements by national far right experts, who can provide more insights on the national far right scene, and thus, potentially explicate the contextual reasoning behind such a transnational diffusion process.

Collective Action Frames and Campaign Issues

It is extremely difficult to estimate whether the diffusion of frames and campaign issues take place through direct or indirect channels of diffusion. This is especially the case, when diffusion is related to major events, such as a terrorist attack in a European city, 'Brexit,' the EU's refugee quota proposal, etcetera, which might have led to similar responses across Europe, without in- or direct exchanges between the actors. Thus, diffusion of frames will only be considered in the analysis when it can be proven that this is due to the in/direct influence of a transmitter. For example, this could be the diffusion of a particular concept from group A to group B or the instigation of a similarly worded protest campaign as group A by group B. Such processes can be traced through the protest event data set and/or the interviews with the key actors from the groups. Adaptions of frames and campaigns often either occur between actors, who are "spatially or culturally relevant" to each other (*proximal* diffusion), and/or are in *hierarchical* relationships, where the leading organization 'trickles down' its frames and issues to the hierarchically lower organizations or actors (Soule 2004: 295). In this way, the occurrence of such diffusion can also give good indications as to the (potential) hierarchy in the given transnational coalition, particularly if it is frequently the same group, which is emulated.

Protest Tactics

Concerning protest tactics, it is slightly easier to deduce the occurrence of a diffusion process, especially when it comes to the more creative and/or innovative types of protest repertoires. Here, I will search for the following indicators in order to identify diffusion: explicit statements about drawing inspiration from another European actor; sharing of another actor's events on the group's website or Facebook page and later carrying out the same tactic, and interview data about protest events and communication between the groups.

The establishment of all of these various types of diffusion across the European borders will help me to argue more convincingly about the groups' Europeanization process aside from the mobilization related to the EU. Hence, it can reveal more about the similarities of the groups, plus (potentially) indicate if there are groups who act as 'role models' for the other groups, i.e. groups the others want to learn from and/or emulate. The diffusion aspect of the research is thus not a main feature of the analysis, but rather aids in gaining a deeper understanding of the relationship between the various groups in the coalitions. It thus acts as a (potential) mechanism in the groups' coalition building and collective action endeavours.

FRAME ANALYSIS

With the onset of the 'cultural turn' in social movement studies, frame analysis became a prevalent means to consider social movement actors and their cognitive 'views of the world' (Snow & Benford 1988; Benford & Snow 2000). The approach, which can be considered a sub-variant of discourse theory (Lindekilde 2014), has also frequently been employed in relation to research on the Europeanization of social movements. This is mainly because it is an apt method to consider actors' statements both over time and in comparison to other actors (e.g. looking for similarities and differences in their viewpoints and argumentation styles). A growing number of studies have thus employed frame analysis as a means to consider extra-parliamentary actors' Europeanization paths (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009; Parks 2015; Monforte 2014; Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015). This most commonly infers the exploration of the degree to which the organizations' claims obtain a 'European dimension,' both in regard to the issue and target of mobilization, but also their own (portrayed) identity (see e.g. Monforte 2014; della Porta & Caiani 2009). Concerning the EU institutions, scholars have employed the method to explore the (potential) ways national organizations' distinct frames change, once they direct their political activities toward the EU-level³⁰, and/or join European coalitions (see e.g. Monforte 2014; Salgado 2014; Parks 2015), plus their perceptions of the EU as a political entity (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009). Moreover, recent far-right scholarship also

³⁰ Researchers have, for instance, focused on how and whether the given groups "use frames that resonate with EU policy-making" (Monforte 2014; see also Parks 2015; Salgado 2014).

encourages more research employing frame analysis as a research method (see e.g. Pytlas 2018). The following section explains the ‘frame’ concept and outlines how the method is employed in the analysis.

What is a ‘Frame Analysis’?

The frame analytical approach draws attention to the role of ideas and images, and the organizations’ construction and expression of their ‘dominant worldviews’ (Caiani & della Porta 2018: 338; see also Gamson 1992). They do so by highlighting and conveying particular claims (Entman 1993), somewhat akin to the framing of a picture (Lindekilde 2014). Frame analysis is a constructionist approach, which considers the role of perceptions of movement activists (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009), and scholars have employed it to consider the cognitive mechanisms behind a given political organization’s or activist’s demands and references on a specific issue (Caiani et al. 2012). The frames are thus often constructed around the group’s given “ideas, cultures and ideologies,” which are combined with “certain situations or empirical phenomena,” in order to construct a reality through which to understand the world (Lindekilde 2014: 196). This process is also referred to as ‘frame articulation’ (Snow 2004). Despite its constructionist foundations, Snow & Benford (1988) refer to framing as a strategic, and thus, causal, action, deliberately employed by the movement entrepreneurs (or the ‘signifying agents’) to garner activist and bystander support, i.e. getting people “from the balcony to the barricades” (Benford & Snow 2000: 615). The leaders, then, interpret the group’s grievances, and construct and define its strategies, goals, and mobilizing frames, with the ultimate goal of obtaining consensus (Snow & Benford 1988). However, as Lindekilde (2014) argues, “the relationship between ideas, social structures, and action is not one of determinism, but rather one of contingency,” and the activists all partake in various processes of interpretation, again highly dependent on the context (Lindekilde 2014: 203).

Employment of Frame Analysis in the Thesis

The analysis of the groups’ *collective action frames* (CAF) involves an exploration of the frames employed to mobilize consensus (the diagnostic and prognostic frames) and action (motivational frames) (Snow & Benford 1988). The study investigates the groups’ collective action frames in order to deduce the extra-parliamentary FE and GI groups’ mobilizing frames and political agendas, and whether and how these are likely to align with the EU’s institutional framework (based on prior Europeanization findings, see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009).

Hence, it is *not* the aim to look at the evolution of the groups’ frames over time, and their potential Europeanization. Instead, the analysis will analyse the various groups’ main collective action frames for three separate purposes. For one, to introduce the groups and their worldviews, and explain their likely Europeanization strategies on this basis (Chapter 5). As the research focuses on the mobilization during the ‘refugee

crisis', this section particularly explores their main CAFs around (Muslim) immigrants and asylum seekers. Moreover, the CAFs are also employed to analyse the groups' blame attributions and targets during their protest actions (Chapters 6 and 7), just it is used to explore whether the groups joined the transnational coalition based on shared worldviews (Chapters 8 and 9).

The transnational coalition chapters consider whether the national groups' movement entrepreneurs establish Europeanized *collective identity frames*. Hence, while certain scholars have studied Europeanization's effect on the 'issue frames' of the given groups (see e.g. Monforte 2014), the focus in this thesis is instead placed on the effects on the 'we', i.e. the (potential) creation of a shared European collective identity together with the coalition-partners (see Theoretical Framework). It will thus consider whether the groups develop shared definitions of a European 'us'. Della Porta and Caiani (2009) argue that, "As an imagined community, Europe represents different things for different actors, whose positions on Europe are linked to various themes, placing Europe within specific systems of values or ideologies" (2009: 23). It is these particular perceptions of 'Europe', and what it means to be 'European' that are relevant to unravel in regard to the research objects, in order to gain a more profound understanding of the rationales and strategies behind the (trans)national mobilisation and use of frames. In fact, these various frames do not necessarily develop through intergroup interaction, but may also arise from diffusion processes, which do not necessarily involve face-to-face encounters. Hence, in certain instances, the transnationalization of the collective identity frames (i.e. the construction of shared antagonists and protagonists) occur prior to the more substantial networking taking place due to the overlaps in ideological viewpoints, etcetera. Such occurrences are also worth examining further, as this reveals a lot about their more ideational rationales for transnationalization. Moreover, the analysis will also explore how the groups justify, rationalise, and perceive the transnational cooperation, i.e. the Europeanization of the prognostic and motivational frames. In other words, it considers how and why the groups develop a perceived need to cooperate with other, European actors in order to combat a shared problem. Here, the role of ongoing European and national events and developments become particularly important, as these may provide opportunities, which the actors can attempt to pursue.

The Sources for Frame Analysis and its Coding

Frame analysis is most commonly conducted on data retrieved from the explored actors' own sources, such as manifestos, newsletters, speeches at protests and meetings, online 'About us' sections, etcetera. As the sample needs to be representative to the greatest possible extent to increase the external validity, it usually requires a rather large bulk of data (Lindekilde 2014). As will be explained further below, for the purposes outlined above, I have chosen to rely on website data, statements at protest events, manifestos, press releases, and Facebook posts.

In terms of coding, frame analysis is an open-coding method, which has its foundations in content analysis (Lindekilde 2014). As will be further elaborated upon below, the collected data will be coded in NVivo according to several pre-established coding categories.

2.3. DATA COLLECTION: TRIANGULATION

Process tracing, frame analysis, and protest event analysis are all research methods that are highly reliant on extensive empirical data from various types of sources (Checkel 2005; Lindekilde 2014; Hutter 2014b). At the more general level, a too high reliance on only one type of data is likely to lead to biased and one-sided findings. In order to accommodate these challenges, the study employs a variety of different data types, sources, and collection methods, allowing for the obtainment of multiple perspectives on the events and occurrences (Yin 2003). This ‘data-triangulation’ has become one of the most frequently employed data collection strategies, both by scholars conducting case studies (see e.g. Baxter & Jack 2008) and social movement research (see e.g. Ayoub et al. 2014). The triangulation approach implies the exploration of a given issue through several lenses, shedding light on numerous facets and aspects of the phenomenon (Baxter & Jack 2008). It also infers that one ‘checks’ whether the different methods employed end up at the same conclusions, thereby increasing the validity of the claims by reducing the “risk of chance associations and systematic biases” (Maxwell 2013: 245).

Similar to Monforte (2014), this study aims to observe far-right organizations ‘from the inside’, i.e. to focus on their organization, deliberations, and actions at the national and European level based on their internal documents and accounts of events. This, however, is not quite possible here, as I am not able to gain unrestricted access to the data. Hence, when approaching the far right groups involved in the study, I anticipated a high degree of opposition or suspicion towards me, due to my role as a university researcher, and thus, representative of ‘the left-wing establishment’. I thus did not expect that such access would be granted, especially not if I wished to publish the research afterwards. These deliberations made me refrain from requesting access to confidential documents, such as meeting reports and internal communications. This decision, of course, leads to some challenges, especially in terms of analysing the relationship and interactions between the various groups in the coalitions. Yet, there is an attempt to bridge this gap through an extensive data collection of other types of sources, explained further in the following paragraphs.

In order to ensure complementarity of the sources, I employ both primary and secondary sources. I retrieved the primary data from the organizations making up the two coalitions (through semi-structured interviews with key informants and the groups’ websites and Facebook posts). Certain social movement researchers warn against too heavy a reliance on publicly available sources from the activists themselves. As Schedler (2015) argues:

While these may provide information on the public image of groups and organizations, it is critical to ask to what extent this data material allows a correct interpretation of the ideology of individual activists or even the goals of groups, or whether there are serious distinctions [...] between the public facade and the internal reality [...]. The action-guiding motives and strategies can be quite different. (2015: 289, author's translation)

Instead, Schedler (2015) continues, one should collect biographical data at the individual member level. Yet, as the explicit aim with this research is to explore how *the groups* Europeanize their contention, i.e. not the individual activists and their perceptions and interests, I discarded this approach. Yet, while I deem the gathered data crucial in order to understand the distinct groups' Europeanization strategies and processes, it is also likely to be one-sided and may portray a given situation in a biased way without revealing much about the *actual* deliberations of the given movement leaders. Hence, in order to evaluate the 'correctness' of the claims, I will also gather data from secondary sources, which I will use to either support and/or disprove the primary sources (especially regarding repression, counter-demos, and protest actions)³¹. The secondary sources are collected from media outlets and the far right groups' adversaries and observers (newspaper articles, reports by anti-racist organisations, and the state), and scholars of the far right (expert interviews and prior research on the groups). Particularly the interviews with experts on the various national far right scenes should ensure more rigidity concerning the national cases and the actors' opportunities at the European institutional level (see Interview section).

The data thus consists of both observational and interview data, i.e. un- and obtrusive data respectively. Hence, the research objects themselves have a voice, and can provide insider knowledge of events and decisions through the interviews. Yet, at the same time, they "cannot react to or distort the research process; for instance, by intentionally or unintentionally misrepresenting the unfolding of events" (Beyers et al. 2014: 175). As there is a danger of this misrepresentation occurring, the unobtrusive data will be the carrying part of the investigation, while the interviews with organisation leaders (the 'key informants') will provide supporting information about the general strategical deliberations and employment of frames and protest repertoires for the different organizations.

ONLINE DATA

The focus of the analysis is on the two coalitions' *offline* Europeanization, i.e. their coalition building and collective action, and their (potential) development of a transnational collective identity during this process. Yet, apart from the protest events

³¹ A very good example of this approach being necessary is the big differences in the description of GI's 'Defend Europe' mission in the summer of 2017, where GI portrayed it as a successful event, while the media and scholars were much more critical (see e.g. Oppenheim 2017).

and various gatherings and social events themselves, a lot of the groups' interaction with their followers and (potential) members takes place online. As Mosca (2014) argues, "As we tend to focus on mobilization phenomena that are constructed both online and offline, it is crucial to access both fields where participants act. This means that in order to provide robustness to our findings, data need to be triangulated" (2014: 413). Hence, together with the interviews, the primary sources consist of online data, gathered from the different groups' websites and social media pages.

Online Data for Offline Mobilization

As research has demonstrated, online communication plays a substantial role in far right communication, organisation, and mobilisation (see e.g. Caiani & Parenti 2013). The technological advancements in regard to IT and telecommunications has thus led to a change in the way social movements (Edwards 2014), and particularly far right subcultural actors, mobilize (see e.g. Caiani & Kröll 2015; Caiani & Parenti 2013). In this way, the "internet facilitates and supports (traditional) offline collective action in terms of organization, mobilization and transnationalization and, on the other hand, creates new modes of collective action" (Van Laer & Van Aelst 2010: 1147)³². Hence, the internet is used for mobilization, but has also more broadly changed the logic and organizational forms behind the protest activities and the organizations as such (Mosca 2014; see also Bennett & Segerberg 2012; Chadwick 2007 for more).

The far right actors have thus obtained much better communication channels, making it simpler to disseminate their viewpoints more 'freely' and unobtrusively due to the difficulties national legal authorities face in terms of curbing far-right groups' online activities (Weidinger 2016). The border-crossing nature of the internet also infers that the groups can reach wider audiences and contact like-minded actors abroad. Online communication is thus one of the clearest expressions and simplest ways of crossing state borders. Internet access has, for instance, made demonstrations more transnational in the sense that it is easier to invite foreign groups to join protests but also in terms of organizing European protest campaigns (della Porta & Tarrow 2005). In this way, social media has broadened the scope for transnational networking, aside from the usually nationally based group interactions.

Moreover, the online communication also permits the actors quick means for making statements to the public, before the media intercepts (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan as cited in Caton et al. 2015). Thus, apart from the need to mobilize participants and skills for their groups, collective actors must also have a well-functioning communications infrastructure, in order to coordinate the efforts, network, and mobilise supporters,

³² These new kinds of collective action involve e-mail bombings, hacking of websites, etc., but also the development of online versions of already existing protest tactics and strategies, such as online petitions and virtual sit-ins, plus new forms of alternative media (Van Laer & Van Aelst 2010: 1147; Flesher Fominaya 2014: 38).

both at the initiation of protests, but also to uphold the group on a daily basis. Political participation and coordination have thus largely moved to the online setting.

From a research perspective, the online data can therefore provide concrete, easily accessible, unchangeable, and detailed information about collective actors and their activities, and is therefore beneficial for studying protest events and extra-parliamentary groups (Almeida & Lichbach 2003; Mosca 2014). The heavy utilisation of online communication especially by far right actors offers a good opportunity for researchers to carry out unobtrusive research. Hence, in this thesis, the internet is utilised as a source of information about the coalition in its entirety and the groups as such. The data is approached as documentation of protest actions and means of communication between the distinct groups. In this way, the gathered Facebook posts and websites of the groups will “be accessed in order to collect information on their history, claims, organization, actions, and other characteristics” (Mosca 2014: 397).

Most European political actors, and especially of a far right persuasion, have a website and are present on at least one social media platform (unless prohibited by the authorities). The vast majority of the far right actors included in this study have either a Twitter or a Facebook account, or, as is the case for most, both. Due to the scope of Facebook, I have decided to focus on this site for my data collection. In the following, the benefits of using websites and Facebook data as primary sources will be outlined.

Website Data and Problems Related to Using Webpages as a Source

An organizational website typically provides:

- Self-presentation of the organization (unobstructed self-portrayal)
- Event calendar and planning, plus coordination
- News section about upcoming and past events
- Links to other, similar-minded, organizations

For this thesis, the website data will be employed to deduce the main frames of the different groups and to identify their protest events (see above).

Aside from the clear advantages of using website data as material for analysis, there are some rather grave disadvantages, particularly when one is researching a phenomenon over a longer period. For one, the organisations tend to renew the websites after a certain period of availability, and/or remove older posts from the pages. In this study, this has particularly been a problem concerning the cases of *GI France*, *GI Austria*, and *GI Germany*, plus *Lega Nord*, *PEGIDA Netherlands* and *PEGIDA Germany*. While one can retrieve much of the older data through the *WebArchive* and its *WayBack Machine* (<https://archive.org/web/>), one can still not obtain all data produced since the groups’ creation (Mosca 2014). This is partly what motivated me to retrieve Facebook data as additional data.

Social Media Data: Facebook

Social media is one of the most utilised communication methods in the world. The term refers to “web-based and mobile-based Internet applications that allow the creation, access and exchange of user-generated content that is ubiquitously accessible” (Kaplan and Haenlein as cited in Batrinca & Treleaven 2015). Facebook is one of the largest platforms, and while Twitter also has a large following, its keystroke-restrictions and forward-facing data retrieval makes it less apt for use for this study’s purposes (Caton et al. 2015: 2). Today, more than 2 billion people are members of Facebook, making it the largest public social media in the world (Statista 2019a). Due to the breadth of Facebook’s scope and its position as the dominant global online social network (Wilson et al. 2012), political activists quickly realized the benefits of this media. They now use it “for protest coordination and the dissemination of injustice frames and demands,” making it “a crucial area of transnational social movement diffusion” (Flesher Fominaya 2014: 46).

This is also the case for far right groups, which frequently employ it as a mobilising media (see e.g. Berntzen 2018a). Just to give one example from the research subjects, in June 2016, *PEGIDA Germany*’s Facebook page counted 204,270 ‘likes’ (Baldauf et al. 2016),³³ and in the 2015-2016 period, the group posted an average of 12 posts per day, mainly consisting of pictures and links. The most popular posts were photos or videos from the last demonstration (Ibid.).

Additionally, members use the site to account for, and promote, the group’s various events (with pictures, (live) videos, etc.), and to spread news stories about relevant topics, which speak to the ideological viewpoints of the group itself. In this way, this relatively new communication channel (created in 2005) provides opportunities for both “processes of opinion formation/expression and for citizen mobilization, not only online but also funnelled into actual forms of protest and action” (Barisione & Ceron 2017: 78). One can therefore consider it a type of “ongoing database of social activity with information being added in real time,” like a form of movement diary (Wilson et al. 2012: 214). Hence, for a researcher, Facebook posts from a collective actor can give insights on its: views on societal issues (framing), protest events, transnational interactions, recruitment strategy, etc. For this study’s purposes, the focus is on the groups’ protest event data (i.e. mentions of protest activities) and transnational relations with other actors (including re-posting of posts and shared events).

³³ The protest group was also active on Twitter and VK, and in the same month (i.e. June 2016), it had around 3,700 followers on each of the platforms. By November 20, 2018, *PEGIDA Germany*’s ‘Likes’ count had fallen to 57,517.

Process of Facebook Data Extraction

For the Facebook data scraping, I have utilized the *Netvizz* application (Rieder 2013). At the time of writing³⁴, one can access several types of information regarding the pages, such as the contents of the ‘Post’, its ‘Comments’ and ‘Likes’, plus of course the date of the entries. For all the groups, it is only the given group, which has permission to post on the ‘Wall’ (except in the case of the ‘Fortress Europe’ page). As the sole purpose here is to explore the ‘Posts’ on the group wall (and not the ‘Comments’ by the users), I carried out a simple extraction for each group, as far back in time as posts were retrievable (see figures on the table below). I retrieved data for the period ending on December 19, 2017 (date of data retrieval for most of the groups, and after Facebook’s closure of GI’s Facebook accounts in May 2018, I could no longer access this data online). I first retrieved the first 999 posts possible (maximum of posts possible to retrieve at once). Then, I continued moving backwards in the date intervals in the NetVizz app’s search function, until no more posts could be retrieved (i.e. first search: 999 posts; Second search: end date of these 999 posts and one year further back (e.g. 14.5.2017 to 14.5.2016) and so on). This data extraction gave me the following data sets for the different groups making up GI and FE:

Table 2.6: Number of retrieved Facebook posts and period of retrieval.

GENERATION IDENTITY		
GI Group³⁵	Posts	Period of Retrieval
GI France	3,096	Aug 2012 – Dec 2017
GI Austria	1,728	Oct 2012 – Dec 2017
GI Germany	2,679	Apr 2013 – Dec 2017
GI Italy	2,527	Oct 2012 – Dec 2017
GI Czech Republic	291	Aug 2016 – Dec 2017
GI Hungary	419	Sept 2016 – Dec 2017

³⁴ Facebook introduced new regulations, which might inhibit the use of the NetVizz application in the future (1.10.2018).

³⁵ *GI Slovenia*’s Facebook account was closed at the time of extraction.

FORTRESS EUROPE		
FE Group	Posts	Period of Retrieval
PEGIDA Germany ('Pegida Dresden')	1,698	Dec 2014 – Dec 2017
IVČRN (‘IVČRN Brno ³⁶)	1,550	Nov 2014 - Dec 2017
BA Islamization ('Blok Proti Islamičci – Pilsen') ³⁷	998	July 2016 – Dec 2017
PEGIDA Austria	1,775	Dec 2014 – Dec 2017
PEGIDA Netherlands	Not possible to retrieve	
PEGIDA UK	No longer accessible at time of retrieval	
For Freedom	392	Mar 2015 – Dec 2017
Dawn	2,396	April 2013 – June 2017
NGO ISIS	No Facebook account	
EKRE	1,973	April 2014 – Dec 2017
Lega Nord	Not possible to retrieve old posts (new Facebook page for Italian elections 2018)	
National Movement	492	Dec 2016 – Dec 2017 (no earlier posts due to page-closure)
Courage	No longer accessible at time of retrieval	
Fortress Europe	1,552	Jan 2016 – Dec 2017
Festung Europa	158	May 2016 – Nov 2017

³⁶ Biggest *IVČRN* group accessible at the time of data extraction.

³⁷ *BPI* no longer had a main Facebook-group at the time of the data extraction. I thus chose the largest available *BPI* group.

As some of these Facebook ‘Pages’ have been closed down, I have decided to solely refer to the Facebook posts in the text, and not add them to the bibliography. If one wishes to see the specific post data, please contact me.

Problems Retrieving Facebook Posts

There were several problems related to this data extraction. For one, some of the Facebook pages or groups were private, i.e. I had to request becoming a member of the group in order to gain access. I decided against this strategy out of two main considerations. On the one hand, I did not expect them to grant me access, if I was open about being a researcher. On the other, out of an ethical consideration, I did not wish to join in a covert way, not disclosing my research aim. This inferred that I could not gain access to e.g. *Fortress Europe*’s internal organization group. Moreover, in some cases, it was not possible to retrieve the Facebook data. It was thus only possible to retrieve about 20 posts from *GI Czech Republic* and *PEGIDA Netherlands*’ pages.

A more general problem with both the websites and the Facebook pages relates to the contentious nature of the actors making up the two coalitions. It happened on several occasions, and for the majority of the groups, that either their websites or Facebook pages were ‘blocked’ or closed down altogether by either Facebook or the public authorities (for more about these procedures, see e.g. Graham-Harrison 2019). This infers some limitations to the data collection, as it leads to certain gaps in the material. However, by combining the website data with the posts retrieved from Facebook and newspaper searches, it should still be a rather complete final dataset.

Access Rights for Facebook: Public vs. Private Profiles and Contents

There is also a need to account for certain ethical considerations, when utilising social media data. In terms of confidentiality and potential breaches of privacy, I have only retrieved data from public ‘Pages’ and ‘Groups’, and not the private profiles of any of these actors. This means that while I have included Tommy Robinson’s (*PEGIDA UK*) and Maria Kaljuste’s (*NGO ISIS* and *EKRE*) public pages (‘Maria from Estonia’), which they use for public purposes in their roles as political activists, I did not retrieve the available data set from Edwin Wagenveld’s (*PEGIDA Netherlands*) private profile, for instance. Moreover, I did not retrieve the ‘Comments’ for any of the posts, both due to the size of the data (very large datasets), the lacking necessity of it to answer my research questions, and because of privacy-related issues (despite not being able to see the name of the commenter in the dataset).

Search Strategy for the Online Data

Some of the websites and Facebook pages contained a lot of data that was not required for my exact research purposes (on the websites, this was especially the case concerning the ‘News’ section, which mainly consisted of news stories about immigrants, refugees, Muslims, and political adversaries). This included the diffusion

of news articles and blog entries from other far right actors, such as *Breitbart*, Robert Spencer (from the American alt-right), etc. This was especially the case for the Czech websites (*IVČRN*, *BPI*, and to some extent also *Dawn*) and the French *Résistance Républicaine* and *Riposte Laïque*. This type of information sharing is important for the extra-parliamentary actors in this study, and relevant for understanding their worldviews. Yet, as this study does not focus on the online dissemination of information, this particular research does not consider this aspect further. Moreover, especially the parties have other key issues, such as economic policy and social welfare, for example, requiring a search strategy. Hence, due to the great diversity in the organization types and the groups' websites, in some cases it was difficult to retrieve data corresponding with that found on the other groups' pages. Yet, the data collection strategy was the same for all groups, and from the outset, I knew I needed data on protest events, the national political setting (including allies and adversaries), the groups' transnational connections, their views on the EU and European identity, their conception of 'us,' and of 'immigrants' and 'Islam'.

For the websites, I thus first gathered the data from the 'About Us' or 'Who we are' sections (organizational self-presentation), the 'Political Program' and/or 'Manifesto' (mainly for the parties), and the 'Events Calendar' (data on protest events and meetings). Where available, I also gathered 'Press releases,' 'Calls,' 'Petitions,' and internal literature, such as 'Annual Reports'. The 'News' and 'Blog' data was also retrieved, but for some of the actors, the broad scope of these sections and the type of data (mainly news articles) inferred a more focused search strategy, only gathering relevant articles. Certain political parties (*Dawn*; *EKRE*; *National Movement*) had a huge blog-output, and I thus focused on posts containing information on: ideology (such as election manifestos and political programs), transnational relations with other actors; and organisational issues (such as changes in leadership, etc.). A similar procedure was carried out on the blog of Tatjana Festerling (*PEGIDA Germany* and spokesperson of *Fortress Europe*), which I went through manually, and only retrieved the posts related to the topics outlined above, plus her participation in protest actions.

For the Facebook posts, I manually searched for protest keywords and transnational connections (mentions of other members of either GI or FE)³⁸. The latter part could involve the sharing of other groups' posts (via links, reposts, videos and texts, e.g. about (upcoming) protest events, or joint, transnational encounters). In relation to *Fortress Europe*, the coalition (or rather Maria Kaljuste from *EKRE*) also created a shared Facebook page for the actors, simply called 'Fortress Europe', just as a German equivalent was set up ('Festung Europa'). The data from these two platforms was also retrieved, in the same manner as explained above.

³⁸ Special thank you to Associate Professor Elena Pavan from the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Florence, Italy, for the suggestion to search through the posts in this way.

Archiving the Online Data

I archived the online data “in order to have a stable object to study and refer to when the analysis is to be documented” (Brügger as cited in Mosca 2014: 399). I have taken screen shots of the (accessible) Facebook posts, which were stored in a Word document. However, I carried out the Facebook analysis of the GI posts just before Facebook removed all of the coalition’s Facebook pages in June 2018, and unfortunately, I did not back up all the written posts with a screenshot of the actual message at the time, thus losing the image content. Luckily, most of the protest events for the period 2015-2017 could be retrieved from other GI-related websites (such as *Novopress* for *GI France*, and the *Identitäre Blog* for *GI Germany* and *GI Austria*). Having learned from this, I ensured to take both screenshots of the given pages, and to archive the remaining online content, in order to have evidence of the whole message and images.

Language Restrictions: Using Google Translate for Data Translation

In terms of language limitations, I am able to read Danish, German, English, Spanish, and French without problems, and Swedish and Norwegian to a somewhat more limited extent. For the other languages (more specifically Czech, Slovenian, Estonian, Hungarian, Polish, Italian, Dutch, Lithuanian, and Slovakian), I have relied on Google Translate. Whilst this poses some questions in regard to reliability (see below), I reason, similarly as Berntzen (2018), that the current advances made by Google in terms of its translation function implies that it can be considered sufficiently reliable. As Turovsky (2016) argues, the change to neural machine translation in 2016 infers that the page now:

[...] translates whole sentences at a time, rather than just piece by piece. It uses this broader context to help it figure out the most relevant translation, which it then rearranges and adjusts to be more like a human speaking with proper grammar. Since it’s easier to understand each sentence, translated paragraphs and articles are a lot smoother and easier to read. (Turovsky 2016)

Nevertheless, I am of course aware that the translation service is far from perfect, which several of the translations also demonstrate, for example, regarding party names, etcetera. In order to ensure that direct citations are correct, and where I was in strong doubt about the contents, particularly when conducting the frame analysis, I have consulted a native speaker of the given language.

Coding the Primary Sources: Manual Coding in NVivo

As my research involves various uses of the data (both the need to identify protest events, the groups’ frames, plus their transnational cooperation in the coalitions), I first carried out a broad manual coding of the websites. Several scholars rely on a

‘formalized’ or ‘automated’ web content analysis; also called Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) (see e.g. Caiani & Kröll 2015 and their analysis of 336 right-wing websites). This approach is less time-consuming and allows for the obtainment of word-clusters and overviews of the frames produced by the analysed object(s) without having to read the documents oneself. While this is an excellent approach, particularly concerning time management, I instead opted for the manual version, both due to the different aspects I needed covered, plus my research objects’ great language variety, which inferred a strong reliance on *Google Translate* as the initial translation device. I thus also wanted to read the texts to ensure that potential errors of translation were spotted³⁹.

Frame Analysis Codebook based on Theoretical Framework and Far Right Literature

I employed the computer software *NVivo* for the coding of the collective action and collective identity frames. I first imported Word-format files for each group, containing the data collected on the groups’ websites. Then I established several ‘Nodes’ with analytical categories that were relevant for my research based on Europeanization theory and far right worldviews (see Table 2.7 below). The coding was in this sense closed and pre-determined at the outset (deductive).

As it was a partial aim with the frame analysis to determine the collective action frames around the groups’ key mobilizing issues, I created the categories ‘Views on Islam and Muslims’ and ‘Views on immigrants and refugees,’ as I knew that many of the groups’ protests involved these topics. When coding, I included both the groups’ voicing of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames to the appropriate category. Similarly, I coded the groups’ collective identity frames by considering their views on ‘National identity’ and ‘European identity,’ while also paying attention to the ways the groups’ constructed the ‘us’ vis-à-vis particularly the external ‘others’. Moreover, when the groups discussed their transnational relations with other far right actors, such mentions were coded to the ‘Transnational far right cooperation’ category, and certain of these frames also related to the construction of transnational unity around both the internal and external ‘others’ (e.g. the expression of solidarity frames in the face of domestic suppression).

Furthermore, as the study concentrates on the groups’ relations to, and inclusion of, the EU in their mobilization, the coding category ‘View on the EU’ was also included, in order to deduce what type of relationship the groups were seeking with the EU institutions. From the outset, it was the expectation that the relationship would be conflictual, but it was important to deduce the *degree* of this opposition (e.g. soft or hard Euroscepticism (Taggart & Szczerbiak 2004)). Moreover, I also wanted to

³⁹ A complete translation check would require that I am fluent in all of the languages involved, which I am not. However, certain translation mistakes are very easy to recognize due to the semantic mistakes, which makes some translated sentences incomprehensible.

explore the relationship between the groups from Eastern and Western Europe respectively, plus their perceptions of the two parts of the continent (if they made such a distinction). I thus also included the coding category ‘Eastern and Western Europe,’ to deduce how the groups framed the two parts of the continent (e.g. in an oppositional or harmonious relationship).

Finally, when I initiated the coding phase, I quickly noticed a discrepancy in the FE groups’ framing of Russia, and I thus included ‘View on Russia’ as a category, in order to be able to explore these oppositional views further. Hence, I created the following ‘Nodes’ or categories, around which the initial coding phase took place, namely statements related to the following:

Table 2.7: NVivo Nodes and descriptions for the coding of primary sources.

Node	Description	Used in Thesis⁴⁰
Self-presentation	Descriptions of the groups’ history, founding story, aims, and strategies.	Chapters 5 and 8-9
Islam and Muslims	Collective action frames (i.e. diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames) related to the religion and its role in Europe.	Chapter 5
Immigrants and refugees	Collective action frames related to the reception and integration of immigrants and/or refugees	Chapter 5
National identity	Collective identity frames related to the group’s conception of its nation state, its citizens, and its role in Europe and the world	Chapters 8-9
European identity	(Potential) Collective identity frames related to the group’s conception of Europe and Europeans (and how this (potentially) aligns with the group’s ‘us’ construction)	Chapters 8-9

⁴⁰ The various coded frames were utilized throughout the thesis. Yet, there were certain chapters, which utilized the findings more extensively. They are the ones provided here.

Transnational far right cooperation	Mentions of links to actors abroad, and reasons for the transnational cooperation.	Chapters 8-9
View on the EU	Stance on the EU as a political institution, its policy output, and the role for the EU member states	Chapter 5
Eastern and Western Europe	(Potential) similarities and differences mentioned	Chapters 8-9
Russia	Statements voicing support or criticism of Russia	Chapters 8-9

During the initial coding phase, I simultaneously looked out for mentions of protest events, which I added to either the GI or FE ‘Protest Event Table’ in Excel (see Appendix B for more on this). I also extracted all the mentions of cooperation with other members of the group’s transnational coalition (i.e. either GI or FE). These were coded according to the type of contact (e.g. conference, meeting, informal networking, etc.), and I coded statements about the coalition as such. After having read and coded all the documents, I printed out the node data and manually coded a second time, looking out for similarities and differences between the frames of the different groups.

Keyword Searches in Facebook Post Data

I retrieved the Facebook data after initiating the website coding. The data was presented in an Excel sheet, which I searched through with pre-defined keywords to help me identify the protest events (e.g. protest tactic, such as ‘demonstration’, ‘press release’, etcetera, or time of an event, like ‘Monday’ or ‘evening’), just as I searched for mentions of any of the other groups participating in the transnational coalitions. I then added new mentions of protest events to the already created Excel-table.

INTERVIEWS WITH KEY INFORMANTS

Aside from the online primary sources, I also carried out semi-structured interviews with some of the leaders and spokespersons of the organizations making up GI and FE. As observational data has several limitations in terms of getting the ‘full picture’ of given research objects, “interviews are a necessary, sometimes even crucial, complement to the analysis of publicly available sources for research on political mobilization, strategies and influence” (Beyers et al. 2014: 175). Interviews are thus particularly useful in order to obtain information directly from the source, gain a better understanding of the perceptions and viewpoints of the given actors, clarify potential misunderstandings, and to identify observational data, one might have missed (Beyers et al. 2014; Blee & Taylor 2002).

I thus deemed it necessary to ask the actors themselves for their thoughts on, and rationales for, transnational cooperation, plus their views on the EU and European identity. This was in order to “capture a broader picture on [their] visions of and strategies towards Europe” (Koopmans 2004 as cited in della Porta & Caiani 2009: 32), and to fully grasp the deliberations behind their activities (Blee & Taylor 2002: 92). Thus, in addition to the online material and the secondary sources, I have also conducted nine semi-structured interviews with leaders and spokespersons of national GI and FE groups.

While structured interviews are useful for systematic comparative purposes, as it ensures homogeneity in the responses (Blee & Taylor 2002), semi-structured interviews were deemed the best interview technique in this case. Unlike structured interviews, it offers more flexibility for the researcher, as one has the opportunity to pose clarifying or follow-up questions, if something is not understood or needs further elaboration. While still relying on an interview guide, the researcher can delve further into issues deemed important, and obtain a “greater breadth and depth of information” by scrutinizing the meaning behind given statements (Blee & Taylor 2002: 92).

Interviews with Key Informants (Spokespersons or Leaders of National Groups)

As my analytical focus is placed on the meso-level, I decided to focus on the leading members of the organizations for the interviews, just as other Europeanization scholars have done (see e.g. Monforte 2014; Parks 2015). It was the aim of the interviews to obtain better knowledge of the group’s strategic deliberations and rationales for coalition-building, and I therefore chose so-called ‘key informants’ from the given organizations, who I “asked to serve as an expert to inform the researcher about various aspects of the movement” (Blee & Taylor 2002: 106). This type of interview is in many ways akin to so-called ‘elite interviews’ (see e.g. Beyers et al. 2014 for more). This meant that the respondent had to have knowledge about the more organisational aspects of the group, both in terms of protest strategies, transnational relations, and alliance commitments (Johansson 1997). As these are most likely to be best known to the leading actors of the given parties and extra-parliamentary organizations, I decided only to contact the leaders and/or spokespersons of the groups.

(Far Right) Political Actors as Interview Subjects: Reliability and Validity Issues

One must take certain considerations under advisement before and after having conducted interviews with political actors, especially when they represent a more contentious political standpoint and actor type, such as does the far right. Due to both the subjectivity and strategical deliberations of political actors (of any political persuasion), there is no guarantee that one will obtain an objective account of events and strategies. Moreover, the respondent is highly unlikely to feel obliged to ‘tell the truth,’ and might even attempt to derail the interviewer, if the interview turns too

intrusive (Alvesson 2011). This is even more important to keep in mind, when wanting to explore the given actors' strategies and collaboration partners, issues which, in and of themselves, can be considered contentious, secret, and leave the groups exposed. Hence, as with all interview subjects, one has to be cautious regarding the interpretation, validity, and reliability of the respondents' answers (Maxwell 2013).

Unlike the exhaustive access frequently given to scholars, who research left-wing actors (consider e.g. Monforte's (2014) access to pro-migrant organizations' internal documents), from the outset, I expected only to be permitted surface access to the groups' strategic deliberations and plans. Moreover, due to the rise in media outlets and the therefrom-ensuing publicity bestowed upon political actors in general, the given 'Interview society' infers that many political actors obtain training in 'doing interviews' (Alvesson 2011). This is very much a matter of the level of professionalism of the given organization, yet, it can generally be expected that they have been taught how to divest from or avoid a topic, they do not wish to discuss. Additionally, actors with controversial societal viewpoints may express themselves in a more restricted fashion because they wish to 'keep up the appearances' of respectability. Hence, it is necessary to reflect on the respondent's own interest in the interview and his or her objective for participating. Alvesson (2011) uses the term 'impression management,' in the sense that the respondent considers the interview a promotional activity, where they get to present and justify their own account of events. Beyers and colleagues (2014) similarly discuss the occurrence of 'expansiveness bias' where smaller actors make themselves appear more prominent than they are and vice versa regarding higher-status actors.

During the interviews, this infers that the researcher must be cautious not to influence the respondent's answers by posing leading questions, and be prepared to get different answers than expected. Moreover, in the analytical phase after the interview, one must also be cautious not to take all of the responses for granted, or as representing the 'truth'. It is thus vital to carry out a source critique, especially concerning the context and timing of the interview. The respondent might give only temporary, context-specific statements (e.g. in a period of repression or success for the actor, period of high/low mobilization, etc.), inferring that if I interviewed them at a later or earlier point in time, the answers might be different. It is also important to consider the time lag between the interview and the topic of the questions (e.g. their coalition-building process), as the respondent might misrepresent the situation for strategic reasons (Beyers et al. 2014). In addition, due to their controversial viewpoints and their roles as politically engaged extra-parliamentary actors, the groups' leaders may want to distort the truth somewhat to make their alliance sound more substantial than it actually is. This was the case during some of the interviews with actors from both coalitions, and such replies have to be evaluated based on the information retrieved from other sources.

Participant Selection, Interview Requests, and Problems Obtaining Interviews

I selected the respondents based on their leadership of a participating member organization of either *Generation Identity* or *Fortress Europe*. It was my main aim to obtain interviews with the leading organizations of the coalitions, i.e. *GI France*, *GI Austria*, *GI Italy* and *GI Germany* for *Generation Identity*, and Tatiana Festerling (ex-*PEGIDA Germany*), a *Dawn* or *BPI* representative, Maria Kaljuste (from *EKRE* and *NGO ISIS*), and Tommy Robinson (*PEGIDA UK*) for *Fortress Europe*. Yet, I strived to get as many positive replies to my request as possible.

Before sending out the interview requests, I first carried out a more general search on the different groups to obtain information about their organizational set-up, activities, and views on the EU. Unfortunately, I did not have access to any gatekeepers, who could have helped me in gaining access to the respondents. During the interview rounds, I did get some suggestions from the respondents to forward me to other groups I was interested in, but unfortunately, these invitations never materialized.

The Formulation of the Interview Request

In alignment with the general academic standard, I opted for an honest and professional approach to the formulation of the interview request, explaining the aim and context of my research, my own name and academic status, plus the reason for choosing the particular respondent for the interview (Beyers et al. 2014). I briefly outlined my research focus, where I referred to my research objects as ‘anti-Islam movements, parties, and political associations’, and I made it explicit that I wished to discuss their views on the EU as a political organisation and their transnational relations with other far right actors. Hence, I attempted to be as transparent as possible, without giving too much information away about the specific interview contents.

The initial round of interview requests was sent out via e-mail in the summer of 2017, where I obtained four positive replies that led to actual interviews (see Table below). In the winter of 2017, I then sent out another round of e-mails, receiving positive responses from *Dawn* in the Czech Republic, and later, two further positive replies from the same country, whereof only one materialized into an interview. Finally, in the autumn of 2018, I made the final round of requests, receiving three positive replies.

In total, I contacted 12 spokespersons or leaders of other groups, who did not wish to discuss the given subject, did not have the required time at their disposal, or simply did not respond to my request.

Table 2.8: Overview of key informant replies to interview requests.

Generation Identity		Fortress Europe	
Positive Reply⁴¹	Interview conducted	Positive Reply	Interview conducted
Daniel Fiß (GI Germany)	July 2017	Edwin Wagensveld (<i>PEGIDA Netherlands and FE</i>)	August 2017
Lorenzo Fiato (GI Italy)	August 2017	Tania Groth (<i>For Freedom</i> (DK))	October 2017
Adam Berčík (GI Czech Republic)	March 2018	Marek Černoch (<i>Dawn</i> (CZ))	January 2018
Aurelija Anilyte (GI Denmark)	October 2018	Pierre Cassen (<i>Riposte Laïque</i> (F))	October 2018
		Ingrid Carlqvist (<i>Dispatch International</i> (S)) ⁴²	October 2018
NEGATIVE/NO REPLY		NEGATIVE/NO REPLY	
GI Austria (Never replied to my request. Other scholars have also failed in obtaining interviews (see e.g. Ajanovic et al. 2016))		Tatjana Festerling (<i>PEGIDA Germany and Fortress Europe</i>) (Strongly rejected the interview request in August 2017 after having seen some of the interview questions)	
GI France (Never replied to request)		Maria Kaljuste (<i>NGO ISIS and EKRE</i>) (She asked to answer the questions per e-mail in August 2017. I sent her the questions, but never heard back from her again)	

⁴¹ They all gave their consent to have their names published as the respondents.

⁴² Ingrid Carlqvist was not a formal member of *Fortress Europe*, yet, she participated in several demonstrations organized by FE-members, and her prior role in the Counter-Jihad Movement made her a highly relevant interview respondent in order to understand the anti-Islam mobilization over time.

GI Hungary (Never replied to request)	Tommy Robinson (PEGIDA UK) (He replied to my first e-mail in December 2017, but then never responded again)
GI Slovenia (Never replied to request)	Anne Marie Waters (PEGIDA UK) (She replied to my e-mail in Spring 2017, but never arranged further)
	Jana Volfová (Blok Against Islam) (Arranged interview with her in Spring 2018, but when I arrived in Prague, she never responded with the actual place for the interview)
	Lutz Bachmann (PEGIDA Germany) (No reply, most likely due to his distrust in the media and the ‘establishment’ (he generally does not give interviews (Vorländer et al. 2018))
	National Movement (Never replied)
	Vincenzo Sofo (Northern League) (Never replied)

Negative Replies

Even though many scholars argue that far-right actors are very keen to talk about their organizations and goals, previous research on far-right movements and parties has also demonstrated the difficulty of obtaining an interview with this type of actor (see e.g. Caiani & Kröll 2015; Caiani 2014 (positive response rate below 40%)). This is particularly difficult without any gatekeepers, who can provide access to a given movement. Moreover, the topic of the interview might dissuade certain actors from participating, especially if it relates to their movement strategies and cooperative ties with similar-minded actors. Other scholars have struggled to obtain this sort of information in the past. In relation to EP interest groups, Beyers and colleagues (2014) state that “In particular, it is extremely difficult to obtain data on coalition building, coalition leadership, the intensity of collaboration and exchanges within coalitions” (2014: 176).

As Table 2.8 shows, most of the negative responses amounted to a non-response to the e-mail with the interview request. However, two times, a respondent was dissuaded after I gave more information about the interview contents, per request by

the respondent. Particularly the response by one of the two is very telling about the mindset and worldview of certain of the explored actors, as the person stated that:

Western universities are a nursery and breeding ground of left-wing extremism and completely twisted, fascist ideologies. With the members of the 'Refugee filter bubble,' rational, logical discussions are no longer possible, too great are the ideological blindness, the indoctrination and dependency, which were bred by financial contributions and perks by our politicians. So I decided to change my mind and will not be available to you for the interview. I do not support the activities of these universities, and I will not give you any insight into our internal networks and strategies. (Author's translation)

This response is telling, considering the current environment, where many people, including most mainstream media, meet extra-parliamentary far right actors with hostility, just as several far right activists themselves are strongly suspicious of representatives of the liberal elite (see e.g. Vorländer et al. 2018). Moreover, the lacking responses from especially the political parties can also be considered as part of the more general reluctance of political actors to assist in research projects, particularly when there is no apparent gain for them by participating.

Use of the Interview Data in the Analysis

Despite the limited response rate, which means that the interview data in no way is representative for all of the organizations and the coalitions as such, I have still opted for including the material in the thesis. For one, it provides first-hand knowledge and more subjective accounts about the organizations, their strategies, and European ambitions; thereby increasing the validity of arguing anything in relation to these issues. This is especially the case for the answers provided in relation to the groups' rationales for, and problems related to, the transnational European extra-parliamentary cooperation, plus their thoughts on the EU and direct targeting of the EU institutions. Moreover, from the perspective of gaining organizational insights into the GI- and FE-participants more generally, it also very clearly demonstrated the different training/levels of professionalization of the two groups' actors. The GI respondents appear well-trained in media relations, while the FE members were much more direct in their statements, not paying too much attention to the actual information revealed or how 'radical' they came across to the interviewer.

Nevertheless, while the interviews provided good data on the rationales, motives, and aims behind the different organisations' strategies, it would still infer a 'key informant bias' to solely rely on these respondents as providing 'typical' answers for all of the groups in the coalitions (Pelto & Pelto as cited in Maxwell 2013: 99). One should thus consider the interviews as a sort of 'secondary' source for this research, backing up the findings from the supplementary data.

Interview Guide

The interview guide was carefully prepared, and was based on a thorough background search on the respondents and their organizations, both from the collected primary sources, but also other publicly available sources, such as media reports, as questions formulated based on this form of data may improve the interview quality (Beyers et al. 2014). Moreover, the order of the questions also received careful consideration, especially in terms of how best to obtain rapport and get the respondents to talk about the most vital questions (i.e. the ones I could not obtain information about through the unobtrusive sources). From the outset, I expected it to be a difficult task to get the respondents to talk about their cooperation with other far right actors, both at home and abroad. This was not only because of the expected mistrust towards me as a scholar, but also the generally contentious nature of these groups, plus the high level of focus on their activities, especially by media and left-wing activists. This made it a bit of a tricky task to formulate questions that did not appear too intrusive, or as if I was ‘snooping around’⁴³. The rejection to participate by one respondent, whom I had sent some of the questions in advance, further accentuated the need for caution.

My approach to the actual interview was to first pose some more general questions about the respondent’s own organization, in order to get them talking, and to try to build up some rapport before asking the more ‘controversial’ questions. Hence, in this way, I very much followed the formula proposed by Blee and Taylor (2002) of seeing the interview as “a guided conversation” with the aim of “elicit[ing] specific kinds of information” (2002: 92). Therefore, I formulated the questions in a more ‘conversational’ style, while still “conveying the sense that the interviewer is both professional and neutral” (Beyers et al. 2014: 180).

Topical Division of the Interview Guide

Each Interview Guide consisted of the same five broad sections with group-specific questions where applicable. Hence, the interview guides were appropriated to the respondent and the group s/he was representing, especially concerning their transnational ties, the actor type (party vs. extra-parliamentary actor), and national context. Yet, the main topics of the questions remained the same throughout:

- **Introductory remarks** about the research aim and focus, the question topics, and use of data (Oral consent of the use of the data for research purposes, agreement on either naming the person by full name or anonymously, and information about the storage of the data)

⁴³ In fact, one of the interview respondents decided to record the interview as well, because the person was worried that I might be a member of *Antifa*.

- **Ideology and protest repertoires** (their inspiration for their viewpoints, the goal of their organization, their specific type of protest repertoire, views on their country's handling of the refugee crisis)
- **View on Europe and the EU** (visions for European cooperation, view on the EU's handling of the 'refugee crisis', interaction with EU actors and institutions (thoughts on protesting at the EU institutions, approaching MEPs, and taking claims to the EU))
- **Transnational cooperation** (reasons for joining the coalition, cooperating with other European actors, participating in demonstrations abroad, and/or hosting demonstrations with foreign speakers)
- **Domestic actors and allies** (view on national political parties)

The questions thus focused on both the groups' strategic manoeuvring in the national and European political arenas, and their perceptions about Europe and the 'others'. In most of the interviews, the order of the questions differed somewhat from the written order. This was especially the case, when the respondent started providing responses to questions that were planned to be asked at a later point in the interview.

Especially the questions about transnational cooperation were highly important, as it was difficult to obtain much exact information from other sources, particularly regarding the planning and conduct of meetings and communicative means between the groups participating in the different coalitions. While I specifically inquired into the constitutive *Fortress Europe* meetings in January and May 2016, and *Generation Identity's Defend Europe* mission in 2017 (for more on these events, see Chapters 6 and 7), I also posed general questions about the reasons for the groups' participation in transnational collective action and networks. This inclusion of both specific and general questions was also based on my insecurity in regard to how much I could expect the respondents to convey during the interview, especially because these transnational links could be deemed as sensitive information to convey to a researcher. I thus attempted to bridge the two approaches and continued to ask questions that were more specific to those respondents who had been open to such questions during the interview and more general questions in the opposite case (Maxwell 2013).

Pilot Testing the Interview Guide

After first discussing the interview guide with my supervisor, I carried out three initial interviews with other far right actors, i.e. respondents "as much like (my) planned interviewees as possible" (Maxwell 2013: 101). I did this in order to ensure that the questions were clearly enough formulated, to get an idea of which type of answers to expect, and to make revisions accordingly. These interviews were with the extreme right *Party of the Danes (Danskernes Parti)*, the transnational political association *Women against Islamization* (which is led by Anke Van dermeersch from *Vlaams Belang*), and Petr Mach, an MEP for the Czech *Party of Free Citizens (Strana svobodných občanů)*.

Conducting the Interviews

Of the nine interviews, five were carried out face-to-face (one of these by another person than me), while the remaining four were conducted via Skype. I carried out three interviews in Copenhagen (with *GI Denmark*, *For Freedom*, and Ingrid Carlqvist). The remaining two took place in the Czech Republic, one by me and a translator (with *GI Czech Republic*), and one by a Czech research assistant (with a *Dawn* representative), as I did not have the ability to go there myself at the time that suited the respondent.

Setting aside my own personal political convictions, my approach to the interview was to “work with the respondent as a partner in the production of useful material” (Weiss as cited in Maxwell 2013: 91). I thus attempted not to react too strongly to statements with which I did not agree, and instead uphold a more ‘objective’ demeanour throughout. This generally did not pose a very big problem for me, as most of the questions were not of a ‘controversial’ nature in terms of expressing e.g. racist or otherwise offensive statements, yet, there were, of course, exceptions throughout.

Notwithstanding the interview setting (whether Skype or face-to-face), it was surprisingly easy to gain rapport with the respondents, whose organization was a member of, or liaised to, *Fortress Europe*, as all of the five respondents were very open, and not scared of speaking freely, also in terms of making radical or extreme remarks. Oppositely, all of the respondents from *Generation Identity* were much more cautious, and did not express themselves in radical terms, nor reveal much about their strategies. In general, the GI members had a much more professional approach to the interview situation, and it quickly became apparent that this was a discipline they had been schooled to master (something which correlates with the focus on this issue by *Les Identitaires*, particularly in their Summer Universities) (for more on this, see Chapter 8). One clear indication of this professionalism was the fact that they frequently responded rather evasively, but they also gave different answers from each other to certain questions I posed, especially regarding their networking activities. As Beyers and colleagues (2014) argue, “variation in how actors view a particular case can be informative” (2014: 178), and this indicates that I had to be particularly cautious using these answers for my analysis.

Skype Interviews as Interview Format: Gaining Rapport (?)

I employed Skype as the interview ‘setting’ for four of the interviews, both due to time and financial constraints. It is a somewhat controversial scholarly question whether or not Skype interviews are an appropriate interview setting, especially when it comes to the question of gaining trust and rapport (see e.g. Deakin & Wakefield 2013 for a discussion). In general, to gain rapport, or at least “to motivate and convince the respondents to cooperate,” is often one of the hardest things to obtain in any interview setting (Beyers et al. 2014: 184). Yet, for Skype, this is even more the case.

Rowley has argued that for “telephone and Skype interviews [...] something of the rapport and richness of the interaction may be lost” (Rowley as cited in Lo Iacono et al. 2016: 10). However, as stated above, the interview setting did not seem to influence the responses in a noticeable way.

Language Limitations

Just as the collection of online data caused some problems in terms of language, so did the interviews. While I conducted the interviews with the Danish respondents in Danish (my mother tongue), I gave the other respondents the option of either speaking their native language (with a translator) or English. The spokespersons from *GI Italy* and *GI Germany* plus Ingrid Carlqvist opted for speaking English. The remaining interview subjects opted for their mother tongues, or in the case of Wagensveld from *PEGIDA Netherlands*, German, a language I speak proficiently well to conduct the interview myself, albeit not as good as English. I utilised a simultaneous translator for the interviews with *Riposte Laïque* and *GI Czech Republic*, while solely a native Czech speaker carried out the Czech interview with *Dawn*. Due to the more limited knowledge of the research field by this interviewer, the follow-up questions lacked from the *Dawn* interview, which to some extent affected its quality.

While the language limitations did cause a few issues in terms of the quality of the interviews, overall, it was not a major problem, also not in terms of the utility of the responses for my research purposes.

Coding the Interview Transcripts

The interviews were conducted at various points in the years 2017-2018 (see Interview Overview on Table 2.8), i.e. at the same time as the online data-extraction and coding took place. For the interviews, I took the following steps upon receiving a positive reply to an interview request: I first created an individualised interview guide, appropriated to the given group, leader, and country context. Then I conducted the interview and transcribed it afterwards. This was followed by the actual analytical procedures, where I first read through the transcript, while simultaneously marking useful passages, plus noting down analytical points to be made based on the interview statements and the outlined theoretical framework (see Chapter 3). I then coded these analytical points according to the topics, they considered, such as ‘collective action’, ‘transnational cooperation’, ‘view on Europe’, ‘view on the EU’, and etcetera. In the final step, the quotes were added to the analysis.

SECONDARY SOURCES

The secondary sources were mainly collected to obtain more information about the national political, societal, economic, historical, and demographic contexts, background information about the far right mobilizations under exploration, plus to

gather additional data about some of the protest events (especially when the primary data was limited). The data is thus mainly required in order to cross-check and interpret the evidence obtained through both the interviews, but particularly the website and Facebook data, and in this way ensure the reliability of the conclusions drawn on their basis (Beyers et al. 2014).

The data consists of two distinct types, namely expert interviews and written sources. The experts contacted consist of researchers, who have studied some of the national far right groups, while the document material is in the form of:

- Newspaper articles (from both mainstream and far right sources)
- Reports by anti-racism and anti-Fascist actors
- Governmental reports
- Scholarly literature on the distinct groups

News Articles (From Newspapers, Online Media Portals, and Blogs)

The inclusion of newspaper articles is mainly for background purposes in relation to the actors' larger protest events (number of participants, counter-demonstrations, etcetera), and the political context in which they take place. Due to the, at times, local nature of certain events or actors, it was deemed impractical, if not to say impossible, to only focus on one to two national newspapers from each country. Instead, Google searches were employed in order to find valid sources, including both mainstream newspapers (like *The Guardian* and *Der Standard*) and far-right media outlets (such as *Breitbart*, *Compact!*, *NovoPress*, *PI-News*, etcetera) and blogs (such as *Gates of Vienna*). While one could argue that using far right media outlets infers bias, the accounts of far right protest actions and gatherings was usually much more focused on the protest organizers' reasons for the protest, while mainstream media tended to mainly describe the protest setting, such as the size of the counter-protest, the (potential) level of violence, police arrests, etcetera. The more loosely based search method of course has implications for the replicability of this research, just as one can discuss the validity and reliability of these sources. Yet, it was deemed the most suitable approach in order to develop as detailed a data set as possible.

Reports by Anti-Racist and -Fascist NGOs and CSOs

The use of this type of data is a rather contested issue. It is far from all researchers who find these reports reliable, due to the inherent antagonist relationship between NGOs and CSOs advocating against racism and fascism and far right anti-Islam and –immigration actors. Yet, these reports are rather valuable in terms of gaining background information about the members of the groups (and their political pathways), the groups' consolidation periods, the counter-mobilization, etcetera, which was used as supplementary data for the analysis.

Several of these organizations also produce annual reports, which include data on protests by the studied actors. I have used data from the Dutch group *Kafka*, which reported on *PEGIDA Netherlands* and the *Dutch Defence League* in the period under investigation, just as Willem Wagenaar from the *Anne Frank Foundation* has written several annual reports on the Dutch far right scene. These accounts were very useful, due to the problems retrieving data on *PEGIDA Netherlands*' protest events from the group's own published data. Other examples include the Polish *Never Again!*⁴⁴, the Danish *Redox*, the Austrian *Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DOEW)*, the British *HopeNotHate*, German *Antifa* reports, and *Expo* from Sweden. Moreover, the annual 'European Islamophobia Report'⁴⁵ published since 2015 by the Turkish think-tank the *Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA)* and edited by Enes Bayraklı and Farid Hafez, was also used to a more limited extent.

Governmental and State Agency Reports

Moreover, I also retrieved reports from governmental agencies in Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic, for similar purposes as the ones outlined above. This involves the German and Austrian *Federal Offices for the Protection of the Constitution (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz)* (regional and national reports on the groups under observation, i.e. data on *GI Austria*, *PEGIDA Austria*, plus *GI Germany* and *PEGIDA Germany*). Moreover, the Czech Ministry of the Interior's annual reports on right-wing extremism in the Czech Republic was also utilized (it includes data on *BPI*, *IVČRN*, *Dawn*, and *GI Czech Republic*).

Scholarly Literature on the Distinct Groups

Finally, I have also made use of available scholarly literature on the groups. There is a great difference in the amount of research on the different organizations. While *PEGIDA Germany*, *PEGIDA UK*, Tommy Robinson, *GI France*, *GI Austria*, and *GI Germany* have received a lot of scholarly attention since around 2014, most of the other actors have not been so extensively covered.

Expert Interviews with Far Right Scholars

I have carried out several expert interviews throughout the research period in order to heighten the reliability of my conclusions. This was mainly due to the importance of the various national contexts in order to understand the actions and frames of the national groups, both in terms of (geo-)political and historical contexts, political opportunities, etcetera, which inferred a deep knowledge about the domestic settings.

⁴⁴ Rafał Pankowski, who has written rather extensively on the Polish far right (see e.g. Pankowski & Kormak 2013), directs the research.

⁴⁵ The report consists of European country-reports from 33 states, written by scholars and observers from the given countries.

Moreover, the expert interviews were also used as a means to learn more about the distinct groups' views on the transnational coalitions and their transnational links with fellow far right actors more generally (e.g. the Polish *National Movement* and its relationship to *Jobbik* versus the other groups in *Fortress Europe*).

These interviews were either conducted in writing (via e-mail), through Skype, or face-to-face, and mainly considered the political context and position of the given group in the national political system (for instance, the rise of *EKRE* in Estonia in the period under investigation), plus their transnational relations. I also conducted two expert interviews with scholars, who have researched the EU-institutional setting (Ruzza and de Bruycker) and who both confirmed my assumption that far-right extra-parliamentary actors would have very limited access to any of the EU-institutions, and thus, were highly unlikely to Europeanize their contention through these settings.

Table 2.9: List of expert interviews with scholars studying the European far right.

Expert	Country	Topics discussed
Iskander de Bruycker Assistant Professor Maastricht University, the Netherlands	EU-level	The European Parliament and far right access to the institutions
Carlo Ruzza Professor University of Trento, Italy	Italy, EU-level	<i>Lega</i> , the far right, and the EU
Pietro Castelli Gattinara Assistant Professor University of Oslo, Norway	Italy	<i>Generazione Identitaria</i> and the Italian far right scene
Alena Kluknevska Researcher Masaryk University, Czech Republic	Czech Republic	<i>BPI</i> and <i>Dawn</i>
Vendula Prokupkova, PhD Fellow Charles University in Prague Czech Republic	Czech Republic	<i>PEGIDA Germany</i> , <i>Dawn</i> , <i>IVČRN</i> , and <i>BPI</i>

Miloš Dlouhý Researcher University of Economics Prague, Czech Republic	Czech Republic	<i>GI Czech Republic</i>
Ralf Melzer Researcher Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Germany	Germany	German far right scene (<i>PEGIDA Germany</i> and <i>GI Germany</i> , plus transnational relations)
Bernhard Weidinger Researcher Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance, DÖW, Austria	Austria	Austrian far right scene and <i>GI Austria</i> (and relation to German far right)
Étienne Pingaud Post-doc EHESS-Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, France	France	<i>Bloc Identitaire</i> and <i>Riposte Laïque</i>
Konrad Jajecznik Independent researcher Poland	Poland	<i>National Movement (Ruch Narodowy)</i> and Polish far right
Andres Kasekamp Professor University of Toronto Canada	Estonia	<i>EKRE, NGO ISIS</i> and the Estonian far right
Louis Wierenga PhD fellow University of Tartu Estonia	Estonia	<i>Generation Identity, Fortress Europe, Kaljuste, and Kirsberg</i>
Jasper Muis Assistant professor Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam The Netherlands	The Netherlands	<i>PEGIDA Netherlands</i> and Dutch far right scene

These interviews all provided me with more in depth knowledge about the different contexts of far right agitation. They were particularly beneficial in terms of obtaining the ‘larger picture’ of the role and position of the groups in their respective national settings, plus their historical focus points and transnational relations. For instance, it was only through the interview with Jasper Muis that I got a more thorough understanding of the Dutch context and the limited role of the extra-parliamentary far right actors in this particular setting, plus the composition of the scene. Moreover, these interviews were also used in order to either de- or confirm my findings up until that stage about the role of the transnational relations for the different actors and the POS and DOS in the different national contexts.

Secondary Data Sources for Eliciting the Political and Discursive Opportunities

As the later Theoretical Framework will explain further, the political and discursive opportunities and the degrees of openness at the EU and domestic levels are expected to play a central role in terms of a distinct group’s Europeanization strategy. In order to elicit whether the EU and domestic political systems and discursive opportunities are ‘open’ or ‘closed’ for the far right actors, I needed information on the EU and the MS’ institutional and societal settings. The political opportunities at the EU-level consider the different European institutions and the access opportunities for civil societal organizations, both in terms of lobbying and protest actions. I identified these opportunities based on prior research (particularly Caiani & Graziano 2018; della Porta & Caiani 2009), plus expert interviews with scholars, who have studied the EU-level and civil societal organizations (CSOs) (Carlo Ruzza and Iskander de Bruycker).

The POS at the domestic level consider aspects such as whether the states are strong or weak, the access opportunities for extra-parliamentary actors to the decision-makers, the far right’s elite allies, the levels of repression (de- or certification), the strength of the national far right party, plus the relationship to a given country’s (potential) authoritarian past (see Chapter 3). I deduced this information through the expert interviews, plus in country reports on the far right, both from official (state authorities) and public sources (such as journal articles and other types of research reports). The discursive opportunities focus on the (changing) attitudes on refugees and third-country immigration of the media, public opinion, and the mainstream parties. These were established through existing analyses of the media’s portrayal of the migrants before and during the 2015-2017 period, from Eurobarometer and other public opinion polls, and from newspaper articles and scholarly research, which considered the (changing) opinions of the mainstream parties.

In summary, the data collection has provided me with a rich data set consisting of long-term (online) observation and extensive interviews, providing me with detailed and varied sources that give a rather full and revealing picture of what is going on. Nevertheless, in many important ways, my research remains a ‘comparison at a distance’ (Hassenteufel as cited in Salgado 2014), referring to “comparative studies

based exclusively on secondary literature, Internet websites and data that are not directly collected from the field by the researcher” (Ibid: 11). I did not carry out explicit fieldwork, and I rely on website data and secondary literature. However, by conducting (a small number of) interviews with movement leaders and expert interviews with researchers from across Europe, I aim to diminish the ‘distance’ in terms of context knowledge.

2.4. LIMITATIONS

Meso-Level Focus, Excluding Micro-Level Accounts

As I consider the transnational cooperation of numerous European far-right groups from across the continent, I had to delimit the data collected for each group, in order to make the research feasible and possible to conduct. Hence, whilst it would arguably be more convincing to include individual activists’ accounts of the transnational cooperation and views on Europe, in terms of exploring the cognitive aspects of Europeanization, plus the extent to which the groups *truly* transnationalize, (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009), this is not this study’s research strategy. This decision was both based on the extensive breadth of the research in terms of countries and organizations involved, but mainly because the relevance and priority in terms of answering the research question was placed elsewhere.

In a similar vein, I could also have carried out an overt or covert participant observation of either one of the national groups or the transnational coalition as such (by joining meetings, etc.). While on the one hand, this could have given me more in depth information about specific situations and events, on the other, it would also have inferred a different, and narrower, research question. Additionally, I also object to the covert approach from an ethical perspective. Hence, as I wanted to include as many European groups as possible, and a more *transnational* perspective, I decided against such approaches, and instead placed the focus on the meso-level of the organizations.

Another limitation consists of the extent to which I analysed the *online* relations between the groups. While an online network analysis could have added valuable information to the analysis of the groups’ transnational coalitions, I decided not to include it in the analysis, as it is not within the scope of the Europeanization theories into which I wished to write this study. However, more analytical work on the role of the online profiles and websites for the transnational relations could have given more encompassing knowledge about the networking between the different groups.

REFLECTIONS ON BIAS AND OBJECTIVITY

Following Blee's (2002) example from her research on the *Ku Klux Klan*, I also briefly wish to discuss and "acknowledge the myriad ways" my "personal li[fe] and emotions are intertwined with who, what, and how" I study (2003: 22). Scholars studying the far right frequently do not discuss this aspect of the research. I find this quite problematic, as it may both have certain repercussions on the objectivity of the researcher and thus, the study, just as it might be beneficial for other scholars to read, in order to be somewhat prepared for the research endeavour and/or to read about other's (potentially similar) experiences.

Most scholars I have met, who study the far right are (or at least appear to be) of a different political persuasion than their research objects. This is also the case for myself, as I politically am considerably more to the left on the political spectrum. From the outset of this research, I very consciously worked towards obeying the demands for scholarly objectivity and neutrality, despite my disagreement with the groups' statements and actions. This is an approach, I believe I have maintained throughout in my writing, despite struggling with the material on a more psychological/emotional level. For one, during some of the interviews, it was rather difficult not to react negatively upon some of the statements from the interview respondents. Yet, seeing as it was not my goal to confront them regarding their viewpoints, which I knew from the outset that I would disagree with, it became my strategy to simply 'let it slide', and move on to other topics.

Moreover, during the frame coding process, where for a longer period, I was constantly reading the gathered primary sources, I found myself going through various 'waves' of confusion and emotional distress. I both found myself angry and repulsed by the statements and disillusioned by society and the right-wing turn, but I was also at times not able to see clearly through the frames, and developed a sort of 'sporadic paranoia', due to their emotional appeals. This was particularly the case when constantly being exposed to the groups' framing of the 'terrorist threat' posed by Muslim Jihadists and the very explicit images of sites targeted by said actors. Combined with media articles with a negative spin on migrants, plus my 'following' of far right Facebook groups and comments sections, this was a very difficult period of the research. In fact, I am even struggling to write these words because the emotional effect was quite frightening. However, it taught me a lot about how 'echo chambers' work, and in this sense provided a kind of 'intel' on the mechanisms involved, while at the same time teaching me a lot about how best to study the research objects.

In terms of research strategies to 'escape the bubble,' I decided to code the data in smaller doses/sections, and generally refrain from solely reading far right sources and/or negative statements about immigrants and refugees. Moreover, it also helped a lot to discuss the emotional effects with fellow social movement scholars and friends.

CHAPTER 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Having now outlined the methodological framework in the preceding chapter, the following explains the theoretical framework, which guides the analysis of how the national groups and actors making up the two transnational coalitions *Fortress Europe* and *Generation Identity* have Europeanized their mobilizations. The analysis considers the individual extra-parliamentary groups' developments over time, from their mobilization in their respective national settings to their involvement in a transnational network, plus their protest strategies in the same period. The theoretical framework focuses on their Europeanization. This includes the strategic and organizational deliberations involved in terms of: gaining influence and/or resonance at the national and/or European level (largely depending on the perceived political and discursive opportunities and their material and symbolic resources); the creation and maintenance of coalitions at the transnational level; and the groups' (potential) construction of European collective identities.

With the growing scholarly attention to the Europeanization of social movements and civil societal organizations (CSOs) (see e.g. Imig & Tarrow 2000; 2001a; Rucht 2002; della Porta & Caiani 2009), the knowledge of extra-parliamentary actors' strategies at the EU level has vastly improved. Initially, social movement scholars assumed that protests targeted at the EU would mirror those directed at the national government. This was based on Tilly's assertion that the nation-state historically has been, and continues to be, the main target for collective actors (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009). Hence, just as "national challengers" went up against the "national polity," European challengers were "expected to emerge at the EU level" (Ibid: 13) acting independently from the national activists. Yet, so della Porta and Caiani's (2009) argument continued, the reality appears to be slightly more complex, as the domestic actors are likely to wish to take advantage of *all* the multi-level opportunities offered them. Tarrow (1998), in fact, showed this several years earlier, where he, besides from establishing that the targeting of domestic authorities for domestic issues is still the prevalent means of protesting for national activists, also found that many collective actors develop other strategies to gain influence, both at the domestic and European level (Tarrow 1998; see also Hutter 2014a). Hence, over time, extra-parliamentary actors, such as social movements and CSOs, have developed multiple variegated strategies in their endeavour to navigate the multi-level polity, to a large extent dependent on their material and symbolic resources (della Porta & Caiani 2009; Monforte 2014).

Tarrow's (1998) findings led to the development of a social movement Europeanization framework, which involves four distinct paths (Tarrow 2005). The first two relate to the national actors' protest strategies, and their choices to either 1) domesticate the protest (i.e. take the European issues to the national level) or 2) externalize their contention (take the domestic issues to the European authorities, either through insider or outsider strategies) (Ibid.). Moreover, collective actors may also start networking with actors from other European countries, leading to 3) coalition building, and finally, the organization of 4) transnational protests of various forms (Ibid.). This framework was adopted and moderated by della Porta and Caiani (2009), who also explored the multi-level features of the EU. Their framework was based on assumptions about the actors' material and symbolic resources, plus their political opportunities, making it possible to largely anticipate their strategies at the European level. Again adopting and adapting this model, in his exploration of French and German pro-asylum extra-parliamentary groups, Monforte (2014) argued that for contentious actors, the Europeanization process is "made up of three decisive (and intrinsically linked) stages, or steps" (2014: 24), namely the Europeanization of: 1) networks; 2) perceptions (or frames); and 3) collective action. This entails the expectation that actors undergoing Europeanization will construct:

- 1) Border-crossing linkages with other like-minded actors;
- 2) A common perception of the EU being a required target for their actions;
- 3) Common collective actions towards the different power holders (Ibid.).

Monforte's (2014) three points will form the basis for the structure of the main part of the theoretical framework. Hence, drawing on predominantly social movement literature and considering Europeanization from a bottom-up perspective⁴⁶, the framework is built up around the assumption that the national groups' political and discursive opportunities at both the domestic, transnational, and EU level are determinate for their strategic choices. These opportunities thus play a vital role in explaining the groups' Europeanization trajectories, in terms of both their development of "relationships with other domestic, European and transnational actors and arenas" (Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015: 46), plus their more general protest activities. More particularly, the thesis will explain how the far right groups together (attempt to) construct a shared European space of anti-immigration and -Islam mobilization. At the same time, the thesis explores the role of the EU, especially the extent to which it is targeted by the far right groups, and how and whether they frame and instrumentalize it as an antagonistic construct around which to mobilize.

⁴⁶ While the *top-down* perspective considers the "impact of EU integration on the domestic level," often by considering the effect of EU policy frameworks on the EU MS, a *bottom-up* perspective instead has its starting point at the domestic level. It considers "actors, ideas, rules and styles and how they change through time" (Lynggaard as cited in Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015: 46), particularly with a focus on the role of the EU in that regard.

Overview of the Theoretical Framework Chapter

The following sections will further elaborate on the various theoretical components of the Europeanization framework, starting with the political and discursive opportunity structures, which are important contextual features that help explain the various national groups' mobilization strategies. These varied opportunities are predominantly nationally contingent and are, in many cases, determinate for a group's mobilization success, or at least its options for manoeuvring (see e.g. Kriesi 2004). Moreover, prior research has also demonstrated that a groups' material and symbolic resources influence its strategic options, both domestically (see e.g. Edwards & Gilham 2013), and regarding EU-level mobilization (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009). In short, resource mobilization theory postulates that the more resources a social movement can muster or mobilize, the better options for initiating and maintaining a mobilization, plus recruiting activists (see e.g. McCarthy & Zald 1977). In terms of Europeanization, prior research has also shown that it is mainly resource-strong extra-parliamentary groups and actors, which approach the EU institutions (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009), making it a prerequisite for certain Europeanization strategies. In this way, the POS and DOS plus material and symbolic resources act as the *independent variables* that influence the Europeanization paths (i.e. the *dependent variables*) of the domestic groups.

The ensuing section closely relates to these opportunities, as it considers the theoretical output on far right mobilization more broadly, plus the expectations regarding 'Europeanized' mobilization and protest strategies. This section introduces the various Europeanization paths and strategies available for extra-parliamentary actors (see e.g. Tarrow 2005), and it explains which types of actors are most likely to pursue which path, and the role of material and symbolic resources in this regard. Moreover, the section also explains how the scopes of the targets, participants, events, and issues can be employed to deduce a given actor's type of collective action Europeanization. The section is followed by an outline of the literature that will be utilised to explore the Europeanization of networks. It considers the actors' strategic deliberations before and during the setting up of a transnational coalition with other European actors. The section largely draws on social movement (transnational) coalition theories. Finally, the last section introduces the concept of 'frames', and two of the main social movement research variants, namely 'collective action frames' and 'collective identity frames' (see e.g. Snow & Benford 1988; Benford & Snow 2000). Collective action frames will be employed to explore the domestic groups' initial perceptions and argumentation style (as part of their symbolic resources), which can partly explain their likely/expected Europeanization paths (see Chapter 5), plus the groups' viewpoints in comparison with their coalition-partners, in order to evaluate their value homophily (see Chapters 8-9). Hence, unlike certain other studies of social movement Europeanization (see e.g. Monforte 2014; della Porta & Caiani 2009), the interest here is not so much in exploring the development of the frames depending on the political level addressed (i.e. whether the framing of claims change if/when a

collective actor targets the EU or other European actors). Instead, frame analysis is rather used as a means to establish the mobilizing frames of the various groups, as part of the exploration of their Europeanization strategies in terms of both collective action and coalition building. The ‘collective identity frames’ will consider the (potential) construction of a European collective identity between the coalition partners, by exploring whether and how the different leaders and movement entrepreneurs (attempt to) develop a sense of solidarity and unity across the European borders. In this way, the Europeanization of frames closely relates to the actors’ transnational networking.

The final section combines all three Europeanization components (framing, collective action, and networking) in one overarching theoretical framework, which will guide the ensuing analysis. As already briefly alluded to, this framework holds the POS and DOS, and the material and symbolic resources as determinate for a national groups’ Europeanization strategy, both in terms of collective action and coalition building. It is thus the availability of certain (perceived) opportunities and resources, which is expected to proscribe a collective actor’s strategic choices.

3.1. POLITICAL AND DISCURSIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Social movement scholars have developed a framework to explain “the emergence and course” of collective actors’ mobilization, while at the same time “embedding internal processes such as identity-building and issue-framing in the context in which they occur” (Milan 2013:15). This *political opportunities* framework considers the likely form and targets of a political actor’s mobilization activities and can help explain a given organization’s interaction with the decision-making level (Kriesi 2004). The approach is most frequently employed to analyse extra-parliamentary actors’ interaction with the decision-makers, but scholars have also used it to analyse political parties’ opportunities (see e.g. Rydgren 2005).

According to the political process model, which was introduced by McAdam in 1982, a political actor’s actions are contingent on its foundation (especially its mobilizing structures), its organization, available resources, and *political* and *discursive opportunities*. Without delving into all of these components here, as these are not the focus of the research, the following section instead concentrates on the framework’s key component, political opportunity structures (POS). Moreover, it also introduces the discursive opportunity structures (DOS), which were added subsequently by other scholars. POS’ main tenet is that the degree of open- or closedness of the political system is decisive for a given extra-parliamentary actor’s chances of emergence and political influence. The degree is thus expected to affect “people’s expectations for success or failure” (Tarrow 1998: 77), and it thereby influences the organization and mobilization form of contention.

Defining 'Political Opportunity Structures' (POS)

Peter Eisinger developed the political opportunities theory in the 1970s during his examination of protests in various American cities. He found that their form and extent were highly context-dependent (Meyer 2004). Kitschelt later similarly deduced that “political opportunity structures influence the choice of protest strategies and the impact of social movements on their environments” (as cited in Kriesi 2004: 3). The actors are thus argued to strategically pursue certain actions based on a cost and benefits analysis of the ‘means’ (resources) and ‘ends’ (goals) of such mobilization (Ibid.), plus the expected responses by the targeted authorities (either policy changes towards, or away from, movement goals, a mix of the two, or no response at all).

The POS approach thus considers the (possible) openings in the political system, which the given actors can pursue in order to attain their goals. Most scholars agree that open(ing) channels of institutional access are conducive to ensuing protests, expressed in a moderate form (Kriesi 2004; see also Koopmans & Kriesi 1995). Conversely, more closed opportunities lead to more radical expressions of contention (McAdam 1996; Caiani et al. 2012). In his study, Eisinger, in fact, found that protests usually took place in settings with mixed opportunities (i.e. there was a curvilinear relationship between protests and opportunities), as a very open system already was on its way to reform, while a very closed setting would not permit mobilization (as cited in Kriesi 2004).

Over time, scholars have outlined a whole range of facilitating and debilitating factors for actors’ political opportunities. In short, the political opportunities include “institutional and cultural variables as well as the structure of party competition” (Minkenberg 2015: 10). Yet, there is an on-going debate as to which exact factors must be included in order to evaluate the political opportunities for a given extra-parliamentary actor, particularly those of a far right persuasion. On the one hand, there are the more stable factors. They include:

- **The political system** and whether it is open or closed concerning access to the decision-making entities (e.g. regarding electoral thresholds, de/centralization, power configurations (separation of powers), majoritarian/consensus democracies, etcetera) (Kriesi 2004). As a rule of thumb, the stronger the state, the less likely that mobilization will be successful.
- **The levels of state repression** (McAdam 1996). Depending on the domestic context and the type of collective actor and action, one can either expect the authorities to facilitate (through resources or moral support), not respond at all, or repress (through sanctions) the given collective action (Kriesi 2004). The levels of state repression are highly relevant to consider, when analysing far right contentious actors, as research shows that they are determining for

the composition and expression of far right activism in a given country (see e.g. Koopmans et al. 2005; Klandermans & Mayer 2006; Caiani et al. 2012; Caiani & Borri 2013). The repressive means can, for instance, include legal provisions against certain political organizations and expressions of racism and/or xenophobia, but also the inclusion or exclusion (stigmatisation) of far right groups in political deliberations (Caiani & della Porta 2018).

- **Dealings with an authoritarian past.** Research into the POS for far right actors across Europe and the U.S. has revealed that cultural aspects related to the national historical context play an important role in terms of the strategies and action repertoires employed by the far right in said country (see e.g. Caiani et al. 2012; Klandermans & Mayer 2006). This particularly involves countries with an authoritarian past, e.g. experiences with Fascism or Nazism. In these cases, it is particularly relevant to consider the country's (non-)dealing with these ideologies and adherents post-WWII, and how this affects the reception of far right claims in the given country today⁴⁷ (see e.g. Klandermans & Mayer 2006; Mudde 2007).

On the other hand, there are also more *dynamic* (i.e. less stable and possibly changing) factors, which have shown to be important for far right mobilization. They include:

- **The views of (potential) allies and opponents.** The relationship between the given group and its allies and adversaries is highly important in relation to its chances of success. Such allies are particularly important in terms of (potential) repression, especially if the allies are influential in the decision-making process (Caiani & della Porta 2018). Hence, researchers have found that particularly the political leaning of a state's governing party is either conducive or dissuasive for certain political expression types, as it has a key position in terms of instigating state repression (Ibid.). Other types of allies considered determinant for social movements more generally include "policymakers, public authorities, parties, interest groups, the media, related movements," etcetera. (Kriesi 2004: 5). For far right actors, particularly the attitudes of institutional actors, such as moderate right-wing parties are important for the (potential) mobilization. They can either 'certify' the given group's viewpoints, and thereby add legitimacy to the cause, or 'decertify' the group, either explicitly (by proscribing it, or its activities), or implicitly (by ignoring it and its statements) (see also Gupta 2008: 65). These alliance

⁴⁷ Some of the most prominent examples in this regard involve Germany and Italy, which were both under authoritarian dictatorships during WWII, but whose national treatment of these actors in the aftermath have differed greatly. In Germany, there is a rather broad societal consensus around the stigmatisation of (neo-)Nazis and racist expressions (Caiani et al. 2012), while in Italy, nostalgic expressions for the fascist past are still voiced at the political level (Chiarini 2013).

structures are likely to change after elections, where new contenders (potentially) gain seats and governmental positions, and thus, change the available political opportunities (Kriesi 2004).

- **Allies at the extra-parliamentary level:** The far right groups may also look for allies in the domestic subcultural milieu. A strong social network with other domestic extra-parliamentary actors has been found to play a vital role for the groups' organization and mobilization potential, especially concerning recruitment purposes (Caiani & della Porta 2018; see also Berntzen & Weisskircher 2016). Moreover, the 'certification' of the given group by (other) domestic far right subcultural actors, such as hooligans, student association members, etcetera (Ibid.) is also crucial in order to keep hostility and competition at bay. Conversely, the strength of an actor's opponents, such as the public authorities or other actors, who may carry out suppressive acts (including counter-movements), can become decisive for the outcome of said actor's mobilization (Kriesi 2004).

All of these factors in various ways influence the deliberations and mobilization strategies of collective actors, depending on their goals and ambitions. Moreover, as the following section will show, the electoral gains of far right *parties* also influence the mobilization of Western European far right extra-parliamentary actors.

The Western vs. Eastern European Interplay between Far Right Non- and Institutional Actors

In the Western European context, far right scholarship has shown that the political opportunities affect which far right actors are most prominent in a given country, both in terms of their organization type and ideological proclivity (see e.g. Minkenberg 2015). Koopmans and colleagues (2005) has argued that a strong far right *party* in a given country would act as an inhibition for far right subgroups, as the space for manoeuvring already was occupied, and the party would thereby 'crowd out' the subcultural actors. This theory has been corroborated by Hutter (2014a), and as Minkenberg (2018) convincingly argues, it still holds true for the Western European far right scene, where strong radical right (i.e. ethno-centrist, not fascist) parties prohibit strong street mobilisation and vice versa, if no strong party is present (2018: 9). In this sense, "the availability of sufficient 'political space' predicts a strong radical right party, but at the same time a weak social movement" (Caiani 2017: 7), which also tends to utilize a more moderate action repertoire (Koopmans et al. 2005). On the

other hand, a closed political space will lead to radicalization⁴⁸, both at the party and extra-parliamentary level. This was, for instance, exemplified in Sweden, Germany, and the UK in 2014. The (most successful) far right parties (at the time) all belonged to the more extreme right (*Sweden Democrats*, the German *National Democratic Party (NPD)*, and the *British National Party (BNP)*) and were acting alongside a very active extra-parliamentary extreme right scene (Minkenberg 2015; see also Caiani et al. 2012). Conversely, the strong electoral position of the *Danish People's Party* in Denmark entails a rather insignificant and moderate far right subcultural scene (Holmsted Larsen as cited in Ejsing 2017).

The situation in Eastern Europe is very different. The German scholar Michael Minkenberg has written rather extensively on the subject of Eastern versus Western European far right mobilization. Some of his latest texts explore the various political opportunities in the two parts of Europe, where he explains that the relationship between parties and extra-parliamentary actors are rather different in Eastern Europe (Minkenberg 2015). While in a Western European country, the relationship between the strength of a party and a movement tends to be 'hydraulic' (i.e. strong/weak or vice versa), in Eastern Europe, they are usually equally strong (he uses the example of *Jobbik* and the *Hungarian Guard* in Hungary) (Minkenberg 2015). Furthermore, due to the configurations of the political system, the two types of actors can co-exist, and even cooperate, without any political repercussions, and the parties are more prone to see this cooperation as beneficial rather than a problem (Minkenberg 2018). The Western European radical right parties, on the other hand, are more hesitant to cooperate with far right movements due to the extra-parliamentary far right actors' "extremism and uncontrollability", which "more often than not" becomes "a liability rather than a resource" (Minkenberg 2018: 15).

Hence, from this, one can deduce two expectations. For one, in Western European countries with a strong far right party, the extra-parliamentary far right actors will have difficulties attracting high numbers and acting forcefully, and they are unlikely to obtain an alliance with the given party. In Eastern Europe, on the other hand, the two types of organizations can have equally strong roles in their domestic settings, potentially mobilizing together.

⁴⁸ In the literature, Daphi and Anderl (2016) argue that this 'radicalization' of contention is usually equated with the employment of violence. Yet, as they point out, this does not necessarily have to be the case. Instead, they define 'radicalization' as "a considerable move on a continuum from conventional towards more disruptive tactics, not necessarily including violence" (2016: 3).

Criticisms of the Political Opportunity Approach

The political opportunity approach has received much criticism over the years, mainly due to the plethora of different interpretations of what constitutes an ‘opportunity,’ which “reduces its heuristic and theoretical values” (Kriesi 2004: 2; see also Gamson & Meyer 1996 for a critique). Yet, scholars have also criticized its focus on structural factors rather than e.g. movement identity (see e.g. Goodwin & Jasper 1999). Subcultural, and thus, more ‘identity-based’, far right actors are, for example, argued to be neither focused nor dependent on these political and discursive opportunities to a high extent when mobilising due to their more general ambitions of changing society rather than specific policies (Goodwin & Jasper 1999). As Kriesi (2004) states, “Such movements will have a greater degree of autonomy from the political context and thus be less adequately explained” by the political process approach (2004: 7). Hence, even though these political opportunities might exist (be ‘open’), this does not automatically entail that a given actor mobilizes, just as closed opportunities do not necessarily dissuade all contentious actors from mobilizing. Yet, despite the rather profound criticism of the approach, there are certain factors, which most research on far right extra-parliamentary actors has found to be determining for their mobilization and its outcome. This involves the levels of repression, de- and legitimisation by the elites, the reception by the subcultural milieu, and their countries’ dealings with the authoritarian past (Caiani & della Porta 2018; Klandermans & Mayer 2006).

Defining Discursive Opportunity Structures

In a similar vein of critique as the ones cited above, the POS approach implicitly expects that the given actor must first be *aware* of, and *believe in* the opportunities, in order to exploit them (Elster as cited in Kriesi 2004). Yet, in their study of extreme right violence in Germany, Koopmans and Olzak (2004) argued that “Most people, including most activists, are not full-time political analysts who closely follow and gather independent information on what is going on in the corridors of power, and who have an intimate knowledge of the institutional intricacies of the political system” (2004: 201). They instead gather much of their knowledge from the media and consider the (possible) societal reception of their actions before and during the instigation of protest actions (Ibid.). In order to accommodate for these eventualities of non-consideration of the political opportunities, plus to consider the role of discourses for mobilization, the framework also includes *Discursive Opportunity Structures* as an explanatory factor for the groups’ mobilization.

Koopmans and Statham (1999a) introduced the ‘discursive opportunity structure’ (DOS) concept, which, in short, refers to opportunities that “determine what kind of ideas become visible for the public, resonate with public opinion and are held to be ‘legitimate’ by the audience” (Kriesi 2004: 229; for a literature review on the concept, see McCammon 2013). The concept synthesises framing and POS and brings in more cultural elements to the exploration of opportunities (McCammon 2013). Koopmans

and Olzak (2004) define these discursive opportunities as “the aspects of the public discourse that determine a message’s chances of diffusion in the public sphere” (2004: 202). They are determined by examining “the political conditions under which specific discourse become imaginable” (Koopmans & Duyvendak as cited in Bröer & Duyvendak 2009: 338).

Similar to the POS, it can be quite hard to pin down both the definition and inclusion of factors for the exploration of DOS (see e.g. McCammon 2013). Yet, the discursive opportunities can help ‘foresee’ or predict the political and societal reception of the given collective actors’ employment of specific frames. Scholars have identified mainstream parties, the media, and public opinion as particularly important in terms of the particular public discourses to which the given frames need to speak. The following section will briefly outline why this is the case.

- **Mainstream parties:** The discourses of the mainstream parties, and more generally, the national political elites, strongly influence whether or not a collective actor will mobilize successfully (Koopmans & Statham 2010). In terms of far right mobilization, Koopmans and colleagues (2005) found that the mainstream parties’ policy positions “on issues pertaining to immigration and ethnic relations” is “a crucial determinant” of far right success, as the far right claims relate to those made by the other parties in a competitive institutional setting (2005: 182). Moreover, prior research conducted by Koopmans (1996) also revealed that when the political elite discussed migrants and asylum seekers as a social problem, racist attacks tended to rise, due to the opening of discursive opportunities.
- **Media:** As it is from the media, that most people draw their political knowledge and therefrom opinions, the media is one of the key sites for the development of main discourses within a given society’s public arena (Koopmans & Olzak 2004). It is thus important for a collective actor to ‘speak to’ this discourse in order to gain wider visibility and resonance (McCammon 2013). Moreover, Koopmans and Olzak (2004) also emphasize the role of editors and journalists in terms of giving ‘visibility’ to a given public message. Hence, by e.g. placing a news story on the front page, plus continuously focusing on a specific issue, these actors play a great role in determining the topics of discussion amongst their readerships, and thus, the diffusion of the message at the public level (Ibid.).
- **Public opinion:** While collective actors often mainly address political institutions, they also speak to public opinion foremost in order to attract attention to their cause (i.e. visibility), but also to foster a broader appeal of their claims by attempting to gain *resonance*. ‘Resonance’ refers to the provocation of “reactions from other actors in the public sphere,” inferring a communicative impact of the claims, thus leading to their societal spread

through various responses (Koopmans & Olzak 2004: 204). It is particularly beneficial if these responses are affirmative or positive (i.e. consonant), yet, even a negative reception of the message is better than no response at all as it at least brings the topic into the public sphere (Ibid.). Hence, the ability of a given actor to speak to the “widespread beliefs and core values” within society is likely to further said actor’s resonance gains (McCammon 2013: 1). Similarly, Rydgren (2005) argued that the diffusion of xenophobic worldviews at the societal level prescribes far right success, thus showing the potential in speaking to the public’s societal worries and concerns.

A frame’s resonance can thus be based on the frame’s alignment with both the “pre-existing ideational elements” of said society (McCammon 2013: 1), but also the current saliency of a specific topic in the domestic discourse. In their exploration of the far right in five European countries, Giugni and colleagues (2005), for instance, considered the countries’ history of migration and migrants’ citizenship rights as determinant for the current far right scenes and their claims. In their analysis of the anti-TTIP campaign in six European countries, Caiani and Graziano (2018) considered the present views on the deal as expressed by the governing parties, public opinion, and the media. In this way, certain scholars utilize the concept as a less stable factor, and consider shifts in these discursive opportunities over time, and how this may permit collective actors to gain resonance, and thus, success (see e.g. McCammon et al. 2007 as cited in McCammon 2013; Koopmans & Olzak 2004; Kasekamp et al. 2018; Caiani & Graziano 2018). This is also mainly how the concept will be employed for this thesis’ purposes, as it is the aim to consider the (potential) mobilization changes during the ‘refugee crisis,’ a period that both contained domestic and European differences of opinion, both at the political and public opinion level. This implies that the analysis will pay particular attention to the discourses and viewpoints of mainstream parties, the media, and public opinion on the given policy issue, and their potential changes over the three-year period under exploration.

In order to analyse the role of the political and discursive opportunities, Koopmans and Statham (1999a) have devised a typology of a collective actor’s likely mobilization outcome. They expect that if both the POS and DOS are closed, the actor will obtain no support from, nor gain access to, the decision-makers. Where the DOS are open, but the POS are closed, the political elite is likely to take over the less contentious ideas, while excluding and/or repressing the claimant, which instead can “exert some influence on the public discourse” (1999a: 247). In the reverse situation, i.e. where the POS are open, but the DOS closed, the challenger will most likely be co-opted, but without necessarily achieving much in terms of policy changes. Finally, where both the POS and DOS are open, the challenger will be met with a full response, i.e. both access and concessions (1999: 248).

The political and discursive opportunities thus heavily influence the available strategical options for a collective actor, and in this way, act as an independent variable influencing the national group's path of Europeanization (the dependent variable). This infers that the POS and DOS (may) affect the actors' chosen collective action strategies, networks, and frames, even though, as already argued above, these actors may not always opt for the objectively apparent political or discursive opportunity (Poletta & Jasper 2001). The following sections will outline these three aspects, and consider them in a Europeanization perspective, with a focus on the influence of the political and discursive opportunities. Moreover, as explained above, a group's material and symbolic resources are another key factor in terms of the group's Europeanization (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009). This aspect is also envisioned to play a crucial role in terms of the actors' Europeanization strategies, particularly regarding the collective action Europeanization, but also in terms of the transnational coalition-membership. The resources' roles will be introduced further below, but should also be considered an independent variable affecting the groups' Europeanization.

3.2. EUROPEANIZATION OF COLLECTIVE ACTION: STRATEGIES AND PATHS

In terms of collective action, Imig and Tarrow (2001a) hypothesised that the development of Europe into a polity would "sooner or later" infer that "ordinary citizens will turn their claims and their forms of contentious politics beyond their borders and toward this new level of governance" (2001a: 7-8). Europeanization theory thus expects that with the increased EU-level policy competences, collective actors would begin moving away from the purely domestic focus, and instead start both targeting the EU institutions with policy demands and constructing 'Europeanized' identities (Caiani & Graziano 2018: 1032). Hence, the prior nation-state focus of movements was expected to also appear at the EU-level, where *European* actors would start targeting the *European* polity, just as was the case at the *national* level, where *national* actors targeted the *national* decision-makers (della Porta & Caiani 2009). This expectation has to some extent been substantiated by empirical research, which has shown that while the nation-state still plays a strong role in terms of social movement claims-making, these actors are also increasingly turning towards the EU-level (Ibid.). The actors thus often employ multi-level strategies in an attempt to exploit the opportunities for 'crossed influence' at several political decision-making levels (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009; Caiani & Graziano 2018).

Europeanization theory thus posits that the shifting level of decision-making (i.e. from the national to the EU-level) will lead national extra-parliamentary collective actors to target the new level of decision-making (Tarrow 1998). It considers whether and how collective actors change and moderate their protest strategies both as a reaction to, and in order to accommodate, the European integration process. This infers that it

is Europeanization analyses' overarching aim to understand collective actors' mobilization strategies in the multilevel political setting and to consider the European continent as "a movement space on its own terms" (Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015: 35). Concerning this particular study, it is the main aim of the collective action analysis to explore how and whether far right collective actors make use of the mobilization opportunities at the transnational and/or EU-level. This is done by analysing European far right collective action in a period where one of the far right's key mobilizing issues (i.e. third-country immigration) was discussed in pan-European terms, i.e. during the 'refugee crisis'.

In order to develop an analytical framework to analyse such effects, the following theoretical framework draws on the scholarly literature on social movement collective action Europeanization. The literature posits that the collective actors' Europeanization strategies largely depend on the different groups' available POS and DOS, together with their symbolic and material resources (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009). The section thus outlines the expected forms of Europeanization by first explaining the various Europeanization paths possible in terms of the scopes of protest targets, issues, participants, and events (Ibid.). These findings will be utilised to analyse the groups' forms of Europeanization, which may either involve 'domestication,' 'externalization,' or 'transnational contention,' either in the form of 'transnational pressure' or 'supranationalization' (these concepts will be explained further below).

The initial section will first briefly consider prior findings regarding far right extra-parliamentary actors' protest repertoires more broadly and their protest strategies, in order to further underline the relevance of employing social movement Europeanization theories on this particular type of actors. This is followed by an outline of the theoretical expectations regarding the forms of Europeanization of contention, drawn from social movement Europeanization literature.

Far Right Protest Repertoires: Protests as Policy-Expression and as Intra-Group Unifier

Protests play an important role for many extra-parliamentary political actors (mainly social movements) as they offer a possibility to exert direct political pressure on adversaries, and attract attention to a cause through the public display of discontent, (potentially) leading to media exposure. This is also the case for several European radical and extreme right extra-parliamentary actors. Yet, until the early 2010s, the dominant research focus on far right mobilization tended to be placed on the *extreme* right's violent action repertoires⁴⁹. However, in 2012, Caiani and colleagues (2012)

⁴⁹ This has led to several studies on anti-immigrant/minority and anti-left violent mobilization (e.g. Merkl 2004; Schlembach 2011), but also football hooligans across Europe, who often belong to the extreme right (see e.g. Garland & Rowe 2001).

conducted a more encompassing protest event analysis of various American, Italian, and German groups' activities, based on newspaper sources. The analysis revealed that the groups make use of a highly varied portfolio of action repertoires, depending on both the type of group but also the available opportunity structures in the given countries.

According to Tilly, the 'repertoire of contention' refers to "[t]he whole set of means (a group) has for making claims of different kinds on different individuals or groups" (as cited in della Porta 2013b: 1). Similar to left-wing movements, the far right repertoires involve both policy contestation and symbolic actions. They range from conventional (such as lobbying), to demonstrative (like demonstrations and petitions), confrontational (e.g. building occupations), and violent actions (such as attacks on political opponents). Moreover, the groups also frequently organize expressive events (such as concerts,⁵⁰ conferences, and other cultural initiatives), in order to foster and sustain intra-group cohesion by providing meeting places and a social life to the actors (see e.g. Caiani et al. 2012; Caiani 2017; Merkl 2004; Simi & Futrell 2010).

Research has also demonstrated that the organizational characteristics of a given far right group are important factors in terms of its strategic action repertoire. The more institutional format, the more moderate actions, and the more flexible structures, the more controversial types of actions (Koopmans et al. 2005: 187). Similarly, Caiani and Borri (2013) found that subcultural youth groups employed the most violent repertoires, while parties and political movements tend to employ more expressive, conventional, and demonstrative strategies. Moreover, the repertoires are also to a high extent dependent on the societal context and resonance (see e.g. Klare & Sturm 2016 for the German context), plus the state and judicial regulations for mobilization⁵¹. Hence, in many senses, the far right mobilizes in rather similar ways as do other extra-parliamentary contentious actors. This infers that they can be analysed through a similar social movement lens (see e.g. Caiani et al. 2012), also in terms of Europeanization.

⁵⁰ These types of activities particularly relate to the U.S. White Power movement and European neo-Nazi Skinheads (Merkl 2004), but also to neo-Fascists, such as *Bloc Identitaire* and *CasaPound* (see e.g. Froio & Castelli Gattinara 2015).

⁵¹ One has to keep in mind that due to the contentious nature of their protest events, many far right activists are likely to remain behind the screen rather than participate in street protests. These so-called 'keyboard warriors' (Busher 2016) thus find a sort of 'safety behind the screen', in the sense that they can relatively freely express their political sentiments as they are in a group of similarly minded actors but avoid the criticism and potential repression and stigmatization attempts faced on the streets.

DEGREES OF EUROPEANIZATION: ISSUE, TARGET, PARTICIPANT, AND EVENT SCOPES

Europeanization theory argues that domestic collective actors have several protest strategies available to them in the multi-level polity, depending on their political and discursive opportunities and their resources (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009). Hence, depending on these variables, on the one hand, there will be ‘non-Europeanized’ domestic actors, solely active on domestic issues with domestic scopes (i.e. ‘domestic protests’) (Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015). Yet, on the other, there will be some actors, who Europeanize their contention by protesting around *European* issues, targeting *European* decision-makers with fellow, *European* contenders. Such cases indicate that the EU has *supranationalized* as a polity (Caiani & Graziano 2018).

In order to consider both the variation in national groups’ degrees of Europeanization, and to analyse their Europeanization paths, prior Europeanization studies have focused on four aspects of the actions, namely the scope of the protest *targets*, *issues*, *participants*, and *events* (see e.g. Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015; Caiani & Graziano 2018). The extent to which these various scopes are ‘European’ and/or ‘transnational’ gives a good indication about the various groups’ degrees and forms of Europeanization (see e.g. Caiani & Graziano 2018).

Scope of Issues

The ‘issue scope’ is a crucial aspect for collective actors’ Europeanization paths. It considers whether the given groups’ protest issue involves a problem that requires a ‘domestic’ or ‘European’ policy solution. Scholars exploring collective action have had difficulties to both define and determine the ‘issue scope,’ due to the intertwined nature of many domestic and European policy issues, making it hard to distinguish between an issue’s breadth (see e.g. Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015; Hutter 2014a). As Hutter (2014a) states, one can only establish “a very crude measure, because most problems or goals can result from internationalization processes” (2014a: 178).

This study draws on Bourne and Chatzopoulou’s (2015) approach, and considers an issue scope as ‘domestic,’ if it can be “specifically linked to a domestic decision or a domestic political arena,” ‘European’ if it relates to the European or EU political arena, or a “combination of both,” if both levels are involved (2015: 50). Even though Hutter (2014a) distinguishes between ‘local,’ ‘domestic,’ and ‘transnational’ issue scopes, his conceptualization is still rather similar. He exemplifies it by looking at migration policies, stating that issues related to the entry of foreigners to a country are ‘transnational’ problems (i.e. ‘European’), while issues related to the *integration* of the immigrants are ‘domestic’ in scope (Hutter 2014a), including, for example, the housing of refugees. This implies that if a demonstration for instance both involves demands around the immi- and integration of third country immigrants and refugees, it involves a combination of European and national issue scopes.

Hence, even though the ‘refugee crisis’ largely involved discussions at the EU-level about the entry of the refugees to the different EU MS (for instance during the ‘quota’ debates), i.e. it had a ‘European’ scope, the domestic mobilization could also relate to the *integration* of said refugees, i.e. have a ‘domestic’ scope. In such cases, i.e. where the issue surrounds a ‘domestic’ policy topic, there is no expectation that the given group will Europeanize its contention, as it will want to take the claims to the appropriate level of decision-making, i.e. the nation-state (Tarrow 1998). This is why the issue scope is rather indicative for a collective actors’ (potential) mobilization strategy in terms of Europeanization (see Table 3.1 below).

Scope of Targets

As argued above, it is expected that the shifting level of decision-making (i.e. from the national to the EU-level) will infer that protests increasingly will target the EU with demands for political change (Tarrow 1998). Hence, Europeanization works from the assumption that protest organisers voicing political demands have a predefined target, or addressee, in mind when organising a demonstration or other protest event, depending on the political entity, they consider most apt to approach for attaining their goals. When the given group perceives a foreign or international actor to be most approachable, the targeting is expected to shift accordingly. Europeanization research thus frequently focuses on whether protest “targets are principally domestic authorities, European authorities (including EU institutions and state authorities abroad), or both” (Bourne & Chatzopolou 2015: 39; see also Caiani & Graziano 2018).

The exploration of the context-specific situation surrounding the ‘refugee crisis’ is expected to lead to the illumination of very different national responses by the different actors under investigation, not least the extent to which they target the EU in their mobilization. In terms of the different EU institutions and their roles regarding EU migration policy, then besides the European Commission and the European Parliament, the European Council is also an influential decision-making power as it sets the strategic priorities for the EU (Monforte 2014). As the institution consists of the EU MS’ ministers, it can be influenced on the national level, via pressures on the national governments. This entails that the various national extra-parliamentary far right actors have various available protest strategies available, depending on the specific EU institution they (potentially) target.

At the same time, collective actors may also target other European actors besides the EU. For instance, they may problematize the actions of, and thus target, other EU member states, especially if these have an impact on the collective actor’s own nation-state. This was, for example, seen during the anti-austerity protests in Greece where numerous groups targeted Germany (Van Gent et al. 2013: 153; see also Bourne & Chatzopolou 2015). Similarly, politicians from other EU MS may also be presented as part of the solution to a given problem (Monforte 2014).

Scope of Participants

In order to explore the breadth of the European protest arenas, Europeanization literature also focuses on the extent to which “movement actors take action predominantly alongside fellow domestic actors, fellow European actors or both” (Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015: 39). While some studies have focused on the composition of the hosting organization(s) (i.e. the *specific* claim maker), and whether it/they consist(s) of domestic or transnational actors, or both (e.g. the domestic branches of transnational organizations, such as *Amnesty International*) (Ibid.), this study looks at the configuration of the protest *participants* at the various domestically organised demonstrations. This choice is based on the desire to more closely examine the extent of the transnationalization of the far right, including in the crowd, as such protest participation also can be conducive to the development of European identities (see e.g. Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015; della Porta & Caiani 2009).

Research by scholars such as Schlembach (2011) shows that particularly the *extreme* right scene, especially neo-Nazis, fairly frequently have joint each other’s protest events abroad, especially around commemorative events, like the birthdays of historical figures, such as Hitler or Himmler. Prior research has also shown that activists from EDL and its European network frequently joined each other’s demonstrations, organized more or less European demonstrations in a particular European MS (e.g. the 2011 *European Defence League* demonstration in Aarhus, Denmark (Meleagrou-Hitchens & Brun 2013)) or participated as speakers at rallies abroad (Ibid.). Yet, despite this evident European cooperation at the street level, there has hardly been any research conducted that explores why the groups wish to partake in events abroad, plus the extent to which such border-crossing exchanges take place (see e.g. Schlembach 2011 for an exception). Hence, this study considers the composition of the crowd and/or the invited speakers and whether these actors are domestic, cross-border (i.e. from neighbouring countries), or European.

Scope of Events

The ‘event scope’ “refers to the geographical and/or political scope of the substantive mobilisation of the event” (Caiani & Graziano 2018: 1051). In Caiani and Graziano’s (2018) framework, these actions both include protests staged at the EU-institutions, or simultaneously in several EU MS. The latter draws on Imig and Tarrow’s (2000; 2001a) framework on ‘transnational contention,’ which refers to protests involving transnational actors, who go up against the EU (or other supra- or transnational actors) “in response to EU policies” (2000: 86f).

These ‘ideal-types’⁵² involve two types of mobilization, which both are included in this study, namely:

- **Cooperative transnationalism:** Various national actors carry out parallel, “in cooperative but recognizably separate acts” in their domestic settings against a shared target or antagonist (like the ones included by Caiani & Graziano 2018)
- **Collective transnationalism:** A larger protest action in one particular setting, which involves transnational participation towards a shared European target.

These ‘transnational protests’ can take many different forms, ranging from a network of actors carrying out single-day coordinated protest events in each partaking actors’ domestic setting, to longer-lasting campaigns against European actors (della Porta and Tarrow 2005; Monforte 2014). Hence, their scopes may differ both in terms of geography, politics, and duration, but they can all be considered ‘European’ protest events (Caiani & Graziano 2018).

The inclusion of ‘event scopes’ to the Europeanization framework not only sheds more light on the role of the *European* space of contention, but several scholars also allude to the effects of protests for the collective identity formation amongst the activists, also at the transnational level (della Porta 2006; della Porta & Caiani 2009; Tarrow 2005)⁵³. Hence, these joint protest actions may help foster a stronger sense of solidarity between the participating groups⁵⁴.

⁵² ‘International conflict’ is deliberately left out of this overview, as the targeting of “competitors from other nations” is an unlikely strategy for collective actors that do not pursue economic goals (unlike e.g. farmers and fishermen who have carried out these types of protests in the past in order to ensure their fishing and farming rights) (Imig & Tarrow 2000: 87).

⁵³ As such, protest participation “generates bonds between activists and builds up a shared history and memories that can sustain movements even in periods of low activity or abeyance” (Flesher Fominaya 2010: 46). The closer bonds are created via protest actions, which ‘eventfulness’ has “cognitive, affective and relational impacts” on the participants in question, including far right groups (Caiani et al. 2012: 12; see also Busher 2016; Simi & Futrell 2010).

⁵⁴ Moreover, there are also several other possible ways that extra-parliamentary organizations can transnationalise their contention and other political activities. This can for instance be through pan-European conferences, meetings, or social events, aimed at fostering closer links between the various participants. Yet, these types of actions are not included in the collective action examination (see Chapter 2 and Appendix B).

EUROPEANIZATION FORMS: FROM ‘DOMESTICATION’ TO ‘SUPRANATIONALIZATION’

Adopting the framework utilised by della Porta and Caiani (2009), the above outlined ‘scopes’ can be employed to deduce four different Europeanization paths, a collective actor may pursue as a means to obtain policy influence. As protests with a ‘domestic’ issue scope do not respond to European policies or involve EU institutions, such actions are not included in the framework (Ibid.), as they are highly unlikely to lead to Europeanization strategies. These actions with a ‘domestic’ issue scope often take the form of ‘domestic protests’. A ‘typical’ or ‘routine’ domestic protest constitutes domestic actors targeting a domestic institution about a domestic policy-issue (Imig & Tarrow 2000). This strategy is frequently shown to still be the prevalent means of protesting (see e.g. Hutter 2014a), something that is mainly ascribed to the necessity for citizens to address the territorial level of the decision-making (Tarrow 1998).

Hence, the framework (as outlined on Table 3.1) only includes protests with a ‘European’ issue scope, and utilises the ‘participant’ and ‘target’ scopes to deduce collective actors’ forms of Europeanization:

Table 3.1: Collective actors’ forms of Europeanization

		Target scope	
		National	European
Actor scope	National	Domestication	Externalisation
	European	Transnational pressure	Supranationalisation

(Adopted from Caiani & Graziano 2018).

Thus, depending on a group’s strategic deliberations, largely based on its POS, DOS, and available resources, it can pursue several Europeanization paths, namely domestication, externalization, ‘transnational pressure’ and ‘supranationalization’. As outlined in the table, ‘Domestication’ involves *domestic* actors, who target the *domestic* decision-makers on a *European* policy issue. ‘Externalization’ also involves *domestic* actors, who, however, target the *EU* with calls for *domestic* policy changes (pursuing a ‘boomerang’ effect (Keck & Sikkink 1998)). Some groups also choose to coalesce with similar-minded groups from other European countries, and either exercise ‘Transnational pressure’ by jointly targeting an EU MS in order for it to make policy changes, or ‘supranationalize’ their contention by targeting the EU (Caiani & Graziano 2018). The latter indicates the development of a European polity, where European actors jointly mobilize at the supranational European level (Ibid.). These four distinct paths are further explained below.

Domestication: Mobilizing at the National Level about EU-Related Policies

‘Domestication’ refers to domestic actors targeting a domestic institution about an issue, where the “EU or its policies are either the source or the indirect target of protest” (Caiani & Graziano 2018: 1033f). The actors opting for this strategy wish to put “pressure on the EU in favour of national interests” (della Porta & Caiani 2009: 52), as they see the EU as somewhat responsible for the given problematic situation, but they deem it better dealt with by pressuring the national, and electorally accountable, government (Monforte 2014). Hence, it involves the voicing of a claim about a European policy towards the domestic decision-makers with the aim of pressuring the national government to take the point to the EU institutions and negotiate on the collective actors’ behalf (Ibid.).

The targeting of the national politicians is mainly due to two reasons: 1) the domestic political opportunities are more open than at the EU-level, and 2) the national decision-makers are considered more directly accountable to the electorates, and thus expected to be more acquiescent to the public’s demands (della Porta & Caiani 2009). Most collective actors are thus expected to internalize their mobilization (della Porta & Tarrow 2005) by targeting their national decision-makers concerning policies where the EU has the decision-making power⁵⁵.

As Tarrow (2005) explains, this can create a ‘triangular relationship’ between ‘ordinary people’, the national governments, and, in this case, the European institutions. He continues by outlining the mechanisms at play in this process. It starts

⁵⁵ Imig and Tarrow (2001) conducted one of the first studies. They carried out a protest event analysis (PEA) to examine the extent to which “citizens” were “protesting EU policies” in the period 1984-1997 (2001a: 3). The analysis showed that mobilization against the EU’s policies was increasing, yet, domestically, and not directly targeted at the EU (Ibid.). Thus, while the “social movements attribute some responsibility for a problematic situation to the European Union”, they still “continue to mobilize at the national level”, even though the protests “are constructed in reaction to decisions taken at the European level” (Monforte 2014: 143). This finding initially posed a conundrum to scholars, as the increased EU competences was expected to lead to a rise in direct EU protests. Yet, the most ensuing studies revealed a similar tendency (see e.g. Rucht’s (2002) research on German protests, Roederer’s (1999) exploration of French farmers’ protests, Uba and Ugglá’s (2011) Europe-wide PEA of the period 1992-2007, and Giugni and Passy (2002) on migrant rights protests). Surprisingly, research on the protests surrounding the financial crisis in the late 2000s reached similar conclusions. These actors also mainly targeted the nation state, and not the EU and other international financial institutions, despite many of the problems deriving from there (Flesher Fominaya 2014: 183, see also Kaldor et al. 2012; della Porta & Mattoni 2014; Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015). In fact, most protesters participating in the ‘global wave of protest’ during this period mainly intended “to reclaim the nation state as a locus and focus of action” (Flesher Fominaya 2014: 183). The member states thus continue to be the most important actors in the EU (Parks 2015), just as “public discourse is deeper at the national level than it is in Europe as a whole” (Imig & Tarrow 2001b: 41).

with external pressure from the EU on the government to adopt the given European policy, which the government eventually implements. This leads to citizen mobilization around the policy, but targeted at the government, which can choose to either repress the protests, offer concessions to the citizens, or broker between the citizens and the European institution (Ibid.). It then potentially leads to policy changes at the EU- or domestic level.

The utilisation of the domestication strategy is partly related to the dominant role of the member states in the EU decision-making process (Rucht as cited in Chabanet 2011: 96; see also Parks 2015), something that is also the case regarding migration policy (see e.g. Monforte 2014). Hutter's (2014a) exploration of protest events in six European countries from the mid-1970s to the mid-2000s thus showed that protests related to 'immigration' (either "by, against, or on behalf of migrants" (2014: xix)) almost exclusively targeted the national governments (see also Giugni & Passy 2002). Hence, protests still most frequently target national political actors, despite the growing influence of EU policies on the member states, also concerning migration and asylum policies (see e.g. Hutter 2014a; Monforte 2014).

Domesticated protests and protests with a 'national' scope and target are thus likely to continue being the prevalent strategy, as research has also demonstrated (see e.g. Caiani & Graziano 2018). Moreover, studies indicate that actors who mobilize around a policy issue with a 'politicized' agenda will have difficulties taking the claims to the EU institutions (see e.g. Monforte 2014; Parks 2015). Hence, on this basis, one can expect that far right mobilization mainly will take place at the domestic level, targeting the national governing bodies.

Externalization: Taking the Claims to the EU Institutions

Another possible Europeanization path is for the domestic actor to take the mobilization to the European level in order to exercise pressure on the national decision-makers by gaining EU-support (della Porta & Caiani 2009; Balme & Chabanet 2008). The *externalization* path thus refers to the reverse strategy of domestication, and involves actors targeting the EU because they deem that their opportunities are better at this policy level, due to the obstacles faced domestically, such as repression or marginalization (Tarrow 2005; della Porta & Caiani 2009). They thus "try to mobilize allies at the supranational level; their protest addresses EU institutions, pushing them to intervene upon domestic governments" (della Porta 2007: 375; see also Dür & Mateo 2014; Monforte 2014). Groups that employ this strategy most commonly perceive the "European policies" in a particular policy area as "more liberal than national policies"⁵⁶ (Monforte 2014: 144). Moreover, collective

⁵⁶ Monforte (2014) also identifies *multilevel social movements* as an Europeanization mode. Such movements organize around a central organization (commonly based in Brussels) and aim to target both the European and domestic level, as they have no distinct allies at either level.

actors that perceive the challenges as supranational, inferring issues such as the environment, workers' or women's rights, or migration, also frequently opt for an externalization strategy (Ibid.).

'Externalization' strategies may involve protest actions on domestic soil targeted at the EU. Yet, the extra-parliamentary challengers can also attempt to gain more direct access to the EU. These strategies largely depend on the type of organization mobilizing. The domestic *interest groups* and *civil societal organisations* frequently opt for *insider strategies* (mainly lobbying) (see e.g. Eising 2008; Beyers 2004; Balme & Chabanet 2008). *Social movement organizations* and other types of collective actors instead tend to pursue *outsider strategies* (mainly protest, but also media campaigns) and transnational interactions (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009; Bourne & Chatzopolou 2015; Monforte 2014).

The *insider strategy* refers to the setting up of a CSO's own EU office or the joining of (already established) representative umbrella organizations (see e.g. McCauley 2011; Salgado 2014). Marks and McAdam (1996) established that due to the EU's structure, its institutions are more open to conventional (such as lobbying) rather than unconventional actions (like protest campaigns). There is thus a rather broad agreement in the literature that "the EU decision-making style is not at all conducive to political protests" (Eising 2008: 173). The groups of actors employing insider strategies are thus also considered the most Europeanized (Kriesi et al. 2007). This finding has later been empirically demonstrated through diverse studies, which show that the majority of organizations, which externalize their activities, either set up EU offices or join forces in encompassing umbrella organizations, and mainly employ lobbying (corporatist instruments) as their action repertoire towards the EU institutions (see e.g. Monforte 2014: 185)⁵⁷. This has also led to a steep increase in European public interest groups as the "supranational institutions offer resources and allies to local movements which mobilise on issues with a wider audience, namely, environmental, gender and human rights issues" (Andretta & Caiani 2005: 284).

However, in order to obtain the EU access, the groups must adapt to the EU's rules, norms, and requirements (Marks & McAdam 1999). The most successful lobbyists thus offer specialized technical expertise and information in exchange for a consideration of their views (see e.g. Monforte's (2014) analysis of pro-migrant

⁵⁷ This has been the case for environmental groups (see for instance Rucht 2002; Rootes 2002). In his research, Rucht showed that these groups were only modestly represented in Brussels but also emphasized that "lobbying will prevail over protest" for environmental actors (2001: 140), due to both the various barriers to EU protesting, but also because of the opportunities presented at the EU-level. As Imig and Tarrow (2001a) explained, environmental groups benefited from "a Directorate-General dedicated to their claim, and generous subsidies from the Commission" (2001a: 21), making direct EU lobbying a viable strategical option.

associations in Brussels). This has meant that larger, more professionalised and resource-strong organizations, such as business and professional associations, have had easier access to EU deliberation (della Porta 2003). In this way, organizations with a *specific* purpose and organizational set-up are increasingly becoming part of the EU decision-making apparatus (Eising 2008; Dür & Mateo 2014). Parks' (2015) research on technical⁵⁸ and political EU protest campaigns shows a similar finding, as it is mainly organizations with more *specific* interests, which tend to take their claims directly to the EU institutions. Her research thus shows that technical campaigns have “low levels of popular mobilisation at the national and local levels and high levels of engagement with EU level institutions, particularly the Commission.” Political campaigns, on the other hand, have “higher levels of popular mobilisation at national and local levels and [...] lower levels of engagement in consultation” (Parks 2015: 4), again indicating that technical, and thus more *specific* issues, are more beneficially targeted at the EU.

Moreover, in terms of rhetoric and frames, della Porta and Caiani (2009: 15) assert that actors, who opt for an insider strategy tend to appeal “to the kinds of discourse and identity legitimized at the European level” (see also Eising 2008). Hence, extra-parliamentary actors with more *diffuse* interests⁵⁹ often have more limited material and symbolic resources, making them struggle to tackle the high transaction costs of such work (della Porta 2007; Giugni & Passy 2002; Rootes 2002; Andretta & Caiani 2005). Research has thus revealed that there is “an imperfect pluralist system of interest representation or an 'empowered pluralism' [...] emerging at the EU level” (Salgado 2014: 4), signifying that it is usually only the most resource-strong organizations that obtain voice.

Furthermore, some of the reasons for certain groups' lacking direct EU-interaction also relate to the groups' perceptions of the EU institutions. Research on the *Global Justice Movement*, for instance, revealed that numerous national groups had rather limited direct EU interaction, partly due to their perception of the EU institutions as being “closed, selective, and unaccountable” (della Porta & Caiani 2009: 96; see also Monforte 2014: 197f). So, while there has been an overall increase in civil societal actors opting for insider strategies (Parks 2015), when it comes to direct EU-interaction, social movements and protest groups generally face greater constraints and inhibitions in terms of direct access to the EU institutions.

Nevertheless, numerous organisations expressing diffuse interests still opt for a presence in Brussels. These organizations employ a much more technical and process-oriented language than those remaining outside, while also building “a relationship of

⁵⁸ Technical campaigns attempt to persuade the power-holders by “demonstrating the technically correct solution, seen as somehow 'above' politics” (Parks 2015: 4f).

⁵⁹ For instance, ‘civic interest’ representatives, who mobilize on environmental, gender, or social rights (della Porta & Caiani 2009).

interdependence with EU power-holders” (Monforte 2014: 183; see also Geddes 2000). Geddes (2000) shows this concerning pro-migrant organizations, which face hostility in their home countries due to the issue’s electoral unpopularity. They can instead find a more hospitable environment at the supranational level, due to its ‘insulation’ from the national settings (Geddes 2000). In fact, certain civic political associations, such as the *European Women’s Lobby*, receive EU funding to carry out their work (see Salgado 2014; Císař & Vrábliková 2010).

The *outsider strategy*, on the other hand, refers to activities that, whilst still being directed at the EU institutions, do not involve direct EU institutional representation. It can involve protest actions, media and public information campaigns (see e.g. Koopmans & Statham 2010)⁶⁰, and petitions to the EU, for example through the Ombudsman or the *European Citizens Initiative*⁶¹. The outsider strategy is usually chosen by actors who for various reasons either do not wish to, or cannot, gain access to the ‘inside’ of the EU institutions (see e.g. Parks 2015). It can thus be chosen due to ideological reasons (such as an aversion towards the EU’s policies (see e.g. Monforte 2014)), but also due to a lack of the required financial resources, which tends to be the case for groups that have limited levels of organization. “Poorer actors,” such as social movements, thus “have more difficulty in developing insider strategies” and instead tend to attempt “to influence decision makers by addressing public opinion via disruptive (and newsworthy) tactics” (Lipsky as cited in della Porta and Caiani 2009: 104) either at the domestic or the EU level. In fact, protest groups do not frequently organize protests directly at the EU institutions, due to the high financial costs and the amount of time required to transport the protesters to the buildings in Brussels, Luxembourg, or Strasbourg (Marks & McAdam 1999). Eising (2008) argues, “social movements have recourse to protests only as a means of last resort after all other attempts to influence the EU institutions and policies failed” (2008: 173).

Transnational Contention: Transnational Pressure and Supranationalization

Nevertheless, “[i]f those richer in resources were the first to open headquarters in Brussels, resource-poor actors also started networking supranationally and framing

⁶⁰ For more studies of protests related to European integration, see e.g. Reising 1999; Balme & Chabanet 2008; Uba & Ugglá 2011; Caiani & Graziano 2018.

⁶¹ Since the 1990s, but particularly since the French and Dutch rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005, the EU has worked towards increasing its political legitimacy by introducing more mechanisms for public consultation (such as e.g. the *European Citizen’s Initiative* and discussions with civil societal actors within the EU institutions). Yet, so far, this has not really materialized into tangible results as public trust in the institutions is still rather low (albeit rising, see e.g. Eurobarometer 2018), plus only very few of these initiatives have reached the required signatures, and even fewer amounted to any policy changes (see <http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/welcome>).

European issues” (della Porta 2006: 18), while exchanging resources, knowledge, and expertise with similar-minded European actors (Caiani & Graziano 2018). The domestication and externalization paths of domestic extra-parliamentary actors may thus also conduce to these groups’ participation in, or creation of, transnational networks or coalitions, which carry out actions either to exercise pressure on a given EU MS (‘transnational pressure’) or to target the EU (‘supranationalization’) (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009). Della Porta and Caiani (2009) referred to such groups as ‘European social movements,’ but as will be further elaborated below (see p. xx), they are referred to as ‘transnational coalitions’ in this study.

These actors may join forces in order to target the domestic decision-makers and European actors simultaneously (Ibid.). Without delving into too much detail about this transnational cooperation here, as that is the focus of section 3.3 below, such transnational protest coalitions have rather frequently targeted the EU (see e.g. Parks 2015)⁶². This is also the case in regard to the far right, where there has, in fact, been at least one attempt to protest at the European Parliament buildings in Brussels, namely by the *Stop the Islamization of Europe* association in 2010 (see e.g. Denes 2012 for more on this group). However, as the mayor of Brussels prohibited the demonstration due to the confrontational nature of this type of protest and its likely violent development, it indicates that outsider strategies directly in front of the EU institutions are also an unlikely option for far right activists. Yet, in his research on pro-asylum organizations, Monforte (2014) established that particularly transnational movements of *grassroot* groups tend to organize through outsider strategies, where they are “still able to construct contentious European mobilizations, through their involvement in more transnational arenas. In doing so, they address European institutions indirectly, through the involvement of public opinion” (Monforte 2014: 233) and without necessarily taking the contention directly to the EU institutions. As will be further explained below, this would appear to be a more likely Europeanization strategy for far right organizations.

Hence, as alluded to throughout this section, the given groups will pursue the various strategies depending on their (perceived) political opportunities and material and symbolic resources. This will be further explained in the following section.

⁶² During the years, several highly publicised protest campaigns have directly targeted the EU and its policies. This involves the protests against the high fuel costs in the early 2000s (Imig 2004); the signing of the Maastricht, Amsterdam, Nice, and Lisbon Treaties in the 1990s-early 2000s (Parks 2015; FitzGibbon 2010); the anti-austerity protests of 2008-2012 (Van Gent et al. 2013; Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015) and the anti-TTIP protests of 2015-16 (Caiani & Graziano 2018).

EUROPEANIZATION STRATEGIES: ROLE OF POS, DOS, AND RESOURCES

Following the rationale of political opportunity theory, a given domestic collective actor is expected to direct its protests and other forms of influence attempts towards the political decision-making level perceived as the most opportune in terms of gaining resonance and potential influence (Kriesi 2004). Such openings in the system are highly context-specific, and for far right mobilization, they, for instance, depend on the country's history of authoritarianism, current political leadership, and elite divisions. In this way, "pre-existing domestic structures and internal developments are likely to have an important mediating effect" (Bache 2003: 2). This implies that the collective actor can pursue several possible strategies concerning policy issues with an EU-wide scope (i.e. 'European' issue scopes), depending on the political and discursive opportunities at the time.

Hence, as Table 3.2 below shows, if both the domestic and European opportunities are 'open,' and particularly if the issue is *specific*, collective actors are expected to pursue the 'multilevel opportunity structures', i.e. exploit the 'open' opportunities at *both* the domestic and European level, in order to gain the most benefits possible (Parks 2015). Yet, if the actors deem the domestic level to have the most 'open' political opportunities, one expects the organizations to domesticate the actions. Moreover, as demonstrated by Parks (2015), campaigns around *politicized* issues also tend to predominantly take place domestically, due to the better chances of gaining resonance at this level (i.e. the better discursive opportunities). Depending on the degree of openness at the domestic level, this either entails collective action in a more moderate (open), or radical (closed) form (Caiani & Graziano 2018).

Conversely, if the given actor experiences repression or has less leverage (i.e. closed opportunities) in the domestic setting compared to the EU-level, it may pursue a supranational strategy, either "in terms of degree (i.e., EU as actor, level of mobilisation and target)" or through an externalization path (Ibid: 1036). This means that even if the EU opportunities appear 'closed' for an extra-parliamentary group, the group may still perceive them as more 'open' than the domestic level, leading it to externalize the contention (Ibid.). Depending on the group's material and symbolic resources, this externalization will take either the form of an *insider* (strong material resources, and symbolic resources aligning with the norms of the EU) or *outsider* strategy (weak material resources, and often, symbolic resources disaligned with those of the EU) (for more on the role of the resources in Ch. 5).

Both the domestication and externalization paths may lead to the creation of transnational coalitions with other European actors sharing the same overarching goals (della Porta & Caiani 2009). This infers that the groups may start coalescing with actors abroad, notwithstanding whether their domestic and/or EU-level opportunities are closed or open, especially if the aim is to target the EU (see more on

this below). However, if both settings are closed, the extra-parliamentary group may opt for a radicalization of its protest actions, and/or seek transnational relations with actors facing a similar situation (see e.g. Macklin 2013).

As stated, these opportunities are likely to change over time (Tilly as cited in Caiani & Graziano 2018), depending on contextual and political events. Such occurrences may lead to fundamental changes in either the political composition (e.g. after elections, breaks between elite alignments, etcetera) or at the discursive level (e.g. after a terrorist attack, the publication of new crime statistics, etcetera). Hence, if these various opportunities change, a contentious actor may move the activity accordingly.

Table 3.2: Expected Europeanization paths depending on POS and DOS.

POS/DOS at Domestic level	POS/DOS at EU level	Expected strategy
Open	Open	Both domestication and externalization (multi-level strategy)
Open	Closed	Domestication
Closed	Open	Externalization (or other supranational activity) (aiming for boomerang effects)
Closed	Closed	Domestic protest (either more disruptive actions or hardly any)

The above section has now outlined the theoretical framework for the analysis of the various extra-parliamentary groups making up *Fortress Europe* and *Generation Identity*'s collective action Europeanization in the period 2015-2017. The analysis will thus be based on the findings regarding the groups' scopes of issues, targets, participants, and events. Beside from a closer consideration of the groups' protest scopes, it will also be deduced which kind of Europeanization forms, the groups mainly make use of, by applying the data to Table 3.1 (see above). In order to examine the effect of the different national groups' domestic and European POS, DOS, and their resources more closely, the analysis also includes a more context-specific analysis of certain of the national cases. This should allow for an exploration of the national GI and FE-groups' Europeanization strategies during the height of the 'refugee crisis'.

For more information about the protest event analysis, please consult the Methodological Framework and the Codebook in Appendix B.

3.3. EUROPEANIZATION OF NETWORKS: TRANSNATIONAL COALITION-BUILDING

As briefly alluded to above, Europeanization literature explains that once actors perceive the need to take their contention to the European level, they frequently develop “relationships with other [...] European and transnational actors and arenas” (Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015: 46). In the ‘bottom-up’ Europeanization literature, scholars have thus pointed to the creation of European networks between extra-parliamentary actors, which together target the EU institutions and/or EU policies through the employment of various forms of collective action (See e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009; Monforte 2014). This externalization process, i.e. the move away from the national level and towards the EU-institutions:

...tends to produce a development of supranational organizational structures and identities. The European arenas offer to social movement organizations from different EU countries the opportunity to meet each other, build organizational networks, coordinate activity, and construct supranational discourses. Growing interaction facilitates the development of common, more or less European identity (della Porta & Caiani 2009: 96).

Yet, not all transnational European coalitions arise in relation to externalization strategies or involves the EU as such. A distinction can be made between transnational networks that cooperate around EU-related policy issues inside the EU-institutions (e.g. umbrella associations, such as the *European Youth Forum*), or outside of the EU-institutional setting (such as *Diem25* or *Plan B* (Agustín, 2017)). Moreover, they may also involve both levels, taking full advantage of the possible opportunities created by the multi-level polity (della Porta & Caiani 2009; Monforte 2014).

Monforte (2014) refers to the latter two network types as ‘transnational social movements’ and ‘multi-level movements’ respectively. In his study on German and French pro-migrant social movements and their EU-related strategies, he found that the distinct groups’ *organization type* determined how they Europeanized. Hence, humanitarian NGO actors developed multi-level movements, as they were able (in terms of resources) and willing (in terms of ideology) to gain EU-institutional access. The politicized grassroots actors, on the other hand, created transnational social movements outside of the EU institutions, both due to their lack in material resources, but also because of their worldviews, which often conflicted with the EU’s principles (Monforte 2014). Thus, while some formations might actively pursue direct political influence in the EU, e.g. by creating more formalized interest group organizations, others might see the construction of a “unified space of struggles” as an end in itself (Monforte 2014: 229).

Both the multi-level and the transnational movements address, and attempt to influence, the “national and European institutions simultaneously” (2015: 232). Yet, they differ in their organization. Multi-level organizations typically set up an office in Brussels from which they can lobby the EU institutions while also maintaining their various national organizations and potentially mixing un- and conventional means (i.e. protest actions and lobbying)⁶³. Transnational movements instead act outside of the EU institutions, where they create horizontal linkages with similar-minded organizations abroad (Ibid.). In this way, by creating transnational movements, the actors are “still able to construct contentious European mobilizations, through their involvement in more transnational arenas. In doing so, they address European institutions indirectly, through the involvement of public opinion” (Monforte 2014: 233). Their more politicized nature also infers a more EU-critical stance, frequently calling for a complete overhaul of the existing policies in a given policy area, if not of the EU project itself. In this way, they foster more contentious relations with the European institutions, and will therefore tend to opt for an outsider strategy (Ibid; for a similar account, see Agustín 2017).

While Monforte’s (2014) distinction between multi-level and transnational movements is a good starting point for the creation of a theoretical framework regarding the transnational networking activities of national actors around the EU institutions and/or policies, it still requires further adjustment and elaboration, both in terms of the ‘movement’ concept, but also the actual processes involved in this activity.

FROM ‘MOVEMENTS’ TO ‘COALITIONS’: RELATIONAL AND IDEOLOGICAL TIES

Over the years, transnational cooperation between extra-parliamentary actors has been defined in a multitude of ways, in terms of both the form and type of transnational organizing. Hence, both within the Europeanization, transnationalization, far right, and more general social movement literature, there is much disagreement about the appropriate concept to use and its definition. It thus necessitates a further clarification in order to operationalize for analytical purposes. Thus, in the following, some of the proposals from these various literatures will be synthesised, and a working definition for ‘transnational coalitions’ will be outlined.

Within the research field of social movements, the conceptualizations of ‘social movements’ abound, differing widely with regards to the strength of the ties between the various movement actors, their degree of formality, decision-making structures,

⁶³ Czech women’s rights associations have employed this type of multi-level strategy, as they joined the European umbrella organization *European Women’s Lobby (EWL)* (Císař & Vráblíková 2010). It can also involve European branches of international SMOs, like *Amnesty International* (Monforte 2014).

goal convergence/agreement, etcetera. Moreover, the great dissimilarity between different social movements and their compositions only makes the problem larger, as one of the sole uncontented similarities is their “distress with the status quo” (Levi & Murphy 2006: 651). Utilizing one of the most frequently cited definitions, della Porta and Diani (2006) define a social movement as being “involved in conflictual relations with clearly defined opponents; linked by dense informal networks” and sharing “a distinct collective identity” (2006: 20). Albeit being a highly contested concept (see e.g. Flesher Fominaya’s 2014 discussion), it is this ‘collective identity’, which makes a social movement both a more permanent occurrence, and it enables the participating activists to act in unison (it has agency).

Yet, Snow, Soule, and Kriesi (2004), on the other hand, define social movements much more openly. They argue that these organizations consist of:

...collectivities acting with some degree of organization and continuity outside of institutional or organizational channels for the purpose of challenging or defending extant authority, whether it is institutionally based or culturally based in the group, society, culture, or world order of which it is a part.” (2004: 11)

These two examples are illustrative in terms of showing the difficulty in defining the research objects satisfactorily. Taking this debate to the transnational level, concepts and definitions also abound concerning the cooperation between actors and groups from different countries.

Transnational (Social) Movements

As already mentioned in the introduction, when a movement or coalition is ‘transnational,’ it refers to a group of actors, which “retain their rooting in national political contexts, which they transcend in order to collaborate with other nationally rooted groups and organizations to form transnational networks” (Flesher Fominaya 2014: 40). These actors from numerous countries mobilize on a shared issue, but their interactions may range from low to high levels of institutionalization (see e.g. Froio & Ganesh 2018). Hence, in its simplest definition, “Transnational social movements are movements whose members, organizations, or actions involve more than one nation” (Desai 2008: 959). More elaborately, Tarrow (1998: 184) defines transnational movements as “sustained contentious interactions with opponents - national or non-national - by connected networks of challengers organized across national boundaries” (Tarrow 1998: 184). In 2001, he refined this definition, and stated that they entail “socially mobilized groups with constituents in at least two states, engaged in sustained contentious interactions with power-holders in at least one state other than their own, or against an international institution, or a multinational economic actor” (2001: 11). In these and similar definitions, it is particularly the part of ‘sustained contentious interactions’, which is the defining feature of a movement vis-à-vis more loosely based mobilizations. Moreover, unlike the general definitions

of social movements (see above), at the transnational level, they are most frequently conceptualized as being organized on a looser basis, and without the explicit mention of sharing a 'collective identity'. This is most likely due to the difficulties of both organizing collectively across larger geographical distances (in terms of travel, communication, and contexts), but also in terms of creating close identity bonds.

Regarding their organization, Desai (2008) argues that:

The dominant organizational form of transnational social movements is the network or coalition of groups from several different countries. [...] Members of networks might meet face to face at international protest events or conferences, but they accomplish most of their work through the Internet. Hence, the dominant protest repertoire of transnational social movements includes education and mobilization, symbolic framing, and strategic use of information. (Desai 2008: 959)

The *network* concept is also used by other scholars to define transnational movements (just as social movements are generally defined as 'networks of actors' (see e.g. della Porta & Diani 2006). Kouki and Romanos (2011) state that these movements "are best seen as networks of actors organized at local, national, and international levels, who mobilize people across national boundaries around a shared aim, very often toward the promotion of a global change" (Kouki & Romanos 2011: 2). Keck and Sikkink's (1998) concept of 'transnational advocacy networks' is also oft cited, consisting of various types of actors that attempt to influence policy-making transnationally. Yet, they "do not engage in protest or 'contentious politics' but, rather, prefer lobbying or charitable or voluntary activities as a means of bringing about change" (Flesher Fominaya 2014: 40). Instead, Flesher Fominaya (2014) refers to transnational social movement networks, which she defines as "non-institutionalized links between activists and groups in different countries who share information, strategies, identities and goals and who may collaborate on specific campaigns or mobilizations, or through the creation of transnational social movement organizations (TSMOs)" (2014: 39).

Heavily influenced by della Porta and Tarrow's (2005) definition of transnational collective action as consisting of "coordinated international campaigns on the part of networks of activists against international actors, other states, or international institutions" (2005: 2f), della Porta and Caiani (2009) instead argued that the European transnational entities should be referred to as 'European social movements'. In this way, the conceptualization was moderated to apply to the European political arena, namely as consisting of "challengers," who:

...target different levels of governance at the same time, involving loose networks of national (often even local) and transnational groups. The objectives of their protests tend to be increasingly general, with the participation of national and supranational collective actors that turn simultaneously to various governmental levels." (2009: 16)

Between Networks and Movements: Transnational Coalitions

In a response to the use of the ‘networks’ concept, Tarrow (2005) argues that it is too diffuse in terms of instrumentality, i.e. the role, the participating actors ascribe to the connections. Instead, he holds ‘coalitions’ to be the better term, as it has a more purposive nature. Employing Levi and Murphy’s definition, he argues that coalitions are “collaborative, means-oriented arrangements that permit distinct organizational entities to pool resources in order to effect change” (Levi & Murphy as cited in Tarrow 2005: 654). This conceptualization draws strongly on one of the seminal definitions of a ‘coalition’, provided by Gamson in 1961. He argued that coalitions were “temporary, means-oriented alliances among individuals or groups which differ in goals,” but share their resources, while not (necessarily) agreeing on their values. This entails that its “stability [...] requires tacit neutrality of the coalition on matters which go beyond the immediate prerogatives” (Gamson 1961: 374). Similarly, della Porta & Diani (2006) define coalition-members as being “Densely connected to each other in terms of alliances,” having defined opponents, yet (potentially) lacking “strong identity links,” just as their cooperation is of a more “contingent and instrumental nature,” relying solely on the “exchanges and pooling of resources” with the other members (2006: 24). This placement of ‘coalitions’ below movements in terms of activist ties is rather akin to Fox’s (2010) conceptualization, based on existing movement literature. He argues that transnational cooperation can be divided into three categories: networks, coalitions and movements, depending on their degrees of organizational formalization, worldview alignments and communicational ties, where networks share the lowest levels of coordination (see also Di Gregorio 2012).

For the purposes of this thesis, the term ‘transnational coalitions’ will be used in order to define both *Generation Identity* and *Fortress Europe*. Based on the literature reviewed above, I define a transnational coalition as:

A (more or less) densely connected and means-oriented alliance between nationally-based groups and actors (who may derive from both the non- and institutional level), who pool (certain) resources, in order to target a shared opponent at the transnational level. Aside from the instrumentality of the cooperation, they do not necessarily share any closer identity-based affinities.

This means that they pool some of their resources, yet continue having distinct organizational identities (see e.g. Zald & Ash 1966). They are thus organised on a looser, and potentially shorter-term basis than social movements and do not necessarily involve actors that have shared identities (della Porta & Diani 2006). The temporal feature of transnational coalitions will be explained further below.

Europeanization Literature and Transnational Coalitions

Europeanization theory posits that extra-parliamentary organizations and actors, who wish to take their claims further than the national arena, will attempt to find adequate cooperation partners throughout Europe. The first and most evident step toward “moving to the EU (or European) level” thus becomes the “construction of, or inclusion into, a coalition across borders” (Monforte 2014: 173) as this permits an Europeanization of protest. Just as more general transnationalization theory argues, the (potential) European allies will in some way or another share the group’s agenda, be it in terms of a specific policy outcome (e.g. environmental questions, fishery quotas, a ‘no’ to TTIP, etc.), or more general cross-issue policy objectives (such as those called for at the *European Social Forums*). In this way, “having the same target (e.g. an international institution) has brought many similar-minded actors together transnationally, coordinating their efforts” (della Porta & Tarrow 2005: 10). Moreover, based on “the convergence and harmonization of ideological aims and strategic practices,” (Macklin 2013: 177), they may ultimately form more formal transnational coalitions or alliances (Tarrow 2005). This cooperation is expected to influence both the tactics and frames employed by the participating organizations, as they draw inspiration from each other, and will realign their “frames to better mesh with a coalition partner” (McCammon & Moon 2015: 332).

The theory thus argues that the rationale for these actors is to transnationalize in order to mobilize against, or within, the EU institutions. Yet, social movement research has demonstrated that political actors may choose to pool their resources and carry out joint protest activities with actors in other states for various reasons, not only related to the EU. In this way, Europeanization of contention, in the sense of ‘simple’ transnationalization, can also easily take place without any role ascribed to the EU. In these more general instances, one of the main rationales has been the pursuit of similar goals, whether or not the distinct actors otherwise share characteristics.

The following section outlines the expected mechanisms involved in the Europeanization of networks, namely *transnational diffusion* of various mobilization aspects (such as frames, protest tactics, and organization set-ups), and factors drawn from social movement coalition-building literature that explain the transnational networking process of far right collective actors. These mechanisms are not expected to take place at distinct moments in time, but rather to be ongoing and intertwined processes, which together lead to a certain coalition’s establishment, maintenance, and (potential) survival. At the same time, the diffusion does not *necessarily* take place during such a process. Hence, it is not the intention to say that transnational diffusion is *required* for transnational coalition-building, or that transnational diffusion *only* involves actors who cooperate, but rather that diffusion is one of the mechanisms or dynamics that *may* form part of coalition-building. It is thus included because of prior research’s demonstrations of its significance in terms of social movement interactions and developments, and because it is expected to have taken

place regarding the spread of the *PEGIDA* and *Generation Identity* groups that form part of the two case studies.

TRANSNATIONAL DIFFUSION

Prior to the instigation of official transnational networking activities, the various similar-minded actors are likely to already have been influenced by other actors active abroad. As Soule (1997) argues, it would be wrong to assume that social movements, or, more generally, extra-parliamentary collective actors, act in a vacuum, without noticing or paying attention to occurrences both at home and abroad. Instead, they register the happenings around other, usually similar-minded organizations, either through direct or indirect channels. This may in certain instances lead to diffusion between these actors.

In short, the concept of diffusion refers to the “transfer in the same or similar shape of forms and claims of contention across space or across sectors and ideological divides” (McAdam et al. 2001: 68). Transnational diffusion thus entails certain mechanisms that lead a given group, the receiver, to in- or directly adapt objects, which it observes by an actor abroad (the transmitter) and decide to utilize in its own domestic setting⁶⁴ (Shawki 2013). This can thus involve both ideational and practical diffusion, including the transfer of ideas, ideological fragments, frames, slogans, tactics, strategies, protest repertoires, cultural practices and organizational forms between two or more actors (Soule 1997; Shawki 2013; Van Hauwaert 2014b; Macklin 2013; Fielitz & Laloire 2016; Flesher Fominaya 2014). Studies of far right collective action have revealed that many of the groups adapt protest repertoires from other “political, social and cultural currents that are translated into a specific nationalist framework of interpretation” (Klare & Sturm 2016: 183, author’s translation)⁶⁵.

The receiver groups are most commonly structurally, culturally, and/or ideologically similar to the transmitter (Strang & Soule 1998) and faced with the same global economic and political context, to which they must react (Flesher Fominaya 2014). In this way, they consider the like-minded groups as “salient reference groups” (McAdam & Rucht 1993: 64) whose activities they can use as “potential models for their own actions” (Ibid.). Hence, the receiving actors identify an appropriate object, “observe its success and will try to reproduce this success by adopting” it to their given setting and context (Van Hauwaert 2013: 12). Concerning protest mobilizations,

⁶⁴ ‘Transmitter’ and ‘receiver’ are also sometimes referred to as the ‘agent’ and ‘receiving actor’ (Van Hauwaert 2014b), or ‘sender’ and ‘receiver’ (Gilardi 2012).

⁶⁵ Historically, this was visible by the German Nazi-party of the 1930s, which was inspired by the German *Arbeiterpartei* (*Worker’s Party*). More currently, it is also visible by the *Autonomous Nationalists* and *Generation Identity*, and their adaptation of left-wing protest repertoires.

diffusion can thus lead to the spread of collective action across groups and space (Beissinger 2007) as a ‘wave’ of a certain type of protest may be instigated (see e.g. Soule 1997 for an example) just as other activist groups frequently imitate successful protest repertoires (Tilly as cited in Soule 1997: 859).

Usually, the object of diffusion requires some form of moderation or alteration by the receiving actor as it must be aligned to the new national socio-political context, “so as to increase its likelihood of direct success” (Van Hauwaert 2014b: 6). Flesher Fominaya (2014) refers to this process as (cultural) translation, as the receiver must interpret how best to appropriate the object to the new setting, especially concerning gaining public resonance. This can be a difficult process, and may lead to “recursive interactions, ruptures, backlash, resistance and feedback effects” (Malets & Zajak as cited in Flesher Fominaya 2014: 47), making the translation fail.

Diffusion Mechanisms: Emulation and Learning

The mechanisms involved in diffusion involve either a process of emulation (or imitation) or a process of learning by the receiver. Whilst emulation can take place through either direct or indirect/mediated diffusion, learning requires an active transmitter, and can thus only take place through direct and active face-to-face transmission (Van Hauwaert 2014b). In the relational model of diffusion, the process mainly occurs through inter-personal or direct contact or communication (i.e. face-to-face or via telecommunication), requiring an active transmitter, from whom the receiver learns and adapts the given object. This process usually requires “activists who travel from one social movement context to another” (Flesher Fominaya 2014) to either learn from (receiver), or teach (transmitter), others, but it can also take place through online or phone exchanges (see e.g. Macklin 2013). The offline encounters can involve brief face-to-face encounters, meetings, seminars and conferences, or at protest events. It can involve both an informal exchange of ideas (see e.g. Hafez 2014), information dissemination (e.g. of a more technical nature, but also news from abroad to be spread via alternative media platforms) (Macklin 2013), or more explicit and formal training and workshop sessions (see e.g. Greer & Hauptmeier 2012; Strang & Soule 1998). Particularly, the more general practice of ‘networking’ has been found to be important for this type of far right transmission, as the practice functions “as a crucible for the exchange of ideas and information on policy and praxis” (see Macklin 2013: 177).

McAdam and Rucht (1993) introduced the concept of in-direct diffusion. In their seminal article on ‘Cross-National Diffusion,’ they pointed to possible ‘non-relational channels of diffusion’, where there are no direct ties between the two actors. Since then, research has shown that much diffusion takes place through impersonal or non-direct relations. This can occur via the media, for example. It most often occurs when the receivers “identify with transmitters in some way, socially constructing similarity between themselves and the transmitters” and therefore emulate or imitate those

transmitters' actions (Shawki 2013: 134). Thus, prior research has demonstrated that structurally equivalent actors in terms of factors such as culture, values, beliefs, and identity are prone to emulate each other, also without direct contact (Strang & Soule 1998; Soule 1997; Shawki 2013).

Limitations to Exploring Diffusion Processes

It is hard to ascertain how exactly these diffusion processes take place, and how it is decided by a receiver that the particular object should be adopted. Particularly, the (indirect) diffusion of worldview is very difficult to ascertain, as it might not be that explicitly expressed that the ideas come from elsewhere; just as it is hard to establish the exact diffusion mechanism as the exact way the object was transferred is not always explicated. However, it is the aim "to assemble enough pieces of information and convincing 'smoking guns' to support the hypothesis that diffusion takes place and, especially, to uncover the mechanisms that drive the diffusion process" (Gilardi 2012: 11). This will be done by considering the frames and protest tactics utilized and how they change, plus the available statements about the given direct networking between transnational actors (see Methodological Framework for more on the methods involved).

SETTING UP, MAINTAINING, AND SUSTAINING A COALITION

While these various diffusion processes can go some way in explaining the transnational transfer of frames, protest forms, and organizational set-ups between extra-parliamentary contentious actors, there is also a need to explore the more cooperative and communicative aspects of a coalition-building process. Hence, in the following section, the more strategy- and organization-related factors will be outlined.

The section is divided into three main parts, according to the progression of the transnational cooperation. It thus outlines the theoretical expectations related to the coalition's *instigation*, its *maintenance*, and, depending on its *raison d'être*, the context, and individual member group developments, its *survival* or *end*. Hence, the 'maintenance' refers to the actions that ensure the coalition's continued existence, and (potentially) lead to inter-group unity, while the 'survival' refers to the actions, which ensure its viability and perseverance. The theoretical output presented here draws on social movement coalition-building theories and includes perspectives from political opportunity structures, resource mobilization, and collective identity research. It is the aim to synthesize these theoretical findings into one overarching theoretical framework, which can be employed to analyse the two transnational coalitions.

Coalition Initiation

Research has demonstrated that transnational coalitions are most successful, when actors share ideational, cognitive, or emotional ties (i.e. internal propensities), and/or see an incentive in collaborating with actors from abroad due to external factors (Chang 2008). With the ever-stronger effects of globalization follows also closer alignments of perceived concerns of diverse political actors, who can choose to unite transnationally in order to address these issues together. In this way, the “shared framing of purpose, enemy and tactical preference” can lead to closer transnational cooperation (Levi & Murphy 2006: 657). Shared interests and goals are thus seen as pivotal prerequisites for coalition building. Yet, they do not usually suffice (Tarrow 2005). Additionally, scholars have found it beneficial that the coalition members (either) feel solidarity towards each other; have overlapping or common beliefs and identities, similar cultural backgrounds, pre-existing social ties amongst them, and/or flexible or compatible ideologies (Staggenborg 2013; Bandy & Smith 2005; Gerhards & Rucht 1992; Imig & Tarrow 2000; McCammon & Moon 2015).

Hence, the stronger the preceding ‘value homophily’ between the groups, the more likely a coalition is to ensue (Di Gregorio 2012: 2). Conversely, scholars have shown that too distinct ideologies may stand in the way for coalition formation (see e.g. Gerhards & Rucht 1992; Levi & Murphy 2006; Chabanet as cited in Monforte 2014) and that a too “particularized world view” can impede a group’s transnational coalition opportunities (Rohlinger & Quadagno as cited in McCammon & Moon 2015:). It is thus of particular relevance to consider the alignment of the specific worldviews and frames employed by the different actors, in order to assess the likely viability of said coalition (Ibid.).

Moreover, pre-existing links and earlier networks are two other frequently cited conductors to coalition-formation (Van Dyke 2003; Levi & Murphy 2006). This entails that the participating groups have already built up trust relations, and thus, believe in each other’s commitment to the given cause (Tarrow 2005). When no ties pre-exist, there is need for good networking and relational skills by either experienced activists or movement leadership.

A further issue, which is especially relevant regarding both the far right (see e.g. Ahrne et al. 2005), but also coalition-building writ large (see e.g. Monforte 2014), is the matter of evaluating the respectability of the other participating groups before instigating cooperation. Before joining the given transnational coalition, the group’s leadership must thus evaluate whether it is a ‘good fit,’ so to speak, i.e. whether the transnational cooperation serves its purposes and helps further the group’s political agenda and goals (Ibid.). Thus, the groups in question, especially the parties, must evaluate the effect of participating in the given mobilization in terms of a potential loss or gain in legitimacy in their national setting – the key place for political influence for a political party.

On the other hand, the external factors refer to the evaluation of the contextual political opportunities and/or threats, which may lead to a search for coalition partners (Staggenborg 1986; McCammon & Moon 2015; Chang 2008). Scholars disagree as to whether it is the expansion or the contraction of opportunities that foster transnational coalitions (Chang 2008). Opening domestic political opportunities, such as legislative changes that indicate a more receptive political environment (see e.g. Staggenborg 1986) or the creation of relations with elite allies (Van Dyke & McCammon 2010) have been found to further coalition-building attempts. Conversely, other scholars argue that open national opportunities exclude the need for finding transnational alliance partners. Instead, threats, such as hardening legislation or government-sponsored repression, have been identified as being more conducive to transnational coalition-building as this necessitates a change in a movement's tactical strategy (Chang 2008) (for overview, see McCammon & Moon 2015). This latter finding has been somewhat substantiated regarding far right transnational networking. Macklin (2013) argues that transnational networking and coalition building "facilitates the further development of 'tolerant' support networks for 'intolerant' ideologically inspired action" to actors "who are frequently marginalised within the context of their own domestic politics" (Macklin 2013: 177). Zúquete (2015) similarly argues: "The perception that nationalists are an excluded group, marginalized and persecuted because of their difference and their challenge to the dominant mainstream paradigm is in fact the fuel behind their cooperation beyond national borders" (2015: 80f).

In summary, transnational coalitions are most frequently instigated by actors who share the same goals, if not the same worldview. They are often set up based on pre-existing networks or the networking skills of movement entrepreneurs. The invited actors must thus decide whether to participate based on an evaluation of the respectability of the other groups. While it is debatable whether it is open or closed domestic political opportunities, which lead to transnationalization, prior research has found that far right actors often seek relations to similar-minded actors abroad, as a means to find support against suppression.

Duration of Transnational Coalitions

Extra-parliamentary groups most frequently arrange coalitions as a means to fight a shared threat or to make use of a shared opportunity for mobilization (Tarrow 2005). The groups do not always establish the extent of the cooperation from the outset and some coalitions may have had either shorter- or longer-term plans than the end-result showed (McCammon & Moon 2015). Yet, in general, coalitions can have two goals and/or outcomes. Depending on the strength and type of their ties (see e.g. Granovetter 1973) (e.g. in terms of a more or less shared identity), a transnational coalition may be *instrumental* and for a short duration (weak ties) or *substantive* and longer-term (strong ties) (Di Gregorio 2012). Hence, more material or instructive ties, such as resource pooling and information-dissemination, will most likely solely lead to

instrumental alliances, while stronger, inter-personal ties between the activists in the distinct groups are more likely to foster a substantive alliance (Baldassarri & Diani as cited in Di Gregorio 2012).

Thus, either the coalitions are of a short-term duration, most commonly entailing a single campaign or protest event against a defined actor (an ‘event coalition’) or they can consist of a long-term sustained level of activism (‘enduring coalitions’), where the relationship becomes more formalized and permanent (Levi & Murphy 2006). This formalization may involve the creation of common decision-making entities and rules, and may lead to the endurance of the coalition by “routinizing transnational contacts and facilitating the mobilization of resources for transnational action” (Bandy & Smith 2005: 4).

Coalition-Maintenance: Resource Pooling, Communication, and Shared Activities

Transnational coalition building thus usually involves some sort of pooling of resources between the different national organizations making up the coalition (Tarrow 2005; Levi & Murphy 2006; Monforte 2014), especially when it involves resource-poor organizations. Most far-right extra-parliamentary actors, for instance, neither have strong financial nor material resources (Caiani et al. 2012) and can therefore not be considered to have much financial advantage when it comes to influencing decision-making (unlike e.g. business interests). Hence, like other extra-parliamentary actors, they may perceive an advantage in cooperating with (more resource strong) actors from abroad in order to stand stronger materially and/or ideationally (McCammon & Moon 2015).

While the participation in transnational un- and conventional actions can provide activists with “political and organizational skills that can influence their subsequent organizing initiatives” (McAdam as cited in Bandy & Smith 2005: 3), previous explorations of social movements’ Europeanization have also revealed that the actors face considerable resource-related challenges in this endeavour (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009). Moreover, as Rucht has pointed out, the (usually) segmented (grass-roots) nature of extra-parliamentary actors can provide hindrances for their organization and coordination of activities (as cited in Chabanet 2011). Bandy and Smith (2005) state that the inclusion of “pre-existing [and well-organised national] movements with significant mobilization already underway” into the coalition (2005: 233) can help overcome these resource-related problems, as they can provide organizational expertise and resources.

Transnational coalitions are thus likely to consist of organizations that have disparate levels of power and resources (Flesher Fominaya 2014), and this has effects on the roles within the given cooperation. Yet, once a part of the coalition, all member groups must at least have the *capability* to contribute with sufficient resources (Monforte 2014). The more resources mobilized by a particular group, the more central a role

this group will have in the given coalition and the development of its frames and collective actions (see e.g. Levi & Murphy 2006). At the same time, the groups that do not contribute with many resources will be less actively involved and are more ‘passively included’ in the coalition (Ibid.).

(Online) Transnational Communication between Leadership

Continuous cross-group communication is a key prerequisite for the establishment and survival of a transnational coalition. Regular communication permits “the more rapid and continuing ‘diffusion’ of movement values, strategies, and goals” (McAdam et al. 2001: 68). Thus, the more interaction between the participating groups, the bigger the likelihood of a sustained coalition-commitment and of the development of a shared vision through frame alignment (Di Gregorio 2012).

Prior research has demonstrated the difficulty of instigating transnational protests if there is a lack of shared identities, solidarity, and social networks between the various national groups (Imig & Tarrow 2000). As Imig and Tarrow (2000) argue, the social networks are particularly vital as they “provide the interpersonal trust, the collective identities and the social communication of opportunities that galvanize individuals into collective action and coordinate their actions against significant others in a social movement” (2000: 80). While such an assertion often refers to the movements at activist level, such creations of affective ties can only be furthered through exchanges between the various group leaders. They must first agree on shared transnational collective actions and activities where said activists can meet and potentially develop a “common, more or less, European identity” (della Porta & Caiani 2009: 96).

Besides the geographical proximity, especially the introduction of improved digital communication channels has facilitated the exchange between national groups considerably (della Porta & Tarrow 2005), acting as a tool of empowerment (Castells 2012), including on the far right⁶⁶. The main reasons for the extensive use of the internet by extra-parliamentary actors relates to issues of anonymity, the geographical

⁶⁶ The inclusion of the web in the analyses of the far right is a relatively new research agenda. Yet, since the early 2000s, there has been a steady increase in scholarly output that focuses on this particular arena of mobilization. A multitude of far right actors has embraced the online opportunities for ideational work, mobilization, activity coordination, networking, recruitment, alliance formation, sale of merchandise, information, and propaganda dissemination (Veugelers & Menard 2018; Caiani & della Porta 2018; Caiani & Parenti 2013). Currently, most far right non- and institutional actors have their own websites and social media accounts (especially on Facebook and Twitter in a European context). For some groups, particularly on the more extreme right (e.g. neo-Nazis and Holocaust revisionists), online activism is a cherished possibility to overcome the more closed offline opportunities (Caiani & Parenti 2013; see also della Porta & Tarrow 2005), just as more informally structured organizations can remain active without having to formalize their organization (e.g. EDL) (Veugelers & Menard 2018).

breadth, the speed of dissemination, and the low entry barriers (Caiani & Parenti 2009; 2013; Jackson & Feldman 2011; Perry 2000 cited in Veugelers & Menard 2018), which entails that it is a rather low threshold activity (Van Laer & Van Aelst 2010).

In short, the internet is used by the far right to “create fences, build barriers, and dig trenches” (Caiani & della Porta 2018: 333), and, in this way, acts as an escape from marginalization (della Porta & Tarrow 2005). Thus, the groups not only use the online offers concerning the mobilization of national activists (consider e.g. *PEGIDA Germany’s* extensive use of Facebook) but also concerning the transnational organization of collective action and information and ideology dissemination (Jackson & Feldman 2011; Geddes 2014; Caiani & Wagemann 2009). Numerous non- and institutional far right actors thus rely heavily on social media, especially Facebook (and Twitter), as their “central communicative and organisational tool” (Bartlett et al. 2011: 4), just as they employ online communicational channels such as YouTube or FaceTime to coordinate transnational activities and meetings. It is therefore worth exploring further, how frequently they are in contact with their coalition partners to assess the degree of cooperation.

Activities of Transnational Coalitions: Protests and Ideational Work

Aside from these more organizational and strategic communicative links, plus the groups’ collective action, numerous coalitions also carry out other forms of joint activities. Research into the activities of the *Global Justice Movement*, for instance, shows that conferences “and other forms of international contact [...] create arenas for forming and strengthening networks” (Keck and Sikkink 1998:12). More general information sharing can also further the trust between the various groups, leading to a rise in coalition activities (Ellingson et al. as cited in McCammon & Moon 2015). Research into the activities of the far right has also demonstrated that much of the transnational interaction among far right non- and institutional activists takes place at the more ideational level, e.g. through conferences, meetings, and social events (see e.g. Zúquete 2015; Hafez 2014; Stöss 2001). Here, they, for instance, discuss and develop shared conceptions of ‘Europe’ and what it means to be ‘European’, plus discuss the EU as a political actor. Hence, these gatherings should also be considered as part of the Europeanization process of the given actors, due to the ideological content and transnational actor participation, and they will also be included in the analysis.

Coalition-Survival?

Previous research on Europeanization has shown that it has been difficult to maintain the transnational ties, and that there were several obstacles hindering the development of a European social movement (see e.g. Tarrow 2005). As an initial remark, due to the participating actors’ diverse ambitions for influence and national contexts, one should not forget that most of them mainly focus their attention on the domestic level,

and remain active at home, whilst participating in transnational coalitions. Moreover, far right groups, especially the parties, also have other obligations and interests besides maintaining and fostering their transnational ties. This also infers that it can be problematic to sustain the transnational mobilization, and to continue driving the work forward. Moreover, other known factors that may influence the outcome relate to issues such as the national differences between groups, both in terms of language, but especially the contextual requirements and restraints. The context thus has repercussions on the frames employed, the importance and relevance of given issues, plus the available resources, and levels of repression faced by a given group (Chase-Dunn et al. 2014).

Moreover, concerning the far right and transnational cooperation, the political actors on the far right are notorious for their big problems reaching agreement throughout the 21st century. This has evolved around more organizational quarrels, like leadership battles (Camus & Lebourg 2017). Yet, most of the problems relate to ideology, particularly “inherent nationalism and political differences” (Durham & Power 2010: 92). Hence, one of the main hindrances of the creation of a nationalist international is the organizations’ ideological differences. This has both been a problem for inter-party cooperation (e.g. in the European Parliament (Startin 2010; Almeida 2010)), but also non- and institutional group interaction. Zúquete (2015) has argued that there is “an ideological chasm” between the groups making up the anti-Islam scene, e.g. regarding their views on the Jews, the U.S., but also Russia, that makes deeper cooperation unlikely (2015: 79). Moreover, historical conflicts about state borders have also been a hindrance for closer cooperation between several European far right groups over time, especially post-WWII (see e.g. Weidinger 2016).

Nonwithstanding, the social movement literature points to several criteria, which are advantageous for the survival of a coalition. These are mainly related to communicational and identity aspects. Tarrow (2005) has argued that there must be mechanisms in place to tackle challenges in terms of language, tactics, culture, ideology, etc., just as other scholars have emphasised the need to either avoid conflicts altogether, or at least have methods ready to solve (pending) internal tensions (McCammon & Moon 2015). The various processes of convergence and divergence in transnational coalitions thus imply an ongoing tension between the groups’ homogeneity and heterogeneity and the maintenance work required for successful coalition-survival. Furthermore, Bandy and Smith (2005) argue that there are certain social conditions that aid transnational coalition survival, namely that they are based on “well-organized national movements,” which have the organizational and economical capacity to arrange and facilitate transnational mobilization and cross-border encounters. The development of strong national organizations, which are firmly rooted within the national far-right scenes, can thus contribute to a strong coalition.

The above framework has outlined scholarly findings regarding transnational coalitions and far right cooperation. While it has shown that the far right has struggled to sustain such coalitions in the past, it has also outlined factors, which have been found conducive to both maintain a coalition and ensure its survival. These involve both communicational, ideational, organizational, and material aspects, while it is a bit more debatable what exact role political opportunities play in terms of both setting up and sustaining a coalition. Moreover, it has also explained that particularly reputational and legitimacy deliberations and nationalist feuds may prevent groups from joining certain other, potentially more contentious, far right actors from abroad. At the same time, it has outlined a framework to examine the form(s) of diffusion, which took place especially at the initiation of the cooperation, where several of the other groups adopted both the name and logo of *PEGIDA Germany* and *GI France*. Such diffusion may also have occurred at other points during the cooperation, indicating the need to further analyse how these diffusion processes take place. All of these factors and aspects will be utilised to analyse the initiation, maintenance, and (potential) survival of *Generation Identity* and *Fortress Europe*.

3.4. EUROPEANIZATION OF FRAMES

Scholars, who are interested in exploring the effect of the EU on the European public sphere, and who consider society from a constructivist perspective (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009), have begun exploring the (potential) Europeanization of extra-parliamentary actors' *perceptions*. Such explorations often aim to unravel the extent to which said actors develop shared notions of 'Europe', and mobilize around the same key issues, against the same opponents, and with the same solutions in mind, thus bridging the European borders at the more perceptual level. This study has a similar aim, as it wishes to explore the far right groups' construction of their external reality, and how it aligns with groups and activists from abroad. This will be done by employing a *frame analytical approach*.

Drawing on the work of Goffman and Snow, McAdam and colleagues (1996) conceptualized 'framing' as the "conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action" (1996: 6). In this way, so they argued, framing processes mediate "between opportunity, organization, and action" (Ibid: 5). It can therefore be used beneficially in combination with more structural approaches in order to understand a given mobilization, and its (potential) inclusion of transnational actors. Hence, in short, 'frame analysis' explores the ways political actors "construct and communicate their (internal and external) reality" (Caiani et al. 2012: 13) by attributing meaning to given issues and conflicts.

This study employs Snow and Benford's (1988) approach, and focuses on the groups' constructions of collective action frames, and the transnational collective identity frames, which may be produced through these mobilization frames (Benford & Snow

2000). While such collective identities are frequently examined at the individual activist levels, the approach here instead investigates how the various movement entrepreneurs and leaders construct them (see e.g. Hunt et al. 1994; Benford & Snow 2000). It is thus assumed that the involved groups and actors will begin constructing shared worldviews, notions of solidarity, and enemy pictures, once they begin cooperating, if not even prior to this, for instance through various transnational diffusion processes (see above). Hence, the networking and frame changes do not necessarily take place in a linear progression, and may influence each other in various ways, which remain to be explored. The following sections will introduce the ‘collective action frames’ and ‘collective identity frames’ and explain how they relate to the far right, and how they will be employed in this study.

Collective Action Frames

Looking for a means to account for social movements’ discursive means and processes, Snow and Benford (1988) devised the term ‘collective action frames’. They defined it as “action oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization” (1988: 198). Collective action frames are thus located below the level of ideology (Caiani et al. 2012) and include the groups’ dominant worldviews, often produced and voiced by the leadership. An organization utilises the frames strategically in order to “assign meaning to and interpret, relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to” both mobilize the proponents, demobilise the opponents, and generally persuade others of the worthiness of the cause (see Snow & Benford 1988: 198).

These frames are strategically constructed around three core framing tasks, namely: the outlining of a (perceived) social problem and an implied blame attribution to a culpable actor (the diagnosis), ways to solve this given problem (prognosis), and incentives plus reasons for taking action (motivational frame) (Snow & Benford 1988). When constructing these frames, the actors must both consider the potential support the given frame can amass (Caiani & della Porta 2018) but also how best to create counter-arguments to a regime’s legitimating frames (Andretta & Caiani 2005). Moreover, the ‘framers,’ i.e. the movement entrepreneurs, must also be able to identify and express the ongoing political developments, and thus, potential opportunities, in order to call for social change (Gamson & Meyer as cited in Lindekilde 2014). The frames are therefore frequently employed instrumentally, in order to sway public opinion and foster social change, by offering alternatives for the current political order. This entails that frames can be crucial to campaign outcomes as they may lead to political changes if they resonate with the population at large.

In Europeanization literature, several scholars have looked into the frame shifts that take place amongst the organizations (see e.g. Parks 2015; Monforte 2014) and their activists (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009) during a Europeanization process. Political actors’ use of frames is thus a constantly ongoing and changing process,

which depends on the political context, the target(s), the interactions with other actors, and the audience (della Porta & Piazza as cited in Monforte 2014: 40). Focusing on the leadership, it is the aim here to explore the different national groups' collective action frames, in order to deduce their mobilization objectives and symbolic resources (see Chapter 5), plus how they align with those of the other groups in the transnational coalition (Chapters 8-9). Hence, it is not the aim to explore the frame shifts over time, but rather to analyse the main collective action frames of the distinct groups and how they align with both the EU's language (della Porta & Caiani 2009) and the other groups in the respective coalitions (for more on the method, see Chapter 2).

Collective Identity Frames: The Construction of In- and Out-Group Identities

In order to create in-group solidarity between the activists of a given collective actor, a leader must establish an in-group identity (an 'us') around which the activists can further their sense of belonging and commitment to the cause, and with this, their continued motivation to act in unison (Robnett 2015). One of the first activities of a movement entrepreneur, or political leader, is thus to construct a movement identity, which is both meant to unite the members and adherents against their adversaries (Snow & Benford 1988) as well as to more clearly define the general boundaries of the organization (see e.g. Robnett 2015). At the intra-movement level, the boundary-construction consists of defining "what the collective 'we' is, and what it is not" (Flesher Fominaya 2010). (Far right) actors including political parties, protest groups, vigilante groups, and groupuscules (i.e. most political actors) must thus create a 'group identity' to foster in-group solidarity and shared purpose.

This so-called 'collective identity' is a rather contested concept both in terms of its definition as well as its scope⁶⁷ (see e.g. Flesher Fominaya 2010). Melucci has ascertained that some determining characteristics need to be present in order to foster a group's cohesion and ability to act in unison (Melucci 1985). In this way, movement organisers must forge a sense of common purpose, "group consciousness, solidarity, and commitment" (Robnett 2015: 202), and a "shared perception of belonging to a specific social group" (Pries 2012: 22). They do this by constructing an identity around which the members can unite and which makes them feel "inextricably linked to other actors, not necessarily identical but surely compatible" in a joint collective mobilization (della Porta & Diani 2006: 21). In this way, the members of the group develop "a shared sense of 'oneness' or 'we-ness' anchored in real or imagined shared attributes and experiences among those who comprise the collectivity in relation or contrast to one more actual or imagined sets of others" (Snow 2001: 3). Such an identity is forged at the symbolic and the discursive level. The symbolic level refers to the (shared) construction of various symbolic and cultural resources, such as

⁶⁷ One of the major scholarly disagreements is whether to consider 'collective identity' as a process of constant negotiation (see e.g. Melucci 2000) or rather a symbolic and static property or product of a movement, distinguishing it from others (Snow 2001).

“names, narratives, symbols, verbal styles, rituals, clothing, and so on” (Poletta & Jasper 2001: 285), which create a ‘collective differentiation,’ demarcating the ‘in-group’ from the ‘out-group’ (see also Snow 2001). A prominent far right example could be the skinhead movement. Moreover, for these sentiments to develop, the movement leadership or entrepreneurs must construct ‘collective identity frames’ around which solidarity can arise (see also Fominaya 2014).

Collective Action: Creating a Collective Identity around Shared Blame Attributions

Yet, this identity construction also takes place through various mechanisms of framing activities (Snow & McAdam 2000; Hunt et al. 1994) frequently expressed during collective actions. The collective identities thus do not emerge naturally from movements. Instead, the movement entrepreneurs must strategically frame both their understanding of self and of the ‘other’, in order to gather support. This involves engaging in a “process of defining this ‘we,’ typically in some opposition to ‘they’ who have different interests or values” (Gamson 1992: 7). Such frame constructions are usually “built around certain categories, strata or dimensions” (Pries 2012: 22), which distinguish the ‘us’ from the ‘them’. One famous example is the *Occupy Movement’s* construction of ‘us’ as ‘the 99%’ (Flesher Fominaya 2014). Hence, in terms of *far right* transnational collective identity construction, there is a necessity to consider the group’s dual boundary construction of an in- and outgroup. One must both explore how the groups define the ‘others’, but also their uniting frames, which are meant to ensure inter-group cohesion amongst the collaborative partners.

However, especially regarding protest movements, it might even suffice for the participants to agree on the opponent, and in this way not share further collective ties (McCarthy et al. as cited in Mercea 2017: 547). The antagonised ‘they’ thus commonly consist of actors who are perceived as being culpable for the occurrence of the given phenomena and to whom the blame is attributed. This most frequently entails the actors responsible for the decision-making, or actors found to conflict with the causes and identities of the protagonists (Benford & Hunt 1992). These adversaries, or opponents, are “often personified as irrational, immoral, and devoid of compassion and feeling” (Shibutani as cited in Hunt et al. 1994: 192), while the reverse is the case for the antagonist ‘us’ (Ibid.). For example, in regard to the issue of climate change, left-wing actors frequently villainise ‘big business’, just as populist movements juxtapose ‘us’, ‘the people’, against ‘them’, the economic and/or political elites (Aslanidis 2017).

The Far Right and National and/or Civilizational ‘Othering’

When it comes to far right (and thus, nationalist) agitation, the boundary-construction is often also extrapolated to the more general societal level where the collective identity frames frequently are employed to construct an ethnic or cultural differentiation between those who belong to the group (the ‘in-group’), and those who

are excluded (the ‘out-group’ or ‘enemy’) (Gerö et al. 2017). Hence, as Carl Schmitt has argued, the coherence and communitarian ties of the (most commonly national) in-group can be established through the creation of enemy pictures, around which the ‘we’ can (be) mobilize(d) (as cited in Weiß 2017). Particularly far right actors, including parties, are thus prone to build up their own identity around a set of external enemies (‘them’), who the (usually) national, ‘we’ should go up against (see e.g. Minkenberg 2011). The literature has demonstrated how this most frequently involves a nativist (and thus, exclusionary) construction of a national ‘us’, which must unite around the defence of the nation against the ‘intrusive,’ and most frequently, ethnically different, ‘them’, be they e.g. immigrants, a national minority, an international organisation, or even ‘globalisation’ at the more abstract level. In this way, the far right actors attempt to forge symbolical exclusionary societal boundaries aiming at pre-defining belonging based on ethnic, and at times, racial criteria (Pytlas 2018).

Within the last decades, scholarly attention has been increasingly directed towards certain far right actors’ “construction of a complex (and sometimes contradictory) identity where traditional nationalistic values and innovative transnational elements coexist” (Caiani 2014). This is frequently expressed around more ‘civilizational’ notions of exclusion, particularly targeted at Islam and its adherents (see also Zúquete 2015; Berntzen 2018a). Yet, despite this redirection in focus by many current far right organizations and actors, which now base their in-group definitions around civilizational criteria⁶⁸, numerous far right groups still perceive their nation-state adherence as being the defining ‘us’ and ‘them’ demarcation feature.

Coalition Building: Constructing a European ‘We’ against a Common ‘Other’

Notwithstanding the exact employed ‘us’ and ‘them’ framing in the national setting (i.e. whether ‘national’ or already ‘European’ in boundary terms), the process of identity-creation is ever changing, developing according to the ensuing strategies pursued in order to gain political influence. Hence, if a given organization decides to join forces with other national or foreign groups, it is likely to have to moderate and/or expand its boundaries and views on ‘us’ and ‘them’ accordingly, especially if it also wishes to take the contention outside of the national context. It is thus through the perception of having shared antagonists and agendas that national political actors may develop cross-national links with other similar-minded actors and eventually start mobilizing jointly. Yet, before this can take place, the different actors must first justify their cross-border and European collaboration through their frames in order to persuade their constituents and supporters about the justification for joining forces

⁶⁸ E.g. the *Western* against the *Islamic world* (for instance argued by proponents of the *Counter-Jihad Movement*), or the *European civilization* against the rest of the world (e.g. the *New Right*) (see e.g. Betz & Meret 2009; Denes 2012; Hafez 2014; Bar-On 2008).

with other European actors. Hence, they must explain why they believe a transnational coalition is the answer and what the ‘glue’ is that unites the groups.

Moreover, the frequent transnational interaction, both through protest actions but also more general networking activities, is also anticipated to lead to the creation of cross-national solidarities and shared goals between the groups, and potentially, even a ‘European identity’ (Imig & Tarrow 2001a). Hence, it is expected that the groups will ‘Europeanize’ their definition of ‘us’ through the continued interaction with similar-minded actors at the transnational European level, as the actors jointly must attempt to foster a shared transnational commitment to the cause, together with inter-group solidarity (Busher 2016). This is a difficult task, particularly when the different group identities are “diffuse and less easily embedded” (Tarrow 2005: 135 about the GJM), but also when several of the participating actors have nationalist perceptions of the ‘us’. Yet, this can be done by drawing on collective conceptions of what it means to be ‘European’ and outlining the reasons as to why the European actors must stand together. Most frequently, these reasons pertain to the shared perception amongst the European (far right) activists that they are up against a common ‘enemy’. Thus, the leaders and movement entrepreneurs together conjure collective enemy images, which the imagined community must be protected against, and around which to mobilize. This can take place by constructing images of a past and present pan-European unity against an extra-European ‘other’ (in this process obliterating or neglecting mentions of intra-European controversies) or by pointing out the factors that unite the Europeans against both the external and internal ‘others’. The enemy in this way becomes instrumental for the group formation between otherwise divergent actors (see e.g. Gerö et al. 2017; Mercea 2017).

The analysis of the collective identity frames will form part of Chapters 8-9 as a means to establish whether the groups participating in FE and GI respectively developed shared transnational collective identity frames during their time of cooperation. If this turns out to be the case, then this can give a good indication of the strength of the given coalition in terms of inter-group unity. The framing approach will thus be utilised to explore several aspects of the far right groups’ perceptions of reality, both in terms of the frames around which they organize protest actions (the collective action frames) and the ones to create in-group solidarities (the collective identity frames). Both aspects will be analysed in order to deduce the transnational overlaps in the constructions of ‘Europe’ and ‘Europeans’ and the protagonist/antagonist relationships between the organizations and their adversaries across the continent.

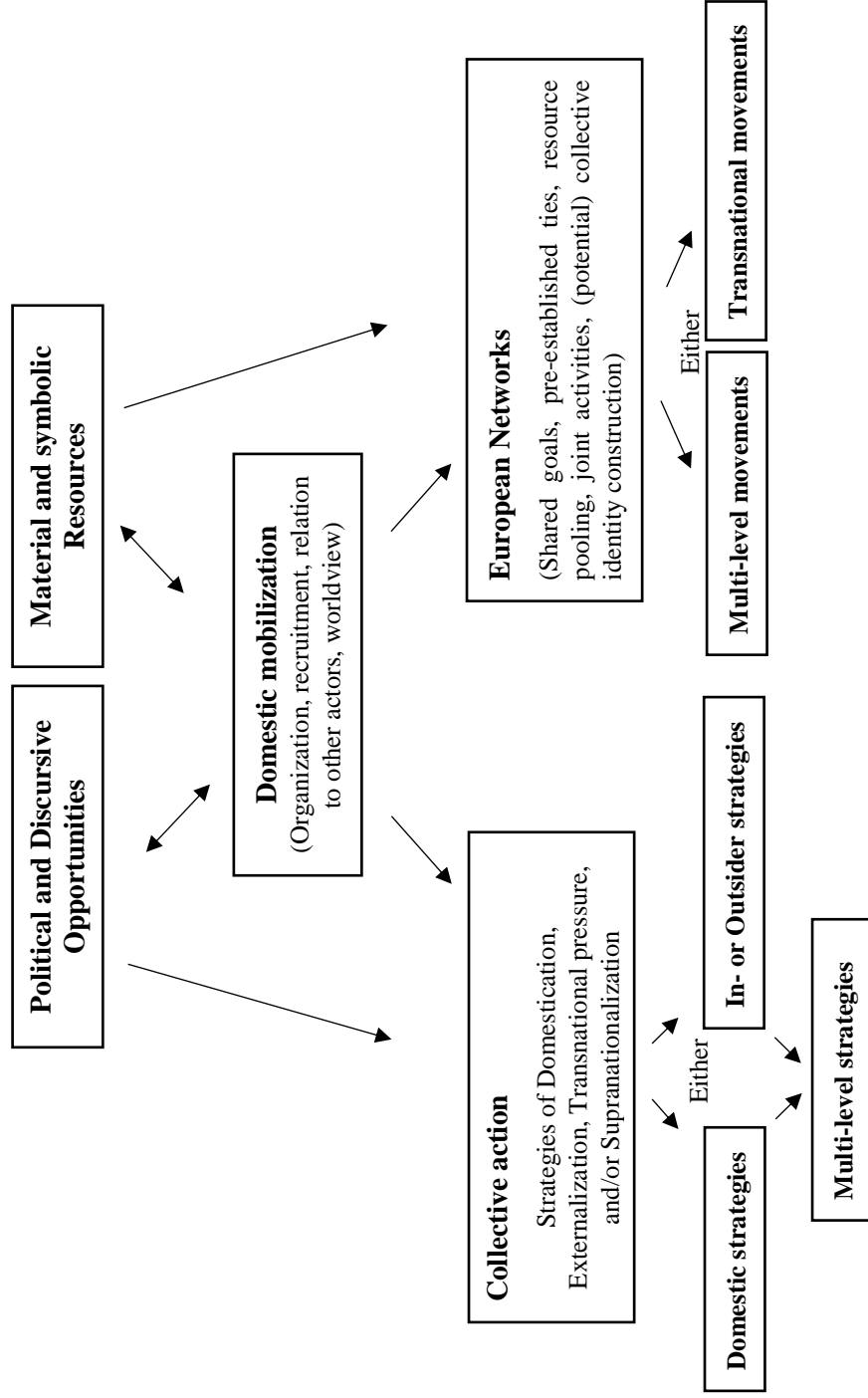
3.5. BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE MODEL FOR ANALYSIS

The following model explains the theoretical framework outlined above and is guiding for the ensuing analysis. It is founded on theoretical approaches that consider the strategic deliberations around the networking and collective action involved in far right Europeanization, and how this affects, or is affected by, the groups’ collective

identities. This allows for the obtainment of a deeper understanding of far right extra-parliamentary actors' strategic maneuvering at the domestic and European level during a time of pan-European 'crisis'. Throughout the (anticipated) period of Europeanization, the national groups' strategies are expected to change depending on their political and discursive opportunities at the domestic and European level, just as their symbolic and material resources are indicative for their mobilization strategies (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009; Monforte 2014).

It is important to keep in mind from the outset that the various transnationalization processes do not take place in a linear, or consecutive, fashion. Instead, they occur as part of a continuous process of inter-group exchanges, inspirations, and collaborations, which again affect the next steps of the various processes, just as the national and European political contexts will continuously affect the developments of the transnationalization process. Hence, this rather simplistic portrayal of the Europeanization process is not as clear-cut in reality and may develop along somewhat different paths than the model proscribes.

Figure 3.1: Model for analyzing extra-parliamentary actors' Europeanization.



Stage 1: The Domestic Level: Creation of the Groups and Domestic Mobilization

While the study places its main emphasis on the *Europeanization* efforts and strategies of far right extra-parliamentary actors, the domestic political and historical context is important to include in order to argue convincingly about the groups' different political strategies and organizational choices. In terms of the model outlined above, during the initial stages of their mobilization, the national groups are expected to adapt their organizational set-ups, frames, and political strategies to the context in which they are set (Mudde 2007). In fact, many current far right groups do not evolve from a vacuum but rather rely on pre-existing structures, networks, and organizational features around which they can establish their groups. This can either be based on structures in the domestic setting (e.g. French groupuscules, such as *Bloc Identitaire*) or they may draw inspiration from far-right actors abroad (such as e.g. the spread of *Defence Leagues* across Europe, based on the English 'prototype') (see e.g. Meleagrou-Hitchens & Brun 2013).

In terms of explaining these developments and how new groups emerge, consolidate themselves, and mobilize in the domestic setting, one can beneficially employ the theoretical output on political opportunity structures. As Klandermans and Mayer (2006) argue, the actors' influence "depends on the links they have with other movements, challengers, allies or opponents in the 'multi-organizational field' and on the 'political opportunities' opened for them" at the given time (2006: 10). Hence, the shape and form of the organization and mobilization is not predefined but depends on the available political and discursive opportunities, which the actors must strategize around in order to find the most suitable option for gaining influence (see e.g. Kriesi 2004; McCammon 2013). The theory argues that the level of support and/or hostility in a given environment preconditions the success of a mobilization to a high degree, including those on the far right (see e.g. Berntzen & Weisskircher 2016). Even though these political and discursive opportunities might not be perceived, or exploited, by the given far right actors, there are still several of the POS and DOS factors that are vital to consider, when explaining far right action repertoires and mobilization success. This particularly involves the level of state repression, the group's relationship to the elites, and the historical view on authoritarianism in a given political setting, but also the discursive openings due to position changes by the political elite, the media, and public opinion⁶⁹.

While the initial setting up of the organizations, etcetera, are important facets of understanding collective actors and their actions, it is not the focus of this study. Instead, the analysis focuses on the groups' mobilization strategies on EU-related policy issues. It is expected that the domestic opportunities influence the collective

⁶⁹ Due to the great number of groups involved in this study, the analysis of the domestic groups is limited to three from *Fortress Europe* and *Generation Identity* respectively. This decision was explained in the Methodological Framework (see Chapter 2).

action and the transnational networking of the groups. For one, the choice to network with actors from abroad is most likely made due to (perceived) openings in the European political and/or discursive opportunities, even though it is a contentious issue how exactly the POS influence an actor's choice to seek European allies (see e.g. McCammon & Moon 2015). Collective action at the EU or transnational level is likewise more likely to ensue if the actors perceive an open opportunity in this action choice aside from, or rather than, their domestic protests (i.e. either in pursuit of a multi-level strategy or externalization). The inclusion of the POS and DOS perspectives thus allows for the examination of some of the underlying rationales behind the mobilization choices and the role of the national context in terms of understanding far right contention more generally. At the same time, one must keep in mind that while political and discursive opportunities *may* be available to pursue for the given actors, they also have to both be aware of them and want to pursue that strategic opening. The strategic choices thus both depend on the openings themselves, especially those that *implicitly* affect the mobilization, such as the level of repression or the role of the domestic far right *parties*, but also more 'subjective' factors, such as the group's identity, the leaders' level of mobilization expertise, and their preferences in terms of protest tactics.

Moreover, a group's symbolic and material resources are also expected to influence its strategic manoeuvring, in terms of both collective action and networking. As further explained below (Chapter 5), the group's options of collective action at the EU-level highly depend on the level and type of said resources (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009). The resources are also important in regards to the networks, as the role-division in transnational networks often relates to the distinct groups' levels of particularly *material* resources (see e.g. Monforte 2014).

Hence, the thesis stipulates that the political and discursive opportunities and the groups' symbolic and material resources (the independent variable) influence the national groups' Europeanization (the dependent variable) (see Figure 3.1 above). A group can thus pursue various Europeanization strategies, depending on its POS, DOS, and resources. In the following, these will be considered in relation to the groups' collective action and transnational networks.

Stage 2: Europeanization of...

... Collective Action: (Transnational) Mobilization Strategies

The Europeanization literature posits that extra-parliamentary actors predominantly Europeanize their contention in order to mobilize at, or against, the EU. Through the examination of social movements and civil societal organizations' mobilization on EU-related policy issues, Europeanization scholars have thus determined four distinct paths of collective action Europeanization, namely domestication, externalization, 'transnational pressure,' and 'supranationalization'. These paths can be determined

based on the groups' protest scopes in terms of issues, targets, participants, and events, and whether these predominantly have 'national' or 'European' scopes. All four of these scopes are also interesting to examine more closely in their own right, as they reveal a lot about the role ascribed to Europe and other European actors for far right extra-parliamentary actors. Hence, the thesis analyses these aspects more extensively, in order to deduce the extent to which the far right extra-parliamentary groups mobilize around 'European' issues, against 'European' targets, with other 'European' actors, and/or at 'European' events.

The available POS and DOS plus the groups' symbolic and material resources are expected to guide their separate and shared (transnational) collective action strategies. The strategies can involve either predominantly domestic protest strategies, or, if the opportunities are more open at the EU level, insider (such as lobbying) or outsider (e.g. protesting or media campaigns) strategies at the EU-institutional level (see e.g. Parks 2015). If both the domestic and EU POS and DOS are perceived as open, the groups may also pursue multi-level access (della Porta & Caiani 2009). As stated above, the particular path chosen is highly dependent on the group's symbolic and material resources, and the (perceived) availability of political and discursive opportunities at both the national and European level. Hence, the more resource-strong, the more likely an extra-parliamentary actor is to pursue direct EU-level access, particularly if it mobilizes on a *specific* policy issue (rather than a *diffuse* interest), and/or can employ more technical language and expertise. Moreover, the symbolic resources are also highly important, as they (partially) determine whether the given actor is likely to gain resonance at the EU-level, but also whether it would even seek such resonance to begin with. Hence, symbolic resources refer to, among other aspects, the group's frames, worldview, and more general expression forms, and if they conflict too extensively with the EU's ethos, the actor is highly unlikely to gain EU-access and/or resonance (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009). The groups' symbolic resources will be determined based on an analysis of their protest repertoires, appearance, and main collective action frames, including a consideration of their views on the EU, as this also is rather indicative as to whether an extra-parliamentary actor will pursue EU access (see e.g. Monforte 2014; della Porta & Caiani 2009). The given group must thus also consider its available resources when evaluating which political decision-making level to target, based on its political and discursive opportunities. For instance, a collective actor is unlikely to organize a demonstration in front of the EU institutions, if it does not have the material and/or human resources available to do so.

At the same time, the collective action analysis also considers the alignment of the groups' protest repertoires and tactics across the European borders, again to consider their Europeanization in more relational and ideational terms. The two cases chosen are particularly suitable for such an exploration, as they involve groups, which have adopted the same name and logo (i.e. *Generation Identity* and *PEGIDA*), entailing that they are expected to carry out somewhat the same type of actions in their domestic

settings. The analysis thus also considers the groups' respective protest frequencies and repertoires, and explains their (potential) differences, again by drawing on the groups' averse POS, DOS, and resources.

Hence, the protest event analysis will shed more light on the strategies of far right collective action, both domestically and transnationally, including the deliberations regarding the possibilities and hindrances behind the choices. This includes the decisions as to the place of transnational collective action (in terms of geography, repression levels, and resources). Moreover, by considering the participant composition and the leaders' portrayal of these transnational protest strategies, it will be possible to deduce how big a role such events play for the actors themselves and potentially also what they are used for in terms of the national groups' own, domestic goals.

...Networks: Transnational Coalition-Building

Once the national groups have been set up and established their (initial) strategies and protest repertoires, they may opt to transnationalize their mobilisation as part of these strategies (for various reasons). Europeanization theory postulates that due to the global, or at least European, nature of a given policy issue, the actors will look for similar-minded actors abroad in order to be able to act more resourcefully towards both the domestic and European decision-makers. This entails the creation of a transnational coalition, which can have varied overarching goals and features, but (usually) involves national groups that pool their resources, develop shared problem formulations and solutions (collective action frames), and (potentially) consolidate the network into a more long-term collaboration. Depending on the material and symbolic resources available to the different groups composing the coalition, the cooperation will either include EU-level activities (multi-level movements), or take place at the transnational level, outside of the EU institutions (transnational movements) (Monforte 2014) (see Figure above). Regardless of which type of coalition, the research literature expects them to develop rather similarly.

In order to investigate thoroughly how exactly the national GI and FE member groups instigate the coalition-building process, and their distinct rationales for participating, the analysis considers the various stages involved, i.e. from the initiation to the (potential) end of a transnational coalition. The theoretical framework thus draws on more general social movement transnationalization, coalition-building, and framing literature, in order to arrive at the factors that influence how the far right transnational coalitions develop.

In terms of the coalition-building process as such, it is not from one day to the next that actors start cooperating. Instead, such processes usually evolve around pre-existing relations, which are often omitted consideration in the Europeanization literature. Such pre-established ties can be created through various diffusion

processes; via either direct border-crossing communication, or indirectly, e.g. through news stories about the given actors being read prior to the actual coalition-building taking place (see e.g. Shawki 2013). In fact, these transnational diffusion processes may be constantly ongoing and can involve various mobilization-related aspects, including the spread of frames, ideas, protest repertoires, and strategies.

Due to the aim of gaining a better understanding of far right transnationalization, the present study is particularly interested in establishing how the far right transnational ties are forged and maintained. The participating actors might have very diverse aims and rationales for wanting to cooperate with actors from abroad but will need to align their views at least to some degree in order to mobilize jointly. As argued above, actors often instigate transnational coalitions as a means to oppose shared enemies, making it highly relevant also to explore the far right groups' joint 'othering'. As demonstrated in existing literature, this has recently tended to involve anti-Islam frames for the far right in general (see e.g. Zúquete 2015). During the coalition-building process, the groups may thus also begin aligning their various framings of 'us,' while jointly constructing a 'them', and thus develop shared transnational collective identity frames. This is a particularly relevant issue to explore in terms of far right actors, as they are usually conceptualised as strongly *nationalist* actors whose transnational networking has been perceived as somewhat of a paradox (see e.g. Almeida 2010). The group leaders and/or spokespersons are thus expected to frame a collective identity that all of the transnational coalition-partners can commit themselves to and mobilize around (i.e. the development of a Europeanized 'us'). In other words, there is an expectation that the actors will begin framing the 'us' as 'European', plus to emphasize the 'European' scope of the problems and solutions, and thus, call for European mobilization in their transnational networks (Monforte 2014).

In terms of the coalitions' *outcome*, its development is very context- and actor-dependent. Some transnational coalitions will become sustained political groups ('Coalition survival') and will develop closer ties and organizational features between the groups. Other coalitions will instead cease to exist, and the individual groups are expected to 're-nationalize' their contention, i.e. return to their domestic settings and continue mobilizing from there or to stop mobilizing altogether⁷⁰. This aspect is particularly important to include in order to better understand the possible obstacles for closer European far right cooperation. The analysis thus also considers how and whether the coalition survived, by looking at domestic factors, the matching of expectations, shared rules, and other organizational aspects of the participating groups, which may influence the outcome.

⁷⁰ This could be due to a won or a lost cause, e.g. the anti-TTIP-demonstrations of 2016, which largely ended once the final EP-decision had been made (see Caiani & Graziano 2018).

Structure of Analysis

After the conceptualization of the ‘far right’ (Chapter 4), the following chapters analyse the groups’ Europeanization strategies in the 2015-2017 period. Chapter 5 sets out by analysing the GI and FE extra-parliamentary groups’ anticipated Europeanization based on their material and symbolic resources, and moderates Figure 3.1 according to these expectations. The following chapters continues the exploration of the groups’ Europeanization, by first considering their collective action strategies (Chapters 6-7), and then their European network, or coalition, formation (Chapters 8-9). As the network formation periods overlap with that of the collective action, it infers that these chapters should be read as part of the same developments, and could thus in theory be read in reverse order as well. Moreover, as already explained, the GI and FE coalition-formation did not take place during the same period (the first GI groups already began cooperating in 2013 and the network has continuously expanded throughout the period, while FE only was formed in 2016), inferring that there is no ‘most logical’ order of the chapters. This also explains why there will be mentions of the same events in both chapters, for instance their transnational protests, which both form part of the collective action, but at the same time were organized by the GI and/or FE *coalitions*.

CHAPTER 4. CATEGORIZING THE 'FAR RIGHT'

4.1. THE 'FAR RIGHT': CONCEPTUALISING A MUDDY FIELD

It is a bit of a daunting task to come to terms with the huge bulk of literature on, and definitions of, the group of political actors making up the margins of the right-wing spectrum. For one, since the early 1990s, the research on this particular group of actors has constantly grown, together with the disagreements on their conceptualization and classification (see e.g. Mudde 2016; 2017a), making it very difficult to come to terms with the many concepts and denominations to define and classify the European far right. Hence, more than twenty years since Mudde (1996) problematized the “war of words defining the extreme right party family,” scholars still argue about the best way to define the actors and their extra-parliamentary ‘relatives’.

One of the main definitional challenges lies in the actors’ employment of a vast array of expression forms and strategies (e.g. of moderation or institutionalization), leading to “an impressive plurality of definitions, most of which resemble mere shoppinglists of criteria rather than conceptually grounded definitions” (Minkenberg 2000: 171). The fact that different national literatures on the far right employ adverse denominations for the actors only brings further confusion to the debate. American scholars thus tend to employ the term ‘radical’ (just as does Minkenberg (2015) and other German researchers), while Anglo-Saxon scholars often opt for the denomination ‘far right’ (see e.g. Kitschelt & McGann 1997), and Continental European scholars tend to opt for the ‘extreme’ right (see e.g. Ignazi 2003 (Italian); Virchow 2016b (German)). Furthermore, these conceptualizations are based on diverse genealogies, again adding to the difficulty of defining the groups. Yet, some of the most widely cited definitions include the categorisations and typologies by Kitschelt & McGann (1997), Carter (2005), Ignazi (2003), and Rydgren (2005).

Being aware of these scholarly disagreements, and the highly contentious conceptual debates, I have decided to follow Halikiopoulou’s (2018), Ravndal and Bjørge’s (2018), Camus and Lebourg’s (2017), and Mudde’s (2019) examples, amongst others, and denominate the actors in their entirety as pertaining to the ‘far right’. Acknowledging the limitations involved in putting this array of groups and viewpoints under one umbrella, Halikiopoulou (2018) argues that the ‘far right’ term both allows the researcher “to identify the overarching similarities that make them comparable” and “to distinguish between different variants” including the potential “idiosyncrasies of specific cases” (2018). I similarly argue that the ‘far right’ encompasses actors and groups, who “all justify a broad range of policy positions on socioeconomic issues on the basis of nationalism” (Ibid.).

It is important to establish from the outset that albeit most far right actors today target more or less the same type of enemies (external and internal 'others', especially Muslim immigrants and the left-wing establishment), it is not by any means a "united family" (Caiani et al. 2012: 3). Aside from the far right parties, the scene consists of a multitude of extra-parliamentary actors, such as protest groups, student fraternities, subcultural groupuscules, civil societal associations, hooligan associations, media outlets, music bands, and various other types of activists (see e.g. Veugelers & Menard 2018). While one can somewhat easily categorize the parties ideologically based on their manifestos and public statements (see e.g. Mudde 2007), the street level actors provide bigger hardships in terms of classification. With the further diversification of the far right scene in the late 1990s and onwards (see e.g. Fielitz & Laloire 2016), the expression forms have only become more varied, just as the actors' different domestic settings also influence their organization form and action repertoires. To add further confusion, the frames and focus points of the organizations that already occupy this political space also tend to change over time. As Wright (2009) argues, "While the *core beliefs* of the far right have *remained relatively constant*, the *reframing* of the message and the ability to capitalize on widely shared perceptions of new threats has been essential to movement success" (2009: 194, emphasis added).

Features of the 'Far Right'

What then are these 'core beliefs'? Taking the term 'right' to begin with, there is rather broad scholarly agreement that the 'right' is distinguishable from the 'left' based on predominantly socio-cultural criteria. Thus, while the 'left' is *progressive* in outlook, the 'right' is hostile towards modernity and expresses a moral conservatism. Moreover, whereas the groups on the left pursue "collective economic and social rights as their principal agenda" (March & Mudde 2005: 25), the 'right' believes that "individual inequality falls outside of the limits of the state," and is thus not a concern for the decision-makers (Bobbio as cited in Van Hauwaert 2014a: 67; see also Durham & Power 2010).

In very general terms, one can gradate the right-wing parties into two degrees of right-wing expression, namely the *center-right*, which contains the liberal parties and the conservatives (e.g. the *Danish Liberal Party* (Venstre), the British *Conservatives*, etc.) and the *far right*, which are mainly distinguishable due to their nationalism⁷¹. Hence, there is broad scholarly agreement that the far right's ideological viewpoints consist of several core features including (exclusionary) nationalism, anti-liberalism, authoritarianism (the search for hierarchy and order) and, in its current expression, anti-immigration (see e.g. Betz & Meret 2009; Camus & Lebourg 2017). Ravndal and Bjørgo (2018) have also recently defined far right members as sharing an

⁷¹ This contention is yet again not without a need for moderation, particularly in the current political climate, where numerous centre-right and –left parties attempt to accommodate the nationalist appeals by developing similar stances (see e.g. Joon Han 2015).

“authoritarian inclination, that is, an inherent need for sameness, oneness, and group authority, resulting in intolerance towards diversity and individual autonomy, and some form of nativism or ethnic nationalism” (2018: 6).

Considering the radical right⁷² from a historical lens, Minkenberg (2000) explains that one should understand them as actors that wish to “undo” the “social change”, which modernisation, and the therefrom-ensuing individual autonomy and functional differentiation, has brought to society. The far right instead promotes the ideas of the “nationally defined community” and the “return to traditional roles and status of the individual,” thereby fostering “social homogeneity” (2000: 174). As ‘nationalism’ is widely considered the key concept for understanding the far right, the following section will briefly conceptualize the term.

Nationalism, Nativism, and ‘Civilisationalism’

Bar-On (2018) argues that nationalism is the ‘master concept’, or “the main animating feature” of the radical right (Bar-On 2018: 17). Nationalism is based in “the belief that the political unit [the state] and the ethnic unit [the nation] should be congruent” (Mudde 2000: 187)⁷³. In his conceptualization of the ‘populist radical right,’ Mudde (2007) utilized the related term ‘nativism’. It combines nationalism and xenophobia⁷⁴, and refers to the belief that the nation (or the mythical and romanticized ‘imagined heartland’ (Taggart 2004)) only belongs to the native, or autochthonous, homogenous population, and that it should be protected from all external ‘others’ who are threatening its continued existence (Mudde 2007: 19). The term thus has a clear anti-pluralist and exclusionary core (Pytlas 2018; see also Wodak 2015: 183), and this protectionist standpoint, both in economic, social, and civilizational terms, is a key trope of most far right actors’ worldviews. For instance, proponents of nativism often voice their economic stance in welfare protectionist terms (see e.g. Siim & Stolz 2013), employing statements such as ‘our own people first!’ However, the far right’s expression of ‘nationalism’ is different from country to country, depending on the historical and societal contexts, plus the advancement of the far right in the given state. One example is German nationalism, which tends to focus more on ‘blood relations’ between the autochthonous citizens, due to its historical evolution since the ‘Konservative Revolution’ in the 1920s (Goodwin & Eatwell 2018).

⁷² Drawing on Rucht’s conceptualization of modernization, Minkenberg (2000) refers to the actors as ‘radical right’ without distinguishing further between the pluralities of actors.

⁷³ Conversely, ‘patriotism’ solely refers to a “feeling of attachment and commitment to a country, nation, or political community” (Britannica), and nationalists often employ the term themselves, in order to convey a more palpable version of their viewpoints.

⁷⁴ I.e. the “fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign” (Merriam Webster Online Dictionary).

Yet, while nationalism is a core feature of *all* far right groups' worldviews, one can further distinguish the actors making up this political space from each other, by employing the terms 'radical' and 'extreme' right.

RADICAL VS. EXTREME RIGHT DIFFERENTIATION

Even though there is much scholarly disagreement as to whether one can distinguish between different groups of far right actors in terms of ideology or not⁷⁵, it is still contended here that such a division is feasible, and even necessary, due to the heterogeneity of the actors making up the far right. Again, partly following Halikiopoulou's (2018) example, the focus in this thesis, and thus, this conceptual framework, is on the 'radical' and 'extreme' right of the political spectrum, as expressed at both the party and extra-parliamentary level. This entails a division between the (populist) radical right (e.g. the *Alternative for Germany*, the *Danish People's Party*, *PEGIDA Germany*, etc.) and the extreme right (e.g. the *National Democratic Party of Germany*, the *Party of the Danes*, the *Greek Golden Dawn*, etc.).

Halikiopoulou (2018) defines the extreme right as actors who are "often openly racist, have clear ties to fascism and also employ violence and aggressive tactics [...]. They tend to oppose procedural democracy" (Halikiopoulou 2018). While she does not deem the opposition to democracy as a *defining* feature of the extreme right, this tends to be the prevalent differentiating factor between the two sides in the scholarly literature (see e.g. Mudde 2012). Hence, the most frequently employed distinction of the radical and extreme right considers their *attitude towards democratic deliberation*. Whereas the extreme right completely denounces democracy (or at least its key aspects, such as the fundamental values and human rights, popular sovereignty, and majority rule), the radical right is against *liberal* democracy (they accept democratic deliberation, yet, in an anti-egalitarian, ethnic sense, defending an ethnocracy) (Hirsch-Hoefler & Mudde 2013; Mudde 2012; Caiani et al. 2012; Minkenberg 2000). This means that the radical right agrees to adhere to the rules of the democratic system, while the extreme right rejects such participation, and is, instead, on a quest for "a revolutionary overthrow" of the entire political system (Fielitz & Laloire 2016: 15). Hence, this thesis distinguishes the radical and extreme right from each other based on their positions on, and relationship towards, 'democracy'.

Moreover, extreme right actors *tend to* view the *employment of violence* as a means to attain their goals, just as they generally espouse a more aggressive behaviour than the radical right (Caiani et al. 2012). They predominantly direct this at immigrants,

⁷⁵ Some scholars argue that they all belong to the same group. Minkenberg (2015), for instance, argues that the entire far right scene is part of the 'radical right', while other German scholars conglomerate the actors under the term 'Rechtsextremismus' (see e.g. Virchow 2016b for a discussion). Conversely, Betz (2003a) argued that one should split the radical right into two parts, those espousing 'exclusionary populism' and those 'fascism'.

domestic minority groups (such as LGBTQ), (radical) left-wing groups, and other political opponents. Heitmeyer argues that this relates to their ideologies of inequality (such as “exaggerated nationalism, racist denigration, and totalitarian views of the law”), which contain a dehumanizing effect (as cited in Caiani et al. 2012: 7), meaning that they can more easily justify the application of violence.

Rather simply put, identifying the extreme right thus “simply means going to the poles of the ideological scale,” when considering the specific issues in question (Lipset & Raab as cited in Klandermans & Mayer 2006: 4). One can then classify the extreme right as *ultra*-nationalist (Jamin 2013), *rejecting* democracy and equality, *ultra*-authoritarian, and most frequently *violent*, while the radical right also is nationalist, rejects *liberal* democracy, authoritarian, and most frequently employs non-violent means to gain traction.

FROM ANTI-SEMITISM TO ANTI-ISLAM: A (VERY) SHORT HISTORY OF THE FAR RIGHT

The European far right has radically changed over time, taking advantage of the opportunities presented to them due to the political and socio-economic changes in their respective societies. As the following brief look at the far right’s historical evolution demonstrates, the more profound ideological and/or frame shifts of far right actors have occurred due to the macro-structural openings or closures in the political system, plus movement intellectuals’ ability to frame the worldviews in persuading ways.

The section is inspired by Minkenberg’s (2015) categorization of the current European far right (or *radical* right, in his terminology) based on “a fundamental ideological dividing line” along a time perspective (2015: 30). He differentiates between historical (interwar) movements and ideologies (proponents of Nazism, fascism, and other authoritarian ideologies), and contemporary racist or ethno-centrist nationalists, which do not express as extreme a version of radical right sentiments (Ibid: 3f). This leads him to divide the actors into four groups, namely *Autocratic-fascists*, *racists/ethno-centrists*, *populist-authoritarians*, and *religious-fundamentalists* (Ibid.). Similarly, as Minkenberg (2015), this thesis divides the far right currents into five categories, roughly based on the time of their creation and the key aspects of their worldviews. Yet, the terms employed differ slightly, and do not include the ‘religious-fundamentalist’ groups⁷⁶.

The following historical overview of the European far right plays the dual role of explaining the ever-changing nature of the European far right, while also outlining the core features of arguably the five main far right expressions in Europe today. This

⁷⁶ This is due to the specific focus of the thesis and not because they are not deemed as being important actors on the far right scene.

involves *(neo-)Fascism*, *(neo-)Nazism*, the *New Right*, the *populist radical right/nationalist populists*, and *Anti-Islam/Islamophobes* (see also Ravndal & Bjørgo 2018 for a similar approach). These definitions will later be employed in the *ideal-typological* framework, which outlines the characteristics of the current European far right. It is thus the point of this section to both explain wherefrom the various worldviews derive, and at the same time explain their *current* expression form. The time perspective is mainly included to contextualize the current worldviews in their historical settings, and do not infer that actors ascribing to one or the other of these worldviews cannot move along the spectrum over time, nor that an actor cannot ascribe to a mix of these categories (more on this below). Moreover, the overview is also written fully knowing that it is bridging the works of various researchers of the far right, who have averse genealogical starting points for their conclusions. Yet, as it is the ambition to explain the different worldviews as concisely as possible, plus to consider the societal circumstances that led to the far right ideology's further advancement and mutations, this was opted as the most appropriate approach.

1920-1940s: Fascism and Nazism

Due to the heterogeneous and highly context-dependent expression forms of the actors adhering to Fascism or Nazism, the definitions of the two terms in their generic forms are highly contested (see e.g. Paxton 2004; Wolfreys 2013 for a discussion). However, scholars agree that the development of the specific worldviews correlate with the national contexts of their developers, i.e. Italy for Fascism (Mussolini) and Germany for Nazism (Hitler), and that one has to consider the *mood* at the time in order to understand the spread of the two currents (see e.g. Camus & Lebourg 2017). Scholars thus argue that the World War I experience, plus the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, led to the development of classic fascism (Ibid.). Paxton has similarly ascertained that the ideology “developed as a reaction against modern democratic society, liberal individualism, constitutionalism and the left,” and arose in a period “when mass democracy had difficulties” and socialists’ parliamentary seats began compromising them (as cited in Wolfreys 2013: 21). In terms of Nazism, the more extreme expression of Fascism (Camus & Lebourg 2017), Germany was similarly struggling to recover economically from World War I, facing high war reparations demands, soaring unemployment, hyperinflation, and general financial turmoil (Lang 2010).

Thus, all fascist movements have a common foundation in “the rejection of democracy, an aversion to Communism, the promotion of violence, a cult of personality devoted to a leader, along with racism, anti-Semitism, and ethnic chauvinism” (Camus & Lebourg 2017: 24). Moreover, Goodwin and Eatwell (2018) assert that extreme nationalism forms the core of fascism, together with the perception

of the nation as being ‘organic’⁷⁷. There is some scholarly disagreement about fascism and its views on economy, yet, Goodwin and Eatwell (Ibid.) argue that fascists promote an authoritarian ‘third way’, placed between capitalism and socialism (Ibid.: 62). Conversely, ‘Nazism’ combines “radical Fascism, völkisch ideology, and conservative-revolutionary concepts” (Camus & Lebourg 2017: 32). Adherents hold that the autochthonous population belongs to the nation on a blood basis (i.e. based on biological and racial terms), while Jews are seen as the greatest foreign threat (Goodwin & Eatwell 2018).

Post-War Period: Neo-Fascism and -Nazism

In the post-war period, openly fascist and Nazi groups either remained fringe occurrences, or were suppressed, marginalized, and/or discredited in their national settings (Von Beyme 1988). Moreover, due to the completely new political context after WWII, Fascists and Nazis had to moderate their worldviews, and initially struggled to reorganize (see e.g. Iriye & Mitter 2010). Their main aim thus became sheer survival as an organization, but they also started to deliberate on a new ‘master frame’ or ideology, seeing as the original had become unviable (Rydgren 2005). Developing a new, more moderate, ideational framework, neo-Fascists continued to advocate “extreme nationalism, opposed liberal individualism, attacked Marxist and other left-wing ideologies, indulged in racist and xenophobic scapegoating, and promoted populist right-wing economic programs” (Soucy 2019).

After further contextual moderations, current neo-Fascism is not explicitly fascist, as its ‘othering’ considers non-European immigrants, and not Jews,⁷⁸ and it is not set on gaining ‘Lebensraum’ (‘living space’) through military conquest (Ibid). However, the military and battle frames still play a big role in neo-Fascist discourse, while neo-Nazis continue to express anti-Semitic and racially superior terms, particularly targeted against Jews and African-Americans. Even though many neo-fascist and – Nazi groups face closed political opportunities in several (Western) European settings, numerous smaller subcultural groups continue ascribing to Fascist and/or Nazi viewpoints, despite the high societal costs of associating with such currents in many European countries (see e.g. Klandermans & Mayer 2006). This, for instance, involves the Italian *CasaPound* (neo-Fascism) and the *Nordic Resistance Movement*

⁷⁷ Conversely, Griffin asserts that fascism has “a mobilizing mythic core of revolutionary ultra-nationalist rebirth (palingenesis),” to be achieved by a revolutionary overthrow of the ongoing decadence and degeneration of society (Griffin as cited in Copsey 2018: 112). Yet, other scholars far from share this conceptualisation (see e.g. Virchow 2016b for a critique). Moreover, as a means to move away from solely focusing on the ideology as such, but also consider the proponents’ actual *actions*, Mann also incorporates the paramilitary organization as a key aspect of Fascism (as cited in Wolfreys 2013).

⁷⁸ Even though many of its proponents are “attracted to Holocaust denial and readier to admire Nazism and fascism” (Veugelers & Menard 2018: 289).

(neo-Nazi). Conversely, certain neo-Fascist parties instead moderated their stances according to the new political realities, and 'shifted' their worldviews slightly towards the centre (most famously *Front National*, see e.g. Mammone 2014).

Populist Protest Parties (1950s-1970s)

From the 1950s until the mid-1970s, Europe also experienced a 'populist protest phase,' where right-wing populist parties without links to Fascism began appearing, in reaction to the social and economic modernization processes of the post-war period. They often had charismatic leaders with a strong 'us-vs.-them' discourse against the political elite, frequently around tax policies (see e.g. Von Beyme 1988; Minkenberg 2000). Examples of such parties include the French *Poujadist Movement*, the Nordic *Progress Parties*, and the Dutch *Farmer's Party*. They had some initial electoral success, but as Minkenberg (2000) argues, as the public increasingly accepted "the new political situation," these new movements and parties "faded away" in the 1970s (2000: 175), but to be replaced with the populist radical right some years later.

French 'New Right' Revival of the Right (1960s Onwards)

In the late 1960s, another development took place in France, namely the foundation of the *Nouvelle Droite*. In 1968, the French *Groupement de recherche et d'études pour la civilisation européenne (Research and Study Group for European Civilization, GRECE)* was created as a right-wing response to the New Social Movements. It was thus formed in the same "context of far-reaching social and cultural change in Western societies," due to the societal shift towards post-industrialism or post-modernity (Minkenberg 2000: 176). Due to the think tank's 'new' visions for society, French scholars began referring to the writers as the 'new right,' even though much of the writings drew on the German *Konservative Revolution (KR)* of the 1920s⁷⁹. Hence, adopting and appropriating the "strategies and issues of its political opponents, especially the New Left and new social movements" (Minkenberg 2000: 180), the New Right aimed at being seen as 'mainstream', non-violent, and democratic. Unlike the 'old-right', it thus presented itself as not being reactionary or anti-modernist, but instead searching for *alternative modernities* (Bar-On 2013). Yet, similar to Fascism, its proponents aimed for a revolution. It should be achieved through the reclamation of the societal cultural hegemony from the '1968ers,' by means of a 'right-wing

⁷⁹ Armin Mohler introduced the term 'Conservative Revolution' as a conglomerating term for various right-wing conservative and extremist currents, which expressed "anti-liberal, anti-democratic and anti-egalitarian positions" during the Weimar Republic (Verfassungsschutz Baden-Württemberg 2018: 178). Some of the most important writers for the later new right developments are Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt, and Edgar Julius Jung.

Gramscianism,’ involving a takeover of the discourses on “societal themes, interpretations and solutions” (Hafenegeer 2014: 3, author’s translation).

The school of thought quickly diffused to other European countries and led to the creation of numerous new right magazines, journals, and philosophical groups abroad (see e.g. Minkenberg 2000; Bar-On 2011; Camus & Lebourg 2017). Particularly the German *neue rechte* became increasingly influential both domestically and abroad. In the late 1960s, the German scholar Henning Eichberg⁸⁰ introduced one of the New Right’s key concepts, ‘Ethnopluralism’ (or ‘ethnodifferentialism’). It signifies that ethnically and culturally heterogeneous people are hierarchically equal, yet, cannot coexist in the same geographical space, without this leading to ethnic conflict. Instead, each civilization should have the ‘right to difference’ (Bruns et al. 2017), in order for the diversity not to go lost. At its core, the concept aims to keep the various states and civilisations homogeneously pure, inferring a ‘global apartheid’, as the only way to ensure ethnic diversity is maintained through the geographical segregation of cultures (Minkenberg 2000). The argument is, then, only a linguistic turn away from explicit racism, as ‘culture’ has replaced ‘race’, thereby upholding the differentialist racism (Eckes 2016) and totalitarian worldview of the past (Mense 2017). Several scholars thus argue that the New Right’s discarding of Fascism more was a strategic manoeuvre, in order to appear more legitimate, and that they in fact continue to belong to the extreme right of the political spectrum (see e.g. Spektorowski 2003; Eckes 2016).

The current New Right mainly organizes at the extra-parliamentary level in think tanks and publishing houses from where the writers attempt to influence the societal discourse. It has become particularly influential in Germany, Italy, and France within the last two to three decades (see e.g. Geisler et al. 2016). The groups and actors span across Europe and vary from blogs (e.g. *Riposte Laïque* (‘Secular Response’)), to think tanks (*Institut für Staatspolitik (IfS)*), to political associations (*Bloc Identitaire*), and to smaller groupuscules (the various *Generation Identity* groups, more on this categorization below).

Populist Radical Right/Nationalist Populists (from the Early-1980s Onwards)

As Ignazi (2003), Rydgren (2005), von Beyme (1988), and Van Hauwaert (2014a) have demonstrated, in the 1980s-1990s, several previously Fascist parties *re-framed* their viewpoints into a more moderate and modern packaging, both in terms of

⁸⁰ Henning Eichberg was a German cultural sociologist and historian. Strongly influenced by the thoughts espoused by *Europe-Action*, he developed the ‘ethnopluralism’ concept in the late 1960s (Camus & Lebourg 2017).

economic policy (to a statist policy)⁸¹ and democracy (moderation/accommodation). Von Beyme (1988) argues that this third wave arose amidst rising unemployment, economic turbulence, plus a growing disquiet about the European immigration figures, which had risen due to the economic boom in the post-war period. In his text on the 'silent counter-revolution,' Ignazi (2003) considered the broader macro-structural factors, which he argued led to this frameshift, mainly based on the change from industrialist to post-industrialist conceptions of society⁸².

Hence, led by *Front National's* 'master frame,' numerous parties reoriented their ideologies towards populism and ethno-nationalism, argued in ethnopluralist terms⁸³, and thus, found "an escape route from the margins" (Akkerman et al. 2016: 1). This departure from their extreme right anti-democratic traditions has mainly been considered as a strategic means to fit in to a setting of representative democracy (Rydgren 2005) or their "capacity to repackage old hatreds into new crusades" (Mammone et al. 2013: 2). Hence, this partly explains why some scholars still place *FPÖ* and *FN* as part of the extreme right (see e.g. Ibid; Wolfreys 2013).

Yet, others argued that the parties had created a new far right ideological expression. Mudde (2007), for instance, devised the term 'populist radical right' (PRR) to the parties due to their adherence to nativism⁸⁴, authoritarianism, and use of populism (in the sense of a thin ideology⁸⁵). Of these three concepts, nativism is the most important for their ideology. The PRR parties are by far the most prominent far right actors in the last three decades, both in terms of scholarly interest, and national plus European election results (Mudde 2007). Yet, with time, Mudde's conceptualization was considered increasingly inadequate, leading to new attempts at a convincing terminology. In 2018, Eatwell and Goodwin published a book about the rise of

⁸¹ There is not consensus in the literature as to how to define the parties' socio-economic policies, as they differ largely between the different European nations, plus scholars disagree on the best denomination (see e.g. Van Hauwaert 2014a for a short discussion)

⁸² Based on an investigation of the political evolution of MSI into *Alleanza Nazionale* in 1994, and the internal differences within the same group of actors, he distinguished between two groups of parties, namely the classical (or the 'old extreme right') and the 'post-industrial' extreme right (Ignazi 2003).

⁸³ They based this on ideological notions developed by the *Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI)*, the *Nouvelle Droite*, and Poujadism (see e.g. Minckenberg 2011). As an example, FN reduced "their neofascist aspects to a sort of 'rightwing socialism' with anti-globalist and anti-liberalist traits" (Caiani 2017: 7).

⁸⁴ Mudde (2007) defines nativism as "an ideology, which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ("the nation") and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogeneous nation-state" (2007: 22).

⁸⁵ Perceiving 'populism' as a 'thin ideology' infers that it must always be combined with another key issue in order to work. In the case of the far right, this usually involves nativism and/or the idea of the 'Heartland' (Taggart 2004).

‘national populists,’ which largely refer to the same groups of political actors as covered by Mudde’s concept. The two scholars argue that these actors’ narratives focus less “on the detail of policy,” but instead discuss “national decline and destruction, which they link not only to immigration and ethnic change, but also to what they see as culturally incompatible Muslims and refugees” (2018). Hence, the actors’ nationalism is based on a strong ‘us’ and ‘them’ distinction on ethnic and cultural terms, particularly targeted at adherents of Islam.

Anti-Islam/Islamophobia

Especially since 9/11, 2001, and further aided by the 2005 ‘Mohammad Cartoons Crisis,’ *anti-Islam* has become one of the main features of most far right worldviews, including its own distinct category (yet, Islamophobia can be traced further back in time (see e.g. Betz & Meret 2009)). Adherents of this political belief perceive a great cultural threat in a pending *Islamization*⁸⁶ of Europe through immigration from Muslim countries (akin to Huntington’s (1993) *Clash of Civilizations* theory). The threat is thought eventually to destroy the Western societies, both in terms of democratic values and through Islamist terrorism. The actors thus draw on Europe’s Christian heritage, values, and culture, in order to underline the differences (see e.g. Betz & Meret 2009; Berntzen 2018a). Moreover, unlike extreme right ideology, many current radical right actors include LGBTQ and women’s rights in the narratives, as a means to demonstrate the ‘backwardness’ of Islam (see e.g. Mondon & Winter 2018 on ‘Liberal Islamophobia’), just as the actors promote the protection of Jews, also to dissociate themselves from Fascism (see e.g. Shroufi 2015; Hafez 2014 for more on this). Yet, based on the works by Said, Kalmar and Ramadan, Narkowicz (2018) argues that the anti-Islam position remains a form of racial Othering (2018). Muslims are in this way essentialized and considered a homogeneous group (Zúquete 2008) or a ‘monolithic block’ (Lee 2016), perceived as civilizationally inferior and ‘backward’ to the ‘West’ (see e.g. Hafez 2014; Berntzen 2018a).

While anti-Islam is currently also voiced by ‘older’ far right currents, including actors on both the radical and extreme right, the 2000s have witnessed the rise of actors, which almost solely focus on the incompatibility between Islam and ‘Western civilization’ (see e.g. Meleagrou-Hitchens & Brun 2013; Goodwin 2013; Berntzen 2018a). There is some scholarly disagreement as to how to define these far-right actors, who primarily oppose Islam as a religion and Muslims as an ethnic group. Some refer to them as ‘Islamophobes,’ while others instead draw attention to their specific ‘Othering’ target, by naming them ‘anti-Islam’ actors (see e.g. Berntzen 2018a for a discussion). Without delving into this discussion, this study employs the term ‘anti-Islam’.

⁸⁶ The Collins Online Dictionary’s defines *Islamization* as “to convert to or bring under the influence of Islam” (<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/islamize>).

Protests against Islam and its allegedly incompatible nature vis-à-vis *Western* civilisation became the new object of European far-right extra-parliamentary contention in the mid-2000s (see e.g. Berntzen 2018a). This involved various types of groups, such as citizen initiatives (e.g. the German *Pro-Movement* against mosques), protest groups (such as the *English Defence League*), but also transnational networks (such as the *Counter-Jihad Network*) (see e.g. Goodwin 2013; Berntzen 2018a for an overview).

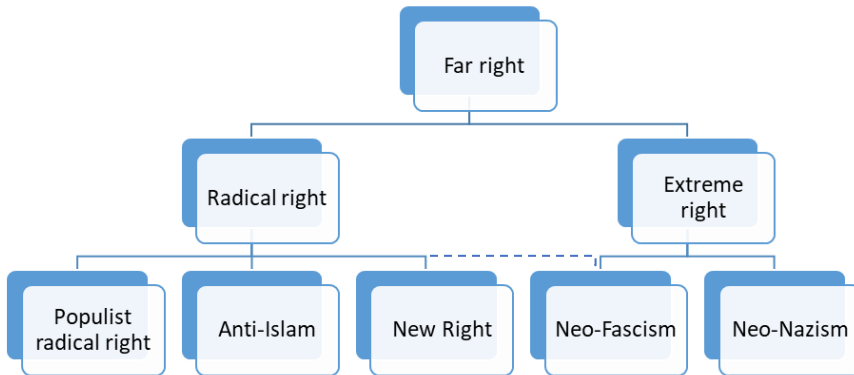
4.2. IDEAL-TYPICAL CATEGORIES OF FAR RIGHT IDEOLOGY

I distinguish between the five outlined far right ideal categories, i.e. 'Neo-Nazism,' 'Neo-fascism,' 'New Right,' 'Populist radical right,' and 'anti-Islam,' based on their placement on the radical and extreme right. The groups that express neo-fascist and neo-Nazi viewpoints are thus placed on the 'extreme right' of the political spectrum, as they, also according to Minkenberg (2015), *tend* to be anti-democratic and *often* employ violence as part of their action repertoires, largely aligning with the definition of extreme right actors as explained above. The populist radical right actors are instead placed in the 'Radical right' category, as they only object to *liberal* democracy, do not employ violence, and generally do not express themselves in ultra-nationalist or racist ways.

Conversely, the 'New Right' and 'Anti-Islam' categories are deliberately placed to the right in the 'radical right' field, as it is a rather contentious question whether actors such as *PEGIDA* and *Generation Identity* should be classified as radical or extreme right. As Ruzza (2009) also ascertains in his analysis of 'right-wing civil societal groups', these groups "often thread a fine line between conducting legal or illegal activities" (2009: 91). Yet, when looking at their worldviews, they do not (openly, at least) employ violent means, nor are they strictly anti-democratic. The 'New Right' is arguably the hardest to place in terms of the two parts of the far right spectrum. Certain scholars argue that it still is neo-fascist at its core (see e.g. Spektorowski 2003). Yet, conversely, this thesis aligns itself with Berntzen (2018b), who argues that the New Right accepts the "democratic principle [...] as the path to power" (2018b: 82), thus inferring that it mainly belongs among the radical right. However, as can be seen on Figure 4.1 below, the 'New Right' has been placed *between* the radical and extreme right, due to the ambiguity of its worldview (see also Bar-On 2008; 2011; Weiß 2017 for a discussion of the ideology).

Hence, beginning with the populist radical right and ending with neo-Nazis, the following *ideal-typical* figure distinguishes the 'far right' into five distinct worldview categories, which all have developed at various key moments in the European history, and with various ambitions.

Figure 4.1: Ideal-Typical Categorization of Far Right Worldviews.



WESTERN VS. EASTERN EUROPEAN FAR RIGHT

Aside from the differences in European far right expression forms, which have developed *over time*, one must also keep in mind that there also are large *geographical* differences, due to the averse political, social, and historical contexts of the various European countries. While this is the case for *all* the EU member states, the differences are *particularly* large between Western and Eastern Europe.

Hence, due to these contextual circumstances, the Western and Eastern European far right have developed rather adversely from each other over time. For one, while the Western European far right actors could develop their political viewpoints and agendas along with the recovery of the democratic regimes after the Second World War, the Eastern European far right was only 're-established' after the fall of the Communist regime in 1989-91 (Pytlas 2018). This has entailed a scholarly 'overlooking' of the Central and Eastern European non- and institutional far right actors in much of the initial writing on the far right post-1990.

Yet, with the increased scrutiny by scholars such as Minkenberg (2015; 2018) and Kopecky and Mudde (2003), they are also gradually becoming part of the more general far right debates (see e.g. Pytlas 2018), just as the continuous empirical findings of exchanges and movement overlaps between Eastern and Western Europe also demands more consideration of the *European* far right.

However, the highly different contextual circumstances and expression forms infers a reluctance by some scholars to employ the same vocabulary to describe the Western European far right about Central and Eastern European groups (see e.g. Camus & Lebourg 2017; Buřtíková 2018). For one, these differences relate to the far right's focus points on the two sides of the continent. Drawing on numerous scholars' findings, Pytlas (2018) ascertains that the Western European far right's core issues mainly involve opposition to immigration, integration, and Islam, together with

criticism against the establishment (Pytlas 2018). In Eastern Europe, on the other hand, the focus has largely remained on the nation-state, and evolves around much more “authoritarian ethnicist and nationalist tendencies” than in the west (Camus & Lebourg 2017: 2). Pytlas (2018) thus argues that the Eastern European far right perceive numerous threats to the nation-state, “including both ethnic and sexual minorities (LGBTI), left-liberal ‘Western’ values and their proponents” (2018: 5). At the same time, anti-Semitism and blatant racist utterances are more prevalent in CEE (Ibid.). Yet, with the onset of the refugee crisis, the focus of Eastern European far right ‘othering’ has also largely shifted towards anti-Islam and –immigration (Hafez 2018), a trend which had already begun many years prior to this (see e.g. Mareš 2017).

Hence, at least in terms of *certain* of the Eastern European far right actors, it is possible to consider them through the same framework as developed for actors in Western Europe, *especially* those Eastern European groups which have adopted the blueprint from a Western European counterpart (like e.g. *GI Czech Republic* or the *Czech Defense League*). In the following typology, which unites far right ideology with organization types, I will thus also add Eastern European groups and actors, where appropriate, knowing well that there are rather big differences between the actors on the two sides of the continent. However, since the partial aim of this research is to explore how and whether Eastern and Western European groups cooperate, it must be established where they have potential for cooperation in ideological and/or organizational terms.

CATEGORIZING FAR RIGHT ORGANIZATIONS

After having determined the ideological tenets of the far right, I will now return to the plurality of organizations, which make up the current European far right scene. They vary in terms of both worldview, organization form, and activity types, and they are ever changing and re-forming according to the given opportunities for gaining influence and resonance (see e.g. Wright 2009). According to Fielitz and Laloire (2016), the current far right actors can broadly be divided into two types, both of which are going through a “process of restructuring”. On the one hand, there are the more regressive and ‘traditional’ organizations, which “have begun to fundamentally alter their image and political positions”, while, on the other hand, other groups “[...] draw on new forms of mobilization, agitation and (transnational) networking while integrating ideological components that had previously been alien to far-right ideologies and constituencies” (Fielitz & Laloire 2016: 13f).

In short, these actors span from:

...right-wing parties to several radical political movements, from neo-Nazi groups to fascist nostalgic/revisionists and cultural associations, from publishers, commercial sites and militaria to a radically differentiated subcultural radical right area composed of skinhead, music and sports groups. (Caiani & Parenti 2013: 45)

All of these actors can be considered challengers “for political and cultural hegemony in contemporary liberal democracies” (Veugelers & Menard 2018: 286). Together they form the ‘galaxy’ of the European far right, a plethora of actors that have increasingly begun aligning their views. Today, they agree more or less about their oppositions, namely towards (liberal) democracy, proponents of liberalism, and immigrants, particularly of Muslim faith, often combining “elements of left-wing and right-wing philosophy with populist language and rhetoric” (Caiani & della Porta 2018: 340).

The following categorization again largely draws on the works of Minkenberg (2015), yet, with some added categories. Minkenberg considers the actors in relation to their approach to, and role in, institutional politics. He differentiates between political parties (which seek to win *institutional* seats), social movement organizations (which attempt to mobilize public support, but not to be elected), and finally, “smaller groups and socio-cultural milieus” (independent from parties and movements, and without formal organizational forms) (2015: 4).

The subcultural actors usually gather in smaller, underground, groups without formal organizations or leadership. They may have access restrictions, only permitting “individuals considered reliable and worthy of trust” to become part of the core group, while other activists remain at the margins of the group, making the boundaries rather ‘fuzzy’ (Bjørge 2009: 30). Such groups develop their collective identity around “their own symbols, myths, and language” (Caiani et al. 2012: 3), which usually is “more extreme than that of the parties or movement organizations,” and may include the employment of violence (Minkenberg 2015: 31). In 2003, Griffin developed the related term *groupuscule* (derived from French), which he defines as a “non-hierarchical, leaderless and centreless (or rather polycentric) movement with fluid boundaries and constantly changing components” (2003: 30). These groups have “tighter boundaries around membership and stricter rules over action,” yet, they are more likely to strike ‘pragmatic’ and ‘informal’ alliances with other far right groups (Veugelers & Menard 2018: 295).

In addition to these three categories and drawing on the article by Veugelers and Menard (2018), the category of ‘Alternative Media Outlets and Publishers’ is also added, due to the role such actors places for the dissemination of far right worldviews. The category includes political blogs, think tanks, publishing houses, and so on, certain of which also became members of *Fortress Europe*.

Table 4.1 below thus attempts to categorize various political organizations according to their position on both the 'far right' and 'organization' scale. Such a definitional task is in itself challenging, and can thus best be *ideal-typical*. However, in order to employ the terminology convincingly throughout the analysis (especially in terms of the 'radical' and 'extreme' right distinctions), the following table depicts the position of numerous current far right non- and institutional organizations on the basis of their ideology. Nevertheless, a caveat must be given: The great volatility in the organizations' standpoints on certain issues infers that, one year, they can be classified as belonging to one group, and over time, maybe move either more right-wards (e.g. *Alternative for Germany*), or closer to the centre (such as *Front National* and the *Austrian Freedom Party* (FPÖ) have allegedly done). Again, this entails that the table should not be considered irrefutable.

The groups mentioned below are not all part of the ensuing analysis, but should rather be considered as current examples of the given far right category. As can be seen, certain of the groups have been placed in more than one far right category, as their worldviews bridge several far right categories. This form of 'multiple belonging' again accentuates the difficulty of defining the far right political spectrum.

Table 4.1: Categorization of European far right organizations.

	Parties	Movements and protest groups	Subcultural groups	Alternative Media Outlets
Extreme right (neo-fascist/neo-Nazi)	<i>National Democratic Party</i> (NPD) (DE) <i>Golden Dawn</i> (GR) <i>Dutch People's Union</i> (NVU) (NL) <i>Worker's Party</i> (DS) (CZ)	<i>Hogar Social</i> (SP) <i>CasalPound</i> (IT) <i>Nordic Resistance Movement</i> (N, S, DK, FIN)	Neo-Nazis (all) Skinheads (all) <i>Blood & Honour</i> (all) Student associations (like Burschenschaften (DE/A)) <i>Autonomous Nationalists</i>	<i>Deutsche Stimme</i> (DE) <i>White Media</i> (CZ)
New Right (ethnopluralist, metapolitical agenda)	<i>Front National</i> (FR) <i>Alternative for Germany</i> (AFD) (DE)	<i>Generation Identity</i> (all)	<i>Identitarian Bloc</i> (FR) <i>Generation Identity</i> (all)	<i>Riposte Laïque</i> (FR) <i>Junge Freiheit</i> (DE) <i>Institute for State Policy</i> (IFS) (DE) <i>Compact!</i> (DE)
Anti-Islam	<i>Party for Freedom</i> (NL)	<i>European Defence League</i> <i>Blok Against Islam</i> (CZ) <i>IVCRN</i> (CZ) <i>HoGeSa</i> (DE) <i>PEGIDA</i> (all)		<i>Gates of Vienna</i> <i>Stop the Islamization of Europe</i> (SIOE) <i>Free Press Association</i> (TFS) (DK)
Populist Radical Right	<i>Front National</i> (FR) <i>Freedom Party of Austria</i> (FPÖ) <i>Alternative for Germany</i> (AFD) <i>Northern League</i> (IT) <i>EKRE</i> (EST) <i>Dawn</i> (CZ)	<i>PEGIDA Germany</i> (DE)	<i>Burschenschaften</i> (DE/A) Student associations (FR + IT) <i>Radio Maryja</i> (PL)	

As can be seen on the table above, the extra-parliamentary groups that joined the *Fortress Europe* coalition are almost all placed amongst the radical right *anti-Islam* actors. Particularly *PEGIDA Germany* could also be argued to form part of the *Populist radical right* due to its strong use of populist frames and more general opposition to the political establishment, which is expressed somewhat differently than by its European namesakes (see e.g. Vorländer et al. 2018). The various GI groups mainly draw their inspiration from the *Nouvelle Droite* (or the ‘*New Right*’), and are thus placed among the radical right actors. Yet, as the GI groups also have adopted many of the neo-fascist *CasaPound*’s frames and protest repertoires (see e.g. Zúquete 2018), several scholars, particularly in German- and French-speaking countries, classify GI as a *neo-Fascist* mobilization (see e.g. Goetz et al. 2017; Bruns et al. 2017; Bouron 2014). The GI groups’ worldview thus consists of a mix of the two expression forms (i.e. *New Right* and *neo-Fascism*); again further accentuating the tricky task of categorising the actors on the far right.

The following chapter will introduce the GI and FE extra-parliamentary actors’ worldview and expression forms in a more detailed manner, which especially will emphasise the varied objectives with their mobilizations and how this relates to their worldviews. Hence, it will differentiate between GI’s *New Right* meta-political ambitions versus the FE groups’ *anti-Islam* populist demands for change.

CHAPTER 5. FE AND GI: RESOURCES AND EUROPEANIZATION STRATEGIES

This first analytical chapter introduces the extra-parliamentary groups that form part of the two transnational coalitions *Fortress Europe* and *Generation Identity* and situate them in their organizational and ideational contexts. This ‘casing’ has the dual purpose of introducing the groups to the reader, but also, and more importantly, to deduce their likely Europeanization paths based on the Europeanization literature. As explained in the theoretical framework, earlier studies have found that the strategies pursued by political actors in relation to the EU and its institutions depend highly on their available financial means, technical knowledge, and types of claims and discourses (see also della Porta & Caiani 2009). This chapter will thus assess the distinct domestic FE and GI groups’ material and symbolic resources and their most prevalent protest repertoires, and discuss their likely Europeanization strategies on this basis. The data employed derives from all of the *extra-parliamentary* groups partaking in the GI and FE coalitions and was retrieved from the groups’ own sources, just as secondary sources about the groups were utilized for background information and to explain their worldviews.

As outlined in the theoretical framework, the amount and type of a group’s available resources affects its possibility (and willingness) of externalizing its contention, particularly concerning access to the EU institutions. The material and symbolic resources have been found to be especially crucial (della Porta & Caiani 2009). **Material** resources refer to the groups’ finances, organization type and capacities, infrastructure, membership figures, degree of professionalization, and expertise (Milan 2013). Regarding Europeanization strategies, particularly the group’s economic situation, size, and degree of professionalization are relevant to consider further as it is usually only the more resourceful extra-parliamentary actors, such as business interest groups, which have the material capacities to lobby directly at the EU level (Caiani & Graziano 2018). The **symbolic** resources, on the other hand, more broadly refer to the ideational and identity aspects, and include the groups’ frames, discourses, use of language as means of persuasion (verbal styles), rituals, culture, and symbolic markers (Poletta & Jasper 2001). In terms of the Europeanization literature, particularly their issue *foci* (technical/politicized) and *type* of issue (specific/diffuse) matters, plus their stance on the EU as a political actor. The chapter will thus consider the groups’ main collective action frames in order to deduce these aspects, and how they relate to the various possible Europeanization paths.

Moreover, a collective actor's protest repertoires or tactics are also rather indicative of its likely Europeanization strategy. If the actor mainly employs unconventional tactics, it often implies a lower level of organizational resources (Hjelmar 1996). The protest tactics' nature can also give important pointers about a given actor's most likely mobilization strategy. As Jasper (2008) for instance states, "Tactics are rarely, if ever, neutral means about which protestors do not care. Tactics represent important routines, emotionally and morally salient in these people's lives. Just as their ideologies do their activities express protestors' political identities and moral visions" (2008: 237). Hence, the analysis also briefly introduces the groups' protest repertoires.

Table 5.1 below briefly sums up the possible strategies depending on a group's symbolic and material resources and protest repertoires. It is mainly based on the works of della Porta and Caiani (2009), Parks (2015), and Monforte (2014).

Table 5.1: Expected Europeanization for extra-parliamentary actors, based on resources and action repertoires.

Strategic Option	Material Resources	Symbolic Resources	Action Repertoire/ Tactics
Insider at EU-level (Open EU POS/DOS)	Strong (funds, expertise, degrees of professionalization, size)	Technical issue , specific interests, process-oriented, and appealing to EU approved discourses and identity	Conventional
Outsider at EU-level (Open EU POS)	Weak (limited funds, no expertise, low membership numbers)	(Most commonly) Politicized issue	Unconventional (mainly demonstrative)
Transnational Protest (Closed EU POS/DOS)	Weak (limited funds, no expertise low membership numbers)	Politicized issue , diffuse interests (Potentially perceiving the EU negatively)	Unconventional (demonstrative and confrontational)

The chapter is organized in the following way: First, it introduces *Generation Identity* and *Fortress Europe's* extra-parliamentary members' shared antecedents (the *Counter-Jihad Movement*) in order to situate them as part of the same type of far right contention. The following two sections introduce the two groups separately, starting with *Generation Identity*. They include an introduction to the groups' immediate antecedents in the form of the groups and/or events that led to the key groups' creation

(*GI France* and *PEGIDA Germany*, i.e. the ‘blue prints’ for some of the other groups in the coalitions). This is followed by a consideration of the groups’ levels and types of material and symbolic resources in 2015, plus their mobilization strategies and protest repertoires. Finally, the last section of the chapter deduces the expected Europeanization paths based on previously established scholarly findings.

5.1. ANTECEDENTS: THE 2007 COUNTER-JIHAD MOVEMENT

The roots of most of the extra-parliamentary actors making up the two coalitions can be traced back to earlier developments on the European radical and extreme right scene. In fact, the majority of the groups are part of the more overall *anti-Islam movement*, which became increasingly vocal during the 2000s (See e.g. Berntzen 2018a). It had its onset in the early 2000s and gradually expanded in terms of both geography, members, and organizational types (Ibid.). It encompasses a large part of the European far right, at both the extra- and parliamentary level. Initially, it was mainly an online phenomenon, as American and Western European bloggers and alternative media sites began depicting Islam and its adherents as the greatest threat facing the Western world today. This involved the development of conspiracy theories, such as Bat Ye’or’s *Eurabia* thesis⁸⁷ of which the main claim was that the pending Muslim ‘take-over’ of Europe would transform the European continent “into an Islamic colony called ‘Eurabia’”, and turn the European population into dhimmies, a form of slaves (Carr 2006: 1). Ye’Or’s publication received consensus amongst various actors on the right.

In 2007, the so-called *Counter-Jihad Movement (CJM)* had its first offline summit. The CJM gathers the main anti-Islam groups and activists from Europe and the U.S. on a loose basis with most communication occurring online (see e.g. Meleagrou-Hitchens & Brun 2013; Gates of Vienna 2011; Lee 2015; 2016). While the participating actors did not necessarily refer to Bat Ye’Or’s thesis to a high extent, they all still united around the cultural threat perception (Lee 2016). They thus “depicted Europe as a doomed continent, on the brink of cultural extinction in the face of a relentless and co-ordinated campaign of Islamicisation” (Carr 2006: 2).

The network comprises “movements that are more confrontational, chaotic and unpredictable than traditional anti-immigrant and ethnic nationalist movements in

⁸⁷ In 2002, Bat Ye’or (aka Gisele Littman) developed the idea of a secret political project between the Arab world and European politicians deriving from the Euro-Arab cooperation in the Euro-Arab Dialogue (EAD) programme during the oil-crisis in the 1970s. This “consciously designed” project aimed at furthering the so-called Islamization of Europe, in order to make Europe a strong world power. Europe was portrayed as “a collaborator in its own downfall” (Carr 2006: 1), and thus villainized to the same extent as the Arabs carrying out the ‘Islamization’, which would finally end with the creation of “a new geographical entity – Eurabia” (Ye-or as cited in Ibid: 6).

Western democracies” (Goodwin 2013: 3). Moreover, particularly with the initiation of the *English Defence League’s* (EDL) demonstrations in 2009, several of the groups became increasingly street active⁸⁸ (see e.g. Berntzen 2018a). According to Goodwin (2013), the CJM consisted of the following actors:

[T]he ‘defence leagues’ in Australia, Denmark, England, Finland, Norway, Poland, Scotland, Serbia and Sweden, groups such as Pro-Cologne and the Citizens’ Movement Pax Europa in Germany, Generation Identity in France, the “Stop the Islamization” networks in Europe and the United States, the American Freedom Defense Initiative and the International Civil Liberties Alliance. (Goodwin 2013: 3)

These groups all united around the master frame that there is an inherent incompatibility between Islam and the Western civilization, mainly based on cultural differences (Berntzen 2018a). It is within this so-called *Counter-Jihad* scene’s offspring that one can locate most of the extra-parliamentary actors making up the two coalitions. The members of both coalitions thus denounce fascism and racism and form part of this new wave of far right expression, which strongly mobilizes against Muslim immigrants (See e.g. Berntzen 2018a for more). Yet, aside from these more general ideological overlaps, there are several distinguishing factors between the two mobilizations. They will be explained in the following sections.

5.2. GENERATION IDENTITY⁸⁹

ANTECEDENT: IDENTITARIAN BLOC

GI France started out as the youth association of the *Identitarian Bloc* (*Bloc Identitaire, BI*) (now *The Identitarians* (*Les Identitaires*)). Collecting the remnants of *Unité Radicale*, Phillipe Vardon, Guillaume Luyt, and Fabrice Robert created the political association *Identitarian Bloc* in 2002-03 after the forced dissolution of *Unité Radicale*, an anti-Semitic neo-Nazi Skinhead movement⁹⁰ (Bruns et al. 2017). Setting

⁸⁸ By 2013, the main impetus of the *EDL* mobilization had faded, and it no longer attracted strong crowds. These problems further increased with the resignation of its leaders, Robinson and Carroll in October 2013 (BBC 2013). Nevertheless, together with its namesakes in the *European Defence League* (the *Dutch, German, Swedish, Finnish, Danish, and Czech Defence League* to name a few), the *Defence League* groups continue mobilising to various extents and with various success in their home countries (see e.g. HopeNotHate n.d.d).

⁸⁹ Due to their earlier founding dates, sizes, and higher activity levels, most available data about the GI groups consider *GI France, GI Austria, and GI Germany*. This means that the following analysis also mainly refers to these groups in terms of explicit information.

⁹⁰ *Unité Radicale* was created in the 1990s, and it was linked to Guillaume Faye, a French new right writer. After a failed assassination attempt against Jacques Chirac by one of its members, the government dissolved the group in 2001, and forbade it in August 2002 (Bruns et al. 2017).

out as a nationalist-revolutionary anti-U.S. and anti-Semitic association in 2001, in the aftermath of 9/11, BI shifted its focus to anti-Islam and third country immigration (Cahuzac & François 2013). At its creation, the groupuscule referred to itself as a *Mouvement social européen* (Ibid: 276), and due to its emphasis on Europe and European identity, the association looked for European network opportunities throughout the period of 2002 to 2012. It was thus in contact with numerous European radical and extreme right groups (see e.g. Rippon 2012).

This European ambition was also visible in BI's aspiration to set up a youth association. It thus initially founded *Jeunesse Identitaire (Identitarian Youth)*, which was envisioned to encompass "all the young Europeans", who would partake in a "modern fight" to "defend our land and our people, threatened as much by the plague of immigration-invasion as by the globalist cholera" (Jeunesse Identitaire manifesto 2008). Yet, in 2007, the French authorities closed down *Identitarian Youth*, as it was found to simply be a derivation of *Unité Radicale*. In 2009, another attempt was made to create a youth group, *Une Autre Jeunesse (Another Youth)*, which disappeared with the creation of *Génération Identitaire* in 2012. GI largely consists of the same leadership as had *Jeunesse Identitaire* (e.g. Pierre Larti and Damien Rieu) (for more on *GI France* and the other GI groups' creation, see Ch. 8).

THE NATIONAL GI GROUPS' MATERIAL RESOURCES

All of the national GI groups consist of numerous local and regional subcultural groupuscules, which carry out activities independently of each other, employing social movement protest repertoires, and consisting of members in the ages 15-30⁹¹. The GI groups are all structured like most other subcultural groupuscules, namely in concentric circles, with an inner circle consisting of the leadership (or elite), surrounded by the activists, then the supporters, and finally, the sympathisers (Hentges et al. 2014). Even though it is very difficult to establish the exact number of members, due to their rather secretive inner workings, plus their own exaggerated figures, none of the local or national groups has substantial active memberships (Bruns et al. 2017). The figures vary from national group to group, and so do their material resources and levels of activism.

Hence, *Generation Identity* is not a large organization in terms of actual active membership, neither in any of the countries where it is present, nor all of them combined. The four largest GI groups, *GI France*, *GI Austria*, *GI Germany*, and *GI Italy*, all have around 100-600 core members. Their biggest local groups are found in the larger (student) cities (see map of the local groups, Chapter 6) where they have created political and social centres, largely inspired by the Italian *CasaPound*

⁹¹ The four GI characteristics of youth, activism, pop culture, and their 'corporate identity' make the GI groups rather unique in relation to other New Right organizations in Europe, which have historically "had the image of an old boys' club" (Bruns et al. 2017: 68).

movement. *GI France* built on the pre-existing structures created by BI (such as e.g. the *GI Nice* chapter, which Phillippe Vardon founded in 2002. This was later to become one of the most active *GI France* regional groups (called *Nissa Rebela*) (see Speit 2018 for more). Conversely, *GI Austria* cooperated rather closely with different *Burschenschaften* initially, and took advantage of their available resources until the group had amassed sufficient funds to start establishing its own structures (Glösel 2019)⁹². Their reliance on previous structures partly explains how the two groups have become the most resource-strong GI groups.

The groups are all rather resourceful in terms of their *human* resources. Most of the core members of GI in France, Germany, Austria, Italy, and the Czech Republic have higher educations, while they mainly recruit the basic activists amongst pupils, apprentices, and students (Bruns et al. 2017: 68). The groups place a strong emphasis on their branding strategy, which is highly professional, entailing an expertise for online and offline media-communication (see more on the online activism below). However, at the same time, due to their young ages, hardly any of the activists have much experience with lobbying and other types of political negotiation.

Financial Resources

There is very limited knowledge about the different GI groups' financial resources, but the reliance on few members and the employment of mainly smaller-scale protest tactics indicate rather limited funds. The little available information points toward a heavy reliance on funding from their own members. All of the GI groups make use of online crowd funding and other technological means to gather financial resources (in the shape of membership fees and donations, as they do not receive any public funds). Moreover, research on the German and Austrian GI groups reveals that both are registered as 'associations/clubs' (and may thus ask for membership payment) (Glösel 2019). The Austrian group is the best organised and resource strong of the two and most of its funding comes from three sources, namely: membership fees, crowd funding, and merchandise sales (Quent and Fuchs as cited in Röhlig 2019). Phalanx Europa, a company set up in 2013 by the two GI Austria activists Martin Sellner and Patrick Lenart (Eckes 2016), mainly produce the merchandise, and *GI France*, *GI Austria*, and *GI Germany* have online GI merchandise webshops (Glösel 2019).

Hence, by 2015, the Austrian and French GI groups were by far the most resourceful, while both *GI Czech Republic* and *GI Italy* have been struggling to amass both recruits and financial means (Interview with GI Czech Republic 2018; Bruns et al. 2017). *GI Germany* is found somewhere in between these groups in terms of material resources.

⁹² The first 'centre' was in Linz, and is named 'Khevenhüller Zentrum'. It has the same address as the 'Burschenschaft Arminia Czernowitz' (Glösel 2019). Moreover, *GI Austria* employs an FPÖ-member's apartment in Graz as the address for their association (Wiener Zeitung 2019).

Table 5.2: The GI groups' material resources and membership figures.

(Estimates)	Material resources	Membership figures
GI France	Limited (but strongest of the 8 GI groups)	1000 (Speit 2018)
GI Austria	Limited (but strongest of the 8 GI groups)	300 (Seiser & Lindorfer 2019)
GI Germany	Limited ⁹³	400-500 (Häusler as cited in Naumann 2017)
GI Italy	Limited	150 (Bruns et al. 2017)
GI Czech Republic	Limited	Est. 20-50
GI Slovenia	Limited	Est. 20-50
GI Hungary	Limited	Est. 20-50
GI Switzerland	Limited	No data found

SYMBOLIC RESOURCES: STYLES AND FRAMES

Symbols, Style, and 'Collective Differentiation' (Rituals, clothing, etc.)

The GI groups have gone to great length to dissociate themselves from neo-Nazi and other extreme right organizations. This is visible, for example, in their assertion of being about “100% Identity, 0% racism” (GI Austria/Germany n.d.). Moreover, the activists' attire holds no resemblance to more ‘traditional’, and highly stigmatized, extreme right outfits, such as those worn by skinheads. Instead, the media often referred to the GI activists as ‘hipsters of the right’ (Somaskanda 2017) or *Ibsters*, in the German-speaking context (‘Ib-’ referring to ‘Identitäre Bewegung’). They are thus smartly dressed, sporty, and “healthy looking” (Interview with GI Italy 2017), and look like most other young people in their respective countries in an attempt to underline the ‘normalcy’ of their attitudes and viewpoints, and thus, attract support. *If* the activists wear any GI-symbols, then they are mainly in the form of t-shirts with GI's logo (depicting the Greek lambda symbol) or slogans (Eckes 2016).

The GI Group's Main Collective Action Frames⁹⁴

The following section outlines the shared worldview of the GI activists. Despite certain smaller differences, the European groups all voice the same main collective action frames, which will be outlined below (Chapter 8 explains how they reached such similar conclusions). In order to understand the GI leaders' construction of

⁹³ With the creation of *EinProzent* in 2016, the German GI network's funding has considerably increased (Röhlig 2019), but not to the same levels as the Austrian and French groups.

⁹⁴ This section largely draws on my forthcoming book chapter ‘The Transnational Mobilization of Generation Identity’. In: A. Hellström, O.C. Norocel & M.B. Jørgensen (Eds.), *Hope and Nostalgia at the Intersection between Culture and Welfare*. Springer.

collective action frames, one must first unravel their perception of ‘identity,’ the key term for the groups. They all see their identity and culture as consisting of three interdependent layers: the regional (bodily-generative or fleshly (French: *charnelle*)), national (historical), and European (civilizational) (BI as cited in Jarassé 2012), and particularly highlight rural traditions and idyll in their writings (Weiß 2017: 94). The activists employ the image of a matrioshka to explain this three-tiered view. You can therefore not be German without also being e.g. Bavarian and European, meaning that a mere citizenship of a European country does not make you truly European (Robert as cited in Ibid: 105). This infers that all GI groups understand identity as ethnocultural and organic, as culture and identity are considered static, essentialist, and nativist (Mense 2017). Moreover, employing this three-tiered identity construction also involves a distancing from the ‘ideology’ of nationalism, which is discarded, together with liberalism and Marxism (Sellner 2017a).

The GI groups’ opposition to immigration is based in an ethnopluralist conception of society. In *GI France*’s first video statement, the group announced that: “We are the generation of ethnic fracture, of the total failure of integration, the generation of forced crossbreeding” (Morgan 2013: 9). This quote argues along the lines of Huntington (1993), and refers to the fact that the GI groupuscules consider the world’s different civilisations too distinct to live side by side peacefully, and they are instead destined to wage war against each other. In terms of diagnostic frames, then, this ethnic distinction mainly targets one particular ‘other’, namely Islam and its adherents, who are considered the greatest visible threat currently facing the identity and culture of Europe’s autochthonous population. One can largely divide this threat perception into four distinct types, namely a cultural, demographic, economic, and security threat.

Unsurprisingly, all the GI groups mainly voice a *cultural threat* frame, as they fear the erosion of a culturally and biologically based European identity through Muslim immigration and alleged ‘Islamization’. They thus believe that the communitarian and homogenous “we” is in danger of disappearing through the mass-immigration of civilizational “others”. This is visible, for instance, in *GI Germany*’s constant referencing to statistics on the ratio of Muslim immigrants in certain districts and the groups’ opposition to the introduction of Sharia legislation and building of mosques and Islamic centres (see Ch. 6 on Collective Action). Moreover, the GI activists see no possibility for successful integration, as “A multicultural society in the long run is completely impossible to implement. Integration does not exist; it would mean giving up identity” (Fiato from GI Italy as cited in Palladino 2018a)⁹⁵.

⁹⁵ This relates to GI’s general argument that it is not the third-country migrants’ fault that they are not able to integrate. Instead, GI considers it natural that the incompatibility between a migrant’s cultural background and the one s/he is faced with in the hosting society will lead to confusion and resentment in the mind of the immigrant.

The *demographic threat* frame closely interlinks with the cultural threat outlined above revolves around the conviction that Europe is currently undergoing a ‘*Great Replacement*’. Adopting Renaud Camus’⁹⁶ concept, the GI groups argue that the European autochthonous population is gradually being “repressed and replaced” by non-European immigrants, due to the combination of falling birth rates and the “growth of Islamic parallel societies and mass-immigration” (GI Germany n.d.a). Particularly in Western Europe, GI activists fear becoming minorities in their own country within a few decades, leaving them with the sentiment of ‘feeling like strangers in our own country’ (Janzen 2013), and even becoming “the Indians of Europe”⁹⁷ (Morgan 2013: 33). In reference to Eastern Europe, activists argue that once the West is “full”, the East will follow (Hucek 2014).

Considering the *economic threat*, GI employs the welfare chauvinist frames shared by many radical right parties (see e.g. Lazaridis et al. 2016). It considers third-country immigrants detrimental to the European social systems (Morgan 2013). This framing is often employed together with their direct social actions, which aim at improving the situations for vulnerable autochthonous citizens (see more on these actions below).

Finally, the *security threat* diagnostic frame is based on the ethnopluralist premise that culturally distinct people cannot live in the same geographical place without this leading to ethnic strife, conflicts, and violence (instigated by the non-autochthonous residents). For instance, since 2012, *GI France* has carried out several campaigns against criminal immigrants (so-called “riff-raff”), who they accuse of acting violently against the autochthonous population. *GI Austria* and *GI Italy* have conducted similar actions. Moreover, with ISIS’ announcement of the Caliphate in 2014, which led to a surge in Islamist terrorist attacks in Europe, the GI groups also increasingly began mobilizing around anti-terrorist frames (see Ch. 6 for more).

The GI groups’ over-arching diagnostic frame is thus that *Muslim mass-immigration poses a threat to the European autochthonous population*. While there are, of course, certain differences between the frames of the various GI groups, all the frames are intrinsically linked, and at their core, they lead to the same conclusion (i.e. prognosis). Due to the existential threat posed by Muslim immigrants to the European

⁹⁶ The French author published the book *Le Changement de peuple* in 2013, outlining the ongoing ‘phenomenon’ of a Great Replacement in Europe. The main claim is that globalization’s acculturation of the autochthonous European population has made the people replaceable and “stripped of all national, ethnic and cultural specificity”, thus leaving it currently undergoing a gradual replacement by Muslim immigrants.

⁹⁷ This refusal of Islam based on ‘colonization’ fears has, in fact, been an important component of the overall Identitarian Movement since the late 1990s-early 2000s. It springs from the book by Guillaume Faye, ‘La Colonisation de l’Europe - Discours vrai sur l’immigration et l’Islam’ (English title: ‘The Colonisation of Europe’), which was published in 2000. In the book, Faye calls for the defence of the ‘white world’ against the threat of an ‘invasion’ of Muslim ‘colonising’ immigrants (Dlouhý 2016b).

autochthonous population, there should be no Muslims in Europe. This entails two main prognoses: to close both the internal and external EU borders and to begin a process of ‘remigration’. The so-called “remigration” of third-country immigrants is a term GI has adopted from BI, referring to the (forced) returning of third-country immigrants to their home countries. As argued by Aftenberger (2017), this is merely a rewriting of the neo-Nazi calls for “Foreigners out” (*Ausländer raus*). The ultimate aim with these exclusionary diagnoses is to establish a future return to an imagined past, where Europe consisted of ethnically homogenous communities all belonging to the European cultural sphere. As Willinger states in his GI Manifesto: “We are the rightful heirs to this continent, and we will not give up our inheritance” (2013: 38).

Yet, while the Muslim ‘other’ is diagnosed as the greatest *immediate* threat to GI, it is, in reality, the political liberalist and ‘cultural Marxist’ elites who are blamed for the occurrences, and are considered the absolute enemy (Weiß 2017: 218)⁹⁸. Hence, the aforementioned static understanding of identity is expressed through the rejection of Universalist and egalitarian principles introduced in Europe in the aftermath of the French Revolution and their proponents (Winkler 2017). The groupuscules argue that the European population is currently experiencing an existential crisis due to the influences of modernity and globalization (particularly Americanization) and the therefrom-ensuing individualisation of society (Willinger 2013). This is leading to the current societal decay and an acculturation of the autochthonous population, replaced by multiculturalist and liberalist values (Eckes 2016; François as cited in Devecchio 2012; Weiß 2017). As *GI France* states in their ‘Declaration of War’: “We stopped believing that Kader could be our brother, the planet our village and humanity our family” (Génération Identitaire 2013a)⁹⁹.

Particularly the 1968 generation is strongly castigated for its ‘soft’ political stances, which have allowed society to come close to falling apart. One clear example is the breakdown of the traditional family structures. All the GI groups across Europe deplore the promotion of LGBTQ, gender policies, and other similar measures, which

⁹⁸ See Ch.8 of Weiß 2017 for a more substantial explanation of this argument.

⁹⁹ Similarly, at the ‘European Identity’ conference in Austria in April 2015, Adam Bercik from *GI Czech Republic* expressed that: “We are not only exposed to external dangers, but the roots of our civilization itself have also been attacked from within for decades. We can call them liberals, neo-Marxists, cultural Marxists, Frankfurt School, Generation 68, or otherwise - it does not matter. It is those who, in line with Gramsci’s strategy of the long march, occupy the important places in all areas of life, whether in politics, education or economics. They apply the principle of cultural hegemony to taunt and destroy all traditional values. They speak of multiculturalism, but their ultimate goal is not conservation of natural differences, but mixing which will create a homogeneous mass of mindless consumers. In the name of universal equality, they destroy the natural order” (GI Germany 2015a, author’s translation).

further decrease the autochthonous demographics (see e.g. *GI France* (Novopress 2014; *GI Czech Republic* 2017c).

GI also blames the cultural ‘take-over’ on the deplorable state of the Europeans’ self-image, which must be re-boosted. This is especially a concern for the German and Austrian groups due to the Nazi history. Thus, they both use the slogan ‘Love for your own people’ (‘Liebe zum eigenen’) to prod the pride in the national heritage and thereby prevent the (alleged) ‘self-abolition’. *GI France* also insists on re-establishing that the autochthonous French (i.e. ‘le français de souche’) are ‘masters in our own house’ (‘maîtres chez nous’), by insisting on “our determination to continue living on our land according to our laws, our values, in the respect of our identity” (*GI France* FB-post, author’s translation¹⁰⁰). *GI Germany* similarly states, “We want patriotism to become a social leading value, and a true freedom of expression, which also allows our substantive positions a legitimate space of articulation” (*GI Germany* n.d.c). This ambition of both a national and a European reconquista (reclaiming) of the ‘patriotic hegemony’ should take place at the metapolitical level as a counter-measure to the liberal zeitgeist (*Ibid.*) (see more on this below).

View on ‘Europe’ and the EU

Due to their conception of ‘European identity’ as referring to people adhering to the same civilizational culture, the GI groups perceive of Europeans as making up a ‘community of fate’ or ‘destiny’ (Bruns et al. 2017). Yet, as the various European regions correspond spatially to the ‘ancestral peoples’ (Eckes 2016), the GI groups prefer European cooperation organized around a ‘Europe of Nations,’ or of a European network of federally organized regions.

They therefore object to the moves toward a ‘closer Union’ in terms of sovereignty losses but also to the technocratic and bureaucratic nature of the EU (see e.g. Novopress 2012). Yet, particularly the Western European GI groups do not generally devote much attention to the EU and its policies in their texts. Moreover, the individual GI activists do not have a completely unitary stance on the EU as such, neither across the national GI groups, nor within them (Interview with *GI Germany* 2017). As the spokesperson of *GI Germany* elaborated, the lacking focus on the EU is mainly due to the GI groups’ perception that there are several more urgent societal issues, which need to be dealt with, before they can consider the EU (Interview with *GI Germany* 2017; see also Zúquete 2018). *Fiato* from *GI Italy* similarly stated: “[...] our movement does not have a main point regarding the European Union. [...] This is not something we are talking about. We are acting on [...] mass immigration and

¹⁰⁰ As mentioned in the Methodological Framework, the contents of the Facebook posts are available upon request.

things related to this. [...] 90 per cent of our activities are on other issues [than the EU]" (Interview with GI Italy 2018).

Mobilization Aim: Reclaiming the Societal Hegemonic Discourse

The GI groups' ideological inspiration from the French New Right infers that they act as a groupuscular counter-culture at the meta-political level (Griffin 2003; see also Bar-On 2008). It is the groups' main ambition to circumvent the mainstream (pro-immigrant) discourse and the liberal ethos of European societies (see e.g. Zúquete 2018 for more)¹⁰¹. Most of their protests aim to undermine the liberal voices within European society, including the mainstream (both right- and left-wing) parties, and portraying Identitarianism as the sole answer to today's crises. The GI groups thus carry out many symbolic forms of protests, and they do not (in the first place) aim for policy changes at the national or European level, but rather work towards shifting the general societal discourse (Interview with GI Denmark 2018). Bódi Ábel, the leader of *GI Hungary*, explains the small numbers of GI activists with this ambition, as he states that it suffices to have few, well-prepared activists, in order to control the societal discourse (Bódi Ábel as cited in Tamás 2019).

Protest Repertoires: 'Spontaneous' Happenings as the Main Protest Tactic

Drawing heavily on the Italian neo-Fascist movement *CasaPound's* protest repertoires (see e.g. Bruns et al. 2017), and strongly inspired by left-wing extra-parliamentary mobilizations, such as *Greenpeace*¹⁰², the GI groups' main protest form involves non-violent agitprop campaigning, especially in the form of so-called 'spontaneous' happenings¹⁰³. These actions usually only involve 5-20 activists and aim at attracting media attention with a limited use of resources in both financial and activist terms (see e.g. Cahuzac and François 2013). This, however, also infers that the GI groups can "convey political messages without having to recur to

¹⁰¹ As *GI Germany* states, "To be sure, today we are in no direct military confrontation and yet, the zeitgeist of self-abolition is dominated by the ideology of multiculturalism. It is therefore primarily a struggle for ideas, concepts and political positions. As the Identitarian Movement, we want to recapture the social spaces of discourse that were previously dominated by a left-liberal hegemony" (GI Germany, nd).

¹⁰² Translating the left-wing repertoires "into a specific nationalist framework of interpretation" (Klare & Sturm 2016: 183), Martin Sellner has referred to GI as a 'patriotic Greenpeace', which acts as the "activist avant-garde of the silent critical mass" (Litschko 2016). Other GI activists argue similarly. Robert Timm, the leader of GI Berlin, has stated: "[W]e would be stupid, if we did not learn from the experiences of left-wing activism" (Ibid.). They also emphasize the need for acts of civil disobedience (Interview with GI Italy 2017) (see also Castelli Gattinara & Froio 2018; Cahuzac & François 2013 on the role of Bloc Identitaire for GI's protest strategies).

¹⁰³ This strategy was adopted from *Identitarian Bloc* whose founders had to come up with a non-violent alternative to their prior activities due to state repression (François 2018).

confrontational actions or physical violence” (Froio 2018). Moreover, the actions’ relatively short duration and ‘spontaneous’ nature, plus the fact that many of the banner-drops and symbolic actions take place during the night make them hard to suppress. In order to gain media attention, the protests often take place in clearly visible and/or symbolic places, such as on historical monuments, city squares, or tall central buildings. Moreover, as part of their strategy to circumvent the prevailing societal liberal hegemony, many of the actions of especially *GI Hungary*, *GI Slovenia*, *GI Germany* and *GI Austria* take place at their respective countries’ universities and often involve strong criticism of the educational system (see e.g. GI Germany 2015b). The actions also frequently include attention-grabbing props or stagings, like big banners and flares or controversial scenes (such as imitating ISIS terrorist attacks), or the occupation of buildings and roads. The majority of the protest actions are thus “artistically orchestrated performances” (Froio 2018), which “to an important extent” are “scripted and staged to maximize the chances of drawing media attention” (Koopmans & Olzak 2004: 204).

The GI groups strive toward expressing racist and exclusionary viewpoints in a more ‘modern packaging’ of action-oriented far right mobilization (Häusler as cited in Janzen 2013), with a strong focus on appearing moderate. Several of the GI activists have previously been associated with violent extreme right associations (see e.g. François 2018; see Ch. 8 for more on this), yet, now, the GI groups underline their non-violent nature. In this sense, GI finds “[t]he iPhone [...] mightier than the boot” (BBC News 2017). The motives behind this dismissal of violence as a protest strategy are numerous and include “the sterility of this path, the lack of manpower, the context of a peaceful society,” just as it is a matter of gaining legitimacy to the Identitarian combat promoted by the GI network (François 2018)¹⁰⁴. Moreover, this non-violent nature is also used as a means to differentiate themselves from their political opponents, especially *Antifa*, by pointing at the more violent proclivities of these activists (and of course downplaying, or not mentioning at all, violence perpetrated

¹⁰⁴ In the words of a leading member of the *Jungen Nationaldemokraten* (*Young Nationaldemocrats*): “Whether as an autonomous, strong movement in the large pre-political space, as a door opener to new youth areas or as a conduit for the modernizing nationalist groups. [...] The Identitarians are [...] an action form that can be used when JN or NPD flags are not appropriate” (as cited in DOEW 2014b).

by one or more GI activists) (see e.g. GI demonstration in Austria on June 10, 2016 (GI Germany 2016e))¹⁰⁵.

Hence, as an alternative, the GI groups across Europe frequently employ non-violent ‘intervention-provocation’ tactics (Camus & François 2011), which have the intention to trigger shock-effects. According to Sellner, who is considered the main movement entrepreneur and thus strategist for the German-speaking GI groups, these actions should act like “performance art” with the “aim to disrupt and influence the mainstream narrative by producing rapid fire images that the media will rebroadcast in outrage” (Sellner & Lichtmesz as cited in Barthélemy 2018). This involves, for example, the initial ‘hard-bass actions’ by *GI Austria* and *GI Germany*,¹⁰⁶ the banner-drops, etcetera.

Direct Social Actions as a Strategy to Influence the Societal Discourse

Many of the GI groups’ protest tactics can be classified as ‘direct social actions’ (see Bosi & Zamponi 2015; Froio & Castelli Gattinara 2016 on the Italian far right; Zúquete 2018 on the Identitarians). Drawing on “the idea of a self-changing society”, the activists aim to solve public problems without directly addressing the responsible authorities, but instead carry out actions themselves in order to resolve the issues (Bosi & Zamponi 2015: 371; Froio & Castelli Gattinara 2016). These actions derive from (neo-)fascist ideology, which draw on the “organic conception of the national community, the cult for action, the opposition to parliamentary democracy, and communitarianism” (Tarchi as cited in Ibid: 1044), making it a sort of ‘mystic duty’ for the activists to be solidaristic. For GI, these actions more specifically involve socio-economic issues,¹⁰⁷ and issues that combine the topics of immigration and law and order¹⁰⁸. They all aim at helping the autochthonous (national or European)

¹⁰⁵ Due to GI’s anti-pluralist conception of identity and democracy, several of the national and regional groups are monitored by the authorities in Germany and Austria (see e.g. ARD 2016; Thalhammer 2016), while certain French parties already called for the group’s abolition in 2012 (Canellas & Ponthus 2012). Several of the groups’ texts or protest actions have also been banned by the authorities/Facebook, etc., just as GI Slovenia and GI Hungary have had their webpages removed. Moreover, the majority of GI’s demonstrations in Austria and Germany are met with strong counter-demonstrations of left-wing civil societal coalitions and Antifa activists, also leading to physical attacks, both perpetrated by the counter-protesters and the GI activists (see e.g. GI Germany 2016e).

¹⁰⁶ This tactic was only employed in the first two years of their creation, i.e. 2012-2013. After this, the two national GI groups moderated their tactics.

¹⁰⁷ Such as giving food to the homeless or poor (e.g. GI France’s *Génération Solidaire* campaigns); collecting money for dog kennels, poor families and sick children (GI Czech); and providing warm clothes for the homeless (GI Germany and GI Austria), etcetera.

¹⁰⁸ E.g. ‘securing’ the neighbourhoods, metros and squares; occupying/blocking entrances to buildings for refugees, or roads/train tracks, where refugees travelled; and emergency actions (e.g. in relation to the Italian earthquake in 2016).

population, most frequently with the argument that the authorities' focus on helping the migrants or other minority groups leads to their neglect (Interview with GI Czech Republic 2018). In this way, they combine anti-establishment discourses with anti-immigration and solidarity expressions (see e.g. Froio & Castelli Gattinara 2016 for more on the far right and DSAs).

Hence, very similar to neo-fascist parties and organizations, such as *Golden Dawn* (Greece), *Hogar Social* (Spain) and *CasaPound* (Italy), certain of the national GI groups take the welfare-protectionist stance to a further extreme through their so-called "Generation Solidarity", or "Patriotic Solidarity" actions. They are based on the same claims as those of the radical right, namely that the migrants are offered better social benefits than the socially vulnerable autochthonous Europeans who are considered "left behind" by the national governments and civil society organizations. Yet, by adhering to a sort of "ethnicized socialism" (François 2009), GI frames these direct social actions as an instance of explicit anti-national racism (e.g. anti-French, anti-Italian), and carries out acts of resistance. Activists have, for instance, organized charity and assistance drives exclusively targeting "autochthonous" groups of socioeconomically vulnerable individuals.

Online Activism

GI's online activism is key to understanding the spread of their messages and their attempt to gain attention. According to Fabrice Robert, the leader of *The Identitarians* in France, it is the combination of street action and the internet, which allows the Identitarians "to bypass the media and break into the mainstream" (as cited in Barthélemy 2018). Unlike most other far right groupuscules, which tend to act 'under the radar', due to the contentious nature of their actions (Glösel as cited in Courtil 2017), GI very openly seeks media attention through their actions. To spread news about their events, and in an attempt to conjure a buzz around their protests (Bouron 2014), the young GI activists make strong use of social media. Drawing on marketing strategies, they cleverly frame and publicize their political statements through a professional medial staging strategy (see e.g. Castelli Gattinara & Froio 2018), also referred to as a 'guerilla media tactics' (Zúquete 2018). The different GI groups put particular emphasis on social media, communication (including rhetoric and the production of memes (see e.g. Bruns et al. 2017)), and protest training of all the activists, and generally display strong media- and communication-savviness.

They also demonstrate this professionalism during their protest actions. The GI activists, for instance, rely on professional camera operators, who aim at making the protests "symbolise power, strength and victory," by capturing the "masses and flags" (Biermann et al. 2017). In this way, they attempt to make "an image say more than a thousand words" (Interview with GI Denmark 2018), and 'inject' the concepts and images into the minds of people (Sellner as cited in Dusini & Panzenböck 2016) even though the actual protest action itself does not conjure much attention from passers-

by (Froio 2018). It thus becomes a means to appear larger than they actually are, and it allows for a “multiplication of militantism” (François 2018)¹⁰⁹. As most of the protest events are of a smaller nature, it is far from all of them that garner much mainstream media attention. Yet, the members’ awareness of social media strategy ensures the dissemination of information on various sites (until April 2018 especially on Facebook).

The above section has shown that whilst the national GI groups mainly consist of university-educated members, who have strong (online) media and communication skills, they all have limited material resources. Their aim of influencing the societal discourse rather than exercising political pressure means that their protest repertoires mainly take the form of direct social actions, often of a more confrontational nature. The groups’ worldview is mainly informed by new right literature, and entails a strong focus on ‘identity,’ understood organically, thus inferring a sense of the Europeans as belonging to a ‘community of fate,’ which stands in opposition to the EU’s visions.

5.3. FORTRESS EUROPE

The following section introduces the symbolic and material resources of the *extra-parliamentary actors* that joined *Fortress Europe* at its creation in January 2016 (i.e. *PEGIDA Germany*, *PEGIDA Austria*, *PEGIDA Netherlands*, *For Freedom* (ex-*PEGIDA DK*), *PEGIDA Bulgaria*¹¹⁰, *PEGIDA UK*, *NGO ISIS*, and *BPI*). *PEGIDA Germany* began demonstrating in October 2014 and *IVČRN* in December. Most of the other groups only became street-active either in January-February 2015 (*PEGIDA Austria* and *PEGIDA DK* (the later *For Freedom*)), or later still (*NGO ISIS* in June 2015; *PEGIDA Netherlands* in October¹¹¹; and *PEGIDA UK* in February 2016¹¹²).

Like the preceding section on the GI coalition, the text is divided into several sub-sections, starting with a consideration of the antecedents leading up to *PEGIDA*’s creation. This is followed by an analysis of the distinct FE-groups’ material and symbolic resources, plus their protest repertoires.

¹⁰⁹ François refers to this communication strategy as ‘Digital gramscism’. It aims at watering down and trivializing far right theses online in order to “make them acceptable to the public”, plus enhancing their legitimacy and getting a better ‘brand’ image (François 2018).

¹¹⁰ As stated in the Methodological Framework, it was not possible to find sufficient data on this group to include it in the analysis.

¹¹¹ Albeit after a failed attempt at setting up a Dutch *PEGIDA* group in January 2015 (HopeNotHate n.d.a.).

¹¹² This was also after a failed attempt in March 2015, which, after a successful mobilization in Newcastle, dissolved after a London demonstration, due to leadership infights (HopeNotHate n.d.b).

ANTECEDENT: THE EUROPEAN DEFENCE LEAGUE

In the late 1990s and 2000s, Germany witnessed a rise in street mobilization by groups expressing xenophobic sentiments toward Islam (Rucht 2018). This involved the *Pro-Movement*, which mobilized against ‘Islamization’ in the mid-2000s, particularly opposing the construction of mosques. Around the same time, the anti-Islam *English Defence League* (EDL) was experiencing rather great mobilization success in the UK, leading several European far right activists to adopt the EDL blueprint. Numerous national *Defence Leagues* thus appeared across the continent, all mobilizing against Islam and its adherents (see e.g. Meleagrou-Hitchens & Brun 2013). Yet, none of these offshoots amassed anywhere near as strong activist numbers as did EDL, despite the attempt to unite the groups under a *European Defence League* umbrella association in 2012. Nevertheless, most groups remained active at a smaller scale, mainly online (see e.g. HopeNotHate n.d.d).

In October 2014, a German mobilization inspired by the *English Defence League* saw the light of day, namely the so-called *Hooligans against Salafism* (*Hooligans gegen Salafismus, HoGeSa*), which was created by a “loosely organised network of right-wing soccer fans” (Virchow 2016a: 543). It assembled in the aftermath of a Kurdish demonstration in Hamburg in September 2014, where around 600 Kurdish protesters clashed with a group of Salafists (Buchanan 2014). A Dresden citizen, Lutz Bachmann, was similarly outraged by the occurrence of foreign ‘battles’ in his country, leading him to post a video suggesting that something should be done against this praise of violence on the streets of Dresden (see e.g. Vorländer et al. 2018). He set up a Facebook page and quickly obtained the support of a crowd of friends from the football fan milieu (Virchow 2016a) including an activist (Simon Däbritz) linked to the *German Defence League* (Popp & Wassermann 2015). The clashes between the Kurds and the Salafists thus provided a catalyst, leading to anti-Muslim demonstrations by both *HoGeSa*¹¹³ and *PEGIDA*, starting in October 2014. After the terrorist attack on *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2015, several *PEGIDA*-offshoots started protesting across Europe, many of which could be linked to the *Defence Leagues*.

Several European *Defence League* activists thus joined *PEGIDA* demonstrations. *English Defence League* activists took part in *PEGIDA UK*’s protests (HopeNotHate n.d.b), the *Dutch Defence League* joined *PEGIDA Netherlands* (Sterkenburg 2016), and activists from the *Danish Defence League* have participated in *For Freedom*’s

¹¹³ Aside from some smaller, regional protests, *HoGeSa* arranged three larger demonstrations, all aimed at countering various aspects of Islam, especially the so-called ‘Islamization’ of the West (see e.g. Virchow 2016a). The demonstrations took place in Cologne (October 26, 2014 with 4500 participants and heavy police clashes), in Hanover (November 15, 2014 with 3000 participants, and a strong police presence), and finally, in Cologne October 2015, on the one year anniversary of the first demonstration (Virchow 2016a). The Cologne protest attracted around 5000 participants from various extreme right groupings.

demonstrations (Na & Schwarz-Nielsen 2016). Moreover, *IVČRN* directly derives from the *Czech Defence League* (Mrva 2014), while the *Finnish Defence League* cooperates with *NGO ISIS* (NGO ISIS n.d.). This gives a very strong initial indication of the types of resources, frames, and mobilization styles of the various *PEGIDA* groups across Europe. The following section consider the groups further.

THE NATIONAL FE GROUPS' MATERIAL RESOURCES

As was the case for *GI France* and the other GI groups, most of the protest groups participating in *Fortress Europe* have used *PEGIDA Germany's* blueprint as the model for their organizations and protest repertoires (for more on this, see Ch. 9). The majority of these extra-parliamentary groups are thus protest groups. In fact, only the Estonian group *NGO ISIS* (abbreviation for *NGO International Stop Immigration/Islamisation Society*) did not organize its own demonstrations, but instead, joined demonstrations both in Estonia and abroad.

It is rather challenging to establish the groups' organizational features and financial resources, as they do not always provide extensive information about such aspects themselves. Hence, while it is evident that there was wide variation in the set ups of the *PEGIDA* groups around Europe, it is much harder to say much *concretely* about their compositions. Yet, we *do* know quite a lot about the organization of *PEGIDA Germany's* demonstrations. Initially, the demonstrations were organised by a team of 12 people (the so-called 'Orga-team') of whom only three had prior experience with political organization,¹¹⁴ while several did not have jobs, nor higher educations, and could not be deemed as 'professional' in the sense of experts in a field.

Most of the European *PEGIDA* groups' (official) leaderships consisted of 2-5 actors from the far right milieu, including a mix of activists from the *Stop Islamization of Europe* and the various *Defense Leagues*, and new actors on the scene (see e.g. Berntzen 2019). In terms of the various European *PEGIDA* groups, the examples of backgrounds include:

- Nicolai Sennels, *PEGIDA DK* (tpsychologist and candidate for the *Danish People's Party* before setting up *PEGIDA-DK* (then later *For Freedom*))
- Georg I. Nagel, *PEGIDA Austria* (member of *GI Austria* and writer for *Zur Zeit* (by *PEGIDA Austria* until February 2015) (Ajanovic et al. 2016))
- Ignaz Bearth, *PEGIDA Switzerland* (President of *Direct-Democratic Party Switzerland* (*Direktdemokratische Partei Schweiz*) (DPS), and ex-member

¹¹⁴ The Orga-team members derived from Bachmann's circle of friends, the 'party scene', and football supporters from Dresden (Bachmann as cited in Virchow 2016a: 544). As examples, Bachmann is a trained chef and founder of an advertisement agency, while Simon Däbritz is a former city council candidate of the German *Free Democratic Party* (*FDP*), and Thomas Tallacker is from the *Christian Democratic Union* (*CDU*).

of the extreme right party *Swiss Nationalist Party (National Orientierter Schweizer (Pnos))* (Zumach 2015))

- Tommy Robinson, *PEGIDA UK* (ex-leader of the *English Defence League*)
- Anne Marie Waters, *PEGIDA UK* (creator of *Sharia Watch UK* and *UKIP* member)
- Edwin Wagenveld, *PEGIDA Netherlands* (participant in *HoGeSa* demonstrations and linked to Dutch football hooligan scene (Bos 2016))
- Raffie Chohan, *PEGIDA Netherlands* (leader of the *Dutch Defence League*)

The national *PEGIDA* groups' inner circle of organizers thus mainly consisted of far right activists, who, broadly speaking, did not have strong professional backgrounds, and especially not regarding more issue-specific expertise around e.g. migration and integration policy. Moreover, some of the leaders' extreme right backgrounds also inferred lacking respectability among the public, leading to low attention numbers and strong medial criticism (see e.g. Hafez 2016 on *PEGIDA Austria*). Similarly, the Czech group *IVČRN (We do not Want Islam in the Czech Republic)* also did not have many resources or strong expertise (see e.g. Císař & Navrátil 2018; Prokupkova 2018a). Deriving from the *Czech Defence League* (Mrva 2014), it was led by the Czech biologist Martin Konvička. It consisted of a small group of leaders, plus numerous local groups, which organized protests and public talks. Aside from a few of the members, the organizers did not have much political experience.

Hence, in terms of human resources, none of the groups were particularly resourceful, neither in terms of numbers nor professionalism, except for a few of the members, who either had political party experience (like Jana Volfová from *BPI*) or professional communication (like Tatjana Festerling who has a background in PR).

Financial Resources

At the same time, none of the *PEGIDA* groups had strong financial resources as they were dependent on donations from their members (either collected at the demonstrations or online), or their own, personal funds (Interview with Wagenveld 2017; Interview with For Freedom 2017)¹¹⁵. The only exception to this was *IVČRN*. It united with other Czech anti-Islam activists in the summer of 2015 and created the political association *Blok proti Islamu (Blok Against Islam, BPI)*, which soon began cooperating with the Czech party *Dawn (Úsvit)*. This cooperation inferred that *BPI* had access to more financial resources due to *Dawn's* parliamentary seats, which included funds from the state.

¹¹⁵ *PEGIDA Germany* was registered as a company in the German Trade register in December 2014 (as *PEGIDA e.V.*, see Handelsregister n.d.) and attempted to become a charitable association in January 2015, inferring that donations to the protest group would be tax deductible (Speit 2015).

Table 5.3: The extra-parliamentary FE-groups' material resources.

Groups	Material Resources
PEGIDA Germany	Very limited
IVČRN	Very limited
Blok against Islam	Limited (but could draw on <i>Dawn's</i> funds after fall 2015)
PEGIDA Austria	Very limited
PEGIDA Netherlands	Very limited
NGO ISIS	Very limited
PEGIDA UK	Very limited
For Freedom	Very limited

SYMBOLIC RESOURCES: STYLES AND FRAMES

Symbols, Style, and 'Collective Differentiation' (Rituals, clothing, etc.)

Similar to the GI groups, the FE groups' activists look like 'regular' people, i.e. they do not wear any attire that clearly distinguishes them as far right activists of any kind. This aligns with their aim of appearing moderate and respectable and as being 'of the people' (see e.g. Aslanidis 2017). *PEGIDA's* logo underlines this sentiment, as it depicts a person who is symbolically throwing 'totalitarian' ideologies in the bin (including the swastika, the ISIS flag, and the logos of *Antifa*, and the *Kurdistan Workers' Party* (PKK)). Some of the German protesters also quickly started waving the black-red-yellow *Phillipus Cross* flag, which was created by a group plotting a coup against Hitler (Kellerhoff 2015), again as a symbolic rejection of Nazism. Conversely, *IVČRN* and *BPI's* logos show a crossed-out mosque and minaret (see *IVČRN* n.d.a), in this way clearly underlining their anti-Islam sentiments.

The Extra-Parliamentary FE-Members' Main Collective Action Frames

As its name indicates, *PEGIDA*, or the *Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident* (i.e. the Western world), consists of 'Patriotic Europeans,' who oppose the so-called 'Islamization' of Western Europe. While *PEGIDA Germany's* worldview goes beyond anti-Islam consternation, and in fact, covers a much broader anti-immigration agenda (Fano Fernandez as cited in Fielitz & Laloire 2016), most of the other *PEGIDA* groups, while largely adopting *PEGIDA Germany's* main frames, are single-issue, mobilizing against Islam and Muslim immigrants, combined with populist anti-establishment frames. As Berntzen and Weisskircher (2016) assert, at their core, all the *PEGIDA* groups propagate an end to Islam's influence on Europe (so-called 'Islamization'), and thereby draw on many of the same key mobilizing frames and symbols as the *Defence Leagues* and the general *Counter-Jihad Movement*

(see e.g. Berntzen 2018a; Lee 2016; Denes 2012). In other words, “[t]heir grievances mirror that of the contemporary anti-Islamic radical right movement with the external enemy being Islam and Muslims, while the internal enemy is the elite: politicians, the press, academia and human rights activists” (Berntzen & Sandberg as cited in Berntzen & Weisskircher 2016: 559). This populist framing is visible in *PEGIDA Germany’s* chant ‘We are the people’ (‘Wir sind das Volk’).

While the Czech *IVČRN* and the later *BPI* were not officially part of the *PEGIDA* network, they employ very similar frames, also largely drawing on the ideological output from actors within the *Counter-Jihad Movement*, such as Bill Warner. Thus, the group does not target any other immigrant group, nor hardly act on other, broader, societal issues. It mainly targets Muslims due to the (alleged) cultural incompatibility between Christian Europeans and Islam, and the later established *Blok against Islam* continued expressing this worldview (Císař & Navrátil 2018). Finally, the Estonian *NGO ISIS* was created in the summer of 2015 in response to the “the wave of forced migration” from African and Muslim countries during the ‘refugee crisis’ (Kirsberg 2018). It has the main aim of fighting immigration and ‘Islamism’ (Ibid.), utilising very similar collective action frames as the other FE-members.

If one looks more closely at the diagnostic frames employed by the various groups, they are very similar as those used by GI, and thus mainly evolve around a threat perception of ‘Islam’ mainly argued along cultural, security, and existential frames.

All the extra-parliamentary groups share the main diagnosis, namely that Islam poses a *cultural threat* to Europe due to its adherents’ alleged gradual ‘take-over’ of the continent. They therefore argue that Islam and so-called ‘Islamization’ threatens the European civilization and culture. *For Freedom*, for instance, opposes the “creeping Islamization of Denmark and the West” by “fundamental Islam” (see e.g. Eltard-Sørensen 2015). Especially *BPI*, *IVČRN*, *NGO ISIS*, and *PEGIDA UK* post numerous conspiracy theories on their websites and Facebook accounts, for instance about the ‘Phases of Islamization’ (BPI n.d.; see also Kirsberg 2016a about ISIS’ gradual take-over of the world) and videos predicting the end of Europe in 2050 replaced by a Muslim caliphate (Kirsberg 2015b). They mainly base this fear in the shared belief that the Western civilization is a homogenous and superior civilization, which should be protected against adherents of Islam (see also Berntzen 2018a). Robinson from *PEGIDA UK*, for example, expresses this through the claim that “The European heritage is the envy of the world” (Robinson as cited in 4freedoms 2015). Tania Groth from *For Freedom* instead argues it more nostalgically, calling for the need to “restore all that we have built and what has made the West the greatest, freest and fairest place

for humanity in all human history. We will turn back the clock and fight for the life that so many have died to create for us” (För Frihet 2016)¹¹⁶.

Despite the low number of Muslims in the Czech Republic and Estonia, both *IVČRN*, *BPI*, and *NGO ISIS* perceive the same great cultural threat in Islam, often drawing on Western European experiences and occurrences to underline the incompatibility and the pending problems. *IVČRN* (2014), for instance, argues that by allowing a few hundred Muslims to enter the country as refugees, more will come, as they then have a base to join. They consider this a problem, due to Islam’s disregard for other cultures, as seen in *IVČRN*’s motto “We like diversity, so we reject Islam” (*IVČRN* n.d.a.). Similarly, *NGO ISIS* holds that “Islam does not recognize European lifestyle, norms and local jurisdiction” (Kirsberg 2018). The shared viewpoint makes several groups develop the related diagnosis that multiculturalism does not work, as it is not deemed possible to integrate Muslims to the host societies (*PEGIDA Germany* (Festerling 2016a); *PEGIDA DK* (Winther 2015); *IVČRN* 2015a). Tommy Robinson even compares Muslims with the allegedly much better integrated Sikh community in the UK (Goldberg 2016), while both *IVČRN* and *PEGIDA Germany* called for the European reception of solely *Christian* refugees from Syria (*IVČRN* 2014d; *PEGIDA Germany* 2015b). It is thus the ultimate fear that the ‘mismatch’ between Islam and Western civilization will lead to the rupture of the European societal cohesion.

According to the groups, the ongoing ‘Islamization’ process is visible in several things. For instance, in the increase in Halal butchers (see e.g. *IVČRN*’s ‘Stop Halal’ campaign (*IVČRN* n.d.b.) or *PEGIDA Netherlands*’ protest actions against halal butchers (see e.g. *PEGIDA Netherlands* 2015), Muslim schools (see e.g. *IVČRN* 2014b), and mosques (*NGO ISIS* (Kirsberg 2015b); *PEGIDA Netherlands* (n.d.)). Moreover, the (possible) introduction of Sharia law and Islamic courts is deemed as particularly problematic (see e.g. Buchanan 2015 on *PEGIDA UK*; *IVČRN* 2014a), just as is the more general introduction of Muslim customs and traditions (e.g. *PEGIDA Germany* (Baron Bodissey 2014); *PEGIDA Netherlands* n.d.a). This mainly relates to the fact that many of the groups consider Islam less of a religion but more of an *ideology* in its own right (*PEGIDA UK* as cited in Dearden 2015a; *IVČRN* 2015b.). Some even go as far as referring to it as ‘fascist’ (e.g. *PEGIDA DK* as cited in Eltard-Sørensen 2015; *BPI* 2016b), and the Koran is frequently compared to Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*. These are all ideas, which were also widespread amongst the *Counter-Jihad* actors (see e.g. Meleagrou-Hitchens & Brun 2013), and which underline the great threat perception in terms of the pending ‘overtake’ of the European continent by Islam and its adherents.

¹¹⁶ Wagenveld similarly wishes to take the Netherlands back to its cultural state of the 1970-80s, so that it is “one’s own people, which counts, and one’s own traditions and culture, and with that also the return of the freedom of opinion, because this we have, and this is clearly evident in most areas, completely lost” (Interview with *PEGIDA Netherlands* 2017).

One of the most frequently employed means to express the incompatibility between Islam and Western culture is through the focus on the treatment of women in Islam, particularly regarding their subordination. This is for instance visible in the groups' focus on the Muslim veil and burka (see e.g. For Freedom 2015; PEGIDA Netherlands n.d.a; *PEGIDA Austria* (as cited in PEGIDA Graz FB-post); *PEGIDA Germany* (as cited in Baron Bodissey 2014) and IVČRN 2015j). These adoptions of more liberalist frames in order to protect both the autochthonous and the migrant women have recently been referred to as 'liberal Islamophobia' by the two scholars Mondon and Winter (2018). They find this type of Islamophobia to be "anchored in a pseudo-progressive discourse in the defence of the rule of law based on liberal equality, freedom and rights (e.g. liberal versions of freedom of speech, gender and sexual equality)" (2018: 62). Yet, instead, one should rather see it as the exploitation of feminist issues in anti-Islam campaigns in order to stigmatize Muslim men (see e.g. the literature on femo-nationalism, e.g. by Farris 2017). The ambivalence in terms of how to understand such defences of women's rights is further underlined by the fact that some of the groups otherwise strongly problematize gender policies (*PEGIDA Germany* for instance derogatively refer to it as 'Gender Wahn', i.e. 'gender craze', and *For Freedom's* spokesperson problematizes feminism (see e.g. För Frihet 2016).

Another oft-voiced diagnostic frame is the *security threat* posed by particularly male Muslim immigrants. It is argued around several aspects, but mainly in terms of a fear of possible rises in European terrorist attacks, plus the (allegedly) violent behaviour of Muslim immigrants and asylum seekers (see Ekman 2015). This particular threat perception was strongly voiced after the January 7, 2015, Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack in France but also prior to this. At *PEGIDA Germany's* first demonstration in October 2014, for instance, Däbritz stated online "We don't want terrorist, Islamist powers to fight their religious war on our streets. We are against IS, PKK, al-Qaida and all the others" (Popp & Wassermann 2015). Moreover, many of the protest groups also draw attention to the (allegedly) violent and sexually deviant nature of Muslim third-country immigrants, for instance, by pointing to growing crime rates (NGO ISIS Kirsberg 2015a; PEGIDA Germany 2015b; Robinson (as cited in Goldberg 2016)).

While some of the protest groups also underline the *demographic* threat posed by Islam by drawing on Camus' fear of a 'great replacement'. Festerling from *PEGIDA Germany* for instance used the term 'Umvolkung' or 'replacement' of the German population (see Vorländer et al. 2018: 18), i.e. the gradual overtaking of the European continent by Muslim immigrants, and thus, "essentially genocide" (Groth speech in Sweden in November 2015 (För Frihet n.d.)). Yet, this is not a generally oft-voiced frame. Similarly, both *NGO ISIS* and *IVČRN* (IVČRN May 2015) at times mention the *economic* threat posed by immigration in terms of the welfare burden and the potential rupture of the societal cohesion, but again, this is not a continuously raised concern.

However, the combination of the external cultural and security threats makes several of the groups' leaders express their perception of Islam as an *existential threat* and fear for the deteriorating states of their countries (see e.g. Wagensveld as cited in Feenstra 2016). For these actors, it becomes a question of the sheer *survival* of Western culture and European values (see e.g. Hafez 2014; Betz & Meret 2009 for more on this). Robinson, for example, states that resistance is required "for the future of our children" (Epoch Times 2015f; PEGIDA FB-Post). According to him, "Islam is the greatest threat our generation has to fight. In the past, every European people has had external threats to fight against. Now we have the enemy in our midst" (Dispatch International 2016a).

This frame is frequently aligned with the issue of illegal immigration, and the main prognosis is to stop immigration by curbing their rights in the nation-states and closing the open borders as a means to control whether, for instance, ISIS members arrive to the European continent (see e.g. IVČRN; BPI 2015a; PEGIDA Germany 2015b).

(Populist) Perceptions of the Liberal Elite

Aside from the groups' strong criticism of Islam and its adherents, they also oppose the liberal elites and proponents of left-wing politics. This is not so much based in a framing that discards the historical hegemonic influences of the political belief (as was the case for the *Generation Identity* groups), but more in its current treatment of the far right. Similarly as GI, several of the FE-groups thus oppose the influence of so-called 'cultural Marxists,' who are accused of being the main culprits for the multiculturalist attitudes prevalent in Europe today (see e.g. Jamin 2018 for an explanation of the term). The proponents of multiculturalism are considered blind to the ongoing changes to European societies, and instead, place too much emphasis on 'political correctness'. Groth from *For Freedom*, for instance, states that "2000 years of reason has been replaced by cultural Marxism and Islamic supremacy in the form of political correctness. Cultural Marxism and cultural relativism is anathema and lethal to our civilization" (För Frihet n.d.). The 'political correctness' witnessed in the lacking ability to discuss the integration problems freely, plus the moralizing by the left, is thus problematised as inhibiting the opportunity to freely discuss what is going on in Europe (see e.g. Festerling 2015a). Moreover, particularly *PEGIDA Germany* expresses a very strong anti-elitism, diagnosing the political leadership as 'Betrayers of the people' ('Volksverräter') due to their disregard for the (autochthonous) populations' concerns and general well-being (as cited in Skrobala 2015).

At the same time, other actors, such as the mainstream media, are also criticized, particularly when they report negatively about the groups (for instance when referring to them as being 'extreme' or 'racist' (see e.g. IVČRN (IVČRN (2015f)). Yet, they are also criticized for their more positive reporting of the 'refugee crisis,' while at the same time 'not listening to' the far right (see e.g. *PEGIDA Germany* and the 'Lügenpresse' (e.g. Skrobala 2015). The groups' leaders thus lament the ways they

are portrayed by mainstream media and political opponents, particularly *Antifa* and other far left activist groups, who, in their view, appear more concerned about targeting anti-Islam actors than actually questioning what goes on in the Muslim societies.

Views on 'Europe' and the EU

The EU does not play an important role in all FE-groups' argumentation. Yet, very similarly to most other European far right actors (see e.g. Vasilopoulou 2018; Mudde 2007; Brack 2015), they agree that the EU and its 'dictatorial' policy output infringes on the national sovereignty of the EU-member states (see e.g. PEGIDA Netherlands n.d.a; PEGIDA Germany 2015a (see also Epoch Times 2015a); IVČRN 2015d). Most of the groups also problematize the undemocratic and overly techno- and bureaucratic nature of the Union (Interview with PEGIDA Netherlands 2017; PEGIDA Germany as cited in Epoch Times 2015a). Aside from this, much of the critique revolves around an anti-establishment frame, just as some of the groups slander the EU for being run by a left-wing elite (see e.g. Kirsberg 2015c) and even make personal attacks, such as drawing attention to the alleged alcoholism of Jean-Claude Juncker (Festerling 2016c).

Instead, most of the groups call for a European cooperation akin to the *European Economic Community* (EEC) up until the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, which turned the cooperation into a 'Union,' and simultaneously, gradually increased the EU's supranational powers over the member states (Interview with PEGIDA Netherlands 2017). The cooperation should thus mainly involve trade policies, and each country should have the right to make its own, sovereign decisions. Yet, the groups are split in terms of whether or not their country should continue its membership of the EU or not. *PEGIDA Netherlands* calls for a so-called 'Dexit' (PEGIDA Netherlands n.d.a), just as does *PEGIDA Germany*, stating that it wishes to leave "the useless outfit that oppresses" all member states (PEGIDA Germany 2015b). Moreover, some of the Eastern European groups feel let down regarding the outcome of their EU accession in 2004, finding that this was not what they were promised (IVČRN 2015h; see also Caiani & Kluknavská 2017).

Protest Repertoires: Mainly Non-violent Demonstrations

Lutz Bachmann and his co-organizers arranged the first *PEGIDA* 'evening walk' ('Abendspaziergang') on October 20, 2014, in Dresden. This quickly turned into a weekly recurring event, taking place each Monday. It involves a march through the centre of Dresden, Saxony. The protesters did not employ violence, as proscribed by the organizers. Gradually, more rituals were added to the walk, such as a *PEGIDA* anthem, the singing of the national anthem, and holding up cell phones with the flashlights on in order to "enlighten" those at the top" (Virchow 2016a: 545). Rucht (2018) likens *PEGIDA*'s performance with those of other far right protests, having the

aim to present “a collective body, arranged as a densely packed crowd that epitomizes coherence, will, energy, determination and power” (2018: 233f). Vorländer and colleagues (2018) compare it with other (left-wing) protest movements, alluding to “The high emotionality, the confrontational air, the mode of putting one’s indignation on display, and the successful attempt to generate communicative power on prominent squares and streets.” This has all made *PEGIDA* “into a new style of protest movement, a right-wing populist movement of indignation” (2018: 198)¹¹⁷.

The other German and European *-IDAs* initially adapted the German protest repertoire to their local and domestic settings in an attempt to gather as strong crowds as their German predecessor. The protest groups thus organized broadly advertised still-standing rallies or processions (depending on whether they obtained the permit to walk through town centres or not (see e.g. Lowe 2016)), with the intention of including ‘normal people’ (Wagensveld as cited in *ibid.*), and in this way, amass enough people to pressure the decision-makers (Møller 2016). Despite the fact that many of the organizers derived from the more violence prone hooligans’ scene and the various European *Defence Leagues*, they insisted on non-violent protests in an attempt to appear more moderate, and thus respectable (Lowe 2016). *For Freedom*’s leader explains this aspect thusly:

We make a big point out of the fact that we walk peacefully [...]. We are ordinary people. We are not a bunch of hooligans, who feel like fighting. And if any hooligans or similar try to participate in the demonstrations, and I find out about this, then I expel them. [...] We simply cannot afford... Because the media are there all the time, and they have not been very nice towards us, one could say. (Interview with For Freedom 2017)

In order to ensure that this moderation is maintained, also in the face of provocations from counter-mobilizers, such as *Antifa* activists and other anti-racist coalitions, all groups place special emphasis on the maintenance of order and discipline during the demonstrations. This, for instance, involves the staunch rejection of National Socialism, the prohibition of alcohol and violence, and the request that the supporters follow the orders of the police (Rucht 2018). In this sense, they attempt to fulfil the old EDL slogan “not racist, not violent, just no longer silent” (Pilkington 2016). Nevertheless, at the same time, the vast majority of the speeches of *all* *PEGIDA* groups are delivered with a highly inflammatory language, and the boundaries

¹¹⁷ While Virchow (2016a) refers to *PEGIDA* as a ‘völkisch-nationalist movement’, Druxes (2016) instead refers to it as “an identitarian populist movement that shares the white nationalist beliefs of the New Right” (2016: 30), and Rucht (2018) names it a right-wing populist movement. This demonstrates the difficulty of determining the different *PEGIDA* groups’ exact ideological positions, particularly due to the turnover in speakers, and the various topics, they touch upon, etcetera.

between the radical and extreme right are continuously crossed, yet most often without stating anything that conflicts with the law (Rucht 2018).

The Czech *IVČRN* and *BPI* protest groups were also highly inspired by *PEGIDA Germany* in terms of their protest tactics (Prokupkova 2018b). *IVČRN* organized its first demonstration on December 18, 2014, but its protest tactics reached beyond demonstrations, mainly involving conventional action forms (see Ch. 7). The two people behind *NGO ISIS*, on the other hand, were mainly active online, but also participated in various demonstrations organized by other far right actors in Estonia, Finland, and Germany, aside from their political work for *EKRE*.

Online Activism

All of the protest groups had, and some still have, a rather strong online presence, especially on Facebook (see e.g. Berntzen & Weisskircher 2016). Yet, unlike the GI groups, the FE-groups did not construct and utilize the pages with high strategic communications ambitions or based on technological media-savviness (see e.g. Haller & Holt 2019). Instead, most groups mainly employ the online sphere for mobilization for, and advertisement of, upcoming events, yet, in a more low-key fashion than GI, and mainly directed towards the actual participants. There are thus not many accounts of how the events went, postings of press releases, and etcetera. This indicates a limited interest in mainstream media dissemination, which aligns with the anti-establishment frames expressed by most of the groups. According to Haller and Holt (2019), due to their general disbelief in mainstream media, “PEGIDA leaders [in Germany and in other countries] do not focus on mass media communication, for example by using press statements or organizing press conferences, but channel their communication with supporters and the general public exclusively through social media” (2019: 1668).

Notwithstanding, several of the protest groups are highly active on their social media platforms and websites, placing much emphasis on disseminating both political messages, such as news stories and derogatory memes, pictures, and cartoons about immigrants and other political opponents, plus information about upcoming protest actions and events. In this way, they attempt to garner support and influence public opinion via online sources together with their protest tactics. Many of the news stories derive from blogs and media portals created by other far right actors, just as news articles, which portray migrants and asylum seekers negatively, are frequently utilised to underline that ‘we said this all along’. As an example, *IVČRN* had both a very active website and Facebook page, where it mainly re-posted articles and blog posts from national, European, and American websites with the intention to “warn, inform, instruct people” about Islam (*IVČRN* 2015b). *NGO ISIS*, on the other hand, mainly posted blog entries about the current political situation across Europe crafted by Kirsberg himself.

The above section has shown that none of the extra-parliamentary FE members had strong material resources, in terms of neither absolute numbers, nor professionalism or expertise on their protest issues. In fact, only *PEGIDA Germany* drew huge crowds, and could potentially instigate protests in Brussels, but limited funding precludes such an occurrence. Moreover, the groups' far right anti-Islam worldview both involves a diffuse policy issue, but also a strong criticism of the EU as a political institution, and a preference for a much looser level of cooperation between the European states.

5.4. DISCUSSION: LIKELY EU-RELATIONS OF THE GI AND FE GROUPS

The introduction to the groups making up *Generation Identity* and *Fortress Europe* have revealed several features, which can help deduce their likely Europeanization strategies.

Material Resources: Limited for Both the GI and FE Groups

For one, it has been argued, and to a certain extent demonstrated, that none of the extra-parliamentary GI and FE groups have either the manpower, level of professionalization, or required financial means to set up offices at the EU institutions. At the same time, the subcultural and groupuscular GI groups, the various *PEGIDA* protest groups, *IVČRN*'s small core organizational team, and *NGO ISIS*' blog nature infer very informal and highly fragmented organizational forms, without high numbers of formal memberships, something that is also not conducive to the pursuit of insider strategies at the EU level. Hence, even though some of the GI groups (especially *GI France*, *GI Austria*, and *GI Germany*) have a rather professional, and to some extent, efficient media strategy, plus are very apt at political communication (see e.g. Castelli Gattinara & Froio 2018), they have neither the organizational capacity, nor the ideational interest, to take this professionalism to the EU-level.

Symbolic Resources: Mobilizing on Diffuse, Political, and Politicized Issues

Drawing on Islamophobic fears, the GI and FE groups deliver the same core message: the so-called 'Islamization' of Western societies and the religion's impact on the European culture, demography, society, and politics must be curtailed. They thus call for the maintenance of a culturally and ethnically homogenous autochthonous European civilization, whose culture is under threat by the Muslim 'other' (Hirsch-Hoefler & Mudde 2013). This mainly evolves around the perception that "Muslims are aggressively forcing their beliefs upon indigenous nations," for instance, through the introduction of Sharia law together with the fear that "Islam" will soon "become the dominant religion in Europe" (Madisson & Ventsel as cited in Kasekamp et al. 2018: 8). Moreover, the actors making up both coalitions employ anti-liberal and -establishment discursive appeals. In this way, they not only target Muslim immigrants and refugees but also the national and EU elites, who they blame for the problems

facing many EU Member States (see Ch. 6 and 7 for more on these blame attributions). The groups' mobilizing frames thus mainly evolve around opposition to Islam and third-country immigration, and these topics belong under the category of 'diffuse' interests (della Porta & Caiani 2009).

In addition, the frames consider a *political* campaign topic (Parks 2015), and thus, are most likely to lead to protest actions and other means of simultaneously addressing both the public and the decision-makers. This aligns with both the GI and FE groups' more overarching ambitions of swaying *public* opinion rather than directly influencing the political decision-makers through lobbying and other conventional means (such as is a frequent approach by interest groups, see e.g. Beyers 2004). The groups' strong distrust in established politics, which particularly the FE protest groups express, is also likely to make them refrain from seeking personal contacts to EU representatives, aside from potentially far right MEPs.

Additionally, the topic of immigration has become a 'hot topic' in European politics in recent decades, and as a policy issue, it involves intense political conflicts and divisions, making it highly *politicized* (see e.g. Grande et al. 2018). In this sense, both the GI groupuscules and the FE extra-parliamentary groups largely equate the actors, which made up the *transnational movements* according to Monforte's (2014) research. They mobilize employing strongly politicized frames, and they have no interest in political processes and deliberations, just as they are unlikely to meet resonance in the EU setting due to their aversive symbolic resources, both in terms of expression styles and content.

The GI and FE Groups' Negative Stances on the EU

As all the groups hold negative perceptions of the EU, which is founded in an opposition to its supranational powers, and to its (perceived) bureaucratic, inefficient, and elitist nature, it is highly unlikely that any of the groups will want to take their demands to the EU buildings. All the groups at least *state* that they are proponents of democracy, but mainly advocate more direct democratic means, i.e. a larger inclusion of the public in the decision-making process.

The EU's Negative Stance on the Far Right

At the same time, due to the GI and FE groups' anti-liberal and xenophobic viewpoints and statements, there is absolutely no expectation that the EU is willing to either fund, or accommodate the work of these far right extra-parliamentary actors. As Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union states,

The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are

common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail. (OJEU 2012)

These values clearly conflict with those expressed by both the GI and FE-groups. In fact, due to the European extreme right party group *Alliance of European National Movements*' (AENM) racist and undemocratic worldview, it is already highly controversial that the EP provides funding for this group of actors (see e.g. Taylor 2012). Moreover, unlike in most national European parliaments, the anti-immigration discourse of the radical right parties has still not become part of the dominant discourse within the EP. In fact, “[a]t the EU level a powerful coalition of institutional actors and human rights activists have spearheaded anti-racist legislation and successfully contributed to the diffusion of anti-racist concerns in all European institutions” (Fella & Ruzza 2013: 20)¹¹⁸. Thus, there are numerous examples of groups and legislative initiatives, which attempt to counter the rise of xenophobic and anti-immigrant behaviour and pan-European CSOs, which attempt to exercise influence, when the EP is deliberating legislation on migration rights (like the *European Network Against Racism (ENAR)* or the *European Network of Migrant Women (ENoMW)*¹¹⁹. Hence, GI’s centring of “white identity as the primary cause for organizing political, social, and cultural life” (Donovan et al. 2018) is highly unlikely to draw support from any EU actors, just as the essentialist portrayal of Islam by both coalition’s groups juxtapose the EU’s framework on human rights (see e.g. European Commission n.d.).

¹¹⁸ Particularly the European Commission and the EP’s (usual) promotion of liberal and more progressive values and policies makes it highly unlikely that extra-parliamentary actors, which express protectionism and hostility towards liberalism, democracy and third country immigration, will be permitted a voice within the institutions. This has already been plainly visible in terms of the populist radical right MEPs, against whom a cordon sanitaire was imposed by the other EP fractions, as the grand coalition (S&D and EPP) assures that the radical right MEPs do not become successful with their policy proposals (Startin 2010). Populist discourse is similarly met with great condemnation by the EU leaders (consider, for instance, the Commission President, Jean Claude Juncker, who has strongly admonished Eurosceptic populist parties (see e.g. Juncker’s State of the Union, 2016: Europe faces “galloping populism” (Ellyatt 2016), or the great criticism, which has been directed towards the Hungarian PM Victor Órban). Moreover, MEP activists have also created various groups against xenophobia and racism (e.g. EP Intergroups and the S&D group’s working group on extremism, populism, and xenophobia).

¹¹⁹ On the other hand, in their research on pro-migrant organizations and the EU, Giugni and Passy (2002) explain how the EU institutions’ own political agenda may also inhibit civil societal direct involvement in the EU institutions. They argue that the European Commission’s re-direction of focus on the EU’s external borders in the late 1990s-early 2000s meant that the EU doors ‘closed’ for pro-migrant organizations (Ibid.).

It can therefore be expected that the EU institutions impose a restraint on far right extra-parliamentary actors who are unlikely to be greeted with open arms by EU officials. The GI and FE leaders are thus unlikely to conceive EU access as a viable political and discursive opportunity. This assumption has already somewhat been affirmed by prior research, as “in the consultation of civil society during the EU constitutional process, a bias in favour of more ‘civilized’, moderate, often EU-sponsored civil society organizations has been noted” (Lombardo as cited in della Porta & Caiani 2009: 8). One should thus not expect that far right extra-parliamentary actors Europeanize through insider strategies at the EU-level.

Expected Europeanization Strategies

Returning to the framework introduced at the beginning of this chapter, and the analytical model introduced in the theoretical framework (see Figure 3.1), both the GI and FE extra-parliamentary groups lack the material resources to mobilize through insider strategies at the EU level. Moreover, their action repertoires and worldviews, i.e. their symbolic resources, do not align with the culture and ethos of the EU and its institutions, making any form of collective action at the EU institutions improbable, as the EU representatives are unlikely to respond to the actors’ demands.

Instead, the far right extra-parliamentary groups are expected to pursue more *transnational* avenues and *indirectly* target the EU institutions by attempts to influence the European public opinion (Monforte 2014). Together with their critical stance towards the EU, the politicized and diffuse nature of their mobilization issue, and their protest repertoires, they are more likely to form part of ‘transnational movements’ (Ibid.).

SECTION 1: EUROPEANIZATION OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

In order to situate the mobilization of the extra-parliamentary members of *Generation Identity* (GI) and *Fortress Europe* (FE) in the European context of the 2015-2017 period, this section shortly accounts for the political events regarding the ‘refugee crisis’ in Europe, with a particular focus on the EU-level. It first very briefly outlines the development of the European migration and asylum policies over time, and then consider the occurrences in the 2015-2017 period more specifically. This should aid in determining the European and national political and discursive opportunities to be employed in the ensuing two chapters as a means to explain the various GI and FE groups’ strategies and protest tactics in terms of collective action.

EU’S MIGRATION AND ASYLUM POLICIES: MAINLY MEMBER STATE COMPETENCIES

Throughout the history of the European Union, its competencies have steadily grown in practically all areas of politics, and it is currently the strongest international organization in terms of supranational powers. Yet, at the same time, the EU remains “a composite polity composed of semi-sovereign states, quasi-autonomous European institutions, and virtually represented citizens” (Imig & Tarrow 2001a: 16). Particularly, the *semi-sovereign* statehood, and the problems related to this for a supranational decision-making body, became abundantly clear during the 2015 ‘refugee crisis’. This will be explored further after a short introduction to the EU’s role in the member states’ (MS) third-country immigration and asylum policies.

The EU’s Migration Policy Regime: Supranational vs. National Competencies

As explained by Monforte (2014), migration and asylum policies have historically been a key public policy area for the creation of the nation-states, as these “policies” made the powerholders “able to exclude categories of people from individual, political and social rights and thus to define their territory as a homogeneous political space” (2014: 235). Hence, in the early phases of the European integration project, migration policy was exclusively a national matter (Monforte 2014).

Yet, in the early 1990s, the need for a joint response to the reception of refugees from the Balkans meant that the EU’s competences concerning third country immigration and asylum policy began growing significantly (Karamanidou 2015). The EU MS thus gradually began developing common norms on immigration and asylum (Monforte 2014), and the EU obtained more and more competences on the MS’ migration control and policies (Guiraudon 2010; Karamanidou 2015).

The EU policy output has thus developed steadily over the last three decades, going from intergovernmental cooperation on asylum policies to the introduction of Schengen in 1992 (as a means to control migration via VISA requirements), while the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1996 ensured that migration and asylum policies became an EU policy matter (Karamanidou 2015). The EU initially attempted to both introduce a human rights and a securitization approach (Boswell as cited in *Ibid.*). Yet, as the EU MS mainly considered free movement as a potential security risk, the focus of the 1990s was to *control* migration, rather than to concentrate on the integration of these new citizens and to curtail the rights of asylum seekers (Chabanet 2011). This *securitization* ambition, further exacerbated after 9/11, as European governments tightened their security policies, “often acting under the cloak of EU-level agreements” (Fella & Ruzza 2013: 3). The ambition led to the introduction of the *European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX)* in 2004, whose aim is to protect the EU MS’ external borders. The EU’s migration and asylum policy regime has thus been very much under the heading of the EU defending its external borders, leading to the development of a so-called ‘Fortress Europe’ (Geddes 2000).

Hence, as explained by Chabanet (2011) and Monforte (2014), from being an exclusive national matter up until the 1980s, migration policy has increasingly *Europeanized*, and the EU institutions now have many competences in the policy area. Yet, the migration policy’s further Europeanization continues to be dependent on the European Council, i.e. the EU MS’ ministers, while asylum legislation remains a matter of national sovereignty (Monforte 2014: 4). Thus, the determinant factors remain “the internal dynamics of the member states,” while it “for the most part escapes the influence of other EU institutions” (Chabanet 2011: 99). Immigration and asylum policies thus involve competence sharing between the EU MS and the EU institutions, but with most decision-making power placed at the member state level (Monforte 2014). Yet, of the two (migration and asylum policy), the EU *does* have a high level of competences in terms of EU MS’ asylum policies, as this does not directly relate to a country’s citizenship legislation (*Ibid.*).

The MS’ key decision-making power in this policy field vis-à-vis the EU became blatantly clear during the ‘refugee crisis’. Looking more closely at the occurrences at the EU-level during this period, the following section outlines the developments and key moments of contention in the period 2015-2017. This will lead to a consideration of the far rights’ opportunities for mobilization against the EU’s refugee policy.

EU Political Developments during the ‘Refugee Crisis’ (2015-2017)

The Syrian civil war drove thousands of Syrians to flee to Europe, leading to an exponential rise in refugee and migrant arrivals to Europe in the 2014-2015 period, arriving to Greece from Turkey, and to Italy from Libya (BBC 2016a). In April 2015, the first larger EU-level debates about the European reception of refugees took place after a migrant boat-accident in the Mediterranean (Kingsley 2015). The European Commission also began calling for joint EU responses, including “an emergency relocation mechanism” (European Commission 2015a). On April 20, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, presented the first proposal of refugee distribution quotas (Ibid.), leading the Commission to propose the first ‘quota scheme’ in May. Yet, despite support from larger EU MS like Germany and Italy, it failed as countries like Hungary, Slovakia, France and Spain opposed the idea (Traynor 2015a). The European Council was thus highly divided, inferring *a division in elite alignments* at the EU-level. As a compromise, the European Council decided on a *voluntary reallocation scheme* (i.e. *not* mandatory quotas) for 60,000 migrants on June 26, which were allocated at a Summit between the EU MS’ Interior Ministers in June (European Council 2015a).

In autumn 2015, the pressure on the EU’s external borders increased substantially, as thousands of refugees and immigrants from the MENA countries started arriving (BBC 2018). The national and European responses to this ‘long summer of migration’ (della Porta 2018) varied greatly. The EU’s influence capacities were diminished, and the national governments were instead decisive, especially after the Visegrad countries rejected the quota proposals. The period thus saw the re-construction of various national borders, first by Hungary (Dunai 2015), and then by other EU MS (see e.g. Mortimer 2015). The numbers of EU MS that increased the national border security only increased further after the German Chancellor Angela Merkel said the, by now, infamous words “Wir schaffen das” (“We can make it”) on August 31, effectively making the Dublin Agreement temporarily void (Bannas 2015), and thus leading to an unprecedented level of third-country immigration to and through Europe. Throughout September, more countries thus reinstated border controls.

Around the same time, on September 2, the, by now iconic, picture of Alan Kurdi, the drowned Syrian boy whose body washed ashore, circulated through the European media, leading to a more humanitarian media portrayal of the ‘refugee crisis’, in terms of its human toll and hardships (see e.g. Sajir & Aouragh 2019). This made the EU MS, led by Germany and France, try to instate new quota measures, but again the Visegrad countries refused, while Hungary even further restricted its migration policies (Traynor 2015b).

On September 9, the European Commission proposed new refugee allocation measures and called for the relocation of 120,000 refugees, again leading to strong Visegrad opposition¹²⁰ (Dominiczak et al. 2015). Indicating the increasingly polarized populations across Europe, on September 12, a huge pro-refugee ‘Day of Action’ took place across (mainly Western) Europe and in Australia, involving tens of thousands of people. They demanded more lenient national migration and asylum policies (BBC 2015b). Yet, on the same day, there were also numerous anti-immigration demonstrations and rallies in Warsaw, Prague and Bratislava (Ibid.).

At the September 22 Justice and Home Affairs Council Meeting, the Visegrad countries were overruled on the vote to relocate 120,000 refugees across Europe, and the EC wanted this decision to be mandatory for all EU MS (European Council 2015b). Moreover, after Slovenia announced a state of emergency due to the arrivals of too many migrants for it to handle, on October 25, an emergency Balkan Summit was held, where eleven EU Member States and three non-EU Member States agreed to ensure 100,000 more refugee centre spaces, plus the deployment of 400 police officers to Slovenia (Chrisafis 2015). Nevertheless, due to the exceeding pressure on its borders, on October 28th, Austria decided to build a fence on its Slovenian border, and the work began on November 4th (DW 2015b).

The period thus showed an EU that was under extreme pressure, both from the migratory numbers (more than a million migrants arrived ‘irregularly’ in 2015 (Euronews 2015)), but also politically. The European Commission and the main European Council countries thus had to balance the national calls for restrictions, while also finding viable Europe-wide solutions to the migration numbers. The competence-division was thus more and more in favour of the EU MS, which made increasingly unilateral decisions, whilst the EU and its leaders appeared insecure and indecisive.

The Paris terrorist attacks on November 13, 2015 (Bataclan) only further exacerbated the ‘crisis,’ as some of the Islamic State perpetrators had arrived in Europe amongst the migrants and refugees, while others were French and Belgian citizens¹²¹. The Cologne sexual attacks of January 1, 2016, only aggravated the situation, and the European far right parties were quick to take this as an opening discursive opportunity to target immigrants and refugees (see e.g. Yardley 2016).

¹²⁰ This was mainly voiced by Órban, who feared that the Commission’s plan would lead to the arrival of “tens of millions” of migrants (Dominiczak et al. 2015).

¹²¹ This led to the introduction of passport screenings for third-country immigrants and tourists, and the media revealed that *Euro-pol* did not know the geographical location of 3,000 Jihadists from its database (Holehouse 2015).

As the EU MS struggled to reach agreement about the best ways to allocate the refugees in Europe, and this was leading to quarrels between the various governments,¹²² the EU began looking towards Turkey for a possible solution. Due to the country's geographical position, it was a transit country for many refugees on their road to Europe, and the EU leaders wanted the country to prevent their further travel to the continent¹²³. Hence, with the increased pressure on the other Southern European MS, due to the closure of the 'Balkan Route' a few weeks prior, on March 18, the EU signed a deal with Turkey¹²⁴. The leaders agreed to speed up EU visa liberalization for Turks and to renew talks on Turkey joining the EU, if Turkey would stem the influx of migrants to the continent (European Council 2016).

Needing to come up with a new means to ease the asylum pressure and mend the problems in the Dublin Convention,¹²⁵ in addition to the lacking results of the original scheme, the European Commission suggested a 'fairness mechanism,' inferring that the wealthier and larger EU MS should take the largest share of the migrants (EP 2017). Yet, this was not fulfilled by the EU MS, and in early May 2016, the European Commission stated that it would begin substantially fining those countries that refused

¹²² After having instigated court proceedings against the EU's mandatory quotas in December 2015 together with Slovakia (DW 2015a), on February 24, Órban proclaimed that Hungary would hold a referendum about the EU's mandatory migrant quotas (Traynor 2016). This decision was strongly criticized by the European Commission and the European Parliament (Euronews 2016). In mid-February 2016, the Austrian government organized a mini-Summit with Western Balkan countries about the 'Balkan route'. Yet, as Greece had not been invited to the meeting, the country retracted its ambassador in Austria (DW 2016). On March 9, the Balkan countries restricted the migrant entry demands, leading Merkel to chastise the Balkan countries for putting further pressure on Greece (BBC 2016b). On the same day, Órban declared Hungary to be in a state of emergency due to the Balkan route's closure and further strengthened the border security enforcement (Sullivan 2016).

¹²³ The European Council had already backed an EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan in November 2015 (European Council 2016).

¹²⁴ It included that irregular migrants "not applying for asylum or whose application has been found unfounded or inadmissible in accordance with the said directive" entering Greece would be sent back to Turkey (European Council 2016). For each Syrian person returned to Turkey, another would be resettled in the EU.

¹²⁵ The Dublin Convention in its current state (as of 2003) was not apt to the current situation, as its provision that asylum applications should be made in the first country of entry did not envision a situation, in which all migrants largely entered in the same 3-4 EU MS. The European Parliament had already called for revisions in 2009 but these had not been made (EP 2017). In April 2016, the European Commission wrote the European Parliament and the European Council about "inherent weaknesses" in the Common European Asylum System and called for revisions of the Dublin Regulations, including better burden-sharing provisions, for instance a 'reference key' based on the national GDP and population sizes (European Commission 2016a).

to take in the allocated refugee numbers¹²⁶. The Visegrad countries' leaders found this "unacceptable" (Órban as cited in BBC 2016b), and the leader of the Polish *PiS* party, Jaroslaw Kasczynski, cited the terrorist threat as the main reason for opposing the quotas (Broomfield 2016).

In June, the British vote to leave the EU (the so-called 'Brexit') provided further problems for an already strained EU Commission and European Council, and underlined the EU's divisions between the EU MS. While no other MS decided to call for similar national referenda, numerous, mainly right wing, politicians across Europe voiced the idea (BBC 2016c).

At the European Council's Bratislava Summit in September 2016, Merkel announced the abandonment of the refugee quota mechanisms due to the staunch opposition expressed by the Eastern European EU MS (Mével 2016). Finally, in February 2017, the EU MS leaders agreed on the Malta Declaration, which increased cooperation with Libya, due to its role as a transit country towards Europe (BBC 2017), implementing a further limitation of migrants entering Europe.

2015-2017 PERIOD: EUROPEAN OPENINGS IN POS/DOS

After this brief description of the political occurrences at the EU-level during the 2015-2017 'refugee crisis', the following table shows the openings in the European POS and DOS in the period. As already argued in Chapter 5, one must assume closed political opportunities at the EU-level for far right actors, due to their specific policy stances and limited material resources. However, at the same time, the developments during the 'crisis' had Europe-wide effects, inferring potential openings at the European *discursive* level, just as the decisions by other EU MS could be utilized to exercise pressure on the groups' national governments (e.g. the members of the Visegrad countries).

¹²⁶ The money should then instead go to the main migrant recipient countries, such as Italy and Greece, which temporarily housed a lot of the migrants and refugees, due to border controls in the neighbouring countries (BBC 2016b).

Table S1.1: EU-events in 2015-2017 and effect on the far right's POS and DOS.

When	What	POS/DOS Effect
Jan 2015	Terrorist attack on <i>Charlie Hebdo</i> in Paris, France	Discursive openings at the national levels (public, media, and politicians condemning attacks)
Apr-May 2015	EC quota proposal ('No' by Hungary)	Divided European Council infers break in elite alignments (POS) → Domestic POS in some countries, due to national government's choice of either accepting or rejecting the EU quotas. Domestic DOS due to rise in saliency of refugee topic
Aug-Sept 2015	Border constructions and Visegrad 'no' to quotas, (but overruled)	Divided European Council infers break in elite alignments (POS) DOS more favourable at national levels, as several MS begin expressing opposition to EU demands and EU's incapacity of acting. Yet, refugees still portrayed positively in media and European public opinion largely favourable.
Nov 2015	Bataclan terrorist attack (France)	Elite condemnation and security concerns grow, leading to calls for further border restrictions. DOS more favourable at national levels

Jan 2016	Cologne sexual attacks → Merkel instating German border controls	National DOS, especially in Germany and Austria (media, politicians, and public)
Apr 2016	Renewed EU-attempt to introduce quotas, again Visegrad opposition	European Council divided (elite alignment divisions (POS)) DOS more favourable in most EU countries, as public opinion is turning against the refugees, and the media is also increasingly hostile
June 2016	Brexit	DOS more favourable for anti-EU mobilization, particularly in countries with Eurosceptic populations.
Sept 2016	Renewed EU-attempt at introducing quotas → Visegrad countries firmly reject the proposal	European Council divided (elite alignment divisions (POS))
Spring 2017	‘Refugee crisis’ debates begin to fade out, particularly after EU closes deal with Turkey.	DOS: More limited chance for resonance

THE DOMESTIC POS AND DOS IN GERMANY, FRANCE, THE NETHERLANDS, AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC IN 2015-2017

During the ‘crisis,’ the EU Member States’ domestic contexts all varied in terms of political and discursive opportunities. In the 2015-2017 period, all the European countries’ far right discursive opportunities opened as the ‘refugee crisis’ advanced, as both the media, the mainstream elites, and public opinion became increasingly hostile towards further third-country immigration and asylum seekers (see e.g. Consterdine 2018).

Moreover, Eurobarometer opinion polls also showed that the European public saw ‘immigration’ as one of the most important policy issues in the period (European Commission 2015b; 2016b), a development that had been visible for almost a decade already (see e.g. Stokes 2016). With the ‘crisis’ there was a further increase in the salience of the issue, just as the public sentiments were becoming more polarized.

From being initially sympathetic towards the refugees, the row of Islamist terrorist attacks that hit Europe in the 2015-2016 period strongly influenced the growing hostility¹²⁷. The European media and political debates regarding the refugees were particularly strong from spring 2015 to spring 2016, whereafter the EU's deal with Turkey meant that the issue gradually received less attention across all EU member states.

In terms of the four countries in focus here, the period saw a strengthening of the electoral results of their main radical right parties. Both *Alternative for Germany* (AfD), the French *Front National* (now *Rassemblement National*), the Dutch *Party for Freedom*, and the Czech *Freedom and Direct Democracy* (SPD) experienced strong public support and ensuing electoral results (all around 12-13% at the national elections) (BBC 2019b). Like most other Western European countries, Germany, France, and the Netherlands have all been experiencing a mainstreaming of far right discourse within the 2000s (see e.g. Kallis 2013; Joon Han 2015), and anti-immigration policies are high on the national political agendas, just as 'immigration' is deemed an important issue for the general public. At the same time, the Czech population expressed strong Islamophobic sentiments, despite the low number of Muslims in the country (Císař & Navrátil 2018). This infers rather open discursive opportunities in all four EU MS, due to the salience of immigration and the debates about the role of Islam in the respective countries.

Yet, conversely, it was only the Czech and French groups, which had (near) open political opportunities. Oppositely, the history of Nazism (especially for the German and the Dutch groups), and the strong role of the domestic far right *parties* (especially in the Dutch case), inferred closed opportunities (see more in Appendix C). Table S1.2 below shows the expected mobilization strategies for the far right in Germany, France, the Netherlands, and the Czech Republic respectively. They will be used to examine the protest developments of *GI Germany*, *PEGIDA Germany*, *IVČRN/BPI*, *GI Czech Republic*, *PEGIDA Netherlands*, and *GI France* in the following two chapters.

¹²⁷ The terrorist attacks for instance involved the attacks on 'Charlie Hebdo' (January 2015); on Bataclan (November 2015); Brussels (March 2016); Nice (Bastille Day, July 2016); Rouen and various German attacks (Summer 2016) and Berlin Christmas Market (December 2016).

Table S1.2: Expected far right strategies in DE, FR, NL, and CZ in 2015-2017.

	Domestic level	European level	Expected actions
Germany	(Near) Closed POS Open DOS	Closed POS at EU-level Open discursive opportunities at transnational European level	Domestic protests, likely of a more disruptive nature (Political elite adopts demands that accord with dominant ideas, while excluding or suppressing actor)
France	(Near) Open POS Open DOS	Closed POS at EU-level Open discursive opportunities at transnational European level	Domestic protests, targeting government (which fully responds)
Netherlands	(Near) Closed POS Open DOS	Closed POS at EU-level Open discursive opportunities at transnational European level	Domestic protests, likely of a more disruptive nature (Political elite adopts demands that accord with dominant ideas, while excluding or suppressing actor)
Czech Rep.	(Near) Open POS Open DOS	Closed POS at EU-level Open discursive opportunities at transnational European level	Domestic protests, targeting government (which fully responds)

(Based on Table 3.2 in Theoretical framework and Koopmans & Statham 1999a).

CHAPTER 6. GENERATION IDENTITY AND EUROPEANIZATION OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

The following chapter examines the *Generation Identity* (GI) groups' mobilization patterns and forms of action in the period 2015-2017. It investigates the Europeanization of the national groups' collective action, while also paying attention to the cross-national differences in protest strategies, and the role assigned to the EU and the European level for the coalition groups' street mobilization. In order to consider all of these facets, the chapter is divided into three main parts that explore the: 1) alignment of protest repertoires across the groups; 2) Europeanization of the protest 'scopes' (i.e. issue, targets, participants, and events) and the Europeanization forms; and 3) the role of the national contexts for this (potential) Europeanization.

The chapter first considers all the GI groups' protest repertoires in the 2015-2017 period,¹²⁸ introducing the groups' protest forms, tactics, and participant compositions, while evaluating the national GI groups' degree of alignment of protest frequencies, forms, and tactics. The following section explores the groups' collective action Europeanization with a focus on the scopes of the groups' issues, targets, participants, and events, and how these (potentially) changed as the 'refugee crisis' developed. The final part of the section considers the specific forms of Europeanization the groups made use of during the 'refugee crisis.' The third and last section explores the role of the national political and discursive opportunities for far right Europeanization by closely analyzing the protest actions of *GI France*, *GI Germany*, and *GI Czech Republic*. The three groups were chosen due to: i) their prominence in the GI coalition, especially in terms of protest frequency; and ii) the aims to include groups from both Western and Eastern Europe; and iii) to compare across the GI and FE groups. Finally, the conclusion sums up the findings. The chapter thus analyses the groups' domestic and transnational protest strategies, the role assigned to the EU, and make an initial assessment of the relationship between the groups, both in terms of protest alignment and transnational mobilization.

¹²⁸ The initial period of the GI-group formation (2012-2014) is thus not considered here. Yet, the data shows that it involved a comparatively low level of mobilization from all groups besides *GI France* and *GI Austria*. By 2015, *GI Germany*, *GI Italy*, and *GI Czech Republic* also increased their street presence, mainly due to the strengthening of their organisational cohesion (as discussed in Chapter 8). *GI Hungary* organised a few protest events since its creation in 2014, but only became truly active in 2016, together with *GI Slovenia*.

6.1. THE GI-GROUPS' PROTEST FORMS AND TACTICS: GROUP ALIGNMENT?

The protest data derives from the national GI groups' websites and Facebook pages, and consists of 682 protest and solidarity actions¹²⁹ from seven GI groups (*GI France*, *GI Germany*, *GI Czech Republic*, *GI Austria*, *GI Italy*, *GI Slovenia*, and *GI Hungary*¹³⁰), and events with participation by all GI groups (referred to as '*GI Europe*'). The data shows that none of the GI-groups' protests took place in front of or inside the EU-institutions in Brussels, as anticipated in Chapter 5.

Table 6.1 below shows that *GI Germany*, *GI France*, and *GI Austria* have organized the highest numbers of protests in the period. This is due to their comparatively longer existence, better material resources, stronger pre-existing networks, and higher numbers of local and regional groups in the respective countries¹³¹ (see Chapter 5).

Table 6.1: The national GI groups' number of protest events (2015-2017).

GI Group	Pct. (PEs)
GI Germany	32.7 (223)
GI France	22.3 (152)
GI Czech Republic	5.3 (36)
GI Austria	21.1 (144)
GI Italy	9.7 (66)
GI Hungary	5.6 (38)
GI Slovenia	1.9 (13)
GI Europe	1.5 (10)
Total	100.0 (682)

Note: N: 682. Pct (No. of protests).

The numbers also demonstrate the geographic scope of the New Right worldview and its dominance in France, Germany, Austria, and Italy (see e.g. Minkenberg 2000). The GI-groups' New Right worldview appears to have problems 'catching on' in Eastern

¹²⁹ 'Solidarity actions' refer to actions such as giving food to the homeless and gathering donations for less well-off segments of the population.

¹³⁰ At the end of 2017, *GI UK & Ireland*, *GI Denmark*, and *GI Poland* had only organized a few protests each, and they were thus not included in this analysis. At the same time, the Swiss and Belgian GI groups were hardly active offline except for the participation by some of their activists in the annual BI/GI Summer University in France and the transnational GI demonstrations in Germany and Austria (Bruns et al. 2017).

¹³¹ The finding correlates with those of other scholars, who also point to the comparatively higher activity levels of the French, German, and Austrian groups vis-à-vis the Eastern European and Italian GI-groups (see e.g. Bruns et al. 2017; Zúquete 2018).

Europe, affecting both the groups' levels of members and resources (Berlekamp & Opielka 2018; see also Ch. 8). *GI Hungary*, *GI Czech Republic*, and *GI Slovenia* are thus rather marginal in their domestic settings, due to, for one, their divergent far right viewpoints. Yet, another reason is also found in the already strong influence of far right discourses on the government in the countries, meaning that the extra-parliamentary far right is crowded out (Berlekamp & Opielka 2018).

Similarly, in the case of *GI Italy*, other far right extra-parliamentary groups already cover the New Right viewpoints expressed by the group, thus making it rather superfluous. Moreover, the extreme right *CasaPound* already more or less employs the same protest repertoire, just as *GI Italy* copies many of *CasaPound's* collective action frames, meaning that the political space for New Right mobilization is already filled. Moreover, as *GI Italy* is not explicitly fascist, it is also excluded from the Italian extreme right segment (Expert Interview with Castelli Gattinara 2019).

Conversely, *GI France* and *GI Austria* are not crowded out domestically, despite the strong roles of *FN* and *FPÖ*. This can be explained by the more symbiotic relationship between *FN* and the French New Right actors (see e.g. Gattinara 2018), just as *GI Austria* has managed to embed itself in the Austria far right scene, particularly by drawing on the *Burschenschaften's* resources, and obtaining the validation by *FPÖ* (see e.g. Ajanovic et al. 2016). In the German case, it was only in 2017 that a strong far right party, *AfD*, entered the Bundestag, and *GI Germany* could exploit the opportunities provided by the rise of *PEGIDA Germany* in late 2014 (see more below).

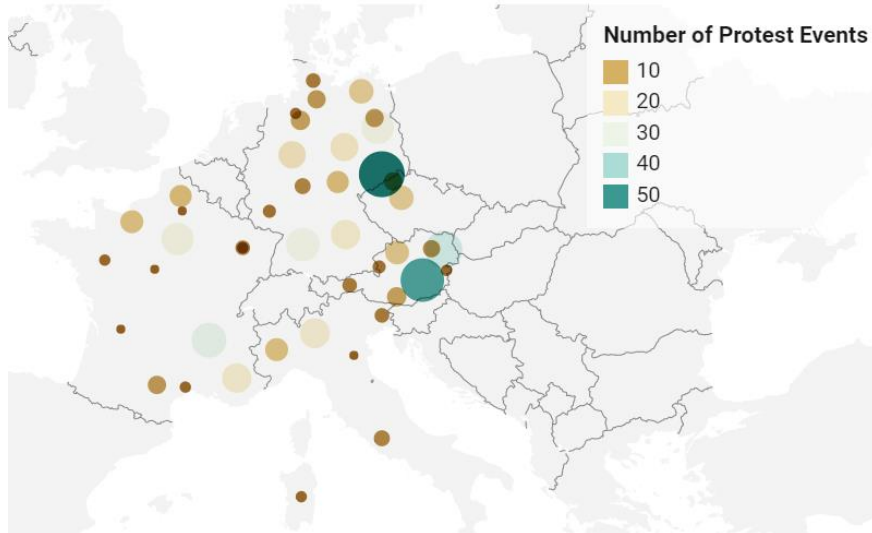
*Regional Dispersion of GI Protest Events*¹³²

If we consider the spread of protests across the different regions and cities of France, Germany, Austria, Italy, and the Czech Republic¹³³ (excluding press releases and protests organized by the *national* GI-groups), the following 'activity-map' emerges:

¹³² The overview of the regional GI groups' protest actions is based on the protest events mentioned on the websites and Facebook pages of the *national* GI groups. Thus, there may be a number of protests missing depending on whether or not they were reported by the national groups or not. Yet, the overview still gives a good indication of the dispersion of protests across the five countries.

¹³³ There were insufficient data for *GI Hungary* and *GI Slovenia* in terms of regional dispersion, but *GI Hungary* is mainly active in Budapest, where the group also was set up (Berlekamp & Opielka 2018), while *GI Slovenia* mainly mobilizes in Ljubljana, Maribor, and Velenje, the largest, second, and fifth largest Slovenian city respectively (Cirman & Vuković 2018).

Figure 6.1: Regional spread of GI protests (FR, DE, AT, IT, CZ) (2015-2017).



Note: N: 545. The figure was created with *Datawrapper* (<https://www.datawrapper.de/>).

The figure is highly revelatory in terms of the importance of the various groupuscules' material resources and partly their political opportunities, thus further accentuating the relevance of structural factors for the groups' mobilization. The map also reveals the somewhat 'skewed' regional activity levels, indicating the national groups' *actual* strengths in each country.

Due to the larger recruitment-potential, several of the most active groups are found in university-cities. In France, the most active groups are based in the three regions that house the oldest, largest, and most resourceful French GI groups, namely *GI Paris* ('Projet Apache' in Ile-de-France), *GI Lyon* ('Rebeyne' in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes) and *GI Nice* ('Nissa Rebella' in Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur) respectively (Speit 2018). Similarly, in Austria, GI groups in Steiermark and Vienna have carried out most of *GI Austria's* actions. Both regions house universities (in Vienna and Graz), and the student associations (including the *Burschenschaften*) thus provide GI with potential recruits (see e.g. Weidinger 2016).

In Germany, the better political and discursive opportunities in Eastern Germany explain the high number of protests in Saxony. Far right repression is more limited in the region, just as the rise of *PEGIDA Germany* provided more space for the far right here (see e.g. Häusler as cited in Naumann 2017). In Italy, the northern Lombardy region has the most active local GI groups, especially in Milan, as this is where the national GI group was created in 2012 (*GI Italy* n.d). It thus houses the best-established and member-strongest group, just as *Lega* derives from the region. Finally, in the Czech Republic, most GI protests take place in the western part of the country,

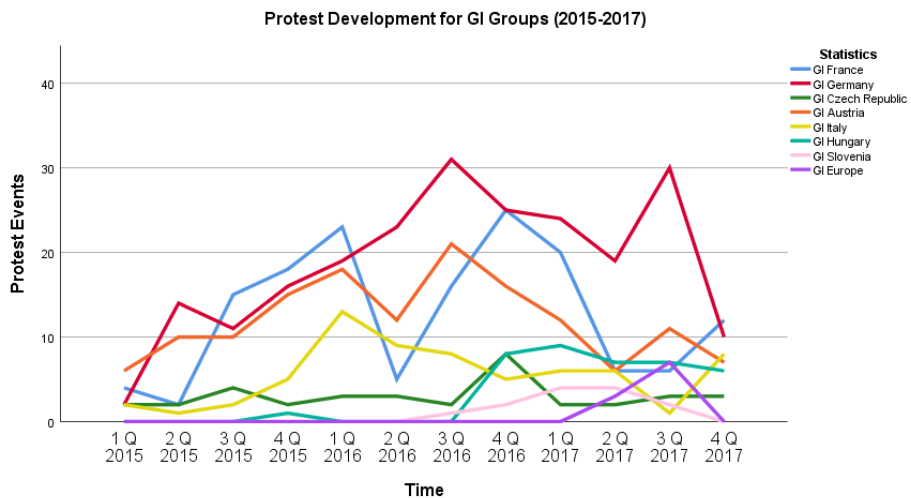
particularly in Prague, the capital, and in Ustí nad Labem, where the movement was created and where the leader, Bercik, resides (Dlouhý 2016a).

Thus, the map clearly shows the rather uneven distribution of GI actions across the regions in Germany, Austria, France, Italy, and the Czech Republic, underlining the role of material resources and the local groups' period of existence.

GI PROTEST FREQUENCIES OVER TIME

Figure 6.2 shows the seven national GI groups' protest frequency development from January 2015 to December 2017, including the joint protest actions in 2017 ('*GI Europe*').

Figure 6.2: The GI groups' protest frequency per quarter (2015-2017).



Note: N: 682. Cramer's V = .199*** (*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001).

The figure shows rather different protest developments for the various national GI groups in the 2015-2017 period, just as the individual groups' protest frequency differ over time ($V = .199$). While the years 2012-2014 are not included here, the data indicates that 2015 marked a steep rise in protests for *all* GI groups active at the time (except for *GI France*, whose action frequency has remained rather constant). The rise is mainly ascribable to the opening of especially the *discursive* opportunities across Europe in the period, largely due to the onset of the 'refugee crisis,' particularly since spring 2015 (see Section 1 above).

Yet, despite the rise in protests from 2015 onwards, *GI Italy* and *GI Czech Republic* still only organized a comparatively low number of protests, together with *GI Slovenia* and *GI Hungary*, which only really began mobilizing from 2016 onwards. As

explained above, these low figures relate to their lack of resources, especially in terms of active members, plus their limited domestic political space. Conversely, *GI Germany*, *GI France*, and *GI Austria* were all particularly active in 2016. Their peaks in the second half of the year can largely be ascribed to mobilization against the terrorist attacks in France and Germany in the summer of 2016, plus *GI Austria's* protests against the *Green's* candidate for the Austrian presidential elections, Alexander van der Bellen (see e.g. *GI Austria 2016i*). One can in fact observe a very interesting almost parallel increase in *GI Germany* and *GI Austria's* protest activities, indicating an opening in their (perceived) opportunities from 2015 onwards. *GI Germany* continued mobilizing comparatively strongly in the autumn of 2017, just as this is the period where the GI groups carried out most transnational protests ('*GI Europe*').

This initial analysis of the groups' mobilization frequencies has shown rather disparate figures across the continent, which can be explained by *GI Germany*, *GI Austria*, and *GI France's* better material resources, just as these groups do not experience the same form of 'out-crowding' as their namesakes in Italy, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovenia. At the same time, the regional overview also demonstrated the importance of resources, as the most active GI groups can mainly be found in the larger university cities. The following paragraphs turn to the groups' protest repertoires and the national groups' (potential) protest form alignment.

CONTESTING THROUGH WHICH MEANS? THE GI GROUPS' PROTEST FORMS

Table 6.2 below shows the seven national GI groups' protest forms in the 2015-2017 period. Demonstrative actions are the predominant protest form (60% of all actions), while conventional, confrontational, and solidarity actions each amount to around 12-14% of the total. This preference for demonstrative actions mainly relates to the groups' aim of attracting media attention through spectacular, yet non-violent, means (see e.g. Bouron 2014; see also Chapter 5). The table also shows a substantial quantitative rise in protest actions from 2015 to 2016 (from 142 to 297 actions, or an increase of 109.2%), which is mainly ascribable to the rise in *GI Germany*, *GI Austria*, and *GI France's* protests in the period (see Figure 6.2 above).

Table 6.2: *The GI coalitions' forms of protest across time (2015-2017)*.

Year	Conventional	Demonstr.	Confront.	Solidarity Action	Total
2015	11.3 (16)	57.7 (82)	19.7 (28)	11.3 (16)	100.0 (142)
2016	10.1 (30)	59.3 (176)	13.5 (40)	17.1 (51)	100.0 (297)
2017	17.3 (42)	63.0 (153)	11.9 (29)	7.8 (19)	100.0 (243)
Total	12.9 (88)	60.3 (412)	14.2 (97)	12.6 (86)	100.0 (682)

Note: N: 682. Pct (No. of protests). Cramer's V = .120** (*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001).

Yet, as shown in Table 6.3 below, the national GI groups have not made use of the various protest forms to the same extent. Instead, one can begin seeing the relevance of the national contexts and the groups' somewhat independent natures in terms of expression forms ($V = .356$). The table shows that all groups aside from *GI France* mainly carried out **demonstrative** protests during the 2015-2017 period. These range from around 47% of all their protest actions (*GI Czech Republic*) to 92% (*GI Slovenia*). The majority of these actions involve banner-drops (47%), followed by various forms of demonstrations and rallies (17%), and street theatres and flash mobs (11%). These three tactics combined thus make up 75% of all the GI groups' demonstrative actions (see Chapter 5 for more on these types of actions).

Table 6.3: The national GI groups' protest forms (2015-2017).

	Conventional	Demonstr.	Confront.	Solid. Action	Total
GI FR	27.0 (41)	30.9 (47)	9.9 (15)	32.2 (49)	100.0 (152)
GI DE	1.8 (4)	79.4 (177)	16.6 (37)	2.2 (5)	100.0 (223)
GI CZ	5.6 (2)	47.2 (17)	5.6 (2)	41.7 (15)	100.0 (36)
GI AT	6.3 (9)	69.4 (100)	22.2 (32)	2.1 (3)	100.0 (144)
GI IT	24.2 (16)	57.6 (38)	3.0 (2)	15.2 (10)	100.0 (66)
GI HU	23.7 (9)	52.6 (20)	13.2 (5)	10.5 (4)	100.0 (38)
GI SL	0.0 (0)	92.3 (12)	7.7 (1)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (13)
GI EU	70.0 (7)	0.0 (0)	30.0 (3)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (10)
Total	12.9 (88)	60.3 (411)	14.2 (97)	12.6 (86)	100.0 (682)

Note: N: 682. Pct (No. of protests). Cramer's $V = .356^{***}$ (* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$).

GI France, *GI Italy*, and *GI Hungary* also made use of **conventional actions** to a rather large degree, mainly in the form of press releases (95.5% of the 88 PEs), while open letters to politicians make out the remaining 4.5%. *GI France's* comparatively higher reliance on this form can partly be explained by the closer involvement of *The Identitarians (Les Identitaires)* in its strategy vis-à-vis the other GI groups due to the French initiator's strong focus on the exercising of media pressure (See e.g. Cahuzac & François 2013; Castelli Gattinara & Froio 2018). Moreover, its better domestic political opportunities entails a higher reliance on more conventional action forms. Yet, while it is mainly *GI France* that uses press releases as a means to express its policy issues, the other groups also frequently provide statements to the press in relation to their larger demonstrations and generally do much to attract attention through their actions.

The **confrontational actions** mainly consist of direct social actions (see Chapter 5), most frequently employed in relation to the groups' objection to the reception of refugees¹³⁴. Most take the form of entrance and passage blockades (27%), building occupations (22%), meeting disruptions (22%), and counter-protests (19%)¹³⁵. The comparatively frequent use of confrontational actions by *GI Austria*, and *GI Germany* mainly relate to their better resources (Interview with GI Czech Republic 2018), just as their closed domestic political opportunities and the surveillance by the authorities can explain the two groups' higher proclivity towards more confrontational tactics (Eisinger as cited in Caiani & Graziano 2018; Rucht 2018; Caiani 2017). Conversely, the other groups' comparably more moderate action forms can also be related to the fact that these groups' demands are already being catered to, either by a strong radical right party or the mainstream politicians, inferring that they do not need to utilise radical expression forms (see Koopmans et al. 2005).

Finally, only *GI France* and *GI Czech Republic* have carried out a substantial share of **solidarity actions** beside the demonstrative actions. *GI France* has organized this type of action since 2013, strongly inspired by both the *Identitarian Bloc* and *CasaPound* (see Chapter 5). *GI Czech Republic's* spokesperson explains the group's high number of solidarity actions with its lacking resources, as these actions require very limited resources to carry out (Interview with GI Czech Republic 2018). While *GI France's* actions mainly involve the provision of food and clothing for autochthonous homeless people ('les SDFs'), *GI Czech Republic* instead focuses on both aiding abandoned animals and poor Czech citizens.

The above section has shown that while all groups mainly employ demonstrative action forms (except *GI France*), and generally make use of very similar protest tactics, they employ the various protest forms to highly varying degrees, again due to their diverse levels of political opportunities and material resources.

¹³⁴ Action examples include the erection of border fences by *GI Austria* (OE24 2015), and entrance blockades to refugee centres, either through 'sit-ins' (see e.g. Generace Identity 2015) or the construction of brick walls (see e.g. RT France 2016). Moreover, particularly *GI Germany* and *GI Austria* use the tactic of disrupting public meetings (see e.g. GI Austria 2016d), theatre plays (GI Germany 2016i), and other public events, mainly as a means to intimidate their political opponents (for more about these types of protest tactics, see Castelli Gattinara 2018; Froio & Castelli Gattinara 2018).

¹³⁵ Several of these actions border the lines of legality. Yet, despite numerous arrests of GI activists (for instance, the 'Poitiers 4' from *GI France's* Poitiers mosque occupation (Génération Identitaire 2013b), they are very apt at staying within the bounds of the law, indicating a strong understanding of the legal system, which again underlines their professionalism.

SIZE OF PROTESTS

In order to determine the mobilization potential of the GI-groups in terms of Europeanization, it is also relevant to consider the *sizes* of their protests aside from their *frequencies* (see also Caiani & Graziano 2018). Table 6.4 below shows that the majority of the GI groups' protest actions consist of a low number of participants, only involving between 1-10 activists (75%). The demonstrations with 50+ participants have mainly been organized by *GI Austria* (16, or 50% of the 50+ protests), *GI Germany* (9, or 28%), and *GI France* (5, or 15.6%), just as the 'Indeterminate' cases also mainly refer to these three groups' protests.

Table 6.4: Size of the GI groups' protests (2015-2017).¹³⁶

Protest Form	Total
Announcement (1 person)	14.8 (101)
Few (2-10 people)	59.7 (408)
Moderate (10-50)	9.8 (66)
Small demo (50-250)	2.6 (18)
Moderate demo (250-1000)	1.5 (10)
Big demo (1000+)	0.6 (4)
(Indeterminate ¹³⁷)	11.0 (75)
Total	100.0 (682)

Note: N: 682. Pct (No. of protests).

The low protest sizes both relate to the GI-groups' limited number of core members and material resources and to their inability to attract supporters to their own demonstrations (Froio 2018). Moreover, several of GI's planned demonstrations have either been cancelled,¹³⁸ moved to a less prominent site¹³⁹ by the authorities, or

¹³⁶ While the GI groups in certain cases specify how many activists took place in the given event, the figures in the table are mainly based on the estimated *required* amount of people for carrying out such an activity. Hence, a banner-drop is, for instance, only estimated to require around 2-10 people, while the writing of an announcement, such as a press release, only requires one person. Yet, for the demonstrations, it is only the participant rates published by either GI themselves or newspaper articles, which have been included. This explains the lacking information for 75 of the protest events.

¹³⁷ Rallies, demonstrations, and vigils organized by GI, where it was not possible to deduce from the data how many people participated.

¹³⁸ Such as the Moolenbeek rally after the Brussels terrorist attack in 2016 (The Bulletin 2016), or the 'Face aux Islamistes' demonstration in Paris in November 2017 (20 Minutes 2017).

¹³⁹ Like *GI Austria*'s planned rally in front of the Austrian *Greens* office in 2016 (Kurier 2016).

interfered with by counter-protesters¹⁴⁰, making it more opportune to organize smaller scale ‘spontaneous’ protests that can still create a ‘buzz’ (Bouron 2014). The low participant levels also imply that none of the GI groups has (or at least has not yet) become a truly independent far right movement with a strong mobilization potential (such as e.g. *PEGIDA Germany*). This thus also implies that they did not organize sizeable protests around European issues in the period, already indicating a low impact in terms of organizing people-strong protests directed at the decision-makers.

Participating in Other Far Right Organizations’ Demonstrations

Instead, the GI groups rather rely on other far-right actors, like *PEGIDA*, to organize sizeable demonstrations in which they can participate. Several of the national and local GI groups thus also took part in other far right groups’ demonstrations, both at the domestic and European level. Aside from the mobilization size perspective, this protest participation also relates to the GI-groups’ aim of seeking cooperation with similar-minded domestic groups (see e.g. Lipp 2017; Interview with GI Czech Republic 2018) as a means to become consolidated, accepted, and embedded parts of their domestic far right scenes, an acceptance that is vital for a group’s survival.

The 37 identified protests are divided among five of the seven national GI groups, namely *GI Germany* (16 with other groups)¹⁴¹, *GI Austria* (9)¹⁴², *GI Czech Republic* (7)¹⁴³, *GI France* (4)¹⁴⁴, and *GI Slovenia* (1)¹⁴⁵. Particularly *GI Germany*, *GI Austria*, and *GI Czech Republic* attempt to become an established part of their national far right scenes (or German-speaking, in *GI Austria’s* case) as this allows them to draw benefits and increased resonance from the other groups’ resources and experiences. Conversely, *GI France* only joined a few protests hosted by other French far right

¹⁴⁰ Such as the annual transnationally attended demonstration in Berlin in the summer of 2017, where counter-protesters kept attempting to block the Identitarians’ route (BZ-Berlin 2017).

¹⁴¹ *GI Germany* joined nine *PEGIDA Germany* rallies (mainly *GI Saxony*). German GI activists have also taken part in demonstrations by German *PEGIDA* offshoots (see e.g. GI Germany-FB post), by the radical right *Alternative for Germany* (GI Germany 2016b), plus in two far right citizen’s initiatives’ demonstrations (*Citizens for Erfurt* (‘*Bürger für Erfurt*’) (GI Germany 2017b) and *Citizen Forum Saxony* (‘*Bürgerforum Sachsen e.V.*’) (GI Germany 2015g).

¹⁴² *GI Austria* joined four anti-immigration protests in Austria in February 2016, organized by, amongst others, the *FPÖ* (GI Austria 2016c) and *PEGIDA Austria* (GI Austria FB-Post), and joined citizens’ initiatives against refugee housing (see e.g. GI Austria 2016e; Schmidt 2016).

¹⁴³ *GI Czech Republic* joined four anti-immigration rallies organized by the extreme right *NE Bruselu – Národní demokracie* (*NO Brussels – National Democracy*) party (see e.g. GI Czech Republic 2015d), and it participated in *Blok Against Islam’s* FE-protest in February 2016 (GI Czech Republic 2016a).

¹⁴⁴ One was with a regional *Front National* branch (Guiot 2015), while the other three involved anti-refugee citizens’ initiatives (see e.g. Castanier & D’Angelo 2017; Foulon 2016).

¹⁴⁵ *GI Slovenia* joined a protest against refugee housing in February 2016 (GI Slovenia 2017).

groups, thus acting more independently (and perhaps carefully) in terms of open cooperation with domestic far right actors. Moreover, *GI Italy's* lacking (open) participation in other Italian groups' protests can be explained by its attempt to dissociate itself from fascist organizations.

As explained above, several of the rallies joined by GI activists are hosted by more successful demonstration organizers, such as *Pegida Germany*¹⁴⁶, or by radical and extreme right political parties, like local *Front National (FN)*, *Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)*, and the Czech *NO Brussels – National Democracy* branches, which all have considerably better resources than the GI groups. Scholars argue that *GI Czech Republic's* participation in the more well-established *National Democracy's* protests mainly is a means to introduce itself to the other actors on the Czech far right scene (Berlekamp & Opielka 2018: 234).

Aside from the domestic links, *GI Czech Republic* activists also participated in far right demonstrations abroad, namely in Dresden, Warsaw, and Bratislava¹⁴⁷. *GI Czech Republic's* leader explained these protest participations as the group being “willing to support basically everything that somehow corresponds with our opinions,” even if the viewpoints do not correlate one to one, and it involves extreme right actors (Interview with GI Czech Republic 2018). This open cooperation with extreme right groups aligns with the porous borders between right-wing actors in Eastern Europe, and the lacking need for dissociation from far right actors considered extreme. Thus, the Eastern European GI groups do not need to consider the respectability of their domestic protest partners to the same extent as in Western Europe (Minkenberg 2018).

This initial section has shown that there is a wide variety in the GI groups' amount of protests, their frequencies over time, and predominant forms, and that this is largely ascribable to the groups' diverse material resources, plus, to a more limited extent, their political opportunities. Yet, at the same time, the national GI-groups almost all mainly organized demonstrative protests, and relied on many of the same protest *tactics* (such as banner-drops, rallies, and street theatres), indicating a certain level of transnational coordination. Moreover, the fact that the protest frequencies at the regional levels differ highly, most GI protest actions only involve a limited number of activists, and the groups participate in other, more prominent, far right organizations' protests, are all revealing in terms of the GI-groups' *actual* sizes.

¹⁴⁶ Both activists from *GI Germany* (9 of their 16 protests with other groups), and *GI Czech Republic* have joined *PEGIDA Germany's* demonstrations.

¹⁴⁷ For instance, the Polish National Independence Day march in November 2016 (GI Czech Republic FB-Post), and in the large Slovakian anti-refugee demonstration on June 20, 2015 (GI Italy FB-post). Due to the proximity of Dresden to Ústí nad Labem, where several of the Czech GI activists live, Czech GI activists have also participated in *Pegida Germany's* demonstrations (see e.g. GI Czech Republic 2015a).

6.2. EUROPEANIZATION OF THE GI GROUPS' COLLECTIVE ACTION?

After having considered the GI groups' protest forms and frequencies, the following section will consider their (different) paths of collective action Europeanization. The first part briefly considers the groups' overarching protest issues in the 2015-2017 period. This is followed by an analysis of the scopes of the *issues*, *targets*, *participants*, and *events*, in order to explore the degrees to which the various groups' protest scopes Europeanized in the period.

THE GI-GROUPS' MOBILIZATION ISSUES OVER TIME

Table 6.5 below shows the GI-groups' overarching mobilization issues in the 2015-2017 period (see Codebook in Appendix B). It shows that the most frequent GI protest topics involve 'Anti-immigration', 'Anti-Islam(isation)', and 'Anti-refugee/asylum (policy),' accounting for 63% of the protests. The 'Welfare protectionism,' which is mostly expressed during the groups' solidarity actions, also mostly relates to the (alleged) preferential treatment of third-country nationals versus the autochthonous population. Yet, in the case of *GI Czech Republic*, these actions instead criticise the government's *general* social policy (Interview with GI Czech Republic 2018). Hence, the largest share by far of the GI groups' protests involves opposition to third-country nationals, mainly of Muslim faith.

When considering the groups individually, 'Anti-immigration' and '-Islamization' remain the most frequent mobilization issues for *all* the GI groups in the 2015-2017 period, except for *GI Czech Republic*, which mainly mobilized around 'Welfare protectionism' and 'Identity (preservation)'. 'Gender-related' protests are most predominant for *GI Hungary* and *GI Slovenia*, mainly targeted at LGBT-associations and NGOs (See e.g. 24.hu 2016)¹⁴⁸.

¹⁴⁸ For *GI Slovenia*, this was in response to the parliamentary discussions on civil marriage and the recognition of same sex couples in Slovenia. The law was adopted in February 2017 (Novak 2017). The Western European GI groups have also mobilized on this issue. *GI Germany*, for instance, took part in the German 'Demo für alle' ('Demo for all') in 2015 (GI Germany 2015c), organised by an association, which found inspiration in the French 'Manif pour tous' ('Demo for all') that mobilized strongly against homosexual marriage 2013-2014.

Table 6.5: The GI groups' overarching issues of mobilization 2015-2017.

Overarching Issues	2015	2016	2017	Total
Anti-immigration	35.9 (51)	22.6 (67)	24.3 (59)	26.0 (177)
Anti-Islam(isation)	7.7 (11)	25.9 (77)	22.6 (55)	21.0 (143)
Anti-ref./asylum (policy)	31.7 (45)	10.4 (31)	13.6 (33)	16.0 (109)
Welfare protectionism	10.6 (15)	16.8 (50)	8.6 (21)	12.6 (86)
Identity (preservation)	6.3 (9)	11.1 (33)	10.3 (25)	9.8 (67)
Pro/Vs Political actors	0.7 (1)	3.4 (10)	6.6 (16)	4.0 (27)
Opposing suppression	4.2 (6)	6.7 (20)	8.2 (20)	6.7 (46)
Gender-related	2.1 (3)	0.7 (2)	4.1 (10)	2.2 (15)
Other topics	0.7 (1)	2.4 (7)	1.6 (4)	1.8 (12)
Total	100.0 (142)	100.0 (297)	100.0 (243)	100.0 (682)

Note: (N: 682). Pct (No. of protests). Cramer's V = .243*** (*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001).

The GI protests thus played into the increasingly growing European public worries about immigration at the time (see e.g. Debomy 2015). While the five initial GI groups had mobilized around rather disparate protest issues in the 2012-2014 period¹⁴⁹, the 'refugee crisis' meant that the national GI groups began aligning their issue foci with each other, all mobilizing against the refugees and immigrants. Hence, while *GI Austria* had already carried out a protest action against Austria and the EU's asylum policy in 2013 (Lichtmesz 2013), the onset of 'the long summer of migration' in autumn 2015 (della Porta 2018) meant that *all* GI groups began mobilizing against third-country immigration, refugees, and asylum seekers. This was especially the case during the height of the 'refugee crisis' (i.e. winter 2015-2016), where the five active groups at the time demanded the closure of refugee housing sites, the resurrection of national borders, and the 'remigration'¹⁵⁰ of immigrants and refugees.

¹⁴⁹ In the 2012-2014 period, when active, the national GI groups made rather disparate claims, mainly addressing national issues. The topics of mobilization largely coalesced around: Anti-immigration/Islamization (particularly by *GI France*, *GI Austria*, *GI Germany*, and *GI Italy*), anti-LGBT/Gender policy (*GI France* (*Loi Taubira* on same sex marriage)), and more general protests about identity preservation (*GI Czech Republic*).

¹⁵⁰ 'Remigration' is a term adopted from *Bloc Identitaire*, referring to the (forced) returning of third-country immigrants to their home countries. As argued by Aftenberger (2017), this is merely a rewriting of the neo-Nazi calls for 'Foreigners out' (*Ausländer raus*). At the protest events, the 'remigration' demand was mainly directed towards 'illegal' and 'criminal' immigrants and 'economic refugees'. Yet, in reality, it relates to *all* third-country immigrants, as, in the words of *GI Germany*, there should be "a demographic tendency change towards remigration" (*GI Germany* n.d.b).

Actions that make more general calls for ‘Identity preservation’ (see e.g. GI Czech Republic 2016d), and other protests that are mainly organized as an attempt to set the agenda according to the GI-movement rationales, do not tend to attract much media attention. Particularly *GI France*, *GI Austria*, and *GI Germany* thus mainly act on the contentious issues of the moment by organizing protests that combine their main collective action frames (see Chapter 5) with ongoing events as a means to draw attention to the (alleged) faultiness of the situation. They are thus highly driven by the political and media agenda of the moment, reacting (quickly) to ongoing events. Hence, aside from main campaigns, which last a few months (such as *GI Austria’s* ‘Great Replacement’ campaign in the spring of 2015, or *GI France’s* ‘This is our home!’ (‘On est chez nous!’) campaign in the autumn of 2015), most of GI’s protests are organized in reaction to ongoing events as a means to profit from the discursive opportunities and thus gain resonance (see e.g. Koopmans & Olzak 2004). Such events, for instance, include new legislative decisions (e.g. the local housing of refugees (see e.g. Génération Identitaire 2015c; GI Austria 2016d; GI Slovenia 2017), or *GI Germany’s* protests against the German surveillance legislation (see e.g. GI Germany n.d.e)). Yet, they also react to news stories (such as violent attacks perpetrated by third-country nationals (see e.g. GI Germany 2016a), the sexual assaults in Cologne (see e.g. GI Austria 2016a)), or ongoing parliamentary and public/media debates (like calls for national border closures in the winter of 2015 (see e.g. GI Germany 2015e)).

Considering the GI mobilization against refugees and asylum seekers more specifically, most took place in the winter of 2015-2016. As Table 6.5 shows, the ‘Anti-refugee/asylum seeker’ mobilization decreased by 31% from 2015 to 2016, and remained at the same level in 2017, while more general ‘Anti-immigration’ and ‘Anti-Islamization’ protests rose instead ($V = .243$). The anti-refugee and asylum seeker protests mainly involved issues such as the securing of the external and, mainly, internal EU borders, opposition to refugee and migrant camps, and demands for asylum and refugee policy changes. Moreover, *GI Germany*, *GI France*, and *GI Austria* mobilized rather heavily against radical Islamist terrorism in July-September 2016, i.e. in the aftermath of the terrorist attack in Nice on Bastille Day, July 14, and the numerous smaller attacks in Germany over the summer of 2016 (see e.g. Les Identitaires 2016; GI Germany 2016g; GI Austria 2016h). Furthermore, while the anti-refugee mobilization had decreased by 2017, it was nevertheless also in this year that the GI groups organized one of their most elaborate protests against said refugees, namely the ‘Defend Europe’ mission (see more on this below).

The following section will now turn the focus toward the *scopes* of the protests, in order to determine the extent to which they involved *European* issues, targets, participants, and events.

THE GI-GROUPS' EUROPEANIZATION PATHS

Scope of Protest Issues

Considering the issue scopes, i.e. whether the expressed GI demands involve 'European' or 'national' policy issues, Table 6.6 shows that the majority of the GI-groups' protests involve 'national' issues, already indicating a limited degree of collective action Europeanization by these actors (see Chapter 3). Hence, from 2015 to 2016, an interesting development took place, involving a shift from the groups predominantly mobilizing around 'European' issues, to 'National'. Yet, the absolute numbers of protests with a 'European' issue scope actually remained rather constant during the three years (around 90-110 PEs), while instead it is the amount of protests with a 'National' focus that increases by 244% in 2016 ($V = .190$).

Table 6.6: Issue scope of all GI groups' protests per year (2015-2017).

	2015	2016	2017	Total
National	38.7 (55)	63.6 (189)	58.0 (141)	56.5 (385)
European	61.3 (87)	36.4 (108)	42.0 (102)	43.5 (297)
Total	100.0 (142)	100.0 (297)	100.0 (243)	100.0 (682)

Note: N: 682. Pct (No. of protests). Cramer's $V = .190^{***}$ ($*p < 0.05$; $**p < 0.01$; $***p < 0.001$).

These figures are largely explainable by the fact that *GI France*, *GI Austria*, and *GI Germany* organized a comparatively much higher amount of protests, implying that their actions have a larger effect on the overall figures. In 2015, *GI Austria* and *GI Germany* thus predominantly mobilized around 'European' policy issues, especially regarding border security, while *GI France*, in fact, mainly focused on the domestic policy level. In 2016 and 2017, *GI Austria* and *GI France* mainly organized protests with a 'national' protest issue, while the remaining five GI groups' protests were rather evenly divided between 'national' and 'European' issue foci in both years, in terms of absolute numbers.

Looking at the issue scopes in correlation with the issues of the protests, Table 6.7 below shows that while all GI's other mobilizing issues have a predominantly 'national' scope in terms of policy-making, the mobilization against immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers (i.e the top three categories) mainly have a 'European' scope (average of 61.9%) ($V = .492$). This is not so surprising, considering that migration, and particularly asylum, policy is "global by nature" (compared to, for instance, agricultural policy), and many policies necessitate EU decisions (Monforte 2014: 230). The actions with a 'European' scope, for instance, involve protests around border security and terrorism, while the 'national' includes protests against refugee and migrant housing, and the 'mal-integration' of Muslim immigrants, plus solidarity actions in favor of the autochthonous citizens (See the Codebook in Appendix B).

Table 6.7: Issue scope of the GI protests' overarching issues.

Topic/Issue Scope	National	European	Total
Anti-immigration	39.5 (70)	60.5 (107)	100.0 (177)
Anti-Islamization	39.9 (57)	60.1 (86)	100.0 (143)
Anti-refugee/asylum (policy)	34.9 (38)	65.1 (71)	100.0 (109)
Welfare protectionism	98.8 (85)	1.2 (1)	100.0 (86)
Gender-related issues	80.0 (12)	20.0 (3)	100.0 (15)
Identity preservation	73.1 (49)	26.9 (18)	100.0 (67)
Opposing suppression	93.5 (43)	6.5 (3)	100.0 (46)
Other topics	75.0 (9)	25.0 (3)	100.0 (12)
Pro/Vs Political actors	81.5 (22)	18.5 (5)	100.0 (27)
Total	56.5 (385)	43.5 (297)	100.0 (682)

Note: N: 682. Pct (No. of protests). Cramer's V = .492*** (*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001)

Thus, 264, or 38.7%, of all the 682 GI-actions involve anti-immigration frames with a 'European' scope. Hence, it is around the issue of third-country immigration that the European GI groups can align around a common cause at the transnational protest level. This also explains why the French GI initiators were interested in making the 'movement' *European* from the outset, as these issues are the main concern for the group, and frequently affect all of Europe, requiring pan-European policy responses.

Scope of Targets

The GI groups' extensive use of direct social actions (see Chapter 5) infers that they do not make use of "traditional forms of engagement addressing third parties (e.g. the state, the media) and demanding their mediation to solve a public problem" to a large extent (Castelli Gattinara 2018: 279). Instead, "they offer a direct contribution against something perceived as dysfunctional" (Ibid.) by taking the protest to where it occurs¹⁵¹. Hence, due to the GI activists' meta-political ambition of influencing the public discursive and perceptive level rather than solely targeting the decision-makers in order to achieve political change, many of the GI groups' protests either target the public (e.g. *GI Austria's* banners with statements such as 'Defend yourself!' ('Wehr dich!') (Identitäre Bewegung Österreich 2017), or involve more symbolic protests, often addressed against the foreign 'others' (e.g. against the 'Great replacement' or 'Islamization'). Both of these factors combined (i.e. the groups' use of direct social actions and their cultural hegemony ambitions) infers that many of the GI groups'

¹⁵¹ Consider e.g. *GI Germany's* statement that "we carry the protest exactly to the places where the aberrations and those responsible centralize. If the politicians are not willing to protect our borders, we become active to point out the enforcement of law and order" (GI Germany n.d.i, author's translation).

protest actions are addressed to the general population and the media, in order to gain attention and attract support.

Hence, the groups usually *frame* their actions in opposition to governments and other, mainly domestic, political, and societal entities, such as left-wing political associations (including NGOs) and other proponents of multiculturalism. Yet, the groups do not always target these actors *directly*. Instead, the protests involve *blame attributions*, thus involving *indirect* targeting. This blaming strategy mainly aims at villainizing and delegitimizing the current leadership and liberal doctrines, while accentuating the benefits of ‘patriotic’ legislation (in their pursuit of an ethnically pure population). As an example, *GI France* explained its entrance blockade of the Calais migrant camp in 2016 with the words:

This situation is the result of an irresponsible policy, of which national and European political leaders in Paris, Berlin and Brussels are guilty. Since these rulers refuse to protect the populations by restoring borders, nationally as well as European, they will see the people building barricades!” (Robert 2017, author’s translation).

The various GI groups, in fact, often voice this sentiment of ‘the politicians did not act, so we have to,’ particularly regarding policy responses to the ‘open borders,’ the housing of refugees and migrants, and to terrorist attacks on European ground, just as the Western European governments are castigated for their ‘politically correct’ behaviour.

Looking more specifically at the groups’ protest targets, Table 6.8 below shows that the share of protests targeting a specific political decision-making entity is rather limited (only around a third of *all* GI protests). Furthermore, while 50% of the protests in 2015 targeted a political decision-making entity, this had changed to solely being around 30% by 2016 and 2017 ($V = .159$).

The table also reveals that despite the pan-European nature of the ‘refugee crisis’ and the role of the EU, the *national government* remains the main target of the protests for most of the GI-groups. The EU and other EU MS are, in fact, hardly the target of mobilization. This finding correlates with other scholars’ findings regarding the (potential) Europeanization of collective action (see e.g. Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015) and, as will be further elaborated upon below, relates to the GI-groups better (perceived) *domestic* discursive opportunities. Hence, when targeting a political decision-maker, *GI Slovenia* (39% of its total protests), *GI Austria* (38%), *GI France* (33%), *GI Germany* (32%), *GI Italy* (27%), and *GI Czech Republic* (19%) mainly took their claims to their respective national governments. Conversely, due to the anti-immigrant and -liberal turn of *Fidesz* and *Órban* (see e.g. Krekó et al. 2019), *GI Hungary*, in fact, carried out protest actions *in support* of its national government (see e.g. GI Hungary FB-post).

Table 6.8: The GI coalition's protest targets per year (2015-2017).

Targets	2015	2016	2017	Total
National government	46.5 (66)	26.9 (80)	25.5 (62)	30.5 (208)
Other MS' gov.	0.7 (1)	2.0 (6)	2.1 (5)	1.8 (12)
EU	2.8 (4)	0.7 (2)	0.8 (2)	1.2 (8)
Muslims/migrants/ref.	9.9 (14)	13.1 (39)	11.5 (28)	11.9 (81)
Public	19.0 (27)	16.8 (50)	23.0 (56)	19.5 (133)
Others ¹⁵²	17.6 (25)	33.0 (98)	31.3 (76)	29.2 (199)
Non-specified	3.5 (5)	7.4 (22)	5.8 (14)	6.0 (41)
Total	100.0 (142)	100.0 (297)	100.0 (243)	100.0 (682)

Note: N: 682. Pct (No. of protests). Cramer's V = .159** (*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001).

The table shows that only eight of the GI groups' protest actions targeted the EU. In fact, only four of the GI groups have directed their demands towards the EU¹⁵³, underlining the generally limited role given to the EU for the groups' mobilization (see Chapter 5). Hence, none of the interviewed GI leaders had ever approached EU institutions or actors directly, through neither protest actions nor insider strategies (such as contacting MEPs or lobbying). *GI Czech Republic's* spokesperson elaborated that he could not imagine contacting MEPs, due to the "patriotic parties" lacking decision-making powers in the EP (Interview with GI Czech Republic 2018). *GI Germany's* spokesperson instead stated that the targeting of the EU "was more a" GI "topic in 2014-2015" (in reference to the 'Our Europe is not your Union' demonstration in Vienna in May 2014 (see e.g. Lichtmesz 2014)), and that the EP's limited political capacities made the group refrain from contacting people in this institution (Interview with GI Germany 2017). These responses imply that the GI groups do not as such reject the EU, but rather take a more pragmatic and strategic position on its institutions in terms of externalization. This aligns with previous findings on extra-parliamentary actors and their EU-strategies. Caiani and della Porta (2009), for example, discovered that several of the SMOs they interviewed had rather

¹⁵² The 'Others' cover, amongst others: Autochthonous nationals or Europeans in need of assistance (86 protests), Left-wing actors (47), Pro-refugee/migrant NGOs (25), Media (10), Educational institutions (8), Turkish government or associations (4), (Multi-)national businesses (4), National trade unions (2), and Facebook (1).

¹⁵³ Either by approaching an EU office (European Commission) or association related to the EU (FRA) (more on these two below), or by making explicit anti-EU demonstrative actions. Only *GI Italy* and *GI Czech Republic* organized explicit anti-EU demonstrations. 10 days after the Brexit referendum in the UK, on July 8, 2016, *GI Italy* held an anti-EU demonstration (GI Italy 2016a).

limited direct EU-actor interaction, including to MEPs, in certain cases due to the lacking decision-making power of the European Parliament (2009: 122)¹⁵⁴.

Other EU MS' governments were also only targeted to a limited extent (12 protests in total). These protests included rallies at embassies, either to oppose the country's refugee policies (GI Hungary 2017a at the German Embassy), or to express 'solidarity' with the Visegrad countries (see e.g. GI Germany FB-post for Hungary; *GI Austria* in support of Poland (Koralewski 2014)). It also included vigils for countries targeted by terrorism (see e.g. *GI Austria* at the German Embassy after the attack on a Berlin Christmas market in 2016 (GI Austria 2016j)). A few of the actions were carried out as joint transnational protests, yet, they were not as such instances of 'transnational pressure,' as they did not involve calls for policy changes or moves towards further integration (della Porta & Caiani 2009). In October 2017, for instance, as part of *GI Hungary's* 'Border Fence Campaign' (GI Hungary 2017c), ten GI activists from *GI Hungary*, *GI Austria*, *GI Germany*, and *GI Slovenia* visited Hungarian border patrollers and thanked them for their efforts during the 'refugee crisis' (GI Austria 2017b). Hence, this event instead fit well into the GI framing of Orbán and the other Visegrad members as being the only 'true' European patriots, ensuring the protection of the European population (see e.g. Sellner 2017b), and was thus a more symbolic gesture, aimed at furthering the GI groups' patriotic cause. Most criticism against other EU MS was thus again mainly expressed through blame attributions, especially directed at Merkel, while simultaneously highlighting the bravery of those political actors who dared to oppose the mainstream politicians.

Aside from the (limited) targeting of the decision-makers, Table 6.8 above also shows that a rather large share of the GI-groups' protests are directed towards other societal actors, mainly of a left-wing persuasion, and that this number rises over time ($V = .159$). Particularly *GI Germany* and *GI Austria* have targeted pro-immigration political actors, including left-wing parties and pro-refugee CSOs and NGOs rather frequently (a total of 72 protest actions, or 18% of their combined protests) by blocking the entrances to offices, disrupting meetings, and similar acts of intimidation. Moreover, especially *GI France's* frames during its solidarity actions entail blame attributions towards the national politicians and pro-migrant organisations, whom it accuses of sidelining the interests of the autochthonous population in favour of the

¹⁵⁴ Nevertheless, while the spokesperson for *GI Germany* stated that he *personally* did not have any contacts with EU actors, he could not deny that *any* German activist might have such connections (Interview with GI Germany 2017). The data does also reveal several (unofficial) links to radical right parties' MEPs, with whom GI activists have been in contact at various domestic and transnational far right events (e.g. Borghezio from *Northern League* (Palladino 2017)). Moreover, in February 2018, after the *Defend Europe* Mission, Borghezio invited GI representatives to come to the EP account for the observations made during the Mediterranean 'boat-mission' (Palladino 2018b). Yet, the majority of these meetings, conferences, and protests do not appear to evolve around EU-politics.

foreign ‘other’ (see e.g. GI France FB-post). Similarly, *GI Slovenia* and *GI Hungary* have targeted pro-LGBTQ activists during their protests, while *GI Czech Republic* has made more symbolic actions in opposition to the consumerist and ‘identity-less’ society of today.

In this way, the GI groups construct shared frames around the internal ‘others,’ who both consist of the politically responsible, but also actors who conflict with the GI activists’ causes and identity (Benford & Hunt 1992). Thus, while the GI activists diagnose third country immigrants as the most acute threat to the ‘European identity,’ the coalition identifies national, and in rare cases European, governments and the left-wing establishment as the main culprits. The main antagonists, in other words, are those actors who, in their appeals to pluralism and egalitarianism, do not counter third-country immigration to Europe, and thus come into conflict with GI’s cause of preserving the European continent as homogeneously ‘pure’. This strategy of blaming the politicians or pro-migrant actors has several purposes. For one, it allows GI “to construct migrants, refugees or Muslims as problems, without explicitly naming them as such” (Lehner 2017: 150). Yet, more importantly, the villainisation of the liberal actors is, in reality, an adoption of the “decade-old” extreme right topoi of constructing “a left-wing, anti-national hegemony” (Aftenberger 2017: 218). Hence, by drawing attention to their ‘unpatriotic’ political opponents, who allegedly act against the peoples’ interests, the GI groups attempt to further their ambition of reclaiming the societal cultural hegemony.

The third-country immigrants and refugees *are* also strongly antagonised, albeit not always directly. Aside from the very direct accusations of Muslims ‘Islamizing’ the European societies, most frequently framed around ‘radical Islamists’, who are portrayed as being predisposed to violence, the GI groups also villainise the immigrants and refugees in more indirect ways. One of these ways is by continuously employing terms questioning the refugees and immigrants’ claims for residence in Europe. This de-legitimation strategy strongly antagonises the refugees, as they are attributed with the immoral agenda of false residence claims, and is done, for instance, by putting inverted commas around the term refugee (i.e. ‘refugee’), or generally referring them as ‘illegal’ or ‘clandestine’ (several of the FE groups employ the same strategy).

The targets of the GI groups’ protests thus involve many different types of actors, albeit predominantly from the domestic context, indicating that the groups perceive the domestic setting to be the most opportune arena for mobilization.

Scope of Participants

Table 6.9 below shows that the extent to which the GI groups joined each other’s protests was rather limited, as only 7.5% of all GI protests involved activists from more than one national GI group (either from a neighbouring country (‘Cross-border’)

or from several European countries ('European')). Yet, the table also shows that these numbers changed throughout the three-year period ($V = .164$). While the amount of 'Cross-border' protests substantially rose, and peaked, in 2016, the groups carried out 16 'European' GI-protests in 2017 (largely due to the 'Defend Europe' mission (9 of the 16 protests), see more below). Conversely, more than 62% of the protests only involve local or regional GI-groups, again revealing a lot about the groupuscular features of the GI-mobilization (see e.g. Griffin 2003).

Table 6.9: Participant scopes of all GI groups' protests per year (2015-2017).

	2015	2016	2017	Total
Local	59.2 (84)	56.6 (168)	71.2 (173)	62.3 (425)
National	33.8 (48)	36.4 (108)	20.6 (50)	30.2 (206)
Cross-border	4.9 (7)	6.1 (18)	1.6 (4)	4.3 (29)
European	2.1 (3)	1.0 (3)	6.6 (16)	3.2 (22)
Total	100.0 (142)	100.0 (297)	100.0 (243)	100.0 (682)

Note: N: 682. Pct (No. of protests). Cramer's $V = .164^{***}$ (* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$).

Most of the protests that include GI activists from abroad take the form of demonstrations and banner-drops. Aside from the *GI Europe* protests, *GI France*, *GI Austria*, and *GI Germany* have hosted the majority of the protests with 'European' participation¹⁵⁵. This is due to their better resources, more prominent roles in the coalition (see also Chapter 8), and the geographical positions of especially Vienna and Berlin, two cities that are easy to reach for all GI groups. Usually, the demonstration participation only involves a small 'delegation' of foreign GI activists (around 5-10 activists), who come to show 'solidarity' (*GI Austria* 2017b), 'European unity' (Interview with *GI Italy* 2017), and to underline the *European* nature of the GI coalition (see e.g. *GI Hungary* 2017b). More strategically speaking, this protest participation is also a means to boost the protest numbers, a strategy many other extreme right protest groups also employ (see e.g. Schlembach 2011).

GI Germany (9 protests), *GI Austria* (7), and *GI France* (6) also mainly host the protests with 'cross-border' participation, but *GI Italy* and *GI Slovenia* have also co-organized a few actions in Italy (see e.g. *GI Italy* FB-post). Particularly *GI Austria* and *GI Germany* have joined each other's protests rather frequently, due to their shared language and links to the German New Right scene (see e.g. Bruns et al. 2017). Conversely, *GI France* has not partaken in many smaller-scale cross-border protests in other countries. However, GI activists from especially Italy have visited France (see

¹⁵⁵ In the winter of 2015, *GI Austria*, for instance, organized several border protests with foreign GI participation. This involved a demonstration at Spielfeld on the Austrian-Slovenian border in November 2015 with GI representatives from Slovenia, France, the Czech Republic, and Germany (*GI Germany* 2015e), and one with *GI Germany* at Freilassing, Bavaria, on the border between Austria and Germany (see e.g. *GI Germany* 2015f).

e.g. GI Italy FB-Post), just as the local GI-groups in Lyon and Normandy raised money for the Italian earthquake victims in 2016 (see e.g. GI France FB-post).

Nevertheless, as Table 6.x clearly shows, the extent of transnational GI collective action is very limited, most likely related to the high costs of travelling, both money and time-wise.

Scope of Events

Based on the findings above, one can deduce that the amount of European, or transnational, *events* also is limited. In fact, out of the 682 GI protests, only seven qualify as *transnational protests*, whereof none took place at the EU institutions in Brussels or Luxembourg. In fact, most of these protests do not evolve around a specific policy proposal or event-related issue, unlike many other mobilizations explored through a Europeanization lens (such as the anti-TTIP mobilization (Caiani & Graziano 2018), the demonstrations against the EU's economic policies in Southern Europe in 2008 (Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015), or the FE-coalition explored in Chapter 7). Rather, the groups' shared ambition of curbing third-country immigration to the European continent is the uniting topic at the transnational level. Most transnational GI protests thus relate to either anti-Islam or –immigration, but again, without always having a direct target (see above), and thus frequently act more as a means to further their European unity as a coalition (see Ch.8 for more).

Since 2014, the GI groups have thus organized an annually recurring transnational protest each summer, the first three in Austria in 2014-2016, and then in Germany in 2017 and 2018¹⁵⁶. The remaining four transnational protests all took place in 2017. They involved two commemorative marches in Budapest, Hungary (GI Hungary 2017b) and Vienna, Austria (GI Austria 2017a) respectively,¹⁵⁷ plus the two so-called

¹⁵⁶ The annual demonstrations have taken place in the school summer holidays since 2014, with participation by several GI activists from abroad. The 2015 event was simultaneously the culmination of *GI Austria* and *GI Germany's* 'Stop the Great Replacement' campaign (Identitäre Bewegung Österreich 2015b), while the June 2016 demonstration was titled 'Defend Europe – For a Free and Strong Europe for the Future' (GI Austria 2016f). The German 2017 demonstration 'Future of Europe - Move and Change' coincided with the anniversary of the East German Uprising on June 17, 1953, a date deliberately chosen by *GI Germany*.

¹⁵⁷ In Budapest, *GI Hungary* called for a procession to commemorate the 1686 *Battle of Buda*, which involved armies from the Holy League and the Ottoman Empire and ended with the recapturing of Buda from the Ottomans (Freedom Day). Despite the strong mobilization efforts prior to the event, only around 50 people participated, amongst them GI activists from Austria, Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia, Germany, and Italy (GI Hungary 2017b). A similar protest took place in Vienna on September 9, 2017, on the Vienna Day of Freedom, in commemoration of the *Battle of Vienna*. The torch procession consisted of around 200 GI members and other far right activists (GI Austria 2017a).

‘Defend Europe missions’ in the Mediterranean in May (GI Germany 2017c) and July-August (GI Italy 2017b).

Beginning with the May 2014 ‘Our Europe is not your Union’¹⁵⁸ demonstration and GI conference, *GI Austria* “dared to take another step towards the establishment of a new right-wing youth movement” (DOEW 2014b), by bringing the more informal GI transnational networking onto the streets. This joint European GI event was aided by the gradually opening European DOS in the period, especially after election polls indicated that the far right parties running for the EP-elections in May 2014 were going to do well (see e.g. Mudde 2014). Thus, the timing was good for the initiation of more regular transnational GI protest actions. Aside from being an event-specific transnational protest (in the run-up to the EP-elections), the rally was also the GI groups’ first opportunity to mobilize jointly, in addition to organizing a widely advertised event, introducing the organizations, and evaluating its reception by media and the public. The demonstration thus became an annual transnational event, organized in either Austria or Germany.

The 2017 ‘Defend Europe’ Missions: First Truly Transnational GI Endeavours

Yet, according to *GI Italy*’s spokesperson, it was only in 2017 that the GI “movement” reached its “maturity stage”, due to GI’s ‘Defend Europe’ campaign, which was “really transnational” (Interview with GI Italy 2017). Having made a name for themselves in (inter)national and European far right circles and media outlets during the ‘refugee crisis’ (consider e.g. *Breitbart*’s extensive coverage (see *Breitbart* n.d.)), in May 2017, the four main national GI groups, i.e. *GI France*, *GI Italy*, *GI Germany* and *GI Austria*, initiated the so-called ‘Defend Europe’ campaign. It was directed against the NGO-boats in the Mediterranean, which they accused of human trafficking (see e.g. GI Germany n.d.f). The ‘mission’ played into the growing far right disquiet about the NGO-boats (see e.g. Gefira 2016), just as mainstream politicians also had begun expressing concerns about the NGOs and their Mediterranean activities (see e.g. the Austrian Foreign Minister’s statement in March 2017 (Der Standard 2017)). Martin Sellner from *GI Austria* thus argued that “We are the helpers for right-wing politicians, who wish to close this route: Kurz, Strache, Doskozil or Sobotka [...]. We really felt like the executors of a public opinion that says: it’s enough, it has to stop eventually” (Zotter 2017).

In May 2017, Italian, French, and Austrian GI activists thus initiated the ‘Defend Europe’ campaign by sailing out to block a German NGO ship from leaving a Sicilian harbour, accusing it of smuggling immigrants to Italy, and thus mainly targeting pro-

¹⁵⁸ The demonstration took place on May 17, 2014, i.e. a week before the EP elections (Lichtmesz 2014).

migrant and human rights NGOs (GI Germany 2017c).¹⁵⁹ Throughout spring 2017, the GI activists also collected financial resources via online crowdfunding to hire a crew and a boat, the *C-Star*¹⁶⁰, and in a three-week period in July-August, ten GI activists sailed around in the Mediterranean to ‘monitor’ the NGO ships and report any prohibited activities (GI Italy 2017c) (see Oppenheim 2017 for an account).

GI Italy’s spokesperson explains that all GI groups were involved in the mission, as “Everyone had their own task and we were really busy. There were people on boats, but also people on land doing PR stuff or translating videos, working with the social [media] like Twitter, Facebook and other stuff” (Interview with GI Italy 2017), underlining the transnational nature of the action. Yet, the GI boat’s team consisted of solely the Western European GI groups, who were partly chosen based on their English skills (Ibid.).

In the ensuing period, the participating activists spent most of the autumn of 2017 on debriefing and media interviews about the ‘mission’. Even though the mission’s ‘success’ is highly debatable, it was presented as such by the GI activists (see e.g. RT France 2017). Fiato also pointed to the change in opinion of several European politicians after the action (Interview with GI Italy 2017)¹⁶¹, thus trying to make *Generation Identity*’s impact much larger than was actually the case.

THE GI-GROUPS’ FORMS OF EUROPEANIZATION

The above analysis has indicated that all the GI groups mainly employed ‘Domestic’ or ‘Domestication’ strategies in the 2015-2017 period, acknowledging the lacking political and discursive opportunities at the EU-level, implying that none of the GI groups attempted to take their claims to this political institution. In fact, over half of the GI-groups’ protests (50.7% of the 682 protests) were cases of ‘Domestic protests,’ i.e. they involved both national issues, participants, and targets (Imig and Tarrow 2000). The limited border-crossing protest participation thus also indicates a low degree of trans- and supranationalization.

¹⁵⁹ In July, *GI France* sent out a petition targeted at the European Council President and the leaders of France, Germany, and Italy, demanding the end of NGOs and ‘human traffickers’ in the Mediterranean. The petition only obtained 411 signatures (France-pétitions.com 2017).

¹⁶⁰ They collected \$234,456 US Dollars (around 196,000 Euros). They first had their *PayPal* account closed by *PayPal*, but found a new crowdfunding site, American *WeSearchr* (founded by Charles Johnson, a contributor to the Breitbart page).

¹⁶¹ The third ‘mission’ was carried out in April 2018, and consisted of a huge banner being spread out on the mountain range between Italy and France with the statement “No Way – You will not make Europe home” on it (a reference to the Australian authorities’ anti-immigration campaign) (see e.g. The Local France 2018).

In order to deduce the GI-groups' Europeanization forms, Table 6.10 below employs the framework outlined in the Theoretical Framework (see Chapter 3), and correlates the 'participant scope' with the 'target scope' for the protests with a 'European' issue scope. It shows that, in terms of Europeanization, the GI-groups mainly rely on 'Domestication' strategies, i.e. targeting the national government or other domestic actors regarding European issues. This involved demonstrations where, for instance, the groups called on the national government to close the national borders or to oppose the EU's refugee quotas.

Table 6.10: The GI groups' forms of Europeanization (2015-2017)¹⁶².

Participant/Target Scope	National	European
National	77.6% (76) (Domestication)	7.1% (7) (Externalization)
European	14.3% (14) (Transnational pressure)	1.0% (1) (Supranationalisation)

Note: N: 98. Pct (No. of protests).

Hence, the groups' main mobilization focus remained on the domestic level, both in the form of 'Domestic protests' and 'Domestication'. The GI groups thus only transnationalized their contention to a very limited extent in terms of transnational pressure and supranationalisation, and very rarely as a means to exert *explicit* pressure on the decision-makers. These actions were instead mainly carried out as part of the groups' more symbolic ambitions of promoting themselves as a pan-European movement, and exercised more general criticism against the liberal mainstream.

6.3. THE ROLE OF NATIONAL CONTEXTS AND POLITICAL AND DISCURSIVE OPPORTUNITIES

As briefly explained above, the national GI groups had very different political and discursive opportunities in their respective domestic settings. The political opportunities were nearly or entirely open in France, Italy, Hungary, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic, yet, except for *GI France*, the groups' more limited material resources, plus the fact that they had problems establishing themselves on their

¹⁶² For the 'Participant' scopes, the 'Local' and 'National' participation are collated to 'National' participants, while the 'Cross-border' and 'European' both count as 'European'. In terms of the 'Target' scope, it is only the protests targeting the national government or the EU, which are included, explaining the relatively low number of protests.

respective domestic far right scenes,¹⁶³ meant that they did not organize many actions domestically (see section 6.1). In Austria, *GI Austria* is embedded in the domestic far right scene, mainly due to its connections with the *Burschenschaften* (Weidinger 2016), and the approval of *FPÖ* (Ajanovic et al. 2016). Yet, it faces state surveillance, and thus, more closed political opportunities than most of the other GI-groups (together with *GI Germany*), making it carry out a larger share of confrontational actions.

The following section examines *GI Germany*, *GI France*, and *GI Czech Republic*'s protest developments and strategies in the 2015-2017 period more closely in order to deduce the exact role of their different domestic contexts, POS, DOS, and resources in the period. These differences meant that the groups mobilized on diverse issues and with varied protest strategies. As an introductory notion, one should keep *all* of their limited membership and protest sizes in mind throughout the analysis.

PROTEST DEVELOPMENTS OF GI FRANCE, GI GERMANY, AND GI CZECH REPUBLIC

Each section begins with a more general consideration of the group's domestic political and discursive opportunities, followed by a closer consideration of its protest developments in the 2015-2017 period.

GI France

GI France faces rather open domestic political opportunities (see Appendix C). It had managed to establish itself as a rather prominent and active French far right actor prior to 2015,¹⁶⁴ despite the strong role of a far right *party* in the country, namely *Front National* (Now *National Rally*). While this has led to a lower level of far right extra-parliamentary mobilization in other countries, this is not the case in France. This mainly relates to the symbiotic nature between *Front National* and the French New

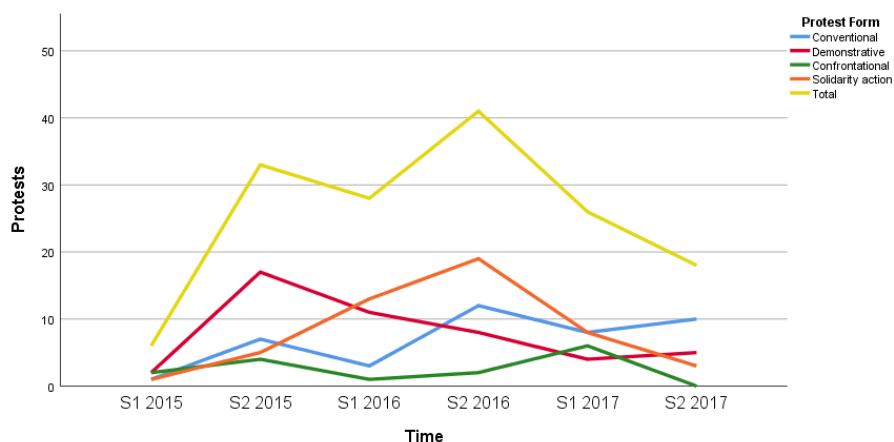
¹⁶³ Either due to 'out-crowding' by the respective governments (in Hungary and Czech Republic) or main far right parties (Slovenia), or hostility from the other domestic far right actors (Italy).

¹⁶⁴ Starting with the Poitiers roof occupation in October 2012, the group carried out a row of controversial protest actions, which ensured considerable media attention (see e.g. Licourt 2019 for a short overview). These actions were mainly in the form of direct social actions (see p. xx), such as 'securitisation' of the metro in Lille in 2014 (see e.g. Licourt 2014), defending the autochthonous population against 'riffraff' ('racailles'), plus 'solidarity' actions in favour of the French homeless people since January 2013 (see e.g. Le Cain 2015). Moreover, in 2013-2014, it also mobilized strongly against the *Loi Taubira* (Taubira Law), which permitted marriages between homosexual couples, both as part of numerous demonstrations together with other French far right groups, but also through its occupation of *UMP*'s headquarters (see e.g. Le Parisien 2014).

Right extra-parliamentary actors, inferring that the two types of actors co-exist on the French far right scene without this inhibiting any of their activity levels or mobilization spaces (see e.g. Castelli Gattinara 2018). *The Identitarians* (ex-*Identitarian Bloc*) thus play a particularly prominent role in France, being the “most important extra-parliamentary national opposition,” also in terms of *Front National* recruitment (Camus as cited in Speit 2018), and *GI France* has benefitted from its strong role and position.

The more accommodative reception of the group on the French political scene also partly explains why *GI France* did not ‘radicalize’ its contention substantially at any point in the 2015-2017 period (see Figure 6.3 below). Instead, the group mainly opted for demonstrative and conventional actions, aside from the annually recurring winter solidarity actions. These types of actions were initiated by *The Identitarians* in the mid-2000s (François 2009) and several local GI groups continued the distribution of soup and clothes to homeless autochthonous people in the winters of 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, employing the welfare protectionist slogan ‘Ours before the others’ (‘Les nôtres avant les autres’)¹⁶⁵. The (comparatively limited) confrontational actions mainly involved direct social actions, for example when protesting against refugee housing by ‘occupying’ or blocking entrances to a centre (see e.g. Génération Identitaire 2015c).

Figure 6.3: *GI France*’s protest forms per semester (2015-2017).



Note: (N: 152). Cramer’s V = .293** (*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001).

¹⁶⁵ In the first months of 2015, *GI France* shared many posts from regional and local French GI groups, but only containing pictures. These could no longer be accessed after the Facebook-network was closed down in 2018. It is my assumption that these posts contained pictures of ‘social assistance’ acts, but as this cannot be verified, they have not been included in the protest event data.

As can be seen in Table 6.11 below, *GI France* strongly focused its protest actions on the national level, as 87% of its protests had a domestic target, either involving the national government (33% of the protests) or other domestic actors, such as the autochthonous French citizens, which were aided through the solidarity actions (also 33%). Thus, the group mainly worked on the domestic mainstreaming of far right worldviews, and only organized a few protest actions against the EU or other European decision-makers in the 2015-2017 period. It therefore perceived the domestic political and discursive opportunities as more promising and mainly mobilized around ‘Domestic’ issues, while only pursuing a supranationalisation strategy in 2017, together with the other GI-groups in the ‘Defend Europe’ mission (see above).

Table 6.11: Issue and target scopes of *GI France*’s protests (2015-2017).

Issue/Target	National		European		Other	Total
		<i>Nat.Gov</i>		<i>EU</i>		
National	74.3 (113)	26.3 (40)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	2.6 (4)	77.0 (117)
European	12.5 (19)	6.6 (10)	3.3 (5)	2.0 (3)	7.2 (11)	23.0 (35)
Total	86.8 (132)	32.9 (50)	3.3 (5)	2.0 (3)	9.9 (15)	100.0 (152)

Note: N: 152. Pct (No. of protests). Cramer’s V = .536*** (*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001). The figures for ‘National government’ and ‘EU’ form part of the ‘National’ and ‘European’ totals respectively.

In fact, *GI France* only targeted the EU in three protests. One of these was after the European Commission published its refugee quota proposal. On May 23, 2015, i.e. ten days after the quotas were officially proposed, and four days after the French President Hollande had refused these quotas (The Local France 2015),¹⁶⁶ *GI France* ‘occupied’ the European Commission’s Paris office (Ibid.)¹⁶⁷. *GI France* thus seized both the open domestic and European discursive opportunity created by the division between the EU’s demands and the MS’ responses, in order to highlight the EU’s inadequate dealing with third-country immigration. The group thus targeted the EU,

¹⁶⁶ *GI Denmark* and *GI Czech Republic* similarly targeted ‘European Houses’ in their respective capitals in early 2018. *GI Czech Republic*’s twenty-minute blockade was directed at the European Commission (EC), which had offices in the building, after the EC had instigated infringement procedures against the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary, because they rejected the immigration quotas. The activists wore prison uniforms, and held signs with the statement: “I love my country, and the EU sees me as a criminal because of that,” in Czech, Polish, and Hungarian (Interview with *GI Czech Republic* 2018).

¹⁶⁷ The protest linked to *GI Austria*’s occupation of the EU’s Agency for Human Rights (FRA) a week later (*GI Austria* 2015). *GI Austria* argued that FRA symbolized the ‘Lobby for the Great Replacement’, due to its humanist and open-armed endorsement of refugees and immigrants (Ibid.).

albeit on domestic soil, speaking into the ongoing domestic debates about the reception of refugees (see e.g. Atlantico 2016), and exploited the more open domestic political opportunities for mobilization.

The domestic setting was thus in focus in most of *GI France's* protests, and many of these actions were related to the 'refugee crisis'. In September 2015, for instance, the French government agreed to take in 24,000 refugees over a two-year period (McPartland 2015a). At this point, the French population was still in favour of accepting refugees (Atlantico 2016). However, from autumn 2015 onwards, there was a strong media debate in France about problems related to refugee and migrant camps, especially in Calais and Paris (see Appendix C). As the public was dissatisfied with the government's handling of the problems, it led to growing popular dismay (Ibid.). As Castelli Gattinara (2018) has already demonstrated empirically, *GI France* seized this discursive opportunity and carried out several "direct interventions and confrontational actions against the settlement, displacement, and management of migrants" in various cities across France throughout the three year period (2018: 279). In October-November 2015, this particularly involved the targeting of refugee housing facilities (see e.g. Génération Identitaire 2015c). Research has, in fact, shown that such local actions against migrant centres are a rather 'common' protest response, when politicians decide to place asylum seekers and refugees in a specified location (see e.g. Haselbacher & Rosenberger 2018 for more). Moreover, *GI France* also organized a few protests at the various French border crossings, for example, against the refugees at the Italian border by Ventimiglia in June 2015, a protest that also targeted the EU (Génération Identitaire 2015a).

The problems in Calais, in fact, provided one of the best opportunities for *GI France* to attract public attention and (potential) resonance. Together with the growing migratory pressure on the French-British border-crossing, the debate about the 'Calais Jungle's' future received much political and societal attention in France in the 2015-2016 period (see e.g. McPartland 2015b). After an escalation of the situation in March 2016, *GI France* blocked the bridges between the camp and the city, arguing that this was to curb the rising crime rates and attacks on the security forces (Robert 2017).

Moreover, *GI France* was quick to react to the surge in public disquiet in the aftermath of terrorist attacks (see e.g. Atlantico 2016). The group organized numerous protest actions on the issues of anti-terrorism and radical Islam, attempting to profit from the fear and anger generated amongst the population. Most ISIS attacks in France and Europe were followed by actions that included demands for an 'Expulsion of the Islamists' (see e.g. Génération Identitaire 2015b). This was the case after the attacks on Bataclan in November 2015, Brussels April 2016, the Bastille Day attack in Nice in July 2016, and the killing of a priest in Normandy in July 2016 (leading to the 'Defend your church!' ('Défend ton église') campaign (see e.g. Bui 2016)). At the same time, *GI France* also mobilized strongly against the 'Islamist' *Union of Islamic*

Organizations in France ('*Union des organisations islamiques de France*' (UOIF)), an organization, *Front National* also opposed (see e.g. Fayet 2017).

Hence, due to its amassed resources from the 2012-2015 period, the national *GI France* group and its local chapters were able to organize protest actions rather frequently in the 2015-2017 period, mobilizing heavily against Islam, refugees, and immigrants. Despite the European nature of the 'refugee crisis,' *GI France* mainly mobilized on national issues (around 77% of its protests) and targeted national actors (87% of all its protests) (see Table 6.11), indicating that the group perceived the domestic opportunities as most favourable for its mobilization. This aligns with the expectations from the theoretical framework.

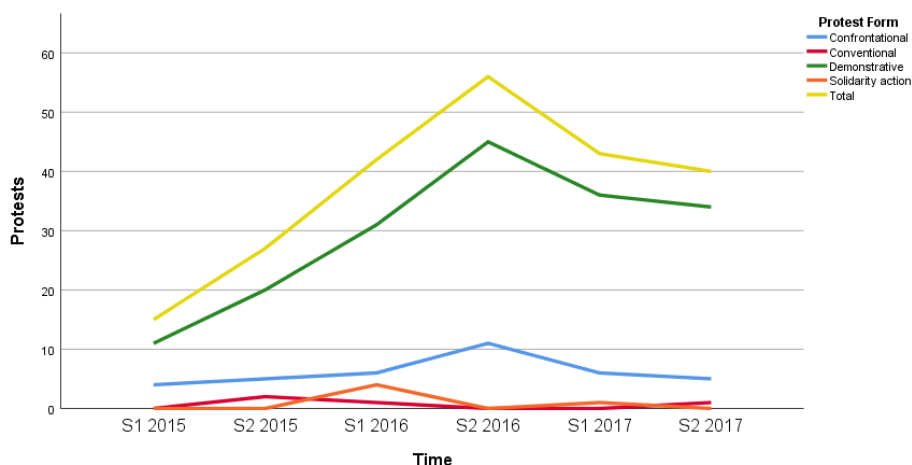
GI Germany

While *GI France* had organized numerous protest actions prior to 2015, it was only from 2015 onwards that it is possible to discern a substantial increase in *GI Germany*'s protest frequency. This is mainly due to the opening domestic discursive opportunities, at least in Eastern Germany, due to *PEGIDA Germany*'s successful mobilization in Dresden (Rucht 2018). *PEGIDA*'s rise therefore acted as a catalyst for *GI Germany*'s protests (Vorländer as cited in Merkur 2018). The special political and societal circumstances of Saxony (where one finds Dresden) also explains why the local GI groups in this federal state by far mobilized most frequently (see map in section 6.1). Yet, at the same time, the German history of Nazism infers that the German far right, including *GI Germany*, experiences strong societal suppression attempts from both the authorities, the media, and the public (see e.g. Caiani et al. 2012). The Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution ('*Verfassungsschutz*') has thus monitored *GI Germany* since 2016, just as certain regional groups have been under surveillance for a longer period, due to the group's racist worldview and anti-systemic nature (ARD 2016). Hence, even though the group had comparably more open mobilization opportunities in Saxony, *GI Germany*, as a whole, faced closed political opportunities.

The political opportunity framework suggests that with closed, or limited, political and discursive opportunities, non-institutional collective actors are likely to employ more disruptive protest tactics (Tarrow 2001). This finding is to some extent based on data from the German context, where historically, extreme right mobilization has been very violent and disruptive (see e.g. Rucht 2018). Yet, as can be seen in Figure 6.4 below, similar to *GI France*, *GI Germany*'s protest actions mainly involved demonstrative actions, usually taking the form of non-violent direct social actions, aimed at undermining the national mainstream and the liberal hegemony. Nevertheless, *GI Germany* did, in fact, carry out more confrontational actions than by its French namesake, in accordance with the theoretical expectations. This was particularly the case in the second half of 2016 (see Figure 6.4), just as the group in general organized most protests in 2016, as an effect of the electoral gains for *AfD* at

the regional levels from May 2016 onwards. The party's rise simultaneously inferred that the domestic opportunities for far right activism significantly increased, leading the *GI Germany* groups' actions to both rise in numbers, but also to become more confrontational ($V = .184$). In August 2016, *GI Germany* thus occupied the symbolic Brandenburg Gate, a protest that was considered a landmark event for the group, as it led to a lot of media attention (see e.g. Welt 2016b; Rbb24 2016).

Figure 6.4: *GI Germany's* protest forms per semester (2015-2017).



Note: N: 223. Cramer's $V = .184$ (* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$).

Yet, while the Brandenburg Gate protest addressed the national government, the majority of the confrontational actions instead targeted domestic left-wing representatives, in an intimidation attempt (see e.g. Spiegel 2015b). As was the case for *GI France*, and again, due to the closed opportunities at the EU-level, *GI Germany* almost exclusively targeted local or national actors (see Table 6.12 below). The protests addressed at the local and national governments mainly consisted of admonishing them for their policy decisions but also for attempting to dissuade people from voting for a given politician at upcoming elections¹⁶⁸, and in general, these protests mainly concerned immigration and refugee-related issues. Conversely, the EU was only targeted in one of *GI Germany's* protest actions, just as it made two banner drops at pro-EU actors' events, with the statement 'Our Europe is not your Union' (see e.g. *GI Germany* 2017d).

¹⁶⁸ The protests have included, for instance, seven explicit Anti-Merkel actions, which were mainly organized around the time of the national elections in November 2017.

Table 6.12: Issue and target scopes of GI Germany's protests (2015-2017).

Issue/Target	National	European		Other	Total	
		<i>Nat.Gov</i>	<i>EU</i>			
National	44.4 (99)	16.6 (37)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	3.1 (7)	47.5 (106)
European	41.7 (93)	15.7 (35)	2.2 (5)	0.4 (1)	8.5 (19)	52.5 (117)
Total	86.1 (192)	32.3 (72)	2.2 (5)	0.4 (1)	11.6 (26)	100.0 (223)

Note: N: 223. Pct (No. of protests). Cramer's V = .214 (*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001). The figures for 'National government' and 'EU' form part of the 'National' and 'European' totals respectively.

In terms of the protest issues, then, aside from participating in *PEGIDA Germany's* demonstrations from early on, *GI Germany* also largely adopted *PEGIDA's* anti-establishment agenda, for instance its 'lying press' mantra (see e.g. *GI Germany* 2017a). Unlike *GI France*, *GI Germany* thus organized several protests targeted at mainstream media and its (alleged) 'political correctness,' while presenting itself as the victim of persecution by both the media and the left (see e.g. *GI Germany* 2016f; *GI Germany* 2016h). This strategy of self-victimization vis-à-vis actors who uphold the "societal consensus" against the far right is, in fact, one of the features that makes Germany "a special case for right-wing extremism" (Caiani et al. 2012: 48). Similarly, when the German Minister of Justice Heiko Maas introduced new legislation involving the monitoring of websites in 2017, *GI Germany* strongly opposed this move, and made numerous protest actions derogatorily targeting the minister (see e.g. *GI Germany* n.d.e). Thus, many of the group's protests against national targets were directed at other actors aside from the government, including left-wing opposition parties, the media, and anti-racist civil societal organizations.

Aside from numerous similar actions against left-wing parties and actors, the German government, particularly Angela Merkel, became the target for the brunt of the German GI protests. For one, her announcement of an 'open border' policy in late-August 2015 quickly came under fire by both the leader of CDU's sister party, CSU, and by the German far right, including *GI Germany*, which could use CSU's certification of the anti-immigratory viewpoints as a legitimization of their cause (see e.g. Gupta 2008). Hence, in September 2015, shortly after the Austrian and German governments had decided in conjunction to allow asylum seekers, who wished to travel to Germany, passage to Austria from Hungary, *GI Austria* initiated a campaign called "Secure borders for a secure future" ("Sichere Grenzen für eine sichere Zukunft"), which *GI Germany* joined. Throughout the winter of 2015-2016, *GI Germany* thus took part in demonstrations on the Austrian-German border organized by *GI Austria* (*GI Germany* 2015e). These protests have, in fact, been the best-attended GI demonstrations so far. The two groups also jointly launched a 'We are the

border' ('Wir sind die Grenze') campaign (GI Germany 2015f), just as *GI Saxony* made several symbolic protests close to the Czech border (GI Germany 2015g)¹⁶⁹.

GI Germany's opposition to the reception of refugees was also targeted at other societal actors, particularly pro-refugee NGOs. In 2016 and 2017 (i.e. in the lead up to GI's 'Defend Europe' campaign), *GI Germany* carried out many confrontational and demonstrative protests against civil societal actors, as several of the NGOs that attempted to save people from drowning in the Mediterranean came from Germany (Klingst 2017). This 'dissuasion' strategy against left-wing organizations (see e.g. Castelli Gattinara 2018) overlapped with the many disruptions and building occupations of its other political adversaries throughout the period.

Like *GI France*, *GI Germany* also made protest actions in response to practically all larger terrorist attacks in Europe in an attempt to exploit the fear, just as the local GI groups frequently mobilized when a third-country immigrant had perpetrated violent attacks. The local and national GI groups thus mobilized strongly in July-September 2016, after the attacks in France and Germany. The GI activists employed the slogan 'Terror as the normal state' ('Terror als Normalzustand') (GI Germany 2017e), as a means of drawing attention to the problems of radical Islam. The attack on the Berlin Christmas market in December 2016 similarly led to strong mobilization, including a blockade of the CDU office in Berlin (GI Germany 2016j). The following year, the group organized a 'No victim is forgotten' ('Kein Opfer ist vergessen') campaign (GI Germany n.d.g), as part of the criticism against the mainstream media and political establishment, which 'lied' about e.g. crime levels of migrants, a rationale that again strongly aligned with the utterances made by *Pegida Germany* (see e.g. Vorländer et al. 2018). Moreover, in the aftermath of the attacks on women on New Year's Eve 2015-2016 in Cologne, local German and Austrian GI groups exploited the great outcry by the public, the media, and several mainstream politicians. They attempted to speak into this growing fear and anger by provocatively handing out pepper spray and CS gas to women as a means of self-protection (see e.g. GI Germany 2016d; GI Austria 2016b).

Due to its particular political context, and unlike *GI France*, most of *GI Germany's* protests involved the expression of strong anti-establishment frames, especially targeted at the media and left wing politicians and activists. The group thus made a much more concerted effort at attempting to reverse the liberal hegemony and making it acceptable to voice nationalist sentiments by constantly second-guessing the actions of the left. In terms of protest targets, the data shows that *GI Germany* mainly targeted

¹⁶⁹ Yet, unlike *GI France* and *GI Austria*, *GI Germany* did not carry out many protest actions against refugee housing except for a few protests. The lacking (published) protests against the refugee centres could be related to the fact that *GI Germany* did not want to be associated with the more violent attacks perpetrated by other extreme right activists in the country, especially in Eastern Germany (see e.g. Rucht 2018).

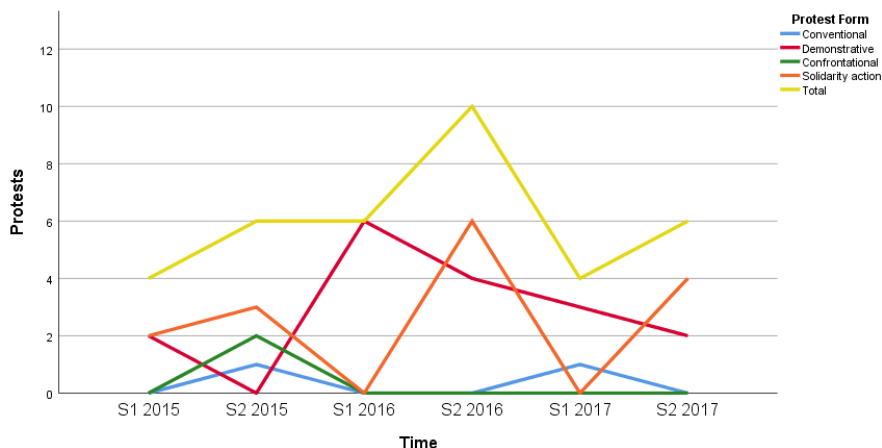
national actors, and that more of these actions involved domestication strategies than was the case for *GI France* (see above). Moreover, due to the repression of the far right in the country, *GI Germany's* protests frequently had a more disruptive and confrontational form than was the case for *GI France*.

GI Czech Republic

Compared to *GI France* and *GI Germany*, *GI Czech Republic* was not very active on the streets in the 2015-2017 period, despite its relatively open political opportunities (see Appendix C). While the group gradually obtained a stable structure, built up around 20 core members (Berlekamp & Opielka 2018), its rather low membership numbers and its more general lack of resources inhibited its actions (Interview with *GI Czech Republic* 2018). Furthermore, as most members of the Czech political establishment also opposed the EU's demands and third-country (particularly Muslim) immigration, there was also a lack of political space on the national scene (Berlekamp & Opielka 2018). Moreover, unlike *Blok Against Islam*, *GI Czech Republic* did not forge close relations to a far right party present in the parliament, even though Okamura from *Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD)* did join some of *National Democracy's* demonstrations, together with the Czech *GI* group.

These factors partly explain the predominance of 'solidarity actions' as *GI Czech Republic's* protest form (see Figure 6.5 below), together with demonstrative actions, which peaked in the first half of 2016 ($V = .518$), and its rather frequent participation in demonstrative protests organised by other groups (see above).

Figure 6.5: *GI Czech Republic's* protest forms per semester (2015-2017).



Note: N: 36. Cramer's $V = .518^*$ (* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$)

Several of *GI Czech Republic*'s protest actions have thus consisted of the participation in other domestic far right groups' demonstrations, both the anti-Islam group *Blok against Islam*, but especially the national-conservative and extreme right *NO to Brussels - National Democracy* party, led by Adam Bartos,¹⁷⁰ which, as its name indicates, is against the EU¹⁷¹. This cooperation partner, combined with other factors,¹⁷² indicates that *GI Czech Republic* does not fear being associated with the extreme right (Berlekamp & Opielka 2018). This can partly be explained by the different perception of the extreme right in Eastern Europe, which implies that society is less preoccupied with degrees of right-wingedness, when determining a political actor's legitimacy (see e.g. Minkenberg 2018).

Considering the group's targets during the 'refugee crisis' (see Table 6.13 below), *GI Czech Republic* actively mobilized against the reception of refugees, largely directing its criticism against the EU. Yet, the protests were mainly targeted at the national government. The Czech GI group demanded it to align itself with the other Visegrad countries. In July 2015, for instance, the group posted an open letter to the government, calling for a referendum on non-EU immigration to the Czech Republic, stating that said migrants posed a health, social, and security threat to the Czechs, while also being better off staying in their home countries (GI Czech Republic 2015c).

Table 6.13: Issue and target scopes of *GI Czech Republic*' protests (2015-2017).

Issue/Target	National	European		Other	Total	
		Nat. Gov	EU			
National	44.4 (16)	2.8 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.5 (2)	50.0 (18)
European	27.8 (10)	16.7 (6)	16.7 (6)	2.8 (1)	0.5 (2)	50.0 (18)
Total	72.2 (26)	19.4 (7)	16.7 (6)	2.8 (1)	11.1 (4)	100.0 (36)

Note: N: 36. Pct (No. of protests). Cramer's V = .453* (*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001). The figures for 'National government' and 'EU' form part of the 'National' and 'European' totals respectively.

¹⁷⁰ In March 2016, the leader of *National Democracy*, Bartoš, was sentenced for anti-Semitic statements, and in April the same year, the Czech police introduced legal proceedings against him for his written and verbal 'attacks on human dignity' (Bučan 2016).

¹⁷¹ When asked about this cooperation in the interview, the *GI Czech Republic* spokesperson stated that he would not refer to it as 'cooperation', but simply 'event participation' by *GI Czech Republic*, because GI protested against immigration and did not necessarily agree with *all* of the party's policies. This is again a very clear demonstration of the GI groups' overall ambition of appearing moderate.

¹⁷² For instance, *GI Czech Republic*'s choice to commemorate the day of an American airstrike in Ústí nad Labem in April 2016, which has also been done by other Czech extreme right groups in the past (Berlekamp & Opielka 2018), just as many of its website posts are phrased considerably more radically than the Western European groups.

The group also organized a few demonstrations against the refugee quotas, and one explicit anti-EU protest in the 2015-2017 period. This mobilization began with the European Commission's initial quota proposal in May 2015, which was rejected by the Czech government from early on (see e.g. Robert et al. 2015). Yet, it still led to strong Czech far right street mobilization. *GI Czech Republic* directed its demands towards the government, mainly arguing for the maintenance of national sovereignty of the EU MS, and the right for the Czech Republic to oppose the quotas.

The relatively strong mobilization against the quotas can partly be explained by the fact that the Czech Republic has one of the most Eurosceptic populations in Europe (see e.g. European Commission 2015b), just as most Czechs were against the reception of refugees (Hovet 2015). It was thus a very opportune topic for the Czech far right to mobilize around during the 'refugee crisis', even though, as mentioned above, it was shared with many mainstream politicians already, and the government thus responded to the demands from early on (see also Hafez 2018).

GI Czech Republic also joined *National Democracy's* demonstrations in July 2015 (the so-called 'People's Camps') (see e.g. *GI Czech Republic* 2015d), which targeted the national government in order to change the EU's policies. In 2016, this anti-refugee mobilization continued, and after having joined several demonstrations organized by other actors (see section 6.1), in April the Czech GI group organized its own demonstration explicitly targeting the EU around its latest attempt at instating EU MS refugee quotas. The protest attracted around 30 participants (*GI Czech Republic* 2016b)¹⁷³. Moreover, in response to the Brexit-vote in June, on the Czech Statehood Day (September 28, 2016), *GI Czech Republic* organised a 'funeral procession' simulating the 'death' of the concept of the EU. The group carried a coffin draped in the EU-flag to the Czech Parliament and buried it in a wastebasket, under the symbolic sounds of the "March of the Fallen Revolutionaries" (*GI Czech Republic* 2016c).

Several of *GI Czech Republic's* protests thus went up against the EU's demands, yet, without explicitly targeting the institution. Yet, it *did* mobilize more explicitly against the EU's demands than *GI Germany* and *GI France*, largely because of the government's rejection of the quotas, plus the public's attitude towards the EU and the refugees (see Hafez 2018). The group thus clearly made use of a 'domestication' strategy during the 'crisis', but its lacking resources, plus the limited political space on the far right, inferred a considerably low street mobilization frequency, just as the group did not organize many demonstrations on its own initiative, instead joining more well-established groups.

¹⁷³ The protest invitation involved a long list of criticisms, such as the loss of sovereignty, the security risks due to migration, and the irresponsible U.S.-backed foreign policy of the EU, which "co-sponsored" the current wave of migration (*GI Czech Republic* 2016b).

6.4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The above analysis has shown that the national and local GI groups display large differences in their protest frequencies. This was explained as being largely due to the varied roles of their respective countries' main radical right parties (Western European groups), the government's position on immigration (Eastern European groups), and the groupuscules' levels of material resources. Hence, while *GI France*, *GI Germany*, and *GI Austria* all organized frequent protest actions in the 2015-2017 period, *GI Italy*, *GI Czech Republic*, *GI Slovenia*, and *GI Hungary* struggled to mobilize support and thus also to organize protests.

In terms of Europeanization, the analysis showed that hardly any of the national and local GI groups targeted the EU in their protest actions, nor paid much attention to the EU and its institutions more generally in the 2015-2017 period, instead opting for a 'domestication strategy.' This was also anticipated in the theoretical framework, due to both *Generation Identity's* more conflictual relationship with the EU, and the topic of third-country immigration, which is a highly politicized policy issue, inferring a predominance for domestic mobilization (see Chapter 5).

Moreover, the national focus also aligns with the groups' overarching viewpoints and enemy-constructions, which mainly involve antagonist framings of the proponents of liberalism, as part of GI's aim of overturning the societal liberal hegemony. The GI groups thus construct many of their collective action frames around domestic 'others,' a strategy that if applied by *all* the GI groups entails the targeting of a wide selection of the European liberal elite. Moreover, instead of targeting the EU, one of the groups' transnational protests, the 'Defend Europe mission', was also aimed at European pro-refugee NGOs. In fact, of the seven groups, only *GI Italy* and *GI Czech Republic* mobilized explicitly against the EU, in alignment with the domestic far right (see e.g. Hafez 2018). Aside from *GI France* and *GI Austria's* protests at the offices of the European Commission and FRA respectively, it was only *GI Czech Republic*, which, mostly together with *National Democracy*, exercised pressure on the national government in order to make it decline the EU's quota proposal.

The closer analysis of *GI France*, *GI Germany*, and *GI Czech Republic's* protest developments in the 2015-2017 period further underlined the high variation in the groups' protest frequencies, employment of tactics, specific mobilization issues, and targets. Interestingly, the section also further demonstrated how particularly *GI France* and *GI Germany* mobilize around specific events and political decisions, rather than solely focusing on the formulation of their own movement agenda, just as *GI Germany's* involvement in the German new right scene explains its strong anti-media and –establishment agenda as compared to the French and Czech groups. These differences are strongly related to the three groups' diverse domestic political and discursive opportunities, times of creation, and resources, just as their nation-states' different political, historical, and societal contexts suggest the necessity for varied

types of protest strategies and issue foci. This thus accentuates the continued high relevance of the national contexts for far right mobilization, despite the GI groups' concerted efforts to appear as a united European force.

Having now highlighted the differences across the countries, the initial section of the chapter also indicated that the groups display a certain level of homogeneity across the national boundaries, as they mobilized with remarkably similar protest forms, tactics, and campaign issues in the period, indicating that some form of diffusion is taking place between them.

Transnational Diffusion of GI Protest Tactics and Campaign Issues

The GI groups' protest activities have several similar features, suggesting a process of diffusion in the shape of '*proximal diffusion*,' implying actors, who "mimic others who are spatially or culturally relevant to them" (Soule 2004: 295). The GI activists thus both imitate European left-wing movements' action repertoires (see Chapter 5), but also each other's. For one, all of the other national GI-groups adopted *GI France*'s corporate identity (Eckes 2016), including its logo, worldview, protest forms, and rationale through both in- and direct diffusion channels (see Chapter 8 for more on this).

During the 2015-2017 period, one can also observe various types of campaign and protest tactic diffusion taking place between the groups, despite their rather varied national strategies in terms of street mobilization in the period. As an example, *GI Italy* and *GI Germany* adopted *GI Austria*'s 'Great Replacement' campaign. Moreover, the rise in Islamist terrorist attacks on European soil in the period 2015-2016 also led to several GI protests against Islamist terrorism. One of their more explicit ways of demonstrating the dangerous nature of Jihadi Islamists was through public performances of imitated terrorist attacks and/or ISIS killings. This particular type of protest event began in Austria in September 2014 (Erstaunlich 2014), and diffused to Prague (*GI Germany* FB-post), several German cities (see e.g. *GI Austria* 2016g), and Budapest (*GI Hungary* FB-post). Another similar example of diffusion is the expression of anti-Islamization by dressing up statues in burkas as an indication of 'the future of Europe'. The German *GI Hannover* group first carried out this protest tactic in July 2013 (*GI Germany* FB-post). Local groups from *GI Austria* (*GI Austria* 2016h), *GI Czech Republic* (*GI Czech Republic* FB-post), and *GI Italy* (*GI Italy* 2016b) later emulated it in their own domestic settings, most famously by *GI Vienna*, which covered the 20 meter high Maria-Theresien statue with a burka, leading to a lot

of media attention¹⁷⁴ (see e.g. Heute 2016). Moreover, as demonstrated above, the solidarity actions, which *GI France* adopted from *Bloc Identitaire* were also adapted to the Czech, Austrian, and German settings, albeit in rather different forms (especially in the Czech Republic), and to a much more limited extent. Other examples of protest tactic diffusion include banner-drops from noticeable and symbolic buildings (often the first type of protest by a new GI group), and hanging signs with slogans around the necks of statues of prominent writers (see e.g. GI Germany 2017f; GI Italy 2017a).

When asked about this similarity in protest tactics, *GI Denmark's* spokesperson explained that the GI-groups “are very inspired by each other,” and that there is a “healthy competition” between the groups in terms of making the most aesthetically pleasing protests. They thus observe the protest activities of the other national groups, and “either you think ‘that would never have worked here’ or ‘maybe we can use some of it in another context, if it becomes relevant’”. It is thus seen as “a creative process”, where “you collect such fragments that you can use when the occasion fits” (Interview with GI Denmark 2018)¹⁷⁵.

This is also the case with several terms and slogans that the various national GI groups attempt to introduce into the societal discourse of their countries. These terms mainly consist of diminutions of extreme right slogans, such as ‘remigration’ instead of ‘foreigners out!’ (‘Ausländer raus!’) (Aftenberger 2017), just as the term ‘Great Replacement’ is also a prominent example. Jean-David Cattin (*GI France*) and Alexander Markovics (*GI Austria*), for instance, introduced and explained the concept to the Czech GI group at a meeting in the Czech Republic in May 2015 (GI Czech Republic 2015b), whereafter *GI Czech Republic* employed it in subsequent protest actions (see e.g. GI Czech Republic 2015e)¹⁷⁶. There are numerous other examples of

¹⁷⁴ For example, *GI Italy* adapted the burka-draping of statues to the Italian setting. The group posted the following Facebook post: “This action, which is naturally inspired by others of this kind carried out in Europe, *first of all on the statue of Empress Maria Theresa in Vienna*, is something completely new to our country, and the effect we have achieved has been a complete success” (GI Italy FB-post, author’s emphasis).

¹⁷⁵ Explaining the diffusion process of protest actions, *GI Denmark's* spokesperson also highlights the autonomy granted to each group as a plus because all groups need to address their own national and regional cultures: “[...] all countries have different cultures and we learn a lot from each other as well. Because well, France started it all, so they might have one idea about what works. When it then moves to, for example, Austria and Italy, then they work out which of the things have been local, and which can be spread throughout Europe, so there are some cultural differences. We, for instance, clearly use more humour here in Denmark than they might in France, because the culture is a little different” (Interview with GI Denmark 2018).

¹⁷⁶ Aside from the terms that diffuse from one GI group to the others, some of the national GI groups also adapt terms and slogans introduced by other political actors. One prominent example is *GI France's* use of the Australian government’s dissuasion campaign against

such direct and indirect diffusion processes of protest tactics and slogans, which the groups can employ when and if they deem it fitting. This indicates that the groups follow each other's protest actions rather closely and draw inspiration from each other, demonstrating a concerted attempt at appearing as a united transnational coalition.

Hence, the groups have not Europeanized their collective action to a large degree in terms of protest targets, participation, and events. Instead, the Europeanization mainly takes place around the transnational diffusion of protest campaigns, forms, and tactics, with the shared aim of reversing the liberal hegemony in the European societies, plus, more broadly, to 'defend Europe' in terms of its people (security and demography), borders (soil) and culture (identity). Thus, while the groups' specific protest issues do not align across the borders from a timing perspective (it was only *GI Austria* and *GI Germany*, for example, which organized border security demonstrations in 2015), the groups still formulate shared, European, responses to the 'threats' facing the continent, indicating a Europeanization from below.

The chapter thus revealed that the GI coalition has not Europeanized their contention by targeting the EU and its institutions, but that it is rather working towards suggesting 'Another Europe' externally of the EU institutions and in opposition to mainstream and left-wing liberal influences. The GI groups do this by employing collective protest repertoires and main collective action frames appropriated to the domestic settings. In this political setting, the extra-parliamentary pressures are largely replaced with the attempt to influence popular opinion, very much in alignment with Kriesi (2004) and Goodwin & Jasper's (1999) expectations about subcultural actors. In this way, the GI groups exercise an indirect pressure on the national and European governments by drawing attention to their faulty handling of the 'refugee crisis', yet, without (always) targeting them directly.

asylum seekers, which it launched in April 2014, with the slogan "NO WAY! You will not make Australia home" (see e.g. Laughland 2014). *GI France* activists wrote the slogan on a banner, which was placed at the Italian-French border in 2015, having replaced the word 'Australia' with 'Europe' (Génération Identitaire 2015a), just as the German *GI Zwickau* local group, for instance, also employed the slogan in a protest against immigrants (*GI Germany* 2016c).

CHAPTER 7. FORTRESS EUROPE AND EUROPEANIZATION OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

This chapter considers the collective action of the extra-parliamentary groups and activists that were among the initial 12 signatories of the *Prague Declaration* in January 2016 and thus became members of the *Fortress Europe* (FE) coalition. The groups are *PEGIDA Germany*, *PEGIDA Netherlands*, *For Freedom* (Denmark), *We Do Not Want Islam in the Czech Republic* (*IVČRN*), the *Czech Blok Against Islam* (*BPI*) (after May 2016: *Block Against Islamization*), *PEGIDA Austria*, *NGO International Stop Immigration/Islamisation Society* (*NGO ISIS*)¹⁷⁷ (Estonia), and *PEGIDA UK*¹⁷⁸.

The chapter is organized in the same way as Chapter 6. It thus aims to explore the Europeanization of the FE-groups' collective action in terms of: 1) alignment of protest repertoires and frequencies across the European groups; 2) the protest 'scopes' (i.e. issue, targets, participants, and events) and the groups' forms of Europeanization; and finally, 3) the role of the national contexts for Europeanization. The chapter starts out with a consideration of the extra-parliamentary groups' protest repertoires in the 2015-2017 period and the degree of alignment between the various national groups. This is followed by an analysis of the groups' collective action Europeanization, with a focus on the scopes of the groups' issues, targets, participants, and events, and their (potential) changes as the 'crisis' developed. The section ends with an analysis of the groups' forms of Europeanization. The last section explores the role of the national political and discursive opportunities for far right Europeanization, by closely analyzing *PEGIDA Germany*, *IVČRN/BPI*, and *PEGIDA Netherlands*' mobilization in the period. The three were chosen due to: a) their importance in the FE coalition; b) their comparability to the three GI groups' collective action analyzed in Chapter 6; and c) their positioning within Western and Eastern Europe respectively.

¹⁷⁷ *NGO ISIS* consists of Maria Kaljuste (*EKRE*) and Georg Kirsberg (*Free Party*), who set up the association in the summer of 2015. Kirsberg became a member of *EKRE* in July 2016, after having been excluded from the *Free Party* in June that year, due to charges of racism (*DELFI* 2016).

¹⁷⁸ *PEGIDA Bulgaria* also signed the *Prague Declaration* in January 2016. Yet, the group has not been included in the analysis due to the difficulties in identifying its protest events.

7.1. THE FE-GROUPS' PROTEST FORMS AND TACTICS: GROUP ALIGNMENT?

The gathered data from the groups and activists' websites and Facebook pages consists of 355 protest events spread over nine protest groups and political associations (as outlined above). Moreover, the actions by the two activists Tatjana Festerling and Edwin Wagenveld are also included, as aside from their leadership roles in *PEGIDA Germany* and *PEGIDA Netherlands* respectively, the two also carried out their own protest actions in the period from 2015-2017. The transnational FE- protests are included under the designation 'Fortress Europe'. Table 7.1 shows the distribution of protest actions by groups and actors.

Table 7.1: The national FE members' number of protest events (2015-2017).

FE Group	Pct. (PEs)
PEGIDA Germany	37.2 (132)
PEGIDA Netherlands	14.1 (50)
IVČRN	11.3 (40)
Blok against Islam (BPI) ¹⁷⁹	10.4 (37)
Blok against Islamization ¹⁸⁰	2.8 (10)
For Freedom ¹⁸¹	12.1 (43)
Festerling and Wagenveld	3.7 (13)
PEGIDA Austria	2.5 (9)
Tatjana Festerling	1.7 (6)
PEGIDA UK	1.7 (6)
NGO ISIS	1.4 (5)
Fortress Europe	1.1 (4)
Total	100.0 (355)

Note: N: 355. Pct (No. of protests).

Similar to the GI-groups, the data shows that all of the groups' protest actions in the 2015-2017 period took place at the member state level, i.e. none of the groups mobilized actions in front of, or inside, the EU-institutions, as anticipated in Chapter 5. Yet, aside from this finding, there is high variation in the groups' protest frequency during the period. *PEGIDA Germany* has, by far, organized the most protests (more than a third of *all* the actions), while conversely, *PEGIDA UK* and *NGO ISIS* only

¹⁷⁹ Nine of these protest events were organized together with the Czech political party *Dawn – National Coalition*.

¹⁸⁰ The remnants of BPI after the group's dissolution in May 2016 (Novinky 2016).

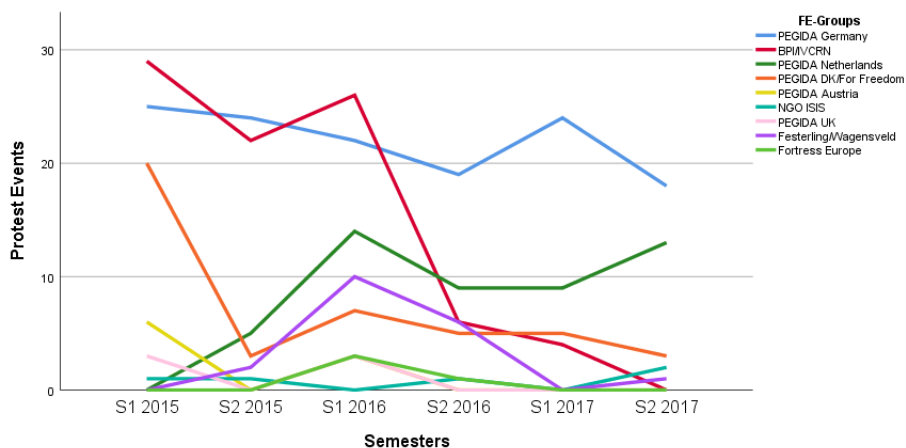
¹⁸¹ Including protests by *PEGIDA DK*, which was the name of the group until April 2015 (Eltard-Sørensen 2015).

organized six and eight protests respectively, while all the FE-groups only organized four joint protests (see section 7.2). *NGO ISIS*' low numbers relate to its organization form, as it is a political blog, whose two members (Kirsberg and Kaljuste) mainly participate in other groups' protests. Similarly, Wagensveld and Festerling's 'single activist' actions also largely consisted of giving speeches at other groups' rallies, plus organizing small direct actions. As for the Czech groups, the combined protests for *IVČRN*, *BPI* and *Blok against Islamization* amount to 88, or 22.8%, of the FE-total. *IVČRN* organized protests against Islam from 2014 onwards, and in May 2015, *IVČRN* and other Czech anti-Islam groups created the political association *Blok Against Islam (BPI)*. Yet, in May 2016, an internal strife in *BPI* led to its dissolution, and *Blok against Islamization* was created in its stead (Novinky 2016).

FE PROTEST FREQUENCIES OVER TIME

Figure 7.1 below shows the eleven actors' protest frequencies in the 2015-2017 period. It reveals that due to its weekly demonstrations, *PEGIDA Germany* has organized a high number of, and rather frequent, protest actions during the years 2015-2017. Both *IVČRN* and *BPI* were very active in 2015 and early 2016. The Czech anti-Islam groups' protest actions dropped considerably in the second half of 2016, mainly due to a loss in momentum (for more on their actions, see section 7.3) ($V = .374$).

Figure 7.1: The FE groups' protest frequency per semester (2015-2017).



Note: N: 355. Cramer's $V = .374^{***}$ (* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$).

While *PEGIDA Germany* and *IVČRN* had already begun organizing demonstrations from 2014 onwards (Vorländer et al. 2018; Islám v ČR nechceme 2014), some of the other groups¹⁸² only began mobilizing in the aftermath of the *Charlie Hebdo* terrorist attack in Paris, France, in January 2015, around an anti-terrorism frame, which, however, quickly evolved into more general anti-Islam(ization) protests.

Aside from *PEGIDA Germany* and the Czech groups, the FE-groups all struggled to uphold their protest frequencies due to low turnout. *PEGIDA Netherlands*, *For Freedom*, and *PEGIDA Austria*'s low protest numbers are largely explainable by their lacking domestic political space. The strong far right *parties* mobilizing against Islam and immigration in their respective countries (*Party for Freedom*, *Danish People's Party*¹⁸³, and the *Freedom Party of Austria* respectively) thus crowd out their mobilizations (see Muis & van Kessel 2017; Ejsing 2017; Ajanovic et al. 2016). A similar occurrence can be deduced in the UK, where *PEGIDA UK* was 'out-crowded' by both the *British National Party* and *UKIP*, whose supporters shared many traits with those of the EDL (see e.g. Stanyer et al. 2016). These parties' prominence thus inferred little space for mobilization at the extra-parliamentary level, despite the increasingly favorable discursive opportunities across Western Europe as the 'refugee crisis' developed (see e.g. Krzyżanowski et al. 2018). Moreover, in the Austrian setting, unlike *GI Austria*, *PEGIDA Austria*'s leaders struggled to gain support from *FPÖ* and to embed themselves in the far right scene, leading to very low participation rates at its protests and hostility from the other actors on the scene (Ajanovic et al. 2016).

Hence, after hosting a few demonstrations (in the spring of both 2015 and 2016), *PEGIDA UK* and *PEGIDA Austria* quickly had to give up on their endeavors, mainly due to low turnouts and strong counter-mobilization (see e.g. HopeNotHate n.d.b for *PEGIDA UK* and Ajanovic et al. 2016 for *PEGIDA Austria*). In Denmark, *For Freedom* (ex-*PEGIDA DK*) initially organized weekly demonstrations like *PEGIDA Germany*, but since September 2015, it began only hosting monthly processions in an attempt to boost the participation rates. *PEGIDA Netherlands* did arrange a comparably higher and rather frequent amount of protests since the winter of 2015. Yet, as the later analysis will explain further (see below), these actions are often small and carried out together with other Dutch far right groupings.

¹⁸² This is the case for *PEGIDA UK*, *PEGIDA Austria*, and *PEGIDA DK*.

¹⁸³ As Chris Holmsted Larsen stated in a newspaper interview, *PEGIDA* "has not caught on in Denmark. Maybe because the *Danish People's Party* has been so apt at monopolizing the fight against Islam. Yes, a bit cheekily one could say that the entire political rhetoric against Islam is so harsh that it dampens the extreme right's ability to really profile itself on anti-Islamism" (as cited in Ejsing 2017).

CONTESTING THROUGH WHICH MEANS? THE FE GROUPS' ACTION FORMS

Table 7.2 shows the eleven actors' protest forms from 2015 to 2017. Unlike the GI groups, only one of the groups (*IVČRN*) organized a 'Solidarity action' in the period of investigation, calling for donations to the Kurds, who 'stayed behind' and fought ISIS (*IVČRN* 2015i). Instead, the vast majority take the form of *demonstrative* actions (81% of the 355 PEs), while *conventional* and *confrontational actions* only amount to 18.3% combined. The table also shows that the absolute number of protests dropped substantially in 2017 (56 actions less, or a drop by 41.5%), mainly because several of the FE-groups had stopped mobilizing by this point, just as the Czech groups' protests steeply decreased in the second half of 2016 (see Figure 7.1 above). As explained below, this also explains the considerable drop in conventional actions in 2017, while the confrontational protests instead increase ($V = .151$).

Table 7.2: The FE coalitions' forms of protest across time (2015-2017).

Year	Conventional	Demonstr.	Confront.	Solid. Action	Total
2015	18.4 (26)	78.7 (111)	2.1 (3)	0.7 (1)	100.0 (141)
2016	17.0 (23)	79.3 (107)	3.7 (5)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (135)
2017	2.5 (2)	89.9 (71)	7.6 (6)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (79)
Total	14.4 (51)	81.4 (289)	3.9 (14)	0.3 (1)	100.0 (355)

Note: N: 355. Pct (No. of protests). Cramer's $V = .151^*$ (* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$).

As emerges from Table 7.3 below, the FE groups' use of protest forms varies to a rather large degree ($V = .523$). All groups, except for *BPI* and *IVČRN*, predominantly organized **demonstrative actions**, mainly in the form of demonstrations and rallies (85%). While the FE-groups do not use the same plethora of protest tactics as GI (see Chapter 6), particularly Wagensveld, Festerling, and *IVČRN/BPI* did also carry out actions such as street theatres, banner-drops, and symbolic protests (18PEs, or 6.3% of all protests). Moreover, petitions only make out 2.1% (7) of all demonstrative actions, indicating that the direct pressure on the decision-makers is not considered the preferred option for mobilization.

Table 7.3: The national FE groups' protest forms (2015-2017).

FE Group	Conventional	Demonstr.	Confront.	Total
PEGIDA DE	0.8 (1)	97.0 (128)	2.3 (3)	100.0 (132)
PEGIDA NL	0.0 (0)	88.0 (44)	12.0 (6)	100.0 (50)
IVČRN	57.5 (23) ¹⁸⁴	42.5 (17)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (40)
BPI	62.2 (23)	32.4 (12)	5.4 (2)	100.0 (37)
BA Islamiz	20.0 (2)	80.0 (8)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (10)
For Freedom	0.0 (0)	100.0 (33)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (33)
Fest/Wagens.	0.0 (0)	76.9 (10)	23.1 (3)	100.0 (13)
PEGIDA DK	0.0 (0)	100.0 (10)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (10)
PEGIDA A	0.0 (0)	100.0 (9)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (9)
Festerling	16.7 (1)	83.3 (5)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (6)
PEGIDA UK	0.0 (0)	100.0 (6)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (6)
NGO ISIS	20.0 (1)	80.0 (4)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (5)
FE	25.0 (1)	75.0 (3)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (4)
Total	14.6 (52)	81.4 (289)	3.9 (14)	100,0 (355)

Note: (N: 355). Pct (No. of protests). Cramer's V = .523*** (*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001).

IVČRN and *BPI* have employed the highest share of the **conventional actions** (88.5%). These actions mainly consist of press releases (63.5% of the 52) and open letters to political actors (17.3%). Due to their more open political opportunities, which meant more access to the decision-makers, *IVČRN* and *BPI* mainly employed press releases as a means to target and/or criticize the national government, plus to express anger about suppression attempts (see e.g. *BPI* 2015a; *IVČRN* 2015c). Conversely, the *PEGIDA* groups hardly used any conventional actions, mainly due to their lacking political opportunities, plus their distrust in the media and the political establishment, which made them refrain from using this channel of communication to the supporters (see Chapter 5 for more). The *PEGIDA* groups' tactics thus differ highly from certain of the *GI* groups, which employed press releases to a greater extent (especially *GI France* and *GI Italy*).

The FE-groups did not employ **confrontational actions** as frequently as the *GI*-groups (see Chapter 6). In fact, one group, *PEGIDA Netherlands*, is behind almost half of them (6 of the 14 actions), while Wagensveld also has carried out three confrontational protests together with Festerling. His and *PEGIDA Netherlands'* higher reliance on this action form are partially due to the group's more limited domestic political opportunities, but Wagensveld also explained it by the strong inspiration found in *Generation Identity's* activities, and their ideas about 'acts of civil

¹⁸⁴ The 'Solidarity action' has been added to this category in this particular table, as it entailed a call for action (donation of food and clothes to Syrian families).

disobedience’ (Interview with Wagenveld 2017), indicating protest repertoire diffusion. The actions consist of three types, namely counter-demonstrations (42.9%), passage and entrance blockades (35.7%), and disruptions of meetings (21.4%).

SIZE OF PROTESTS

Based on the data presented above, one can also make remarks about the sizes of the various protest actions in order to say more about the mobilization potential. As Table 7.4 shows, the number of ‘Big demonstrations’ is considerably higher for the FE-coalition than for the GI-groups (see Chapter 6). Yet, this number is solely due to the demonstrations of *PEGIDA Germany* (97 protests with +1000 people) and *BPI* (four protests), plus the *Fortress Europe* demonstration in May 2016. *PEGIDA Germany* is also the only group that maintained a comparably strong participation rate over time (between 1000-3000 participants on average since February 2015) (Durchgezählt n.d.). Conversely, *For Freedom’s* demonstrations tend to only have around 30-50 participants, while *PEGIDA Netherlands’* vary between a ‘Moderate’ number of participants to ‘Small demonstrations’. Both *PEGIDA Austria* and *PEGIDA UK’s* demonstrations attracted between 50-250 supporters (i.e. they were ‘Small demonstrations’).

Table 7.4: Size of the FE groups’ protests (2015-2017)¹⁸⁵.

Protest Form	Total
Announcement (1 person)	15.5 (55)
Few (2-10 people)	8.7 (31)
Moderate (10-50)	5.6 (20)
Small demo (50-250)	10.1 (36)
Moderate demo (250-1000)	2.5 (9)
Big demo (1000+)	28.7 (102)
(Indeterminate) ¹⁸⁶	28.8 (102)
Total	100.0 (355)

Note: N: 355. Pct (No. of protests).

¹⁸⁵ The figures in the table are based on the information provided about the different protests either from the group itself, or from media accounts about the event. In terms of the ‘Few’ category, this is based on pictures of their smaller protest actions, and/or the *estimated* number of people required for a certain action (e.g. a banner-drop). The figures about the various types of demonstrations, and the ‘Moderate’ category are *only* included if a number was specified in the retrieved data. This explains the categorization of 102 as ‘Indeterminate’.

¹⁸⁶ Rallies, demonstrations, and vigils organized by GI, where it was not possible to deduce from the data how many people participated.

The table also shows that, compared to the GI-groups (see Chapter 6), a rather limited number of the FE-groups' protests only involved 'Few' activists (8.7% of the total). Most of these were carried out by *PEGIDA Netherlands* (17 PEs) and *Wagensveld/Festerling* (eight PEs), due to their lack of human resources, plus more confrontational natures. The other *PEGIDA* groups, plus *IVČRN* and *BPI*, maintained *PEGIDA Germany's* demonstration model, or opted for conventional means, such as press releases and letters to politicians.

Participating in Other Far Right Organizations' Demonstrations

Aside from their own protest actions, the dataset also includes 31 protests organized by other far right groups, in which some of the FE members participated. These protest participations are divided among eight of the FE-groups and actors, namely *PEGIDA Netherlands* (7 with other far right groups); *Festerling* (5); *Festerling and Wagensveld* (4); *For Freedom* (4); *PEGIDA Austria* (4); *IVČRN* (2); *NGO ISIS* (3); and *PEGIDA Germany* (2). The rationales for these FE-actors' multiple-participations mainly pertain to the actors' own limited human resources, and their desire to coalesce with other domestic actors in order to become embedded in the far right scene.

Due to the weak material resources of most Dutch far right subcultural actors, *PEGIDA Netherlands* cooperated extensively with other domestic far right actors as a means to boost both its own numbers and those of the other groups (both well-established smaller parties, subcultural groups, and newly created citizens' initiatives) (see e.g. Wagenaar 2019). This was also the case for *For Freedom* and its cooperation with similar-minded actors from the neighboring country, Sweden. Aside from the Dutch protests, *Wagensveld* also gave speeches at various German demonstrations, either in his capacity as the *PEGIDA Netherlands* leader,¹⁸⁷ or with *Tatjana Festerling*, due to their prominent roles on the German far right¹⁸⁸. *Festerling's* protest participations without *Wagensveld* were very similar in terms of the organizing

¹⁸⁷ Either organized by *PEGIDA*-offshoots, such as *BRAGIDA*, or by so-called 'citizen's initiatives' like *Sulzbach Defends Itself* ('*Sulzbach wehrt sich*') (for more information about the group, see Flätgen & Wagner 2018).

¹⁸⁸ This involved *HoGeSa* (of which both were staunch supporters) and the two *PEGIDA*-offshoots *LEGIDA* (*PEGIDA* in Leipzig, Saxony) and *PEGIDA NRW*.

groups¹⁸⁹, and they both thus pursued closer relations with both the Dutch and the German far right scenes in their pursuits of political change.

Conversely, *PEGIDA Germany's* organizers mainly focused on their own demonstrations in Dresden. Yet, Bachmann also joined a *GI Germany* rally in Berlin in the summer of 2017 (PEGIDA Germany 2017a), as a means of showing support to the group, which also frequently participated in *PEGIDA's* demonstrations (see Chapter 6). Moreover, in the period, *PEGIDA Germany* also began cooperating with *Alternative for Germany (AfD)*, and it organized a demonstration with a local Saxon *AfD* group in July 2017 (PEGIDA Germany 2017b) (see more on the *PEGIDA-AfD* cooperation below).

PEGIDA Austria's leader, Werner Wirth, participated in rallies organized by the Austrian neo-Nazi *Party of the People ('Partei des Volkes')*, and even spoke at one of its demonstrations in September 2015 (Schmidt 2015), indicating that he had a more extreme right worldview than the one presented at the *PEGIDA* demonstrations. Finally, the two *NGO ISIS* members joined a demonstration in Finland (titled 'Keep Finland Finnish', co-organized by, amongst others, the *True Finns* party), where Kaljuste and Kirsberg participated as *Fortress Europe* representatives (Kirsberg 2016b).

The above section has shown that the extra-parliamentary FE-groups' protests have developed rather distinctly from each other in the 2015-2017 period, especially in terms of frequencies, and to some extent also the protest *forms*. Hence, even though all groups, except for *IVČRN* and *BPI*, mainly made use of demonstrative actions, there were large discrepancies in terms of the participant rates and frequencies, something that can largely be explained by the political space on the far right in the different countries. Similarly, the higher reliance on conventional actions by the Czech groups both indicate better political opportunities in the country, but also relates to the more conflictual relationship between the other groups and establishment. Hence, the differences largely relate to the diverse political and discursive opportunities in the various European countries.

¹⁸⁹ She spoke at a rally organized by the extreme right *Democratic Departure Saxonian Switzerland (DASS, 'Demokratischer Aufbruch Sächsischer Schweiz')* (Tatjana Festerling TV 2016a), which is under surveillance by the German *Verfassungsschutz*, and she spoke at a rally against a refugee centre by *Hohenstein-Ernstthal Says NO to the Centre ('Hohenstein-Ernstthal sagt NEIN zum Heim')* (Festerling 2015d). Finally, she joined *OnePercent's ('EinProzent')* vigil to commemorate the German victims of the terrorist attack on *Breitscheidplatz* in Berlin in December 2016 (Festerling 2016j).

7.2. EUROPEANIZATION OF THE FE GROUPS' COLLECTIVE ACTION?

After the initial overview of the different FE-groups' protest frequency and forms in the 2015-2017 period, the following section focuses on the various groups' Europeanization strategies in terms of collective action. The initial part briefly considers the groups' protest developments over time in terms of issue focus. This is followed by an analysis of the various groups' issue, target, participant, and event scopes, which leads into a consideration of their forms of Europeanization.

THE FE-GROUPS' MOBILIZATION ISSUES OVER TIME

Before explaining the issue foci development in the 2015-2017 period, a caveat must be mentioned. It was not possible to establish the *exact* issues of each *PEGIDA* demonstration in Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, Denmark, and Austria, as their demonstrations mostly did not have a specific title and involved the mention of various topics related to anti-Islam, nativism, and against the establishment. Yet, based on the groups' *raison d'être* and scholarly literature (see e.g. Berntzen & Weisskircher 2016; HopeNotHate n.d.a), these unspecifiable *PEGIDA* demonstrations are coded as having 'Anti-Islam(ization)' as the overarching topic. At the same time, several FE-groups also carried out actions *specifically* directed against Islam as a religion, or specific aspects of its practices, like actions against burqas, mosques, halal meat, and violence against Muslim women (see e.g. *PEGIDA Netherlands* (Kuipers 2017); *IVČRN* (IVČRN (2015j); *For Freedom* (Sjunnesson 2016)). These actions were also coded as 'Anti-Islam(ization)' protests. Hence, unless another topic is explicitly stated in the sources, or it can be deduced from the type of activity carried out (e.g. a rally by a refugee centre), the issue was coded as 'Anti-Islam(ization)'.

Table 7.5 shows that most protests were organized around threat perceptions related to Islam's potential effect on the countries' cultures (societal 'Islamization') (25.9%, of these 239 protests were *explicitly* against Islam and its practitioners). Conversely, only 16.9% of the protest involved issues that were not directly related to the issues of immigration, asylum seeking, and Islam.

Table 7.5: The FE groups' overarching issues of mobilization 2015-2017.

Overarching Protest Issues	2015	2016	2017	Total
Anti-Islam(isation)	67.4 (95)	58.5 (79)	82.3 (65)	67.3 (239)
Anti-refugee/asylum (policy)	20.6 (29)	13.3 (18)	2.5 (2)	13.8 (49)
Anti-immigration	1.4 (2)	3.0 (4)	1.3 (1)	2.0 (7)
Opposing suppression	6.4 (9)	14.1 (19)	10.1 (8)	10.1 (36)
Pro/Vs. Political actor	1.4 (2)	5.2 (7)	0.0 (0)	2.5 (9)
Identity (preservation)	0.0 (0)	2.2 (3)	3.8 (3)	1.7 (6)
Social assistance	0.7 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.3 (1)
Other	2.1 (3)	3.7 (5)	0.0 (0)	2.3 (8)
Total	100.0 (141)	100.0 (135)	100.0 (79)	100.0 (355)

Note: N: 355. Pct (No. of protests). Cramer's V = .228*** (*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001).

With the increase in refugees entering Europe in late-summer 2015, the groups' anti-Islam frames merged with anti-refugee and –immigration frames. Yet, while *For Freedom*, *PEGIDA UK*, *PEGIDA Austria*, *NGO ISIS*, and *PEGIDA Germany* mainly, if not exclusively, organized, or took part in, 'Anti-Islam(ization)' demonstrations, which *also*, but not exclusively, drew in anti-refugee frames, particularly *PEGIDA Netherlands* and the three Czech groups carried out actions with more varied issue foci. Hence, while *IVČRN* had mobilized against the refugees since January 2015, coupling the Syrian refugees with the 'dangers' of Islam (Císař & Navrátil 2018), *PEGIDA Germany*, *PEGIDA Netherlands*, and *For Freedom's* demonstrations increasingly focused on the 'refugee crisis' from July 2015 onwards. Nevertheless, besides the Czech and Dutch groups, the other groups did not organize many *explicit* protests against refugees ('Anti-refugee/asylum (policy)') protests only made out 13.8% of the total number of protests).

IVČRN's mobilization was intertwined with protests against Islam writ large in the spring of 2015 and developed into strong action against the refugee quotas proposed by the EU from April 2015 onwards, an issue *NGO ISIS* also mobilized around (see e.g. Kirsberg 2017). In the autumn and winter of 2015, only *BPI* and *PEGIDA Germany* mobilized for the closing of the national borders, in a very similar fashion as witnessed by *GI Austria* and *GI Germany*, and almost in the same period of the 'crisis', namely September-November 2015 (Sputnik Germany 2015; Epoch Times 2015d). This was also the period in which *BPI* and *PEGIDA Germany* developed the idea of the *Fortress Europe* coalition (see more in Chapter 9), which held its first demonstration against the refugees and the EU in February 2016.

In the first half of 2016, *PEGIDA Netherlands* organized numerous actions against the construction of Dutch refugee and migrant centres (see e.g. Kafka 2016), just as Festerling joined local German demonstrations against the housing of refugees and

migrants (Festerling 2015d). While this mobilization against refugee centres is quite similar to the actions by GI, the Dutch protests mainly took place in February-April 2016, i.e. a bit later than the GI groups (see Chapter 6). From the second half of 2016 onwards, the overall protest frequency dropped (see above), and the protests mainly involved objection to ‘Islamization’ more broadly, while the ‘Anti-refugee/asylum (policy)’ protests also largely ended by 2017 ($V = .228$).

THE FE-EUROPEANIZATION PATHS

Scope of Protest Issues

Table 7.6 below shows the various ‘Issue scopes’ of the protests. Due to the ambiguity of the ‘anti-Islam(ization)’ frames, which were frequently linked to both the ‘national’ scope of integration, but also the ‘European’ of immigration, and the lacking data on the *specific* statements at the various ‘Anti-Islam(ization)’ demonstrations, these demonstrations were coded as ‘Both,’ as they are both national and European. Exceptions to this involve protests against specific Muslim practices, such as e.g. the construction of mosques or the production of halal meat (both coded as ‘national’, as they are a matter of national legislation), or that called for measures against terrorism (coded as ‘European’) (see the PE-Codebook in Appendix B).

Table 7.6: Issue scope of all FE groups’ protests per year (2015-2017).

	2015	2016	2017	Total
National	14.2 (20)	31.9 (43)	24.1 (19)	23.1 (78)
European	39.7 (56)	23.7 (32)	10.1 (8)	27.0 (96)
Both	46.1 (65)	44.4 (60)	65.8 (52)	49.9 (177)
Total	100.0 (141)	100.0 (135)	100.0 (79)	100.0 (355)

Note: N: 355. Pct (No. of protests). Cramer’s $V = .212^{***}$ (* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$).

The table reveals an interesting development regarding the degrees to which the groups mobilized around ‘European’ issues. It shows that most protests with a ‘European’ issue scope were organized in 2015, in alignment with the height of the EU MS’ discussions about the ‘refugee crisis’. Moreover, after June 2016, i.e. once the EU’s deal with Turkey in March began having an effect on the numbers of boat arrivals to Europe (see European Commission 2018a), protests with a ‘European’ scope gradually began decreasing ($V = .212$). At the same time, the protests that both involve national and European policy issues (i.e. the ‘Both’ category on the table) almost remain constant over the three-year period, due to the consistent *PEGIDA Germany*, *For Freedom*, and *PEGIDA Netherlands* demonstrations in all three years.

As Table 7.7 shows, the protests with a ‘European’ scope mainly refer to ‘Anti-immigration’ and ‘Anti-refugee/asylum (policy)’ protests, i.e. protests that aim at curbing the immigration of third-country nationals to the respective EU MS, while the anti-Islamization protests are a bit more ambiguous. The remaining protests instead all involve ‘national’ issues ($V = .644$). Like the GI-groups, it therefore again becomes apparent here why the different national groups are interested in European cooperation with similar-minded actors, considering that their main reasons for agitation (i.e. opposition to Islam and its adherents) are mainly framed as a ‘European’ matter, particularly concerning the ‘Anti-refugee/asylum (policy)’ issue.

Table 7.7: Issue scope of the FE protests’ overarching issues.

Topic/Issue Scope	National	European	Both	Total
Anti-immigration	42.9 (3)	57.1 (4)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (7)
Anti-Islamization	8.4 (20)	17.6 (42)	74.1 (177)	100.0 (239)
Anti-refugee/asylum (policy)	16.3 (8)	83.7 (41)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (49)
Opposing suppression	91.7 (33)	8.3 (3)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (36)
Pro/Vs Political actors	66.7 (6)	33.3 (3)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (9)
Identity preservation	66.7 (4)	33.3 (2)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (6)
Welfare protectionism	0.0 (0)	100.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (1)
Other	100.0 (8)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (8)
Total	23.1 (82)	27.0 (96)	49.9 (177)	100.0 (355)

Note: N: 355. Pct (No. of protests). Cramer’s $V = .644^{***}$ ($*p < 0.05$; $**p < 0.01$; $***p < 0.001$).

Scope of Targets

Table 7.8 below shows that most of the FE-groups’ protest actions target Muslims, migrants, and/or refugees, rather than a political decision-making entity, just as the media and other kinds of ‘suppressers’ are also targeted to a somewhat large degree (‘Others’). Most of the groups thus create a dual enemy picture around the external ‘others’ (migrants and refugees, particularly of Muslim faith) and the internal left-wing and establishment (see e.g. Wagenaar 2019). Yet, even though most of the groups *do* make populist statements against the political elites and the establishment plus voice critique of left-wing activism during their actions, it is still mainly the foreign ‘others’ who are targeted. Especially *PEGIDA Germany* and its offshoots thus

predominantly mobilize around an opposition to ‘Islam’ and ‘Islamization,’¹⁹⁰ involving criticism of the religion and its adherents, plus third-country nationals more generally. Hence, the demonstrations are mostly intended to draw attention to the anti-Islam and -migration cause than to actually voice (policy) demands towards a specified political actor or institution (see also Chapter 6)¹⁹¹.

Table 7.8: The FE coalition’s protest targets per year (2015-2017).

Target	2015	2016	2017	Total
National government	36.9 (52)	28.1 (38)	13.9 (11)	28.5 (101)
Other MS’ government	2.1 (3)	3.0 (4)	2.5 (2)	2.5 (9)
EU	0.0 (0)	3.0 (4)	1.3 (1)	1.4 (5)
Muslims/migrants/refugees	56.7 (80)	46.7 (63)	75.9 (60)	57.2 (203)
Other	4.3 (6)	19.3 (26)	6.3 (5)	10.4 (37)
Total	100.0 (141)	100.0 (135)	100.0 (79)	100.0 (355)

Note: (N: 355). Pct (No. of protests). Cramer’s V = .231*** (*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001).

Considering the various groups’ protest targets in 2015-2017, Table 7.8 thus shows the percentage of protest actions, which explicitly target either the national (including local) governments, the EU, or the governments of other EU member states, just as the categories ‘Muslims/migrants/refugees’ and ‘Other’¹⁹² have been included, when the target was not a decision-making entity.

Table 7.8 thus shows that 28.5% of all the FE-groups’ protests targeted the national government, while neither other MS’ governments nor the EU were targeted to a very high extent. This implies that the national government is, by far, the most frequently targeted political entity for the FE groups, just as is the case for most other types of social movements (della Porta & Caiani 2009), including *Generation Identity* (see Chapter 6). One can also see a noticeable decrease in the targeting of the government over time (V = .231), mainly due to the diminished protest frequencies of particularly

¹⁹⁰ It is, however, difficult to code particularly *PEGIDA Germany*’s protest contents due to its blend of anti-Islam and anti-establishment frames (see e.g. Vorländer et al. 2018). Yet, as argued above, its name, plus much of the speech content, involve opposition to ‘Islamization,’ and it is on this basis its protests are coded as being against ‘Muslims/migrants/refugees,’ even though especially the German *PEGIDA* group criticizes the national politicians extensively as well during the demonstrations.

¹⁹¹ As an example of this strategy, consider e.g. *For Freedom*’s statement about one of its 2017 demonstrations that, from then on, it would begin targeting the government and demanding more explicit policy changes (For Freedom FB-Post), something it had not done up to this point - also according to the gathered data (see blame attributions section below).

¹⁹² The ‘Other’ category involves ‘repressers’ (like the media and the left-wing), internal strifes, national commemoration, far right cooperation, etc. (see Codebook in Appendix B for more).

the Czech groups by 2017. It was thus mainly *NGO ISIS* (60% (but only out of 5 protests)), *IVČRN/BPI/BP Islamization* (49%), Festerling/Wagensveld (37%), *PEGIDA Netherlands* (34%), and *PEGIDA Germany* (21%), which targeted their respective national governments in their protests.

The EU was only targeted directly by *IVČRN* (*IVČRN 2016*; *IVČRN 2017*), *BPI* (*Focus Online 2016b*), and the *Fortress Europe* coalition (see further below). This limited targeting of the EU is mainly explained by the far right's limited political and discursive opportunities at the EU-level, inferring that their protest actions are more likely to be targeted towards the *national* decision-makers. Moreover, particularly the high transaction costs in terms of instigating protests at the EU institutions also made the extra-parliamentary FE-groups refrain from demonstrating in front of the EU buildings (*Interview with For Freedom 2017*; *Interview with Wagensveld 2017*), just as they did not approach any EU officials with their claims. While the Czech *Dawn* party's representative stated that he *did* have contacts to MEPs and discussed EU politics with these actors (*Interview with Dawn 2017*), both the leader of *For Freedom* and *PEGIDA Netherlands* stated 'no' to this question. As the *For Freedom* leader elaborated, she could not imagine taking the claims to the EU institutions, as "[W]e are still such a small group [...]. We are still just a street-movement," indicating the problems related to resources and EU contention (*Interview with For Freedom 2017*). *PEGIDA Netherlands'* leader, Wagensveld, similarly stated that the lack of resources made his group abstain from such a strategy (*Interview with Wagensveld 2017*), thus substantiating the finding in the Europeanization literature that material resources are key to taking the claims directly to the EU institutions (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009).

The populist and anti-EU proclivities of the FE-members also made it highly unlikely that they would seek insider strategies at the EU level (see also Chapter 5). This sentiment was expressed, for instance, by Tommy Robinson at a *PEGIDA Germany* demonstration in Dresden on November 30, where he made a clear 'us' and 'them' distinction the people and the elites, when stating that:

From within our own resources we call forth a European Union of 'We the People.' We do not rely on the politicians and bureaucrats who brought us into this situation in the first place. They have brought Europe close to destruction. They are responsible for it and many of them continue to act in a way that brings us closer to the edge. (4freedoms 2015)

A few of the FE-groups also targeted other EU MS, either to request they make policy changes (see e.g. Festerling and Wagensveld's protest in front of the Romanian Parliament building (*Festerling 2016e*), and *IVČRN's* open letter to Merkel in September 2015 (*IVČRN 2015k*)), or as a sign of appreciation for their decisions during the 'refugee crisis'. As was the case for the GI groups, the FE-actors saw the Visegrad countries' leaders as the sensible policymakers, and the Western European leaders, especially Merkel, as harmful to the interests of the citizens. The German

government was thus targeted with calls to change the country's migration policy or to express anger about its decisions during the 'crisis' (see e.g. For Freedom FB-post). When Merkel travelled through Central and Eastern Europe in August 2016, she was met by FE-member protests in both Estonia (EKRE 2016) and the Czech Republic (BPI and Dawn (BPI 2016c)). In its call for the protest, *BPI* wrote "Let's welcome this 'lady', who destroys the peaceful life on our continent, and opens the door to our present and future murderers" (Ibid.). On the other hand, some of the actors expressed gratitude towards Órban, especially, either through open letters (IVČRN 2015l) or through banner-drops (Festerling 2015b), thanking him for his efforts and supporting his anti-refugee stance.

Aside from the mobilization against decision-makers, the protest groups also targeted the migrants and refugees plus the (left-wing) establishment more broadly in their protest actions. In short, they mainly diagnosed the refugees and Muslim immigrants as being prone to radicalization and too culturally averse to integration, the media as untrustworthy, the politicians as only obeying self-interests, and the left-wing activists as violent. The targeting of these actors is considered in the following paragraphs.

While the extra-parliamentary FE-actors argue rather similarly to GI about the detrimental effects of third-country immigrants and refugees to the European civilization, and called for a curbing of their entrance to Europe, the framing of opposition towards Islam is fundamentally different than the one employed by *Generation Identity*. Where the GI-groups mainly argued in ethno-pluralist terms, and chastised the domestic decision-makers and pro-migrant/refugee associations for their multicultural viewpoints (see Chapter 6), the FE-groups focused their criticism much more directly on Islam as a religion (if not ideology), and especially its more radical adherents (see also Chapter 5). Aside from the more general 'Anti-Islamization' demonstrations by most of the *PEGIDA* groups, some of the groups also expressed this in similar actions as GI. This involved protests against, for instance, the religion's treatment of women, especially the wearing of the burqa (see e.g. the actions of *For Freedom* (Sjunnesson 2016); IVČRN (IVČRN 2015j); and *PEGIDA Netherlands* (Kuipers 2017)) and radical Islam and terrorism (almost all of *For Freedom's* demonstrations, and *PEGIDA UK* (see e.g. Kassam 2016a)). Moreover, a few of the groups also targeted Muslim associations in their respective countries (see e.g. *PEGIDA Netherlands vs. the Turkish DENK Party* (PEGIDA Netherlands 2016); *For Freedom against Islamic Society in Denmark* ('*Islamisk Trossamfund*') (For Freedom FB-Post)).

The anti-establishment frames were particularly vocally voiced by *PEGIDA Germany*, *BPI*, and *IVČRN*, which all pointed to the shortcomings of the mainstream elites and chastised them for not acting in the interest of 'the people' (see also Vorländer et al. 2018; Císař & Navrátil 2018). Moreover, they also accuse the elites of working towards the eradication of the national cultures, in order to replace it with societies that favor the demands of the minorities. These sentiments are somewhat

comparable to *PEGIDA Germany*'s derogatory employment of the term 'do-gooders' ('Gutmenschen') (see e.g. Festerling's speech on September 7, 2015 (Epoch Times 2015b)), and include references to actors that abide by 'political correctness', especially when it comes to the mainstream actors' rejection of Islamophobic arguments and activists (see e.g. Blok Against Islamization 2017; For Freedom FB-Post). Similarly, the 'defense of the freedom of speech' is a key frame employed by several of the groups (especially *For Freedom*¹⁹³ and *PEGIDA UK*), just as particularly *For Freedom* and *PEGIDA Netherlands* created victimhood frames around left-wing counter-protesters.

Having now considered the protest developments from a more *national* perspective in terms of the different extra-parliamentary FE-groups' protest repertoires, issue and target scopes, the following two sections will turn the attention towards the levels of *transnational* collective action in the period. This is both measured through protest participation by actors from abroad (the scope of participants), and the organization of transnational protest events (the scope of events).

Scope of Participants

Table 7.9 shows that the largest share of the FE-groups' protest actions solely involve national participants (85%)¹⁹⁴. Only 15% (or 54 protests) involve 'Cross-border' or 'European' participation,¹⁹⁵ and the most frequent transnational exchanges took place between groups from neighboring countries (39 protests). The table also reveals that most protests with 'European' and 'Cross-border' participation were in 2016, i.e. when the groups started mobilizing transnationally in *Fortress Europe*, while these figures plummeted substantially by 2017 ('Cross-border' protests decreased by 68.4% and 'European' by 77.8% between 2016 and 2017). This is largely ascribable to the end of the FE-cooperation (see Chapter 9) and the fact that the height of the 'refugee crisis' had decreased by 2017.

¹⁹³ Mainly due to Mohammad Cartoon crisis of 2005, since which the Danish far right scene has conglomerated about the right to 'speak freely' (especially prominently argued by the *Free Press Association* ('Trykkefrihedsselskabet') with which *For Freedom* cooperates closely).

¹⁹⁴ As a caveat, it is very difficult to deduce the participant-composition of the groups' protests. Research has shown that groups from abroad participate in *PEGIDA Germany*'s demonstrations on and off, but this is very hard to trace empirically. The few quantitative studies, which have been conducted at the demonstration sites at the *PEGIDA Germany* protests, indicate that the protesters mainly derive from the local areas (Vorländer et al. 2018). So, unless it is specified that a group from abroad participated or that the speaker is from abroad, they are coded as 'National', and otherwise 'Cross-border' or 'European'.

¹⁹⁵ 'Cross-border' entails participants from a neighboring country, while 'European' either refers to actors from further afield in Europe (i.e. *not* a neighbouring country), and/or to participation by groups from several European countries, aside from the hosting.

Table 7.9: Participant scopes of all FE groups' protests per year (2015-2017).

Year	National	Cross-border	European	Total
2015	87.2 (123)	9.9 (14)	2.8 (4)	100.0 (141)
2016	79.3 (107)	14.1 (19)	6.7 (9)	100.0 (135)
2017	89.9 (71)	7.6 (6)	2.5 (2)	100.0 (79)
Total	84.8 (301)	11.0 (39)	4.2 (15)	100.0% (355)

Note: N: 355. Pct (No. of protests). Cramer's V = .092 (*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001)

The protests with 'European' participation involved four transnational *Fortress Europe* protest actions in 2016 (more below), while *PEGIDA Germany* and *BPI* also organized a few demonstrations with participants from across Europe (4 and 3 protests respectively)¹⁹⁶. The protests with 'Cross-border' participation were mainly organized by *PEGIDA Germany* (10), *PEGIDA Netherlands* (8), *For Freedom* (8), and *PEGIDA Austria* (7), i.e. all the *PEGIDA* groups, except for *PEGIDA UK*. These various types of protest-participation by actors from abroad will be considered further in the following paragraphs.

One Person Speaking as 'Organization and Country Representative' Abroad

The speaker exchanges make up most of the FE-protests that include non-domestic participants. They mainly act as a means of support and/or endorsement of the given group, in attempts to both attract more supporters *and* media attention. Hence, in terms of the protest targets and issues, only a very limited number of the 54 protests actually involved a specific policy issue, which made the groups want to join forces transnationally in order to exercise European pressure on the decision-makers (see more on these in the 'Scope of Events' below). Instead, most of the protests with foreign participation involved actors from abroad joining an otherwise regularly occurring demonstration in order to speak about his or her domestic situation.

PEGIDA Germany has thus invited both national and European far right actors to come and speak at its demonstrations since December 2014 (Druxes 2016). The European actors counted leaders of European *PEGIDA* groups, but also other European activists and politicians,¹⁹⁷ most prominently Geert Wilders in April 2015 (Ibid.). As a way of 'putting his seal of approval' on newly created *PEGIDA*-offshoots, Lutz Bachmann has also given numerous inaugural speeches abroad (e.g. for *PEGIDA Netherlands* (Hopkins 2015), *PEGIDA Vlaanderen* (HopeNotHate

¹⁹⁶ *For Freedom*, *PEGIDA UK*, *PEGIDA Netherlands*, and Festerling and Wagensveld also organized one protest action with European participation respectively.

¹⁹⁷ The speakers from abroad have included, amongst others, Geert Wilders (Dutch *Party for Freedom*), Tommy Robinson (from *PEGIDA UK* and the now defunct *English Defense League*), and Martin Sellner from *GI Austria* (Eckes 2016).

n.d.a.), and *PEGIDA UK* (Kassam 2016a)) (for more on *PEGIDA Germany's* transnational ambitions, see Chapter 9). For similar reasons, Tommy Robinson has also given frequent speeches around Europe, due to his past leadership of *EDL*, and his continued fame on the far right¹⁹⁸.

Such speeches were also provided in order to support the given group, especially when protest numbers were low, and/or the group needed more exposure. In January 2016, for instance, Anne Marie Waters, Paul Weston, and Tommy Robinson from *PEGIDA UK* went to Copenhagen to help further the development of the Danish *PEGIDA* group (Bartlett 2017). This trip simultaneously acted as a learning experience for Waters and Weston, who were both relatively inexperienced protest organizers (Mulhall 2016). Similarly, due to *PEGIDA Austria's* problems attracting people to its rallies, prominent German and Swiss far right actors gave speeches (see e.g. Kreidfeuer 2015; Malarich 2015). These transnational protest speakers are thus also attempts to make the group appear bigger than is actually the case (Althof as cited in Lüssi 2015).

From a more ideational perspective, the speeches were also a way to demonstrate 'solidarity' with the other European groups (Interview with For Freedom 2017; Interview with Wagensveld 2017). They also employ them as a means to underline that *all* Europeans face the same threats, and thus 'are in this together' (for more on this, see Chapter 9). The foreign speakers therefore often describe the (often direly portrayed) situation with Muslim immigration and (non-)integration in their home countries. The speeches act as a form of direct information diffusion between the groups (see e.g. Bachmann's speech as cited in Kassam 2016a). This also partly explains the line-up of speakers at the February 6, 2016, *Fortress Europe* demonstrations, where most of the groups had at least one speaker from abroad at their demonstration, as a means to underline the sentiment of 'European patriotic unity'.

'Delegations' of Activists Going Abroad to Participate in Protests

As mentioned above, due to their limited domestic political opportunities, and as a means to boost their protest numbers, some of the FE-groups have established close links to groups and actors from neighbouring countries, including groups not (formally) part of the FE-coalition. These relations are mainly based on the groups' geographical and lingual proximities. Examples include *For Freedom* and its ties to

¹⁹⁸ Robinson has spoken, for instance, at demonstrations in the Czech Republic (see e.g. Blok against Islamization 2016c); in Denmark, where he introduced *PEGIDA UK* in January 2016 (Mulhall 2016); on numerous occasions for *PEGIDA Germany* (see e.g. Epoch Times 2015f); and for *PEGIDA Netherlands* (Hopkins 2015).

the Swedish anti-Islam scene¹⁹⁹, *PEGIDA Netherlands* and its cooperation with German and Belgian extreme right activists (Wagenaar 2019)²⁰⁰, *PEGIDA Austria* and *PEGIDA Germany*²⁰¹, and *NGO ISIS*' participation in Finnish groups' demonstrations²⁰². Moreover, since the autumn of 2015, *PEGIDA Germany* and *BPI* also began cooperating (see e.g. Prokupkova 2018b), and this later evolved into the *Fortress Europe* coalition (see Ch. 9).

Hence, as most border-crossing protest participation only involves one or two people from abroad who act as *speakers*, or take place between actors from neighbouring countries, the participant scopes are only 'European' to a rather limited extent.

Scope of Events

The limited transnational FE-contention took the form of *transnational protests* (see Imig & Tarrow 2000). Only four (1%) of the 355 FE-groups' protests count as 'transnational protests'. The low number has many reasons, including lacking resources to instate large-scale events, and the missing incentive to coordinate the efforts with actors from abroad, especially after the FE-coalition's end in June 2016 (see Chapter 9).

The first transnational event took place in January 2016. Before this date, none of the participating FE-groups had organized *any* transnational protests, also not with other groups aside from the FE-members. Three of the four transnational protests took place between January and May 2016, and the last in September 2017. They consisted of a joint press conference at the inauguration of *Fortress Europe* (January 2016), one collaborative (February 2016) and two cooperative transnational protests (May 2016), plus an *attempt* to set up a *European Citizen's Initiative*. They involved *all* of the FE-members, including the parties, and were precipitated by the gradually opening discursive opportunities across Europe.

¹⁹⁹ Tania Groth both joined Dan Park and Henrik Rönquist's attempt at creating *PEGIDA Sweden* in 2015 and spoke at a few of Jan Sjunnesson's *För Frihet* rallies (see e.g. *För Frihet* 2016). Moreover, activists from both countries frequently attend each other's demonstrations.

²⁰⁰ The group joined *Vlaams Belang* and *PEGIDA Vlaanderen* protests in Belgium and *HoGeSa* and *PEGIDA Germany* demonstrations in Germany, while Belgian and German activists have attended Dutch *PEGIDA* demonstrations (for more on these links, see Wagenaar 2019).

²⁰¹ Due to the lingual proximity, the two groups had rather frequent speaker exchanges (mainly from *PEGIDA Germany* to *PEGIDA Austria*), plus German and Austrian new right activists spoke at *PEGIDA Austria* or *PEGIDA Germany* protests respectively (see e.g. Malarich 2015).

²⁰² This is again largely due to the lingual proximity between Estonian and Finnish, which means that they can join each other's demonstrations without problems. Kaljuste and Kirsberg have thus spoken at a few demonstrations in Finland, once under the banner of *Fortress Europe* (see e.g. *The Tundra Tabloids* 2016).

With the onset of the ‘long summer of migration’ in the autumn of 2015, the FE-actors’ growing concern about the pan-European effects of the ‘refugee crisis’ and their respective states’ intake of refugees, inferred that they perceived a need for transnational cooperation (see more in Chapter 9). Simultaneously, the diverging stances of the European leaders (especially the Visegrad countries vis-à-vis Merkel), plus particularly the Eastern European population’s increasingly hostile view on the refugees and migrants (see e.g. Eurobarometer 85 (European Commission 2016b)), implied that the discursive opportunities were favorable for exercising transnational European pressure. It also became clear that it was the European Council that made the decisive decisions, and *not* the European Commission, despite its attempt to introduce quotas. The leaders of the Visegrad countries had quickly ended this attempt, just as Western European member states also voiced concerns (see overview above). The winter of 2015-2016 was thus considered an opportune moment to instigate transnational demonstrations, and this first led to the January FE-meeting in Prague, followed by the February 6 parallel *Fortress Europe* demonstrations across Europe (see e.g. Ruptly 2016b).

On January 23, 2016, the signatories of the *Prague Declaration* (Appendix 1; Chapter 9) held a press conference announcing the creation of the *Fortress Europe* coalition, which mobilized against the EU (Ruptly 2016a). Various European far right groups (including groups that had not signed the Declaration) organized simultaneous protests on February 6, 2016, i.e. a ‘cooperative transnational protest’, mainly advertised and framed as a demonstration of ‘solidarity’ towards the other European patriots. Demonstrations took place in Germany, the Czech Republic, France, the Netherlands, Poland, England²⁰³, Ireland, Slovakia, Denmark, Australia, and Estonia with rather mixed results (Volk 2016). The rallies were thus based at the domestic levels, meaning that the groups could target both the national and the European institutions due to the simultaneity of the protests. Yet, the protest suffered from several setbacks, such as a low turnout in most countries, governmental suppression

²⁰³ PEGIDA UK re-launched its demonstrations on this day, under the new leadership of Tommy Robinson, Anne Marie Waters, and Paul Watson (Halliday 2016). Concerning the February 6 protest, *Hope Not Hate* states, “As our video shows there is nothing new about PEGIDA UK, it really is just a re-launch of the English Defence League (EDL). [...] The organisers are the same, most of the speakers are the same, the security team is the same and many of the demonstrators are the same” (HopeNotHate n.d.e).

attempts, and failing technology in terms of the announced live streaming between the protest places²⁰⁴.

On May 16, 2016, a few days after the second FE-meeting in Prague (see Chapter 9), *PEGIDA Germany* hosted a transnational collective FE-demonstration in Dresden with around 2,500 participants. The protest speakers both discussed the unity between the European peoples²⁰⁵, but also the ongoing ‘refugee crisis,’ which they especially blamed on Merkel (see e.g. Epoch Times 2016). This protest again did not have an explicit target nor demand, and instead aimed at fostering closer ties between the participating European activists.

At the meeting a few days prior, the FE-members had discussed the possibility of setting up a *European Citizen’s Initiative* so that the EP would organize a hearing on the ‘forced migrant quotas’ (Jonaitis 2016), an issue that especially the Czech participating groups had been pushing for domestically (IVČRN 2015d). This was thus a form of ‘cooperative transnational protest’ targeted at the EU, as it would require the FE-groups to mobilize one million signatories from at least seven EU MS (ECI 2019). Yet, due to various circumstances, mainly the lack of funding, this idea never materialized (Interview with Wagenveld 2017; see also Chapter 9).

Due to internal feuds in the leading FE-groups and other organizational difficulties (see Chapter 9 for more), the next FE-protest was only organized in September 2017²⁰⁶. *PEGIDA Netherlands* hosted a demonstration in Enschede, Netherlands (Wagenaar 2019). The demonstration was titled ‘United We Are Strong – United We Will Win’²⁰⁷, in reference to *HoGeSa* and *PEGIDA*’s motto ‘Gemeinsam sind wir

²⁰⁴ In Dresden and Prague, there were around 8,000 and 3,000 protesters respectively, while the Dutch and Swiss protests were cancelled due to safety threats. This was supposed to have been the first *PEGIDA Netherlands* demonstration in Amsterdam, but it was cancelled due to a bomb threat hours earlier, leading to an evacuation of the surrounding areas. At the new location, a broad coalition of left-wing organizations formed a numerically strong counter-protest, and tumult erupted at the demonstration, 20 people were arrested, mainly from the counter-protesters’ side (Van der Laan 2016). The Swiss demonstration did not get the required permission from the authorities and thus did not take place (Stutz 2016). The French protest, which took place despite a state ban, led to the arrest of 20 of the about 150 participating activists, while the demonstration launching Identity Ireland led to scuffles (Hentschel 2016).

²⁰⁵ The FE-members had been encouraged by Festerling to talk about “identity, respect, and mutual forgiveness for everything that ever stood between us, the European nations” (Tatjana Festerling TV 2016b) (for more about the actual speech contents, see Chapter 9).

²⁰⁶ Festerling *did* organize an FE-demonstration in Dresden on October 3, 2016, which was targeted at Merkel. While the demonstration *did* have transnational speaker participation, it was only Georg Kirsberg from *NGO ISIS*, who was an ‘official’ FE-member.

²⁰⁷ It had not been an easy task to organize the Dutch demonstration, as the authorities were very opposed to the endeavour and did not give permission for a prior attempt in June 2017.

stark / Samen zijn We Sterk'. Yet, none of the original FE-members participated in the rally, not even Festerling, the FE-coalition leader. Instead, the participants included considerably more extreme right groups and activists²⁰⁸.

THE FE-GROUPS' EUROPEANIZATION FORMS

Similar to the *Generation Identity* groups, the *Fortress Europe* (FE) groups mainly opted for protest strategies targeted at the *domestic* decision-makers in the 2015-2017 period. The groups thus perceived it as more advantageous to exercise pressure on the national governments, as most EU MS were either already strengthening the asylum, migration, and border legislation, or showing increasing levels of divisions on the question (such as Germany (CDU/CSU)). During the winter of 2015-2016, the explored groups chose to join forces in the *Fortress Europe* coalition, and organize transnational protests, as a means to both exercise pressure on their own, domestic governments and the EU.

Table 7.10 shows the FE-groups' forms of Europeanization by considering the protest with a 'European' issue scope and their scopes of participants and targets. While protests targeting 'Muslims/migrants/refugees' are not included, the table includes those 'Anti-Islam(ization)' protests, where it was possible to deduce a *political* target. These caveats of course affect the resulting figures, yet, from the 106 protests with a 'European' issue scope that could be coded as targeting a specified actors (i.e. 29.9% of *all* the FE-protests), 'Domestication' is the predominant Europeanization form for the FE-groups, while 'Externalization,' 'Transnational pressure,' and 'Supranationalisation' strategies were only used to a limited extent. This finding largely aligns with the research on social movements conducted by other scholars (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009; Caiani & Graziano 2018), just as it is rather similar to the findings for the GI groups. Conversely, 'domestic' protests only make up 17.5% of the FE groups' protests versus more than 50% by the GI groups. This partly relates to the fact that it was not possible to determine the exact issue and target scopes of many of the *PEGIDA* groups' protests.

Yet, this cancellation was ignored by the organisers and supporters, leading to the arrest of Wagensveld (Tubantia 2017).

²⁰⁸ Including the Austrian Freie Heimatliche Bewegung (Free Homeland Movement) (Gerhard Bauer), the Nederlandse Burger Partij (Dutch Citizens Party) (Marco Burghout), the Finnish Defence League (Jukka Ketonen), HoGeSa (Alex Kurth), Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany) (Christiane Christen) also took part, while Paul Meijer from Forza! Nederland cancelled his participation last minute. The German extreme right hooligan band Kategorie C provided the music.

Table 7.10: The FE groups' forms of Europeanization (2015-2017)²⁰⁹.

Participant/Target Scope	National	European
National	85.8% (91) (Domestication)	1.9% (2) (Externalization)
European	9.4% (10) (Transnational pressure)	2.8% (3) (Supranationalisation)

Note: N: 106. Pct (No. of protests).

7.3. THE ROLE OF NATIONAL CONTEXTS AND POLITICAL AND DISCURSIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Based on the observations above, the eleven FE-groups can be broadly divided into two categories in terms of their protest strategies, depending on their domestic political and discursive opportunities at the outset of the 2015-2017 period, together with their political contexts and geographical positions. On the one hand, the Eastern European extra-parliamentary groups (*IVČRN*, *BPI*, and *NGO ISIS*) had relatively open political and discursive opportunities domestically, and thus were most likely to directly target their national decision-makers (see Chapter 3)²¹⁰. Conversely, except for *PEGIDA Germany*, most of the Western European groups faced closed domestic political opportunities, partly due to the prominent role of the far right *parties* in their respective countries. As their discursive opportunities gradually opened, the groups largely focused their mobilization around domestic issues and more symbolic protests against Islam(ization) as such, as a means to influence the domestic debate (see Koopmans & Statham 1999a).

²⁰⁹ The 'Issue' scopes include both the protests with 'European' and 'Both (national and European)' scopes. For the 'Participant' scopes, the 'Cross-border' and 'European' are collated to 'European'. For the 'Target' scope, the 'National' targets only include the national decision-makers and the 'European' targets only the 'EU'.

²¹⁰ This was also the case for the Eastern European *parties*, as *Dawn*, *National Movement* and *EKRE* all mobilized strongly against the quotas in their respective countries. As this is outside the scope of this chapter, this will not be considered further here. However, one can mention that all of the Eastern European non- and institutional groups largely followed the same paths of Europeanization in terms of the scopes of their targets and issues. Therefore, they all mainly targeted their national governments in the summer and autumn of 2015, but indirectly targeted the EU by demanding that the government said 'no' to the EU's quota proposals (Polish *National Movement*), or maintained its refusal of the quotas (*EKRE*).

As the following section will illustrate, these differences became decisive for the groups' protest actions and strategies in the period (and also partially explains the protest frequencies and tactics outlined in the introductory section). Moreover, as the political and discursive opportunities at the EU-level remained closed throughout the 2015-2017 period, the groups instead decided to opt for a strategy of *transnational contention* in end-2015. This transnationalization will also very briefly be touched upon in this contextual analysis. The following section will thus examine the protest developments of *PEGIDA Germany*, *PEGIDA Netherlands*, and the Czech anti-Islam groups (*IVČRN*, *BPI*, and *Blok against Islamization*).

PROTEST DEVELOPMENTS OF PEGIDA GERMANY, PEGIDA NETHERLANDS, AND IVČRN/BPI

Each section begins with a consideration of the group's domestic political and discursive opportunities, followed by an analysis of the group's protest developments in the 2015-2017 period. The analysis also considers organizational and resource-related aspects, such as leadership changes, infights, and cooperation with other domestic actors, which (potentially) hindered or aided the mobilization.

PEGIDA Germany

PEGIDA Germany's first demonstration was on October 17, 2014 (see Ch. 5 for more). Especially its placement in the Eastern German city of Dresden in Saxony explains its successful mobilization, due to the more open discursive opportunities in the region (Minkenberg 2018), and the societal malaise expressed here since German reunification in 1991 (see e.g. Virchow 2016a). With the opening discursive opportunities in Germany after the publication of Sarrazin's book in 2014, plus the lack of a strong far right party occupying the political space in the country, the movement quickly increased its participant rates in Dresden²¹¹ (see e.g. Vorländer et al. 2018). Yet, the German political opportunities remained closed.

The German government, most parties, and the mainstream media initially heavily criticized *PEGIDA Germany* (see e.g. Vorländer et al. 2018, Ch. 2). Yet, an opinion poll conducted in December 2014 showed that almost half of the German population understood why one would mobilize against 'Islamization' (Ibid: 33), thus indicating a rather accepting population (and rather open discursive opportunities in terms of gaining resonance). Yet, *PEGIDA's* initial focus on 'Islamization' was quickly equal with more general anti-establishment expressions, making the protest group perceive

²¹¹ It struggled, however, to attract similar figures anywhere else in Germany and Europe (see e.g. Vorländer et al. 2018; Virchow 2016a).

itself as “the core of a collective German and European movement of the outraged, the new ‘enraged citizens’ (Wutbürger)” (Ibid: 2)²¹².

By January 2015, around 25,000 people participated in the demonstrations (Spiegel 2015a). Yet, from February 2015 onwards, the participation rates gradually decreased, both due to the group’s initial loss of momentum (Vorländer et al. 2018), but also because of the pictures published by the *Dresden Morgenpost* in January showing Bachmann in Hitler attire (Chambers 2015). This revelation led to the first split in the *PEGIDA* organizing team (the so-called ‘Orga-team’), and Tatjana Festerling joined the leadership (Vorländer et al. 2018). Despite the internal problems, the weekly Monday demonstrations continued as before (see Figure 7.2 below), while the group attempted to come up with new strategies to regain support and attract renewed media attention (Ibid.)²¹³. For one, Festerling ran as a mayoral candidate for *PEGIDA Germany* at the local elections in Saxony in June, where she won ten percent of the votes (Die Welt 2015).

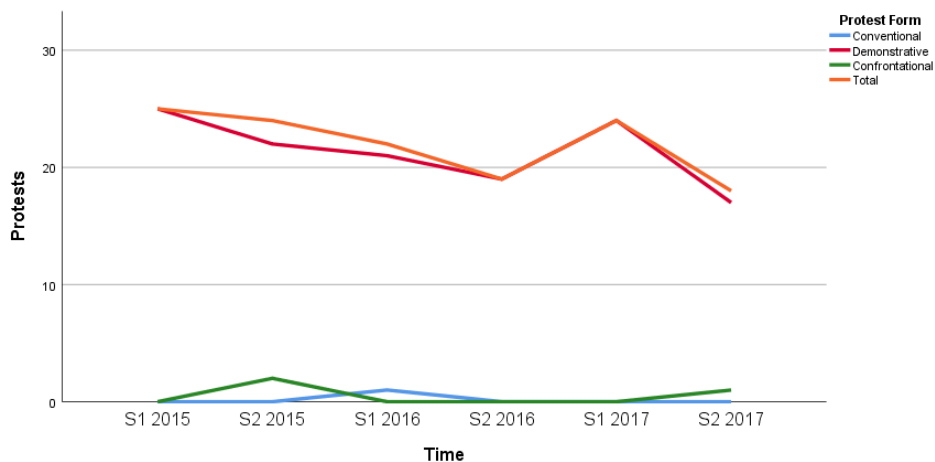
Yet, as can be seen on Figure 7.2 below, aside from a periodical radicalization of its protest repertoire in the autumn of 2015, where it carried out two border blockades with *BPI* and *Dawn*²¹⁴, the group never changed its protest form substantially. Instead, it continuously aimed at professionalizing the demonstrations (Vorländer et al. 2018), while maintaining the same level of protest throughout ($p > 0.05$). Nevertheless, over time, several of the speeches, particularly by Festerling, encouraged violent responses from the *PEGIDA*-supporters (for instance, her encouragement of the military and police’s use of civil disobedience in September 2015 (Epoch Times 2015c)), indicating a *discursive* radicalization.

²¹² The movement presented its first position paper on December 10, 2014 (see e.g. Söhler 2014), and Bachmann added six demands at the January 12, 2015, demonstration. Amongst other topics, these points involved a stricter immigration policy, a duty of integration for immigrants, and the expulsion of Jihadi Islamists (Epoch Times 2015a). Around a month later, on February 16, the so-called ‘Dresdner Theses’ were read aloud at a Monday demonstration (PEGIDA Official 2015). They had been developed together with the other German *PEGIDA* groups and included *PEGIDA Germany*’s policy demands (see *PEGIDA Germany* 2015a).

²¹³ For one, in April 2015, *PEGIDA Germany* hosted the Dutch politician Geert Wilders as a guest speaker at a demonstration (Jacobsen 2015).

²¹⁴ Similar to many other far right groups across Europe, *PEGIDA* called for a stricter domestic border control (see *PEGIDA Germany* 2015b). As *PEGIDA* and *BPI/Úsvit* were calling for similar measures in their neighboring countries, they agreed to carry out two joint border blockades on the Czech–German border in October (Epoch Times 2015d) and November 2015 (Sputnik Germany 2015). The latter was organized with a similar heading as the ones employed by *GI Germany* and *GI Austria*, namely as part of the ‘We are the border’ initiative (‘Wir sind die Grenze’) (*GI Germany* 2015f) (for more on the Czech–German cooperation, see Chapter 9).

Figure 7.2: PEGIDA Germany's protest forms per semester (2015-2017).



Note: N: 132. Cramer's V = .213 (*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001).

With the steep rise in refugees crossing the European external borders at the end of July 2015, PEGIDA's participant numbers re-surged (Vorländer et al. 2018). PEGIDA Germany now “attempted to position” itself “as the leading platform for protest against the refugee policy of the Federal Republic,” and turned into a more explicit anti-immigration movement (Ibid: 10)²¹⁵. Yet, despite this new protest focus, many of the protests still did not include the posing of specific demands to the decision-makers. This makes it very hard to evaluate the targeting of specific political or societal entities. However, when looking at Table 7.11 below, one can see that the German group only targeted the national decision-makers, when specifying a target²¹⁶ (based on the speeches by either Bachmann or Festerling).

²¹⁵ These sentiments only developed further after the EU-meeting on September 4, where Merkel established the ‘open border’ policy of Germany, and the therefrom-ensuing de facto (temporary) removal of the Dublin Conventions. At the following PEGIDA demonstration (on September 7), Festerling criticized Merkel's policy, and instead demanded closed, militarily guarded, borders (Epoch Times 2015b). Similarly, in September, the European Commission proposed new refugee allocation measures, and this led to strong Visegrad opposition, mainly voiced by Órban (see above). Ten days later, Festerling posted a YouTube video of her holding a sign saying, ‘Germany says thank you, Mr. Órban,’ to show him that not all Germans agreed with Merkel's policy (Festerling 2015b).

²¹⁶ On August 11, 2015, for instance, PEGIDA Germany published an asylum policy paper, where it called for a suspension of the Schengen agreement, and a German exit from the EU, referring to it as “the useless outfit that oppresses” all member states (PEGIDA Germany 2015b).

Table 7.11: *PEGIDA Germany's protest issue and target scopes (2015-2017).*

Issue/Target	National	European		Other	Total
		<i>Nat.Gov</i>	<i>EU</i>		
National	4.5 (6)	3.8 (5)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	4.5 (6)
European	3.8 (5)	3.0 (4)	0.0 (0)	4.5 (6)	8.3 (11)
Both	14.4 (19)	14.4 (19)	0.0 (0)	72.7 (96)	87.1 (115)
Total	22.7 (30)	21.2 (28)	0.0 (0)	77.3 (102)	100.0 (132)

Note: N: 132. Pct (No. of protests). Cramer's V = .445*** (*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001). The figures for 'National government' and 'EU' form part of the 'National' and 'European' totals respectively.

Particularly in August-December 2015, *PEGIDA Germany* mobilized strongly against the German chancellor due to her role in allowing the refugees' access to Europe. In a sense, their mobilization both targeted the German government, but also the EU, due to the role of the German Chancellor in the EU's decisions. Yet, in terms of the framing of the claims, *PEGIDA's* criticism of Merkel was mainly regarding her role as the national leader of Germany²¹⁷. The 'refugee crisis' remained the main topic for the movement's demonstrations throughout 2015 (Vorländer et al. 2018), and this was also the period where *PEGIDA Germany* and *BPI* started discussing the creation of the *Fortress Europe* coalition (see Chapter 9).

After the mass sexual assaults on women in Cologne on New Year's Eve 2015-2016 (see Appendix C), the focus shifted back to the domestic setting. As the German media started becoming more critical about the refugees, plus Merkel and other prominent German mainstream politicians called for tighter migration controls (see e.g. Yardley 2016), *PEGIDA Germany* again attempted to exploit the opening in the discursive domestic opportunities. The frames employed in the *PEGIDA* speeches thus became even more hostile against refugees and migrants (see e.g. Vorländer et al. 2018: 544; Locke & Bender 2016), while the blame attributions were mainly directed at the national government.

Yet, the earlier re-surge in protest participants began decreasing again, implying a need for change, in terms of a more militant action repertoire and/or finding other means to attract more activists to the cause. Festerling and Wagensveld, who were both frequent speakers at the *PEGIDA Germany* demonstrations from January 2015 onwards, had, for a longer period, called for more radical protest repertoires and activist responses, while Bachmann instead wanted to maintain the structure and frequency of the weekly Monday demonstrations (Vorländer et al. 2018). These

²¹⁷ Festerling, for instance, constantly insinuated that the 'abolition' ('Abschaffung') of the German people was Merkel's aim from the outset in order to boost the German economy, but that it, in fact, just led to the immigration of people who would become dependent on the welfare system (Epoch Times 2015c).

differing stances, plus Festerling's radical expression forms, led to her exclusion from the Orga-team in May 2016, resulting in a very public feud between she and Bachmann during the summer of 2016 (Spiegel 2016b). This public dispute showed a very limited degree of professionalism (see also Chapter 5).

Besides *PEGIDA Germany*'s own weekly demonstrations in Dresden, from May 2016 onwards, Bachmann also supported the anti-Merkel demonstrations in Berlin ('Merkel must go' ('Merkel muss weg'), and he spoke at some of the demonstrations (see e.g. Hasselmann 2016). Simultaneously, *PEGIDA Germany* was developing closer relations with members of the far right *Alternative for Germany (AfD)* party,²¹⁸ which was gaining prominence on the German political scene during the 2016-2017 period, largely benefitting from the success of the *PEGIDA* mobilization, with adversely decreasing momentum and participation rates (Weisskircher & Berntzen 2018). By 2017, *PEGIDA*'s demonstrations only had between 1,000 to 2,000 participants (Vorländer et al. 2018).

Throughout 2017, *PEGIDA* focused on creating a stronger national anti-immigration force, especially by expanding the cooperation with *AfD*, for instance, by co-organizing demonstrations with the party (from May 8, 2017, onwards) (Bartsch 2017). At *PEGIDA Germany*'s 3-year birthday celebration in October 2017, six *AfD* MPs were on stage being celebrated for the good electoral results in September (Stürzenberger 2017). Yet, at the same time, this strong electoral outcome for *AfD* also signified a loss of importance for *PEGIDA Germany*, as the country now had a strong far right party, where dissatisfied people could voice their dismay. Scholars thus argue that the rise of the *AfD* in many ways signified the end of *PEGIDA*'s prominence in German politics (see e.g. Vorländer et al. 2018) even though the weekly demonstrations still take place.

PEGIDA Netherlands

After a failed attempt by the *Dutch Defense League* to set up a Dutch *PEGIDA* offshoot in early 2015, Edwin Wagenveld, made a renewed attempt in the autumn of 2015, allegedly due to several requests (Interview with Wagenveld 2017). *PEGIDA Netherlands*' first demonstration in October 2015 attracted around 200-300 supporters, making it the largest Dutch far right demonstration that year, with a crowd consisting of both newcomers and experienced far right activists (Muis & van Kassel 2017).

²¹⁸ The two organizations began cooperating more openly from May 2016 onwards, despite the *AfD* party leadership distancing itself from the movement (Weiland 2016; see also Vorländer et al. 2018, Ch. 3; Weisskircher & Berntzen 2018). It was only in 2018 that *AfD* officially permitted its members to participate in *PEGIDA Germany* demonstrations and speak on the stage (Süddeutsche Zeitung 2018).

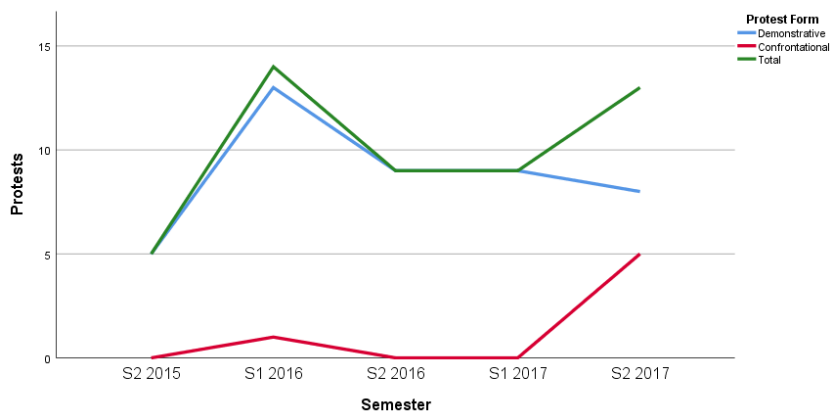
In September 2015, a few weeks prior to *PEGIDA Netherlands*' first demonstration, the Dutch Parliament had discussed the European Commission's quota demands (Bahceli 2015). Here, Mark Rutte, the Conservative Prime Minister, stated that the country would prefer giving money to the near areas instead of accepting refugees (Ibid.). Hence, the Dutch government was expressing concerns about the reception of refugees, just as the topic led to worries amongst the Dutch population (COB 2015). This meant that the discursive opportunities for the expression of similar statements were rather open in the second half of 2015. The Dutch context thus had rather open DOS for mobilization around anti-Islam frames, further 'aided' by the series of terrorist attacks that hit Europe in the 2015-2016 period, which strongly increased the salience of "anti-foreigner sentiments" in the country (Muis & van Kessel 2017: 1).

Yet, the strong Dutch far right parties inferred that *PEGIDA Netherlands*' mobilizing issues were already covered politically (Ibid.). Moreover, the Dutch far right extra-parliamentary actors were strongly stigmatized (Klandermans & Mayer 2006). The group thus quickly became part of the weak, fragmented, and politically irrelevant Dutch far right extra-parliamentary scene. It joined other groups' protest actions as a means to increase the combined resources (e.g. by helping each other with practicalities surrounding demonstrations) (see e.g. Muis & van Kessel 2017). Throughout the 2015-2017 period, *PEGIDA Netherlands* thus cooperated extensively with similar smaller far right groups, both well-established groups and newer initiatives²¹⁹ (see also section 7.1).

After the initial mobilization success, over time, the participation rates significantly decreased. This, however, did not dissuade the *PEGIDA* activists from continuing to organize demonstrations, and as Figure 7.3 shows, *PEGIDA Netherlands* mainly employed demonstrative protest forms (mainly involving demonstrations and rallies). Due to the dwindling protest attendance numbers during 2016, *PEGIDA Netherlands* changed its protest frequency to monthly demonstrations in The Hague from September 2016 onwards (Wagensveld 2016b), which explained the drop in protests in the second half of 2016. September 11, 2016, was thus the first monthly *PEGIDA Netherlands* demonstration in The Hague.

²¹⁹ The established groups involve the extreme right party *Dutch People's Union* (*Nederlandse Volks-Unie, NVU*), *Voorpost* ('Outpost'), and the *Dutch Defense League*, while Dutch *PEGIDA* activists also joined the demonstrations of Dutch citizens' initiatives organizing demonstrations against refugee housing, just as Wagensveld spoke at an anti-refugee housing demonstration organized by residents of the Ypenburg neighbourhood in The Hague (see Kafka n.d.).

Figure 7.3: *PEGIDA Netherlands' protest forms per semester (2015-2017).*



Note: N: 50. Cramer's $V = .491^*$ (* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$).

Moreover, after the break-up of the German *PEGIDA* Orga-Team in May 2016 (see above), which also meant the exclusion of Wagensveld, due to his loyalty to Festerling (Meisner 2016), and the decreasing participation rates at *PEGIDA Netherlands' rallies* in mid-2016, its protest repertoires further radicalized (Tierolf et al. 2018). The protests, however, still maintained a demonstrative format (see Figure 7.3), albeit increasingly through tactics involving direct actions²²⁰ ($V = .491$).

The 'confrontational' actions in the second half of 2017 (see Figure 7.3 above) mainly occurred during the summer of 2017, where the group opposed the announcement of Ahmed Marcouch (Labour Party, *PvdA*) as the mayor of Arnhem through disruptive actions. *PVV* also mobilized on this issue (Reijner 2016),²²¹ yet, this was one of the only times *PEGIDA Netherlands* cooperated with Wilders' party, which usually refused to cooperate with extra-parliamentary Dutch far right groups (Muis & van

²²⁰ The group has in general carried out several very derogatory actions against Muslims and their faith. This, for example, includes the wearing of hats that look like pig heads, or spreading pigs' blood on the model of a church on the grounds of a planned mosque (Omroep PowNed 2017), just as the activists focused on Islam's treatment of women at the demonstration in Nijmegen on the International Women's Day on March 8, 2017 (Kuipers 2017). According to Wagensveld, the inspiration to these action repertoires mainly derives from *Generation Identity* (Interview with Wagensveld 2017).

²²¹ The party's request for a parliamentary debate about the appointment was not successful, so it took the quarrels to the streets, and organized a demonstration on July 5, 2017, which *PEGIDA Netherlands* took part in (Kafka n.d.), just as three *PEGIDA* activists disturbed Marcouch's instatement proceedings on September 1 (Omroep gld 2016).

Kessel 2017)^{222 223}. Moreover, in relation to the Dutch debate about ‘Zwarte Piet’ or ‘Black Pete,’ Santa’s black-faced helper (see e.g. De Beukelaer 2018), PEGIDA activists also carried out street theatres dressed up as the figure (Omroep PowNed 2016). This indicates a more disruptive strategy than the one of *PEGIDA Germany*, largely due to the closed domestic political opportunities and low protest attendance numbers, which made the group carry out similar actions as *Generation Identity*.

The majority of *PEGIDA Netherlands*’ protests focused on domestic issues (e.g. regarding ‘Zwarte Piet’, mosque constructions, or refugee housing), and more general protests against the ‘Islamization’ of the Netherlands. The group therefore mainly targeted *national* actors, when the protest was directed towards a decision-making target. Table 7.12 below shows that in terms of issue scope and targets, aside from the ‘Anti-Islam(ization)’ protests, *PEGIDA Netherlands* overwhelmingly mobilized on domestic issues against national targets. 32% of the group’s protests targeted the local or national government, while, in fact, 46% of the group’s protests can be classified as ‘domestic’ protests, entailing a national issue, participant, and target scope. Conversely, none of the protests targeted the EU or other EU MS’ governments.

Table 7.12: *PEGIDA Netherlands*’ protest issue and target scopes (2015-2017).

Issue/Target	National	European		Other	Total	
		Nat.Gov	EU			
National	46.0 (23)	32.0 (16)	2.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	8.0 (4)	56.0 (28)
European	2.0 (1)	2.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	10.0 (5)	12.0 (6)
Both	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	32.0 (16)	32.0 (16)
Total	48.0 (24)	34.0 (17)	2.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	50.0 (25)	100.0 (50)

Note: N: 50. Cramer’s V = .574*** (*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001). The figures for ‘National government’ and ‘EU’ form part of the ‘National’ and ‘European’ totals respectively.

Aside from ‘Anti-Islam(ization)’ demonstrations, *PEGIDA Netherlands* also participated in numerous rallies against planned refugee centers in the first six months of 2016. The political decision to erect these centers had led to considerable anxiety amongst the general population, leading *PEGIDA Netherlands* and other Dutch far

²²² In an attempt to approach the PVV, *PEGIDA Netherlands* joined several PVV-related protest actions: amongst them, a rally against the court prosecution of Wilders on March 18, 2016 (Kafka n.d), and a protest against the Turkish Foreign Minister (Festerling 2017b). Yet, these support actions for PVV largely remained unanswered by the party, mainly due to legitimacy and respectability concerns regarding cooperation with extreme right actors (see Appendix C).

²²³ Instead, the relatively new *Forum for Democracy (FvD)* was much more accommodative. Wagensveld stated that FvD would come to the PEGIDA activists in order to discuss policy points and topics for debate, indicating an alignment with the far right party (Interview with PEGIDA Netherlands 2017), a party that at the same time was part of the explanation for *PEGIDA Netherlands*’ limited success.

right groups to mobilize in front of the centres and at information evenings (see e.g. Teitsma 2016; Kafka 2016). Yet, aside from these direct actions against refugee housing and Muslim practices (see above), most of *PEGIDA Netherlands*' demonstrations did not have a specified theme or title (Bos 2017), and instead mainly targeted Muslims through 'Anti-Islam(ization)' protests.

During 2016, the participation rates continued plummeting, mainly due to the diminishing attention given to the group by the media, authorities, and general public, as the 'refugee crisis' debates began fading out, thereby reducing the salience of the refugee issue, and anti-Islam more generally (Wagenaar 2019). Hence, by its 18th demonstration on March 5, 2017, "Only the hard core" were "left", just as the speech contents had become extremely radical (Bos 2017).

Wagensveld argued that the confrontations with counter-protesters and his frequent arrests deterred people from joining, as "People are too scared to come" (Feenstra 2016). *PEGIDA Netherlands*' rallies were, in fact, often met by suppression by both the Dutch authorities and counter-protesters (Wagenaar 2019). Unrest frequently erupted between the *PEGIDA* activists and left-wing counter-protesters, often leading to arrests of protesters from both camps (see e.g. NOS Nieuws 2015; Leijten 2015). In fact, during the three-year period, the police made numerous arrests of Wagensveld for not abiding to the Dutch demonstration rules (see e.g. NOS Nieuws 2016; DUIC 2017)²²⁴. Such suppressive acts, together with the personal reputational costs of participating in violent far right protests, are often found to be an obstacle for far right mobilization, and thus lower the participation rates.

In the autumn of 2017, an infight between *PEGIDA Netherlands*' core members led to the creation of the splinter group *Right in Resistance* ('*Rechts in Verzet*') (Tierolf

²²⁴ Unlike the situation in the 1990s, where Dutch extreme right demonstrations largely were prohibited, on reasons of disturbance of public order and safety (see e.g. Muis 2015), the local Dutch authorities mostly permitted *PEGIDA*'s demonstrations and public meetings. Yet, in 2016 alone, Wagensveld was arrested five times, leading him to express that he felt targeted and victimized (Bos 2017), and, for instance, referred to the strong police force as "a conscious intimidation of the government to ensure that widely supported criticism of immigration and Islam cannot be spread" (Feenstra 2016). Moreover, *PEGIDA Netherlands* activists often clashed with counter-protesters, largely made up of *Antifa* and other left-wing organizations, who attempted to dissuade people from participating (see e.g. Ibid.). Finally, *PEGIDA Netherlands* also faced repression online, as Facebook removed its page in early 2016, at a point where it had 20,000 'Likes'. Wagensveld considered this as part of the reason why the participation numbers at the demonstrations were so low, as this led to a more limited message reach (Bos 2017). These frequent arrests and legal cases against Wagensveld plus the left-wing counter-mobilization permitted the *PEGIDA* activists to tactically frame themselves as victims, just as the arrests gave the protest group more media exposure, making them seek the confrontation (Wagenaar 2019).

et al. 2018), just as it led to even lower participation rates at the *PEGIDA Netherlands* protests (Wagenaar 2019). However, despite the split, *PEGIDA Netherlands* continues carrying out smaller actions and a few demonstrations, yet, still maintaining very low participation rates (to read more about *PEGIDA Netherlands*' protest actions post-2017, consult Wagenaar 2019).

IVČRN, Blok Against Islam (BPI), and Blok Against Islamization

We do not want Islam in the Czech Republic's ('*Islám v České republice nechceme*', *IVČRN*) website was created in 2009, and the group had a very active online presence, posting anti-Islam articles and blog posts. In December 2014, the group took the contention to the streets when the Czech Republic was asked to receive 15 ill Syrian children and their families, implying a potential for Muslim arrivals to the country²²⁵. This mobilization increased the group's visibility, and by January 2015, *IVČRN's* Facebook page reached 100,000 'Likes' and the group began setting up local associations (Prokupkova 2018a).

Unlike the Netherlands and Germany, both the discursive and political opportunities were open for far right anti-Islam mobilization in the Czech Republic in 2015. Even though (or exactly because) the country hardly had seen any Muslim immigration in the past (Hafez 2018), the population was strongly Islamophobic, and opposed third-country immigration (Čisár & Navrátil 2018), just as did most political parties (Hafez 2018), especially vocally voiced by the country's President, Miloš Zeman (Culik 2015). Furthermore, a political claims analysis by Navrátil and Hruběš showed that the majority (2/3) of the government's claims about refugees in 2015 were negative, mainly portraying migrants as a threat to the country (as cited in Čisár & Navrátil 2018). The Czech media was rather divided in the portrayal of the 'refugee crisis' and Islam. While the mainstream newspapers were largely impartial, alternative media sources and some traditional media outlets instead "framed the debate from the perspective of Islamophobic and anti-refugee groups" (Globsec 2016).

The Czech debates about refugee reception had its onset around January 2015 (Čisár & Navrátil 2018), and together with the moral shock of the terrorist attack in Paris on January 7, *IVČRN* used the opportunity to organize a demonstration in Prague, attracting around 400-600 participants (ČTK 2015). Some days later, the Czech government accepted the entry of the refugees due to EU demands, and *IVČRN* mobilized against this by targeting the national government. Hence, the external pressure from the EU on the Czech government led the citizens (i.e. *IVČRN*) to target the domestic government, which could choose to either repress the protests, offer

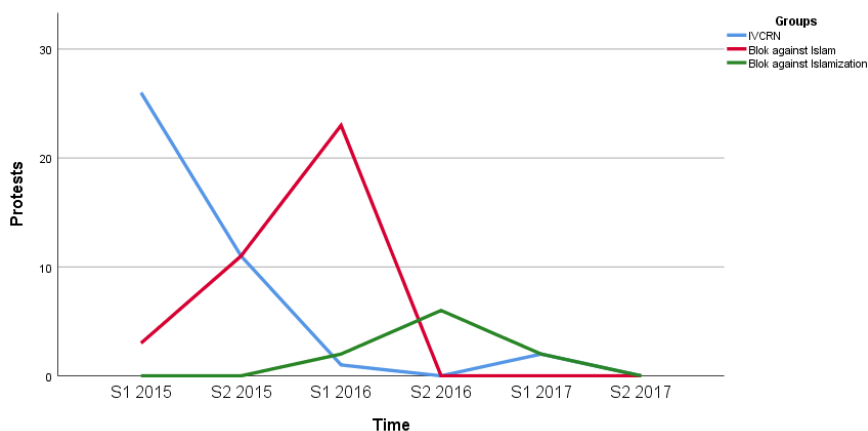
²²⁵ In the preceding year, the group had mainly carried out smaller domestic protest actions and events against Islam, such as e.g. a petition against the full recognition of Islam in the Czech Republic (the Churches Act) (see e.g. *IVČRN* 2014b) and campaigning against Halal meat (*IVČRN* 2014c).

concessions to the citizens, or broker between the citizens and the European institution (Tarrow 2005). In this case, the government chose to agree to the EU's demands, yet, by mid-2016, it had only resettled three children and their families (Globsec 2016).

The Czech group continued mobilizing. Initially, it continued its anti-Islam protests, but returned to the anti-refugee mobilization after the European Commission launched its quota proposal in May 2015. *IVČRN* reacted rather similarly as other Eastern European far right actors by exploiting the domestic opportunities to target the domestic leaders in order to exercise pressure on the EU. Moreover, looking for a means to express a stronger response to the EU's demands, *IVČRN* co-founded *Blok against Islam (Blok Proti Islamu)* on June 5 (*IVČRN 2015e*)²²⁶.

As is visible on Figure 7.4, *IVČRN*'s protest actions began gradually decreasing during 2015 after it largely returned to being an online phenomenon. Conversely, *BPI* organized most of its demonstrations in the second half of 2015, i.e. at the height of the 'refugee crisis.' After the split up of *BPI*'s group in May 2016 (*Novinky 2016*), *BPI*'s momentum was largely gone, and by 2017, the three Czech groups' anti-Islam mobilization had largely terminated (more on this below).

Figure 7.4: *IVČRN*, *BPI*, and *BA Islamization*'s protest frequency per semester 2015-2017.

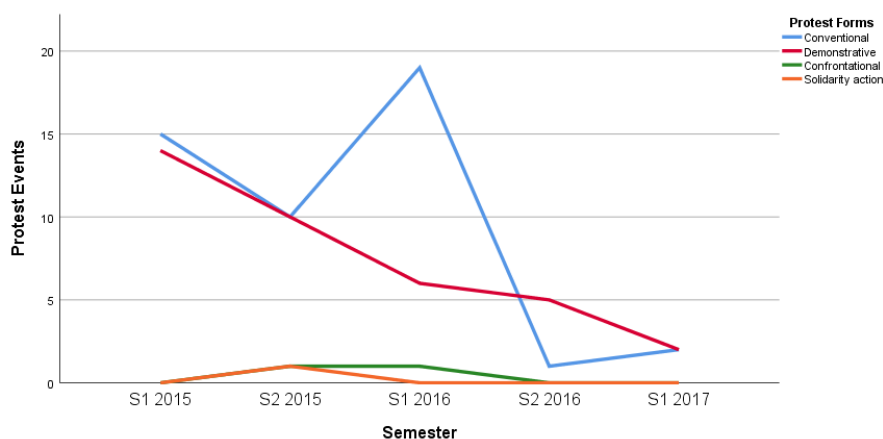


Note: N: 87.

²²⁶ In the inaugural speech, Konvička mentioned several possible strategies for how *BPI* could obtain influence, such as through lobbyism, political analyses, election participation, and the establishment of coalitions with political parties. Moreover, he also discussed the proposed EU refugee quotas, which he only saw as a starting point for the Muslim immigration to the country. He used the current situation in Western Europe as an example of how bad the situation could turn (*IVČRN 2015f*) and emphasized that the *IVČRN* petition was the means by which the government should be 'pushed' to stay on the group's side (*Ibid.*).

Figure 7.5 below, which merges the three groups' protest actions, shows that from the summer of 2015 until the spring of 2016, both *IVČRN* and *BPI* organized numerous domestic protests against the EU's quota proposal, using a variety of different protest tactics, albeit mainly of a conventional or demonstrative nature. The actions included a petition in May 2015, calling for a referendum on the uptake of refugees (*IVČRN* 2015d). It had been signed by more than 140,000 people by June 23, where it was presented to the Czech Chamber of Deputies by a representative of *IVČRN* and *BPI*, Martin Konvička, plus the populist radical right party *Dawn (Úsvit)* (*IVČRN* 2015g). *BPI* was thus granted access to the Czech parliament, and could present its petition directly to the decision-makers, illustrating the more open political opportunities in the Czech Republic (Prokupkova 2018a).

Figure 7.5: *IVČRN*, *BPI*, and *BA Islamization's* protest forms per semester (2015-2017).



Note: N: 87. The table shows the three groups' combined protest events in the period. Cramer's V = .239 (*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001).

In the April-December 2015 period, *IVČRN* and *BPI's* protest actions thus mainly evolved around the objection to the possible reception of refugees to the Czech Republic (see also Císař & Navrátil 2018). This meant that *IVČRN's* initial civilizational 'anti-Islam' focus and targeting in the period leading up to 2015 shifted to a nation-state focused mobilization in 2015 and early 2016, inferring a rather high number of protests targeting the national government (see Table 7.13). This strategy was further aided by the Hungarian Prime Minister Órban's early rejection of the European Commission's plans, which meant that the group could use the Visegrad relationship as a way of pressuring the national government. Moreover, when demanding a rejection of the refugee quotas, the protests were mostly also framed against the domestic decision-makers themselves, who were scolded for obeying the EU's demands without concern for the will of the people (see e.g. *BPI's* protest actions in June-July 2015 (e.g. *BPI* 2015a). Hence, even though *IVČRN* and *BPI's* protest actions mainly targeted the national government in this period, the groups indirectly

targeted the EU, by demanding that the government said ‘no’ to the EU’s quota proposals. As an example, a day after the Hungarian government had decided to close the national border (Dunai 2015), on June 18, 2015, *BPI* and *Dawn* sent locks to Czech government representatives, symbolically asking them to lock the borders against illegal refugees (Parlamentní Listy 2015). The groups demanded that the Czech government “make it clear to the big EU states that we are not afraid of their pressure to accept quotas” (Ibid.), clearly employing a domestication strategy. Several of their protest actions were thus cases of *domestication*, as the issue scope was ‘European’, while the target scope was ‘domestic,’ and involved clear formulations requesting the national government to oppose the EU’s demands.

Table 7.13: Czech anti-Islam FE groups’ protest issue and target scopes (2015-2017)

Issue/Target	National		European		Other	Total
		<i>Nat.Gov</i>		<i>EU</i>		
National	31.0 (27)	11.5 (10)	1.1 (1)	0.0 (0)	5.7 (5)	37.9 (33)
European	33.3 (29)	33.3 (29)	10.3 (9)	3.4 (3)	9.2 (8)	52.9 (46)
Both	4.6 (4)	4.6 (4)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	4.6 (4)	9.2 (8)
Total	68.9 (60)	49.4 (43)	11.4 (10)	3.4 (3)	19.5 (17)	100.0 (87)

Note: N: 87. Cramer’s V = .466*** (*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001). The figures for ‘National government’ and ‘EU’ form part of the ‘National’ and ‘European’ totals respectively.

BPI began co-organizing protests with the Czech *Dawn* party in August 2015 due to the party’s aim “to boost attendance and get media attention, and to compensate for the lack of their own members” (Císař & Navrátil 2018: 195). During autumn and winter of 2015, i.e. at the height of the ‘refugee crisis’ debates in the Czech Republic (Ibid.), *BPI* mobilized strongly against the Czech reception of refugees, together with several other Czech far right actors, despite the fact that hardly any refugees entered the country from the Balkan route (Globsec 2016). This was very much in line with the wishes of the general Czech population, as around 70 percent opposed the entry of refugees from the MENA countries to the EU as such (CT24 2015).

Moreover, in the same period, *BPI* began cooperating with *PEGIDA Germany*, a movement the Czech activists had admired since 2014 (see e.g. Prokupkova 2018b). The two tried to jointly put pressure on their respective governments, for instance through two border blockades in the autumn of 2015 (Epoch Times 2015d; Sputnik

Germany 2015)²²⁷ and by forming the *Fortress Europe Coalition* in January 2016 (for more on this, see Chapter 9).

BPI and *Dawn* maintained their coalition throughout 2015, and in January 2016, aside from hosting the inaugural *Fortress Europe* meeting on January 23 (Volk 2016), they published a common ‘National Paper’ (‘Narodny listy’) (Kopecký 2016). After the relatively successful demonstration on February 6, 2016, the two political groups decided to formalize ties two weeks later through a name change of *Dawn* (which the authorities did not permit), and to introduce an election program for the autumn 2016 regional and senate elections (Hospodářské Noviny 2016). A few weeks later, on March 10, the Czech parliament again discussed *Dawn* and *BPI*’s referendum petition on the refugee quotas (Czech Parliament 2016), yet, again without this leading to any results.

Yet, after an internal struggle about funding (Císař & Navrátil 2018), *BPI* left the *Dawn* coalition, and split into two groups, a party, *Alternative for Czech Republic*, and a new political association, *Blok Against Islamization* (Novinky 2016). The new *BPI* decided to continue the support of *Dawn*, and carry out further anti-Islam demonstrations, albeit mainly focusing on the national level. During the summer of 2016, *Blok against Islamization* and *Dawn* organized numerous election debates for their joint campaign. Yet, in June, the Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lubomír Zaorálek very firmly rejected the refugee quotas (Lehnartz 2016), seeing that the strong Czech ‘refugee crisis’ debates had largely terminated (Císař & Navrátil 2018), and thus, closed this topic as a mobilization issue, indicating that the momentum was largely lost for the anti-Islam mobilization.

From the fall of 2016 onwards, *Blok Against Islamization*’s street activism decreased (see Figure 7.4). At the October 2016 regional elections, which had anti-immigration as one of the main topics of debate, *Dawn* was unsuccessful (only obtaining 0.1% of the votes), while Tomio Okamura’s new party, *Freedom and Direct Democracy* (SPD), which had also mobilized strongly during the ‘crisis,’ won 10.6% of the votes. This “showed that a single issue anti-Muslim campaign was not enough to win elections” (Globsec 2016). From these elections onwards, *Dawn* and *BPI* only carried out sporadic protest actions without much public support. Despite their role in furthering anti-Islam sentiments amongst the population throughout the ‘refugee crisis’ (Basch & Heřmanová 2017), the mainstream parties already catered to the

²²⁷ *BPI* and *Dawn* organized another border blockade only three days before the Czech government was supposed to respond to their refugee quota petition in April 2016 (Focus Online 2016b). The protest took place at three points on the Czech-German (2) and Czech-Austrian (1) borders in April 2016. It was a few days after the Czech government had refused the EU’s quota demands (Wirnitzer 2017), and was targeted at the European Commission, which was seen as infringing on the sovereign rights of the EU MS, due to the quota demands (Focus Online 2016).

public's concerns about third country migration and opposition towards the EU, saying that there was hardly any space on the Czech political scene for either *IVČRN* or *BPI* (Pehe as cited in Lazarová 2016). Moreover, *Dawn*, practically speaking, became obsolete after the 2016 elections, as it did not run in the 2017 elections (Císař & Navrátil 2018) and was dissolved as a political party in 2018.

This section has shown the great importance of both the POS, DOS, and material resources for a group's particular mobilization strategies, choices, and developments, as exemplified by the cases of *PEGIDA Germany*, *PEGIDA Netherlands*, and *IVČRN/BPI*. While *PEGIDA Germany* could exploit the open opportunities in Dresden and drew huge crowds to its demonstrations in the winter 2014-2015, its attempts at regaining momentum only succeeded with the onset of the 'Long summer of migration' in late summer 2015, as the group seized the discursive opportunities, and continued its criticism of the national government. Moreover, the rise of *AfD* simultaneously resulted in a decreasing role to the German movement, as a strong domestic far right party tends to diminish the support to extra-parliamentary far right actors. This was, in fact, one of the main problems for *PEGIDA Netherlands*, which had closed domestic political opportunities from the beginning, due to the Dutch historical view on the far right and the prominence of the far right parties in the country. Moreover, the closed EU opportunities plus the group's lack of resources meant that EU-mobilization was not an option. The group thus had problems establishing itself as a relevant domestic far right actor, and instead, turned increasingly radical in terms of protest repertoires, mainly targeted at the local or national government, just as it cooperated closely with other small Dutch far right groups as a means to boost the numbers. The Czech groups, on the other hand, had both open domestic POS and DOS from January 2015 onwards, and attempted to exploit these openings by exerting pressure on the national government in order for it to refuse the EU's quotas. Yet, as soon as the 'refugee crisis' debates ended in the country, *Blok Against Islamization* and *IVČRN* both practically ended their mobilization.

7.4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The above analysis has shown that the FE-groups almost all mainly organized demonstrative protests, frequently around the issue of 'Anti-Islam(ization)'. Yet, the groups had highly varied degrees of success with their mobilization in terms of attracting participants. *PEGIDA Germany's* name, protest repertoire, main collective action frames, and slogans were initially adopted by the European *PEGIDA*-offshoots, which also began organizing silent marches followed by speeches. Yet, none of the FE *PEGIDA* groups managed to attract as proportionally strong numbers as their German counterpart did.

Prokúpková (2018b) has similarly analysed how *IVČRN* and *BPI* drew on *PEGIDA Germany's* amassed knowledge in terms of organizing demonstrations, and, in fact, managed to attract rather sizeable numbers. Yet, *PEGIDA's* repertoire does not work in all European domestic settings, mainly due to the averse political opportunities (especially in relation to the role of the radical right *parties* in the given countries) and the groups' degree of embeddedness in their domestic far right scenes (see also Berntzen & Weisskircher 2016). After a certain period, *For Freedom* thus realized that its weekly demonstrations were not as popular as in Dresden, Germany, and changed to monthly demonstrations in September 2015. *PEGIDA Netherlands* took a similar decision in September 2016, where it announced the intention to protest monthly in The Hague, as a means to make its protests more regularly organized. Conversely, both *PEGIDA Austria* and *PEGIDA UK's* endeavors of introducing *PEGIDA* to their domestic settings were very short-lived, as the groups quickly had to give up on their endeavors to introduce *PEGIDA* to the domestic setting.

The protest repertoire strategies also very much depended on the personal preferences and deliberations of the various protest group *leaders*. Festerling and Wagensveld are two prominent examples, due to their insistence on the use of 'acts of civil disobedience' in order to counter the refugee and migrant 'threat,' explaining *PEGIDA Netherlands's* stronger reliance on direct actions than any of the other *PEGIDA* groups. Conversely, Tania Groth from *For Freedom* instead highlighted the wish to 'unite the right' in Denmark through monthly demonstrations (Interview with *For Freedom* 2017), while Bachmann from *PEGIDA Germany* concentrated on the professionalization of the Dresden demonstrations (Vorländer et al. 2018). The extra-parliamentary FE-groups thus did not draw on each other's protest tactics in a similar way as the GI-groups, but instead either moderated the expression forms to the domestic settings or ended the mobilization after a few attempts.

In terms of the groups' protest targets, the chapter similarly underlined the high relevance of their political and discursive opportunities. Hence, due to their more favorable domestic political and discursive opportunities, the Czech anti-Islam groups exercised pressure on the national government to refuse the EU's quota proposal, and they exploited their alliance with *Dawn* for this endeavour. Conversely, only a few of the Western European groups' protests were targeted at the national government in order to explicitly pressure the EU. Instead, *PEGIDA Netherlands*, *PEGIDA Germany*, *PEGIDA UK*, *PEGIDA Austria*, and *For Freedom* mainly targeted the national governments with demands regarding *domestic* issues, or targeted Islam and/or its adherents, migrants, and refugees, while voicing blame attributions towards the political establishment more broadly (see above), mostly without posing specific policy demands. At the height of the 'refugee crisis' (i.e. the second half of 2015), the Western European groups' demonstrations *did* all focus on the topic of anti-refugees, yet, again without making explicit policy demands in most cases. The protests therefore quickly became routinized rituals, mainly intended to exercise general pressure on the national government via the attempt to attract a strong following from

the general population. This strategy is rather akin to the one employed by the *EDL* a few years earlier (albeit without the violence) and to extreme right demonstrations more generally (see e.g. Caiani et al. 2012).

Aside from the organization of a high number of protests around ‘European’ issues, the exploration of the groups’ collective action Europeanization showed a very limited level of ‘European’ target, participant, and event scope, inferring that the majority of the protests were cases of ‘domestication’—exactly as was the case for the *GI* groups. As the section on ‘Scope of participants’ showed, there *were* several protests with participants from other European countries, yet, this mostly only surrounded *speakers* from abroad, and was not, as such, co-organized by groups from different European countries. Moreover, the analysis also showed that several of the groups participated in each other’s protests *cross-border*, i.e. with geographically close actors, most frequently due to language similarity, and as a means to boost each other’s protest numbers, and again not to exert a concerted pressure on the decision-makers. All the groups instead focused their contention on the domestic level, while it was practically only *BPI* and *IVČRN* that mobilized explicitly against the EU.

Hence, as was the case for *Generation Identity*, none of the FE protest groups took their demands to the EU institutions, due to the closed political opportunities at the EU-level, and the groups’ lack of symbolic and material resources (see Chapter 5). Instead, the groups opted for a joint strategy of *transnational contention* towards the end of 2015 on the initiative of *PEGIDA Germany* and *BPI* as a means to exercise *transnational* far right pressure on the EU through an outsider strategy, and, more generally, to portray a united European front against Islam and the establishment (more on this in Chapter 9). Distinctly from the *GI* groups, the FE-groups’ transnational protests were organized within a specific period of contention (January–May 2016) and due to an explicit policy issue and target. The scope of FE transnational events was thus rather limited, and mainly evolved around a few large-scale events (i.e. the founding of the coalition in January 2016, the simultaneous protests in February, and the demonstration in May). Furthermore, with the FE-demonstrations only taking place in the spring of 2016, the momentum was almost lost before the protests happened. The highest migratory pressure was in the autumn and winter of 2015, and most EU MS had introduced border controls and refused the quotas by this point (something the FE-actors of course could not anticipate in November 2015).

Moreover, despite the anti-EU sentiments expressed at the initial meeting in January 2016, the other protests with ‘European’ participation, such as e.g. *PEGIDA Germany’s* anniversaries (see e.g. Häußler 2015) and the May 2016 FE demonstration, were not organized with the explicit aim of countering a policy decision or applying pressure on a defined target. Instead, they acted as more symbolic events, organized to underline the European groups’ solidarity with each other’s domestic anti-Islam, –refugee, and –establishment efforts.

Unlike the *Generation Identity* groups, the *Fortress Europe* extra-parliamentary groups did not coordinate their mobilization in terms of protest repertoires, and they did not maintain their transnational protests over time. Instead, the FE-groups organized protests rather independently of each other, accommodating the contention to the domestic circumstances and the preferences of the respective protest group leaders. Yet, at the same time, these protests were all voiced with remarkably similar collective action frames, diagnosing Islam, third-country immigrants, and refugees, and the political establishment's 'political correctness' as the greatest threats to the European population. In this way, they therefore also expressed an alternative vision of Europe, albeit not formulated in as congruent of terms as was the case for the GI groups.

SECTION 2: EUROPEANIZATION OF NETWORKS

This section considers the European networking of the groups partaking in *Generation Identity* and *Fortress Europe* respectively. The framework is formulated in relatively broad terms, as it is the aim to employ the same concepts on both coalitions, which have very heterogeneous aims and developments. It is the main aim with the two chapters to investigate how and why the far right actors coalesced transnationally and which factors further or inhibit their transnational ambitions. As explained in the theoretical framework, the theories and concepts employed mainly draw on literature developed concerning left-wing trans- and national extra-parliamentary coalitions, plus findings by scholars of the far right.

‘Transnational’ coalitions are conceptualized as coalitions of groups that all retain their rooting “in national political contexts, which they transcend in order to collaborate with other nationally rooted groups and organizations to form transnational networks” (Flesher Fominaya 2014: 40). Both analytical chapters will be divided into three main sections: one focusing on the ‘Initiation’ of the coalition, one on its ‘Maintenance’, and finally, the coalition’s (potential) ‘Survival’.

As explained in the theoretical framework, groups usually initiate transnational coalitions due to changes in the domestic political opportunities, albeit it is a contentious issue, whether it is the opening or closing of opportunities, which lead to transnational coalition-formation (see e.g. McCammon & Moon 2015; Chang 2008). A more established finding is that transnational coalitions tend to be created by groups that share a similar worldview (they have value homophily) or at least the same enemy (Di Gregorio 2012). They are often based on pre-existing networks and/or the networking ability of movement entrepreneurs, who will organize the initial contacts and meetings (Van Dyke 2003). When considering which groups to include in the coalition, (particularly far right) movement entrepreneurs must evaluate the respectability and legitimacy of the other groups, as an unrespected transnational alliance partner may make the group appear illegitimate, for example, in terms of degree of extreme right-wingedness (see e.g. Ahrne et al. 2005; Monforte 2014).

Once the coalition has been created, the groups must determine the level of resources they wish to pool. Those who agree to pool most resources (commonly the most resourceful) will usually also have the most prominent role in the coalition (see e.g. Levi & Murphy 2006). Moreover, in order to maintain the transnational coalition, the participating groups are required to remain in relatively frequent contact, something the new technological advances have aided substantially (della Porta & Tarrow 2005). This can both take place online, usually via social media, Skype, or e-mail, or offline, through face-to-face encounters. Particularly the offline meetings and activities are

useful for coalitions, which wish to develop closer bonds between the activists, as both joint protests and ideational work can be conducive to the development of a collective identity (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009; Tarrow 2005).

Throughout these processes, the groups may also make use of various forms of diffusion, for example in the form of movement material, collective action frames, or other forms of expression forms, which may further the creation of unity between the activists. Such (potential) diffusion processes will also be considered in the analysis, if and when applicable.

Finally, in order for a transnational coalition to survive, prior research has demonstrated that there are certain conditions that are conducive to such a survival. For one, depending on the ideological ties between the groups, the coalition is likely to either be substantive (the members exhibit strong ideological overlaps) or simply instrumental and goal-oriented (the members form weak ideological ties) (Di Gregorio 2012). Moreover, the coalition is also highly dependent on the cohesion of the individual groups. The stronger the organizational and economic capacities of the individual organizations, the more likely a coalition will survive. Similarly, if the coalition partners have not managed to set up a strong coalition, including in terms of having rules and regulations for solving internal conflicts, then the coalition is also highly unlikely to survive. At the same time, the contextual differences between the various groups may also hinder a coalition survival, for instance if a domestic opportunity requires a response that conflicts with the goals of the coalition.

In terms of data collection, the two chapters draw on the data from Facebook and web pages, plus interviews with key informants, and utilise the gathered event data to get an overview of the various links and relationships between the different groups making up the coalitions. The analyses will show two very different types of coalition building between *Generation Identity* and *Fortress Europe*, largely due to their adverse compositions— GI consisting of similar groupuscular organizations and FE of both non- and institutional groups.

CHAPTER 8. GENERATION IDENTITY'S EUROPEANIZATION OF NETWORKS

The following chapter analyzes *Generation Identity's* transnational coalition-building process. It explores how, and around what, the national GI groups began collaborating transnationally, and how and whether they maintain and sustain this cooperation. The chapter focuses on the three main GI-groups, *GI France*, *GI Austria*, and *GI Germany*, which are the most resourceful (see Chapter 5), and were among the first GI-groups created, played vital roles in setting up the other national GI-groups, and providing the ideological output for the coalition. The developments of four other national GI-groups will also be considered, namely *GI Italy*, *GI Czech Republic*, *GI Slovenia*, and *GI Hungary*, in order to explain how the coalition has developed. The chapter aims to explore how the GI coalition has evolved since the first *GI France* protest action in October 2012, and whether and how it has survived over time. It is split into three sections, 'Initiation of the Coalition'; 'Maintenance of the Coalition'; and 'Coalition Survival,' in order to analyse the various components of the coalition-building process. The analysis will emphasize the great importance of transnational diffusion for this particular coalition, as the activists have managed to set up rather congruent 'branches' across Europe (Pierre Larti in Dupin 2017), which largely share the same frames, political strategies, types of activities, and protest repertoires. Hence, since *GI France's* first protest action in 2012, both in- and direct diffusion have been key for the creation and survival of the *Generation Identity* coalition.

8.1. INITIATION OF THE COALITION (2012-2014): GI FRANCE'S 'DECLARATION OF WAR'

The following section considers the creation of the GI coalition from October 2012 onwards. It considers *GI France's* aim of creating a transnational network, and explains how and why *GI Austria*, *GI Germany*, *GI Italy*, and *GI Czech Republic* became its first four transnational coalition-partners in the period 2012-2013. A few years later, *GI Hungary*, *GI Slovenia*, and *GI Poland* also joined the coalition.

In September 2012, the newly established *Génération Identitaire (GI France)* launched a YouTube video titled 'Declaration of War' (*Génération Identitaire* 2013a). It quickly diffused across Europe, where it was translated into several other European languages. Within a short period, numerous European extreme right activists created Facebook pages and websites, adopting the GI logo and language (see Eckes 2016). As *GI France's* spokesperson at the time, Alban Ferrari, explained, the video promotion led to "individual initiatives from people we didn't know. We have

contacted some of them and we hope for great collaborations in the future” (as cited in Musson 2012).

In the same interview, Ferrari mentioned that *GI France* ‘felt close’ to the youth sections of the *Flemish Interest (Vlaams Belang)*, the Spanish *Platform for Catalonia (Plataforma per Catalunya)*, and the Italian *Northern League (Lega Nord)*, but also, and more importantly, for the future coalition, they “look[ed] with interest at what new organizations do, like *W.I.R.*²²⁸ of Vienna” (Ibid.). *W.I.R.* also mobilized on a New Right platform, and a few weeks later, in November 2012, *W.I.R.* representatives participated in *Identitarian Blok’s* conference in Orange, France²²⁹, and this became the initiation of the future European *Generation Identity* coalition.

Around the same time, an Italian far right activist, Lorenzo Fiato, “saw the promo-videos and the first action,” where after he contacted *GI France*, and expressed his wish to set up an Identitarian group in Italy. He then discovered that *GI France* had received “a similar mail from Austria, and then from Germany” (Interview with GI Italy 2017). Moreover, in September 2013, a Czech YouTube video appeared, showing young Czech activists making very similar statements as those of *GI France* in its ‘Declaration of War’ (Generace Identity 2013).

In order to explain this strong interest in *GI France’s* ideology, organization, strategy, and expression form, the following section considers *why* the other national GI groups wanted to establish contacts, based on their political and discursive opportunities at the time.

²²⁸ WIR or *Wiener Identitäre Richtung (Viennese Identitarian Direction)* was an intellectual debate club that later turned into *GI Austria* after fusing with other, smaller, street active subcultural groups. It became an official Austrian association in 2012, referring to itself as an “Association for the preservation and promotion of cultural identity” (i24NEWS 2019).

²²⁹ The ‘Identitarian Convention’ (*Convention Identitaire*) was, at the same time, the 10th anniversary of *Identitarian Bloc*. *GI France* participated at the *Young Europeans’ Forum*, together with representatives from various far right youth parties and student associations, including Alexander Markovics and Martin Sellner from *W.I.R.* (Convention Identitaire 2012), who both later became leaders of *GI Austria*.

POLITICAL AND DISCURSIVE OPPORTUNITIES: LOOKING FOR NEW EXPRESSION FORMS²³⁰

As explained in the theoretical framework, domestic political opportunities tend to guide movement activists, when searching inspiration and alliances abroad (see e.g. McCammon & Moon 2015). This is also the case for the various European activists, who adopted *GI France's* 'corporate identity' (Eckes 2016). In order to understand this great interest in *GI France* and its ideology and political organization-form, one needs to consider the given groups' national contexts, particularly concerning repression. The national GI group initiators all come from diverse political backgrounds, yet, most derive from neo-Fascist or neo-Nazi subcultural organizations. This is the case for the activists from *GI Germany* (*NPD* and neo-Nazi subcultural groups) (see e.g. Bruns et al. 2017), *GI Austria* (neo-Nazis and *Burschenschaften*) (DOEW n.d), and *GI Czech Republic* (*Autonomous Nationalists* and neo-Nazis) (Dlouhý 2016a). *GI Italy's* leader, Lorenzo Fiato, derives from the *Northern League* milieu (Bruns et al. 2017). They all had an interest in making a similar (symbolic) break with their own, or national scenes', neo-Nazi and -fascist pasts, just as *Identitarian Bloc*²³¹ and the later *GI France* had (attempted) to do. This involved changing the supply-side of their appearance by distancing themselves from the 'old' far right, moderating their discourses, and refraining from employing violence as part of their protest repertoires²³².

²³⁰ This section focuses on *GI Germany*, *GI Austria*, *GI Czech Republic* and *GI Italy*, due to their earlier creations than the other GI groups. It was not possible to find much information about the origins of *GI Hungary* and *GI Slovenia*. We do know, however, that the leader of *GI Hungary*, Bódi Ábel, is a prior member of the Hungarian *Jobbik* party (*Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom*, or *Movement for a Better Hungary*) (see e.g. Tamás 2019). Journalists and anti-racist organizations have not been able to find much data about the Slovenian GI-activists, neither in terms of leadership, internal structure, or membership. Yet, it is known that the group has close links to the Slovenian hooligan milieu, especially the *Green Dragons* from Ljubljana (see e.g. Cirman & Vuković 2018).

²³¹ After the dissolution of *Unité Radicale*, its leaders, Robert and Vardon, reflected about the usefulness of political violence for agitation (Camus & François 2011). Robert had, for instance, earlier spoken about his activities in *Troisième Voie* (*Third Way*), where he had lost several friends, who were either killed or incarcerated, but also that he feared for his own future. With *Identitarian Bloc*, they changed the action repertoire to non-violent protests, but still with a focus on combat, for instance by the creation of local boxing studios (Ibid.).

²³² Despite the portrayal of being more 'moderate', there are several instances of GI leaders and activists showing their 'backstage faces', either by expressing themselves in explicitly racist, revisionist, or violent terms (see e.g. Rees et al. 2018). Hence, one should not accept this 'moderation' at face value, of course.

In the Austrian and Czech cases, the leading activists were looking for more moderate expression forms in the face of repression. In Austria, during the period 2007-2012, the Austrian Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (*Verfassungsschutz*) repressed numerous extreme right extra-parliamentary actors, especially neo-Nazi activists. The most prominent group was the *Alpen-Donau* group around Gottfried Küssel, which mainly had a virtual presence (DOEW 2014a). After the closure of its page, some of the neo-Nazis, including Martin Sellner, re-formed, and founded the Austrian Identitarians in 2012, together with other far-right activists (Peham as cited in ORF.at 2016). When explaining their prior participation in neo-Nazi groups, most Austrian GI members talk about this as an aberration, or wrong path, which they have now replaced with the more ‘correct’ or ‘moderate’ *GI Austria* (DOEW 2014b). In the Czech Republic, the state’s forced dissolution of *Dělnická strana (Workers Party, DS)* in 2010, together with a heightened police crackdown on neo-Nazi structures (Mareš 2011), entailed a similar need for more moderate expression forms.

In the German case, the remnants of the neo-Nazi *Autonomous Nationalists* were looking for a new impetus for the mobilization. Prior to *GI Germany*, the German neo-Nazi scene had made continued attempts of renewal, and of ideological moderation, in order to become more socially acceptable (Sieber 2012). In 2010, for instance, several neo-Nazis set up different ‘identity’-inspired groups²³³, just as German *Neue Rechte* intellectuals, especially Götz Kubitschek, encouraged a reenergizing of *völkisch* nationalism, and made several attempts at fostering a sustainable new right mobilization (see e.g. Weiß 2017 for more)²³⁴.

Conversely, *GI Italy*’s leadership does not derive from the extreme right scene. Its creator and spokesperson, Lorenzo Fiato, was working for *Lega Nord* prior to the creation of the group. He explains that the more moderate look and expression form of *GI France* was very appealing. To him, the French activists “were saying real things [...] they were keeping everything very concrete, and they were all looking very good and normal,” unlike extreme and ‘old-fashioned’ nationalist organizations, such as *CasaPound* (Interview with *GI Italy* 2017). In the Italian case, it was thus not the fear

²³³ In Frankfurt, the *National-Socialists Rhine-Main* initiated the *Identitarian Group Frankfurt* (*‘Identitäre Gruppe Frankfurt’*). Another group, the *Sarrazin Movement* (*‘Sarrazin-Bewegung’*), arose as a cultural-racist splitter-group that mobilized around the book published by the *SPD*-member Thilo Sarrazin in 2010, *Germany Abolishes Itself (Deutschland schafft sich ab)*. The Facebook-page of the group was called “Identitarian Movement ‘100% Identitarian – 0% xenophobic’”, a name very akin to the current *GI*-motto “100% identity – 0% racism” (Sieber 2012). In March 2011, ‘Block Identität’ appeared on Facebook as a German namesake of the French *Identitarian Bloc* (Ibid.).

²³⁴ For instance, the 2008 *Konservativen-Subversiven Aktion*, which attempted to carry out the same form of happenings as the French *Identitarian Bloc* (Kellershojn 2009).

of repression that motivated Fiato to set up *GI Italy*, but rather the appeal of *GI France's* modernized far right mobilization form.

The action repertoire moderation and 'normal' appearance of the GI activists is a recurring theme in the GI-groups' texts and interviews and aligns with the New Right ambition of countering liberalism at the meta-political level, i.e. through arguments and discourse instead of fists. All groups thus strongly emphasize the more moderate stance of GI compared to other extreme right currents in Europe. As *GI Germany's* spokesperson states, "We have a clear rule, we have a clear position that we are patriots and not Nazis, and the *NPD*, or movements like the *Free Nationalists*, are not an opportunity for us" (Interview with GI Germany 2017).

This distancing to the extreme right must also be considered in relation to the more open discursive opportunities for the far right in Europe, especially since 9/11, 2001, plus the European economic crisis of 2008 (for more on this, see Chapter 1). These events have led to strong electoral gains for the European populist radical right, just as the mainstream parties have shifted their discourses rightwards (see e.g. Joon Han 2015). Hence, with the gradual openings of both the discursive space *and* political system, an ensuing moderation of both the frames and protest repertoires is to be expected (Kriesi 2004). One can thus consider the European GI groups' adoption and adaptation of the French GI 'model' as a combination of their aim of an extreme right moderation, mainly based on repression fears, plus the more open discursive opportunities in terms of far right anti-immigration and -system frames. The national GI groups thus all looked elsewhere for alternative expression forms of extreme right frames and protest strategies, using *GI France's* new, modern, and professional 'model' or 'formula' as a blueprint, plus drawing on New Right ideologues. This then entailed a discarding of neo-fascism and neo-Nazism as 'old and traditional' ideologies, and the ability to present themselves as modern 'Ibsters' on the right side of the law (Speit 2017).

Considering the initial GI coalition-building period more closely, the following section will show that the adoption of *GI France's* New Right frames and its action repertoire both was based on prior networks, but mainly the networking and strategical abilities of key movement entrepreneurs.

ESTABLISHING CONTACTS: MOVEMENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND NETWORK TIES

Beginning with the *Identitarian Bloc's* conference in Orange, France, in October 2012, the transnational GI-coalition gradually developed. This transnationalization was an explicit aim of *GI France*, as:

Génération Identitaire wants to establish durable relations with all youth communities that share our vision all over Europe. We attach a lot [of] importance to the European dimension of our fight. From Paris to Bucharest and from Stockholm to Athens, the youth, who are heirs of a great common civilisation, have to look in the same direction. It's simply a matter of survival. (Alban Ferrari, *GI France* spokesperson, October 2012 as cited in Musson 2012).

One of the first transnational GI events took place in July 2013, where *GI France* invited European activists to France for the 'First European Forum of Generation Identity' (*GI Austria/Germany* 2013). It was a four-day coordination meeting with seminars on various topics, ranging from 'Cultural revolution' to 'Management'. Moreover, the activists also discussed the prospects of a "strengthened pan-European cooperation in the future" (*Ibid.*). This event later became an annually recurring event, as *Identitarian Bloc* incorporated the European participants in their Summer University in 2014 (see below for more on the Summer University).

Being the main actors behind the Summer University, and generally providing much GI-material to the other national GI groups (more on this below), one can consider Phillippe Vardon, Fabrice Robert, and Jean-David Cattin from *Les Identitaires* (the earlier *Identitarian Bloc*) as the main movement entrepreneurs of the GI coalition. At the same time, *GI Austria* and *GI Germany* have been important for the Italian and Central and Eastern European GI groups, and particularly the Austrian activist Martin Sellner has been crucial for *GI Germany's* development. Drawing on his acquired knowledge from the German New Right scene, Sellner was key to setting up the German GI group, and he played an important role in the 2014-2015 period, where *GI Germany* further professionalized themselves (Interview with *GI Germany* 2017; ORF.at 2016). This involvement by Sellner is mainly ascribable to *GI Austria's* great interest in ensuring that Germany was represented in the GI network, as the Austrian branch adhered to *völkisch* ('Folkish') and, in some cases, pan-German nationalism (Winkler 2017), shared the German language and was already somewhat embedded in the German *Neue Rechte* scene (see Daniel 2019). From the start, the two national groups thus had "close links", and considering their many on- and offline exchanges and the diffusion of protest strategies, campaigns, and frames from Austria to Germany, *GI Germany* appears to see *GI Austria* "as a role model" (German Bundestag 2017).

Sellner, in fact, quickly turned into one of the main GI movement entrepreneurs in terms of cross-border (online) activities. As a full-time activist, he is a highly mobile transnational activist, speaks fluent English and French, and generally spends much time abroad; introducing the movement to new members, and giving seminars and lectures about the new right ideas, plus networking with other far right actors in Europe and the U.S. (see e.g. Cox & Meisel 2018). Moreover, with a strong online YouTube and social media presence, he disseminates information about GI events, ideational deliberations, but also presentations of the various other European GI groups making up the coalition (such as his interview with *GI Hungary's* leader in 2017 (Sellner 2017b)). In this way, he links up the online with the offline GI presence.

GI Germany and *GI Austria* both aided the Italian²³⁵ and Central and Eastern European groups assembling (first the Czech group, then the Hungarian, Slovenian, and Polish). Having already established good links to fellow European ER activists (especially from Germany and Italy), during their time as *Autonomous Nationalists* (see e.g. Schlembach 2013), the Czech GI group received a lot of foreign assistance when setting up its organization in 2013-2014. After the Czech activists had been in contact with *GI France* regarding the possible creation of a Czech GI branch, *GI Austria* came to the Czech Republic in December 2013, giving lessons about non-violent activism and graphics techniques (Interview with GI Czech Republic 2018). On April 5, 2014, a more formal introductory meeting took place in Prague, attended by 60 GI activists from France, Austria, Italy, and Poland, and with speeches by French BI and GI leaders (Phillipe Vardon and Jean-David Cattin) (Czech Ministry of the Interior 2015: 14). In the same month, April 2014, *GI Germany* and *GI Italy* also held their annual National Assemblies, with participation by *GI France* and/or *GI Austria* (GI Italy FB-Post²³⁶; Majic 2017). Here, they established their organisational and strategical frameworks, and in both the German and Italian cases, the assembly was considered foundational for both the national GI group, and in terms of their acceptance into the European GI network, together with the Czech GI group.

The Czech group sees itself vital for GI as the 'gateway' between Eastern and Western Europe (Interview with GI Czech Republic 2018). The group assisted the founding activists of *GI Hungary* and *GI Poland* in setting up their groups, providing them with advice on the aim of the overall movement (for instance, at a visit to *GI Hungary* in October 2016 (GI Hungary FB-post) and a joint meeting with *GI Poland* in Prague in March 2017 (GI Czech Republic 2017a)). *GI Germany* has also helped these groups

²³⁵ Sellner, for instance, took part in *GI Italy's* National Assemblies in Milan in the spring of 2013 and 2014, and *GI Italy's* leadership particularly found the one in April 2014 to be an "important step forward" for the organization (GI Italy FB-Post).

²³⁶ As all of the *Generation Identity* Facebook-pages were closed down in April 2018, the Facebook links no longer work, which is why there no references to the posts in the Literature List, just as there is not for the *Fortress Europe* posts. If one wishes to see the collected datasets, please consult the author.

organise. This is both due to its geographical proximity to Poland, but also because *GI Germany* had Polish members who knew of some interested activists in Poland, who “wanted to join the Identitarian Movement. Then we decided that ‘okay, if they want to join, first of all we have to build up a movement in Poland’” (Interview with *GI Germany* 2017). *GI Germany*’s spokesperson further explains that the already established groups “don’t influence the political direction of these groups. We only give them knowledge and support in structure-building; how I build a group, how I talk with people, demonstration organising, campaign organising, it’s not so much about the topics, who or what they target, that they have to decide for themselves” (Ibid.). Moreover, *GI Italy* has also cooperated rather closely with the Slovenian activists, both in terms of protests (see Chapter 6), and social events, such as joint summer camps (*GI Italy* Facebook-post 28.8.2017), again due to the geographical proximity of the two countries, plus the Slovenian minority living in the Italian Friuli-Venezia Giulia region.

Leaders and high-ranking activists of the more established GI groups thus acted as transnational movement entrepreneurs and both responded to messages from far right activists abroad, who were interested in setting up their own GI-branch, and utilized their prior networks to create new GI groups across Europe. The leaders thus helped the newly created national GI groups in their founding periods (Bruns et al. 2017), in order to ensure that the GI ‘brand’ was implemented correctly (*GI France*’s spokesperson Pierre Larti in Dupin 2017). This involved the setting up of their organizational structure, and the dissemination of knowledge about the history and intellectual output of the New Right and *Generation Identity* itself (Interview with *GI Germany* 2017; Interview with *GI Czech Republic* 2018). Hence, when looking at these initial steps from a coalition-building perspective, then their transnational networking activities ultimately provided “the basis for the convergence and harmonisation of ideological aims and strategic practice as a precursor to the formation of political alliances” (Macklin 2013: 177). This happened largely before in the case of the other national GI groups²³⁷, as they based their features on *GI France*’s ideological and organizational set-up, which they learned about through both

²³⁷ It was a similar case for *GI UK & Ireland* and *GI Denmark*, which became part of the GI coalition in 2017 and 2018 respectively. Their admittance into GI was rather similar to that of the other national GI groups and will not be analysed further in the chapter, aside from these short remarks: The GI leadership welcomed *GI UK & Ireland*’s creation, as this meant a better ‘bridge’ to the U.S. (Ebner as cited in Dearden 2017). Moreover, in the interview with *GI Denmark*’s spokesperson, she talked about their inclusion into the coalition in 2018: “Well, we made the initial contact [...] and said ‘We are here now’ [laughter] [...] I can’t actually remember who we wrote first, but all the other official countries at that time had to say yes to a cooperation, and the same for ourselves. We also had to decide whether we would be an independent group or whether we would like to join the community and use the symbol and so on [...] They looked at what we were doing and met up with us” (Interview with *GI Denmark* 2018).

direct (face-to-face encounters) and in-direct (the ‘Declaration of War’ video) channels of diffusion. The following section explains these diffusion mechanisms, as it considers how the different European groups adopted *GI France*’s main frames and viewpoints, and thus, developed similar worldviews around which to mobilize.

SIMILARITY IN WORLDVIEW AND ENEMIES: THROUGH IN- AND DIRECT DIFFUSION

Research indicates that actors who either share the same beliefs and worldviews, or at least have a common enemy, create the majority of transnational movement coalitions (see e.g. Shawki 2013). The movement leaders have similarly been found to produce the majority of such frames, as a means to garner support (see e.g. Noakes & Johnston 2005). In the case of *Generation Identity*, besides the Austrian *W.I.R.*, the other GI groups did not adhere to, or employ, *GI France*’s explicit worldview or frames prior to the initial networking. Instead, they largely adopted *GI France*’s frames, values, and mobilization strategies through various diffusion processes.

As part of the French *The Identitarians*, *GI France* draws on the ideological output of New Right writers from France, Germany, and Italy (see e.g. Bruns et al. 2017; Weiß 2017; Dlouhý 2016b for more on this). The French New Right, which arose in the late-1960s, drew heavily on the ideological output of the German *Conservative Revolution* from the pre-World War II era. Yet, it also developed close links to numerous other European far right intellectuals, who were trying to develop new far right impetus, and there was a lot of cross-border diffusion of literature at the time, with de Benoist as one of the key actors (see e.g. Bar-On 2008; Minkenberg 2000; Camus & Lebourg 2017 for more). Ideological exchanges and elaborations of new right material across Europe is thus by far nothing new historically speaking, and there are numerous ideological New Right overlaps between the various countries. Hence, the German and Austrian groups could largely draw on their national New Right output, while particularly the Eastern European groups were heavily dependent on the French and German-speaking groups in terms of obtaining literature.

Ensuring Initial Worldview Similarity by Making New Right Literature Accessible

GI France employed both in- and direct diffusion channels in order to disseminate the ideological material, mainly in the shape of online media and face-to-face meetings and seminars. For one, beginning with the ‘Declaration of War’ video in 2012, *GI France* wished to ensure that the group’s viewpoints were properly understood and implemented by the other European GI groups employing its logo. *GI France*’s then-spokesperson, Ferrari, explained that the translations of the video to other European languages “took up a lot of our time,” as the French group had to “ensure that our ideas are properly understood across the entire continent; in German; Spanish; English; Italian; and Greek” (as cited in Musson 2012).

In terms of New Right literature, then the two German New Right actors Kubitschek and Lichtmesz translated the key French GI literature in their *Antaios* publishing house (*Antaios Verlag*). This included Renaud Camus' *The Great Replacement* (*Revolte gegen den grossen Austausch*), Dominique Venner's *The Rebellious Heart* (*Das rebellische Herz*), and Jean Raspail's 1973 novel *The Camp of the Saints* (*Das Heerlager der Heiligen*). According to Weiß (2017), this "amalgamation of economic and political interests made Kubitschek the movement entrepreneur of the Identitarians" (2017: 104). Conversely, *GI Italy's* spokesperson deplors that neither Venner nor Camus' work have Italian translations (Interview with GI Italy 2017). Similarly, *GI Czech Republic's* spokesperson explains that the group has been trying to get some of the New Right texts translated into Czech, as there is not much readily available literature in the language. This was, in fact, an inhibiting factor for the group's initial development (Interview with GI Czech Republic 2018). Yet, the French and Austrian GI groups provided the group with the most basic material, and the year 2013 was thus mainly used to form the ideological profile of the Czech group, based on new right ideology and *GI France's* strategical framework (Dlouhý 2016b).

Moreover, in February 2013, the Austrian GI activist Markus Willinger published the book *Generation Identity – A Declaration of War against the 68'ers* (Willinger 2013), which, in large part, outlines the GI coalition's main arguments (Vardon in Willinger 2013). By April the same year, it had been translated to English, and, albeit not being officially recognised as GI's manifesto by neither *GI Austria* nor *GI France*, the Italian and Czech translations of the book were highly advertised on their respective web pages (see e.g. GI Czech Republic 2017b)²³⁸.

Shared Worldview around 'European Identity', Ethnopluralism, and Anti-Liberalism

In the interviews, the spokespersons of *GI Germany*, *GI Italy*, and *GI Denmark* emphasize that the GI activists do not share a unitary ideology, neither domestically nor at the European level, as they all have different perceptions of society and its organisation. They do, however, unite around certain key concepts and viewpoints

²³⁸ The GI groups utilized Willinger's book for other purposes as well, besides from internal dissemination. For one, it provided GI with a great networking opportunity with other European far right actors, such as e.g. at the *Zwischentag* book fair in Germany in 2013, where the leaders of *GI France*, *GI Germany*, and *GI Austria* represented the 'movement' at separate stalls and talks (see e.g. Menzel 2013). Moreover, Willinger also presented the book at several far right conferences around Europe and the U.S., including *Identitär Idé* in Stockholm, Sweden, hosted by Daniel Friberg (Lilleby 2013).

when mobilizing on the streets and posting contents online²³⁹. Hence, even though there are certain context-specific differences across the local and national GI groups, entailing a focus on different issues, they all:

- Consider their identities as consisting of three layers, a local, a national, and a European, which are all perceived as organic and static;
- Diagnose liberalist and universalist values as the greatest threats to the European societies;
- Diagnose third-country immigration as the key immediate problem to solve;
- Adhere to an ethno-pluralist conception of society (with the prognosis that each ‘civilization’ should stay in its own part of the world, and there should be no interracial mixing (miscegenation));
- Utilise the same key concepts, albeit to various extents (e.g. the diagnosis of a ‘great replacement’ taking place, and the prognosis of ‘remigration’) (for more on their frames, see Chapter 5)

Aside from creating a clear ‘us’ and ‘them’ division between ‘Europeans’ and the ‘others,’ GI’s three-layered identity-conception also permits the groups to place their focus differently in terms of regionalism, nationalism, and Europeanism, while still distinguishing between different local and national identities. The national GI groups thus emphasize different facets of their identity. In the German-speaking countries, the national identity is highlighted (for instance through the slogan ‘Homeland, Freedom, Tradition’ (‘Heimat²⁴⁰, Freiheit, Tradition’), while the French and Italian groups focus more on the regional and European aspects of their identity (Bruns et al. 2017). Moreover, this neo-fascist proclivity to maintain the transnational cooperation at the level of a ‘Europe of Nations’ instead of a ‘Nation Europe’ (i.e. a united Europe) also means that the GI activists can participate in shared European events, without this conflicting with their nationalist prevalence (as also shown by Schlembach 2011).

Hence, unlike many other transnational coalitions, the *Generation Identity* coalition did not arise due to activists from different countries wanting to pool the resources around a shared purpose or enemy (see e.g. Levi & Murphy 2006). Instead, the GI coalition arose due to the movement entrepreneurship of *GI France*, which Poitiers and ‘war declaration’ videos diffused across Europe, leading to the initiation of numerous online and a few offline national GI groups (Eckes 2016). These groups adopted *GI France*’s main frames, symbols, and action forms, acquired through both

²³⁹ As *GI Italy*’s spokesperson, for instance, states: “In fact, it’s also very difficult to say that our movement is very, how can I say, ideological, because there are many political points of view inside, regarding many issues. We are very critical towards mass immigration, but for the rest, there is no, how can I say... [Interviewer: “Ideological core?”] Yeah, exactly, exactly” (Interview with *GI Italy* 2017).

²⁴⁰ The German word ‘Heimat’ can refer to both the home country and town though, so it serves a dual purpose.

direct and indirect diffusion processes. The following section will first describe the coalition's European network structure, and then consider the inter-group activities, which ensure the coalition's maintenance.

8.2. COALITION-MAINTENANCE

In terms of GI's European structure, *GI France* refers to GI as a "French movement with European branches" (Larti as cited in Dupin 2017). One of *GI Hungary's* spokespersons, Bence Szabó, similarly refers to the network as "a franchise, like McDonald's, we just do not sell the same hamburger, but we are representing the same ideas [...], we are in touch, but we are completely independent of each other" (GI Hungary 2016). Moreover, all of the national spokespersons interviewed emphasized the loose structure of the coalition, and the great level of autonomy of each regional and national group (Interview with GI Germany 2017; Interview with GI Italy 2017; Interview with GI Denmark 2018; Interview with GI Czech Republic 2018). The coalition is thus built up around an overarching 'GI brand' or 'corporate identity' (Eckes 2016), shared by all the groups, including the *Lambda* symbol as their logo, and the use of the same key concepts and values, plus professional social media strategies (Zúquete 2018). The GI groups have thus together developed a 'short hand label', which is also recognisable for people outside the group, who can easily identify the activists as partaking in the same European network (Flesher Fominaya 2010). As already indicated, most of the contents of this 'corporate identity' derive from the French *The Identitarians*, which, as the following section will show, disseminates their strategy to European GI activists at the annual Summer University (*Université d'Été*) in France.

POOLING OF CULTURAL RESOURCES

Being the originators of the GI 'brand', *The Identitarians* and *GI France* are the main providers of GI's collective action frames and the specialized knowledge regarding the groups' organizational features, the planning of protest events, and online marketing and communication. The leaders of *The Identitarians* emphasize the necessity to have a professional online appearance (Castelli Gattinara & Froio 2018; Cahuzac & François 2013), and, together with *GI France*, they diffuse most of this knowledge during training sessions at the Summer University (for more on its contents, see Bouron 2014). They have organized this annually recurring GI event since 2003. Yet, it is only since August 2014 that it has been open to GI activists from Europe. It hosts around 140 participants each year²⁴¹. According to Martin Sellner, the

²⁴¹ The German new right intellectual Götz Kubitschek arranges similar training sessions, or 'academies,' in his home in Schnellroda, Germany, for German-speaking Identitarians from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. This is organized through his *Institute for State Policy* ('*Institut für Staatspolitik*', *IJS*) (Kellershohn 2016).

sessions are not open to *all* GI activists, but require one year of prior GI activism, plus “above average performance in the regional section,” in order to ensure the participation of a “certain elite” (Sellner 2015).

During the sessions, the French leaders attempt to ensure that the methods, symbols, and frames (the GI ‘corporate identity’) largely align across state borders, and that new European GI activists are properly introduced to the movement and its strategy. The university usually contains courses on: New Right ideology; current politics; marketing (such as branding, graphics, photography, and the creation of donor networks); political communication (interview techniques and media strategies); activism (protest repertoire practice, organization of demonstrations, legal frameworks); plus combat training (see e.g. GI France FB-post; GI Italy FB-post; Clément Gallant as cited in Laffont 2018). These ‘university sessions’ can thus be seen as activities, in which the “leaders help to socialize and politicize members into a culture of resistance” (DeCesare 2013: 241), thereby fostering shared transnational GI ideals, symbols, and norms (Greer & Hauptmeier 2012). Ultimately, it is a means to foster a closer GI transnational unity, or congruency, both at the movement and individual activist level, leading to the “emergence of a political style and type” (Sellner 2015).

Both *GI Italy* and *GI Denmark’s* spokespeople emphasize the significance of this training for their groups, highlighting the formation of the activists, as it “is organised by professionals that studied political science, they read a lot of books about it, so they actually know their job” (Interview with GI Italy 2017). Moreover, *GI Denmark’s* spokesperson states that:

We take a lot home [from the summer university] [...] It's like sending someone on a course [...] they bring both knowledge, energy, experience, and networks with them, and [the summer university] is certainly one of the things that makes it possible to build this collaboration [...]. It is also a good way for new activists to get into it, for example, understand things like political strategy or communication and ideology, and how the community is [...] It is an experience, you cannot really describe it. You have to just go and meet the others (Interview with GI Denmark 2018, author’s translation).

In conjunction with the Summer University, some of the national GI groups employ the transnational protests as means of learning organizational skills (Interview with GI Czech Republic 2018; Interview with GI Italy 2017). As *GI Czech Republic’s* spokesperson states: “In countries like France, Austria or Germany, their activism and events are on a much more professional level with regards to their potential, with bigger counts of activists and better resources,” making it beneficial to observe these groups’ protest actions (Interview with GI Czech Republic 2018). The GI groups thus pool their resources through direct diffusion by the larger national GI-groups.

ONLINE COMMUNICATION: NETWORKING AND ORGANIZATION OF EVENTS

Similar as other far right transnational networks (see e.g. Caiani & Parenti 2013), most of GI's transnational cooperation, coordination, and information dissemination takes place online. Online networking facilitators are particularly important for domestically marginalized political groups (della Porta & Tarrow 2005), just as it provides an alternative to avoid the constraints faced during street activism (Caiani et al. 2012: 10). The groups have thus adopted *Identitarian Bloc*'s hybrid strategy of on- and offline dissemination of political communication and activism (Cahuzac & François 2013), and both the local and national GI groups are highly active on different online social media platforms, especially Facebook and Twitter. Several of the leading GI activists also produce YouTube vlogs, blog entries, radio shows, and entries for other new right media (e.g. Fabrice Robert's *NovoPress* in France or Kubitschek's *Sezession* in Germany). Until June 2018, where Facebook closed down all European GI Facebook pages (Bailey 2018), the groups employed these platforms for both inter-group GI communication, networking, and for spreading news and political viewpoints to their supporters across Europe.

According to the interviewed GI leaders, most communication amongst the national groups takes place online. The groups mainly use Skype or TeamSpeak to discuss upcoming transnational campaigns and bigger demonstrations, hold informal debates, provide advice, and deliberate on "strategy questions of ideology positions" (Interview with GI Germany 2017). The main language employed is usually English, or in some cases German (Interview with GI Czech Republic 2018)²⁴². Moreover, the leaders also share viewpoints about organizational and strategical matters, account for the progress in each country, and provide information about local or national GI protest events, which the other groups can use for inspiration, and to post on their various social media accounts (Interview with GI Czech Republic 2018). Conversely, they deal with smaller protest events and organizational issues at the local or national level, as the specificities of the national contexts makes it difficult for the other European GI actors to advise a given group about its national setting (Interview with GI Denmark 2018).

There is, therefore, a rather frequent online contact between the leadership of the various national groups, while "an average activist will probably have less contact" (Interview with GI Italy 2017). According to *GI Germany*'s spokesperson, the communication between the European GI groups has in fact increased in frequency and importance since 2014-2015, due to the growth of all of the national GI groups. This has brought them to "a point where it's getting more and more important to be professional, to have clear ideological positions, [...] because [...] when something

²⁴² As Fiato states, "As long as someone speaks English, there are very few problems with the organization" of events (Interview with GI Italy 2017).

happens in Austria or France, that also has implications for Germany or Italy” (Interview with GI Germany 2017). These briefings are thus, to some extent, used to ensure that the groups more or less align in terms of activities and statements.

Online National GI Inter-Group Expressions of Recognition and Solidarity

Aside from the use of the online platforms for inter-group communication, the GI activists also employ it for pan-European promotional means and for underlining their transnational GI links. When their Facebook accounts were still active, many of the posts on the national GI groups’ Facebook pages thus involved activity notifications about other GI groups’ more spectacular protest actions. This sharing endeavour forms part of the GI leaders’ aim of appearing as a close European movement. The Facebook posts thus included mentions of spectacular protest events²⁴³, solidarity actions, and statements of disapproval against repressive steps towards fellow European GI activists.

Particularly the latter point is interesting in terms of fostering transnational solidarity bonds. As Macklin (2013) argues, far-right transnational networking can act as moral support for groups carrying out more ‘intolerant’ actions. GI’s national groups thus frequently refer to the repressive measures taken against their fellow European ‘fighters’. As an example, the other GI groups strongly condemned the court-case against the so-called ‘4 from Poitiers’ arrested after the mosque occupation in October 2012 (Génération Identitaire 2013b). The same occurs if left-wing organizations, such as *Antifa*, have attacked a GI activist or damaged GI infrastructure. Particularly the Czech and Slovenian GI groups post a remarkable amount about *Antifa*, considering the limited presence of the organisation in their countries.

Hence, even though the other European GI groups are mentioned to a more limited extent than the local national GI groups, such links can be considered as a means to both sustain the coalition, but also to demonstrate that the battle against the ‘others’ reaches beyond the national borders. This attempted construction of close transnational coalition ties does not only take place online. As the following section will demonstrate, the European GI activists similarly pursue the aim of constructing a collective European GI identity through their shared frames, protest actions, and symbols.

²⁴³ Such as *GI France*’s occupation of the European Commission’s Office in Paris in May 2015. This was posted on the Facebook walls of *GI Italy*, *GI Austria* and *GI Germany* (There are numerous similar cases of cross-postings, most frequently by the national GI groups that do not organize many protest actions themselves).

CO-CONSTRUCTING THE ‘US’ AT TRANSNATIONAL EVENTS²⁴⁴

As a means to sustain the GI coalition and to highlight its *European* identitarian aspects, aside from the aforementioned Summer University, the GI groups have organized various joint cross-border meetings, seminars, and weekend camps, involving ideological and strategical debates plus social activities. These events are most commonly organised by geographically close national GI groups. Several cross-border encounters have, for instance, taken place between *GI Austria* and *GI Germany* (e.g. a ‘Winter walk’ in Bavaria in 2014 (GI Austria FB-post) and *IfS* conferences (see e.g. GI Germany 2015d), and *GI Italy* and *GI France* (e.g. in Cannes, France in September 2014 (GI Italy FB-post)). Moreover, from 2014 onwards, already established GI groups have organised several meetings with ‘applicant’ groups (e.g. *GI Italy* and *GI Austria*’s trip to Maribor in Slovenia in October 2016 (GI Austria FB-post), just as *GI Czech Republic* and *GI Poland* have held joint seminars (see e.g. GI Czech Republic 2017a)).

Many of these meetings and gatherings involve bonfires and songs, which aim at inducing a community feeling amongst the activists, rather akin to the more general scout’s ethos, which GI attempts to foster, both through these shared activities, but also through the many direct social actions carried out by the various local groups (see Chapter 7; Froio & Castelli Gattinara 2016). This again refers back to the communitarian ties, which GI wishes to revive, protect, and further at the more general local, national, and European levels (See e.g. Bouron 2014), and which requires pan-European cooperation (Interview with GI Czech Republic 2018). According to the GI activists, these ties are currently dissipating, making them develop a diagnostic frame around being part of the ‘Last generation of Europeans,’ if they do not revolt (see e.g. Lilleby 2013). It is around these sentiments that the GI coalition frames its transnational collective identity.

European Collective Identity: Around Battle Frames and the Need to ‘Defend Europe’

Conscious of the challenges forced upon us, we do not decline any battle. Proud of our heritage and confident in our destiny, we have only one command: do not retreat! We are a generation that has been sacrificed, but not a lost generation, for we are launching a war against all who want to tear our roots from us and make us forget who we are. Our ideal is Reconquest, and we will see it through to the end. Generation Identity is the barricade upon which our youth are mounting in order to fight for their identity (*GI France* in Morgan 2013: 12f).

²⁴⁴ This section largely draws on my forthcoming book chapter ‘The Transnational Mobilization of Generation Identity’. In: A. Hellström, O.C. Norocel & M.B. Jørgensen (eds.), *Hope and Nostalgia at the Intersection between Culture and Welfare*, Springer.

Employing strong battle frames, the GI leadership and spokespeople mainly construct the GI groups' transnational collective identity around the need to 'defend Europe', both in a figurative and literal sense²⁴⁵. Inspired by the German writer and war veteran Ernst Jünger and his idealisation of the military (see e.g. Weiß 2017), and similarly as prior BI-related associations, such as *Groupe Sparte* (created 2005) and *Groupe Thucydide* (2008), *GI France* has adopted several discursive and symbolic references to wartime and fighting. In fact, all of the GI groups frequently refer to masculine warriors and portray themselves as heroic knights, who will come to the rescue of Europe (Ibid.). For one, in 2013, the French groupuscule introduced itself as a 'fighting community' on its website (Morgan 2013: 12). Its logo mirrors this sentiment, as the Greek letter *Lambda* refers to the shields of the outnumbered Spartan soldiers, as depicted in the movie *300*. Moreover, a document from a 2018 court case against *GI Austria* shows a hierarchical relationship between the Austrian GI leaders (the 'hoplites') and the activists (the 'Spartans') (Böhmer 2019), mirroring the far right ambition of authoritarianism.

While the GI groups mainly employ frames that depict women as having the role of "traditional homemaker", the coalition maintains a masculinity ideal based on classical conceptions of heterosexual, strong, warrior-like men (Blum 2017: 329) (For more on the GI groupuscules' views on women's roles, see e.g. Blum 2017; Bruns et al. 2017). This becomes visible, for instance, in the frequent depictions of, and participation in, combat sports, as both the male and female activists are offered to learn combat skills, for instance at GI camps or conferences, or in local boxing studios²⁴⁶. Moreover, at the annual Summer Universities in France, the participants wear the same clothes, symbolising uniformity and order (Dupin 2017), just as they are organized in a hierarchical and military fashion, where uniformity, control, and discipline are some of the core principles (Bouron 2014). According to *GI France*, these Summer schools are run with the motto 'Learn to vanquish' ('s'instruire pour vaincre') (GI France FB-post), which is also the motto of the French national military academy *L'École Spéciale Militaire de Saint-Cyr*.

The use of these symbols, practices, and frames should be seen in relation to *GI France's* stated prognostic ambition "to prevent the civil war" in Europe (Larti as cited in Dupin 2017: 45), and the groupuscule's self-presentation as the "barricade upon which our youth are mounting in order to fight for their identity" (Morgan 2013: 12). *GI France* thereby conjures an apocalyptic sentiment, portraying itself as the last

²⁴⁵ Consider e.g. the use of slogans, such as "Defend yourselves because it is our country!" ("Wehrt euch denn es ist unser Land!"), "Defend your Church" ("Défend ton église"), and "We are the front line" ("Nous sommes la première ligne").

²⁴⁶ See also Palladino 2018a, where *GI Rome's* leader states that the newly founded group's focus is on physical training: "We find ourselves in a situation of extreme danger: flocks of refugees, scum, who come to Italy to make their own comforts. We have decided that Generation Identity will be based on physical preparation" (author's translation).

bastion in the defence of the autochthonous ethnically ‘pure’ European population, fighting against egalitarianism, Islam, and mass immigration (see Chapter 5). As the German scholar Sieber (2016) states: “In terms of content, it amounts to this simple, brief and concise message: ‘What matters to us will die out if we do not defend ourselves now’” (2016: 366).

Aside from the attributes outlined above, a lot of the European GI groups’ collective identity construction revolves around references to the shared history of battling Islam, in the shape of the Ottomans, as a joint European venture. Through the “embellishment and reconstitution of relevant aspects of the past” (Hunt et al. 1994: 195), the GI groups employ the glorification of the European past for a dual purpose. The coalition provides a pan-European narrative for the ongoing battle against the culturally foreign oppressor, but also grounds this narrative in actual historical occurrences, albeit with some ‘artistic’ modifications, to make it align better with the GI groups’ frames regarding Islam. *GI France’s* frequent mention of Charles Martel and his Poitiers victory is one example among many others (see e.g. *GI France* in Morgan 2013: 18), and each GI group refers to its own country’s historical figures and events. *GI Italy’s* spokesperson, for instance, sees the Poitiers mosque as ‘a symbolic place,’ due to the European victory against the Ottomans, which meant that “The Islamic community in France decided, because of that, to build the biggest mosque in Europe like in a way to say ‘Okay, after some centuries, we are winning’” (Interview with *GI Italy* 2017).

The historical battles are also discussed at the transnational GI level, for instance at the 2016 Summer University, which was entitled ‘From Covadonga to Calais’, in reference to the site of the first Christian victory over the Islamic *Umayyad Caliphate* on the Iberian Peninsula in 722 AD (See table below). At the same time, the frequent referencing to European history at these summer universities is an attempt to “create an emotional identification with Western Occidental culture” (Leggewie 2016: 392).

Table 9.1: Titles of *GI France’s* annual Summer Universities.

Year	Title of Summer University
2013	‘On the Road to Ithaca’ (<i>En route pour Ithaque</i>) ²⁴⁷
2014	‘A Myth for a New Chivalry, from Excalibur to the Grail’ (<i>Un mythe pour une nouvelle chevalerie, d’Excalibur au Graal</i>)
2015	‘From Charles Martel to Charles de Gaulle – The French Insubordination’ (<i>De Charles Martel à Charles de Gaulle - l’insoumission française!</i>)
2016	‘From Covadonga to Calais’ (<i>De Covadonga à Calais</i>)
2017	‘Defenders of Europe’ (<i>Défenseurs de l’Europe</i>)

²⁴⁷ The 2013 Summer University focused on the works of Homer and the adventures of Ulysses, “in parallel with the militant formation” (*GI Lyon* 2013).

The symbolic 'battle frame' also becomes visible in GI's demonstrations, processions, and other protests commemorating historical European victories over the Ottomans. As examples, *GI Hungary* and *GI Austria* both organised a commemorative procession in the autumn of 2017, with participation by GI activists from abroad. Both marches referred to battles, where an army of soldiers from across Europe had won over the Ottomans (*Battle of Buda* in 1686 and *Battle of Vienna*²⁴⁸ in 1683 respectively) (GI Hungary 2017b; GI Austria 2017a)²⁴⁹. One should see these historical references by GI as an attempt to "give its racist orientation a cultural-historical touch" (Häusler as cited in Janzen 2013). Moreover, very similar to more focused nationalist discourse, GI's highlighting of these battles can be considered allusions to a European "mythical Golden Age", where the continent "allegedly experienced unity and glory, fullness and greatness" (Forchtner 2016: 275), a period to which Europe should return. These marches are also somewhat similar to the processions organized by German neo-Nazis in commemoration of Nazi-leaders, as a means to create intergroup unity amongst international neo-Nazis (Schlembach 2011). Moreover, by referring to clashes that took place in one European country, but led to the liberation of several states, the defence of Europe is not only a national matter. Rather, it becomes a pan-European project, in order to underline the diagnostic frame that 'if one state falls, the next ones will follow.'

The reason behind this pan-European unity at the discursive level derives from the GI groups' perception of 'Europe' as consisting of a shared 'community of fate' that implies a predestined need to defend the continent together against external threats (Bruns et al. 2017: 236). Yet, while they believe that a pan-European alliance is the best means to protect their identity and civilization, the further characterisation of the 'European civilisation' is remarkably vague, and the description does not reach much beyond it consisting of a shared culture and traditions. Instead, the groups refer to themselves as 'patriotic Europeans,' thus permitting the activists to both draw on their shared European heritage, while also highlighting the uniqueness of their nations. This is visible, for instance, in certain statements made by the national leaders who on the one side praise the GI's achievements as a pan-European movement, but on the other, point to the distinctions between the various countries (e.g. Interview with GI Germany 2017). This open framing of being 'European' not only entails a very inclusive stance on the in-group, i.e. the autochthonous Europeans, but also, and most importantly, it permits a strict demarcation between the European people and the out-

²⁴⁸ *GI Hungary's* procession took place on September 2, 2017, under the heading 'Freedom Day' with participation by GI activists from Austria, Germany, Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia and Italy. *GI Austria's* procession was on September 9, 2017, with the slogan "Liberation of Vienna 1683 – Defense of Europe!", and had participants from *GI Hungary*, *GI France*, *GI Germany*, *GI Poland* and from other European countries.

²⁴⁹ *GI Nice* has also organized annual processions on September 3rd, in commemoration of Catherine Segurane, who played a role in the resistance against the Turkish raid of Nice in 1543.

group, i.e. the foreign ‘others’, who are depicted as a constant threat (Mense 2017). The framing strategy is also employed when the GI leaders explain the Eastern European GI groups’ strong mobilisation against Islam, despite the comparatively low numbers of Muslims in that part of Europe (see e.g. Hucek 2014)²⁵⁰.

Similarly, but to a minor extent, uprisings against the communist regime are also commemorated. *GI Czech Republic* for instance praises the student Jan Palach, who immolated himself in protest against the *Prague Spring* of 1968 (*GI Czech Republic* 2014), while GI’s annual transnational demonstration of 2017 coincided with the date of an anti-communist rebellion in the then GDR (June 17, 1953). These attempts to create collective European memories of the past by referring to ‘freedom fighters’ who heroically struggled for the liberation of Europe from foreign oppressors, can then be considered as part of the construction of a transnational collective identity through the symbolic use of frames referring to historical events.

Overcoming the European History of National(ist) Conflicts and Divergences

In a similar vein, the various GI leaders also underline the need for showing pan-European solidarity, especially between the different national GI groups and activists (see e.g. above for the groups’ online solidarity expressions). In February 2015, *GI Austria*, for instance, organized a ‘Forum for European Diversity’ in Vienna, which was joined by *GI Czech Republic* and *GI Slovenia* (Identitäre Bewegung Österreich 2015a). It aimed at providing more insights about the Eastern European countries, by discussing “our history and identity, what unites us and how we can shape our shared Europe, in order to preserve it in its diversity” (Ibid, author’s translation). This cooperation between Austrian and Slovenian far right activists is a rather new development, as prior cooperation was hindered by historical problems related to the border construction, both between Austria and Slovenia, but also with Italy (Weidinger 2016), just as *FPÖ* for decades has opposed the Slovenian minority living in Kärnten (see e.g. Hödl 2014). Yet, the GI leaders downplay this and other old far right border conflicts, and do not problematize all of these prior intra-European history-based animosities. Instead, the activists call for a sentiment of ‘letting bygones be bygones’ in terms of these historical nationalist struggles. As Bercik from *GI Czech Republic* states: “In our opinion, a key to European cooperation and to save Europe as a unity, [is that] we need to let go of all animosities, which were there historically.

²⁵⁰ As Bercik from *GI Czech Republic* explains, “Even though the Czech Republic has not been impacted by mass immigration, Europe has opened its borders, and it is possible that mechanisms will be developed, which makes the Czech Republic more attractive for the immigrants. For example, if it comes to a comparison of social benefits or approval of Dublin 4” (Interview with *GI Czech Republic* 2018).

Currently, we see them as overcome, and we think that it is not important anymore” (Interview with GI Czech Republic 2018).

Similarly, there are hardly any mentions of the European history of inter- and intra-state wars. The Second World War is only mentioned in statements serving to distance the movement from the ideologies of fascism and Nazism, and to underline that such a European war must never occur again, while “Next time we fight, it’s side by side” (in reference to WWI) (Zúquete 2018)²⁵¹. Instead, *GI Germany* and *GI Austria* point to the need to move beyond the “cultic policy of guilt,” absolving contemporary Europeans, and especially Germans, from responsibility for the actions of their ancestors (GI Germany n.d.d). With this stance, they align themselves with the general German-speaking far right. *GI Italy’s* spokesperson also expresses this sentiment, when discussing transnational protests, which he not only sees as a means to “foster co-operation, but also to mobilise through a sense of pan-European identity” (Schlembach 2011: 1347). He thus states that a transnational GI demonstration:

[...] shows unity. Europe [has been] marked by internal wars for centuries and it is very important to go there and show that now we are united in especially some occasions. Like, for example, I remember I went to an Austrian manifestation once, and I spoke about the difference between the start of the century with the First World War and now. We were all united in the same square. So we also want to give this kind of message to the public (Interview with GI Italy 2017).

In sum, the GI activists frame themselves as the heroic and strong defenders of the European continent, who unitedly will act as the prognostic bulwark against the current threats, just like their European ancestors. At the same time, the European autochthonous ‘silent majority’ (white) population forms GI’s constituency (the ‘us’), whose ethnicity-based identity should be preserved at all cost. This explains GI’s use of collective action frames, as the movement continuously highlights itself as the solution to the European population’s problems, by highlighting its own role as the main defender of the continent, including through the employment of combative terms, as shown above. The European GI activists thus frame themselves either as the guardians of the European identity, culture, and general population, the only actors caring for the vulnerable autochthonous citizens, and the protectors against the ‘violent’ Muslim male immigrants. Through this, they develop their own version of an ‘alternative Europe,’ built up around an autochthonous (and thus white) European ‘community of destiny’ based around a shared culture and identity, united in a ‘Europe

²⁵¹ *GI Denmark’s* spokesperson, for instance, states “We have, of course, spent a long time arguing with each other and so on, and also in some rather violent ways in Europe. But now that people come from a completely different culture with completely different values, which we cannot recognize at all in Europe, [...] the different countries find out how close we really are to each other” (Interview with GI Denmark 2018).

of nations’, and protected from the diagnostic threats of both liberalism and the Muslim ‘invaders’.

8.3. GENERATION IDENTITY COALITION-SURVIVAL?

The above analysis has shown that the various national GI groups have managed to establish and (so far) ensure the survival of their transnational coalition, by aligning their frames through various in- and direct diffusion processes, such as the dissemination of ideological material, joint seminars, and training sessions at the annual Summer University, and by coordinating their activities online.

‘European Movement’ versus Reality?

Yet, while the GI groups depict themselves as a “political youth movement that brings together boys and girls across Europe” (GI France n.d.), the infrequent joint transnational meetings and protests (see Chapter 6) and the rather small network size in terms of actual core members indicates that this self-portrayal as a ‘movement’ is rather flawed in reality. The ‘movement’ construction thus mainly takes place at the frame level, as there are, in fact, few transnational face-to-face exchanges. Instead, the groups focus on the employment of a strong (online) media communication strategy and other tools that make the GI groups’ actions and transnational ties appear larger than they actually are (see e.g. Froio 2018). The ideational and the network levels are thus only intertwined to a limited extent, albeit the attempt to construct an alternative reality through framing and media techniques.

Conversely, the rather loose, yet sustained, ties between the local, national, and European GI-groups, which are especially maintained through their frequent online contacts, and advertisement of the other groups’ events, at the same time indicate a well-coordinated European coalition, whose coherence is ensured by constant shared deliberation. However, simultaneously, the vast majority of both the face-to-face and the online transnational encounters only appear to take place between the GI *leadership*, again insinuating the constructed nature of this European ‘movement’ sentiment, as the ‘basic’ activists do not appear to be in frequent contact with each other (Interview with GI Italy 2017). Throughout the 2012-2017 coalition-building period, it has thus been the same 4-7 key movement entrepreneurs, who have pushed the transnationalization forward through more formal European partnerships, while the individual GI-activists do not appear to have strong border-crossing connections. This implies that the GI coalition is run like something akin to a multinational movement of groupuscules with different ‘branches’ across Europe, whose activists refer to the same New Right material and protest repertoires and advocate for the same key political changes, albeit with different levels of resources and contextual opportunities, and a limited level of cross-border unity.

GI Coalition Survival through Hierarchical Organization

Moreover, the prior assertion that *GI France*, *GI Austria*, and *GI Germany* are, by far, the strongest GI groups, while particularly the Eastern European groups are weak in terms of both cultural, human, and material resources (see Chapter 5), has repercussions for the transnational cooperation and activity levels (see Chapter 6), plus the prominence placed on the different groups. Yet, despite this skewed resource-relationship, the GI-groups insist on portraying their transnational organization as non-hierarchical and loosely organized, and that *GI France* does not exercise any form of top-down management on the other national groups, despite its role as coalition initiator (Interviews with GI Italy, GI Denmark, GI Germany, and GI Czech Republic). Instead, so Lorenzo Fiato from *GI Italy* explains, “We have a European leadership [...] with some members from every country” (Interview with GI Italy 2017), which coordinate upcoming events.

Yet, the data reveals another story, as the French *Identitarians* and Sellner from Austria more or less establish the ground rules for GI membership, just as they are in charge of welcoming new groups, training activists, and providing the main ideological guidelines for the other members. Moreover, the little information that has been unearthed about *GI France*, *GI Austria* and *GI Germany*'s²⁵² internal workings at the national levels testifies to a highly hierarchical network structure, with a clear role division between the activists (Böhmer 2019; Bouron 2014). The leaders thus exercise a certain degree of control over the basic activists, especially in terms of their public behaviour (non-violent and non-racist), the contents of their publications (Lipp 2017), and only a select few are allowed to speak publically on behalf of the GI groups or to the press. Infights and internal GI disagreements are also not discussed or even mentioned publically (contrary to e.g. the dispute between Lutz Bachmann and Tatjana Festerling from *Pegida Germany*'s ORGA-team in May-August 2016, see Chapter 9). In this way, GI attempts (and largely succeeds) to present a more ‘polished’ frontstage appearance, especially in the German, Austrian and French contexts, where state repression measures and counter-mobilizations are likely to be stronger (Minkenbergh 2018). Similarly, at the transnational level, *GI Denmark*'s spokesperson explains that there is no overarching ‘ruleset’ for the various national GI-groups, solely that they are obliged to not overstep the boundaries in terms of extremeness (Interview with GI Denmark 2018)²⁵³.

²⁵² This has either consisted of covert ethnographic studies (Bouron 2014, who analysed *Identitarian Bloc*), internal documents (such as those left behind by a regional German GI group in 2017 (see e.g. Lipp 2017), or documents displayed for public view during court trials (e.g. during the ongoing *GI Austria* investigation (Böhmer 2019)).

²⁵³ Consider in this regard Martin Sellner's recent exclusion of *GI UK & Ireland* from the European GI-network, due to its open relationship to anti-Semitic and similar extreme right ideology representatives (Townsend 2019).

Hence, the GI-groups' groupuscular features, such as their small sizes, revolutionary and meta-political aims, network-natures, and "ultimate goal of overcoming the decadence of the existing liberal democratic system" (Griffin 2003: 30), are intertwined with a leadership ensuring transnational conformity to the, more polished, 'party-line,' and a search for public attention. While such features are abnormal for groupuscules (see *Ibid.*), the Western European GI-leaders' prior experiences with domestic repression, and the aim to find new ways to express far right ideology, infer a wish to partly escape the subcultural sphere, at least in terms of visibility and 'front-stage' activities. This also partly explains the small size of the circle of core members, as this makes it easier to prevent dissidence and fallouts. All these factors thus mainly relate to the wish to appear as legitimate and moderate actors, and has been witnessed by extreme right parties as well (see e.g. Feldman 2015 on the *British National Party*).

Respectability Concerns: Eastern European GI-Groups Not Official GI-Members?

This legitimacy and moderation quest also explains the hesitation by the four Western European 'core-groups' to refer to the Eastern European GI-groups as 'full members' of the GI 'movement', due to their need for caution in terms of not 'slipping up' by being associated with more extreme actors abroad. This membership denial thus refers back to the political and cultural opportunities discussed above, as most of the Eastern European groups can be considered as clearly more 'extreme' in their expression forms than their Western counterparts (a common trait for Eastern versus Western European far right actors (Minkenberg 2018)). Hence, even though the GI groups want to portray themselves as sharing a pan-European identity, then this does not outweigh respectability concerns in terms of more extreme national GI groups, indicating the rather porous nature of the transnational ties.

While *GI Czech Republic* was established in 2013 and was quickly linked to the other national GI groups, *GI Hungary*, *GI Slovenia* and *GI Poland* began participating in transnational events with the other national GI groups in the period 2014-2017. All of these Eastern European GI groups openly declare their membership of the European GI 'movement', yet, certain of the Western European GI groups do not recognize the Eastern European groups as 'full' GI members. Instead, the groups are said to be in the 'admittance process' (Interview with GI Denmark 2018), as they are still establishing their groups, aided by the already established GI groups (Interview with GI Italy 2017). *GI Italy's* spokesperson, for instance, explains that while there are well-established GI groups in Italy, France, Germany, and Austria:

[...] there are several groups [...] in Central, in Western Europe, and in Eastern Europe, that would like to open chapters of the movement in their country. It is very important to us to meet them, teach them how we do politics, maybe give them some books to read, bring them to our actions to learn [from us], and so on. It's very important to us" (Interview with GI Italy 2017).

Similarly, on *GI Austria's* website, only the French, Austrian, German, and Italian GI groups are considered as 'official' GI groups, while they are 'represented' in other countries (GI Austria n.d.), including the Czech Republic, despite the Czech group's longer existence, and comparatively rather well-established organization by now (see e.g. Berlekamp & Opielka 2018). This becomes visible, for instance, on their websites and Facebook pages, where they share(d) links to neo-fascist and neo-Nazi pages, such as *Motpol* (GI Czech Republic) and the Hungarian neo-Nazi website *kuruc.info* (GI Hungary). Thus, the Western European groups cannot officially state that these groups take part in the GI-network, as this will make it too easy for Western European state authorities and anti-racist counterdemonstrators to point out the extreme nature of the GI groups, due to their transnational relations (see e.g. DOEW 2017).

Nevertheless, despite this denial of close links to the Central and Eastern European GI groups, in the autumn of 2017, particularly *GI Austria* and *GI France* appeared to make concerted efforts to enhance *GI Hungary's* role in the GI coalition. This took place via both transnational protest actions in Hungary (see GI Austria. 2017b; GI Hungary 2017b), but also a joint press conference in Budapest involving representatives from *GI Hungary*, *GI France*, and *GI Austria*, presenting *GI Hungary* and its goals (GI Hungary FB-post). Austrian observers of the far right saw this networking activity as occurring due to the "stagnation" experienced by the Austrian GI group in terms of media attention, which made them drop their inhibitions concerning cooperation with more openly neo-fascist and revisionist actors (DOEW 2017). This again underlines the role of the political and discursive opportunities, as when extra-parliamentary actors perceive their mobilization opportunities as closed, they tend to radicalize their contention²⁵⁴.

8.4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The analysis of the GI groups' coalition-building process reveals that the various national GI groups have managed to create and sustain their coalition since its creation in 2012. The initial members of the coalition mainly coalesced around the need for new ways to express their ideology and gain societal influence in the face of domestic repression, while at the same time exploiting the opening European discursive opportunities, due to the salience of the anti-immigration issue. The groups have thus built up the transnational cooperation around the creation of an ideational cohesion and unity, rather than responding to a specific political situation or event (such as e.g. the onset of the 'refugee crisis', as in the case of *Fortress Europe*). This has meant that the GI groups emphasised the construction of shared collective identity frames around which to organize their mobilization, in an attempt to appear as a collective European actor. They thus all draw attention to the joint pan-European past,

²⁵⁴ Currently, *GI Austria* is also under renewed investigation, risking a ban by the authorities, due to the links between the organization and Brenton Tarrant, the man behind the New Zealand terrorist attack on two mosques (BBC 2019a).

particularly in terms of battling the Muslim Ottomans, and portray themselves as the defenders of European culture and identity against both liberalism and third-country immigration, while simultaneously all refraining from utilizing *explicitly* racist or derogatory language.

The main organizational framework has been set up by a small group of movement entrepreneurs (mainly Jean-David Cattin, Phillippe Vardon, and Fabrice Robert from *The Identitarians*, and Martin Sellner from *GI Austria*). These actors all “influence the structures, strategies, and goals” of the various GI groups (Staggenborg 2013: 2), utilising very professional, systematic, and military style educational means (see Sellner 2015; Bouron 2014), ensuring that the other GI activists obtained the required skills to initiate and maintain a national GI group. In this way, the GI-leaders have set up a hierarchical coalition, which is top-managed by the Austrian and French leaders, who set up the rules for appropriate activist behaviour, both in terms of frames, communication strategies, and degrees of acceptable extremism.

These entrepreneurs have thus directly diffused the organizational pointers to the given domestic or local contexts, where the national and local GI-leaders adapted them to the domestic settings. This is done by taking the national protest-culture and legislative frameworks into account (Interview with GI Denmark 2018), and focusing more on certain GI-topics rather than others, depending on the political contexts (Interview with GI Czech Republic 2018), while also moderating the GI-worldviews according to the domestic settings. The groups thus adopt and appropriate the main GI collective action frames to their national settings, while drawing on the same *overarching* literature. They thus all attempt to influence the general domestic societal discourse (especially through attempts to influence the media), plus the key national far right political parties (see Lipp 2017; Böhmer 2019), by disseminating New Right thoughts about Islam, mainstream liberalism, and the pending ‘white genocide’ through the ‘Great Replacement’.

The different national groups thus have strong overlaps in their expressed worldviews and frames, plus employment of protest repertoires (see also Chapters 5 and 6), and act as a supranational network of actors that mainly are active domestically. This means that the various national GI-groups have not organized a large amount of joint transnational protests and meetings and do not interact face-to-face transnationally to a high degree. Moreover, the cooperative links mainly exist between the national GI-*leaders*, who communicate rather frequently in order to discuss past and upcoming events, and agree on future joint actions. Hence, as the same core group of leading members mainly has sustained the transnational ties, it is hard to talk about an actual transnational *movement*. Instead, the groups form national GI ‘branches,’ which are united around the same organizational framework and collective action frames, but otherwise organize independently domestically, thereby disseminating and appropriating the GI-worldview to the distinct national contexts.

CHAPTER 9. FORTRESS EUROPE'S EUROPEANIZATION OF NETWORKS

On January 23, 2016, the Czech party *Dawn – National Coalition (Úsvit – Národní Koalice)* hosted a meeting in Prague for representatives of several *PEGIDA* branches and other European anti-Islam actors, together with the Czech anti-Islam protest group *Blok against Islam (BPI)* and *PEGIDA Germany*. The event led to the formation of the *Fortress Europe* coalition, including the signing of the so-called *Prague Declaration* by the following groups:

- **Five protest groups** (*PEGIDA Austria*, *PEGIDA Bulgaria*, *PEGIDA Germany*, *PEGIDA Netherlands*, and the Czech *Blok Against Islam*)
- **Five political parties** (the Italian *Lega Nord (Now Lega)*, the Slovakian *Ódvaha (Courage)*, the Polish *Ruch Narodowy (National Movement)*, the Czech *Úsvit – Národní Koalice (Dawn – National Coalition)*, and the *Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond (Conservative People's Party of Estonia, EKRE)*²⁵⁵)

The majority of the groups (6 out of 10) came from Central and Eastern Europe. Besides the signatories, the Swiss *Direktdemokratische Partei Schweiz (Direct Democratic Party Switzerland)* and the French *Résistance Républicaine (Republican Resistance)* also participated in the meeting (Festerling FB-post). A few days later, *PEGIDA UK* and the Danish *For Freedom (ex-PEGIDA DK)* also signed the declaration at a *PEGIDA Germany* demonstration (Bartlett 2017).

This chapter focuses on the transnational coalition *Fortress Europe* and analyses its emergence, maintenance, and (possible) survival. The chapter sets out by explaining the coalition's chronological development, from the creation of *PEGIDA Germany* in October 2014, its beginning cooperation with the Czech *Blok against Islam* in the second half of 2015, and finally, the formation of *Fortress Europe* in January 2016. The ensuing analysis considers the development of the FE-coalition, i.e. how and why the groups wished to cooperate transnationally, their (potential) pooling of resources, communicative links, plus their creation of transnational collective identity frames. The chapter mainly focuses on *PEGIDA Germany* (especially Tatjana Festerling), *Blok against Islam*, Tommy Robinson, and *PEGIDA Netherlands'* leader, Edwin Wagensveld, due to their important roles in the coalition.

²⁵⁵ *EKRE* was represented by Maria Kaljuste, who had set up the *NGO ISIS* political association in 2015 together with Georg Kirsberg. *NGO Isis* propagates a strong anti-Islam agenda. *EKRE's* participation in *Fortress Europe* was thus mainly led by Kaljuste, and her participation should not be considered representative for the whole party (Expert interview with Kasekamp 2018).

As it is the aim to analyse the various components of the coalition-building process, the chapter consists of three sections, ‘Initiation of Coalition’; ‘Maintenance of Coalition’; and ‘Coalition Survival?’ The analysis will underline the heterogeneity of the participating groups’ organization, worldviews, and political ambitions, which eventually led to the dissolution of the coalition. At the same time, the internal splits of *PEGIDA Germany* and *BPI/Dawn*, i.e. the groups initiating the coalition, were also a strong factor in *Fortress Europe’s* relatively short existence.

9.1. INITIATION OF THE FE-COALITION (2014-2015)

The first paragraphs will briefly recount the immediate period before the creation of the transnational *Fortress Europe* coalition in January 2016. This includes *PEGIDA Germany’s* initial (failed) attempt at creating a European *PEGIDA* movement in 2015, and its cooperation with the Czech anti-Islam group *Blok Against Islam*, which eventually led to the creation of *Fortress Europe*.

PEGIDA Germany’s Initial Transnationalisation Ambitions

The 20.10.2014 was like a long-awaited starting shot, was a signal, was an act of release and unleashed unimagined powers for hundreds of thousands of patriots throughout Europe, even around the world, in the fight against the obviously insane political establishment (PEGIDA Germany 2017c, author’s translation).

On Monday, October 20, 2014, *PEGIDA Germany* held its first demonstration in Dresden, and this quickly became a weekly event. Originally, *PEGIDA Germany’s* leaders intended to only focus on German nationalism, and on ‘being German’. Yet, after deliberating that including the term ‘Europeans’ could lead to more support from abroad, the ORGA-team chose the name ‘Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident’ (‘Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes’) (Coury 2016). There was thus a clear transnational ambition from the beginning, together with an implicit invitation to other European actors to imitate its name. Combined with the soaring numbers of *PEGIDA’s* protest participants by December 2014 (see Chapter 7), this European ambition led to the diffusion of *PEGIDA’s* name, key collective action frames, and protest repertoire across Europe, in a form of symbol and ideology ‘branding’ (Druxes 2016) very akin to *Generation Identity* (see Chapter 6). Particularly “radical right activists in Western Europe [took] the opportunity to use [*PEGIDA’s*] prominence to mobilise their own support” (Berntzen & Weisskircher 2016: 559), initially predominantly online. This then led to the creation of around 200 local²⁵⁶, national, and European *PEGIDA* Facebook groups from late 2014 onwards, who all adopted *PEGIDA Germany’s* main symbols and

²⁵⁶ Including groups such as *Bagida* (Bavaria), *Bärgida* (Berlin), *Kargida* (Karlsruhe), *Müggida* (Munich), *Bragida* (Braunschweig), and, the most successful German offshoot, *Legida* (Leipzig).

positions (Epoch Times 2015a), mainly through in-direct diffusion, and thus without the same 'top-down management' as by *GI France* (see Chapter 8).

Utilizing the discursive opportunities deriving from the Islamist terrorist attack on *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris, France, on January 7, 2015, several European *PEGIDA*-branches began organizing demonstrations (see e.g. Berntzen & Weisskircher 2016). *PEGIDA* groups thus mobilized in Denmark, France, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Finland, Estonia, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Norway, and Austria (see e.g. Epoch Times 2015a; HopeNotHate, n.d.a), albeit with highly varied degrees of success. Yet, similar to the *European Defence League* offshoots that never attracted as many protest participants as *EDL*, none of the *PEGIDA* offshoots, neither in Germany,²⁵⁷ nor abroad, managed to reach the same numbers as *PEGIDA* in Dresden. Moreover, a high number of the *PEGIDA*s remained online phenomena²⁵⁸.

Initially, *PEGIDA Germany* attempted to lead these various *PEGIDA* offshoots, and establish a European *PEGIDA movement*. It required new groups to obtain its consent before utilizing the *PEGIDA* name, and thus wanted to decide which local German and European groups to consider 'authentic' or 'true' *PEGIDA* groups (Vorländer et al. 2018)²⁵⁹. Yet, this attempted pan-European *PEGIDA* leadership largely failed. Instead, the various offshoots had complete autonomy over their protest forms and activities. *PEGIDA Germany* thus did not help set up, nor coordinate the actions of, any of the other *PEGIDA* groups, and there was never any shared pooling of resources.

²⁵⁷ Korsch explains that despite having similar numbers of *PEGIDA*-offshoots and rallies in both parts of Germany, in the first 2 months of mobilization, "the average number of participants is very disproportionate, with 1780 (East) and 170 (West) people taking part per meeting. The vast majority (198,000 people equal to 80 per cent) gathered at events in Saxony and a total of 175,000 (73 per cent) showed up in Dresden alone during this time" (Korsch as cited in Virchow 2016a: 546).

²⁵⁸ Many of these groups *did* obtain a rather strong online following, but as demonstrated by Berntzen and Weisskircher (2016), many of their Facebook 'likers' and 'followers' came from abroad, especially Germany, as a means to boost the numbers.

²⁵⁹ *Pegida UK*, for instance, initially "did not appear to have the full blessing and cooperation of the German parent organisation" (HopeNotHate n.d.a). In Germany, Bachmann managed some of the other local *PEGIDA* groups, while others, such as *DÜGIDA*, refused such top-down management. After some internal debates and disagreements, Frank Ingo Friedemann wrote to the other Germany-Orga team members that, "From our perspective, the direction should be that all willing GIDA's support our positions and see them as their own [...]. If a GIDA thinks it has to go its own way, then it should do that, but not with support and approval of *PEGIDA* Dresden" (Antifa Infoblatt 2016, author's translation).

Regardless of these lacking close cooperational ties, the European *PEGIDA* groups *did* support each other, for instance, by giving speeches at each other's demonstrations (see more in Chapter 7). *PEGIDA Germany* also held several organizational meetings for the various *-IDA* leaders, albeit with rather mixed attendance (see e.g. Antifa Infoblatt 2016)²⁶⁰. In fact, in April 2016, Lutz Bachmann discussed the *PEGIDA* network, which at the time consisted of (mainly online) groups in 27 countries. He acknowledged that he did not "manage them all. It's almost a franchise now and he freely admits that he doesn't know, and certainly doesn't seem sure of all the people leading the different groups around the world" (Kassam 2016b). Hence, there was not a strong social base between the various *PEGIDA* groups (as opposed to the *Generation Identity* coalition, see Chapter 8).

Spring 2015: PEGIDA Germany's Alliance-Attempts with Radical Right Parties

From early on, Bachmann tried to network with European radical right extra-parliamentary organizations *and* parties, aiming to position *PEGIDA Germany* as their "German counterpart" (Vorländer et al. 2018: 66). In February 2015, Götz Kubitschek thus represented *PEGIDA Germany* at a *Legia Nord* 'Identity' conference and demonstration in Milan (Kubitschek 2015). Yet, aside from *Legia Nord*, none of the larger European radical right parties showed interest in closer cooperation. While Geert Wilders for instance *did* speak at a *PEGIDA Germany* demonstration in April 2015, it had also been the plan to include speakers from *Front National*, but this did not materialize (Birschel & Fischer 2015). Hence, besides some sporadic exchanges, the links to the Western European radical right parties were rather unsubstantiated, just as *PEGIDA Germany's* participation rates were falling (see Chapter 7).

Autumn-Winter 2015-2016: PEGIDA and BPI Develop Transnational Coalition Ideas

With the onset of the 'long summer of migration' in August 2015 (della Porta 2018), *PEGIDA Germany's* participation levels started rising again (Durchgezählt n.d), just as the anti-Islam group *Blok against Islam (BPI)* was very active in the Czech Republic (see Chapter 7). Prodded by the urgency of the 'refugee crisis,' *BPI* hoped to learn from *PEGIDA's* demonstration experiences and expertise, while *PEGIDA* still was looking for European networking opportunities. *BPI* and *PEGIDA Germany* thus

²⁶⁰ On July 4, 2015, for instance, *PEGIDA Germany* organized a meeting in Kassel, Germany, with representatives from *PEGIDA* groups from Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Belgium and Austria (PEGIDA Germany FB-Post).

began cooperating in October 2015²⁶¹ (Epoch Times 2015d; for an analysis of the *BPI-PEGIDA Germany* relations, see Prokupkova 2018b).

A few weeks later, on October 19, 2015, *PEGIDA Germany* invited European far-right actors to speak at its one-year anniversary,²⁶² including representatives from the *Czech Dawn – National Coalition*, *Lega Nord*, *PEGIDA Poland*, plus Tommy Robinson (ex-*EDL* leader) (Epoch Times 2015e). In October and November, *PEGIDA Germany* representatives and Robinson joined two *BPI* protests in Prague²⁶³. At the latter, Robinson aired the idea of simultaneous anti-Islam demonstrations across Europe to the *PEGIDA Germany* and *BPI* representatives. He saw this as a means to “coordinate our efforts”, because “[w]e are more powerful if we all do it together at the same time” (Bartlett 2017). On November 30, he presented the idea in a speech at a *PEGIDA Germany* demonstration, encouraging all European ‘patriots’ to unite for a simultaneous protest on February 6, entitled “Save our culture, save our country, save our future,” in reference to the ‘dangers’ of Islam (See Epoch Times 2015f).

Having now recounted the events in the immediate period before the creation of the transnational *Fortress Europe (FE)* coalition in January 2016, the following analysis will consider how and why FE was established more thoroughly. This will involve an analysis of the coalition members’ political and discursive opportunities, the various groups’ invitations to join the coalition, the potential legitimacy deliberations behind the choice to participate in FE, and the groups’ shared worldviews and/or enemy constructions around which they could jointly mobilize.

²⁶¹ Due to both the proximity of Dresden to the Czech Republic and *PEGIDA Germany*’s many participants, already at its first protests in early 2015, *IVČRN* had set up the Czech *PEGIDA* Facebook ‘Page’ and expressed the wish to cooperate with *PEGIDA Dresden* (Kovner 2017). Yet, *IVČRN*’s initial attempts to forge ties did not succeed. However, on October 4, 2015, *PEGIDA Germany* invited *BPI* and *Dawn* to join them on the Czech-German border by Sebnitz in Saxony, in order to form a symbolic human chain, and demand the introduction of border controls (Epoch Times 2015d).

²⁶² Bachmann had hoped to convince Marine Le Pen (*Front National*), Victor Órban (*Fidesz*), and Heinz-Christian Strache (*Freedom Party of Austria*) to come and speak, yet, these requests were rejected (Zeit Online 2015). Marine Le Pen stated that she did not receive an invitation, and that she would not participate in such a demonstration (Ibid.).

²⁶³ On October 28, Festerling and Bachmann from *PEGIDA Germany* and Jerzy Kenig from the Polish *National Movement* participated in an anti-immigration demonstration across the Czech Republic (four simultaneous protests in four Czech cities) (Jahn 2015). On November 17, *PEGIDA Germany* representatives and Tommy Robinson went to Prague to join *Dawn* and *BPI* in their support protest for the Czech President Zéman (Bartlett 2017).

POLITICAL AND DISCURSIVE OPPORTUNITIES: SEARCHING FOR EUROPEAN PARTNERS

The groups, which decided to take part in *Fortress Europe*, wanted to exploit the opening European discursive opportunities, brought along with the onset of the ‘refugee crisis’. As described above, the idea of FE was developed during the height of the so-called ‘crisis’ (autumn 2015), i.e. during a period in which the EU member states struggled to find joint solutions to the problem of accommodating the many refugees and asylum seekers entering Europe. Instead, the various states implemented protectionist measures such as border controls, and particularly the Visegrad countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland) obstructed the EU’s aim of introducing refugee quotas (see Section 1).

In fact, already from spring 2015 onwards, many (mainly Eastern) European far right groups mobilized against their states’ reception of refugees, including protests to oppose the EU’s refugee policy (see e.g. Hafez 2018). From August 2015 onwards, *PEGIDA Germany* also mobilized more explicitly against the refugees, and experienced a resurgence of support because of the perceived threats related to the rise in migrants reaching Europe (see e.g. Vorländer et al. 2018). Due to the pan-European scope of the issue, the movement sought support abroad in order to exercise further pressure on the European decision-makers, especially the German Chancellor Merkel. As *PEGIDA Germany* stated in its ‘10 Demands to the German Asylum Policy’ on August 11, 2015:

We, the people of the European nations, must join forces to defend and preserve our values, our culture, and our freedom. We must unite against the self-proclaimed kings and queens in Brussels. We, the German people, need international support against our own politicians in our German parliaments. (PEGIDA Germany 2015b, author’s translation)

Merkel’s ‘We can do it’ (‘Wir schaffen das’) announcement on August 31 only further strengthened this sentiment, as it meant that she maintained the German pro-refugee stance. Conversely, the Eastern European parties and extra-parliamentary actors taking part in the later FE-coalition had been protesting the EU’s measures since the quota proposal was voiced in April 2015. With Merkel’s ‘open border’ policy, which led their countries to become transit countries, they perceived a further need for pan-European cooperation, as a means to exercise pressure on both the national and the EU politicians. As a *Dawn* representative explained, even though most Eastern European governments were already opposing the EU’s demands, and the ‘refugee crisis’ “concerned [Germany] the most, then France and Western Europe as such,” then it would also affect Eastern Europe, if the problems related to the borders were not solved (Interview with Dawn 2017).

The unprecedented ‘refugee crisis’ and the ensuing disagreements between the various European leaders thus led to an opening in the European discursive opportunities, which the different anti-refugee and –immigration protest groups and parties could attempt to exploit. Particularly after the big increase in refugee numbers in the autumn, the issue’s saliency had grown across Europe, especially at the political and media levels, inferring good discursive opportunities. While the EU-level opportunities remained closed (see Chapter 5), the groups could instead cooperate at the transnational level as a means to target multiple decision-makers at the same time and attempt to influence public opinion. The groups thus considered a united European response advantageous, as it was a means to exercise pressure on all levels of decision-making, and to show a united opposition to Merkel and the EU’s policy-suggestions. As Festerling stated to a German newspaper, the demonstration on February 6 should be “a demonstration of the strength against an increasingly trust-losing policy” (Focus Online 2016a, author’s translation). Hence, unlike *Generation Identity*, the FE-coalition was created in response to an ongoing political situation, which the groups wanted to mobilize against unitedly, somewhat similar to the European mobilization against the TTIP (see e.g. Caiani & Graziano 2018).

INVITING ACTORS: MOVEMENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND NETWORK TIES

The future FE-members were mainly recruited based on the initiators’ pre-existing networks and their ability to ‘sell the idea’ to similar-minded anti-Islam groups and activists across Europe. From October 2015 onwards, Tommy Robinson began announcing at various *PEGIDA* demonstrations that a transnational protest would take place in the near future²⁶⁴. Robinson’s prior leadership of EDL, participation in the *Counter-Jihad* movement, and general experience with transnational cooperation, provided him with strong cultural resources, including contacts to numerous far right actors across the continent. He thus spent most of the second half of 2015 recruiting European anti-Islam actors. In fact, already on October 11, at the launch of *PEGIDA Netherlands* in Utrecht, he stated that he was in contact with activists in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Russia, Poland, France, and Sweden²⁶⁵, and that “A date is coming” for the uniting of the groups “under one banner” (Hopkins 2015). Both Bachmann and he repeated such statements before the November 17 meeting in

²⁶⁴ First in Utrecht at the launch of *PEGIDA Netherlands* on October 11, 2015 (Hopkins 2015), then in Dresden at *PEGIDA Germany’s* one-year anniversary (Calderwood 2015), and finally on November 30 in Dresden (Epoch Times 2015f).

²⁶⁵ *Riposte Laïque*, for instance, notes that Robinson “[...] asked us to organize the European initiative planned for February 6 in France” (Riposte Laïque 2015). As the French political blog found itself to be “totally in the spirit” of his plans, it intended to “quickly contact all the French forces, which refuse the Great Replacement and the Islamisation of our country,” so that they had time to prepare for the protest (Ibid.).

Prague, where Robinson, Konvička, and Däbritz decided on a date for the demonstration (Bartlett 2017).

Pegida Germany's Orga-team thus also began mobilizing transnational support around the same time. In a blog entry in October, Festerling stated that: “Now it is time to expand the European network and join forces with the patriotic parties and citizen’s movements” (Festerling 2015c). *BPI* and *PEGIDA Germany* thus also began contacting groups in their respective networks, and inviting them to attend the inaugural FE-meeting in January (Prokupkova 2018b; Interview with Ingrid Carlqvist 2018). Moreover, *BPI* had approached Maria Kaljuste (member of *EKRE* and *NGO ISIS*) at an earlier stage, and she joined the recruitment team (Prokupkova 2018b). According to Prokupkova’s (2018b) interview data, Kaljuste thus contacted Finnish, Estonian, and Latvian organizations, *BPI* contacted Bulgarian groups, and Tatjana Festerling Dutch and Danish groups (Interview with For Freedom 2017). As *National Movement* and *Lega Nord* representatives had given speeches at earlier protests in the Czech Republic and Germany respectively (see above), the contacts to these two parties had already been established.

The contacting of potential coalition-partners was thus very much based on the pre-established networks of both Robinson, *PEGIDA Germany* (especially Festerling), Kaljuste, and *BPI*, plus their networking abilities, which led to the recruitment of several interested organizations. As was explained in the coalition-building framework, these are some of the predominant methods for setting up transnational extra-parliamentary coalitions (see e.g. Van Dyke 2003; Staggenborg 2013).

RESPECTABILITY OF THE FE-PARTICIPANTS: CAUSE FOR LEGITIMACY CONCERNS?

Research on transnational coalitions has found certain factors inhibiting cooperation; including deliberations about the other members’ respectability and legitimacy (see e.g. Monforte 2014). According to Levi and Murphy (2006), “Ethical commitments of the organizational representatives may prevent an organization from allying with certain other groups, despite possible material benefits. Participation may not be worth the loss of [...] credibility” (2006: 656). In the case of *Fortress Europe*, especially the political parties had to consider these legitimacy criteria, due to their electoral pursuits, which entailed a necessity to appear relatively moderate. Moreover, as both the *PEGIDA* groups and the *BPI/Dawn* coalition were ethically committed to employ non-violent means and refrain from explicitly racist and/or revisionist statements, their leaders also had to evaluate which actors to include or exclude from the coalition.

Most of the participating groups saw an opportunity for publicity and reputational boosts by joining forces with the German nationalist anti-establishment movement *PEGIDA*, as it attracted strong crowds and represented the ‘voice of the people’ (see e.g. Aslanidis 2017). Several of the FE members thus highlighted *PEGIDA Germany*

as their co-actor in FE, strongly indicating its ‘pull-factor’. Hampl from *BPI*, for instance, stated at a joint *PEGIDA-BPI/Dawn* demonstration that *PEGIDA* was “doing a great job and [...] you are very, very important. Not just for Germany, but for the entire Europe. Because now, most people in Europe see that Mrs. Merkel has to be stopped, and you are the one, who can do it. We rely on you” (Patriot für unsere Zukunft 2015). Robinson also referred to *PEGIDA* as the “salvation of Europe”, when he spoke at a *PEGIDA* demonstration in Dresden in October (Dearden 2015b). Moreover, due to the rather strong repression and/or de-legitimization at home, particularly the participating *PEGIDA* offshoots could be argued to see the transnational coalition as a ‘support system abroad,’ boosting their morals in the face of low attendance numbers (see e.g. Macklin 2013; see also Chapter 7).

Pegida Germany also obtained legitimization from electorally strong Western European far right elite allies (including in the EP through the *ENF* group). Hence, even though some of the largest Western European radical right parties, i.e. *FN*, *PVV*, and *FPÖ*, did not join the coalition, most likely due to their worry of bad media exposure by being associated with a movement considered ‘extreme,’ they still discussed *PEGIDA* in favourable terms²⁶⁶. At the same time, the positive responses to the invitation by parties from Eastern Europe and Italy for one relates to the more open POS in these countries, especially in terms of the public perception of the far right and the bigger preponderance of party-movement ties and overlaps (see e.g. Minkenberg 2018 for Eastern Europe; Castelli Gattinara 2018 for Italy). These actors thus did not need to consider the respectability of FE’s coordinators to the same extent, also not in terms of the ‘extreme’ nature of *PEGIDA Germany* and *Blok Against Islam*.

Additionally, the positive responses to the invitation by these particular five parties also relates to their worldviews, sizes, and electoral results at the time. In terms of their worldviews, far right parties’ ideological proclivities meant that they “continuously engage in ‘contentious politics’” (Minkenberg 2018: 2). Many European far right parties thus participate in both electoral and protest politics (see e.g. Minkenberg 2018; Hutter 2014a; Pirro & Castelli Gattinara 2018). This strategy is often due to their fringe status, which needed to find other ways to gain attention, just as far right movement parties tended to continue their street activism, when pursuing electoral seats (see e.g. Caiani & Císar 2018).

²⁶⁶ Most of the parties expressed sympathy with *PEGIDA Germany* but more to state the need for a German counter-voice to Angela Merkel and the political mainstream than to engage in closer collaboration with *PEGIDA* as such. One should also mainly consider Wilders’ visit more as part of his agenda of promoting anti-Islam sentiments across the world (see also Zúquete 2015). Strache from *FPÖ* was supportive of *PEGIDA* from very early on, and even equated his party with the protest movement (Steinlechner 2015). Moreover, Festerling attended the Akademikerball in Austria as a *PEGIDA Germany* representative in 2016 (Lachmann 2016).

Yet, as parties such as *Front National* also carry out demonstrative actions, this aspect does not suffice to explain these particular parties' FE-participation. Another, stronger explanation is the fact that all of the five parties were rather weak electorally and did not form part of any government coalitions in 2015. Four of the five parties also had rather recent founding dates, indicating that they were not yet well-established political organizations, and that they had weak material resources²⁶⁷. They thus did not play a decisive role in the domestic decision-making processes, and only *Legia Nord* had seats in the EP (see Table 9.1 below). They were thus looking for other means to put pressure on their respective governments and obtain media attention.

Table 9.1: FE member parties' domestic electoral gains (2013-2016).

Party	Country	Created	National elections	EP 2014
Legia Nord	Italy	1991	18 (4.09%) (2013)	6 (6.0%)
EKRE	Estonia	2012	7 (8.1%) (2015)	0 (4.0%)
National Movement	Poland	2012	5 ²⁶⁸ (2015)	0 (1.4%)
Dawn	Czech Republic	2013	14 ²⁶⁹ (6.9%) (2013)	0 (3.12%)
Courage (O2H)	Slovakia	2015	Only ran in 2016	Did not run

The previous sections considered the contextual features leading to the transnational cooperation between the FE-members. It showed that the FE-members were recruited based on pre-established networks and the movement entrepreneurship of British, German, Czech and Estonian far right activists. It also explained that the actors accepting the invitation mainly did so due to the perceived opening in the European political and discursive opportunities, just as they saw the transnational cooperation as a means to underline their own anti-establishment views by cooperating with *PEGIDA Germany*. The following section will now turn towards the worldview overlaps and perceptions of shared enemies that explains their more ideological rationale and propensity for mobilization.

²⁶⁷ Due to their relatively recent transformation from Communist rule to democracies, the political systems in Central and Eastern Europe are still developing. This can, for instance, be seen in the fact that the far right is in constant renewal here vis-à-vis in Western Europe (Minkenberg 2018).

²⁶⁸ Alliance with *Kukiz'15*. In the 2015 national elections, *National Movement* made an electoral alliance with *Kukiz'15*. This led *National Movement* to obtain five of 42 *Kukiz'15*'s seats.

²⁶⁹ Before breaking up into two fractions. Tomio Okamura left *Dawn* in 2014, and Miroslav Lidinský became the new party leader.

SHARED WORLDVIEWS AND/OR ENEMIES

Even though all the FE-members belong to the European *far right*, the 12 groups signing the *Prague Declaration* in January 2016 have several conflicting ideological viewpoints, largely divisible between the extra-parliamentary actors on the one side, and the political parties on the other. As shown in Chapter 5, the different extra-parliamentary groups largely align in their overarching worldview and collective action frames. Conversely, the parties are all rather hard to place ideologically²⁷⁰, but they share the features of populism, authoritarianism, and anti-immigration and -Islam. Moreover, while some (mainly the parties) belong to the more ‘traditional’ far right, espousing nationalist and conservative notions of society, the others (mainly the *PEGIDA* groups and *BPI*) construct their frames around anti-Islam on cultural grounds, fearing the erosion of Western civilization’s values and superiority. They often frame this on a liberal basis, especially concerning the treatment of women and the LGBTQ community by adherents of Islam (see e.g. Mondon & Winter 2018).

Notwithstanding, these divergent standpoints did not prevent the groups from formulating and signing the joint *Prague Declaration* on January 23, 2016, in the Czech Republic (see Appendix 1 for the document)²⁷¹. As the declaration explains the groups’ ideational rationales for participating in the coalition, the following section will consider their main collective action frames in relation to the wording of the text, in order to deduce the aims with the coalition.

Prague Declaration: Uniting Anti-Islam, -Establishment, and -EU Frames and Avoiding Issues with Conflicting Viewpoints

The *Prague Declaration* mainly targets Islam as a religion and the EU as a political institution. It sets out by establishing that Western civilization is under threat from “Islam conquering Europe,” and blames this on “the political elites” who “have betrayed us.” The document is thus framed around a strong anti-elite sentiment, together with the opposition towards Islam and immigration. As a response, or prognosis, the signatories express their form of ‘resistance’, involving a refusal to “surrender Europe to our enemies,” and a willingness “to risk our freedoms [...] and maybe even to put our lives at stakes” in the defence of Europe (see Appendix 1). In the words of one of the coalition organizers, Edwin Wagenveld, it outlines “the main

²⁷⁰ Consider e.g. the debates about whether *Lega Nord* can be considered a *populist radical right* party or not (see e.g. Newth 2019), and whether one can even place *any* Eastern European far right party in the category ‘populist radical right’ (Buščíková 2018).

²⁷¹ *BPI*’s Vice-President Petr Hampl had drafted the text for the declaration (Prokupkova 2018b), and the attending groups discussed its wording prior to its signing (Interview with Edwin Wagenveld 2017).

topics” for the FE-coalition’s members, namely opposition to “Islamization, migration and [...] the EU” (Interview with Wagenveld 2017).

While all the FE-members share an aversion to the establishment, most of the extra-parliamentary actors construct their threat perceptions around various aspects of Islam, while the parties diagnose general third-country immigration as the largest danger to the national societal cohesion. Yet, as the ‘refugee crisis’ meant that a high number of *Muslim* refugees and immigrants reached the European shores, it combined these two threat perceptions, whilst also increasing the salience of the issue in the Eastern European context (see e.g. Císař & Navrátil 2018). The FE-members thus all diagnosed various threats to the national and European cultural cohesion, in terms of culturally foreign immigrants, ‘Islamization,’ and Islamist terrorism²⁷².

Previously, the anti-Islam/third-country immigration topic had mainly been a key discussion point in Western European political debates. Yet, the pan-European nature of the ‘refugee crisis’ caused a growing concern about Islam in Eastern Europe (see e.g. Hafez 2018). Several of the Eastern European FE-groups thus alluded to the problems experienced in Western Europe as part of the rationale behind their own opposition to the religion. Konvička, for example, stated that: “The experience of Western Europe shows that immigration from Islamic countries brings with it increased crime, the formation of ghettos, gangsters and the gradual decomposition of society” (IVČRN 2015d, author’s translation). The *National Movement* similarly argued that the “Western European countries are beginning to suffer the consequences of their multiculturalism policy and the acquisition of cheap labour from Africa and Arab countries,” just as the party asserted that, “Muslim immigrants are statistically more difficult to assimilate and more often hostile towards their hosts” (Ruch Narodowy 2016c), author’s translation). The Eastern European groups thus constructed their enemy perceptions around very similar frames as those employed by the Western European far right, often utilizing ‘horror scenarios’ (particularly drawing on Swedish, British, and German examples) as part of their aversion towards Islam²⁷³ (see e.g. Kirsberg 2016a). As Kallis (2013) explains, this is possible due to a translation of “local and national discourses on migrants [...] into a cross-

²⁷² The combination of anti-immigration and –Islam also meant that the groups could emphasize various aspects of the cooperation, depending on their own political viewpoints and national contexts. Hence, when explaining FE’s ambitions, *For Freedom*’s spokesperson highlighted the groups’ shared desire to quench the role of Islam and Sharia in Europe (Interview with For Freedom 2017). *EKRE*’s representative, Maria Kaljuste, instead stated that the groups joined forces around subjects uniting them, namely mass-immigration and the rights of small peoples (like the Estonians) (Vaikmaa 2016).

²⁷³ Several of the groups post news from other European countries on their websites and Facebook pages as a means of supporting their arguments. This entails, for instance, articles about rapes or violent attacks perpetrated by a third-country immigrant, often taking place in Sweden, the UK, and Germany, three countries with large migrant populations.

national/European schema, appealing to a deep-rooted sense of European nativism,” which makes “national experiences and responses putatively relevant to other countries” (2013: 229).

Opposition to the EU: Preferring to Cooperate in a ‘Europe of Nations’

In addition to this strong criticism of Islam, the *Prague Declaration* is highly critical towards the EU, and includes the refusal “to submit to the European central government,” which, together with the “global elites,” is accused of having brought “only poverty, unemployment, corruption, chaos and moral collapse” (Appendix 1). This wording derives from the fact that all of the FE-members express concern about the liberal elites and proponents of multiculturalism, frequently employing a populist framing of the citizens versus the elites. Moreover, through the statement: “We respect the sovereignty of the peoples of Europe and the right of all people in Europe to decide on their own affairs as they see fit” (Ibid.), the declaration unites nationalism with a more European vision. Hence, in the FE-members’ views, the Fortress ‘walls’ should not only be constructed on the EU’s external borders, but also internally, between the European states. They thusly all mainly construct their Euroscepticism around the call for more national sovereignty, as is the case for most European far right actors (see e.g. Vasilopoulou 2011).

Yet, while a few of the groups call for a national EU-departure (Interview with Wagensveld 2017; Interview with For Freedom 2017; Ruch Narodowy 2016b), others have a ‘softer’ Eurosceptic attitude. They instead demand fundamental changes to the EU’s setup (see e.g. EKRE 2014; Lega Nord 2013; Ódvaha’s leader as cited in Hlavné Správy 2016), *if* they voice a specific EU-policy at all. The majority of the organizations call for a ‘Europe of Nations’, a historically oft voiced far right vision (Mammone et al. 2013; Schlembach 2011), which still entails friendly and peaceful cooperation between *fully sovereign* states (see e.g. EKRE 2014; Odvaha n.d.). They do not want any supranational structures imposed on them, but still wish to participate in intergovernmental cooperation (Ruch Narodowy as cited in CEE Identity 2013; PEGIDA Netherlands n.d.b; Interview with For Freedom 2017)²⁷⁴. Hence, instead of further federalization, some of the groups call for a cooperation rather akin to the European Communities prior to 1992 and Maastricht, mainly concerning trade agreements (see e.g. Kaljuste as cited in Kärmas 2016); Interview with Wagensveld 2017; Interview with For Freedom 2017). Other alternatives proposed involve *National Movement’s* own European project, wanting to revive the Central European

²⁷⁴ At a PEGIDA demonstration in January 2015, one of the speakers, Frank Ingo, proposed a ‘United States of Europe’ or ‘Europe of Fatherlands’ instead, entailing a confederation of nations, in which each country maintains its identity and self-determination (i.e. sovereignty) (Epoch Times 2015a).

confederation project, which is essentially a “return to the ‘Great Poland’ concept – a vision of ‘cultural imperialism’” (Jajecznik 2015: 48).

These negative perceptions of the EU institutions and European cooperation by the FE-members inferred a rather combative, conflictual, and oppositional FE-stance towards the EU. Furthermore, Festerling’s later assertion that *Fortress Europe* was going to be the future “counter-movement to the EU of bureaucrats” (Nová buržoazie NEWS 2016) further excluded the likelihood of FE pursuing insider strategies at the EU-level (see more in Chapter 7; see also Monforte 2014).

In an attempt to construct a shared European belonging, the final paragraph of the *Prague Declaration* references “our common European roots, traditions and values as well as the historic alliances of our nations. We are determined to protect Europe, the freedom of speech and other civic freedoms as well as our way to live together” (Appendix 1). The Declaration thus serves the purpose of both showing resistance and dissidence against especially the EU leaders, plus, as Festerling states, “[...] to preserve our Europe as we know it and love it” and to obtain a better “inter-national understanding” (‘Völkerverständigung’) (Festerling 2016b, author’s translation). All of the participating groups thus agree on the key point that Europe should only be for the Europeans (for similar accounts, see Liang 2007), i.e. without third-country nationals, particularly if they adhere to Islam.

Main Topics of Disagreement: The Role of Russia in Europe and Views on Jews

According to Edwin Wagensveld, there were a few issues, in which the groups had too disparate viewpoints to reach an agreement. They were thus not included in the Declaration. The role of Russia in Europe was a key issue of disagreement for especially the Eastern European coalition members (Interview with Wagensveld 2017). Some of the groups are strongly in favour of Russia, and they would like to see more EU-Russia cooperation (Odvaha n.d.; *Lega Nord* (Political Capital Institute 2014); PEGIDA Germany 2015a). *Odvaha* even refers to itself as a ‘Pro-Russian coalition’ (Odvaha n.d). Conversely, other FE-members reject giving the country influence, and rather promote a more ‘pragmatic’ and cautious relationship, due to their countries’ USSR-histories (see e.g. EKRE 2014, NGO ISIS (as cited in DS 2016); Ruch Narodowy (CEE Identity 2013)). *EKRE*, for instance, wants to limit the rights given to the Russian minority in Estonia and voices strong concern regarding the Border Treaty between the two countries (see e.g. EKRE 2014). Hence, due to several groups’ objections, the country was not mentioned in the Prague Declaration, and no Russian groups were allowed to join the FE-coalition (Kaljuste as cited in Vaikmaa 2016), even though Robinson mentioned in October 2015 that he was in contact with Russian actors regarding the February 2016 demonstrations (Hopkins 2015).

Wagensveld also explained that the name ‘*PEGIDA*’ had caused some divisions, as it refers to the Christian and *Jewish* occident, “[A]nd you know that on the right wing, you will always have some movements, which have problems with this” (Interview with Wagensveld 2017), alluding to far right anti-Semitism. He further stated that he had been surprised in general about the level of anti-Semitism still present in some of the Eastern European groups’ statements, without further specifying to which actors he referred (Interview with Wagensveld 2017). The (public) use of anti-Semitic frames was not a common trait of all FE-groups though, and the topic was not part of the *Prague Declaration*, nor mentioned in any documents related to the meeting.

The issues of which the groups had diverging and conflictual viewpoints were thus omitted mention in the declaration. As Wagensveld explained, the higher the number of key issues the groups would have to agree upon, the harder it would be to cooperate (Interview with Wagensveld 2017). The limited issue scope of the declaration also meant that the groups could defend their choices of cooperating with organizations expressing conflicting viewpoints. Mats Helme from *EKRE*, for instance, explained the choice to cooperate with pro-Russian actors by referring to FE as solely being “a pan-European network with a common platform for anti-immigration,” and not necessarily having other ideological overlaps (Randla 2016, author’s translation).

The Declaration thus only included opposition to Islam, immigration, the EU, and the elites. The FE-groups’ ability to find common ground around these issues aligns with Peham’s observation regarding radical right party cooperation in the EP. He states that these shared enemy perceptions make it possible for the far right actors to cooperate transnationally, as they “superimpose” the previously foregrounded ‘national particularities’ (as cited in Maan & Schmid 2017, author’s translation; see also Zúquete 2015).

Fortress Europe: A European (Online) ‘Network’ of Anti-Islam, -Immigration, and – EU Actors

Several of the participants shared Helme’s above-mentioned reference to Fortress Europe as a ‘network’. Unlike *Generation Identity*, it was thus not the key objective for (at least not *all* of) the *Fortress Europe* participants to create something akin to a movement. Hence, while on the one hand, certain *Dawn* representatives wanted to set up an EP-faction with the participating parties to exercise pressure on the EU²⁷⁵ (Interview with Dawn 2017), the other actors saw FE as a much looser coalition. In 2017, Wagensveld, for instance, referred to *Fortress Europe* as a loose “network,” and explained that most of the activity and networking took place ad hoc in the

²⁷⁵ As *Dawn*’s chair until 2017, Marek Černoč stated, the coalition was about “[...] power. If more of you are involved, then people who are more competent take you seriously. If you come as a faction to the European Parliament, then you have a much bigger opportunity to change something than if you are there as a single person” (Interview with Černoč 2017).

background, and that it was not an outright movement with frequent meetings (Interview with Wagenveld 2017).

The initiative was instead more driven by the need to create contacts to anti-Islam activists abroad, because, as Wagenveld argues, “Together we are strong, alone we will not make it” (Interview with Wagenveld 2017). Festerling similarly voiced the ambition to “connect and support” far right actors, (Festerling as cited in BPI 2016a), while *For Freedom*’s spokesperson stated that she signed the Declaration as a sign of:

...solidarity. The solidarity that we stand together and [...] we can call each other, and we can help each other. So it is a network that we have agreed to join. We have said yes to some promises that we want to keep. That we fight for our countries, both individually and together. (Interview with For Freedom 2017)

The extra-parliamentary actors thus aimed to unite around cross-border online diffusion of information (Kaljuste as cited in Kärmas 2016), and to support each other both morally and face-to-face, for instance at demonstrations (see also Macklin 2013). Nevertheless, despite the rather loose nature of the FE-groups’ cooperative ties, they did not manage to ensure the coalition’s survival, and the following section considers the reasons for this.

9.2. COALITION-MAINTENANCE

The initial part recounts the further developments of the *Fortress Europe* coalition from February 2016 to early 2017. This is followed by an exploration of the groups’ pooling of resources, online communication, and attempts at creating a collective coalition identity. The analysis will reveal that despite ardent efforts, especially by Festerling, Wagenveld, and the Czech groups, the endeavours to organize collective activities largely failed, mainly due to lacking impetus for the political parties, and organizational splits among the groups leading the coalition.

Spring 2016: Joint FE-Meeting and Demonstration

After the February 6, 2016, simultaneous FE-demonstrations across Europe (see Chapter 7), the FE-members again met in the Czech *Chamber of Deputies* in Prague on May 13, exactly six months after the Paris terrorist attacks on *Bataclan* and *Stade de France*. The list of participants had changed substantially since the first meeting in January. For one, *PEGIDA Germany*’s leader, Lutz Bachmann, was not present at the

event, *Blok against Islamization* had replaced *BPI*²⁷⁶, and the meeting involved a higher number of groups and activists²⁷⁷ (Jonaitis 2016), including the new Spanish *Respeto* party, which Festerling had helped to set up (Las Voces del Pueblo 2016)²⁷⁸.

At the meeting, besides *Respeto*, four other groups also signed the Declaration, namely the Lithuanian political association *Nacionalnis Interesas (National Interest)*, the *Identity Ireland* party, the Czech *Okstrana – Civic Conservative Party*, and the French *Résistance Républicaine*, raising the number of signatures to seventeen. Aside from brief statements by the delegates, the participants agreed to set up a joint *European Citizen's Initiative*, with the aim of ending the 'forced distribution quotas' of refugees (Epoch Times 2016). The idea of the petition came from *BPI* and *Dawn*, which had been collecting Czech signatures prior to the joint FE-meetings (see Chapter 7). Moreover, the FE-members also elected a three-person co-chairmanship, namely Tatjana Festerling (*PEGIDA Germany*, leader and spokesperson of *Fortress Europe*), Maria Kaljuste (*EKRE* and *NGO ISIS*, co-chair), and Miroslav Lidínský (*Dawn*, co-chair).

A few days after the meeting, *PEGIDA Germany* hosted a transnational collective FE-demonstration in Dresden, attracting around 2,500 supporters (Epoch Times 2016). Yet, most of the FE-members did not highlight the event on their websites. Prior to the demonstration, Festerling announced that the demonstration was organized as a means to move beyond Germany's 'guilt-question,' and its perpetual necessity to

²⁷⁶ In April 2016, *BPI* and *Dawn* broke off their cooperation, due to infights between Konvička and Dawn (iDNEZ.cz 2016). A few days later, *BPI* was dissolved at their National Assembly, and replaced by a new party, *Alternative for the Czech Republic* (headed by Konvička), and *Blok against Islamization* (led by Jana Volfová). *Blok against Islamization* continued supporting *Dawn*, just as it remained part of FE (see Prokupkova 2018b for more details).

²⁷⁷ The representative from *Riposte Laïque* estimated that around 150 people participated (Interview with Riposte Laïque 2018). According to *Nacionalnis Interesas*, there were representatives from Germany, England, France, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Ireland, Poland, Hungary (a *Fidesz* representative), the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Estonia, Israel, and Lithuania (Jonaitis 2016).

²⁷⁸ *Respeto* is a party-coalition between Partido por Catalonia (PxC) ('Party for Catalonia'), España 2000 ('Spain 2000') and Partido por la Libertad ('Party for Freedom'). One of *Respeto*'s future member organizations, PxC, had participated in a *PEGIDA Germany* demonstration in February (Susó 2016).

apologize for the happenings during WWII²⁷⁹ (Tatjana Festerling TV 2016b). She thus encouraged the speakers to talk about “identity, respect, and mutual forgiveness for everything that ever stood between us, the European nations” (Ibid.).

Several of the FE-members spoke at the demonstration, including Barranco (from *Respeto*), Karim Ouchikh (from the French party *SIEL*), Tanja Groth (*For Freedom*) and Robert Winnicki (*National Movement*). In their speeches, Winnicki highlighted the German refugee policy and its relationship to Christianity and emphasized that Germany should “wake up” and Europe should show “courage” (Ruch Narodowy 2016a). Barranco instead highlighted the European history, and the need to look beyond the happenings of the past, and to erase the European self-hatred, which made the people defenceless against “other cultures that do not have these complexes,” ultimately leading to submission (España 2000 2016). Tania Groth from *For Freedom* instead discussed the ‘political correctness’ of today, and how “We are being brainwashed to think that our cultures are racist, bigoted – we are taught to be self-hating and have white guilt” (Rembrandt Clancy 2016). The speeches thus largely focused on a European (and white) ‘us’, united around a common history, reference points, and culture, and whose society is under threat from Islam and third-country immigration.

Summer and Autumn 2016: Break-Up of PEGIDA Orga-Team

In June 2016, a fight between Festerling and Bachmann²⁸⁰ led to the exclusion of Festerling from *PEGIDA Germany’s* ORGA-team, only one month after the Prague meeting and Dresden protest (Welt 2016a). Despite her *PEGIDA*-exclusion, Festerling kept her role as spokesperson and leader of *Fortress Europe*, mainly due to her earlier role as contact person between *PEGIDA Germany* and *BPI*, which meant that she had established strong connections to the group (Prokupkova 2018b).

²⁷⁹ In the words of Festerling, “Fortress Europe needs a strong, solid foundation. This foundation can only be moulded with free and self-confident Germans. [...] Yet, this overdue release from the collective guilt feelings imposed on us cannot only happen in the mind. It is also about the liberation of the degraded German soul. This is why on May 16 it will be about identity, appreciation and mutual forgiveness for everything that ever stood between us, the European peoples. We will be the starting point for true cohesion, for a European sense of community and a strong, European corps spirit - to fight together as united Europeans for the preservation of our continent” (Festerling 2016d, author’s translation).

²⁸⁰ The disagreement had several causes, but was mainly due to opposing views on the future direction of *PEGIDA* (see e.g. Vorländer et al. 2018). According to Wagensveld, Bachmann had, in fact, already excluded Festerling from speaking at *PEGIDA* demonstrations in April 2016, due to ‘PEGIDA damage’ (Wagensveld 2016a). The infighting was very public over the summer of 2016, where the two activists constantly bad-mouthed each other, both at demonstrations and online.

Conversely, *PEGIDA Germany* de facto discontinued the participation in the coalition, even though it never officially left.

This internal break-up of *PEGIDA*'s Orga-team signalled the end of FE. The coalition thus largely became a short-lived “flop” (Interview with Riposte Laïque 2018), as several FE-members either left the coalition, or at least stopped reporting about *Fortress Europe* on their websites and Facebook accounts. Hence, the departure of *PEGIDA Germany* meant that one of the key reasons for the other groups to participate had now left, i.e. FE had lost its ‘pull-power’ (see above). FE as a coalition thus became rather inactive, despite subsequent attempts to continue the use of the FE ‘brand’ by Festerling, especially, but also Wagenveld, Kaljuste, and the *Dawn* party. *Dawn*, for instance, tried to organize an FE-meeting in September 2016, with the plan to create a joint European political party, plus “prepare further protests against Angela Merkel and the pro-immigration policy in Brussels” (Dawn FB-post). Yet, for various reasons, only three people turned up for the meeting,²⁸¹ leading to anger by the *Dawn* party (Interview with Dawn 2017).

Festerling was by far the main FE-movement entrepreneur in the period of May 2016 to June 2017. She very actively pursued international contacts abroad, both before and after the creation of *Fortress Europe* in early 2016. As a *PEGIDA* Orga-team member, she had participated in numerous official events, conferences, and demonstrations abroad, speaking on behalf of *PEGIDA Germany* (see e.g. Buschmann et al. 2016). These activities continued after the founding of FE, as she travelled across Europe to attract new members to the coalition (such as *Respeto*, see above), and to visit some of the FE-members, such as *For Freedom* in Denmark in March 2017 (Festerling 2017a)²⁸². From May 2016 onwards, it was thus practically only her, Wagenveld, and Kaljuste, who sporadically made use of the *Fortress Europe* sign and flag at protests, as well as mentioned the coalition in the media or online. Wagenveld and Festerling thus jointly travelled around Europe and organized and/or participated in various

²⁸¹ The party wrote that both Festerling, *National Movement* (Poland), and other FE-groups were going to take part in the meeting. Yet, some participants had been given the wrong date by the person organizing the event, and others replied that they did not have time to attend.

²⁸² During these endeavours, Festerling networked employing “a professional staging” strategy, due to her higher education and “foreign language skills, a serious clothing style and rhetorical abilities” (Buschmann et al. 2016: 25), which she combined with a vulgar, emotional, and pathological language that placed her rather far to the right on the political spectrum (see also Vorländer et al. 2018).

demonstrations related to the ‘refugee crisis’²⁸³. Moreover, they began cooperating with extreme right actors and groups in Germany (see e.g. Wagenaar 2019).

Regardless, *Fortress Europe*’s momentum was lost. Festerling *did* try to organize a FE-demonstration in Dresden on October 3, 2016, the German Day of Reunification (Pontius & Steffen 2016). Yet, none of the original *Prague Declaration* signatories participated in the FE-demonstration²⁸⁴. Moreover, as the rally clashed with a *PEGIDA Germany* demonstration, their feud became the focus of the newspaper articles, just as it only attracted around 200 protesters (Ibid.). On November 11, the *Fortress Europe* representatives were invited to join *National Movement*’s annual ‘Polish Independence March’, and Festerling was supposed to give a speech. Yet, just before going on stage, she was told that only one foreign guest would be allowed to speak, namely Roberto Fiore from the Italian *Forza Nuova* party (Festerling 2016i). This was another huge blow to Festerling and the FE-coalition as such.

After this protest failure, the *Fortress Europe* name was not employed to organize further events before the FE-demonstration in Enschede, Netherlands, in September 2017. It again involved groups not earlier mentioned in connection to *Fortress Europe*, and which mainly belonged to the extreme right (for more about this protest, see Chapter 7). Moreover, Festerling did not participate. This demonstration was the last official *Fortress Europe* protest recorded.

Aside from some sporadic appearances abroad in the spring of 2017²⁸⁵, the ardent attempt by Festerling to re-boost the *Fortress Europe* coalition failed, as she instead

²⁸³ Throughout the summer of 2016, Wagensveld and Festerling travelled to Southern and Eastern Europe to observe and report about the situation at the EU’s external borders (see e.g. Festerling 2016f). On June 28, for instance, the two placed the FE and *PEGIDA Netherlands* banner in front of the Romanian Parliament in Bucharest, in order to encourage the Romanian government to close the border, followed by a visit to the Bulgarian border vigilantes a few days later (Festerling 2016e). Another trip went to Sicily and Catania in Italy, where Festerling reported very negatively about FRONTEX, which she accused of serving the wishes of big business and being behind the European ‘infiltration’ (Festerling 2016g). They also gave speeches at various anti-refugee and –migration demonstrations in Germany and organized their own protest actions, e.g. on July 29, where they carried out Guerilla-actions in Berlin in front of the German *Bundestag*, the *Tagesspiegel* offices, the Chancellor Residence, and *Brandenburger Tor*, to make the German government close the borders (Festerling 2016h).

²⁸⁴ The speakers instead included a regional AfD-member, Petra Federau, and two Bulgarian extreme right vigilante ‘border protectors’ (Pontius & Steffen 2016), which Festerling and Wagensveld had visited earlier that year (Festerling 2016e). In August 2016, at a *PEGIDA Munich* demonstration, Festerling similarly encouraged German men to set up similar armed initiatives in Germany (TZ 2016).

²⁸⁵ E.g. speaking as a FE-representative at a *For Freedom* demonstration in March 2017 (Festerling 2017a) and again at its summer conference in June (Festerling 2017c) and giving a speech for *Riposte Laïque*’s 10 Year Anniversary (Festerling 2017d).

suffered continuous setbacks in her endeavours. Over time, she thus became increasingly disheartened and disgruntled with the situation in Germany and the authorities' prosecution of her, due to her protest activities (Interview with For Freedom 2017). Moreover, the high stigmatization and personal risk involved were also likely to have taken a toll, as political opponents were threatening her with violent retaliations (Locke & Bender 2016). She thus became gradually more rhetorically radical, and in the winter of 2017, she relocated to Bulgaria, where she started working for a group of vigilante border patrollers (Meisner 2018).

After having now outlined the FE-events from June 2016 to December 2017, the following section will explain the factors that led to *Fortress Europe's* end. Aside from the internal split of *PEGIDA Germany*, they largely relate to the too large disparities between the participating actors in terms of commitment to, and expectations of, the coalition. The first section considers the attempt at constructing collective identity frames around the protection of Europe. In both the *Prague Declaration* and at the joint events in February and May 2016, the FE-members portrayed themselves as part of a united European 'resistance' or opposition, to the proponents of migration, particularly the EU elites. The protest groups frequently employed these frames, also aside from at the FE-events. However, as the following section will argue, this was not a concerted effort by *all* members of the FE-coalition, as they were highly divided in terms of views on European unity and solidarity, coalition-goals, and attention given to the coalition. Thus, despite some of the actors' attempts at creating pan-European FE-unity, only some of the groups shared the collective identity, and there was no shared pooling of resources.

(ATTEMPTED) CONSTRUCTION OF A TRANSNATIONAL COLLECTIVE FE IDENTITY

"Together We Are Strong": The Extra-Parliamentary Actors' 'European Patriotism'

Despite the FE-groups' nationalist proclivities, the *Prague Declaration* consists of European identitarian terms, and concentrates on the safeguarding of the entire continent vis-à-vis the threats of Islam and the supranational decision-making powers of the EU and the 'global elites.' As alluded to in the section on 'Shared Worldviews' above, the FE-members thus attempt to create unity around shared notions of 'Europe' and being 'European,' in order to formulate a joint opposition to Islam and third-country immigration. This means that the move to a 'European' focus requires a departure from 'pure' ethnic nationalism.

One could observe this discursive move in Tommy Robinson's speech on November 30, 2015, for example. Here, he spoke about the need to show *European* unity against the common enemy, as "Our connections by geography, history and culture, urge us to work together on this crisis" (4freedoms 2015). Yet, aside from similar vague formulations around a shared culture, value set, and history (as also seen in the *Prague*

Declaration), the groups do not elaborate further on this notion of ‘Europe’. Instead, the various leaders’ mainly use the notion of ‘Europe’ as a means to delineate a border between a superior European ‘us,’ and a Muslim ‘them,’ who (allegedly) wish to push their religious and cultural practices upon ‘us’. The actors thus create a very exclusionary conception of the ‘European’ in-group, yet, without going into depth with the factors that actually unite the Europeans as such.

Instead, the various extra-parliamentary FE-members emphasize their shared *patriotism*, i.e. love of their countries, and underline the *need* for European patriotic cooperation. As the Danish *For Freedom*’s spokesperson explains:

We cannot exist in a vacuum in such a small country as ours, and we are a very, very small country. We should preferably be able to co-exist with the countries around us. We respect all countries and their sovereignty. [...] *PEGIDA* in Germany, they fight for the Germans and for their culture, and [...] *For Freedom* in Denmark, we fight for Denmark and our Danish culture. At the same time, we agree that all our European countries can keep their culture, that we help them keep their culture (Interview with *For Freedom* 2017)²⁸⁶.

Similarly, underlining the need to defend *one’s own* country, Robinson emphasized the need for a pan-European response, as “one country in Europe cannot stand alone and win” (4freedoms 2015; Hopkins 2015). He thus worked from the idea that “Our voice becomes so much stronger if we place ourselves side-by-side with each other across national borders and together show the threat that Islam poses to our countries” (Robinson in Dispatch International 2016a). In a rather comparable speech, Bachmann stated, “It is more important than anything else that the patriots in Europe connect and cooperate to fight this menace” (Romea.cz 2015). Festerling instead underlined that “We [...] have to join forces in Europe, being alone and nationally isolated in this struggle reduces our chances of effectively fighting the Islamization of Europe” (as cited in BPI 2016a). Moreover, adopting *PEGIDA Germany’s* motto “Together we are strong” (‘Gemeinsam sind wir stark’)²⁸⁷, *PEGIDA Netherlands* and *For Freedom* called for both national and European far right cooperation (Interview with Wagenveld 2017; Interview with *For Freedom* 2017).

The extra-parliamentary FE-groups’ leaders thus jointly formulate a sort of symbolic unity around ‘European patriotism’, as they take part in the joint, *European*, battle, and call for pan-European prognoses to the crisis. It is thus not so much a matter of creating the *same* collective identity that draws on the same history and context, but

²⁸⁶ *Riposte Laïque’s* spokesperson similarly states, “I love France first. I am first French before being European, but I recognize that for me, the European civilization is without equal in the world” (Interview with *Riposte Laïque* 2018).

²⁸⁷ HoGeSa also used this football-motto during its protests, and it became the title of the so-called *PEGIDA-hymn*, published in December 2015.

rather a collectivity through being distinct from each other, yet united around a common cause, i.e. *patriotic Europeanism*. Referring to themselves as people who love *their country*, the employment of the term ‘patriot,’ thus infers that the fight against Islam and third-country immigration is not considered a joint European struggle as such. There is therefore hardly any mention of European ‘unity’ and ‘us’ as a movement at the transnational level. Instead, the battle consists of individual struggles in each nation state, against both (Muslim) immigrants, but also the national liberal elites, against whom the other groups offer their *solidarity* (see e.g. For Freedom FB-Post 2016).

This therefore highlights two intertwined battlegrounds, the national and the European, and the aim becomes to protect Europe in order to protect the nation. As Kaljuste emphasized, the pan-European FE-coalition aimed at preserving the differences between the European nations and ensuring their sovereign rights, including those of the smaller EU MS (as cited in Vaikmaa 2016). This partially explains the FE-slogan “Freedom, identity and *sovereignty*”. Hence, the actors unite at the European level around diagnostic frames expressing that what happens in one place in Europe is also bound to happen elsewhere on the continent (see e.g. Kaljuste as cited in Ibid.), and that while some (Western) countries already have been ‘lost’ to Islam, others (especially in Eastern Europe) can still be saved. Conversely, Eastern Europe (especially the Visegrad countries) is portrayed as a role model for the Western European patriots, due to their resistance to “the suicidal asylum politics” (Festerling as cited in Nová buržoazie NEWS 2016).

A European ‘Resistance’ Movement, Willing to Sacrifice Everything for the Safeguarding of Europe

By the employment of a very pathos-driven language, the main uniting factor for the protest groups is thus the urgency to create a European opposition in the face of the pending catastrophe of ‘Islam conquering Europe’. In the words of Robinson, “Time is running” (as cited in 4freedoms 2015). Tanja Groth, the leader of *For Freedom*, argues that at some point it will become “[...] so stressful and fatal that we put everything else aside and agree, because we have a common goal. And it's about our western culture surviving” (Dispatch International 2016b; see also Kaljuste (Svensk Webbtv 2016)).

All the *PEGIDA* groups, *NGO ISIS*, and *BPI* thus insist on their right to speak freely against Islam, in opposition to the ‘political correctness’ of the political establishment (see e.g. Groth’s speech on April 24, 2016 (För Frihet 2016)). They constantly feel that this right is under threat by the cultural elite (or the ‘cultural Marxists’), who repress and prosecute the ‘patriots’ for speaking what for them is the truth. Simultaneously, some of the groups insinuate that the authorities treat the Muslims and left-wing extremists preferentially, while *PEGIDA Germany* refers to its followers as the ‘silent majority’, who are not given a voice in the debate (see Vorländer et al. 2018: 25). The

extra-parliamentary *PEGIDA* groups thus construct themselves as actors, who heroically dare to take up the battle against both the establishment and Islam, despite the suppressive actions against them.

The voicing of these sentiments permits the extra-parliamentary groups to unite around the frame of ‘we, the persecuted’, who are willing to continue the fight, despite opposition, prosecution, and suppression attempts, particularly concerning freedom of speech (see e.g. Robinson (4freedoms 2015); O’Loughlin (as cited in Healy 2016); Festerling (as cited in Locke & Bender 2016); Wagensveld (as cited in Feenstra 2016)). They thus provide the solidarity and support in order to resist both Islam and the ‘open border’ governmental policies, but also particularly the repressive authorities and condemning media. The groups therefore forge a moral ‘support network’ of kindred spirits, who show that the defiance is *European*, not just national. In this way, the extra-parliamentary groups construct an “action-mobilizing collective identity” through “epics of overcoming” (Poletta & Jasper 2001: 291), while identifying themselves as victims (see also Oaten 2014 for a similar account of the *EDL*).

The heroic sentiment is also visible in the actors’ expressed need to form a European ‘resistance’ movement. The term is employed, for example, by *PEGIDA Germany* (‘We are the resistance’ (‘Wir sind der Widerstand’)) and *For Freedom* (Dispatch International 2016b), just as Maria Kaljuste refers to herself as a European ‘freedom fighter’ (Svensk Webbtv 2016). The later accessions to the coalition, *Riposte Laïque/Résistance Républicaine* and *Identity Ireland* use the term similarly. While some of the groups directly refer to the resistance movement against the Nazis and fascists during WWII (such as *Riposte Laïque*), most of the groups do not discuss this connotation. Yet, by considering Islam as being an ‘ideology’, perceiving of Muslims as ‘invading’ their countries, plus “fighting for our freedom, our culture, our very lives” (Groth as cited in För Frihet n.d.), the allusions to war become rather evident. Hence, despite the portrayal of themselves and their movements as ‘peaceful and non-violent’,²⁸⁸ the language employed is less neutral. As Festerling stated the day after the first FE-meeting: “The peoples of Europe have only two options: submission or rebellion” (Festerling 2016b), undoubtedly inspired by Michelle Houellebecq’s book *Submission*.

²⁸⁸ Interestingly, the ‘P’ in *PEGIDA Germany* actually initially stood for ‘peaceful’, yet, this was very quickly changed to ‘patriotic’ (Vorländer et al. 2018).

Searching for Joint European Narratives: The Preservation of Europe through 'War'

A few of the anti-Islam actors draw on the shared European history of battling the Ottomans as part of the narrative of forming a European 'resistance' against the Muslim threat (rather akin to *Generation Identity*, see Chapter 8). At a joint *PEGIDA Germany* and *BPI* protest, Hampl from *BPI* for instance stated:

When Islamic armies were standing in front of Vienna, Czech soldiers and Saxonian soldiers were in the same armies, fighting shoulder to shoulder against Turks and against Islam. And I think it's time to renew this coalition, it's time to renew this community. (Patriot für unsere Zukunft 2015)

Robinson similarly likened the refugees' entry to Europe with the Crusades, explaining that it had taken six centuries for the Europeans to expel the Muslim invaders (Dearden 2015b). Others employed the same type of battle frames but without employing the Ottomans as reference point. At a demonstration, Konvička, for instance, stated that "We are soldiers, we are at war, but we will win it" (iDNEZ.cz 2015), just as Kaljuste argued, "We are in the middle of a war. It is absolutely sure, and it's only a matter of time [before] people will really, really notice it" (Svensk Webbtv 2016). *For Freedom's* spokesperson went even further, when stating that the EU countries should have deployed soldiers to defend the EU's external borders, "whether with barbed wire, whether with 'shoot to kill', whether with... Whatever. [...] that is how it is in a war, when one wants to defend one's country" (Interview with *For Freedom* 2017).

Since the summer of 2016, this 'resistance' aspect was physically expressed through the support of, and visits to, the Bulgarian vigilante border patrollers *Vassil Levski Association* that received a lot of (mainly negative) European media attention for its refugee 'hunts' on the external Bulgarian borders (see e.g. Lake Smith 2016). Both Festerling, Wagensveld, Kaljuste, *BPI*, and *For Freedom* expressed great admiration for their endeavour, and Festerling, Wagensveld, and Kaljuste even went to Bulgaria to follow their work (Locke 2016; Kärmas 2016)²⁸⁹. Festerling also encouraged European men, "preferably veterans from the military and police," to go to Bulgaria and join the vigilantes (Locke 2016), just as representatives from the group were invited to speak at demonstrations in Germany (see e.g. Pontius & Steffen 2016).

These different 'resistance,' and 'war' frames are very much in continuation of the rationales expressed in relation to previous far right anti-Islam networking endeavours (see e.g. Melagrou-Hitchens & Brun 2013), just as they largely align with those expressed by *Generation Identity* (See Chapter 9). At their core, they revolve around

²⁸⁹ During the summer of 2015, Festerling had made a similar visit to Hungary and the mayor Gyöngösi, who became known for his vigilante approach to the refugee crisis, chasing and detaining illegal immigrants crossing the border into Hungary (Festerling 2015b).

the idea that European unity and solidarity, plus the willingness to sacrifice everything, is the key to a successful ‘defence’ against the pending ‘Islamization’ of Europe, and the therefrom-ensuing attack on universal human rights, freedom of speech, and democratic values. The groups thus construct a shared collective identity around a ‘we’ consisting of brave and persecuted patriotic Europeans, who still will fight for the maintenance of the European continent, despite all the threats facing them, especially from the left-wing upholders of ‘political correctness’.

Yet, as will be further explained below, it was only the *extra-parliamentary* FE-actors that ascribed to the identity of ‘patriotic Europeanism’. This indicates that there was a rather large discrepancy between the goals and self-understanding of the two types of political actors. As the following analysis of the FE-coalitions’ resource mobilization and inter-group communication will show, there was, in fact, a general lack of commitment by the political parties to maintain the cooperation, inhibiting the survival of the FE coalition.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND (LACKING) RESOURCE POOLING

While the different protest groups shared cultural and human resources (see Chapter 7; see also e.g. Prokupkova 2018b on the diffusion of organizational knowledge from *PEGIDA Germany* to *BPI*), there was not a strong level of material resource pooling between the FE coalition-partners. This is largely ascribable to the more *symbolic* and loose nature of the coalition, where particularly the *political parties’* lacking incentives for a deeper commitment (in terms of political and electoral benefits, plus ideological overlaps), made them refrain from using resources on the coalition, especially after the break-up of *PEGIDA Germany’s* leadership in May 2016.

Conversely, the extra-parliamentary groups were more committed to the coalition, yet, none of them had strong financial resources. Instead, *BPI’s* cooperation with the Czech *Dawn* party ensured initial financing, as the party received a substantial subsidy from the state budget as part of the state funding scheme” (Císař & Navrátil 2018: 191). It thus hosted the two FE-meetings in Prague, and funded the participating actors’ hotel, food, and transport around Prague (according to the Lithuanian *National Interest* association, see Jonaitis 2016).

The choice of Prague as a meeting place was also due to its less suppressive efforts against far right groups compared to e.g. Germany, demonstrated by the fact that the groups could use the parliamentary buildings for the meeting, an access that would be considerably harder to gain in most Western European countries (see e.g. Berntzen et al. 2017). The Czech facility also provided the groups with simultaneous translation options, a key asset in a meeting between actors from across Europe, who do not all speak English or German at a high level (Interview with Černoč 2017; Interview

with For Freedom 2017)²⁹⁰. Furthermore, due to *PEGIDA Germany's* rather professional demonstration equipment, technical expertise, security provisions, plus space to host an anticipated large group of people, the protest group hosted the May 2016 demonstration. The Czech and German FE-initiators thus provided most of the FE-resources, and there is no indication that any of the other groups provided material resources to the coalition. This also partly explains why the departure of *PEGIDA Germany* from the coalition was so problematic, as it caused both a symbolic and organizational resource loss (i.e. in terms of media attention, number of activists and protest participants, the network's size, organisational expertise, and protest capacity).

Nevertheless, the FE-groups *did* attempt to pool their resources in one instance, namely when deliberating to instigate a *European Citizen's Initiative* (ECI) at the EU-level against the EU's quotas (see Chapter 7). A citizen's committee consisting of at least seven citizens from seven EU MS must lead such a petition, and they have to collect one million signatures by citizens from at least seven MS (ECI 2019). Hence, it requires a high amount of material resources, both in terms of mobilizing support through advertising, but especially the actual collection of the signatures. Some of the groups got the task of distributing the petition in their domestic settings. Others, like the Lithuanian *National Interest* association, were not asked for their assistance, as the actors believed it would be sufficient if the representatives of the big states gathered signatures (Jonaitis 2016). Yet, the FE-members never instigated this European petition, as the coalition more or less dissolved after the May meeting, and *Dawn* more or less gave up on the endeavour (Interview with Dawn 2017; Interview with Wagensveld 2017).

The lacking pooling of resources was, in fact, one of the biggest general problems for the transnational coalition. The limited financial means meant that Festerling had to pay her own travels, making it hard to uphold close transnational relations, due to the limited travel opportunities to visit the other FE-members (Interview with Wagensveld 2017). The distinct groups *did* try to mobilize money for transport through online calls for contributions. Yet, this was insufficient, and according to some of the interviewees, by the autumn of 2017, Festerling's mental and financial resources were so drained that she no longer wished to be too involved in *Fortress Europe* (Interview with For Freedom 2017; Interview with Ingrid Carlqvist 2018).

²⁹⁰ Černoč also explained that at some events, such translation was not available, and he once asked a fellow listener to let him know, if the *PEGIDA Germany* speaker, "who looked strict," was saying something out of bounds. She told him that the contents were "almost the same as what we were saying. Just that in that language [German] it sounded more radical in intonation and dynamics of voice" (Interview with Černoč 2017). This quote gives a rather good idea about the problems related to border-crossing demonstrations with actors that do not share the same language.

The above section has thus shown that the lacking pooling of resources was one of the coalition's largest problems. With the lacking resource contribution by the political parties, and the loss of one of the main FE-resource providers, i.e. *PEGIDA Germany*, in June 2016, the room for manoeuvring for FE's leadership gradually dissipated. Due to the lacking financial means, it became increasingly difficult for Festerling to travel across the continent, and to organize joint events. Moreover, as the following section explores further, there was also not much communication between the groups, indicating the very loose structure of the coalition.

ON- AND OFFLINE COMMUNICATION²⁹¹

As *PEGIDA Germany's* protests began diffusing across Europe in early 2015, the protest group initially attempted to establish links between the various *PEGIDA* groups, both offline (through protest participation), and online, for instance through mentions of the other groups on *PEGIDA Germany's* Facebook page and/or website. The organizers thus both networked virtually and face-to-face (Druxes & Simpson 2016), cross-posting information about upcoming events on the various *PEGIDA* pages, and generally maintaining contact. Yet, as explained above, Bachmann had already lost contact to most of the *PEGIDA* offshoots by 2016 (Kassam 2016b).

This lacking communication was also a problem for the FE-coalition, something that is particularly visible on the joint *Fortress Europe* Facebook pages. As mentioned in Chapter 2, it was not possible to gain access to the private 'Fortress Europe' Facebook group, thus inhibiting the possibility of analyzing the communication between the participating groups. However, the two *public* groups 'Fortress Europe' and 'Festung Europa,' plus accompanying observations from participating members, give a good indication of the cooperative problems and lacking participation by the majority of the FE-members. According to *Respetto*, FE was supposed to be a "platform that will serve to coordinate the activity of all member parties and associations, and facilitate their participation in all calls and demonstrations against Islamization that are developed" (Respetto 2016). Yet, when looking at the publically available online data, this did not seem to materialize.

Neither the English nor the German *Fortress Europe* Facebook page involved many posts from actors aside from the FE-coalition leaders, despite the encouragements to contribute. The 'Fortress Europe' Facebook page was created on January 25, 2016, by Maria Kaljuste (*EKRE* and *NGO ISIS* representative), and currently consists of 1,128 members (October 14, 2019). Initially, Maria Kaljuste wrote the majority of the posts, for instance inviting the FE-members to join an anti-mosque protest in Helsinki

²⁹¹ This section is based on the publically accessible data from the group's members, and hence not e.g. closed social media groups, and other potential sources that could shed more light on the actual occurrences. However, combined with the interview data from Wagenveld, Groth, and Černoč, this assessment should be considered reliable.

(Fortress Europe FB-post). Moreover, the Lithuanian political association *National Interest* also frequently posted about its political activities, for instance the petition collection, it was undertaking at home (Fortress Europe FB-post). However, in a post on the group's own webpage in 2016, the association mentioned the lacking contributions from the other participants in the FE-network, except for themselves and Kaljuste (Jonaitis 2016). In fact, the Facebook page very quickly became a place for 'ordinary' activists to post anti-Islam and -Merkel slander, instead of invitations to protests and meetings. The German 'Festung Europa' Facebook page has a very similar structure as the English. It was founded on January 7, 2016, and currently has 1,853 'followers' (October 14, 2019). Tatjana Festerling administers the 'page', and the contents largely correlate with those on Festerling's own blog (www.tatjanafesterling.de). Again, there was no sharing of information from the other participating groups on this 'page'.

Furthermore, none of the FE-groups placed much emphasis on the other participating groups' actions, nor diffused knowledge from the other members' pages. In a September 2016 interview about *Fortress Europe*, Kaljuste stated that one of the reasons for forming the coalition was to disseminate information and news from the domestic scenes between the participating groups (Kärmas 2016). The *For Freedom* representative similarly underlined the great importance of online networking for the participating FE-members (Interview with For Freedom 2017). However, when examining the *Fortress Europe* members' websites and Facebook pages, hardly any of them refer to other FE-members aside from the January-May 2016 period, and one would expect such mentions between groups that cooperate (see e.g. Caiani & Parenti 2013). So unlike *Generation Identity* and *PEGIDA Germany* in early 2015, besides the short period around the two transnational protest events (January-May 2016), there are hardly any mentions of the other FE-groups on either the participating groups' websites or Facebook pages²⁹², indicating a very loose transnational cooperative relationship between the groups, including online. Instead, the transnational FE-efforts were mainly driven by individual movement entrepreneurs (especially Festerling and Kaljuste), who attempted to drive the coalition forwards, but largely failed in this attempt.

²⁹² Yet, there are several indications that particularly the protest groups are in contact with, or at least 'follow', numerous different European (and in certain cases American or Russian) far right actors online, whose news articles and other types of information they disseminate on their own pages.

9.3. FORTRESS EUROPE COALITION-SURVIVAL?

Despite ardent efforts by especially Tatjana Festerling, Edwin Wagensveld, and *Dawn*, the *Fortress Europe* coalition never amounted to more than weak cooperative and protest links between the members. After May 16, 2016, the transnational coalition-building endeavour more or less terminated, mainly due to Festerling's exclusion from *PEGIDA Germany* (Interview with Riposte Laïque 2018; Prokupkova 2018b), and the cancelled FE-meeting in Prague in September 2016 further demonstrated the de facto end of the coalition (Interview with Dawn 2017).

Whether intended or not, FE's offline mobilization thus ended up being a short-term and instrumental 'event' coalition (Levi & Murphy 2006), as a means to counter their shared enemies, and aims of curbing third-country, especially Muslim, immigration to Europe. This outcome was mainly due to the groups' differing ambitions with the coalition, and the lack of efforts to foster stronger bonds between the coalition partners. Hence, unlike the *Generation Identity* groups, aside from very sporadic attempts to organise transnational protests and meetings, the FE-leaders did not organize any FE-training sessions, conferences, or social gatherings around which the members could base their commitment (see e.g. Greer & Hauptmeier 2012), just as the leaders were not in frequent contact (Interview with Wagensveld 2017).

The FE-Members' Discrepant Coalition Expectations

This network-type event-specific arrangement of the FE-coalition is rather akin to other far right initiatives, such as *Cities against Islamization* (see e.g. Hafez 2014). However, unlike the rationale behind FE, these mobilizations were more *deliberately* temporary and loosely organized; whereas the transnational FE cooperation was largely inhibited due to infights at the domestic levels, just as the groups all appear to have based their commitments on averse expectations.

Hence, from the outset, Festerling and the *Dawn/BPI* leadership seemingly had much higher ambitions with *Fortress Europe* than did the remaining actors, considering their efforts to continue the European cooperation after June 2016. This was mainly due to their own domestic problems. *Dawn*, for one, did not stand strong in the Czech opinion polls at the time, and received limited domestic media attention, which instead largely went to Okamura, the party's previous leader. It hoped to fare better at the European level by creating an EP faction with the other participating parties (Interview with Černoš 2017). On the other hand, Festerling's exclusion from *Pegida Germany* in June meant that she only led *Fortress Europe*, and thus had great interest in ensuring the coalition's survival.

Conversely, two of the other key FE-organizers, Maria Kaljuste and Edwin Wagensveld, both defined the cooperation as a loose 'network' of European far right actors. Yet, while Kaljuste mainly attempted to further this networking *online*, and

joined a few protests in Finland (see e.g. Jaakola 2016), Wagenveld also attempted to continue the coalition's street activism, and had ambitions for making political changes. Hence, from the interview with Wagenveld, it was his aim to form a network of anti-Islamic voices that could be mobilized for joint protests, plus work together around shared political goals such as the ECI-petition, as "with such political powers [as the political parties], you would have the opportunity to achieve something" (Interview with Wagenveld 2017).

The FE-initiators thus had various goals with the coalition, which required quite different levels of commitment from the participating groups. Yet, all of the four actors aimed for the survival of the transnational mobilization.

Political Parties: Not Prioritizing Fortress Europe in their Political Activities or Communication

Conversely, while the extra-parliamentary actors saw the transnational coalition as vital for gaining influence and 'voice', the parties instead considered it mainly as a means to gain media attention and to establish loose far right contacts across Europe. The parties' limited electoral results and anti-establishment discourse thus acted as incitement to join the coalition, especially in order to grab media attention and thus potentially conjure support. Winnicki from *National Movement* for instance stated that "If [the February 6 demonstration] goes well, we will probably want to repeat it" (Nałecz 2016), indicating that *National Movement* could at least *initially* see potential in the transnational protests. Yet, the February 6 protests did not really meet these expectations, especially not in terms of participant numbers (around 1,500 participants) (Ibid.).

Moreover, according to Černoč from *Dawn*, the coalition also faced hindrances in terms of the groups' averse political viewpoints. FE thus:

...did not have any result. Maybe if it had led to specific cooperation for a longer period, and we had made a faction, then we could maybe have had a chance to influence something in the European Parliament. Yet, because people were not able to agree, we just ended up doing a few events. We did some work in terms of legislation, and took the topic into a public space to show it to people. Aside from that, it had no result. I do not think that anybody expected that it would lead to big results, big consequences. (Interview with Černoč, 2017, author's translation)

It thus appears more likely that the larger participating parties, i.e. *National Movement*, *Lega Nord*, and *EKRE*, saw it as a simple act of resistance, in the form of a show of unity through a common declaration and a one-off protest event. This is further evidenced by the fact that while the various extra-parliamentary FE-actors developed shared collective identity frames around the safe-guarding of Europe against Islam, this was less the case for the political parties. Despite the groups'

general overlaps and rationales for European far right cooperation, i.e. seeing a need to ‘gather the counter-Islamic forces’, the parties did not express a strong need for transnational unity, but rather used the European experiences as a means to underline the need for action domestically, and otherwise maintained the focus on a nationally based ‘us’. Hence, the parties mainly considered the cooperation in symbolic terms. They thus mainly saw it as a means to show their wish to safeguard the nation-states against third-country immigration and EU-impositions, and thereby exert implicit pressure on the EU decision-makers.

None of the larger parties thus placed much emphasis on their participation in *Fortress Europe*, neither in terms of sending their most prominent politicians, nor concerning the advertisement of upcoming events and general mentions of the coalition and its work. Hence, neither *Lega Nord*, *National Movement*, nor *EKRE* sent their leaders or main spokespeople to any of the FE-meetings and –demonstrations²⁹³. At the same time, the coalition did not feature prominently on the parties’ websites, nor did they exchange information on the shared FE-Facebook ‘pages’. Instead, the parties wrote about their relations to similar-minded parties abroad, such as *National Movement* and its cooperation with the Hungarian *Jobbik* party (Ruch Narodowy 2017), *EKRE* and two far right Latvian and Lithuanian parties (*All Latvia!* and *League of Nationalists* respectively) (see e.g. *EKRE* FB-post), and *Lega* and *Front National* (see e.g. Scammel 2015). *Respeto* was similarly constantly looking for transnational partners, aside from the FE members²⁹⁴. Hence, judging from the parties’ closest allies abroad, they found it more relevant to liaise with *political parties*, for one to be part of a party group at the EP-level (*Lega Nord* and *Respeto* strategy)²⁹⁵, but also to partner with actors from neighbouring countries with similar contexts and issue foci (*EKRE* and *RN*).

Moreover, particularly the parties’ quest for electoral gains and ideological focus points placed their foci squarely on the national level, both in terms of frames (‘us’ as national citizens) and activity levels. Their strategic deliberations about transnational cooperation were thus of a completely different type than e.g. those of the *PEGIDA*

²⁹³ *Lega Nord* sent Vincenzo Sofo (*Il Talebano*), *EKRE* sent Kaljuste, a regional leader, but not a prominent *EKRE* member (Expert Interview with Kasekamp), and *National Movement* sent Jerzy Kenig, a prominent member due to his fame prior to joining the party, but not a top party member (Expert Interview with Jajeczniak).

²⁹⁴ The Spanish *Respeto* party was strongly networking at the European (EU) level, aside from the links to *PEGIDA*, in an attempt to set up cooperation with radical and extreme right parties. Even the signing of the *Prague Declaration* was discussed with a focus on the participating parties in the coalition. Moreover, in April 2017, a party representative went to the *Europe of Nations and Freedom* (ENF) meeting in Germany, hosted by *AfD* (Respeto 2017b), and a few months later, a delegation visited the extreme right *Alliance of European National Movements* (*AENM*) EP-party group (Respeto 2017a).

²⁹⁵ ENF had had its inaugural meeting in January 2016.

groups, which could express themselves more freely and less constrained, due to their extra-parliamentary characters. Furthermore, by the time of the initiation of the FE-coalition, the 'height' of the 'refugee crisis' had been reached, and most of the national governments around Europe had created policies during the winter of 2015-2016 to curb the immigration and asylum-seeking in their countries. This meant that the need for transnational far right pressure on the EU also dwindled, at least temporarily.

Hence, particularly after the failure to launch the *European Citizen's Initiative* in May 2016, there was no indication of strong links between the FE-members, either in terms of organisation type, protest goals, ideology, collective identity, or shared political institutions they could attempt to influence (such as the European Parliament, etc.). The dividing line between the parties and the extra-parliamentary organizations thus not only consisted of their organizational set-ups, but also their worldviews, policy proposals, and ambitions writ large. All of these factors combined meant that *Fortress Europe* ended up being a short-term, instrumental event coalition.

Fortress Europe's Loose Network-Structure

Fortress Europe's fluid membership base also indicates its loose network nature. Any group sharing FE's overall agenda could join, and the list of participants continuously changed throughout the 2016-2017 period, gradually involving a rather high share of extreme right extra-parliamentary actors. In August 2017, Wagensveld, in fact, problematized the looseness of the contacts, as he could not say for sure which groups were still active members of *Fortress Europe*, just as he complained that the support from certain countries was too limited to sustain the coalition (Interview with Wagensveld 2017).

Yet, as the creation of contacts and networking was one of the main thoughts behind FE, its loose structures and membership requirements could also be part of the appeal for some of the participating actors. In fact, in September 2017, *For Freedom's* spokesperson stated that the FE-network was still active "underground" (Interview with For Freedom 2017). By now, it mainly consisted of her "knowing someone, who knows someone, who knows someone" across Europe (Ibid.), making the network appear rather loosely structured. Moreover, she also revealed that most of this transnationalization was taking place in the *online* far right sphere. Hence, according to her, the (remaining) FE-groups (she did not reveal which groups, but it is most likely mainly the *extra-parliamentary* groups) had daily contact. She referred to the network participants as 'information channels,' who assisted each other with speech contents, or discussed ongoing events and news across Europe. The members thus neither carried out joint public activities, nor intended to arrange further demonstrations for the time being, but rather sought other, unspecified, avenues of mobilization. Hence, the European networking still continued, albeit for the time being only in the online arena, making it possible to reunite swiftly at the street level, if another 'crisis' was to erupt.

Hence, from the outset, the FE-cooperation did not have a very strong foundation, other than the felt need to unite against Islam and the EU – a slim basis for the survival of a coalition. This led it to have a similar faith as the ‘*Counter-Jihad*’ network and *SIOE*, which, however, maintained online links. The looseness of these ties can also be beneficial in the long run, as it both ensures maintenance of legitimacy and respectability, while also upholding a long-term mobilization potential, which can be re-ignited should another ‘crisis’ occur.

9.4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Unlike *Generation Identity*, *Fortress Europe* never amounted to more than a short-term event coalition between a diverse range of actors, who solely united around their antipathy towards the external threats of Islam, third-country immigration, and the EU, plus the internal adversaries in the form of the liberal elite. The members pushed aside their national(ist) divergences due to the perceived imminence of these threats, spurred on by the European ‘refugee crisis’. They thus all attempted to exploit the opening discursive opportunities across Europe as a means to exercise pressure on both the domestic and European decision-makers.

Yet, the coalition only existed for five months, as the exclusion of Festerling from *PEGIDA Germany* and the dissolution of *BPI* entailed the break-up of the two leading FE-organizers, who had also been the sole providers of resources to the coalition. Despite ardent efforts by especially Festerling to ensure the coalition’s survival over the following year, the lacking incentives for, and thus commitment of, the parties, and absence of a shared agenda between the participants, meant that the coalition could solely be characterised as an event-coalition.

Aside from the coalition’s leadership, it was thus never the aim for all of the FE-members to create a cohesive group of activists fighting under exactly the same banner. On the one hand, particularly the protest groups united around the ability to express pan-European unity without breaking with their own nationhood, and instead propagate a form of ‘European patriotism’. They thus portrayed themselves as forming a joint European force in the defence of their respective nation-states, and through the expression of ‘solidarity’ towards each other in their respective domestic battles against the liberal and ‘politically correct’ elites. On the other hand, the political parties did not appear to have long-term ambitions with the coalition, but rather perceived it as a networking opportunity, and a means to gain media attention.

Hence, the groups’ transnational pressure on the EU and the domestic decision-makers was only of a short time period, and did not lead to any substantial policy changes. In the words of the editor of *Riposte Laïque*, who joined the coalition in May 2016, “The idea [behind *Fortress Europe*] was good, but in any case, it did not work. One does not win every time!” (Interview with Riposte Laïque 2018).

CHAPTER 10. CONCLUSION

The thesis analyzed the Europeanization of collective action and networks of the members of the two transnational far right coalitions Fortress Europe (FE) and Generation Identity (GI) as cases of far right mobilization during the ‘refugee crisis’ (2015-2017).

The case study of the two transnational coalitions is unlike many other studies of extra-parliamentary organizations’ Europeanization. Instead of focusing on one-two national cases (as e.g. done by Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015; Monforte 2014), the two cases were chosen based on their transnational nature, and the focus was thus transnational, i.e. European. Thereby, the study attempted to move away from the methodological nationalism often inherent in political analyses (see e.g. Chernilo 2011). Yet, the pre-determined selection of actors known to cooperate transnationally infers certain limitations as to the findings’ generalizability. Conversely, as both the FE and GI coalitions have members that adopted their organization, action repertoire, and collective action frame (CAF) blueprints from another European actor, there was also an inherent expectation that at least the national GI and PEGIDA groups would mobilize, argue, and act rather similarly across Europe. As shown in the analyses, this was also largely the case, making this a promising test case for the relevance of domestic contexts for far right mobilization.

Moreover, the study focused on the height of the European ‘refugee crisis,’ a period that inferred an increased focus on third country immigration, Islam, and the EU’s supranational role, three of the key mobilizing issues for the European far right. As other far right actors including parties, protest groups, vigilantes, and citizens’ initiatives (see e.g. Castelli Gattinara 2018; Císař & Navrátil 2018), the FE and GI groups mobilized against the reception and integration of refugees and migrants. During this period, they all Europeanized their contention, as they “collaborate[d], or ma[d]e horizontal communicative linkages with movements in other countries, contest[ed] authorities beyond the state, frame[d] issues as European and claim[ed] an European identity” (Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015: 34). Yet, as established in the analysis, and further elaborated below, these Europeanization processes both differed between the two transnational coalitions and across the different states.

This concluding chapter compares the findings between and across the two coalitions, while extending the discussion towards the general Europeanization and far right literature. The thesis aimed to create an empirical basis from which to construct theoretical expectations. While taking this initial step (together with e.g. Hutter 2014a; Denes 2012), more research is required before any certain theoretical deductions can be extrapolated. Yet, it is still possible to make a tentative framework for far right Europeanization based on the FE and GI analyses.

The first section of the conclusion presents the study's key findings, where after I outline a model for far right extra-parliamentary Europeanization, based on the analysis of the two cases. Then the groups' 'domestic mobilization,' 'Europeanization of collective action,' and 'Europeanization of networks' are examined in more detail. This section ends with a reflection about the groups' similar European collective identity constructions, leading into a discussion about avenues for further research.

10.1. KEY FINDINGS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Europeanization of Collective Action

- Limited degree of Europeanization of collective action for far right extra-parliamentary actors (with regards to all scopes, except 'issue'). They mainly utilize the strategy of 'domestication'.
- Significance of the roles of the political opportunity structures (POS), the discursive opportunity structures (DOS), and the material and symbolic resources for an extra-parliamentary actor's Europeanization.
- Despite mobilizing with the same main collective action frames (CAFs), the groups' domestic protest forms and issue foci differ, depending on their POS and DOS, the ongoing domestic debates, and the focus of the domestic far right scene.
- Confirmation of the role of national far right parties as indicative for the frequency and success of Western European far right extra-parliamentary actors' domestic mobilization (hydraulic relationship).
- Diverse mobilization strategies for the Western and Eastern European groups around EU-related issues, due to their different antagonist constructions. While the Western European groups tend to focus on the domestic establishment, the Eastern European (and Italian) target and/or criticize the EU to a larger degree.

Europeanization of Networks

- The far right transnational mobilization potential is strong, due to the ability of (some, but not all) far right actors to bridge ideological disagreements around anti-Islam positions.
- The extra-parliamentary far right unites in 'transnational movements' at the European level. They protest in the transnational space, yet, they do not approach the EU. Instead, they focus on mobilizing and influencing the domestic public.
- Skilled and experienced leaders and 'movement intellectuals' are important for far right coalition survival, due to their ability to create inter-group unity at the ideational and strategical level.
- The importance of social media for far right communication, networking, support mobilization, and for transnational organization and coordination
- The extra-parliamentary far right constructs transnational collective identities around the need for nationalists (or patriots) to heroically defend Europe as a means to safeguard the European civilization, and thus the various nation-states,

despite facing strong opposition (they create identities around victimhood and battle frames).

10.2. EUROPEANIZATION MODEL FOR FAR RIGHT EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY ACTORS

Recounting the theoretical expectations from Europeanization literature, it assumes that collective actors increasingly will target the EU institutions (either directly or indirectly) in attempts to exploit the available opportunities at the European level (see e.g. della Porta & Caiani 2009). Yet, due to several known obstacles for extra-parliamentary groups' access to the EU institutions, it was expected that the political and discursive opportunity structures plus the groups' material and symbolic resources would act as independent variables influencing far right Europeanization (see e.g. Ibid.). In order to analyze these assumptions empirically, the thesis focused on the 'refugee crisis' (2015-2017), as this critical juncture was expected to be the most likely period for far right Europeanization. The global nature of the 'crisis' made it an EU priority, requiring pan-European responses, inferring a similar pan-European mobilization potential at the extra-parliamentary far right level.

The study found that the extra-parliamentary far right's Europeanization is similar to that of most left wing CSOs and SMOs, as it faces the same obstacles for Europeanization, especially regarding political opportunities and material and symbolic resources. Hence, due to the GI and FE groups' limited material resources, focus on diffuse and politicized issues, prevalent use of demonstrative and, in some cases, disruptive protest forms, and views on the EU (Euro-sceptic and conflictual), they were not expected to seek EU institutional access. Besides, the EU's liberal democratic ethos conflicts with the one of the far right, indicating that even if they pursued such a strategy, the access would be denied. The gathered data confirmed these assumptions, as none of the extra-parliamentary FE nor GI groups took their claims to Brussels or Strasbourg, confirming the importance of having material and symbolic resources that align with the EU 'norms'.

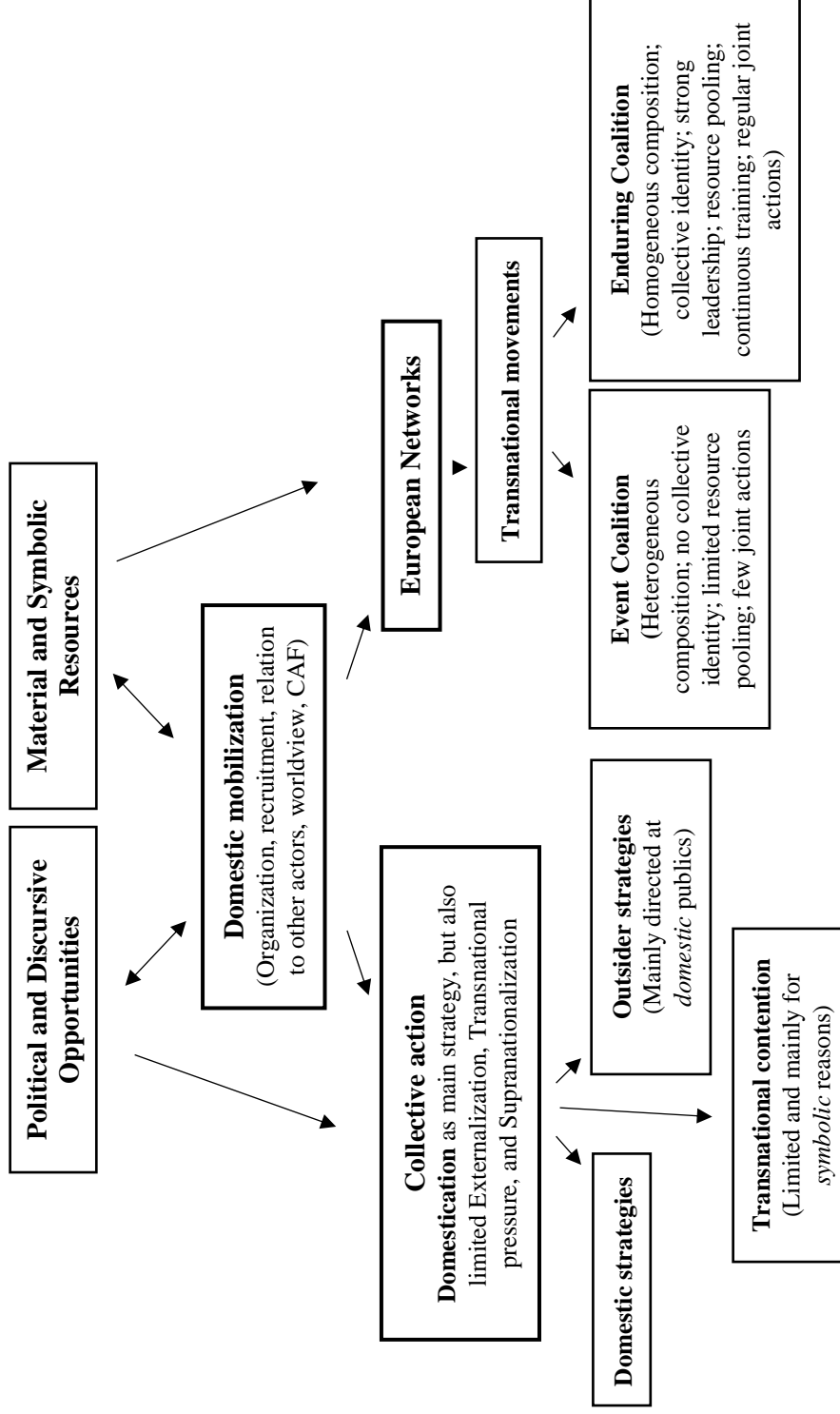
Instead, as the revised Europeanization model shows (Figure 10.1 below), for their collective action, far right groups mainly use *domestic* and *outsider* strategies for targeting both the EU, but mainly the domestic decision-makers. The groups thus indeed pose an 'inconvenient solidarity' for the EU (Caiani & Pavan 2017), albeit not in the sense of directly targeting the EU institutions. Hence, none of the GI nor FE groups 'Europeanized' their collective action to a high extent, except for the mobilization around European *issues*. Similar to previous findings (see e.g. Hutter 2014a; Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015), while they did hold a few joint 'transnational protests,' most of their protests remained at the domestic level, either in the form of domestic protests or domestication, despite the European scope of the 'crisis'. There were thus only limited instances of *externalization*, *transnational pressure*, and *supranationalisation*, underlining the strong role of the domestic setting for far right

collective action. The groups thus mainly organize domestic protests to attract media attention and mobilize the *domestic* constituencies (Beyers et al. 2008) as means to exercise pressure on the decision-makers, but mainly to influence the public's perceptions of the groups' causes²⁹⁶.

The two transnational coalitions organize very similarly as *transnational movements* (Monforte 2014), which conflictual view on the EU and lack of resources infer that they mobilize outside of the EU-setting, albeit still organizing joint transnational protests. The far right groups thus (to varying degrees) coordinated their domestic efforts and co-created joint responses to the European decision-makers, again mainly via the use of outsider strategies. The extra-parliamentary networking and frame construction thus largely occurs externally from the EU institutions, and instead involves the *transnational* space, i.e. both the domestic and European. Yet, similar as the two left-wing transnational coalitions *DiEM25* and *Plan B* (see Agustín 2017), the groups Europeanized their networks in highly differing ways, both in terms of the time of initiation, the rationale, ambitions, and organizational constellations, leading to two very different coalition outcomes, one enduring (GI), and one an event coalition (FE) (see Figure 10.1).

²⁹⁶ The gathered data on *EKRE*, *National Movement*, *Northern League*, and *Courage* suggests that their collective action Europeanization is rather similar to that of the extra-parliamentary groups. Yet, more research should be conducted on both far right and far left fringe parties and their maneuvering in the transnational sphere, particularly with extra-parliamentary organizations.

Figure 10.1: Model of extra-parliamentary, far right actors' Europeanization.



DOMESTIC MOBILIZATION

Unlike the political opportunities, the domestic *discursive opportunities* were open for all the groups. Notably in the years 2015-2016,²⁹⁷ issues related to third country immigration, Islam, and asylum seekers obtained increased salience, while the EU and European decision-makers disagreed about how to accommodate the refugees and migrants arriving to Europe. At the same time, the closed POS for several of the Western European GI and FE groups did not dissuade them from mobilizing. As Jasper and Poletta (2001) explain, ‘identity-based’ actors often mobilize despite (or exactly because of) closed opportunities, especially if they pursue *societal* rather than political changes (see also Kriesi 2004). Certain of the groups instead appropriated their protest forms to the domestic POS. In countries with nearly *open* opportunities, the groups used more moderate tactics, while *closed* opportunities inferred more radical/disruptive protests. This was, for instance, visible in the cases of *GI France* (open POS) versus *GI Germany* and *GI Austria* (closed POS), just as *PEGIDA Netherlands* (closed) also organized a high degree of confrontational actions. Yet, there were, in fact, also a few countries, where the domestic POS differed for the groups. In the Czech case, for example, *BPI*’s cooperation with *Dawn* provided it with better resources, including access to the Czech parliament, while *GI Czech Republic*, conversely, struggled to amass the required resources, partly due to its lack of such an elite alliance.

The national extra-parliamentary GI and FE groups broadly united around the same respective non-violent protest repertoires²⁹⁸ and CAFs. *GI France*’s range of protest tactics, mainly in the form of direct (social) actions, were relatively easy to diffuse abroad, as they required few activists and limited material resources, leading the GI offshoots to employ very similar protest tactics. Numerous *PEGIDA* offshoots similarly adopted *PEGIDA Germany*’s weekly rallies. Yet, due to low turnout and/or police interventions, most of their protests quickly seized, and only *PEGIDA*

²⁹⁷ These topics had already been agenda setting for several Western European governments since the early 2000s (see e.g. Joon Han 2015), and the ‘refugee crisis’ only increased their highly politicized nature, leading to an even more polarized debate.

²⁹⁸ The groups’ more moderate appearance is partly an effect of the long-term shifts in European attitudes, visible in the rise in public Islamophobia and the mainstreaming of the far right, largely ongoing since September 11, 2001 (see e.g. Berntzen 2018). Due to this society-wide hostile discourse against Islam in many European countries, actors mobilizing against Islam can moderate their expression forms, due to the increased likelihood of gaining resonance. Hence, the GI and FE actors form part of a new, more moderate, far right extra-parliamentary mobilization, existing since the early 2000s (see *Ibid.*; Fielitz & Laloire 2016), and (re-)gaining visibility during the ‘refugee crisis’. Despite often crossing the legal lines of ‘acceptable’ behaviour and expression forms, the movement denounces totalitarian worldviews and racism, and mainly draws on demonstrative protest forms.

Netherlands appropriated its protest repertoire accordingly. As a more general observation, this infers that the *PEGIDA* groups' limited protest repertoire inhibited their mobilization potential over time, just as Wagenveld's choice to adjust *PEGIDA Netherlands*' protest repertoire highlights the relevance of the leaders' own convictions, together with the structuralist and rationalist variables.

Despite the varied levels of mobilization, I argue that the extra-parliamentary FE and GI groups fulfilled different far right 'roles' during the 'crisis' (see also Önnersfors 2019). While both coalitions' groups use non-violent means, they appeal to adverse supporters (e.g. in terms of age and education level), and their protest tactics underlines their different mobilization goals. For example, the GI representatives are constantly cautious not to overstep the discursive extremism boundaries,²⁹⁹ while the FE extra-parliamentary groups all had leading members that made extreme and racist statements, both in speeches and online. The *PEGIDA* groups thus present themselves as part of 'the people,' and mobilize the public in a more 'classical' form, by trying to draw huge crowds in order to portray the 'size' of the public disquiet against the elites. Conversely, the GI groups portray themselves as an 'educated elite,' expressing a renewal or modernization of the far right extra-parliamentary scene. They mainly organize their protests to create a media 'buzz,' ultimately aiming to influence the societal discourse through a 'mainstreaming' of the new right worldview (Bouron 2014). Despite these diverging strategies, both coalitions' members wished to "challenge and undermine the dominant idea that underpins the policy monopoly," mainly at the domestic levels (Beyers et al. 2008: 1121). Yet, while most of the *PEGIDA* groups failed to mobilize the masses, the GI groups' reliance on smaller scale protest actions, together with their subcultural groupuscular features, infers an increased sustainment potential, due to the larger focus on the creation of viable organizational structures, together with the frequent street mobilization.

Returning to the collective action frames (CAF), as the 'refugee crisis' advanced, and it began gaining continent-wide salience, all the groups conflated their anti-Islam frames with frames against the refugees and asylum seekers. This inferred a further 'bridging' of the European far right frames, as they "transcend[ed] national specificities" (Monforte 2014: 223), even in (Eastern European) countries unaffected by Muslim immigration and the reception of refugees. Especially the 'terrorism threat' diagnosis was oft voiced across the continent, due to its potential occurrence in *any* European country at *any* time, making it an apt frame for transnational adaptation (see e.g. Druxes 2016). Hence, the CAFs are border crossing, inferring that it is not (only) the national context, which pre-determines a far right group's expression form.

299 Consider e.g. the hesitance to admit the Eastern European groups as 'full' GI members.

Yet, at the same time, the protest event analysis showed that the national particularities entailed varied protest targets, frequencies, and specific issue foci and claims (see Monforte 2014 for a similar finding). The domestic contextual factors relate to the groups' different domestic POS, material resources³⁰⁰, worldview alignments with, and embeddedness in, the established domestic far right, and, in most cases, the role of the radical right parties (Western Europe) and/or the position of the mainstream parties (Eastern Europe)³⁰¹. Hence, the analysis largely confirms prior findings on far right mobilization (see e.g. Caiani et al. 2012; Minkenberg 2018).

The groups thus appropriate the New Right (GI) or anti-Islam (FE) worldviews to those prevalent on the domestic far right scene, and often align the exact protest issues with the dominant topics in the domestic news. This again testifies to the continued relevance of the domestic setting for far right mobilization, despite the respective *PEGIDA* and GI groups' overlapping worldviews, organization forms, and protest repertoires. In this way, the national groups simultaneously draw on European blueprints for their mobilization, while attempting to become accepted, and thus embedded, in their domestic far right scenes. In this regard, the New Right ethnopluralist worldview proved hard to adapt to *all* domestic contexts. The Eastern European and Italian GI groups thus struggled to gain acceptance domestically, as their reading of the ideology conflicted with the prevalent domestic far right frames. Hence, while these groups may have succeeded in setting up national GI groups and in networking with GI groups abroad, they did not actually obtain domestic embeddedness, a factor that influences their resources and thus mobilization potential.

EUROPEANIZATION OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

As the overview in Table 10.1 shows, none of the GI nor FE groups 'Europeanized' their collective action to a high degree, except for the mobilization around *European* issues. The section below further explains these low protest scopes.

³⁰⁰ For the GI groups, the three most resource-strong groups, *GI Germany*, *GI Austria*, and *GI France*, organized most protests in the period, including the ones requiring the highest levels of resources (e.g. building occupations). For FE, *BPI* and *PEGIDA Germany*'s comparatively stronger human resources (especially in terms of protest supporters) meant that they could continue their mobilization for a longer period, together with *For Freedom* and *PEGIDA Netherlands*, which, in fact, continued mobilizing despite low turnout.

³⁰¹ Some cases speak against this correlation though. In France (*Front National* and *GI France*) and Austria (*Austrian Freedom Party* and *GI Austria*), the two GI groups were highly active and amassed comparatively strong resources over time, despite the parties' strong role. In France, this relates to the symbiotic nature of *Front National* and the French extra-parliamentary New Right. In Austria, *GI Austria* has built its organization up around the *Burschenschaften* and has obtained the approval of *FPÖ*, unlike *PEGIDA Austria*, which struggled to find legitimacy by both the party *and* the domestic extra-parliamentary far right scene (Ajanovic et al. 2016).

Table 10.1: Overview of the GI and FE groups' collective action scopes (2015-2017).

	Generation Identity	Fortress Europe
Issue Scope	Around 50% national, 50% European	Mainly 'European' (albeit 'Both' to high degree)
Target Scope	Mainly national government – very limited EU targeting (Eastern European and Italian groups most focus on the EU)	
Participant Scope	Limited 'European' and 'Cross-border' participation	
Event Scope	Very low number of transnational events (both <10)	
Main form of Europeanization	Domestication (followed by transnational pressure)	

Throughout the three-year period, both coalitions' groups mainly organized protests against immigration, 'Islamization,' and refugee/asylum policies, frequently with a *European* issue scope. The groups' strong focus on the overarching topics of 'Anti-immigration' and 'Anti-Islam(ization)' is, in fact, a key explanation for their transnational collaborative links. As I argued throughout, due to the pan-European 'threat', the activists felt a need for continent-wide support, if they were going to 'defend Europe' successfully. Hence, the GI groups' emphasis on *European* identity and *PEGIDA's* 'patriotic Europeanism,' and both groups' focus on civilizational distinctions, explains their desire to unite with fellow (white) Europeans against the 'pending Islamization' of the European continent. The ideological focus on the expulsion of the external 'others' is thus a partial explanation for the transnationalization of nationalists.

As explained above, the far right groups mainly organized their protests at the domestic level and mainly targeted the domestic decision-makers. This domestic focus is partly explained by their lacking EU-level POS. Moreover, the EU member states' strong role in devising the EU migration and asylum policy (Monforte 2014) also infers a more limited *need* to direct the demands at the EU, just as the 'refugee crisis' from early on led to a 're-nationalisation' of immigration and asylum policies and rights by the EU MS. The far right groups were thus likely to be most successful targeting the national government, and more so, if the government was open to the actors' demands (i.e. willing to enforce a strict immigration policy).

Considering all the groups' nationalist predispositions and therewith-related distrust and dislike, if not outright disdain, for the EU, this domestic target focus is rather interesting, considering the expected mobilization potential in EU-criticism, especially as the European's trust in the EU was low in the period, albeit increasing (see e.g. European Commission 2016b). Chabanet (2011) anticipated that as time

advances and “the role of EU institutions is judged more and more on their effectiveness, conflict about European integration in general can be expected to increase” (2011: 97). Yet, despite the FE and GI groups’ Eurosceptic worldviews, they predominantly focused on domestic actors, rather than targeting the EU for any wrongdoing. The EU’s role was, in fact, limited for almost all the Western European groups, except the Italian that, together with the Visegrad country groups, frequently criticized the EU institutions in the protests, in alignment with their domestic far right scenes (see also Hafez 2018). The groups from the Visegrad countries targeted their governments with demands to refuse the EU’s quota proposal. The Czech case illustrates this well. Here, the combination of the government’s anti-immigration stance, its Visegrad membership, and the public’s opposition to both Islam and the EU, meant that the Czech groups could exert more policy-oriented pressure on the government, as the mainstream parties already largely were on the far right’s side (Čisáň & Navrátil 2018; see also Hafez 2018). The Italian group organized a few explicit anti-EU protests, albeit without demands related to the quotas. Conversely, the other Western European groups mainly targeted the *domestic* mainstream establishment, only in some cases explicitly demanding policy changes. They instead often organized expressive protests, aimed just as much at the general population as the national government, and without an explicit focus on the EU’s policy output. As Hafez (2018) explains, this is because the groups’ populist frame foci differ. On the one hand, “in Western Europe, Islamophobia is often part of a horizontal antagonism that stands next to a vertical antagonism against the ruling elite,” while in the Visegrad countries, this vertical antagonism instead consists of the EU, somewhat similar as the Italian case (2018: 447). This thus partially explains the Western European FE and GI groups’ focus on the *domestic* rulers, media, and advocates of liberalism vis-a-vis the Eastern European and Italian expressed aversion towards the EU.

Despite these divergent antagonist frame constructions, *all* groups thus still mainly targeted national actors, be it the national government, other (mainly left wing) political parties, or proponents of multiculturalism in various organizational forms, who particularly the GI groups often targeted through acts of intimidation. Hence, *if* the groups targeted a political decision-maker, then most commonly the national government (see e.g. Hutter 2014a; della Porta & Caiani 2009 for similar findings). In the very limited instances of EU-targeting, the groups approached the EU in a conflictual manner, expressing strong criticism and anti-elite sentiments. Similarly, they also mainly targeted other EU MS’ leaders for more *symbolic* reasons, and rarely with explicit demands for policy changes. Instead, the far right groups jointly constructed Merkel as the enemy, epitomizing both the European elites and the EU, and the targeting of Merkel thus became an implicit targeting of the EU. Conversely, the Visegrad leaders were portrayed as heroes, symbolising the hope for Europe.

In terms of ‘participant scopes,’ the groups only joined protests abroad on limited occasions, and mainly as instances of ‘cross-border’ participation. This shows the (more or less natural) role of geographical proximity, often explainable by resource-

considerations, lingual overlaps, and border-crossing worldviews and references, which may foster closer relations between neighbouring countries' far right scenes³⁰². From an ideological perspective, the dominance of local and domestic protests aligns with the groups' constructions of their European linkages. The GI groups' three-tiered identity construction around a local, national, and European identity places most emphasis on the domestic 'Heimat' and regional level in terms of identity 'uniqueness' and preservation (see e.g. Zúquete 2018). The FE groups instead underline their patriotic and nationalist sentiments, but around the need to preserve the continent to preserve themselves. Hence, both coalitions' members mainly organize domestic protests, but with the use of the same main CAFs, as means to safeguard the continent together.

Similarly, both coalitions also only planned a few transnational protests. The authorities cancelled some of these, due to the far right groups' contentious natures, inferring that at least in terms of the Europeanization of *collective action*, the groups' disruptive natures and anti-liberal viewpoints may act as hindrances for transnational far right protest cooperation. Those permitted were organized with highly varied strategies and goals. The FE coalition held two transnational protests within a rather confined period, the first to exercise pressure on the national and European decision-makers, and the second to forge closer border-crossing bonds between the activists. Conversely, the GI groups organize annual transnational GI demonstrations in order to uphold the inter-group cohesion, and symbolically construct the coalition as a unit. This brings us to a closer consideration of the two coalitions.

EUROPEANIZATION OF NETWORKS: ENDURING VS. EVENT COALITIONS

Table 10.2 provides an overview of the two coalitions' main differences and similarities, explained further below.

³⁰² This is, for instance, visible for the German-speaking New Right scene (of Germany, Switzerland, and Austria), the Estonian and Finnish far right's lingual overlaps and shared aversion towards Russia, plus the Danish and Swedish national-conservative movement around 'freedom of speech'.

Table 10.2 Organizational and ideational differences between the GI and FE coalitions.

Coalition	Generation Identity	Fortress Europe
Worldview	(Largely) Homogeneous (New Right, but national differences)	Heterogeneous (Mix of anti-Islam and populist radical right)
	Denounce fascism, Nazism, and racism	
Types of organisations	Homogeneous (Groupuscules with SMO features)	Heterogeneous (Parties, protest groups, and political associations)
Timing of coalition initiation	2012 → Continuous growth No clear ‘catalyst,’ but aim of expression form moderation)	Midst of ‘refugee crisis’ ‘Refugee crisis’ as catalyst (Autumn/winter 2015)
Reason for transnationalization	‘European identity’ inherent in New Right worldview	Opposition to EU’s handling of ‘refugee crisis’
Coalition initiation	In-direct diffusion of material abroad → establishing contacts	Movement leaders contacting European network
Coalition aim?	Homogeneous Sustained coalition (groupuscule aim of Meta-political changes)	Heterogeneous One-off event (parties) Sustained network (some extra-parliamentary groups)
Coalition-maintenance?	Building social basis Skilled leadership; Diffusion of GI material; Activist training; Regular communication; Annual transnational protests	No shared commitment Scant leadership; No shared aims; Limited communication; Few transnational events
Collective identity?	‘Defenders of Europe’ against Islam(ization) (military jargon)	‘Patriotic Europeans’ protecting Europe vs. Islam (only extra-parliamentary groups)
Transnational ties	Strong and sustained (frequent cooperation across borders; transnational activities; shared rules of non-extremism)	Weak and instrumental (loose network of actors; no sustained contact nor activities; membership on loose basis)
Type of Coalition	Enduring coalition	Event coalition

Guiraudon (2011) poses the question whether “the ‘Europeanization’ of mobilization” is “part of a process whereby activism has become globalized, or are mobilized groups migrating from the national to the European level to follow the shift in policy competence in the EU?” (2011: 130). In this case, it appears to be a mix of both. On the one hand, the GI and FE extra-parliamentary actors’ predecessors (i.e. *Identitarian Bloc* and the *Counter-Jihad Movement*) already ‘Europeanized’ their CAFs and networks prior to the creation of the GI and FE groups, without the aim of approaching the EU. *GI France* and *PEGIDA Germany* continued this trajectory, albeit with different aims. *GI France* shared the New Right ambition of transnational European cooperation, pursued since the late 1960s (see e.g. Bar-On 2011), again without any focus on the EU. The GI coalition was thus founded prior to the ‘crisis’ with the aim of creating a European ‘movement’ of (more or less) heterogeneous New Right groupuscules, jointly advocating for European meta-political changes, mainly coalescing due to broader transnationalization processes on the far right. A similar picture emerges regarding *PEGIDA* and its offshoots that all mainly were set up due to far right worldview change processes, spurred on by the shift to a *civilizational* anti-Islam focus in the early 2000s (see e.g. Berntzen 2018). Globalization thus plays a strong role in terms of ‘uniting the right’ at the transnational European level. Yet, at the same time, the FE coalition united in response to the high inflow of refugees in autumn 2015 and the EU’s role in determining their continental division. Perceiving an opening in the European discursive opportunities, the FE coalition was founded in an attempt to influence the EU’s policy output.

In both coalitions, it was the more resource-strong groups (i.e. *GI France* and *GI Austria* for GI and *PEGIDA Germany* and *BPI/Dawn* for FE), which had the leadership roles (as also expected in the transnational coalition literature, see e.g. Bandy & Smith 2005). Yet, their roles were very different. *GI France*, and later also *GI Austria* and, to a lesser extent, *GI Germany*, directly diffused their worldviews, groupuscular features, and protest repertoires abroad at various forms of meetings, thereby ensuring European GI homogeneity in terms of worldview, framing, mobilization skills, and tactics. The educational focus relates to their embeddedness in the French and German New Right scenes³⁰³. The GI leadership has thus ensured the coalition’s survival since 2012, based on top-down hierarchical and quasi-militaristic management, (initial) diffusion of GI material, fostering of strong human and organizational resources, and rather frequent transnational communication, ensuring the ‘franchising’ of the ‘corporate identity’ (Eckes 2016). Moreover, to ensure conformity and abeyance of the law, the GI leaders monitor the other GI groups

³⁰³ Especially the leaders of *The Identitarians* (ex-*Identitarian Bloc*) and the German New Right actors, Götz Kubitschek and Martin Lichtmesz, have been crucial for the GI activists in terms of teaching the required skills for mobilization.

to ensure European adherence to the ‘party-line,’³⁰⁴ in order to both prevent persecution and to appear ‘respectable’. The GI groups’ resulting similar organization forms, worldviews, and joint activities make them appear as a coherent mobilization, even though it can be speculated exactly how close the individual activists’ transnational ties are, something that requires further investigation. Yet, one *can* say that the national groups unite around the same protest tactics and media communication strategies at their domestic levels, in this way Europeanizing the mobilization form and constructing a longer-term, substantive *ideological* alliance. The annual ‘Summer University’ and transnational GI-demonstration ensure conformity and maintain the coalition’s transnational scope, both in terms of collective action and identity, together with processions in remembrance of European battles against Muslim Ottoman ‘invaders’.

Conversely, when the European *PEGIDA* offshoots started mobilizing, *PEGIDA Germany’s* leader, Bachmann, initially tried to enforce their adherence to *PEGIDA Germany’s* framework and leadership. Yet, this did not materialize, most likely due to the quick diffusion of the *PEGIDA* blueprint, which left no time to prepare a transnational set-up akin to that of GI. *PEGIDA Germany* was thus not involved in the offshoots’ management from the start, inferring that it could not exercise any kind of control over the groups’ actions. Aside from a few transnational *PEGIDA* meetings, there was thus no similar diffusion of strategies and mobilization forms as by the GI groups, leading the *PEGIDA* network to ally on a much looser basis,³⁰⁵ solely united around a strong opposition to Islam and the establishment and the use of the same protest repertoire.

The *Fortress Europe* coalition had a similar problem. Unlike GI, FE consisted of heterogeneous organization types with varied worldviews (especially about Russia) and mobilization aims, just as particularly the parties’ ideational basis for transnationalization had a much more nation-centric foundation. Due to these differences, the FE leaders solely aspired to set up a loose transnational solidarity *network* of anti-Islam and -EU organizations (Interview with Wagensveld 2017). They thus formed it on a very informal basis, without frequent contact and activities, nor ambitions to align the participants’ worldviews, mobilization strategies, organizational set-ups, nor conduct. Instead, FE was an *instrumental* coalition, targeting the European decision-makers. Despite the hope by some of its members that it “would be able to spur a kind of European coordination” (Interview with

³⁰⁴ Consider for example the revelation in 2019 that *GI UK & Ireland* had hosted a meeting with an anti-Semitic speaker. This later led to the exclusion of the British group from the entire GI-coalition by Sellner (Townsend 2019).

³⁰⁵ Albeit, there were some notable, and mainly geographically based, exceptions (e.g. *PEGIDA Germany* with *PEGIDA Austria* and *PEGIDA Netherlands* with *PEGIDA Vlaanderen*).

Riposte Laïque 2018), FE dissolved after a few months of activity, falling victim to the persisting far right problem of internal splits and strategic divergences.

The thesis thus identified two important factors for a transnational far right coalition's maintenance and survival, including the members' mobilization at the domestic levels, namely the roles of skilled coalition leadership and the pooling of cultural resources, as the two coalitions' adverse transnational resource exchanges affected their mobilization. The FE groups largely did not share relational resources in terms of "resource and knowledge exchange" (Rucht as cited in Caiani & Graziano 2018: 1050), due to the lacking commitment and/or low resources of the members, inferring that the FE members never established strong inter-group ties. Conversely, the GI groups' continued skill development focus inferred an "increase" in "their effectiveness" (Ibid: 1050). Hence, the GI groups were more capable at exploiting their domestic and European opportunities, due to the pooling of cognitive and symbolic resources, as exemplified by their diffusion of protest tactics.

FE was thus a short-term event coalition, comparable to coalitions such as *Cities Against Islamization* from 2008, which also was a short-term coalition consisting of a mix of parties and extra-parliamentary groups, uniting around the fear of 'Islamization' (see e.g. Krake 2008). Yet, as demonstrated, FE's short lifespan was more due to organizational problems than lacking POS/DOS. The example of *Fortress Europe* thus displays a more worrying trend, namely (certain) far right actors' ability to bridge all other ideological disagreements in their joint battle against Islam and third-country immigration. This indicates the strong mobilization potential for far right anti-Islam groups, which, despite their fractured compositions, can coordinate transnationally to both counter Islam and reclaim the cultural hegemony from the liberal left, as observed in the GI and FE groups' shared collective identity frames.

EUROPEANIZATION OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES

Both the extra-parliamentary FE and GI groups constructed joint collective identity frames around the perceived need to 'protect Europe and its civilization' against both the external, mainly Muslim, 'other,' and the internal, consisting of the left wing and mainstream establishment. Both the *PEGIDA* and GI groups voiced the European collective identity from the outset of their transnational mobilization, inferring that it did not develop via the Europeanization of networks, but it already formed part of their worldview, as also explained above in relation to Guiraudon's (2011) question. Thus, it was not the EU policy objections that aligned their collective identities, but rather their ideological bases in New Right 'Europeanism' (GI) and the anti-Islam groups' 'civilizational' focus (FE). Hence, the 'refugee crisis' was not as such the catalyst for this identity construction – an important fact to underline.

Heavily relying on military jargon and symbolism, the GI groups constructed, and continue fostering, European identity frames around a heroic ‘we’ that ‘defends’ the European ‘community of destiny’ against Islam(ization). The extra-parliamentary FE actors (together with the German-speaking GI groups) instead mainly construct their identity around victimhood frames, voicing the sensed bravery of daring to speak up about the evident problems, despite this act being *politically incorrect* and leading to suppression. They thus express the sentiment that ‘we protest because nobody else dares to,’ a powerful frame during a time of societal and media polarization, like during the ‘refugee crisis’. Hence, both coalitions highlight their heroism in the face of both external and internal opposition. The ‘defense’ frames thus accentuate the ‘us’ and ‘them’ sentiments, as they underline that ‘we’ need to keep the foreign ‘them’ out of Europe by any means possible, while the domestic ‘them’ must start opening their eyes to the dangers of Islam and third-country immigration, as ‘our’ existence is at stake. The battle frames similarly emphasize the perceived urgency to fight back, as otherwise, ‘they’ will conquer the continent.

While all the far right groups refer to a shared belonging to an *European* civilization, they still maintain their *national* and/or *regional* adherence as the most crucial aspect of their identities, either as part of the GI groups’ three-tiered identity construction, or the FE extra-parliamentary groups’ notions of ‘patriotism’. Yet, all groups struggle to define both their national singularities, and especially the European. These instead become more *implied* constructions with continuous references to a shared European culture and history. Hence, the hierarchical ethnic identity construction permits this otherwise paradoxical Europeanization of the ‘us,’ as it allows the national groups to keep their focus on the domestic levels. The transnationalization of the efforts instead becomes a matter of uniting the national forces in the defense of the continent with the ultimate goal of defending the nation-states. The self-identification as ‘patriotic Europeans’ by groups from both coalitions thus infers that they align themselves with fellow Europeans, albeit still holding their own nationality above all else.

10.3. TOPICS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

BRIDGING OF THE WESTERN AND EASTERN EUROPEAN FAR RIGHT

Related to the aspect of a shared European collective identity, it was also a partial aim to explore the potential bridging of the Western and Eastern European far right, as this has not received much scholarly attention so far. There has been sporadic cooperation between Eastern and Western European extreme right groups in the past (see e.g. Mareš 2006). Yet, these stronger (and in GI’s case, enduring) cross-border relations are relatively new developments (see e.g. Berntzen 2018). The ‘refugee crisis’ played a big role in this ‘bridging’. *PEGIDA Germany* began cooperating with Eastern European actors in the autumn of 2015, and the FE-coalition consisted of groups from both Western and Eastern Europe. Festerling and the Czech groups developed a rather close relationship (see e.g. Prokupkova 2018b), just as she decided to work for a group

of Bulgarian border vigilantes in 2017. Moreover, the *Northern League* (now *The League*) and *EKRE* maintained the contact after FE's dissolution, and *EKRE* joined *The League's* newly created *Identity and Democracy* political group in the European Parliament in 2019, together with the Czech *SPD* party, led by Okamura. For GI, *GI Czech Republic* became a GI member in 2013, while *GI Slovenia* and *GI Hungary* followed in 2015 and 2016 respectively. *GI Slovenia* co-organized protests with *GI Italy* and *GI Austria* from 2015 onwards, just as the Hungarian group increasingly gained coalition prominence, especially in the autumn of 2017.

The onset of the 'refugee crisis' can thus to some extent be seen as a determining factor in terms of 'bridging' the two far right parts of Europe, also ideologically, as the Eastern European groups' anti-Islam frames draw on those developed by Western European (and US) 'movement intellectuals'. The 'crisis' thus provided the actors with common internal (Merkel and the EU) and external ((Muslim) refugees) enemies around which they could unite and create shared collective action frames cross-continently. Furthermore, the Visegrad countries' role as main opposition to the infringing and 'dictatorial' EU, and the Western European political leaders' perceived imposition on the Visegrad countries' sovereign rights, gave a somewhat 'unusual' heroic role to the Eastern part of Europe.

In the past, the WWII history and vindications has inhibited the bridging of the two 'scenes', especially regarding the role of Germany. Yet, the GI and FE actors saw the Islamic threat as too critical to uphold old strives. However, *other* domestic far right groups voiced dismay about the alignment with historical enemies. In Poland, for example, an extreme right group threatened *PEGIDA Poland* with repercussions, if it rallied on February 6, 2016 (DNN 2016). Conversely, the GI groups easily brush over the Eastern and Western European contextual and historical divergences. In fact, both *GI Germany* and *GI Austria* assisted in establishing the Eastern European groups' organizational set-up and links to the other GI groups. Their role is both due to the geographical position of the two countries, but it is also more *symbolic*, as it underlines the ability and *necessity* to forget the old fights and instead unite as 'brothers in arms'. In other words, "Due to the finding of a „common enemy,” and with the prospect of mutual help and inspiration, they could easily overcome their mutual antipathy and unite for the common joint fight" (Czech Ministry Report 2016: 44).

Nevertheless, the Western European GI groups are hesitant to acknowledge the Eastern European groups as full GI members, due to their respectability concerns. In fact, in both transnational coalitions, the Eastern European members use a more 'extreme' discourse, a common distinction between the Western and Eastern European far right (see e.g. Pytlas 2018; Mudde 2004). This makes it hard to 'trust' that the other groups' behaviour aligns with the overall coalition rules. Here, the language differences also become crucial, as demonstrated by the *Dawn* representative's worry about the German actors' statements, as he did not understand the language.

Hence, there are indications of both a continent-wide far right alignment, but also continued obstacles for closer pan-European far right relations. There is, however, still need for further investigation into the cooperative links between the Western and Eastern European far right, in order to uncover more substantial findings about the transferability of far right frames and the networking between Eastern and Western European far right groups.

COALITION LEADERS: ‘EUROPEANIZED’ MOVEMENT ENTREPRENEURS?

The thesis underlined the importance of the coalition *leadership* for the sustainment of a transnational coalition (see also Staggenborg 2013). *Generation Identity* relied on the management skills of the French and Austrian GI leaders, particularly Cattin and Robert (*The Identitarians*), and Sellner (from *GI Austria*). These movement entrepreneurs played a decisive role in terms of distributing GI material, setting up the other national GI groups, and ensuring the abidance to the same GI ruleset. Conversely, none of the FE leaders had the necessary skills and experience to maintain a transnational coalition. The loose network structures of both the European *PEGIDA* network and the FE-coalition were thus the partial reasons for their short temporalities, as there were no strong inter-group ties forged.

Yet, interestingly, some of both the GI and FE leaders gradually became ‘Europeanized’ through their activities, as they travelled extensively across the continent, both to join other groups’ protests and to disseminate information and expertise abroad. In FE, Festerling and Wagenveld travelled across Europe to uphold the coalition and to visit some of the key sites of the ‘refugee crisis,’ and report back home and to the FE coalition about their experiences (see e.g. Festerling 2016g). Yet, their lacking financial resources hindered these transnationalization endeavours’ continuation. Similarly, *GI Austria’s* Martin Sellner quickly became a main European GI coordinator, partly due to his language skills. He travelled across Europe as a GI representative, speaking at conferences and protests and visiting GI groups abroad, assisting them in setting up their organizations. He also has a strong online presence, in this way linking the online with the offline sphere. Tommy Robinson also played a critical role for both the FE-coalition, but in fact also the extra-parliamentary anti-Islam scene as a whole. He played a key part in creating FE, yet, never took on a leadership position. Instead, he mobilized on his own causes, travelling around Europe to network with far right activists, and reporting for far right media outlets. In this way, he networked more broadly with actors from the scene.

As Trilling (2018) states about Tommy Robinson, these figureheads form part of a new ‘breed’ of far right ‘entrepreneurial activists’. These transnational movement leaders count many other far right activists from both Europe and the U.S. (such as e.g. Richard B. Spencer (American alt-right) and more recently, Steve Bannon and his attempt to set up *The Movement* (see e.g. de la Baume & Sciorilli Borrelli 2019). These

actors have been apt at bridging the on- and offline transnational mobilization spheres and their endeavours require further scholarly exploration. It would be relevant to explore how they use these networking activities and their prominence on the far right to further their aims, plus how actors across the far right scene receive their advances.

EUROPEANIZATION OF THE FAR RIGHT (ONLINE) PUBLIC SPHERE?

Many European far right actors network transnationally, especially around opposition to Islam and its adherents. As Rosenberger and Hadj-Abdou argue, “Islamophobia is now used as a sort of (white) European flag: it creates an opportunity for like-minded parties [and extra-parliamentary actors] to cooperate across state boundaries, and to ‘discuss’ the existence of some core European values within a common European space” (as cited in Mammonne et al 2013: 6). This cooperation is exemplified by the overlapping protest participations by the GI and *PEGIDA* groups, plus the *PEGIDA* group leaders’ admiration for *Generation Identity*’s youthful expression forms and types of actions³⁰⁶, showing the thin borders between the different groups. In fact, GI draw support from international far right actors as well, including from the U.S. and Russia, thus widening the transnationalization scope. These links still need further investigation, especially the Russian connections, due to Russia’s increased influences on the European far right parties and extra-parliamentary groups (see e.g. Political Capital Institute 2014).

During the interview, *For Freedom*’s spokesperson revealed that she was in contact with *Breitbart*, *Gates of Vienna*, *Vlad Tepes Blog*, and similar actors with whom she “knowledge-share[s] all the time,” just as she translates video subtitles and articles for the pages (Interview with *For Freedom* 2017). Hence, much of the group’s transnational networking takes place online. In fact, as a growing literature illustrates, the interlinkages and networking in the online sphere have been continuously expanding (see e.g. Berntzen 2018; Caiani & Parenti 2013), just as the actors’ websites and social media accounts are crucial for their mobilization, due to the recruitment potential.

The far rights’ strong reliance on the blogosphere, social media, and other online channels infers that frames, ideas, and images cross borders much more easily, together with negative news stories about immigrants, Muslims, or the elites, thereby influencing the European public sphere (see also Denes 2012). Such sites often become echo chambers for the readers, who can access the pages with ease, due to the low thresholds and risks involved, unlike participation in far right street mobilization.

³⁰⁶ During the interviews, for instance, both the representatives from Sweden, Denmark, France, and the Netherlands highlighted the refreshing nature of *Generation Identity*. *For Freedom*’s spokesperson stated that she found it good they had set up a group in Denmark as it is important to get the youth involved, as it is them who “have to inherit the earth,” while *For Freedom* has struggled to mobilize the youth (Interview with *For Freedom* 2017).

This makes it increasingly relevant to explore the forms of *online* and *horizontal* Europeanization occurring, i.e. the “communicative linkages between different European countries” (Koopmans & Erbe as cited in Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015: 40), especially in terms of (alternative) news dissemination and other types of far right exchanges, and the extent to which it involves *exclusionary Europeanism* (Denes 2012; Risse 2018).

The German and Austrian GI-branches are good examples related to this, as they very actively attempt to influence the ‘hearts and minds’ online. For one, they have published an ‘online handbook’ (‘Informationskrieg-Manual’) in 2017 that draws on many of the American alt-right’s strategies, like the ‘red-pilling’ of potential supporters³⁰⁷ (Köhler & Ebner 2018). Activists from the two groups, including Sellner, also joined a German ‘keyboard warrior’ network, *Reconquista Germanica*, which trolled political opponents and ethnic minorities (see e.g. Gensing 2018). Considering e.g. the revelations about Russia’s influence on European elections, such trolling networks might also exist at the transnational European level, inferring the need to understand the dynamics of such networks better.

Moreover, due to the evidenced strong role of the online sphere for far right mobilization, we also need to learn more about the effects of the blocking of e.g. far right Facebook pages and accounts. It could for instance be highly relevant to analyse how the far right actors react to such suppressive actions. For instance, one could investigate how the GI network manoeuvred after Facebook closed their accounts, just as happened for the *PEGIDA* Orga-team and a number of English far right sites, including that of Tommy Robinson.

Aside from *PEGIDA Germany*, none of the GI or FE extra-parliamentary groups amassed much public support, at least not for their rallies, but especially their online presence can pose a threat to the Union’s cohesion, combined with the general rise of protectionist measures by the various governments. Currently, with the public and political focus on climate change, it appears as if the ‘nationalist moment’ largely has lost momentum, yet, the far right transnational structures have been moulded, ready to re-form, when and if a new European crisis emerges.

³⁰⁷ In reference to the pill consumed by Neo, the lead character in *The Matrix*, where after he saw the world as it *really* looks.

CHAPTER 11. LITERATURE LIST

REFERENCES TO FACEBOOK-POSTS: As all of the Generation Identity Facebook-pages were closed down in June 2018, their links no longer work. If one wishes to see the collected datasets, please consult the author.

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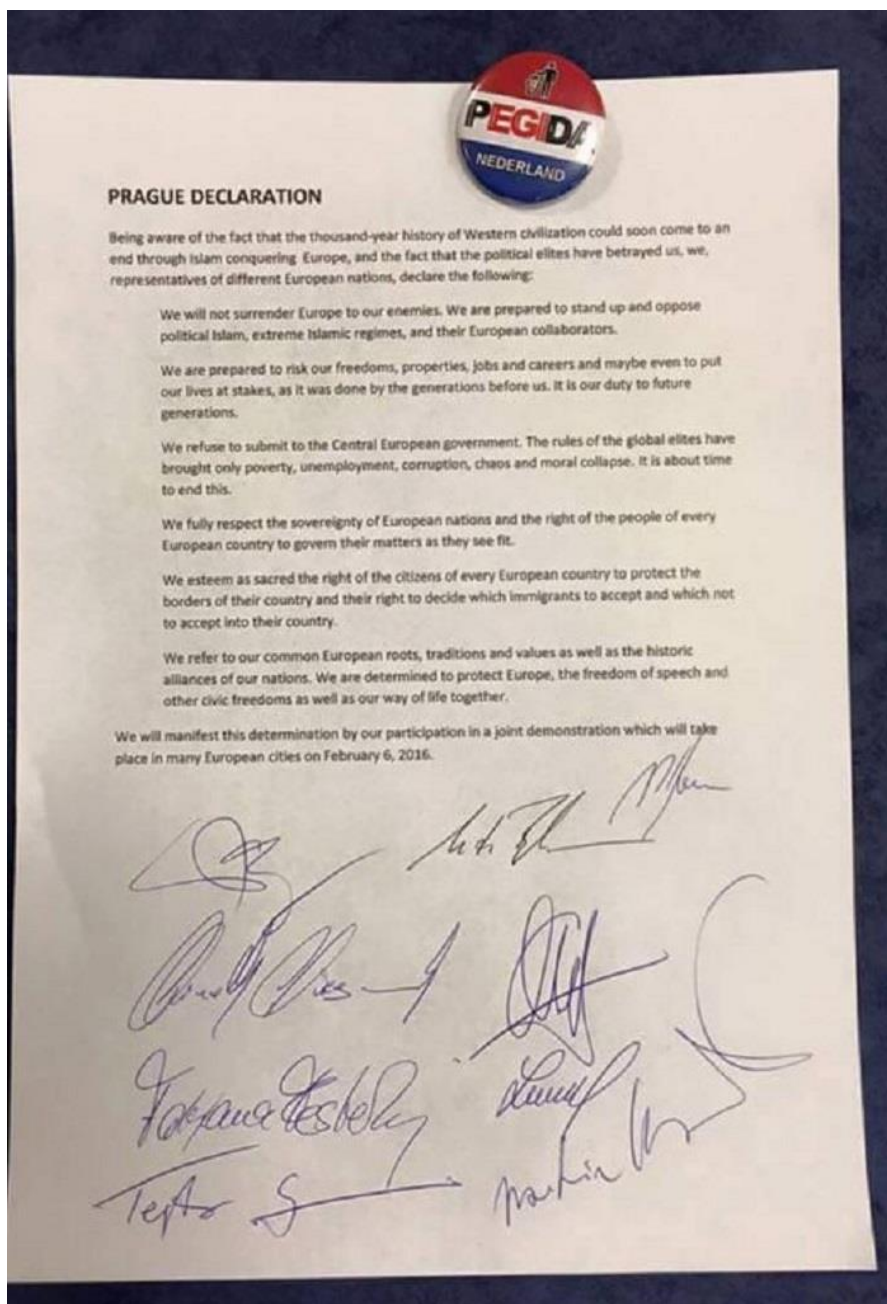
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Appendix A. Prague Declaration



Wording of the Document

Being aware of the fact that the thousand-year history of Western civilization could soon come to an end through Islam conquering Europe, and the fact that the political elites have betrayed us, we, representatives of different European nations, declare the following:

We will not surrender Europe to our enemies. We are prepared to stand up and oppose political Islam, extreme Islamic regimes, and their European collaborators.

We are prepared to risk our freedoms, properties, jobs and careers, and maybe even to put our lives at stakes, as it was done by the generations before us. It is our duty to future generations.

We refuse to submit to the Central European government. The rules of the global elites have brought only poverty, unemployment, corruption, chaos and moral collapse. It is about time to end this.

We fully respect the sovereignty of European nations and the right of the people of every European country to govern their matters as they see fit.

We esteem as sacred the right of the citizens of every European country to protect the borders of their country and their right to decide which immigrants to accept and which not to accept into their country.

We refer to our common European roots, traditions and values as well as the historic alliances of our nations. We are determined to protect Europe, the freedom of speech and other civic freedoms as well as our way to life together.

We will manifest this determination by our participation in a joint demonstration which will take place in many European cities on February 6, 2016.

Appendix B. Protest Event Codebook

What constitutes a 'European' event, issue or participant, and how should this be distinguished from other forms of cross-border relations? In this research, I distinguish between the different scopes of the issues, targets, participants, and events based on the works by Imig and Tarrow (2001a), Bourne and Chatzopoulou 2015, and della Porta and Caiani (2009).

Explaining the Terms for the Protest Event Coding

It is a rather difficult task to determine the exact concepts and contents of the different coding categories, in order to find the best ways to conceptualize 'Collective action Europeanization'. This task is further aggravated by the fact that scholars employ different terms for the various coding categories (see e.g. Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015; Hutter 2014a; Caiani & Graziano 2018; della Porta & Caiani 2009; Uba & Ugla 2011).

This study employs the terms 'national' and 'European' (participants from various EU MS/issue with a Europe-wide span) in order to establish the four various 'scopes'. Moreover, for the GI groups, a 'local' scope is also included for the 'participants,' due to the many local GI groups, just as the category 'cross-border' (groups and actors from neighbouring countries) is added to both coalitions' participant scopes. The 'cross-border' category was included, as it is the aim to explore the geographical scope of the cooperation between the groups, i.e. the distances between those groups that take part in each other's demonstrations. Moreover, as I did not expect to find many activities at the supranational EU-level, I did not initially establish any coding categories for such instances.

In terms of the four scopes, the following deliberations are behind the coding:

Scope of Issues

The PEA codes an issue scope as 'domestic,' if it can be "specifically linked to a domestic decision or a domestic political arena," 'European' if it relates to the European or EU political arena, or a "combination of both," if both levels are involved (Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015: 50). Even though Hutter (2014a) distinguishes between 'local,' 'domestic,' and 'transnational' issue scopes, his conceptualization is still rather similar. He exemplifies it by looking at migration policies, stating that issues related to the entry of foreigners to a country are 'transnational' problems (i.e. 'European'), while issues related to the *integration* of the immigrants are 'domestic' in scope (Hutter 2014a), including, for example, the housing of refugees. This implies that if a demonstration, for instance, both involves demands around the immi- and integration of third country immigrants and refugees, it involves a combination of European and national issue scopes.

Scope of Targets

The target can be very difficult to discern, as this is not always clear from the gathered data. The study employs Bourne & Chatzopoulou's conceptualization, and codes it according to which actor one can discern as being "either implicitly or explicitly the subject of contentious action" (Bourne & Chatzopoulou 2015: 48). Thus, it can both involve decision-making institutions or actors, who are "held responsible for implementing" the demand (Ibid.). This could for instance involve calls for the national government to reinstate domestic border controls. Yet, the protests can also be directed at an actor or group of people, in the form of "criticism or support" (Ibid.). The prior can for instance involve adherents of Islam, who are criticized for their religious practices (e.g. treatment of women), while an example of the latter could be the support to the Visegrad leaders during the 'refugee crisis'.

Scope of Participants

Unlike certain studies, which consider the composition of the 'hosting actors,' i.e. "the organizational extension of the organization and/or institution", and whether it is a national, transnational or supranational actor carrying out the event (see e.g. Caiani & Graziano 2018), this study instead codes the *participating* groups and organizations, i.e. *besides* from the hosting organization. This involves the categories of 'local' (only for the GI groups, as it was specified by some of the actions that they were carried out by a local group), 'national', 'cross-border,' and 'European'.

Hence, as an example: if *PEGIDA Germany* hosts a demonstration in Dresden, and it states that *BPI* joined the event, I code the participant scope as 'cross-border'. Moreover, if it is only specified that an actor from abroad came to give a speech at the event, the participant scope is further specified to 'speaker'. The reasons for this decision are numerous. For one, the national groups were known from the outset, due to my research design, so the hosting group would almost exclusively be either local or national. Moreover, as it is also a partial aim to explore far right contention more broadly, I decided to include the 'cross-border' scope, to discover the geographical extent of the protests, i.e. how far actors travel to join protests abroad. The 'European' participant scope instead refers to protests where actors from several European countries participated and/or they came from further afield than the neighbouring country.

Scope of Events

The events were coded as 'transnational' if they included actors from more than one European country, and either was carried out simultaneously in several countries, or involved a joint European protest around an issue related to the EU (see Imig & Tarrow's (2000) conceptualization of 'cooperative transnationalism' and 'collective transnationalism').

Examples:

Scope	Issue	Targets	Participants	Events
Local			Activists from local GI-branch	
National	Issues related to integration, such as Burqa-ban; construction of Mosques; refugee/migrant housing	National and/or local government; political parties; CSOs, etc.	National activists and supporters	Occurring in <i>one</i> domestic setting, and not advertised as a transnational event
Cross-border			From e.g. Denmark and Germany	
European	Issues related to immigration, like EU quota; EU internal or external border securitisation	EU; Other EU member states	E.g. from Denmark, France, and the Czech Republic	Occurring in one domestic setting with transnational participation, and/or simultaneously protests in numerous countries

Codebook

The protest event data was inserted into two distinct datasets in Excel, one for the FE groups and one for the GI groups, and these were later exported to SPSS. The following information was retrieved about each event:

1. **Date:** full date (format: d.m.year)
2. **Day:** day of the month (1-31)
3. **Month:** Month of the year (1-12)
4. **Quarter:** Quarter of the year (1-4)
5. **Semester:** Semester of the year (1-2)
6. **Year:** Year (2012-2017)

Either:

- 7. GI Group:** Main national GI group involved/organizing the event (Joint actions with other national GI groups are coded according to the place where it was held, i.e. if *GI France* and *GI Italy* co-organized an event, it is coded as ‘GI France’ if held in France and vice versa)
1. GI France (including events by GI France and Bloc Identitaire/Les Identitaires)
 2. GI Austria
 3. GI Germany
 4. GI Italy
 5. GI Czech Republic
 6. GI Slovenia
 7. GI Hungary
 8. GI Poland
 9. GI UK & Ireland
 10. GI Switzerland
 11. GI Denmark
 12. GI Europe (3 or more GI groups taking part – Including ‘Defend Europe’ mission)

Or:**7. Fortress Europe Extra-Parliamentary Group:**

1. PEGIDA Germany
2. PEGIDA Austria
3. PEGIDA DK
4. For Freedom
5. PEGIDA Netherlands
6. PEGIDA UK
7. IVČRN
8. Blok Against Islam
9. Blok Against Islamization
10. NGO ISIS
11. Festerling
12. Festerling and Wagenveld
13. Fortress Europe (if entire coalition involved)

8. Participants (written notes)

(Mentions of speakers, other (far right) actors taking part, local GI group involved, etc.)

9. Number of participants (quantitative) (if specified)

1. If numbers of GI/FE activists mentioned, write figure
2. If demonstration figures mentioned, write figure (and source)

10. Number of participants (qualitative) (if specified or according to protest tactic)

1. Few (1-10 participants) (incl. Banner-drops, press releases, etc.)
2. Moderate (10-50 participants)
3. Small demonstration (50-250 participants)
4. Moderate demonstration (250-1000)
5. Big demonstration (1000+)

11. Main organizer (if not GI/FE groups) (Paris Fierté and Lugdunum Suum V are coded as GI events)

1. **Other far right or anti-Islam/immigration group/organization**
2. **Far right party**
3. **Other group or person, not far right or explicitly anti-immigration** (often other civil societal organizations or political parties)
4. **Left-wing group/CSO/NGO/party– immigration/asylum policy related** (GI or FE group making counter-protest)
5. **Muslim and/or Turkish association/actor (e.g. imam)** (GI or FE group making counter-protest)
6. **Left-wing group/CSO/NGO/party– gender/LGBT related** (GI or FE group making counter-protest)
7. **Pro-traditional family associations** (incl. ‘Demo für Alle’, Manif pour tous, etcetera)
8. **Local/national government** (counter-protests such as anti-Merkel protests, asylum information evenings)
9. **Unspecified, ‘other’**

12. City of protest event (If more than one city involved, all cities mentioned)**13. Country of protest event** (If no cities mentioned, write only country (e.g. petitions/campaign initiations/press releases)**14. Activity explained** (Text accounting for event, as detailed as possible)**15. Type of event**

1. **Instructive** (including teaching, seminars, training, conferences, etc.)
2. **Organizational**
3. **Solidarity action**
4. **Protest event**

16. Event specified

For ‘Instructive’ event:

1. Seminar/Meeting (1-5 hours, with ideological/strategical contents)
2. National assembly
3. Conference (1-3 day event)
4. Summer University (GI)
5. Camp (several days)

6. Book fair
7. Research trips (abroad) (e.g. to ghettos, refugee camps, EU external borders, etc.)
8. Social event (incl. networking)

For **‘Organizational’** event:

1. New group created
2. New leader
3. Merger of groups (into new formation)
4. Running for elections
5. Indictment for hate-speech/hate-crime
6. Party/Non-inst. Alliance (discursive sign of approval from party/formal alliance)
7. End of cooperation (of alliance, party, etc.)
8. Expulsion of member(s)

For **‘Solidarity action’**:

1. Food collection
2. Donation of food, clothes, gifts to less fortunate
3. Assisting homeless people with warm clothes and food

For **‘Protest event’** type:

1. Conventional
2. Demonstrative
3. Confrontational
4. Violent

17. Protest event tactics further specified

‘Conventional’ tactics:

1. Open letter
2. Press release
3. Press conference
4. Lobbyism
5. Campaign

‘Demonstrative’ tactics:

1. Petition/signature collection
2. Launching of referendum
3. Collecting signatures for referendum
4. Handing over signatures for referendum/petition
5. Video message
6. Demonstration
7. Demonstration on border
8. Picketing
9. Procession
10. Commemorative march (for historical event)

11. Solidarity rally (actions to support activists or actors accused of wrongdoing, e.g. '4 of Poitiers' or Visegrad countries vs. the EU)
12. Vigil (e.g. after terrorist attacks)
13. Flash mob
14. Street theatre
15. Silent protest (e.g. at pro-asylum event)
16. Banner-drop
17. Christian symbol restoration
18. Dressing up statues
19. Fake blood (in water, smoke)
20. Putting up crosses
21. Putting up signs
22. Sign-change (e.g. city-signs)
23. Stickers on walls
24. Writing (on floor, on wall)
25. 'Other' similar types of symbolic actions

'Confrontational' protest tactics:

1. Counter-protest
2. Illegal demonstration (non-violent)
3. Blockade (border, ship, entrance to building, railway, road)
4. Occupation (building, street, ship, stage, etc.)
5. Objects in front of building
6. Disruption/disturbance (of meeting, play, etc.)
7. Hard-bass
8. Protest camp
9. Patrolling/Security (to protect autochthonous population)

'Violent' protest tactics:

1. Flag desecration

- 18. 'Issue' of the protest event** (For this variable, up to two different issues could be chosen in two separate variables, to make it possible to code protest events addressing multiple issues. The most encompassing categorization was chosen first). The issues were first coded into more specific categories (e.g. 'Great replacement' (1d below) or 'Anti-LGBT' (4b)), as they emerged from the data set. This list of categories was then conglomerated into 9 overarching key issues (1-9 below). The initial list were then listed as the sub-categories of each key issue. As an example 'Secure borders' (2c) was part of the initial issues to emerge, and as this frame mainly was voiced in relation to opposition against the reception of refugees and asylum seekers, it was later placed as part of the category 'Anti-refugee/asylum (policy)'.

Alternatives:

1. Anti-immigration

- a) Anti-immigration
- b) Anti-illegal immigration
- c) Anti-immigrant crime
- d) Great replacement (Explicit statement of 'großer Austausch' etc. + becoming 'minority' at home)
- e) Protection of women
- f) Anti-multiculturalism
- g) Anti-Roma

2. Anti-refugee/asylum (policy)

- a) Anti-refugee/asylum policy
- b) Anti-refugee quotas
- c) Secure borders
- d) Against asylum/refugee/migrant centre/camp
- e) Against human trafficking
- f) Against pro-refugee NGOs

3. Anti-Islam(ization)

- a. Anti-Islam (historical references to warriors having fought against Ottomans, aligning Islamic symbols, such as mosques, with e.g. violence, or when Islam is targeted as a religion as such)
- b. Anti-Islamisation (Show incomparability of Islam and European culture - If Islamisation is specified; against mosque-building; burka-clad women)
- c. Protection of Muslim women
- d. Anti-terrorism/radicalism
- e. Anti-Turkey (Incl. protests against 'Turkish' immigrants)

4. Gender-related issues

- a. Traditional family values
- b. Anti-LGBT
- c. Anti-gender ideology

5. Identity preservation

- a. Commemorating historical events (wars, death of person (e.g. Fortuyn), etc.)
- b. (Preservation of) local identity
- c. (Preservation of) national identity
- d. (Preservation of) European identity
- e. (Preservation of) identity
- f. Anti-EU
- g. Historical question
- h. Minority issues (e.g. helping Serbian schools)
- i. Anti-national racism
- j. Nature preservation

6. Opposing suppression

- a. State Repression
- b. Anti-media (Media misrepresenting group and the far right)
- c. Anti-political correctness
- d. Defense of freedom of speech
- e. Pro-V4
- f. Anti-censorship
- g. Anti-surveillance

7. Pro/Vs political actor

- a. Anti-government
- b. Anti-national politician
- c. Anti-left-wing (party)
- d. Anti-left-wing violence
- e. Anti-liberal values
- f. Anti-cultural Marxism
- g. Anti-EU
- h. Anti-Erdoğan
- i. Anti-US
- j. Pro-national government
- k. Pro-Trump

8. Welfare protectionism

- a. Social assistance
- b. Our own people first
- c. Ethnic solidarity

9. Other

- a. Democracy question
- b. Promotion of group (e.g. writing name on banner)
- c. Animal welfare
- d. European solidarity
- e. Anti-consumerism
- f. Police force
- g. Economic policy

- 19. Participant Scope:** Actors participating
1. **Local** (If it is specified that only local activists/supporters took part)
 2. **National** (for demonstrations, etcetera, where the participant composition is not specified further)
 3. **Cross-border** (Activists from neighbouring GI/FE national groups (e.g. *GI Germany* and *GI Austria*)
 4. **European** (Activists from several (3+) European countries (including if activists not part of a GI or FE group)
 5. **International** (Participation by actors from other parts of world than Europe)
- 20. Issue Scope:** (Claim/frame's scope in terms of policy perspective)
1. **National** (e.g. asylum policy, prohibition of Muslim practices (e.g. against mosque/minaret construction, female headwear, halal meat, etc.), housing of refugees, specific ethnic group in country (like Algerians in France), de-radicalization, protests against local or national government/political actor/authorities, etc.)
 2. **European** (e.g. third-country immigration, internal and external EU border security, terrorism, refugee quotas, solidarity for activists/citizens abroad, actions against the EU and Turkey etc.)
- 21. Target scope** (actor, group, decision-making body, or institution addressed in the protest event) (In some cases, this is determined on the basis of the *place* of the protest event (e.g. in front of national government then national government coded)
1. **National government** (incl. all levels – local (mayors, prefects), regional, federal, state and legal authorities, also including explicit targeting of the President/leader of the country – e.g. Hollande, Merkel, etc., and national ministers)
 2. **National politician** (e.g. candidate in elections, such as van der Bellen in Austria)
 3. **European governments**
 4. **Other MS' government**
 5. **EU**
 6. **Other** (Left-wing actors, Pro-refugee/migrant NGOs, left-wing parties/politicians, universities, Turkish association, Turkish government, national train service, trade unions, national business, multi-national business, pro-LGBT actor, feminists, poor people, proponents of EU, church, media, victims of natural disasters, animals, USA, other)
 7. **Migrants/refugees/Muslims**
 8. **Far right/'Us'**
 9. **Public**

Appendix C. German, French, Dutch, and Czech Contexts 2015-2017

Each of the short sections below first considers the role of, and political and discursive opportunities for, far right extra-parliamentary actors in the respective country, including the country's experience with third-country immigration, and then it outlines the 2015-2017 political and societal developments in relation to the 'refugee crisis'.

Germany: Far Right Repression, but Open DOS during 'Refugee Crisis'

Germany's history with Nazism implies that the German mainstream has a constrained relationship to the far right, and it broadly condemns and stigmatizes the expression of such political worldviews (Kersten as cited in Caiani et al. 2012). The mainstream parties also refuse to cooperate with the far right in parliament, and have thus imposed a *cordon sanitaire*. Moreover, the German government monitors extreme right organizations through the *Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution* ('*Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz*'). The stringent surveillance and suppression of the far right, together with the mainstream's rejection of its claims, means that the POS are nearly closed for this type of extra-parliamentary actor (see e.g. Caiani et al. 2012; Rucht 2018; Caiani & Parenti 2013). Scholars argue that it is due to the closed political opportunities that the German far right has made use of comparatively violent expression forms. Beginning in the early 1990s, the country experienced, for instance, several extreme right attacks on refugees and migrants (see e.g. Rucht 2018).

Yet, the previous division of Germany into an allied-led Western and a Communist Eastern German part (BRD and GDR respectively), resulted in the two sides of the country developing rather differently and demonstrating substantial differences on various accounts. Due to the East's communist history, there are several "political-cultural lines of conflict," for instance, between the two parts of the country, together with a sentiment in Eastern Germany of being economically and socially disadvantaged (Vorländer et al. 2018: 169). This also partly explains why the populations of the two geographical entities consider immigration and Islam very differently, the most negative sentiments being expressed in Eastern Germany (Ibid; see also Kober 2017).

With regards to anti-Islam mobilization, similarly as elsewhere in Europe and the U.S., single-issue anti-Islam groups started appearing in Germany in the mid-2000s (Rucht 2018; see also Berntzen 2018a). Moreover, in the immediate years leading up to the 'refugee crisis', Germany witnessed a growing tide of anti-systemic critique, which mainly evolved around the German immigration policy (Vorländer et al. 2018).

For one, in 2010, the *SPD*-member (and thus mainstream-politician) Thilo Sarrazin published the book *Germany Abolishes Itself* (*‘Deutschland schafft sich ab’*), which heavily criticizes the German migration policy since World War II. The book led to much debate, and together with other factors, such as the German recuperation from the economic crisis, it thus aided in opening the discursive opportunities for systemic critique (see e.g. Bader 2018). This became very evident in the mid-2010s, where the populist far right party *Alternative for Germany* entered the German political scene. It quickly rose electorally, particularly after it turned its focus towards anti-immigration in 2015, and Germany now has the first far right party represented in parliament since the 1950s (Minkenberg 2018). Earlier, the 5% electoral threshold ensured that parties such as *NPD* could not enter the Bundestag. The rise of *AfD* was further aided by its exploitation (or “leveraging”) of the salience of the ‘refugee crisis’ in the media and public debate since 2015 (Berning 2017: 18).

In terms of migration policy, due to its experiences with Nazism, Germany has a very acquiescent policy towards refugees and immigrants, based on moral and ethical frames. This has made Germany one of the biggest European recipients of asylum seekers since the 1950s (Monforte 2014), and the country received many guest workers from Turkey, Spain, and Greece in the 1970s (Ibid.). At the same time, the German migration policy is built up around *jus sanguinis* (i.e. citizenship based on blood relations), somewhat conflicting with the moral ‘open doors’ obligations, and instead suggesting that asylum “became an exceptional right” (Ibid: 19).

The German Political Context in the 2015-2017 Period

During 2014, Germany accepted more than 200,000 asylum seekers, a substantial rise from 2013 (by almost 60%) (Statista 2019b). The rise led to a renewed increase in far right mobilization and violent attacks from 2014 onwards, an occurrence further prodded by the quick rise of *PEGIDA* in Dresden (Rucht 2018). Most of the anti-refugee demonstrations took place in Nord-Rhein Westphalia (Western Germany) and Saxony (Eastern Germany) (for more on the reasons for this, see Rucht 2018; Virchow 2016a)³⁰⁸.

In late-August 2015, Merkel established the German ‘open border’ policy and the therefrom-ensuing (temporary) removal of the Dublin Regulation (Bannas 2015), plus pushed for the implementation of EU-wide refugee quotas. This led to strong condemnation, both from some German mainstream media outlets (see e.g. Schwarz 2015), but also from parts of her own government. Especially *CSU*’s leader, Horst

³⁰⁸ It was expressed, for instance, in *NPD* protests in Brandenburg and Saxony, the *Mahnwachen* or *Monday Demonstrations*, which began in March 2014, the *HoGeSa* (Hooligans against Salafists) demonstrations in 2014 (see Chapter 5), and demonstrations against the accommodation of refugees in Schneeberg and Bautzen in Saxony (Virchow 2016a).

Seehofer, condemned Merkel's decision to permit refugees' entrance to Germany from Hungary (Spiegel 2015c)³⁰⁹, just as the federal states ('Bundesländer') struggled to accommodate the refugees (Wendler 2015). This indicated the beginning of a split in German elite alignments, which the German extra-parliamentary far right actors could attempt to exploit.

Germany reintroduced temporary border-controls on the Austrian border on September 13, due to the strong migratory pressure in the period. Yet, it was only after the sexual assaults in Cologne and other German cities on New Year's Eve 2016 that Merkel and the German government made changes to the open-border position. The assaults were mainly perpetrated by asylum seekers (18 out of 31 accused), and changed the German media reporting about refugees and migrants (Braun-Klöpffer as cited in Consterdine 2018). The German authorities were heavily criticized for the way they handled the situation. For one, the police and media had been very hesitant to reveal anything about the perpetrators' identities, further adding to the public malaise and distrust (Ibid.). Mainstream media also voiced criticism against the authorities, while Seehofer continued his criticism of the Chancellor, for instance by employing the term 'Reign of injustice' ('Herrschaft des Unrechts,' which had connotations to GDR) about her immigration policy (Spiegel 2016a).

During the same period, *Alternative for Germany (AfD)* was slowly beginning to gain prominence on the German political scene, having turned its focus towards anti-immigration after a leadership change in July 2015 (Paterson 2015), and now taking advantage of the salience of the issue (see e.g. Berning 2017). Campaigning against mass immigration and the German government's 'open door' asylum policy, *AfD* obtained strong electoral gains in the March 13, 2016 state elections in Baden-Württemberg, Rhineland-Palatinate, and Saxony-Anhalt, even becoming the second strongest force in the Saxony-Anhalt Landtag (with 24.2% of the votes) (Gathmann & Wittrock 2016). This result indicated a further opening in the discursive opportunities for the extra-parliamentary far right, due to the *AfD*'s focus on anti-immigration and nationalism, these topics remained high on the political agenda.

In July 2016, two terrorist attacks in Southern Germany further increased the salience of Islam as a topic in the media and public opinion (see e.g. Decker 2017). Shortly after the attacks, Merkel presented a 9-point anti-terror plan, and repeated the words "Wir schaffen das," to renewed consternation by the public. In September, in response to the criticism, she said that she would no longer be using the phrase (Meckel & Schmitz 2016). At the same time, Seehofer stated that he would only support her 2017 *CDU* leadership bid if she restricted the intake of refugees (Ibid.), further underlining the elite alignment splits. A few months later, an ISIS terrorist drove a truck into a crowd attending a Christmas market in Berlin, killing 12 people, and thus,

³⁰⁹ In an act of defiance, he even invited Órban to come to the upcoming CSU-meeting to discuss the situation (Spiegel 2015c).

perpetrating the biggest Jihadi terrorist attack on German ground as of yet (Decker 2017).

On September 24, 2017, the *Alternative for Germany (AfD)* became the first nationalist party to enter the German Bundestag since World War II, as the third largest German party (with 12.6% of the votes), and single largest party of opposition. This victory meant that the far right extra-parliamentary actors now had the possibility of forging alliances with the radical right party in the parliament, just as it was likely to mean a more limited support to far right extra-parliamentary protests.

Table AC.1: POS/DOS for the German.Far Right

	January 2015	Change over time?
STABLE POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES		
Electoral system (high thresholds, etc.)³¹⁰	Mixed Proportional and uninominal (5% threshold)	(No Change)
Degree of centralization (Federal/central gov)³¹¹	Favourable Regional division in Bundesländer (three levels to approach)	(No change)
Separation of powers (legislature, executive and judicial separation)	Favourable	(No change)
Repression (strong legal regulations against extreme right)	Unfavourable (High level of repression) Monitoring and restrictions (Bleich & Lambert 2013)	(No change)

³¹⁰ The information about the four countries' electoral systems was retrieved from International IDEA's (n.d.) database.

³¹¹ The information about the four countries' electoral systems was located in a presentation by a senior project manager for the OECD (Allain-Dupré n.d.).

DYNAMIC POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES		
Elite allies (centre-right party in power)	Unfavourable (<i>CDU</i> against, <i>CSU</i> more in alignment with far right demands, but no cooperation likely due to cordon sanitaire)	Unfavourable (Seehofer (<i>CSU</i>) increasingly hostile towards Merkel's decisions in 'refugee crisis,' but still no chance of gaining legitimacy by governing party)
Elite allies (main far right party)	Unfavourable	<i>AfD</i>
Strong FR party (in parliament)?	Favourable (No strong FR party in parliament in 2015)	Unfavorable After <i>AfD</i> 's electoral gains in March 2016 at the regional level and September 2017 at national
DISCURSIVE OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES		
Media	Favourable Highly salient topic from 2014 onwards	Mixed Some newspapers became increasingly hostile towards refugees, particularly post-Cologne New Year's 2016
Mainstream parties' position on refugees and third-country immigration	Unfavourable	Mixed Especially <i>CSU</i> was expressing concern about the reception of refugees from August 2015 onwards, just as <i>CDU</i> tightened the policies after New Year's Eve in Cologne 2016.

Public opinion (Eurobarometer) (diffusion of xenophobic attitudes in society (Rydgren 2005))	Favourable Spring 2016: 35% positive 58% negative	Favourable 2018: 37% positive, 57% negative
Authoritarian past/Nostalgic views on fascism	Unfavourable	Unfavourable
OTHER FACTORS		
Prior inclusion in far right networks	GI Germany: Most derive from neo-Nazi scene, Autonomous Nationalists, Burschenschaften PEGIDA: Links to Hooligan scene and some were prior members of far right parties (see Ch. 5)	
Current inclusion in network	Both groups: German New Right scene around Kubitschek	

France: Symbiotic Relations with FN, (Near) Open POS, and Open DOS

Compared to Germany, the POS are more open in the French setting,³¹² even though the access to parliament is more restricted, due to France's electoral system, and the *cordon sanitaire* imposed on the far right in parliament. The French authorities are less repressive than is the case for their German counterparts, but they have also established stricter policies against the extreme right (Caiani & Parenti 2013). Conversely, the country's anti-racist organizations do not obtain much valid information from the authorities, and as Camus states, the "public institutions have been fearful of building lasting relationships with the anti-far right NGOs" (as cited in Caiani & Parenti 2013: 48), entailing that there is not much monitoring of the far right's activities. Moreover, unlike Germany, the French extreme right's history is distinguishable from Nazism, being a more heroic, and, in some sense, nostalgic, take on the past (similar to the Italian and Belgian context) (Klandermans 2013).

The long-lasting role of *Front National* on the French political scene is also an important factor. Since 2002, it has made strong electoral gains, and today, a broad segment of the French far right extra-parliamentary actors are clustered around the

³¹² Caiani & Parenti (2013) classify the political opportunities as "Intermediate (nearly open)" (2013: 51).

party, forming a tight network (Minkenberg as cited in Caiani & Parenti 2013; see also Benveniste & Pingaud 2016). In most other (Western) European countries, an electorally strong political far right party diminishes the capacities for mobilization for protest groups. Yet, the strong role of the French New Right since the late 1960s and its reliance on the extra-parliamentary scene indicates “a neat distinction between institutional and street politics” in France (Mammone as cited in Castelli Gattinara 2018: 277). In fact, the extra-parliamentary actors draw on many of *FN*'s frames and its agenda as a means to avoid prosecution for discrimination (Ibid.), just as it can use the *FN*'s parliamentary position as “channel access to the political system” (Caiani & Parenti 2013: 35). Nevertheless, based on “estimates of mobilization capacities as well as frequency and size of protest events based on country-specific research literature,” Minkenberg (2018) assesses the French extra-parliamentary scene to be weak (2018:8), despite its nearly open political opportunities.

As a former colonial power in Africa, France houses a big Northern African diaspora (Bisson et al. 2019). It is considered a traditional country of immigration. Ever since the signing of the First French Constitution in 1798, the French citizenship has been based on *jus soli* ('right of the soil,' birthright citizenship) (Monforte 2014). The country thus has a more inclusive policy than e.g. Germany, yet, due to the French “assimilative conception of citizenship and the Jacobin tradition,” scholars deem the far right's cultural opportunities as potentially favourable in the country (Mudde and Eatwell as cited in Caiani & Parenti 2013: 44). Its basis on a 'republican model' thus infers “a 'universalistic' understanding of integration which stigmatises cultural specificity” (Scrinzi as cited in Castelli Gattinara 2018: 276). This partially explains the strong focus on religious symbols, such as the headscarf, in political debates, as was, for instance, witnessed during Sarkozy's second term (2007-2011), which also included a 'debate' on immigration and nationality (see e.g. Goodliffe 2013).

In fact, the French discursive opportunities have gradually expanded since the early 2000s, especially prodded on by the rise of a conservative, or 'reactionary,' movement alongside, but independent from, *Front National* (Frigoli & Ivaldi 2018). The movement consists of numerous well-known cultural elites (such as journalists, essayists, and philosophers), who have been influential in the mainstream media and public debates on socio-economic and cultural issues, just as the French *fachosphere* (extreme right activists) has been influential online (Ibid.). Many of the discussions have involved criticism of “left-wing progressivism” (Ibid: 73), and other topics close to the French far right, giving its issues a higher level of salience at public and media levels. At the same time, one can observe a mainstreaming of the far right's claims at the party political level, as a means to win votes (Mudde 2007). The extra-parliamentary groups' room for manoeuvring is thus rather good.

Moreover, another extenuating factor can be found in the French economic crisis ongoing at the time, which “intensified the structural and cultural crises that fuelled the *FN*'s rise in the first place” (Betz 2015: 96), and thus also the space for the extra-

parliamentary far right. Hence, as Caiani and Parenti (2013) argue about the French DOS, they are “open” as the country shows “diffuse anti-immigration attitudes both at the elite and population levels, high degrees of public acceptance of the extreme right as a legitimate political actor, and a weak anti-racist and anti-fascist organizational context” (2013: 52).

The French Political Context in the 2015-2017 Period

Being a big recipient of asylum seekers to Europe, the refugee issue had been high on the media and political agenda in France for several years (Monforte 2014). In fact, the country actively attempted to instate EU-wide policies to diminish the numbers of refugees even before the ‘refugee crisis’ set in (Ibid.)³¹³.

The 2015-2017 period started out with a terrorist attack in the French capital. On January 7, 2015, Jihadist terrorists attacked the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*’s headquarters in Paris. The attack came seven months after an attack perpetrated by a French citizen on a Jewish Museum in Belgium (Almasy & Erdman 2014) and led to renewed strong French debates about the place of Islam in the country.

When the European Commission proposed the refugee quota scheme in May 2015, France initially refused to accept the provisional 40,000 refugees, French President Hollande stating that the country had already taken its part of the ‘burden,’ and that rules and policies were already in place for controlling the immigration (The Local France 2015). Yet, in September, the government changed its opinion on the matter, and agreed to accept asylum applicants from Germany. At the same time, the media mainly focused its attention on security measures, rather than expressing compassion for the refugees (see e.g. Georgiou & Zaborowski 2017). In fact, two of the largest French newspapers, *Le Monde* and *Figaro*, were rather divided in their portrayal, the former expressing empathy, while the latter instead mainly framed the articles around fear conceptions, especially portraying the migrants as perpetrators (Ibid.).

On September 5, 2015, the death of Alan Kurdi spurred on numerous pro-migrant demonstrations across France, opposing the ‘repressive policies’ of the French government, and supporting the refugees (France24 2015). However, a public opinion poll published a few days prior (September 2) at the same time showed that 56% of the population were against France’s reception of migrants and refugees (Ibid.). Nevertheless, two days later, Hollande announced that the country would allow 24,000 refugees currently in the EU to come to France within the next two years,

³¹³ Already in 2008, for instance, the French government had called to create a ‘European Pact on Immigration’, which would counter illegal migrants, plus work to reinforce the external borders of Europe (Monforte 2014: 2). As a means to sway the other MS to agree to the pact, the French made “references to uncontrolled flows of migrants at the Southern borders of Europe,” which also became a claim voiced by mainstream media (Ibid: 2).

calling for a “united EU effort” to ‘share the burden’ of the refugees arriving to the EU (Samuel 2015; see also above). This was part of Hollande’s efforts to ensure the maintenance of the Schengen agreement, as he deemed a joint EU response as the only viable solution, in order to avoid the reintroduction of national borders (Ibid.). The decision did not lead to strong political or media uproars. Yet, in October 2015, the French Interior Minister held a meeting with mayors of towns, which were going to house refugees. Particularly the FN mayors were hostile to the idea, and in a statement, Steeve Briois (FN), announced “No *Front National* or *Rassemblement Bleu Marine* town hall will welcome any illegal immigrants” (Le Parisien 2015). Moreover, other mayors were also hesitant to welcome refugees to their cities (Ibid.).

During the three-year period, France had numerous problems at its borders to both the UK and Italy, just as it experienced problems related to the housing of the refugees, due to a “lack of appropriate structures to accommodate asylum seekers,” especially in Paris (Castelli Gattinara 2018: 278). Together with the growing migratory pressure on the French-British border crossing in Calais, France, where migrants and refugees had created a camp, the ‘Calais Jungle,’ the debate about its future received much political and societal attention in France in the 2015-2016 period (see e.g. Samuel 2015). For one, throughout the period, the French authorities had difficulties monitoring the refugees and migrants at Calais, who were attempting to cross the channel to the UK. In the first half of 2015, more than 18,000 migrants had been detained (Taylor et al. 2015). Yet, at the end of June 2015, the problems reached a new height, as ferry workers began striking; leading to traffic jams (see e.g. Grierson & Gayle 2015). This led hundreds of migrants to attempt to break into lorries heading for the UK—, in some cases threatening the drivers with knives. The police came and interfered, and closed the ferry port plus the Channel Tunnel temporarily. The British PM, David Cameron, reacted with consternation, and referred to the migrants as a ‘swarm of people’ (Taylor et al. 2015), further fuelling the growing discontent both in the UK and France. In September, problems again erupted at Calais, where French police carried out forced evacuations of the migrant camps, evicting around 400 migrants, who were mainly Syrian refugees (McPartland 2015b). Yet, the problems ensued, and on February 29, 2016, the French authorities started demolishing the site, leading to clashes between the migrants and pro-migrant activists (Chrisafis et al. 2016). A similar occurrence found place in October the same year, leading to a full destruction of the camp (see e.g. Jones 2016).

Throughout the 2015-2017 period, there was thus strong debate in France about migrant camp problems, especially in Calais (Castelli Gattinara 2018), but also Paris, and as the public felt that the government was not able to deal with these problems, the anger grew (Atlantico 2016). In the summer of 2016 onwards, the authorities began dismantling Parisian refugee camps, and created the temporary reception centre *Porte de la Chapelle*, due to “an influx perceived as out of control” (Ibid.).

The border to Italy was equally problematic, as many migrants sought to enter France through this route, especially by the town of Ventimiglia. A 1997 agreement between France and Italy ensured that France could send back migrants to Italy (Papoutsi 2014), and the French government re-instated border controls in November 2015, after the Bataclan terrorist attack (Foster 2015). Reports indicated that the humanitarian situation around the crossing was getting increasingly dire (Atlantico 2016), and the government was prosecuted by three pro-migrant organizations, who spoke on behalf of mainly African migrants, who had waited at the border by Ventimiglia since mid-June (The Local 2015). However, the court rejected the complaint in June 2015, stating that France was not in breach with the Schengen agreement.

In April 2016, the French population was almost split 50/50 on the question of refugees. Around half feared that domestic terrorism would rise and that the refugees would affect the economy negatively (Pew Research Center as cited in Castelli Gattinara 2018). However, by September 2016, a public opinion poll showed that 62% of the population was opposed to the reception of refugees. This was a new high since the peak of the ‘crisis’ in the summer of 2015. According to the political analyst Jerome Fourquet, this was related to the problems of the migrant camps around France, plus the many terrorist attacks during the summer (as cited in Atlantico 2016).

The 2015-2017 period thus also involved several terrorist attacks, beginning with *Charlie Hebdo* in January, and followed by the attack on the concert hall *Bataclan* in November 2015, killing 130 people. In the summer of 2016, the series of attacks continued, first with the killing of a police officer and his partner in Paris in June, perpetrated by a Frenchman of Moroccan origin. This was followed by an attack in Nice on Bastille Day (July 14), where a Tunisian-born Frenchman drove a truck into a big crowd of people, killing 86. Only 12 days later, a priest was killed with a blade in a small French church, while another person was wounded (Willsher 2016). All three attacks were carried out in the name of ISIS. In the aftermath of each of these attacks, French debates regarding Islam mainly evolved around the issue of ‘integration’ and “the place of Islam in French society,” rather than a sole focus on ‘security’ (Fourquet as cited in Atlantico 2016). Hence, throughout the period, but especially in 2015-2016, the ‘refugee crisis’ was a highly salient topic, affecting the media, public opinion, and the politicians, and ensuring open discursive opportunities for the far right.

Table AC.2: POS/DOS for the French Far Right

	January 2015	Change over time?
STABLE POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES		
Electoral system (high thresholds, etc.)	Unfavourable (Plurality/Majority)	(No Change)
Degree of centralization (Federal/central gov)	Unfavourable	(No change)
Separation of powers (legislature, executive and judicial separation)	Favourable (Tri-partite)	(No change)
Repression (strong legal regulations against extreme right)	Medium (Authorities can ban groups) (Bleich & Lambert as cited in Minkenberg 2018)	(No change)
DYNAMIC POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES		
Elite allies (centre-right party in power)	Unfavourable (Socialists (Hollande) 2012-2017, and cordon sanitaire against <i>Front National</i> , but more favourable at certain local levels (Caiani & Parenti 2013))	(No change)
Elite allies (main far right party)	Favourable Front National	(No change)
Strong FR party (in parliament)?	Favourable Front National (Not unfavourable in French case, due to symbiotic relationship)	(No change)

DISCURSIVE OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES		
Media	Favourable ‘Refugee crisis’ was a salient topic 2015: Divided mainstream media. Defensive measures dominated over caring measures (Georgiou & Zaborowski 2017).	Mixed Salient topic throughout period, but diminishing mid-2016 onwards
Mainstream parties’ position on refugees and third-country immigration	Favourable Mainstreaming of the far right’s frames → Hollande initially rejected refugee quotas	Mixed (Sept. 2015 →) Hollande agrees to accept refugees, but also crack-down on migrant camps
Public opinion (Eurobarometer) (diffusion of xenophobic attitudes in society (Rydgren 2005))	Favourable Spring 2016: 34% positive 57% negative	Favourable 2018: 36% positive 55% negative
Authoritarian past/Nostalgic views on fascism	Favourable More heroic, and in some sense nostalgic, take on the past (Klandermans 2013)	(No change)
OTHER FACTORS		
Prior inclusion in far right networks	GI FRANCE: Included in New Right scene around <i>The Identitarians</i> and <i>Front National</i> .	
Current inclusion in network	Included in New Right scene around <i>The Identitarians</i> and <i>Front National</i> .	

Czech Republic: Fractured Far Right, but (Nearly) Open POS and Open DOS

Being part of the post-Soviet Eastern European states, the Czech Republic's far right has developed like similar-minded groups across the region and also expresses itself in more ideologically extreme forms than its Western European counterparts (Minkenberg 2015). This can mainly be explained by the fact that there have been no mainstream parties that have co-opted the far right's frames and thus led to its 'taming' (as is the case in e.g. Austria) (Ibid.). Moreover, many of the far right's frames are already part of the mainstream parties' programmes, especially regarding nationalism and national identity (see e.g. Minkenberg 2015; Bušítková 2018). This means that the political space for such claims is already occupied, explaining the considerably more extreme ideological viewpoints voiced by the far right in the country (Minkenberg 2015).

Since the end of the Soviet regime in the 1990s, the country has witnessed the development of an extreme right scene, which currently mainly consists of groups expressing post-communist worldviews (including neo-Nazis, skinheads, and groups such as *Blood & Honour*) (Minkenberg 2015). During the 2000s, the extra-parliamentary scene was weak (Mareš 2011), but by 2015, Minkenberg evaluated the movement sector as having a 'medium' level of strength (Ibid.). Conversely, the far right *parties* have generally obtained a low level of electoral support, indicating a low party strength, and often of an extremist type (Ibid.).

In terms of establishing the political opportunities for the far right in Eastern Europe, the state's strength cannot be used as an explanatory factor, as they are all centrally organized (Minkenberg 2015). Instead, the level of state repression is a good indicator of the far right's mobilization opportunities in the region (Ibid.). Unlike most of the other Eastern European countries, there is a *cordon sanitaire* imposed on the Czech far right parties, potentially due to the survival of "a legacy – or memory – of the interwar experience of democracy" (Capoccia as cited in Minkenberg 2015: 37; see also Mareš 2011).

The Czech far right is also monitored by the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, which publishes an annual report about incidents and new developments on the scene. Moreover, the *Bezpečnostní informační služby* ('Security Information Service'), the Czech internal intelligence service (Mareš 2012), also monitors more extreme right groups. The Czech state has several options available for suppressing parties that espouse authoritarian or totalitarian worldviews. It can thus be categorized as a 'militant democracy,' or, in other words:

...a democratic regime that takes active steps to defend its constitutional and political values through the use of repressive legal instruments and other measures. It opposes free activity and the influence of movements

that wish to replace the democratic constitutional regime with another type of regime (authoritarian or totalitarian) and also the ideologies connected with these movements. (Mareš 2011: 34).

The country thus has the option of banning political parties, if they are considered a threat to the constitution. One example of the use of this option was in 2010, where the extreme right *Worker's Party (DS)* was dissolved for 'ideological reasons' (Mareš 2011). In this period, the CEE extreme right activities were on the rise, and one way to stop this development was through the employment of militant democracy (Ibid.). Yet, this is not a very frequently employed option, and the Czech extreme right extra-parliamentary actors are given rather much freedom to express their sentiments.

For one, due to the Soviet history of suppressing free political speech, there are not very strict legislations against hate speech in the country, not even if it directly incites violence (Pejchal 2018). There has, thus, hardly been any prosecution of actors expressing such views, and instead, the legal framework is more geared towards the outlawing of *extremism* (Ibid.). Hence, groups expressing more 'moderate' far right viewpoints have relatively free reign in terms of their activities.

Regarding the political system, the Czech political system has been in a period of consolidation since the end of the Soviet regime, entailing a high fluctuation of parties in the Czech Parliament, including on the far right (Minkenberg 2015). New far right parties thus constantly enter the scene, making it "disconcertingly fluid," and the borders between the far right movements and parties more "permeable" (Minkenberg 2015: 34).

However, after having become more or less consolidated by 2010, the Czech party system underwent a major realignment in the 2013-2017 period (Císař & Navrátil 2018), indicating an opening in the political opportunities (Ibid.), especially regarding alliances with far right parties (*Dawn*). Already in 2010, a new development occurred, as a newly created party joined the centre-right cabinet, something that had not occurred since 1993 (Ibid.). The party, the ultra-conservative *Public Affairs Party (VV)*, expressed xenophobic worldviews, together with the mainstream parties, leading to public debates about their legitimacy (Ibid.). With the entrance of the party to the Czech parliament, the country began a period of deconsolidation of its party system, which, until 2010, had been dominated by two main right and left parties (Ibid.). This led to the rise of several protest parties, who could exploit various corruption scandals and a general "dissatisfaction with post-1989 party politics" in the run-up to the Czech national elections of 2013, which had led to a plummet of public distrust in the mainstream parties (Ibid: 189). The elections thus led to strong electoral gains for the *ANO* protest party, while the radical right party *Dawn* obtained almost seven percent of the votes (Ibid.). Yet, no extreme right parties entered the scene. For one, according to Jiří Pehe, the *Communist Party* in the Czech Republic "plays the role of a protest party, so anyone who wants to protest against foreigners, migration,

EU, or Germans has the Communists to vote for” making the party play “a sanitary role,” as it takes away votes from more extreme right parties (as cited in Lazarová 2016).

Moreover, as Císař and Navratil (2018) explain, *Dawn* crowded out the extreme right parties such as the *Worker’s Party of Social Justice*, and its youth organization, *National Democracy*. These parties mobilized rather frequently on the streets in the 2015-2017 period, but did not react quickly enough to the immigration issue to benefit from it electorally (Ibid.). This is hugely relevant in relation to the two Czech groups explored in this study. It thus meant that while *IVČRN* and *BPI* were comparatively close with *Dawn* ideologically, and thus could seek an alliance with the party, *GI Czech Republic* instead remained without a parliamentary ally, as *National Democracy* and the *Worker’s Party of Social Justice (DSSS)* did not gain access. Yet, at the same time, Tomio Okamura, who had recently established the new party *Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD)*, did not refuse to cooperate with the extreme right (Slačálek & Svobodová 2018). Together with *National Democracy*, *GI Czech Republic* could thus benefit from this cooperation with SPD, particularly after the elections of 2017, where the party received 10.6% of the votes.

Hence, due to the fundamental changes to the political system that led to a party realignment, plus the looser legislative framework to combat far right extremism in the country, the political opportunities for the far right in the Czech Republic were rather open in 2015, especially for groups and actors that do not *explicitly* express authoritarian or totalitarian viewpoints.

Immigration

In terms of immigration then, the Czech Republic hardly has any Muslim population, nor has it received many migrants from the MENA countries more generally. The ‘othering’ has instead usually been directed against the national Roma minority. The few Muslims in the country arrived as refugees in the early 1990s from the Balkans and Caucasus, but they were seen as ethnically similar and thus not controversial (Bonansinga 2015). Yet, due to 9/11 and the growing terrorist threat in Europe, Czech Islamophobia began appearing and partly explains why the Czech population mainly met the Muslim refugees arriving from Arab countries with hostility (Ibid.). In fact, already in the late 2000s, there was a high level of xenophobia in the Czech Republic (around 45% in 2008-2009, a rise from 29% in 1999-2000) (Minkenberg 2015).

The Czech Political Context in the 2015-2017 Period

Up until 2015, immigration had not been a strong political issue in the entire Eastern European region (Barnickel & Beichelt as cited in Minkenberg 2015), even though Islam was mainly discussed using securitization frames since 9/11 (Slačálek & Svobodová 2018). Yet, with the onset of the ‘refugee crisis,’ the topic came high on

the political agenda, just as it “became a topic of public debate” in the country (Globsec 2016).

In December 2014, the Social Democratic-led government (headed by Bohuslav Sobotka) postponed the decision to allocate 15 sick Syrian children and their families to the country, as the EU had requested (Globsec 2016). The Czech government finally decided to accept the 15 families in January 2015, and together with the terrorist attack on *Charlie Hebdo* in France, it set off a heated political discussion about the refugees and asylum seekers, and opened the discursive opportunities for the far right (Císař & Navrátil 2018).

The mainstream political elites and the media “converged on a rather restrictive stance towards refugees” (Ibid: 185). Several Czech mainstream politicians, including the President of the country since 2013, Miloš Zeman, were vocal about the ‘dangers’ of Islam (see e.g. Culik 2015; Císař & Navrátil 2018), and the majority of the political parties, including the government, opposed Muslim immigration (Globsec 2016; Hafez 2018). In fact, “No parliamentary party adopted a pro-refugee stance, with quotas being firmly rejected even by many representatives of the liberal-conservative TOP 09” (Slačálek & Svobodová 2018: 483). The media tended to have a sensationalist spin on Muslims, mainly highlighting stories such as terrorist attacks (Bonansinga 2015), and securitized and dehumanized the refugees (Slačálek & Svobodová 2018). Especially alternative media sources and some traditional media outlets “framed the debate from the perspective of Islamophobic and anti-refugee groups”³¹⁴ (Globsec 2016). While the public was polarized on the issue, the majority opposed the reception of refugees. Hence, despite the fact that the country had hardly experienced any Muslim immigration in the past, the population still expressed strong Islamophobic sentiments, and opposed third-country immigration from Muslim countries, fearing terrorism and the perceived detrimental effects on Czech culture (Bonansinga 2015). The 2015 Eurobarometer survey revealed that more than 70% of the population were against the reception of refugees and immigrants (European Commission 2015b). Hence, the discursive opportunities were very favourable in the period, due to the high salience of the issue, and the media, the political mainstream, and the population aligned their views on the refugees with the far right’s demands³¹⁵.

Due to this strong opposition to third country immigration and asylum seeking, the Czech government was quick to reject the European Commission’s quota proposal. When the idea was launched in May 2015, the Czechs refused to comply, together

³¹⁴ Consider e.g. the leaked documents, which showed that *TVPrima*’s editors and executives demanded of the journalists only to report negatively about the refugees (Globsec 2016).

³¹⁵ As stated by the Czech Foreign Ministry in its annual report on Extremism, “Other typical topics of the extreme right receded into the background, which was certainly aided by the fact that as regards the issues of immigration and Islam the extreme right entities felt considerable support from the wider public in 2015” (Czech Ministry of the Interior 2016: 42).

with the other Visegrad countries (Borger et al. 2015). Initially, the Czech PM was more cautious in his manoeuvring, attempting to balance between the Visegrad countries and the EU, especially Germany, with which he wanted to remain on good terms (Globsec 2016). Yet, in the end, the Czech government built its responses “around security as the primary consideration” (Ibid.), and in early September 2015, together with the other three Visegrad states, the country again firmly rejected the quota idea. The Czech Secretary for European Affairs argued that it was unfair towards the refugees to allocate them to the Czech Republic if they did not want to be in the country (in reference to the country’s role as a transit country to Germany).

The country was, in fact, not very strongly affected by the ‘refugee crisis’ in terms of illegal immigration, and as the Czech Secretary for European Affairs pointed out, most refugees were seeking to travel onwards to Germany (Globsec 2016). In both 2015 and 2016, the country thus only received around 1,500 applications for asylum (Basch & Heřmanová n.d.). Yet, it still experienced some problems related to the detention facilities that housed refugees detained by the Czech police and military at the borders to Austria or Hungary (Globsec 2016).

Despite these low asylum seeker figures, the Czech government continued its refusal of the EU’s demands. In June 2016, the Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lubomír Zaorálek again very firmly rejected the refugee quotas, explaining the rejection with the (alleged) Western European experiences with Muslim non-integration, and the fact that most refugees wanted to go to Germany rather than stay in the Czech Republic (Lehnartz 2016). Similarly, after the terrorist attacks in several European cities over the summer of 2016, President Zeman announced that the Czech Republic refused *any* Czech reception of immigrants due to the terrorist threat, going up against PM Sobotka’s promise of accepting 2,700 refugees before the end of 2016 through the relocation scheme (Ouest-France 2016).

At the October 2016 regional elections, the issues of third country immigration and European integration were big on the campaign agenda, despite the regions’ limited capacity to take decisions on these issues (Vít 2017). This again underlines the high salience of the topic in the Czech Republic. Moreover, in the fall of 2017, the populist protest party *ANO* won the national elections, leading Andrej Babiš to become the new PM. He took an equally strong stance against the refugees (see e.g. Drbohlav & Janurová 2019).

In terms of far right mobilization during the ‘refugee crisis,’ Mareš and Petlák (2019) explain that while several paramilitary and vigilante groups were created, there was a more limited use of violence by the Czech extreme right compared to other European countries, such as Germany, Austria, and Poland. Yet, at the same time, the level of hate speech rose substantially during the period (Ibid.).

Table AC.3: POS/DOS for the Czech Far Right

	January 2015	Change over time?
STABLE POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES		
Electoral system (high thresholds, etc.)	Favourable (Proportional)	(No Change)
Degree of centralization (Federal/central gov)	Unfavourable	(No change)
Separation of powers (legislature, executive and judicial separation)	Favourable (Tri-partite)	(No change)
Repression (strong legal regulations against extreme right)	Medium State repression, and containment of the far right through cordon sanitaire (Minkenberg 2015)	(No change)
DYNAMIC POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES		
Elite allies (centre-right party in power)	Mixed Government coalition of <i>Social Democrats</i> (centre-left) (ČSSD), <i>ANO</i> (centre-right), and the <i>Communist Party</i> (far left) (KSČM) President Zeman strongly anti-immigration and – Islam	Favourable 2017: Gov-Coalition of <i>ANO</i> (centre-right), <i>Civic Democratic Party</i> (centre-right) (ODS), and <i>Pirates</i> (centre-left)
Elite allies (main far right party)	Favourable <i>Dawn</i>	Favourable <i>Dawn</i> (for BPI) <i>Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD)</i> (for GI CR)
Strong FR party (in parliament)?	Not relevant in the Eastern European case, due to their symbiotic natures compared to the hydraulic relationship in Western Europe (Minkenberg 2015)	

DISCURSIVE OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES		
Media	Favourable ‘Refugee crisis’ highly salient issue, refugees mainly portrayed around securitization frames (Georgiou & Zaborowski 2017)	Mixed By June 2016, the issue’s salience decreased (Císař & Navrátil 2018)
Mainstream parties’ position on refugees and third-country immigration	Favourable A high segment of the political mainstream opposed the reception of refugees (Císař & Navrátil 2018)	Favourable 2017: ANO also increasingly expressing anti-immigration sentiments
Public opinion (Eurobarometer) (diffusion of xenophobic attitudes in society (Rydgren 2005))	Favourable Spring 2016: 17% positive 77% negative	Favourable 2018 80% negative
Authoritarian past/ Nostalgic views on fascism	Not relevant in Eastern European case, but Communist past affects views on the far right.	
OTHER FACTORS		
Prior inclusion in far right networks	GI Czech Republic: Autonomous Nationalists and neo-Nazis. IVČRN/BPI: Czech Defense League	
Current inclusion in network	GI Czech Republic: Cooperation with <i>National Democracy</i> IVČRN/BPI: IVČRN alliance with other anti-Islam associations → creation of BPI → BPI alliance with radical right <i>Dawn</i> party.	

The Netherlands: (Nearly) Close POS, and Open DOS

The political opportunities in the Netherlands are almost closed. While the populist radical right parties have had a strong standing in the Netherlands since the early 1990s and the rise of Pim Fortuyn, the Dutch extra-parliamentary far right actors are stigmatised (Klandermans & Mayer 2006), due to the country's "dark past" of Nazism (Klandermans 2013: 239). The far right extra-parliamentary groups have thus had difficulties establishing themselves in the 2000s, mainly because of the electoral wins of the party equivalents, which hinders public support (see e.g. Muis & van Kessel 2017), yet, at the same time, an imposed *cordon sanitaire* ensures that far right parties have not become part of the government thus far. Moreover, the country has several very active 'watchdog' civil societal organizations, which monitor the scene, including groups such as *Kafka* and the *Anne Frank House*. As argued by della Porta and Diani (2006), such groups may influence both the mobilization success and strategies of far right activists. The Dutch extra-parliamentary far right scene is thus rather radical, fragmented, and weak, consisting of smaller, largely irrelevant, groupings (Muis & van Kessel 2017).

The country currently has two prominent and electorally strong far right parties. On the one hand, Geert Wilders' populist radical right *Party for Freedom* (PVV). As it "articulate[d] the main grievances of a part of the population without being associated with the contested historical background of right-wing extremist actors," the party quickly rose electorally (van Buuren 2015). PVV has also been rather hesitant to cooperate with the Dutch extra-parliamentary far right, making alliances with the party unlikely. Yet, in recent years, the relatively new *Forum for Democracy* (FvD) has risen to prominence. While disassociating itself from an extreme right worldview, it has an "authoritarian streak" (Lucassen as cited in Faber 2018), and the party has been much more accommodative towards the political associations at the street level (see e.g. de Jong 2019). Yet, it was only at the elections from 2018 onwards that it has gained a strong position in Dutch politics.

In terms of the country's discursive opportunities, there has been a gradual mainstreaming of the far right frames (see e.g. Muis & van Kessel 2017). Moreover, instead of objecting to the frames employed by Wilders, "[j]ournalists and mainstream politicians have been hesitant to condemn [him] for his xenophobia and racist utterances" (Ibid.), providing space for actors voicing similar concerns.

The Dutch migration regime has undergone substantial changes, particularly after the rise of the populist far right parties in the country. Having historically been a "forefront of multiculturalism," with a "reputation as a humanitarian haven," the country increasingly began enforcing rather restrictive policies (see e.g. van Selm 2019). Since 1945, migration rose from the Dutch colonies, especially from Indonesia, just as the country recruited many guest workers from abroad up until the mid-1970s (Ibid). The country is very densely populated, and continues being so, due to relatively

high levels of *both* immi- and emigration. Particularly the high level of emigration compared to other European countries has led to worries at both the political and the media level (Ibid.). Moreover, in 2018, people with a migration background (i.e. immigrants and children of at least one non-Dutch parent) amounted to 23.1% of the population, 50% of which had a non-Western background (Ibid.).

The country's citizenship is based on both *jus sanguinis* and "a limited form of *jus soli*" for children of parents born in the country, but which do not have a Dutch citizenship (Ibid.). This policy has been part of heated debates regarding dual citizenship. The law proscribes that such a dual nationality is not permitted, and this has been a rather contentious issue, especially regarding migrants from African countries, and their (allegedly) lacking 'loyalty' towards the Netherlands, if they have dual nationality (Ibid.). Moreover, another key point of debate involves the role of Islam in the country, a topic strongly spurred on by the Dutch far right (Ibid.).

Dutch Political Context in 2015-2017 Period

During 2015, the Netherlands received almost 60,000 asylum applications, the highest annual number ever recorded in the country (Klaver 2016). The country quickly developed one of the toughest refugee and asylum policies in Europe, especially in terms of residence permits (WODC as cited in Dutch News.nl 2016), and the mainstream parties adopted a rather restrictive view on the arrivals. On September 10, 2015, for instance, the Dutch Parliament discussed the Commission's quota demands (Bahceli 2015). Here, Rutte, the Conservative leader of the Netherlands, stated that the country would prefer giving money to the near areas, while Wilders spoke about a pending 'Islamic invasion' (Ibid.). Hence, the Dutch government was already expressing concerns about receiving high numbers of refugees, something that also correlates with the general anti-Islam sentiment amongst the Dutch population, which has been visible in the high electoral success of Wilders' *Party for Freedom* since 2010.

In the autumn of 2015, the Dutch government decided to erect numerous asylum centres across the country (like in other EU MS), leading to anxiety amongst the Dutch population, and a polarized debate. The Dutch far right and local initiatives mobilized strongly on this topic, leading to the cancellation of several planned centres (Klaver 2016). Yet, at the same time, despite tensions "in some communities, with people living near (proposed) reception centers sometimes expressing frustration about their fears for public safety," the Dutch public opinion generally remained rather positive throughout the 'crisis,' and supported the reception of recognized refugees (van Selm 2019).

The salience of the issue thus rose amongst the population, who was rather split on the topic. In late 2015, 44% of the Dutch citizens saw ‘immigration and integration’ as the most important domestic problem, a substantial rise compared to the 2008-2014 figures, which had fluctuated between 7 and 14% (COB 2015). The main concerns related to the numbers of refugees, the (potentially) growing societal tensions, the refugees’ use of welfare benefits to the detriment of the population, and the potential of terrorists being among the refugees (Ibid.). A Pew Research Center survey in 2016 similarly showed that 61% feared that the rise in refugees would lead to more terrorism in the country (Connor 2016). Moreover, the ‘refugee crisis’ also came about at a time when the Dutch welfare system was undergoing changes, and as van Buuren (2015) states, this led to a sentiment of “they do not listen to us” amongst the population. This sentiment was further aided by the media, which gave disproportionate space to Wilders. Research thus showed that *PVV* had issue-ownership of the ‘refugee crisis’ in the mainstream media, being the most frequently mentioned party in articles related to the ‘crisis’ (van Teeffelen 2016).

The series of terrorist attacks that hit Europe in the 2015-2016 period and the simultaneously ongoing ‘refugee crisis’ thus strongly increased the salience of “anti-foreigner sentiments” in the Netherlands (Muis & van Kessel 2017: 1). Especially the terrorist attack on Bataclan in Paris in November 2015 led to a further Dutch discussion about the security threats related to the refugees and asylum seekers, particularly as one of the suspects initially was thought to have come as a refugee (see e.g. Alberts 2015). It also led to an introduction of refugee and immigrant screening upon arrival to the Netherlands (Ibid.).

The Netherlands played a vital role in negotiating the terms of the EU-Turkey agreement in the spring of 2016, due to the Dutch presidency of the European Council at the time (Broer 2016). With the introduction of the deal, and the therefrom ensuring the lowering of the refugee numbers, by the end of 2016, the ‘refugee crisis’ debates began fading out, and its salience thus decreased (Wagenaar 2019). Yet, instead, Turkey became a topic of much debate in the beginning of 2017, due to the Turkish referendum campaign, which Erdoğan also decided to run in countries across Europe. In March, the Turkish Foreign Minister visited the Netherlands, planning to speak at a campaign meeting for the Turkish referendum, in order to attract votes in favour of the President. Yet, the Dutch government banned him from campaigning for Turkish issues on foreign grounds, leading to a minor diplomatic crisis between the Dutch and Turkish governments, where Erdoğan accused the Dutch of employing ‘Nazi’ measures (see e.g. Henley 2017).

At the March 2017 Dutch general elections, Wilders’ *PVV* party did not do as well as anticipated by the opinion polls, but still obtained 13.2% of the votes, the second highest amount. *Forum for Democracy* only received 1.8% and was thus still not a serious Dutch electoral contender in 2017.

Table AC.4: POS/DOS for the Dutch Far Right.

	January 2015	Change over time?
STABLE POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES		
Electoral system (high thresholds, etc.)	Favourable (Proportional)	(No Change)
Degree of centralization (Federal/central gov)	Unfavourable	(No change)
Separation of powers (legislature, executive and judicial separation)	Favourable	(No change)
Repression (strong legal regulations against extreme right)	High (State can ban parties and demos, if they pose “unacceptable public order risk” (Bleich & Lambert 2013))	(No change)
DYNAMIC POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES		
Elite allies (centre-right party in power)	Unfavourable Rutte II 2012-now VVP/PvDA Centre (Liberal-Social Dem.)	Favourable 2017 elections: Rutte stays in power (coalition between VVD, D66, CDA and CU (centre-right) only agreed upon after 208 days of negotiations)
Elite allies (main far right party)	Unfavourable <i>Party for Freedom</i> (but not interested in cooperation)	Increasingly favourable <i>Forum for Democracy</i> beginning to gain resonance amongst electorate
Strong FR party (in parliament)?	Unfavourable <i>Party for Freedom</i>	Unfavourable <i>Party for Freedom</i>

DISCURSIVE OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES		
Media	Favourable High on the media agenda	Mixed 'Refugee crisis' losing salience in 2017
Mainstream parties' position on refugees and third-country immigration	Favourable Governing parties was hostile to the reception of refugees	Favourable
Public opinion (Eurobarometer) (diffusion of xenophobic attitudes in society (Rydgren 2005))	Mixed Spring 2016: 43% positive 51% negative	Mixed 2018 49% positive 48% negative
Authoritarian past/Nostalgic views on fascism	Unfavourable	Unfavourable
OTHER FACTORS		
Prior inclusion in far right networks	PEGIDA Netherlands: HoGeSa, Dutch Defense League	
Current inclusion in network	DDL, PDV, and other small Dutch FR groups	

Appendix D. Overview of the FE Member Parties

National Movement³¹⁶ (Poland)

The *National Movement* (*Ruch Narodowy*) party was created in 2012, initially as an electoral alliance between the three far right organizations *National Radical Camp* (ONR) (neo-fascist), the *All-Polish Youth* (neo-fascist) and the *Real Politics Union* party (centre-right). The party understands itself as a ‘social movement from the right,’ gathering various political and ideological Polish far right currents in one party (Spanka & Kahrs 2014), and is associated with the Polish hooligan scene (see e.g. Wolf & Alexe 2016). It shares its name with a Polish anti-Semitic organization from the 1930s.

The Eastern European far right parties are hard to categorize in terms of their exact ideological placement vis-à-vis their Western counter-parts (Buščíková 2018). Yet, even Polish scholars also disagree on where to position *National Movement* on the far right scale. Some argue that it is radical right (see e.g. Jajecznik 2015), while others place it amongst the extreme right. This is mainly due to its very radical nature, and its questioning of the basic democratic values of society, just as some of its members have voiced anti-Semitic and overtly racist positions (Pankowski as cited in Nigdy Więcej 2016). Yet, the party leadership has recently attempted to moderate the language in order to gain legitimacy (Interview with Jajecznik 2018).

The party focuses on the issues of sovereignty and national identity (Kasproicz 2015), and holds that the nation-state is key (i.e. it opposes regionalist movements) (see e.g. CEE Identity 2013). In terms of Muslim immigration, the party worries about the threat to the ethnocultural cohesion of Poland, and wants to preserve the ‘Latin’ civilization in Europe (Nałęcz, 2016). Similarly as the anti-Islam actors, RN blames the problems on the European left, proponents of multiculturalism, and ‘political correctness,’ and the party opposes “importing leftist ideologies, such as gender ideology, ideology of LGBT, socialism etc., to Poland” (CEE Identity 2013). Hence, the party “identif[ies] liberalism as being at the heart of both the European and national identity crises” (Jajecznik 2015:49). Robert Winnicki, the party leader and speaker for *All-Polish Youth*, has stated, for instance, that he aims at building a force “which left-wing radicals and gay people should very much fear” (Wolf & Alexe 2016).

Since 2008, ONR and *All-Polish Youth* organize the annual Polish Independence March in Warsaw (‘Marsz Niepodległości’), an event that has continuously expanded

³¹⁶ ‘*National Movement*’ is the most commonly used English translation of its name, yet, Jajecznik argues it would be more correct to translate it with *Nationalist Movement*.

its participant numbers, and has even been supported by the Polish government (see e.g. Davies 2018). In 2015, the demonstration, which was entitled ‘Poland for the Poles’, drew around 35,000 participants, among which several came from abroad (especially from parties involved in the European party-group AENM).

During an interview in 2013, a party representative stated that the party cooperates closely with *Jobbik*, while the party “definitely do[es] not have close relations” with German nationalists, as “they have strong anti-Polish tendencies. Apart from that, German nationalism is marginal. We do not seek contacts there” (CEE Identity 2013).

Conservative People’s Party of Estonia (EKRE)

The *Conservative People’s Party of Estonia (Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond, EKRE)* was created in 2012, as a merger of the *People’s Party (Rahvaliid)* and the *Estonian Nationalist Movement (Eesti Rahvuslik Liikumine)*. The former was an agrarian centrist party that collapsed in 2011, and the latter a remnant of the Estonian ethno-nationalist camp (Auers & Kasekamp 2015). The party leadership consists of the father and son Mart and Martin Helme, who form a ‘charismatic’ team, as they are both “very able and media-savvy demagogues” (Ibid: 145). Like *Dawn*, *EKRE* “shook up the Estonian political scene (which had been in a period of consolidation) in March 2015,” as it gained 8% of the votes and thus seven seats in parliament (Kasekamp et al. 2018: 1).

The party is conservative, nationalist, and populist, and it has a particularly antagonistic view on Russia (see e.g. Kasekamp et al. 2018). Its logo depicts the Estonian national flower cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*), which symbolizes its fundamental values - national interests and traditions (EKRE n.d.). Together with its youth party, *Blue Awakening*, the party organizes numerous annual nationalist celebrations, such as the Estonian Day of Statehood, armistices, and the signing of the Estonian Independence Declaration.

In terms of immigration, similar to *National Movement*, *EKRE* fears for the erosion of the Estonian traditions, language, and culture, if too many immigrants enter the country, and worry about a pending ‘Islamization’ of Estonia (Kasekamp et al. 2018). The party’s leader has, for instance, voiced the phrase: ‘If he’s black, send him back’ (Teder 2013). During the ‘refugee crisis,’ many of the party’s frames revolved around the security threat of Muslim immigrants, especially voiced in the aftermath of terrorist attacks (Kasekamp et al. 2018).

Moreover, like *National Movement*, the party also wishes to uphold the traditional family constellation (Auer & Kasekamp 2015), and opposes liberalism and 1968 (see e.g. Bauska Declaration as cited in National Alliance n.d.). Thus, based on an analysis of the party’s social media content, Kasekamp and colleagues (2018) find the

following four issues to be prevalent: “an anti-Russian stance, Euroskepticism, promotion of family values, and an anti-refugee discourse” (2018: 1).

In terms of the EU, the party mainly opposes its sovereignty infringement, yet, it does not specifically call for an Estonian EU departure (Wierenga 2017). *EKRE* has opposed several of the EU’s policy initiatives, such as the European Stability Mechanism and EU aid to Greece in 2015 (Auers & Kasekamp 2015). In terms of Russia, the party worries about the Russian influence on Estonia, and it has gained media attention for its staunch stance on the Estonian-Russian border treaty and its refusal to ‘give away’ land to Russia (Auers & Kasekamp 2015).

At the European level, the party is closely associated with two other Baltic far right parties, *National Alliance - All for Latvia!* and the Lithuanian *Nationalist Union*, with which *EKRE* signed the *Bauska Declaration* in 2013. The Declaration was worded in strongly anti-liberal terms (see National Alliance n.d.). After the 2019 EP-elections, the party joined *Lega’s Europe of Nations and Freedom* group.

The League (ex-Northern League) (Italy)

Umberto Bossi created the *Northern League* in 1991. The party began as a movement party, uniting several Northern Italian autonomist associations under the name *Lombard League (Lega Lombarda)*, and under Bossi’s leadership, it acquired a ‘mass-party’ organizational form (Albertazzi as cited in Albertazzi et al. 2018).

Due to Bossi’s involvement in a fraud scandal in 2012, Matteo Salvini took over the leadership of the party in 2013. Thereafter, the party abandoned its prior focus on Northern Italian regionalism (in the shape of a *Padania*) to now encompass the entire country (see e.g. Ibid.). This has garnered more votes, also from regions that were previous left-wing strongholds, plus the south, with which the party had earlier strongly conflictual relations (Ibid.). In the past, this regional focus made it a rather contested question, whether the party belonged among the populist radical right parties or not. Yet, the party currently shares the nativism, authoritarianism, and populism with the PRR parties, making Albertazzi and colleagues (2018) argue that there is no reason not to place it among those parties.

In terms of ideology, the party has been voicing an anti-Islam discourse for several decades by now. Betz (2003b) has shown, for instance, how *Northern League Nord* gradually became more and more vocal about anti-Islam since the early 1990s. In the late 1990s, the party began arguing along a civilizational *Kulturkampf* discourse akin to Huntington’s (1993) argument (Ibid.). It has thus protested efforts at ‘Islamization’ ever since, e.g. by opposing mosque constructions (Ibid.). In this way:

[...] 9/11 was a godsend for the Lega, as it helped justify radicalizing the party's position from being critical of how immigration had been managed by successive governments, to framing it as an existential threat to the very survival of the identities and cultures of northern Italians. (Albertazzi et al. 2018: 648)

Regarding the EU, until the leadership change, the party mainly targeted the national government with its anti-elite frames, due to the sentiment that the Southern Italians were receiving preferential treatment. Yet, currently, “the EU has taken Rome's place as the people's ‘enemy’” (Ibid: 646f). The party's main problems with the EU relate to the Euro and the Union's infringement on Italian sovereignty (Ibid.). Conversely, the party has been increasingly forging ties with actors close to the Russian government, and Salvini promotes political cooperation, while denouncing the sanctions imposed on the country (BBC 2019).

At the European level, *Northern League* has cooperated with *Front National* for several years, especially through the Italian MEP, Mario Borghezio, who both networks with the French party, but also the French Identitarian Movement (i.e. *Identitarian Bloc* and *GI France*) (see e.g. Barrontini & Palladino 2017).

Courage – Great National and Pro-Russian Coalition (Slovakia)

Stanislav Martinčko created the *Courage – Great National and Pro-Russian Coalition (Odváha)* in 2012, and it was dissolved in 2018. It is very hard to find information about the party, due to its small size and short life span.

The party focused on Slovakia's security policy, calling for the Slovak departure from NATO, and that the country should instead create closer links with Russia. The party thus called for closer economic and political cooperation between Slovakia and the EU with Russia and the Euro-Asian Union, with the ultimate goal of a common economy and security area “from Lisbon to Vladivostok” (Pavliš as cited in Rajscká 2015). Moreover, *Courage* called for the immediate abandonment of the sanctions imposed on Russia, a re-evaluation of the country's NATO membership, and the removal of the NATO base in Slovakia (Ibid.).

In terms of the EU, *Courage* kept referring to the pending disintegration of the EU due to the Euro. Moreover, being a pro-Russian party, *Odvaha* argues that the security threat posed by Islam has been brought upon Europe by actors such as NATO and the U.S., due to their wars in the Middle East (WebNoviny 2016; HN Online 2016). The party's website, which now been closed down, is full of conspiracy theories that mainly portray the US as the villain (for example by claiming that the US created ISIS), while Russia is depicted in very positive terms.

Besides its strong focus on Slovakian security policy, the party called for more direct democracy, promoted traditional family values, and called for more direct democracy.

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