More Violence, Less Violence
The Fuel for Far-Right Defections

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While claiming to preserve the country's identity and culture, far-right movements and their offshoots share the distinguishing characteristics of nationalist intolerance and racial prejudice. They are concerned that waves of illegal immigration will change the ethnicity and demography of the country, and they regard non-Europeans as inferior and less valuable.

As a result, these movements consider Islam a threat to the West and its values. They are opposed to Muslim integration in Western communities because they are concerned about the impact on Western religious identity and social culture. They use violence and threats to achieve their objectives, which include empowering the state and the ruling authorities.

Accord and Discord

Far-right movements are not homogeneous and do not share a common agenda. Because of different approaches or slogans, they face conflicts, division, and disunity. Some far-right organizations, for example, criticize their peers for not incorporating racism into their agendas or fighting battles on the ground to achieve their objectives. They are still debating whether violent extremism can yield the desired effect .

Far-right organizations, in general, share abstract principles and agree on end goals, but always disagree on mechanisms and means. As a result, their criticisms of one another and opposing approaches result in defections. Because of the differences in their mechanisms rather than their ideologies, the proliferation and branching of far-right movements and Nazi parties has a tangible impact on Europe and the United States. Some believe that violence and terrorism are neither the best nor the only solutions, while others see them as the only way to achieve their objectives .

More Violence

Such disagreements and defections have impacted the far-right New Nazi Party, which was founded in the United States in 2016 and has been designated as a terrorist organization by several countries, including Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. A newer, more extreme and violent neo-Nazi group called The Base was founded in the USA and Canada, respectively, in 2018 and 2019, with the goal of establishing a national homogeneous society through violence. Taking such a hostile stance, some branches of the group committed violent acts and hate crimes, such as the bombing of an Islamic center in New York. As a result, The Base has also been designated as a terrorist entity .

This defection resulted from differences in these terrorist groups' approaches, policies, and operating methods, particularly their excessive use of violence as the sole means of achieving their goals. Others, conversely, believe that violence and terrorism will not help them achieve their goals, but will instead increase security pressure, undermine their capacities, and threaten their existence .

The Atomwaffen Division, founded in 2015, is a neo-Nazi organization that believes in ethnic cleansing and takes neo-Nazism to a whole new level by making violence and terrorism the cornerstones of its policies and encouraging its members to commit terrorist acts, killings, and subversive acts in order to achieve its far-right goals. Some of its affiliates were involved in a series of terrorist attacks in the United States, killing a large number of innocent civilians. As a result, US authorities designated Atomwaffen Division as a terrorist organization and terminated their social media accounts, which they used to spread extremist ideologies and to plan violent and terrorist attacks .

Less Violence

Pegida, a prominent far-right movement in Germany, was founded in 2014. The acronym «Pegida» stands for «Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West» implying its Islamophobic, anti-refugee, and anti-migration stance. Their calls elicited a range of reactions in German and European cities, some of which resulted in violence and clashes with Pegida supporters and views. Given Pegida's proclivity for clashes and violence in their demonstrations and movements, an internal defection resulted from its opposing political views and action plans, as well as its use of violence.

The defection was led by its founder, Lutz Bachmann, and many members, who formed the Liberal Direct Democratic People's Party (FDDV) in 2016, which opposes illegal

immigration and aims to achieve its goals without resorting to the violent extremism adopted by the parent organization .

Fragmentation and Decline

National Action was the first neo-Nazi terrorist organization in the United Kingdom. It originated from the British National Party (BNP), a fascist political party founded in the United Kingdom in 1982. Internal conflicts over policies and leadership ravaged the BNP. Such conflicts and disagreements resulted in fragmentation and fragility which led to defections, from which new far-right parties based on extremist nationalism and racism emerged in the United Kingdom.

They are all anti-immigrant and anti-Islam, and they all want illegal immigrants deported and legal immigration reduced. The British Democratic Party and the National and Britain First are three of the parties that have defected. The National Action group's goal was to turn the United Kingdom into a Nazi state dominated by racial segregation, to destroy Jewish and Muslim institutions, and to force all immigrants and refugees to return home. As a result, British authorities retaliated with harsh measures, culminating in the group's ban in 2016 under the Anti-Terrorism Law for incitement of hatred, racism, and terrorism. Many of its top members were imprisoned in 2018, including its leader, Christopher Lythgoe, who was sentenced to 8 years in prison for plotting to attack Muslims and for possessing firearms and explosives. Such stringent government measures eliminated the National Action Group's threat and weakened its impact on society .

Reemerging Groups

Extremist organizations and groups that incite violence and terrorism continue to emerge from far-right movements. When one star wanes, another shines, following in its wake with even more extremism and violence. In France, for example, the far-right Generation Identity (GI) group was founded in 2012 to reinforce European identity, combat illegal immigration, Islam, and cultural diversity. It is well-known for its controversial acts of violence, which prompted several European countries to label it as an extremist group and to monitor its activities in order to undermine its ability to spread its violent extremist ideology .

GI operates an extensive network of regional branches and organizations throughout Europe, including France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Denmark, and Belgium. Some

committed acts of violence and hate crimes, such as the arson attacks on mosques in Sweden and incitement to attack immigrants and refugees in Germany and France .

The Identitarians, a group that first appeared in France in 2002, are well-known for their spectacular media activity, which has included campaigns against immigrants and refugees, particularly in France, incitement against Muslims and Islam that led some of its members to destroy a mosque in Austria, as well as other violent and hate crimes. It is also known for repeatedly calling for the reinstatement of national borders and the exit from the European Union.

Extremism and Politics

Right-wing extremism is shrouded in political ties, with far-right movements at times disguising themselves in politics and political freedom in order to disseminate their extremist agendas under populist, racist, and sectarian slogans. At times, they openly advocate for their agendas and resort to violence against their targets. Furthermore, far-right parties have emerged on the European scene, mimicking others and spreading across the continent, all with the same beliefs, goals, names, and slogans, such as:

1. The populist Alternative für Deutschland (AfD): a far-right populist political party in Germany founded in 2013.

2. Front National: a far-right French political party founded in 1972, adopting populist views that oppose immigration and Islam.

3. Forza Nuova: an Italian neo-fascist political party founded in 1997. It believes in Italian nationalism and opposes illegal immigration.

4. The Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ): a far-right political party founded in 1956, opposing illegal immigration and Islam.

5. Danish People's Party (DPP): a far-right political party founded in 1995, opposing Muslims and immigrants.

6. Swiss People's Party (SVP): a far-right political party founded in 1971 .

7. Party for Freedom (PVV): a far-right political party in the Netherlands founded in 2006 by Dutch politician Geert Wilders, opposing Islam and calling for shutting the Dutch borders to illegal immigrants and for their deportation.

Surprisingly, the incorporation of the slogan "freedom" in the names and discourse of some of these parties as a symbol of opposition to governmental interventions, defending individual freedoms and civil rights, and upholding the values of democracy, human rights, and economic freedom contradicts their practices, particularly toward Muslims and immigrants.

Racism and racial and cultural prejudice cannot stand up to the test of human rights.

Parties claiming to be nationalist or populist confined themselves to nationalist intolerance, calling for the preservation of national identity, the protection of borders, the prevention of illegal immigration, and the exit from the EU .

Overall, the divisions within far-right groups exemplify the fragmented fate of extremism due to their extreme enmity and hatred for the other of different races, ethnicities, and cultures, as well as others with opposing views within the same affiliation. This breeds division and defection, undermining their ability to achieve their objectives, which frequently leads to violence.