



IMSIS
International Master
Security, Intelligence
& Strategic Studies



**Erasmus
Mundus**

**Social Media Use of Far-Right Political
Parties and Right-Wing Extremist
Movements: A Comparative Mixed Methods
Research on Twitter**

July 2019

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**Presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Degree of
International Master in Security, Intelligence and Strategic
Studies**

Word Count: 21,978

Supervisor: Dr James Fitzgerald

Date of Submission: 26 July 2019



**University
of Glasgow**



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CHARLES UNIVERSITY

Abstract

This research aims to explore and answer the question: how does the use of Twitter by far-right political parties differ from right-wing extremist movements in terms of their choice of topic and their use of language? Right-wing online extremism is becoming increasingly more relevant, particularly after the 2019 Christchurch attacks, in which the perpetrator seems to have been inspired by consuming significant amounts of online content.

Following from Klein and Muis's research from 2018 regarding followers of right-wing extremist movements and far-right political parties, hypotheses were formulated. It was expected that right-wing extremist movements would tend to mostly discuss Islam and immigration topics, while far-right political parties would mostly focus on the national and European establishment. Moreover, it was expected that right-wing extremist movements would use more extreme language than the followers of political parties.

One party and one movement from three different countries – the Netherlands, United Kingdom and Germany – have been selected. The selected groups are PVV, UKIP, AfD, IV, EDL and Pegida. A mixed methods approach to research was adopted in which the findings of the quantitative statistical analysis were complemented with and enriched by qualitative research methods, namely content analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis.

The analysis confirmed the hypotheses regarding choice of topic by both parties and movements, but the hypothesis regarding tone of language was proved to be incorrect. Instead, this research suggests the novel and significant finding that the groups have adapted their tone to Twitter's policy, in order to avoid getting expelled from the platform.

Acknowledgements

There are several people I would like to acknowledge and thank for their input and effort. Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr James Fitzgerald, whose expertise and guidance have boosted my dissertation to a higher level. I have enjoyed discussing my work and incorporating his feedback to improve my research.

Furthermore, there are several people from the Macquarie University Sydney, the University of Glasgow and Dublin City University that have made time for me and contributed to different parts of my research. Dr Julian Droogan has been my mentor during my work placement at the Department of Security Studies and Criminology part of the Macquarie University Sydney. Besides the tips he provided on how to write a good dissertation, he has showed endless interest in my research and results. Dr Benn Macdonald has improved my interpretation of the statistical results. It was incredible to see how willing Dr Macdonald was to explain, even though we had never met before. Furthermore, I have received writing advice from the team of Learning Enhancement and Academic Development Service (LEADS). In particular, I would like to thank Dr Andrew Struan who sat down with me to provide personal feedback on my writing. When I was still at the beginning of my research, Prof Maura Conway made time for me to talk about data collection. Based on her remarks, I changed my research angle from jihadist groups versus right-wing extremist groups towards far-right political parties and right-wing extremist groups. Dr Ian Paterson has helped me to improve my methodology chapter by discussing the possible ways to justify a mixed methods research design.

Lastly, there are several people from my friends and family I would like to thank and acknowledge. I had little experience with programming and Fraser Baird has helped me to write a script to be able to get my data from Twitter. My sister Rosalie has helped me when I was processing my data. I want to thank my mother for proofreading all my chapters. Finally, I would like to thank two people, my friend Connie Lathe and my boyfriend Jeroen Smit, who have supported me throughout the process with emotional support and motivational speeches.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Pre-research considerations

When this study was still in the exploratory phase, the initial idea was to explore the different usage of social media between right-wing extremist groups on the one hand, and jihadist groups on the other hand. However, because this study is a postgraduate taught dissertation, there are strict ethical rules and limitations. When a non-public platform is studied, the researcher would need to request ethical approval from the College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (College of Social Sciences, n.d.). Many right-wing extremist groups are active on various social media platforms, ranging from Twitter to Facebook to the lesser-known Gab¹. However, almost all jihadist online activity takes place on closed platforms like Telegram (Bloom, Tiflati & Horgan, 2017), and to get access to a closed platform, the researcher would have to request ethical approval. Due to health and safety concerns for an inexperienced postgraduate taught researcher like me, the Ethics Committee would not approve a research proposal requesting access to Telegram. This bump in the exploratory phase of this research, made me change the research angle, but it also caused me to appreciate the different perceptions of jihadist and right-wing extremist groups.

The main reason for the absence of jihadist content on Twitter is the active takedown policy the larger social media companies have instated in recent years to prevent the spread of terrorist material on their platform. Social media companies do not want to be seen to be complicit on inspiring individuals to commit terrorist attacks. These policies made it impossible for jihadist groups, like Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), to stay active on open platforms. Twitter continuously takes down their pages causing them to eventually search for another platform to be active on. Because Telegram is an encrypted platform

¹ Over the course of writing this dissertation, social media platforms have further developed their policies regarding extreme content. It is becoming increasingly difficult for far-right groups to stay active on platforms like Twitter, YouTube, Facebook and even Gab. (Conger, 2019; Dickey, 2019; Robertson, 2019).

on which the company cannot moderate what is going on, this platform is the preferred choice for jihadist groups.

In addition, many jihadist groups are classified as terrorist groups, whereas proscribing right-wing extremist groups as terrorist groups is still rare (Stevenson, 2019). In 2016, the UK has proscribed extreme-right group National Action as a terrorist organisation, accounting for the first right-wing group to be listed as a terrorist organisation (Allen, 2017). In June 2019, Canada proscribed two right-wing extremist groups as terrorist organisations (Harris, 2019). In recent years right-wing extremist attacks have become more and more prevalent on a larger scale (Cai & Landon, 2019). Therefore, it would be understandable if more right-wing extremist groups would be proscribed as a terrorist group. This is happening only slowly, and it is likely due to the character of right-wing extremist groups.

Jihadist groups aim their violence at internal enemies, the West and those they consider to be non-believers or excommunicated, making for a large group of potential victims, especially in Western Europe (Gregg, 2010; Welch, 2018). The group of potential victims from right-wing extremist groups is considerably smaller: Muslims, immigrants and people of colour are often the main target of these groups (Zúquete, 2008; Carter, 2018). Research has shown that people are less likely to give up some of their freedoms to protect a small part of society they are not a part of. This makes it difficult to instigate measures against the rhetoric and actions of right-wing extremist groups, as most Western Europeans are white and not at risk (Garcia & Geva, 2016).

Topic relevance

As a result of the impossibility to research jihadist groups online, the research focus shifted towards the far-right. In recent years, European far-right political parties have managed to convince growing number of people to give them their vote (Alvares & Dahlgren, 2016). The far-right sentiment seems to be popular amongst a large share of the European population. Especially after the 2015 migrant crisis far-right parties have been growing. In 2016, the largest success of a far-right political party was reached: the result of the Brexit referendum for the United Kingdom (UK) to leave the European Union (EU). Beside political

success, right-wing extremists have also become more active. Considering Breivik's attack as an outlier, right-wing extremist attacks have become more prevalent and more deadly since 2010 (Cai & Landon, 2019). With the far-right's sentiment and impact growing throughout Europe and beyond, this topic has become increasingly relevant to study.

The result of the Brexit referendum is partly devoted to the success of the social media campaign carried out by the 'leave' proponents (Howard & Kollanyi, 2016; Dobрева, Grinnell & Innes, 2019). Furthermore, the Christchurch attacker Brenton Tarrant claims to be inspired through YouTube and other platforms on the Internet (Kirkpatrick, 2019). This demonstrates that online activity can influence people and lead to real-world actions. Nowadays, both people and groups increasingly rely on the Internet in general, and social media in particular. Individuals use it to stay in touch with their friends, but many users also consume a large part of their news intake through social media platforms (Ku et al., 2019). Additionally, political parties are often represented on social media. They use these platforms to present their political programme, criticise their political opponents, and to engage with their (potential) voters (Klinger & Russmann, 2017). Moreover, movements also make use of social media in much the same way as parties: they use it to present what they stand for, often criticise the political establishment, discuss issues with their followers, and announce protests (Conway, 2006).

Research question

This study explores whether and how far-right political parties, on the one hand, and right-wing extremist movements, on the other, differ in their use of social media. Defining the far- or extreme-right is complicated, as these are essentially contested concepts. Every author will identify different characteristics and will emphasise different features (Mudde, 2000b). For this research, far-right groups are institutionalised political parties that implicitly embrace the values of a liberal democracy by participating in it; and extreme-right groups are non-institutionalised movements that aim to change society without having any political power. Building on work by Klein and Muis (2018), this research will focus on two components of the use of social media: choice of topic and use of

language. The research question formulated for this study is: how does the use of Twitter by far-right political parties differ from right-wing extremist movements in terms of their choice of topic and their use of language? The aim of this research is to critically assess how political parties and extremist movements differ in their use of social media. By studying this topic, this piece of work contributes to the existing body of knowledge regarding the use of social media by far-right political parties and right-wing extremist movements. Because past events have shown online activity has the potential to transform into real-world consequences, this research will present significant impacts for both researchers and practitioners. Researchers can use this study to refine future research questions exploring the connection between far-right and mainstream politics, while practitioners can benefit from this research by getting a greater understanding about social media narratives used to mobilise people into the far-right and creating countering violent extremism policies based upon this knowledge.

Chapter overview

This dissertation consists of six chapters, all building upon the previous. In Chapter Two the literature review is presented; in which topics such as online radicalisation and right-wing ideology are discussed. After the gap in the literature that will be addressed in this dissertation has been identified, Chapter Three will outline the methodology used in this research. This study makes use of mixed methods in which the quantitative statistical analysis was complemented by qualitative research components: content analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis. In Chapter Four, the findings of the statistical analysis will be presented. Several analyses work towards laying the basis to be able to find an answer to the research question. The findings presented in Chapter Four will be interpreted and critically evaluated in Chapter Five, the discussion chapter. Critical Discourse Analysis is used to enrich the findings and make it possible to interpret these results in a valid manner. Lastly, in Chapter Six, the conclusion chapter, the findings are briefly summarised before presenting the answer to the research question and addressing the limitations to, implications of, and recommendations for future research based upon this study.

Chapter Two: Literature review

This chapter will outline the relevant literature and research done on the topic of this dissertation and thus situate this research within an established lineage of scholarship. The literature review will be structured thematically, starting with a discussion of online radicalisation. This will be followed by an overview of the relation between the Internet and social media, and, groups, individuals and social media and technology companies. Next, the right-wing extremist ideology will be outlined extensively. An overview of the different components of the right-wing extremist ideology will be presented, which will also go into the different interpretations and the loose connections within the far-right ideology. Furthermore, an analysis of Western-European far-right political parties will be presented. Lastly, literature on the way right-wing extremists present themselves online will be discussed. After that, the literature review will be summarised and the gap in the literature will be identified.

Online radicalisation

The Internet and social media are important tools for communication. Since the 1990s, the Internet has taken a prominent role in daily lives of people. Currently, just under fifty percent of the world population is an Internet user and in Europe, this number is just under eighty percent (The World Bank, n.d.). Social media emerged in the 2000s and has been growing in popularity ever since. The market leader in social media companies is Facebook with 2.3 billion monthly active users (Statista, 2019a). This research will go into the use of Twitter, which has currently 321 million monthly active users (Statista, 2019b).

In this section, it is discussed what is known about how the Internet facilitates radicalisation processes. However, it is important to note that, although the cyberspace is linked to the contemporary radicalisation process, it cannot be said that the Internet and social media are the cause of radicalisation. The process of radicalisation is enabled by the Internet and it serves as a facilitative tool, but it is not dependent upon the Internet (Gill, Corner, Thornton & Conway, 2015). The process of (online) radicalisation has been discussed extensively in the existing academic literature. Radicalisation is described as a

pathway or a process from being moderate or normal to becoming radical (Horgan, 2008). This leads to the question what 'being radical' means. Sedgwick (2010) describes the concept radical as a relative concept that can only be understood in the context of what is seen as 'normal' or 'moderate' within a society. Someone becomes radical when one deviates from the norms applicable in a certain society, but it is not always clear when a deviation occurs. Behaviour that would be labelled as radical in one society can be viewed as normal in another. It can be hard to point out what behaviour still falls within the norm, and what behaviour does not, because there is no clear line drawn (Borum, 2011; Sedgwick, 2010).

Radicalisation is the transformation or process of someone's behaviour changing from acceptable and within the norms towards deviation from those norms existing in a certain society (Sedgwick, 2010). The applicability of the word 'process' is contested by Hafez and Mullins (2015). According to them, the word 'process' implies a certain order of steps someone undergoes before becoming radicalised, while there is no evidence suggesting such a fixed order of steps exists. Hafez and Mullins propose to use the term 'radicalisation puzzle', viewing radicalisation as a puzzle that consists of several pieces. Once the puzzle is complete someone is radicalised, but it is not necessary to complete the puzzle in a specific order. The pieces of the puzzle they identify are (1) grievances, (2) networks, (3) ideologies, and (4) enabling environments and support structures.

Grievances can vary from political to economic to cultural and can be felt collectively but is also often felt on an individual level. *Networks* refer to relations based on friendship or kinship. Group dynamics, like group think and peer pressure, play an important role within these networks (Sageman, 2008). *Ideology* is described by Hafez and Mullins as "a set of political beliefs about the world, usually anchored in worldly or transcendental philosophies that are presumably universal, comprehensive, and idealistic (even utopian)" (p.966, 2015). It is important to note that an ideology is not necessarily a religious matter (Atran, 2011). A radical movement's ideology has a critique on the current society, outlines a vision of how society ought to look like and promotes a course of action to reach this vision (Gregg, 2010). *Enabling environments*

and support structures refer to both physical settings, like prisons, and virtual settings, like social media platforms (Hafez & Mullins, 2015).

Therefore, online radicalisation is the process of radicalisation in a virtual setting as a support structure of radicalisation. A virtual setting, like a social media platform or a forum on the Internet, can be facilitative for the radicalisation process of an individual. This is not to say that researchers describing online radicalisation deny any contact between the ‘online’ and ‘offline’ or ‘real’ world exists, but they see the Internet as an enabler of radicalisation, which could lead to ‘real’ world implications (Von Behr, Reding, Edwards & Gribbon, 2013; Gill, et al., 2017).

The role of the Internet and social media

Groups and individuals

It is hard, or impossible, to give a quick definition of the concept of terrorism. However, terrorism is often linked to violence aimed at an audience to force a change in politics (Aly, Macdonald, Jarvis & Chen, 2017). An attack communicates a message to bring about a certain change; therefore, terrorism is intimately linked to communication (Schmid & de Graaf, 1982). This is why the Internet and social media are interesting tools for terrorist and violent extremist organisations and movements. The invention of the Internet has made it possible for such groups to communicate on an equal level as governments and other official institutions (Joosse, 2017). That is to say, there is no intermediate party such as an editorial office to thwart publication. Therefore, it becomes easier for violent extremist movements to compete with governments (Conway, 2004; Aly, Macdonald, Jarvis & Chen, 2017).

It does not come as a surprise to see that most violent extremist groups have opted for using the Internet and social media. Some groups only have a simple website with some basic facts and propaganda on it, while other groups have slick-looking webpages and an active social media presence (Galily, Yarchi & Tamir, 2015). The Internet is accessible for nearly any movement with a working Internet connection. Depending on the skills and priorities of a movement, its usage of the Internet will be more or less professional looking (Sullivan, 2014; Aly, Macdonald, Jarvis & Chen, 2017). Research even shows

that extremist groups that do not have a presence on the Internet are less likely to persist than groups that do (Suttmoeller, Chermak & Freilich, 2015; 2016; 2018; Droogan & Waldek, 2019).

Violent extremist movements use the Internet and social media for a variety of purposes. Maura Conway has identified five categories of the use of the Internet for violent extremist groups; these categories are information provision, financing, networking, recruitment and information gathering (Conway, 2006). *Information provision* refers to targeting their audience to gain publicity, spread propaganda and carry out psychological warfare campaigns. The Internet has opened up new possibilities for violent extremist groups to *finance and fund* their operations. The borderless online world makes it possible to address a much larger audience that makes it possible to gain more funding. Rich donors could find extremist websites and decide to sponsor the movement, but another way to fund their operations is by selling merchandise to their followers (Gerstenfeld, Grant & Chiang, 2003). The third category is *networking*, which means that the Internet has made it possible for extremist movements to use a network-based, decentralised structure, communicating through the Internet. This allows groups to strengthen internally, but also to connect to similar organisations across the world (Weimann, 2006).

Recruiting is another way violent extremist groups use the Internet. There are two positions in the literature regarding the role of the Internet and recruitment for violent extremist groups; they are referred to as the bottom-up and the top-down approach advocated for by Marc Sageman and Bruce Hoffman respectively. Sageman argues that the Internet has made it possible for interested individuals to search for and find extremist content and this way the Internet helps the self-radicalisation process (Sageman, 2008). Hoffman on the other hand disagrees and argues for a top-down approach in which violent extremist groups actively search for recruits via the Internet (Hoffman, 2006). It has been argued that these two approaches can be combined in which Sageman's bottom-up approach explains the initiative of an individual to go on the Internet and search for extremist content, and in which Hoffman's top-down approach explains how violent extremist groups are searching for those individuals to recruit (Conway & McInerney, 2008; Meleagrou-Hitchens & Kaderbhai, 2017). Finally, the Internet is used to *gather information*. This could

vary from information to prepare for an attack to news events and general facts (Conway, 2005; 2006, Rothenberger, Müller & Elmezeny, 2018; Wadhwa & Bhatia, 2013). A good example of this are the different jihadist magazines published by Al Qaeda and the IS, in which new attacks are instructed and encouraged (Droogan & Peattie, 2018; Welch, 2018).

The Internet does not provide opportunities for violent extremist organisations only, but also for individuals. Individuals, who cannot share a certain (extreme) interest with people in their offline social group, can find like-minded individuals online. In particular, people who feel marginalised in their daily lives can flourish on Internet forums and social media (Sandberg, Oksanen, Berntzen & Kiilakoski, 2014; Turner-Graham, 2014). The web is a source to locate like-minded people on nearly anything, including radical topics. Because the Internet is a relatively anonymous place, there are less boundaries for people to join a radical movement (Koehler, 2014). It can also be a starting point for people to discover their identity and to realise what they find important (Rothenberger, Müller & Elmezeny, 2018).

Being online and interacting with similar-thinking people can lead to a feeling of community and stimulate differential association. Differential association is the process in which a person takes over the norms and values of (groups of) people he or she regularly associates with. This could be family or friends, but also other groups like virtual communities. The Internet can strengthen the process of differential association because it is relatively easy to prevent contact with people having different views (Pauwels & Schils, 2016). This fact combined with the lack of online supervision, brings the risk of being susceptible to more and more extreme content and therefore adopting increasingly extreme ideas (Gerstenfeld, Grant & Chiang, 2003).

The above-mentioned ways to use the Internet and social media for violent extremist organisations are ways in which these organisations use the Internet as a facilitative tool towards their goals. Researchers and other experts fear that terrorist and violent extremist groups might also be interested in using the cyberspace as a weapon itself. This would be called cyberterrorism, where terrorists use computer technologies to launch attacks against critical infrastructures to disrupt normal functioning of society (Weimann, 2006). A cyberterrorist attack has a major impact potential, however, there has not been

a single case of cyberterrorism so far. Most likely because the technical knowledge that is required to carry out a large-scale cyberterrorist attack on national critical infrastructure is extensive and it is even harder to create the same effect of shock and terror through the means of cyber. Currently, most terrorists and violent extremist groups are not equipped to prepare an attack like that (Conway, 2003).

Social media and technology companies

So far, publishers and consumers of extreme content have been discussed. However, in recent years, significant research has been done into the platforms themselves and the effects of the technologies they use to make their platform as attractive as possible. Many social media companies have so-called recommending technologies integrated in their platforms. These technologies recommend specific content their users will probably find interesting. They employ this technology to persuade users to spend a larger amount of time on the platform. Twitter suggests accounts a user might be interested in to follow, YouTube suggests videos someone might find interesting to watch and Facebook will suggest friends and pages that match a person's interests (O'Callaghan, Greene, Conway, Carthy & Cunningham, 2015; Pearson, 2018).

From a business point of view, it makes sense for social media companies to employ these recommending technologies. The more time users spend on a platform, the more advertisements a platform can show, which will then maximise their profits. However, there is also a downside to these technologies. The technologies use algorithms to make an educated guess about what content a specific user might find interesting. When a user ignores a suggestion, the algorithm has learned to make another suggestion. However, when a user clicks on the suggestion, the algorithm's guess is confirmed and more suggestions on a similar topic will appear (Dubois & Blank, 2018). The downside to this technology is the emergence of echo chambers or filter bubbles (Von Behr, Reding, Edwards & Gribbon, 2013).

An echo chamber arises when a social media user will only consume content that reinforces existing beliefs with no counter-sound whatsoever (Dubois & Blank, 2018). Most people will have a political orientation and will

therefore prefer certain news outlets to others. This phenomenon applies to both offline and online news: people prefer certain newspapers over others, and certain websites over others. This means people have always surrounded themselves with perspectives on the news they are comfortable with (Barberá, Jost, Nagler, Tucker & Bonneau, 2015). However, the fear is that algorithms used by social media platforms will turn into a filter bubble in which any content that is not consistent with pre-existing beliefs will be filtered out. This way, a user will become unaware of other opinions and views out there, rather than making a conscious decision to dismiss certain news stories with disaffirming views.

When people become unaware of other viewpoints, this could lead to a polarised society in which there is little understanding for each other's beliefs and arguments. Sunstein describes the process where an individual keeps being affirmed in his or her own beliefs as a radicalisation process: someone's opinion on a certain topic gets increasingly stronger and the alternative seems to be increasingly worse. A group that is only exposed to their pre-existing beliefs is likely to become more extreme in their opinions because of three reasons. Firstly, in a group where people only hear arguments from one side, they tend to be persuaded due to a lack of a counter sound. Secondly, because most people want to fit in, they tend to make an effort to agree with the points of the group. Thirdly and most importantly, when being in a group where everyone shares the same opinions, confidence in these views will grow and greater confidence leads to more extreme views (Sunstein, 2017, p.71-75).

Social media's algorithms lead to a lack of triggers to view an issue from another point of view (O'Hara & Stevens, 2015). Social media companies are therefore increasingly pressured to monitor their platform and prevent extremist and dangerous content from spreading. This is even more important for the far-right, because research has shown that politically right-oriented people are less likely to search for content that is dissimilar to their beliefs than more liberal-oriented people (Barberá, et al., 2015).

Most social media companies were hesitant at first, struggling with the balance of the freedom of speech on the one hand, and the spread of dangerous content on the other. However, some platforms have changed policies and have been actively taking down content (Awan, 2014). Twitter for example, has been

actively removing ISIS Twitter accounts to try to reduce jihadist extremism spreading on their platform (Pearson, 2018). On the other hand, there are still platforms who are not willing or not able to remove extreme content. Telegram, an encrypted messenger platform, is not able to review the content that exists on its platform making it impossible to effectively remove extremist content (Bloom, Tiflati & Horgan, 2017). Until July 2019, Gab, a platform that is similar to Twitter, was unwilling to remove extremist content, as it is their opinion the freedom of speech cannot be infringed for any reason (Lima et al., 2018; Gab, 2019). Because of this policy, many people who are (extreme-)right leaning have favoured Gab, as they could speak freely without being banned or censored. However, Gab has recently changed their policy and it is likely the far-right will be forced to change platforms (Robertson, 2019).

Right-wing extremist ideology

This section will describe the right-wing extremist ideology. According to Andrew Heywood an ideology consists of three parts. Each ideology has a reading of what society looks like right now, how it is supposed to look like, and how to get from the current to the preferred society (Heywood, 2017). Describing the right-wing extremist ideology is not easy, as it is not coherent and exists of multiple different branches. Almost every author will describe the concept in a (slightly) different way by identifying different components (Mudde, 2000b; Tateo, 2005; Kerodal, Freilich & Chermak, 2016; Crosset, Tanner & Campana, 2018). Definitions differ from very broad to very narrow, and both extremes have advantages and disadvantages.

Cas Mudde identified the right-wing ideology as a political ideology consisting of five components that most authors seem to agree on: (1) nationalism, (2) racism, (3) xenophobia, (4) anti-democracy and (5) the strong state (Mudde, 2000b, p.11). Within different branches, different components will be emphasized, and some branches will add more components. The right-wing extremist ideology is racist and nationalistic because they believe the existence of their national identity and culture is being threatened by foreigners and people who advocate for a multicultural society (Mudde, 2000b; Graham, 2016). This also explains why they are xenophobic, as they feel threatened by

these outsiders. More specifically, within most right-wing extremist groups there is a strong anti-immigrant, anti-Islam and anti-Semitic sentiment (Mieriņa & Koroļeva, 2015; Zúquete, 2008). Right-wing extremists believe that both immigrants and Muslims (often seen as the same) are threatening the nation and the national identity and culture (Zúquete, 2008).

When going back to Heywood's view on ideology, the above is how the right-wing extremist ideology views the current society. Furthermore, they believe an ideal society would preserve the national identity and culture. To get from the current threatened to the ideal homogeneous society, a strong, authoritarian state is necessary (Carter, 2018). The following paragraphs will go into the five components identified by Mudde: nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy and the strong state.

Components of right-wing extremist ideology

Mudde describes *nationalism* as “The belief that the political unit (the state) and the cultural unit (the nation or ethnic community) should be congruent” (Mudde, 2000a, p.187). Nationalism is based on the idea that the nation should be put before the individuals living in the nation. The ‘Other’ threaten the nation and should be deported or otherwise eliminated. Mudde (2007) believes the right-wing extremist ideology is based on a specific form of nationalism, which he calls nativism. Nativism is the belief that the nation should only hold native citizens, while non-natives should be eliminated to preserve the national identity. Nationalism is a problematic term because right-wing extremist do not always want to preserve the nation as the borderlines are drawn. Sometimes it is about a specific subgroup within the country, and sometimes it is about a group that exceeds the country borders (Carter, 2018).

Racism is described by Mudde as “The belief in natural (hereditary) and permanent differences between groups of people with the centrality of a hierarchy of races” (Mudde, 2000a, p.187). The extreme-right interpretation of racism is often based on the belief in the natural inequality of humans. In the past, the extreme-right has focused more on racism based on biological features, but in recent times, the extreme-right's interpretation of racism is based on cultural and ethnic incompatibility. This also means that two people from

different cultures or ethnicities should not procreate, as this would threaten the purity and existence of their cultures or ethnicities (Carter, 2018).

Mudde describes *xenophobia* as a “Fear, hate or hostility with regard to groups that are perceived as ‘alien’ or ‘strange’, such as foreigners, immigrants, asylum-seeker, etc. The idea that anything ‘alien’ is threatening” (Mudde, 2000a, p.188). Racism, nationalism and xenophobia are very closely related as they are all used to base an exclusionary policy upon (Carter, 2018). Apart from the migrants already mentioned by Mudde, Muslims and Islam in general, and Jews are also seen as threatening Others. Xenophobia aimed at Muslims is often referred to as Islamophobia.

According to many extreme-right movements and political parties, Islam is threatening ‘our’ Christian identity and cultural history (Zúquete, 2008). Islamophobia conflates religious membership with cultural norms. Muslims think and act in a specific way because Islam is unresponsive to change, has values that are incompatible with ‘our’ values, and is a sexist and violent religion (Adams & Roscigno, 2005; Awan, 2014). Therefore, it is acceptable to make general claims about Islam that are applicable to all Muslims (Gardell, 2014). Xenophobia aimed at Jews, is usually referred to as anti-Semitism. Historically, the extreme-right is concerned with conspiracies in which the Jews dominate politics so they can rule over the world while excluding and threatening the existence of non-Jews. Nowadays, in most Western-European countries anti-Semitic sentiment is rare, however, in Eastern-European countries anti-Semitism is still prevalent (Mudde, 2007).

Anti-democracy is viewed by Mudde as “Criticism of ‘democracy’ as a political system; views that are opposed to (various) core features of democracy (like pluralism, parliamentarism, political equality, etc.)” (Mudde, 2000a, p.188). Where older forms of right-wing extremist movements and political parties have openly rejected democracy as a political system as a whole, this is not the case for most modern right-wing movements and political parties. Although these more modern movements do not openly reject the liberal democracy, they do often advocate for anti-democratic values viewed in their racist, xenophobic and Islamophobic language, but also in the rejection of and contempt for the sitting government (Carter, 2018). This point is heavily debated in the literature though; some authors distinguish extreme far-right and

radical far-right groups. Extreme far-right groups explicitly reject liberal democracy, whereas radical far-right groups accept liberal democracy (Klein & Muis, 2018). This is often the difference between far-right political parties, considered radical, and right-wing extremist movements, considered extremist. By participating in a democratic system for years, political parties implicitly accept the values of a liberal democracy and are therefore considered to be radical. Right-wing extremist movements, on the other hand, are not participating in democracy and openly rejecting the values of a liberal democracy and are therefore considered to be extremist (Carter, 2018).

Mudde has described the *strong state* as a combination of militarism and law-and-order thinking. However, he (in later work) and other scholars have noted that militarism does not aptly describe the ideology of right-wing extremism (Mudde, 2007; Carter, 2018). Therefore, the definition of militarism has been left out. Mudde's interpretation of law-and-order thinking is as follows: "The belief in order and authority, accompanied by the demand for strong punishment of breach of the rules to maintain order the state should have a strong police force in terms of personnel, equipment and competencies" (Mudde, 2000a, p.188). A more appropriate component of the strong state than militarism has been formulated as authoritarianism (Mudde, 2007). Right-wing extremist movements and political parties believe the state will remain strongest when the government acts as a strong and strict body, in which offenders get high prison sentences including the possibility of capital punishment, and live in sober prison conditions. This way the state will remain structured and people are inclined to abide by the rules (Carter, 2018).

Right-wing political parties

In recent years, far-right political parties have gained ground throughout Europe: the Netherlands (PVV), United Kingdom (UKIP), Germany (AfD), Belgium (VB), Austria (FPÖ), Denmark (DF), Hungary (Fidesz/Jobbik), Italy (M5S/Lega), France (RN, formerly FN), Poland (PiS), Sweden (SD), Finland (FP), Switzerland (SVP) and Greece (Golden Dawn) (Wodak, 2015; Börzel & Risse, 2018; Muis & Immerzeel, 2017; Wodak & KoshraviNik, 2013; Sakki & Petterson, 2016). Although these are all far-right political parties, they also

differ in many respects. Far-right politics is often associated with populism, in which parties recognise a divided society with the people on the one end, and the elite on the other. However, this association is not necessarily justified. A party can be far-right and not be populist, and a party can be populist while not being far-right (Stavrakakis, Katsambekis, Nikisianis, Kioupkiolis & Siomos, 2017). Mudde shows that it is not the populist aspect that is best used to describe these parties, but it is the nativist feature that is characteristic for far-right politics (Mudde, 2007).

Wodak has analysed that, despite their differences, there are two characteristics all far-right political parties share. Firstly, they all use a so-called *politics of fear* in which they have identified a group that is framed as the cause of many problems, the 'Other'. Secondly, they all use the same kind of rhetoric, identified as anti-intellectualism or *arrogance of ignorance* in which they speak to common sense and traditional values by simplifying nuanced issues (Wodak, 2015). The use of us-vs-them rhetoric is very common amongst far-right parties. The 'them' can refer to an outsider group, such as migrants, but also to an insider group, such as the political elite (Sakki & Petterson, 2016). Only far-right parties that focus on the elite as the outsider group can be considered populist (Stavrakakis, et al., 2017).

Several developments within European societies, like the migrant crisis and the growth of multi-culturalism, seem to have had an effect on a part of the population longing to a more traditional and conservative society, which in turn led to the growth of these far-right parties (Wodak, 2015). The Brexit result has been the largest success of the far-right in Europe and is characteristic for their response to emerging challenges. Instead of solving these challenges and creating a liberal and open society, their response is to externalise them, so they no longer pose a threat to *their* nationalist society (Börzel & Risse, 2018). The success of institutionalised groups, political parties, has an effect on the (lack of) success of non-institutionalised groups, movements, and vice versa. Meaning that when far-right political parties manage to put far-right sentiments on the political agenda, movements enjoy less support; while when parties fail, the support of movements grows (Muis & Immerzeel, 2017).

Right-wing online

The right-wing extremist movement consists of many different groups and factions, all with a different focus and they do not necessarily agree with each other. There are nationalists, socialists, fascists, white supremacists, and alt-right supporters (Simi & Futrell, 2006; Gardell, 2014; Graham, 2016; Berger, 2018). Online, there is even less cohesion among right-wing extremists, and their language and choice of topic is often similar to each other making it hard to distinguish them (Crosset, Tanner & Campana, 2018). Therefore, it becomes increasingly difficult to identify what content is to be considered healthy democratic opposition and what statements are part of extremist rhetoric (Conway, 2016). To make things even more complicated, the use of the Internet has made it possible to reach a global audience and right-wing extremists are very successful in doing so. People from all over the world will vent their opinion about local issues on forums and social media (Perry & Scrivens, 2016; Conway & Courtney, 2018).

As discussed above, there is also the distinction between right-wing radical and right-wing extremist movements, whereby the first often refers to political parties and the second to non-institutionalised movements. Interestingly, followers of these parties and movements do not seem to make the same distinction as they often support both radical right-wing political parties and extremist right-wing movements (Klein & Muis, 2018). The topics that followers discuss online on their websites and platforms do differ between political parties and non-institutionalised movements. Klein and Muis found in a study conducted on Facebook that the former focus on the national and European political elite and the latter focus more on immigration and Islam. Furthermore, the language used on the platforms of political parties is less extreme than the language used on the platforms of non-institutionalised movements (Klein & Muis, 2018).

Right-wing extremists have been one of the first groups to discover the Internet's potential for disseminating propaganda and recruitment (Burris, Smith & Strahm, 2000). One of the first reasons to use the Internet was because of the concept of 'leaderless resistance'. This is a tactic first introduced in the 1960's and revitalised in the 1980's by Louis Beam. Beam, a Ku Klux Klan member, reintroduced this technique as a last resort to try to resist the force of

the American government who had more resources and power in the hope masses of individuals would stand up against this force (Kaplan, 1997). Rebels that want to be a part of the movement can use the Internet to gain the skills and information they need to prepare for an attack and carry out the attack without a command structure calling for it (Gardell, 2014; Joosse, 2017). Nowadays, right-wing extremists use the Internet for many of the same reasons as other violent extremist and terrorist movements. It is a cheap mode of communication, relatively anonymous, easy to reach a large audience, and it is not restricted to borders or editors (Adams & Roscigno, 2005; Crosset, Tanner & Campana, 2018). Right-wing extremists have used the Internet to spread propaganda, books, music, graphics and merchandise, to stimulate discussion on forums, and to give reinterpretations of current affairs (Burris, Smith & Strahm, 2000; Adams & Roscigno, 2005).

The extreme-right is very vocal online, but this has not led to any movements physically coming together and planning and carrying out a joint large-scale attack. Most right-wing extremist attacks have been small-scale and are often carried out by individuals. Even the two large-scale attacks, in Norway (2011) and recently in Christchurch, New Zealand (2019), were carried out by individuals. This is not to say they did not enjoy (online) support and inspire other radicalised individuals with their actions. Since 2011, the number of victims from right-wing extremist terrorist attacks has been growing (Cai & Landon, 2019). The extreme-right find each other online and a lack of a united large-scale right-wing extremist attack in the recent history does not mean that there will not be one in the future. The Internet does have the potential to drive people over the edge and resort to violence (Perry & Scrivens, 2016). As mentioned above, it is easy to get trapped in an online environment where your pre-existing beliefs are constantly getting affirmed which causes a greater confidence in those beliefs, leading to these beliefs becoming more extreme (Sunstein, 2017).

Although there is not a clear internal cohesion within the right-wing extremist movement as a whole, separate right-wing extremist groups have successfully created a strong group identity. They have done so by having a clear 'us' versus 'them' rhetoric using hate speech. The 'us' is hard to define, as it is not a homogeneous group, however, there are a few characteristics that

apply to most members: they tend to be white, heterosexual and male. The ‘them’ or the Other differs per movement and could vary from immigrants, to Muslims, to the political elite or to proponents of a multicultural society (Graham, 2016; Conway, 2019). In a report on the alt-right movement on Twitter, J.M. Berger also recognises the lack of internal cohesion within the movement on the one hand but a clearly defined Other on the other hand. Therefore, the far-right on Twitter seems to accurately represent the fragmented landscape of the right-wing extremists in the offline world (Berger, 2018). The use of so-called ‘hate speech’ is a big contributing factor to strengthening the group identity, because it (re)confirms the status of the Other. Hate speech dehumanises its victims, for example by referring to groups of migrants as ‘streams’, which makes it easier to say hateful things about them. When people are not targeted as the Other, and understand and recognise the threat the Other causes, they are more likely to work together to protect themselves against this perceived ‘threat’. This way hate speech justifies the existence of the movement (Pohjonen, 2018; Conway, 2019).

Far-right political parties rely heavily on the media to gain publicity, voters and therefore success. In the current media environment conflicts and scandals are increasingly dominating the headlines; parties are aware of this development and use certain rhetoric they know will create a media effect to gain attention and stay relevant (Muis & Immerzeel, 2017). Apart from media far-right parties cannot control, they also heavily rely on media they *can* control, namely social media. Social media has become a part of everyday life, also for (far-right) political parties. Their profiles are an inherent part of campaigning, on which they employ strategic communication to gain voters (Ernst, Engesser, Büchel, Blassnig & Esser, 2017; Klinger & Russmann, 2017). They use social media to present the spearheads of their political programme, show the weaknesses of their opponents, identify the people they want to attract as voters and increase their engagement, and build a reputation. Far-right political parties, more so than ‘regular’ parties, often personalise their social media campaign by focussing on their top candidate. By doing so they humanise their candidate and hope to get a stronger connection with their audience (Klinger & Russmann, 2017).

Conclusion

This chapter discussed relevant literature in order to present a body of knowledge the current research can build upon. The discussed topics were online radicalisation, the role of the Internet and social media, the right-wing extremist ideology, and the right-wing online. Radicalisation is the transformation or process of an individual's behaviour changing from acceptable and within the norms towards deviation from those norms existing in a certain society. Online radicalisation happens within a virtual setting (i.e. a social media platform, an Internet forum, etc.), which can facilitate the radicalisation process of an individual.

When the role of the Internet is discussed there are three perspectives that need to be taken into account: groups, individuals, and social media and technology companies. Groups can use the Internet for a variety of purposes, like information provision, financing, networking, recruitment and information gathering. For individuals the web is a relatively anonymous place to find like-minded people on nearly any topic, including radical topics. Social media companies have been struggling with the balance of the freedom of speech on the one hand, and the spread of dangerous content on the other.

Cas Mudde, a leading scholar in the field, has identified the five most important components of the right-wing extremist ideology: nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy and the strong state. It is important to note that the far- and extreme-right is very scattered and within different branches, different components might be emphasised, added or removed. Far-right politics is often unjustly associated with populism; a party can be far-right and not populist, and vice versa. What these parties do have in common is the use of *politics of fear* in which a certain group of 'Others' is identified and framed as the cause of many problems, and the use of anti-intellectualist rhetoric, where they speak to common sense and traditional values by simplifying nuanced issues. Online, the far-right is even more scattered than offline. Distinguishing the different groups and factions is nearly impossible due to overlap in choice of topic, use of language, and follower base.

Gap

To identify the gap in the literature, the existing literature has been discussed from broad to more specific. Background literature on online radicalisation and right-wing extremist ideology has been discussed. This was more specified by outlining literature on the role of the Internet and social media, and even further specified by focussing on the right-wing's activity online.

The results of a study by Klein and Muis clearly explicates the gap in the literature. In their study, conducted on European groups on Facebook, it was found that followers of right-wing extremist movements tend to mostly discuss Islam and immigration topics, while followers of far-right political parties mostly focus on the national and European establishment. They also found that followers of movements use more extreme language than the followers of political parties. These are interesting conclusions and it would be useful to dive deeper into these findings. By taking a slightly different approach this piece of research aims to complement Klein and Muis's study, and the research body on online extremism as a whole.

This study will focus on a different platform, Twitter, to compare political parties and movements with each other. Besides, it will focus on the content of the groups themselves, not their followers. This way it will become possible to identify if the differences found by Klein and Muis are explained by the groups' choice of topic and language, or, that the followers are choosing this independently from the groups. Therefore, the research question for this research is: how does the use of Twitter by far-right political parties differ from right-wing extremist movements in terms of their choice of topic and their use of language? In the next chapter the relevant methodology will be discussed.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This research aims to answer the question: how does the use of social media by far-right political parties differ from right-wing extremist movements in terms of their choice of topic and their use of language? This question, a comparative research question, comparing far-right political parties on the one hand to right-wing extremist movements on the other hand, asks for a method that can effectively answer two questions: 1) How do these parties and movements differ in their choice of topic? 2) How do they differ in their use of (extreme) language? Methods should be seen as tools that will help to answer the research question (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2015). The best way to answer this question is to combine qualitative analysis with quantitative analysis. Combining qualitative and quantitative research methods is referred to as mixed method research (Lamont, 2015a). Mixed method research is often criticised because the need for this methodology is not sufficiently justified (Bergman, 2011). However, this chapter provides a justification for using a mixed method research design as most suitable and appropriate for this project.

Firstly, qualitative research methods were employed to transform the data from non-numerical to numerical data as a preparation for the next step, in which quantitative statistical analysis was employed. Content analysis was used to identify what the Tweets are about and what kind of language was employed (Lamont, 2015b). Because the raw data were not based on numbers, the data needed to be interpreted and quantified to make it usable for statistical analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The next step to answer the research question engaged quantitative research in the form of statistical analysis. Carrying out statistical analysis helped to identify patterns and showed if there is a significant difference in the choice of topic addressed and the tone of language used by political parties and extremist movements (te Grotenhuis & van der Weegen, 2008).

Lastly, further research in the form of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) complemented earlier work, because it helped to explore the published Twitter content and identify the extremes. It helped the researcher – and the reader – to understand the kinds of assumptions parties and movements make about the

world, which in turn affects how they address certain topics in a certain way (Lamont, 2015b). Although discourse analysis is usually applied on large texts or speeches and not on 280-character limited Tweets, it is not uncommon to employ CDA on Twitter (Quinn, Prendergast & Galvin, 2019; Reddick, Chatfield, & Jaramillo, 2015). When applying CDA on social media data, several aspects of the data can be researched. Medium factors such as one-to-one, one-to-many or many-to-many communication, the anonymity or the size of the message, but also situation factors, such as purpose, topic or tone of the interaction (Unger, Wodak & KhosraviNik, 2016). This research will focus on topic and tone of the interaction.

The combination of statistical analysis and discourse analysis allowed the researcher to not only identify what kind of topics these groups address but also how these topics were addressed. Therefore, mixing qualitative and quantitative methods enriched this research and deepened the final conclusions. The mixed methods approach can also be recognised when looking at the chapter structure and the frameworks of analysis: the findings chapter (Chapter Four) presents the quantitative part of the research, and the discussion chapter (Chapter Five) interprets these results using qualitative research methods. This research combined positivist and interpretive frameworks of analysis. A positivist framework of analysis has been used for the first part of the analysis, in which the answer or truth is out there and can objectively be found in the collected data. For the second part of the analysis, an interpretive framework of analysis was employed. The answer is not just out there but can be found by critically reviewing and analysing the data. Contextual factors needed to be taken into account to find the truth (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018).

Limitations

This research has a number of limitations. Firstly, the study was limited from the broad area of social media to the platform Twitter. Twitter was chosen because of its researcher-friendly policy. Every user of Twitter has agreed with the user agreement, which includes that Twitter allows researchers to scrape data off their platform without the need to ask for permission to the individual users (Twitter, 2018b). The second limitation is the area chosen to focus on.

Although the extreme-right discourse is found throughout the world, this piece of research will focus on Western Europe. Because the geopolitical situation is comparable in this region, parties and movements will be involved with similar issues making it easier to compare them. A third limitation is language. Because the researcher can only understand so many languages, it was limited to the languages English, Dutch and German.

Another remark I would like to make is about a similar piece of research my hypotheses are mainly based upon, by Ofra Klein and Jasper Muis (2018). This study focused on Facebook instead of Twitter, but there is another, more significant difference. Their research goes into the followers of far-right parties and right-wing extremist movements, while this study goes into the far-right political parties and right-wing extremist movements themselves. It has been interesting to compare their results to the ones found in this study.

Hypotheses

Three hypotheses have been formulated for this research, one about the choice of topic and one about the use of language. A similar piece of research, carried out by Klein and Muis, studying followers of far-right groups – both political and non-institutionalised groups – on Facebook concluded that followers of political parties talk more about the national and European political elite, while followers of non-institutionalised groups focus much more prominently on topics related to immigration and Islam (Klein & Muis, 2018). Therefore, regarding the choice of topic it was expected:

Hypothesis 1a: Far-right political parties focus mostly on the national and European political elite.

Hypothesis 1b: Right-wing extremist movements' most prevalent topics are immigration and Islam.

Regarding the use of language, the research focused on how the extremity of the language that is used by political parties and movements differ. Klein and Muis found that political parties are less extreme in their language than non-institutionalised groups (2018): this makes sense in light of the right-wing

extremist ideology. One of the characteristics is anti-democracy rhetoric (Mudde, 2000a): political parties are participating in democracy and therefore it is unlikely for them to reject democracy as a whole. They might retain anti-democratic viewpoints, but democracy as a political system is implicitly embraced. Right-wing extremist movements are not participating in politics and anti-democracy rhetoric is not uncommon (Carter, 2018). Because of this, it was expected:

Hypothesis 2: Right-wing extremist movements use more extreme language than far-right political parties.

Group selection

There are six political parties and movements selected for this project. The three parties selected are: Partij Voor de Vrijheid/Party for Freedom (PVV²), United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP³) and Alternative für Deutschland/Alternative for Germany (AfD⁴). The three movements selected are: Identitair Verzet/Identitarian Resistance (IV⁵), English Defence League (EDL⁶) and Pegida/Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident⁷.

The far-right political parties have been chosen based on their representation in respective parliaments. In the Netherlands, two far-right parties are represented in Parliament: PVV and Forum voor Democratie/Forum for Democracy (FvD). FvD are relatively new, founded in 2016, and with only two of 150 seats, they are quite small⁸. PVV are an established party, founded in 2006, and take twenty seats in Parliament (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, n.d.). Because PVV are much larger and more established PVV have

² <https://www.pvv.nl/> [accessed on May 18, 2019]

³ <https://www.ukip.org/> [accessed on May 18, 2019]

⁴ <https://www.afd.de/> [accessed on May 18, 2019]

⁵ <https://www.idverzet.org/> [accessed on May 18, 2019]

⁶ <http://www.englishdefenceleague.org.uk/> [accessed on May 18, 2019]

⁷ <https://www.pegida.de/> [accessed on May 18, 2019]

⁸ Over the course of writing this dissertation, the Senate elections have taken place (27 May 2019) and FvD are currently the largest party, together with VVD, represented in the Senate with 12 out of 75 seats. A shift seems to be taking place in the Netherlands, where PVV are losing power (5 seats in the Senate, making for a loss of 4) and FvD are replacing this spot on the far-right (NPO Radio 1, 2019). It will be interesting to see if FvD can maintain relevant until the next Parliamentary Elections in 2021.

been selected. PVV are mainly an anti-Islam party but they also focus on anti-immigration and anti-establishment topics, which they combine with a strong social programme for the elderly. The party's main figure, only member and leader is Geert Wilders (Gent, Jansen & Smits, 2014). UKIP are selected because in British Parliament,

UKIP are the only far-right party represented, although taking only one out of 782 seats in House of Lords (Parliament.uk, n.d.). UKIP were founded in 1993 and anti-European rhetoric has always been the core of their programme (Ford, Goodwin & Cutts, 2012). From the 2010 general elections onwards, UKIP added anti-immigration topics to their rhetoric, and after the Brexit referendum anti-Islamic speech became more prevalent as well. The result of the Brexit referendum is considered UKIP's largest success. After this success the party struggled to stay relevant and, despite the refocus on migration and Islam, the party lost many voters in the 2017 general elections (Birch & Dennison, 2019; Breeze, 2019).

AfD have been selected because it is the only far-right party represented in German Parliament, Bundestag, with 91 of 709 seats (German Bundestag, 2017). AfD were founded in 2013 as a Euro-sceptic, populist party. Over the years their focus broadened, and they adopted anti-immigration, anti-establishment viewpoints and became proponents of direct democracy (Schmitt-Beck, 2017). All three selected parties make use of us-vs-them rhetoric, however they all have identified a different 'them' to use as a scapegoat. The Dutch PVV and the German AfD mainly focus on an outsider 'them': Muslims and migrants, respectively, whereas the British party UKIP have mainly focused on an insider 'them': the political elite (Sakki & Petterson, 2016).

The selection of the extremist movements was based on groups that are considered to be right-wing extremist groups by their respective national authorities. Furthermore, it was important to make sure they had a Twitter account and that they were actively using it. In the Netherlands there are a few extreme-right movements, most of them are very small on Twitter. Rechts in Verzet/Right in Resistance and the NVU/Dutch People's Union have 400 and 45 followers respectively (AIVD, 2018; Twitter, 2018a; Twitter, 2019). IV were selected because they have a reasonably large follower base (2,600) on Twitter and are recognised by the Dutch Intelligence Agency as an extreme-right

movement (AIVD, 2018). IV were founded in 2012 and are part of the larger Identitarian movement in Europe. They are against the multicultural society and proponents of a Greater Netherlands in which the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, Flanders, is fused with the rest of the Netherlands (Identitair Verzet, 2017).

In the United Kingdom, several right-wing extremist movements are active, most notable are National Action, Britain First and EDL. However, due to suspensions, National Action and Britain First are not active on Twitter. National Action are one of the most notorious extreme-right groups and are even officially classified as a terrorist organisation (Home Office, 2019). Britain First are not listed as a terrorist group, although there were plans to list them after the murderer of Member of Parliament Jo Cox allegedly shouted “Britain First” just before the attack (Counter Extremism Project, 2019b). EDL were founded in 2009 as an anti-Islam group and have become more extreme over the years, causing their leader and founder Tommy Robinson to leave the movement in 2013. Interestingly, since 2018 Robinson has been a political adviser for UKIP (UKIP, 2018). EDL were selected for this study, because they are not suspended from Twitter and are one of the three big right-wing extremist movements active in the UK.

In Germany, several right-wing extremist movements are active. However, Pegida are by far the largest and most established group. Pegida were founded in Germany in 2014 as an anti-Islam movement, and currently have several branches in other Western European countries (Counter Extremism Project, 2019a).

Data collection

The data were collected through a script written in the programming language Python. One party and one movement from the Netherlands, United Kingdom and Germany have each been selected for this project, which will make for six groups – and corresponding pages – in total. By using Twitter’s REST API (REpresentational State Transfer Application Programming Interface), data were collected from each of the six selected pages. By choosing three different

countries to collect from, it became possible to find if the results are applicable across borders, or are, potentially, country-specific.

A year's worth of Tweets (29/03/18 – 29/03/19) have been collected to prevent concerns that the content would be dominated by specific events like elections or terrorist attacks. The specific date of the 29th of March was chosen because of symbolic and practical reasons. Symbolic, because the 29th of March 2019 would have been the date that the United Kingdom (UK) would have left the European Union (EU). A result of one of the largest successes of a Western-European far-right political party: the leave-outcome of the Brexit referendum. As we now know, the UK has negotiated an extension and has not (yet) left the EU (BBC, 2019a). From April onwards the run-up to and campaigning for the 2019 European Parliament elections started (European Parliament, n.d.). By cutting off at the 29th of March these elections have not influenced the collected data. If this research would be repeated, there are two timeframes that would be interesting to study: a timeframe before the Brexit referendum and a timeframe during the European elections, to see how much specific events influence the parties' and movements' content.

In two cases, UKIP and AfD, it was not possible to collect a year's worth of data. These parties exceeded the maximum number of Tweets Twitter's REST API allows to import within ten and nine months respectively. Although it was not possible to collect a year's worth of data, this was unlikely to be problematic because the amount of collected data, over 3,000 Tweets, did come close to a year, making it unlikely the data was heavily influenced by single issues. After the data were collected, they were cleaned, meaning that Tweets older than 29/03/2018, Retweets and replies have been removed so only original content is available for analysis. Retweets have been removed, because these are Tweets written by other actors and the groups have not chosen the tone of language in these Tweets. With replies, the groups themselves choose the tone of language they use, but the actor they reply to, decided the topic for them. So that we can maintain consistency in analysing only the content they produced themselves, Retweets and replies have been removed.

During the cleaning process it turned out that EDL still had over 2,000 Tweets left in the dataset. After studying the EDL Tweets more closely it turned out that they repost many news articles, but instead of Retweeting these articles

through the Twitter pages of the respective newspapers, they shared the links from the official websites of the newspapers. This means all Tweets they have published containing only a link of a news article, with no original caption can be viewed as a disguised Retweet: the text is written by others and EDL have not chosen the used tone of language. Subsequently, all disguised Retweets have been removed, not just from EDL, but from all six groups (see Table 1 for a summary of general information about the data before analysis).

The data have been stored in CVS-files, saved on a password protected OneDrive to ensure the data's safety. Although only Tweets from political parties and movements that are publicly available have been used, it is still important to treat the data with caution. As a researcher, I am responsible for what happens with the data and I do not want it to be misrepresented during any part of the research.

Table 1 Information on six parties and movements before analysis

Group	PVV	UKIP	AfD	IV	EDL	Pegida
Country	The Netherlands	United Kingdom	Germany	The Netherlands	United Kingdom	Germany
Type of group	Political party	Political party	Political party	Movement	Movement	Movement
Published Tweets	13,600	37,800	18,900	3,805	27,600	14,900
Followers / following	811,000 / 1	205,000 / 3,762	133,000 / 832	2,608 / 811	4,092 / 819	6,234 / 832
Date joined	May 2009	August 2011	September 2012	September 2011	July 2013	March 2015
Followed by other groups	UKIP IV EDL Pegida	AfD EDL Pegida	UKIP Pegida	-	-	-
Period	29/03/2018 – 29/03/2019	23/05/2018 – 29/03/2019	20/06/2018 – 29/03/2019	29/03/2018 – 29/03/2019	29/3/2018 – 29/03/2019	29/03/2018 – 29/03/2019
Raw Tweets	3,183	3,235	3,213	1,029	3,126	1,204
Total raw Tweets	14,990					
Original Tweets	1,190	863	801	134	306	217
Total original Tweets	3,511					

Analysis

The analysis started with a content analysis, to identify the topics addressed and extremity of the language used in the tweets by the political parties and movements. Content analysis is a technique to transform qualitative data into quantitative data to be able to perform quantitative analysis with originally non-numerical data. To quantify the data, the data had to be coded, and during this process seven variables have been formulated. Variables 4 (type group), 5 (topic Tweet) and 6 (tone Tweet) are the most important for this research.

The values of variable 5 have been formulated based on a deductive followed by an inductive approach. For the deductive approach, Mudde's categories of the extreme-right ideology were used combined with Klein and Muis's research to formulate several topics that are likely to appear (Mudde, 2000a; Klein & Muis, 2018). The following topics were expected to come up based on the literature: nationalism, nativism, cultural racism, biological racism, Islam, immigrants, anti-Semitism, anti-democracy, anti-establishment, anti-Europe, and authoritarianism or law-and-order thinking.

Subsequently, an inductive approach was employed by studying the raw data to identify any additional topics that did not come from the literature (Lamont, 2015b). From this approach the following topics were added to the list of values: black people, other xenophobic topics and general political topics. Other xenophobic topics refer to identified 'others' that are stigmatised and problematized but cannot be grouped in any of the other xenophobic values. It could refer to homosexuals and transgenders, but also to people that propagate a multicultural society or even to people that demand action against climate change. These groups were too small for their own specific category and are therefore grouped together as *xenophobic other*.

The value *political other* was identified when it was noticed that many of the Tweets refer to general political matters that cannot be grouped in any of the other values. This could be about any political subject, from employment opportunities to social security schemes, from local to global, and from election campaigns to day-to-day politics.

The values of variable 6, regarding the tone of the Tweet, have been translated into a Likert scale. Ranging from -2 (very negative/extreme) to 0 (neutral) to +2 (very positive/friendly). The label "very negative" was assigned

when a Tweet called to undermine democracy using violence or when a Tweet was implying its respective government is intentionally grossly disrespecting its democratic values. The label “negative” was assigned for other Tweets that are phrased negatively, but not extreme. The label “neutral” was assigned when there was no specific tone of language in the Tweet. The label “positive” was assigned when a group published a Tweet in which they address a topic in a positive tone of voice. The label “very positive” was only assigned in cases where the Tweet addressed a certain topic in an extremely positive way. See Table 2 for an outline of the variables. A Likert scale is an ordinal scale, meaning there is an order in the different values but the steps between the values cannot be considered equal (Norman, 2010).

For the quantitative research part, the statistical programme SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was employed. Descriptive statistics were provided to give an overview of and get acquainted with the dataset (see Table 3). Additionally, by finding statistically significant results, the hypotheses could be confirmed or rejected (de Vocht, 2011). Lastly, CDA helped to understand underlying assumptions about the world causing the choice for the discussed topics and tone of language (Nam, 2018). CDA is a research method that understands language as something that is socially constructed showcasing power relations (Unger, Wodak & KhosraviNik, 2016; Kreis, 2017). Through the topics identified, the words chosen to phrase a message in, and, in the case of written language, through the use of punctuation and capital letters, the publisher gives away clues about his or her worldview and position in the world (Wodak, 2001).

Conclusion

This chapter described and justified the method used to address the research question. In this study mixed methods have been employed in which quantitative statistical analysis have been supported and enriched by qualitative content analysis and CDA. The combination of statistical analysis and discourse analysis has allowed the researcher to see not only what kind of topics these groups address but also how these topics are addressed.

This research was limited in terms of platform (Twitter), area (Western Europe) and language (Dutch, English and German). Six parties and movements from three different countries, the Netherlands, United Kingdom and Germany, have been selected for this study: PVV, UKIP, AfD, IV, EDL and Pegida. The data was collected through the use of Twitter's REST API and Python. Through content analysis the Tweets were coded and prepared for statistical analysis. Statistical analysis was employed to find statistically significant differences. This was followed by CDA to interpret and enrich the findings from the statistical analysis. In the next chapter the findings of the statistical analysis are presented.

Table 2 List of variables

Variable number	Label of variable	Values of variable	Measurement level
Var 1 – ID	ID/Tweet number	-	Scale
Var 2 – Date	Date and time of Tweet	-	Scale
Var 3 – Group	Name of group	0 – PVV 1 – UKIP 2 – Afd 3 – IV 4 – EDL 5 – Pegida	Nominal
Var 4 – P/M	Type of group	0 – Party 1 – Movement	Nominal
Var 5 – Topic	Topic of Tweet	Nationalist 0 – Nationalism 1 – Nativism Racist 2 – Cultural racism 3 – Biological racism Xenophobic 4 – Islam 5 – Immigrants 6 – Anti-Semitic 7 – Black people ¹ 8 – Other ¹ Anti-democracy 9 – Anti-democratic 10 – Anti-establishment 11 – Anti-Europe Strong state 12 – Authoritarianism/ law-and-order thinking Other 13 – Political other ¹ 14 – Non-political other ² -99 – Unusable/missing ²	Nominal
Var 6 – Tone	Tone of language	-2 – Very negative -1 – Negative 0 – Neutral 1 – Positive 2 – Very positive	Ordinal
Var 7 – Country	Group’s country	0 – The Netherlands 1 – United Kingdom 2 – Germany	Nominal

¹ Inductive approach – based on analysing raw data² Left out for analysis

Chapter Four: Findings from statistical analysis

Statistical analysis

This chapter presents the findings of the statistical analysis, which is further interpreted in the next chapter. A total of 3,511 Tweets have been collated in this dataset. For this research, five variables have been used: three independent variables and two dependent variables. Table 3 shows the frequencies of the variables from the dataset used for this study.

Independent variables

The independent variables for this research are *country*, *name group* and *type group*. All independent variables' levels of measurement are nominal. The most important independent variable is *type group*, which tells if a group is a party or a movement. 81.3 percent of the dataset consists of Tweets by parties, and movements published 18.7 percent of the Tweets. The other two variables are used to deepen the results from the analyses carried out with the type of group variable. The *name group* variable consists of six groups, three political parties (PVV, UKIP, AfD), and three movements (IV, EDL and Pegida). The three political parties each have a larger share in the dataset, between 22.8 percent and 33.9 percent, than the movements, whose share is between 3.8 percent and 8.7 percent. The last independent variable, *country*, consists of the groups' nationality. 37.7 percent of the dataset consists of Dutch groups, 33.3 percent consists of British groups, and German groups make for 29.0 percent of the database.

Dependent variables

The two dependent variables for this project are *tone* and *topic*. The *tone* variable is a Likert five-point scale with labels ranging from very negative to very positive, and an ordinal level of measurement. A neutral or negative tone of language was used in 92.0 percent of all Tweets. The last dependent variable was *topic*, this variable had a nominal level of measurement. *Topic* consists of 14 values (as explained in the Methodology chapter), which fall in the following

six broader categories: nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy, strong state and general political topics. One of the values, anti-Semitic (0%), has not come up in the dataset. Anti-establishment has come up in 32.3 percent of the Tweets (see Table 3).

Chi-square test and Cramer's V

For this analysis seven chi-square tests of independence were carried out, and when found to be significant, Cramer's V was measured to determine the level of association. Chi-square tests were chosen because only variables with a nominal or ordinal level of measurement were included. This limits the amount of techniques that can be employed. Chi-square tests of independence are used to determine if there is a significant association between two categorical (nominal or ordinal) variables. When a chi-square test is performed, two hypotheses will be formulated; the first one (the null hypothesis) will state there is no difference, meaning the two variables are independent from each other, the second hypothesis (the alternative hypothesis) will state there is a difference, meaning the variables are not independent from each other (Field, 2018). When there is a statistically significant difference, the null hypothesis will be rejected and the alternative hypothesis will be accepted; meaning the two variables are not independent.

To measure the level of association between these variables, effect size Cramer's V is used. Cramer's V can take a value between 0 and 1, where 0 means no association whatsoever, and 1 means perfect association. Although it is not common to assign normative values when interpreting the number of Cramer's V, Cohen has successfully tried to do so in his book from 1988. Cohen is regularly cited by social scientists employing statistical research methods (Bernhard, 2011; Field, 2018). I will use his normative values when interpreting Cramer's V. The interpretation of Cramer's V is dependent on the size of the table that is used for analysis. The smaller number of rows and columns (r) decides how Cramer's V should be interpreted. When r equals 2, a value of 0.10 equals a 'weak', 0.30 equals a 'medium', and 0.50 equals a 'strong' effect size or level of association. As r becomes larger, a smaller value of Cramer's V will represent a weak, medium or strong effect size (Cohen, 1988).

Topic of Tweet

A chi-square test was conducted to assess whether certain topics would come up more often amongst far-right political parties or extreme-right groups when publishing content on Twitter. The following hypotheses were formulated:

H_0 = There is no difference between parties and movements and their choice of topic.

H_a = There is a difference between parties and movements and their choice of topic.

The results were found to be significant, $\chi^2(12, n = 3,390) = 386.832, p < .001$. This means the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted: *there is a difference between parties and movements and their choice of topic*. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was medium, .338 (Cohen, 1988). The results show that movements most frequently address anti-establishment topics (42.3%). Parties also address anti-establishment topics very often (30.0%), but general political topics (30.9%) are even more common (see Figure 1).

Political parties address general political, nationalistic and anti-European topics more frequently than movements do (see Figure 1 and Table 4). The main bulk of their Tweets (30.9%) addresses general political issues that cannot be grouped in one of the other categories. For movements, on the other hand, topics regarding nativism, racism (both cultural, 4.3%; and biological, 0.5%), xenophobia (Islamophobia, anti-immigrants and anti-black people), anti-establishment and authoritarianism were addressed more frequently than expected (see Table 4). This suggests parties prefer topics regarding politics in general, nationalism and anti-European topics, while movements prefer nativist, racist, xenophobic, anti-establishment and authoritarian topics.

Table 3 Frequency distribution of variables country, name group, tone, topic, type of group

Variables	N	Percentage	Percentage missing	Level of measurement
Country				
The Netherlands	1,324	37.7%		
United Kingdom	1,169	33.3%		
Germany	1,018	29.0%		
Total	3,511	100%	0%	Nominal
Name of group				
PVV	1,190	33.9%		
UKIP	863	24.6%		
AfD	801	22.8%		
IV	134	3.8%		
EDL	306	8.7%		
Pegida	217	6.2%		
Total	3,511	100%	0%	Nominal
Tone				
Very negative	125	3.6%		
Negative	1,962	55.9%		
Neutral	1,268	36.1%		
Positive	128	3.6%		
Very positive	28	0.8%		
Total	3,511	100%	0%	Ordinal
Topic				
Nationalism	128	3.8%		
Nativism	36	1.1%		
Cultural racism	94	2.8%		
Biological racism	5	0.1%		
Islam	310	9.1%		
Immigrants	336	9.9%		
Anti-Semitic	0	0%		
Black people	21	0.6%		
Xenophobic other	24	0.7%		
Anti-democratic	28	0.8%		
Anti-establishment	1,096	32.3%		
Anti-Europe	211	6.2%		
Authoritarianism	247	7.3%		
Political other	854	25.2%		
Total	3,390	100% ^a	3.4%	Nominal
Type of group				
Party	2,854	81.3%		
Movement	657	18.7%		
Total	3,511	100%	0%	Nominal

Notes: ^a Valid percentage

Figure 1 Bar chart on topic of Tweet, broken down to type of group (in relative percentages)

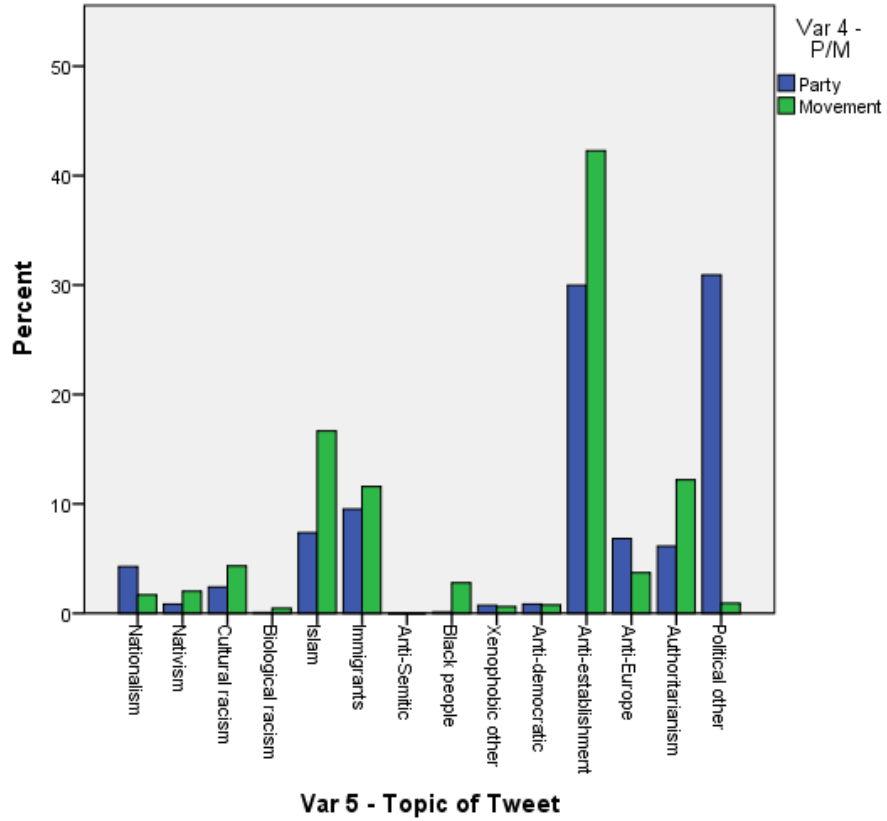


Table 4 Frequency and percentage topic of Tweet, broken down to type of group

		Party	Movement	Total
Nationalism	<i>a</i>	117 (4.3%)	11 (1.7%)	128 (3.8%)
	<i>b</i>	103.5	24.5	128.0
	<i>c</i>	13.5	-13.5	
Nativism	<i>a</i>	23 (0.8%)	13 (2.0%)	36 (1.1%)
	<i>b</i>	29.1	6.9	36.0
	<i>c</i>	-6.1	6.1	
Cultural racism	<i>a</i>	66 (2.4%)	28 (4.3%)	94 (2.8%)
	<i>b</i>	76.0	18.0	94.0
	<i>c</i>	-10.0	10.0	
Biological racism	<i>a</i>	2 (0.1%)	3 (0.5%)	5 (0.1%)
	<i>b</i>	4.0	1.0	5.0
	<i>c</i>	-2.0	2.0	
Islam	<i>a</i>	202 (7.4%)	108 (16.7%)	310 (9.1%)
	<i>b</i>	250.7	59.3	310.0
	<i>c</i>	-48.7	48.7	
Immigrants	<i>a</i>	261 (9.5%)	75 (11.6%)	336 (9.9%)
	<i>b</i>	271.8	64.2	336.0
	<i>c</i>	-10.8	10.8	
Black people	<i>a</i>	3 (0.1%)	18 (2.8%)	21 (.6%)
	<i>b</i>	17.0	4.0	21.0
	<i>c</i>	-14.0	14.0	
Xenophobic other	<i>a</i>	20 (0.7%)	4 (0.6%)	24(0.7%)
	<i>b</i>	19.4	4.6	24.0
	<i>c</i>	0.6	-0.6	
Anti-democratic	<i>a</i>	23 (0.8%)	5 (0.8%)	28 (0.8%)
	<i>b</i>	22.6	5.4	28.0
	<i>c</i>	0.4	-0.4	
Anti-establishment	<i>a</i>	822 (30.0%)	274 (42.3%)	1,096 (32.3%)
	<i>b</i>	886.5	209.5	1,096.0
	<i>c</i>	-64.5	64.5	
Anti-Europe	<i>a</i>	187 (6.8%)	24 (3.7%)	211 (6.2%)
	<i>b</i>	170.7	40.3	211.0
	<i>c</i>	16.3	-16.3	
Authoritarianism	<i>a</i>	168 (6.1%)	79 (12.2%)	247 (7.3%)
	<i>b</i>	199.8	47.2	247.0
	<i>c</i>	-31.8	31.8	
Political other	<i>a</i>	848 (30.9%)	6 (0.9%)	854 (25.2%)
	<i>b</i>	690.8	163.2	854.0
	<i>c</i>	157.2	-157.2	
Total	<i>a</i>	2,742 (100%)	648 (100%)	3,390 (100%)
	<i>b</i>	2,742.0	648.0	3,390.0

Notes: ^a Count, ^b Expected count, ^c Residual

To deepen this initial result, it is important to see what topics the specific parties and movement prefer to talk about, to find out if the result in the previous analysis was influenced by one of the parties or movements. Another chi-square test was conducted to assess whether the individual groups have a strong preference for a certain topic, skewing the above result. However, Cochran's rule was violated. Cochran's rule states that when performing a chi-square test (1) every cell's expected count must be at least 1, and (2) in 80 percent of all cells the expected count must be at least five (Kroonenberg & Verbeek, 2018). In this case, 26.9 percent of all cells have an expected count less than five, meaning that Cochran's rule deems the results of this analysis inappropriate.

To solve this problem, the topic variable is transformed into fewer categories (te Grotenhuis & van der Weegen, 2008). The new variable uses the following six values: nationalism (nationalism and nativism), racism (biological and cultural racism), xenophobia (Islam, immigrants, black people, xenophobic other), anti-democracy (anti-democratic, anti-establishment, anti-Europe), strong state (authoritarianism), and political other (political other). See Table 5 for the frequency distribution of this new variable.

Table 5 Frequency distribution of variable topic category

Variable	N	Percentage	Percentage missing	Level of measurement
Topic category	164	4.8%		
Nationalist	99	2.9%		
Xenophobic	691	20.4%		
Anti-democracy	1,335	39.4%		
Strong state	247	7.3%		
Political other	854	25.2%		
Total	3,390	100% ^a	3.4%	Nominal

Notes: ^a Valid percentage

Another chi-square test was conducted to assess if the specific groups have a preference for a certain topic, potentially influencing the first result. The following hypotheses were formulated:

H₀ = There is no difference between specific groups and their choice of topic category.

H_a = There is a difference between specific groups and their choice of topic category.

The results were found to be significant, $\chi^2(25, n = 3,390) = 821.602, p < .001$, meaning the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. *There is a difference between specific groups and their choice of topic category.* The effect size for this finding was strong, Cramer's V is 0.220 (Cohen, 1988). The results show that UKIP (50.5%), AfD (33.6%) and Pegida (80.9%) address anti-democratic topics most often, IV (47.7%) and EDL (37.6%) mostly focus on xenophobic topics, and PVV (33.7%) discuss general political topics most frequently (see Figure 2).

Between groups the choices of topic categories vary widely. Nationalistic topics are discussed more than average (4.8%) by IV, UKIP, PVV and EDL (6.2%, 6.0%, 5.8%, 5.3%, respectively) whereas Pegida never talk about nationalistic topics. Racist topics are addressed in 2.9 percent of all cases; EDL and Pegida discuss these topics more than average (5.3% and 5.6%, respectively). On average, xenophobic topics are addressed in 20.4 percent of the time, IV (47.7%) and, to a lesser extent, EDL (37.6%) and AfD (29.1%) are most xenophobic in their choice of topic. Striking is the percentage of Pegida addressing anti-democratic topics (80.9%), which is much higher than average (39.4%). This also stands out in Figure 2. EDL (23.4%) choose to talk about topics relating to strong state more than average (7.3%). General political topics are addressed more than average (25.2%) by PVV and UKIP (33.7% and 35.9%, respectively) (see Table 6).

Pegida and, to a lesser extent, EDL seem to have skewed the results from the first chi-square test. 80.9 percent of Pegida's content had an anti-democratic character (mainly anti-establishment). In 23.4 percent of EDL's Tweets, they chose to talk about topics regarding strong state. Because of these outliers, it seemed that, in the first chi-square test, movements talk more about anti-establishment and authoritarian topics than parties do.

Figure 2 Bar chart on topic categories of Tweet, broken down to specific groups (in relative percentages)

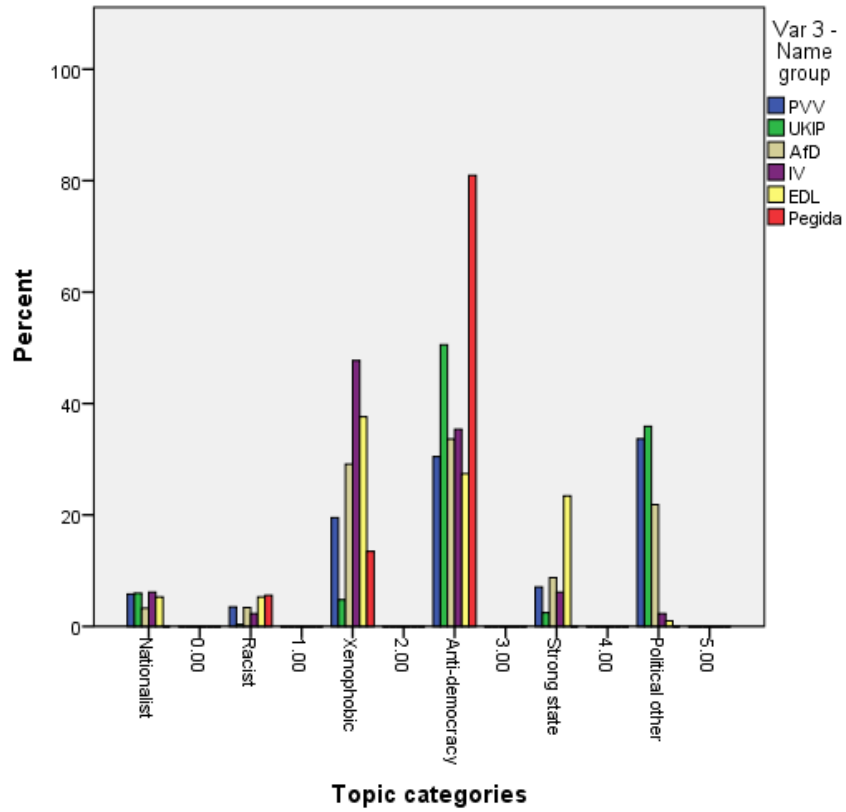


Table 6 Frequency and percentage category of Tweet, broken down to specific group

		PVV	UKIP	AfD	IV	EDL	Pegida	Total
Nationalism	<i>a</i>	63 (5.8%)	51 (6.0%)	26 (3.3%)	8 (6.2%)	16 (5.3%)	0 (0%)	164 (4.8%)
	<i>b</i>	52.6	41.4	38.7	6.3	14.7	10.4	164.0
	<i>c</i>	10.4	9.6	1.7	1.7	1.3	-10.4	
Racism	<i>a</i>	38 (3.5%)	3 (0.4%)	27 (3.4%)	3 (2.3%)	16 (5.3%)	12 (5.6%)	99 (2.9%)
	<i>b</i>	31.7	25.0	23.4	3.8	8.8	6.3	99.0
	<i>c</i>	6.3	-22.0	3.6	-0.8	7.2	5.7	
Xenophobia	<i>a</i>	212 (19.5%)	41 (4.8%)	233 (29.1%)	62 (47.7%)	114 (37.6%)	29 (13.5%)	691 (20.4%)
	<i>b</i>	221.6	174.3	163.1	26.5	61.8	43.8	691.0
	<i>c</i>	-9.6	-133.3	69.9	35.5	52.2	-14.8	
Anti-democracy	<i>a</i>	331 (30.5%)	432 (50.5%)	269 (33.6%)	46 (35.4%)	83 (27.4%)	174 (80.9%)	1,335 (39.4%)
	<i>b</i>	428.1	336.7	315.0	51.2	119.3	84.7	1,335.0
	<i>c</i>	-97.1	95.3	-46.0	-5.2	-36.3	89.3	
Strong state	<i>a</i>	77 (7.1%)	21 (2.5%)	70 (8.8%)	8 (6.2%)	71 (23.4%)	0 (0%)	247 (7.3%)
	<i>b</i>	79.2	62.3	58.3	9.5	22.1	15.7	247.0
	<i>c</i>	-2.2	-41.3	11.7	-1.5	48.9	-15.7	
Political other	<i>a</i>	366 (33.7%)	307 (35.9%)	175 (21.9%)	3 (2.3%)	3 (1.0%)	0 (0%)	854 (25.2%)
	<i>b</i>	273.8	215.4	201.5	32.7	76.3	54.2	854.0
	<i>c</i>	92.2	91.6	-26.5	-29.7	-73.3	-54.2	
Total	<i>a</i>	1,087 (100%)	855 (100%)	800 (100%)	130 (100%)	303 (100%)	215 (100%)	3,390 (100%)
	<i>b</i>	1,087.0	855.0	800.0	130.0	303.0	215.0	3,390.0

Notes: ^a Count, ^b Expected count, ^c Residual

The first chi-square test was repeated but this time Pegida were excluded from analysis. Pegida are an extreme outlier and in statistical research it is not uncommon to disregard outliers to prevent skewed results (te Grotenhuis & van der Weegen, 2008). Firstly, a new *type group* variable was constructed in which the parties consist of PVV, UKIP and AfD, and the movements consist of IV and EDL (see Table 7 for the descriptive statistics of this new variable).

Table 7 Frequency distribution of variable new type group

Variable	N	Percentage	Percentage missing	Level of measurement
New type group				
Party	2.854	86.6%		
Movement	440	13.4%		
Total	3.294	100% ^a	6.2%	Nominal

Notes: ^a Valid percentage

When another chi-square test was conducted with this new variable, 26.9 percent of all cells have an expected count less than 5, meaning that Cochran's rule deems the results of this analysis inappropriate. Therefore, the earlier constructed *topic category* variable was used for this chi-square test (see Table 5). The following hypotheses were formulated:

H₀ = There is no difference between parties and movements and their choice of topic category.

H_a = There is a difference between parties and movements and their choice of topic category.

The results were found to be significant, $\chi^2(5, n = 3,175) = 297.542, p < .001$, meaning the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. *There is a difference between parties and movements and their choice of topic category.* The effect size for this finding was medium, Cramer's V is 0.306 (Cohen, 1988). The results show that parties discuss general political (30.9%) and anti-democratic (37.6%) topics more frequently than movements (1.4% and 29.8%, respectively) do. On the other hand, movements talk more frequently about xenophobic (40.6%) and strong state (18.2%) topics than political parties (17.7% and 6.1%, respectively) do (see Figure 3 and Table 8).

Figure 3 Bar chart on topic categories of Tweet, broken down to new type group (in relative percentages)

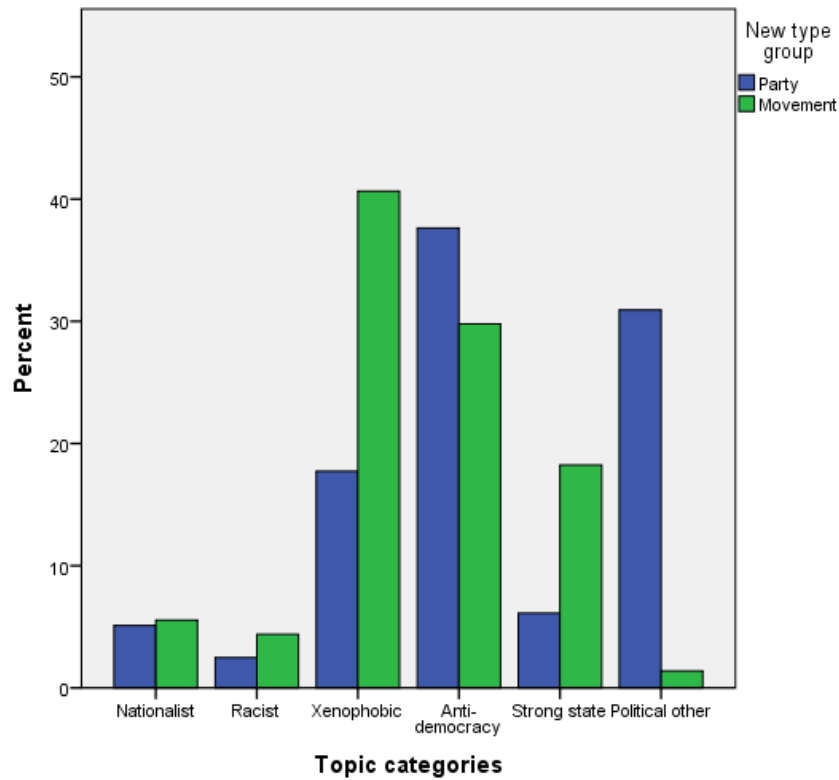


Table 8 Frequency and percentage category of Tweet, broken down to new type of group

		Party	Movement	Total
Nationalism	<i>a</i>	140 (5.1%)	24 (5.5%)	164 (5.2%)
	<i>b</i>	141.6	22.4	164.0
	<i>c</i>	-1.6	1.6	
Racism	<i>a</i>	68 (2.5%)	19 (4.4%)	87 (2.7%)
	<i>b</i>	75.1	11.9	87.0
	<i>c</i>	-7.1	7.1	
Xenophobia	<i>a</i>	486 (17.7%)	176 (40.6%)	662 (20.9%)
	<i>b</i>	571.7	90.3	662.0
	<i>c</i>	-85.7	85.7	
Anti-democracy	<i>a</i>	1,032 (37.6%)	129 (29.8%)	1,161 (36.6%)
	<i>b</i>	1,002.7	158.3	1,161.0
	<i>c</i>	29.3	-29.3	
Strong state	<i>a</i>	168 (6.1%)	79 (18.2%)	247 (7.8%)
	<i>b</i>	213.3	33.7	247.0
	<i>c</i>	-45.3	45.3	
Political other	<i>a</i>	848 (30.9%)	6 (1.4%)	854 (26.9%)
	<i>b</i>	737.5	116.5	854.0
	<i>c</i>	110.5	-110.5	
Total	<i>a</i>	2,742 (100%)	433 (100%)	3,175 (100%)
	<i>b</i>	2,742.0	433.0	3,175.0

Notes: ^a Count, ^b Expected count, ^c Residual

Another way the first analysis could have been influenced is due to the chosen countries. Certain issues might be more prevalent in certain countries. The next chi-square test was conducted to assess whether certain topics come up more in one of the three respective countries. The following hypotheses were formulated:

H_0 = There is no difference between each group's nationality and their choice of topic.

H_a = There is a difference between each group's nationality and their choice of topic.

The results were found to be significant, $\chi^2(24, n = 3,390) = 509709, p < .001$, meaning the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. *There is a difference between a group's nationality and their choice of topic category.* The effect size for this finding was medium to large, Cramer's V is 0.274 (Cohen, 1988). Dutch groups most frequently address general political topics, whereas British and German groups mostly talk about topics regarding anti-establishment (see Figure 4).

The most interesting results are found within the xenophobic topics. Dutch groups talk more about Islam (15.3%) and black people (1.4%) than on average (9.1% and 0.6%, respectively). German groups, on the other hand, talk more about immigrants (22.6%) than average (9.9%). Other notable differences are found amongst anti-European and general political topics. British and German groups (9.0% and 7.8%) are more concerned with anti-European topics than the Dutch (2.3%) are. German groups (17.2%) are less interested in general political topics than on average (25.2%) (see Table 9)

Figure 4 Bar chart on topic of Tweet, broken down to group's nationality (in relative percentages)

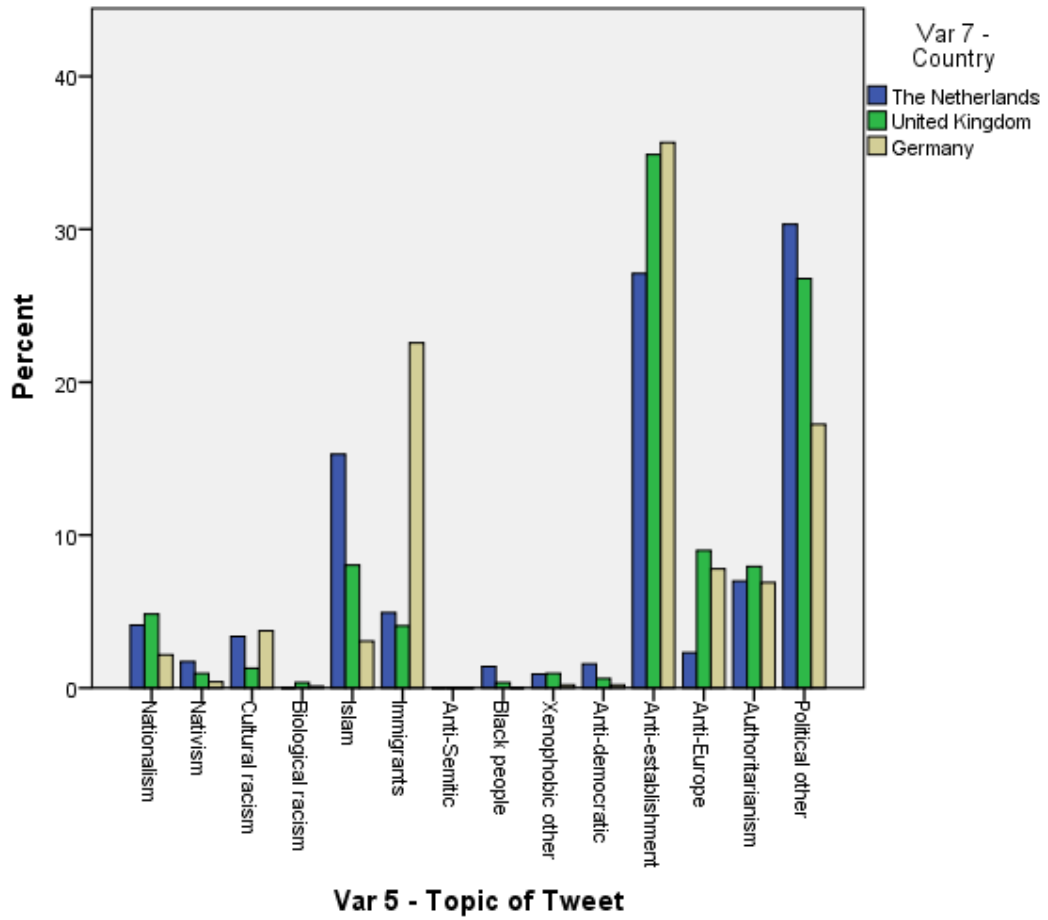


Table 9 Frequency and percentage topic of Tweet, broken down to group's nationality

		The Netherlands	United Kingdom	Germany	Total
Nationalism	<i>a</i>	50 (4.1%)	56 (4.8%)	22 (2.2%)	128 (3.8%)
	<i>b</i>	46.0	43.7	38.3	128.0
	<i>c</i>	4.0	12.3	-16.3	
Nativism	<i>a</i>	21 (1.7%)	11 (0.9%)	4 (0.4%)	36 (1.1%)
	<i>b</i>	12.9	12.3	10.8	36.0
	<i>c</i>	8.1	-1.3	-6.8	
Cultural racism	<i>a</i>	41 (3.4%)	15 (1.3%)	38 (3.7%)	94 (2.8%)
	<i>b</i>	33.7	32.1	28.1	94.0
	<i>c</i>	7.3	-17.1	9.9	
Biological racism	<i>a</i>	0 (0%)	4 (0.3%)	1 (0.1%)	5 (0.1%)
	<i>b</i>	1.8	1.7	1.5	5.0
	<i>c</i>	-1.8	2.3	-0.5	
Islam	<i>a</i>	186 (15.3%)	93 (8.0%)	31 (3.1%)	310 (9.1%)
	<i>b</i>	111.3	105.9	92.8	310.0
	<i>c</i>	74.7	-12.9	-61.8	
Immigrants	<i>a</i>	60 (4.9%)	47 (4.1%)	229 (22.6%)	336 (9.9%)
	<i>b</i>	120.6	114.8	100.6	336.0
	<i>c</i>	-60.6	-67.8	128.4	
Black people	<i>a</i>	17 (1.4%)	4 (0.3%)	0 (0%)	21 (0.6%)
	<i>b</i>	7.5	7.2	6.3	21.0
	<i>c</i>	9.5	-3.2	-6.3	
Xenophobic other	<i>a</i>	11 (0.9%)	11 (0.9%)	2 (0.2%)	24 (0.7%)
	<i>b</i>	8.6	8.2	8.4	24.0
	<i>c</i>	2.4	2.8	-6.4	
Anti-democratic	<i>a</i>	19 (1.6%)	7 (0.6%)	2 (0.2%)	28 (0.8%)
	<i>b</i>	10.1	9.6	8.4	28.0
	<i>c</i>	8.9	-2.6	-6.4	
Anti-establishment	<i>a</i>	330 (27.1%)	404 (34.9%)	362 (35.7%)	1,096 (32.3%)
	<i>b</i>	393.5	374.4	328.2	1096.0
	<i>c</i>	-63.5	29.6	33.8	
Anti-Europe	<i>a</i>	28 (2.3%)	104 (9.0%)	79 (7.8%)	211 (6.2%)
	<i>b</i>	75.7	72.1	63.2	211.0
	<i>c</i>	-47.7	31.9	15.8	
Authoritarianism	<i>a</i>	85 (7.0%)	92 (7.9%)	70 (6.9%)	247 (7.3%)
	<i>b</i>	88.7	84.4	74.0	247.0
	<i>c</i>	-3.7	7.6	-4.0	
Political other	<i>a</i>	369 (30.3%)	310 (26.8%)	175 (17.2%)	854 (25.2%)
	<i>b</i>	306.6	291.7	255.7	854.0
	<i>c</i>	62.4	18.3	-80.7	
Total	<i>a</i>	1,217 (100%)	1,158 (100%)	1,015 (100%)	3,390 (100%)
	<i>b</i>	1,217.0	1,158.0	1,015.0	3,390.0

Notes: ^a Count, ^b Expected count, ^c Residual

Tone of Tweet

A chi-square test was conducted to assess whether a certain tone of language would come up more often amongst far-right political parties or extreme-right groups when publishing content on Twitter. The following hypotheses were formulated:

H_0 = There is no difference between parties and movements and their tone of language.

H_a = There is a difference between parties and movements and their tone of language.

The results were found to be significant, $\chi^2(4, n = 3,511) = 195.434, p < .001$. This means the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted: *there is a difference between parties and movements and their tone of language*. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small to medium, .236 (Cohen, 1988). Parties (60.0%) most frequently use a negative tone of language, whereas movements (58.8%) most frequently use a neutral tone of language (see Figure 5). It appears that parties are both more negative (60.0%) and more positive (4.5%) than average (55.9% and 3.6%, respectively). Notably, movements use a neutral tone of language in 58.8 percent of their Tweets, which is higher than average (36.1%) (see Table 10).

Figure 5 Bar chart on tone of Tweet, broken down to type of group (in relative percentages)

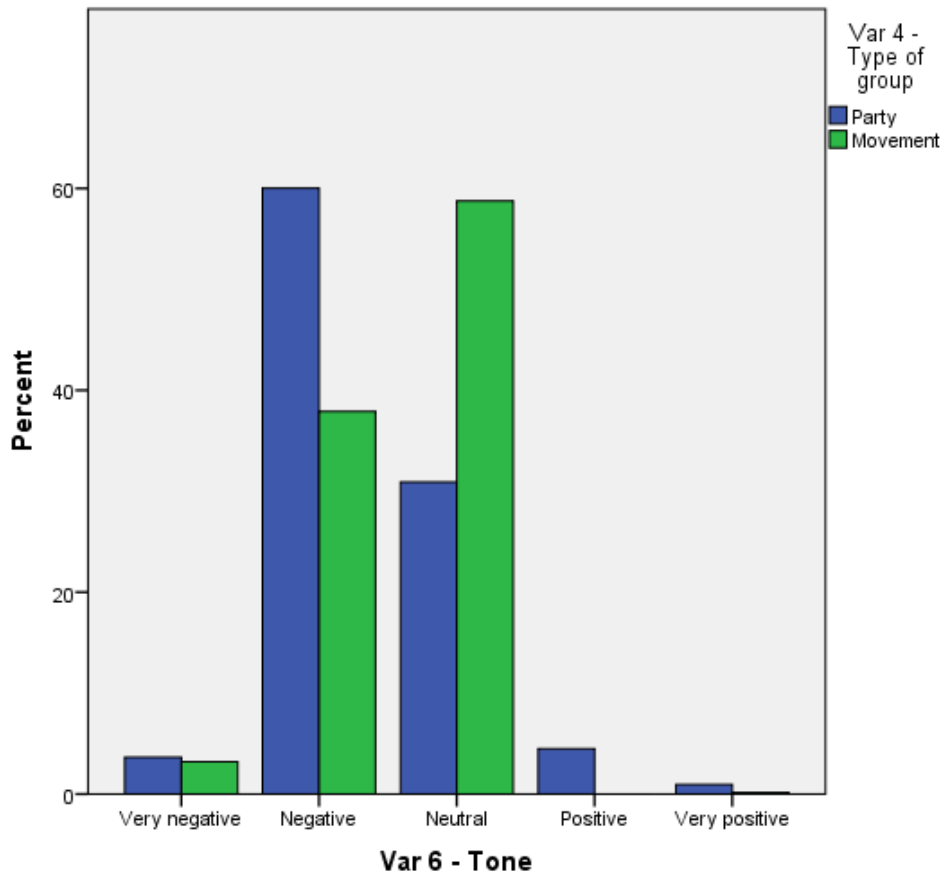


Table 10 Frequency and percentage tone of Tweet, broken down to type of group

		Party	Movement	Total
Very negative	<i>a</i>	104 (3.6%)	21 (3.2%)	125 (3.6%)
	<i>b</i>	101.6	23.4	125.0
	<i>c</i>	2.4	-2.4	
Negative	<i>a</i>	1,713 (60.0%)	249 (37.9%)	1,962 (55.9%)
	<i>b</i>	1,594.9	367.1	1,962.0
	<i>c</i>	118.1	-118.1	
Neutral	<i>a</i>	882 (30.9%)	386 (58.8%)	1,268 (36.1%)
	<i>b</i>	1,030.7	237.3	1,268.0
	<i>c</i>	-148.7	148.7	
Positive	<i>a</i>	128 (4.5%)	0 (0%)	128 (3.6%)
	<i>b</i>	104.0	24.0	128.0
	<i>c</i>	24.0	-24.0	
Very positive	<i>a</i>	27 (0.9%)	1 (0.2%)	28 (0.8%)
	<i>b</i>	22.8	5.2	28.0
	<i>c</i>	4.2	-4.2	
Total	<i>a</i>	2,854 (100%)	657 (100%)	3,511 (100%)
	<i>b</i>	2,854.0	657.0	3,511.0

Notes: ^a Count, ^b Expected count, ^c Residual

Like with topic of Tweet, it is important to explore if specific groups or countries influence the results found in the first analysis regarding tone of Tweet. Firstly, an extra chi-square test was conducted to assess whether specific groups prefer to use a certain tone of language. The following hypotheses were formulated:

H_0 = There is no difference between specific groups and their tone of language.

H_a = There is a difference between specific groups and their tone of language.

The results were found to be significant, $\chi^2(20, n = 3,511) = 663.636, p < .001$. This means the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted: *there is a difference between specific groups and their tone of language*. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was medium to large, .217 (Cohen, 1988). PVV (52.9%), UKIP (55.4%), AfD (75.7%) and IV (73.9%) mostly use a negative tone of language. EDL (48.0%) and Pegida (95.4%) mostly use a neutral language (see Figure 6). The results suggest that PVV (5.5%) and EDL (5.9%) use more extreme language than average (3.6%). AfD (75.7%) and IV (73.9%) use more negative language than average (55.9%).

It is striking that Pegida use neutral language in 95.4 percent of their messages, which is much higher than average (36.1%). This has skewed the results of the previous chi-square test finding that movements mostly use neutral language. Although EDL (48.0%) also use neutral language in almost half of their Tweets. Both positive and very positive language is barely used by movements, only EDL used very positive language in one of their Tweets. In this Tweet they expressed their intense happiness about the decision by Home Secretary Sajid Javid to take away the British citizenship of Shamima Begum, a woman who left the UK in 2015 to join ISIS and intended to come back for the safety of her child (BBC, 2019b). PVV use most positive (7.7%) and very positive (2.2%) language, which is higher than average (3.6% and 0.8%, respectively) (see Table 11).

Figure 6 Bar chart on tone of Tweet, broken down to specific group (in relative percentages)

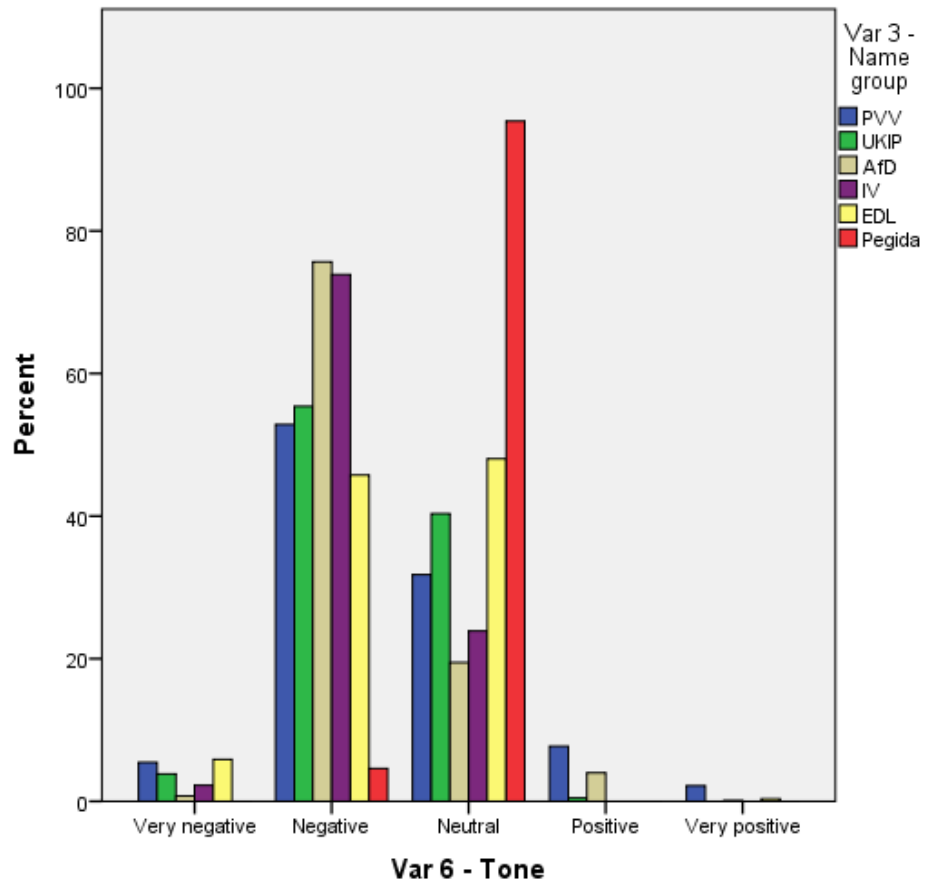


Table 11 Frequency and percentage tone of Tweet, broken down to specific group

		PVV	UKIP	AfD	IV	EDL	Pegida	Total
Very negative	<i>a</i>	65 (5.5%)	33 (3.8%)	6 (0.7%)	3 (2.2%)	18 (5.9%)	0 (0%)	125 (3.6%)
	<i>b</i>	42.4	30.7	28.5	4.8	10.9	7.7	125.0
	<i>c</i>	22.6	2.3	-22.5	-1.8	7.1	-7.7	
Negative	<i>a</i>	629 (52.9%)	478 (55.4%)	606 (75.7%)	99 (73.9%)	140 (45.8%)	10 (4.6%)	1,962 (55.9%)
	<i>b</i>	665.0	482.3	447.6	74.9	171.0	121.3	1,962.0
	<i>c</i>	-36.0	-4.3	158.4	24.1	-31.0	-111.3	
Neutral	<i>a</i>	378 (31.8%)	348 (40.3%)	156 (19.5%)	32 (23.9%)	147 (48.0%)	207 (95.4%)	1,268 (36.1%)
	<i>b</i>	429.8	311.7	289.3	48.4	110.5	78.4	1,268.0
	<i>c</i>	-51.8	36.3	-133.3	-16.4	36.5	128.6	
Positive	<i>a</i>	92 (7.7%)	4 (0.5%)	32 (4.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	128 (3.6%)
	<i>b</i>	43.4	31.5	29.2	4.9	11.2	7.9	128.0
	<i>c</i>	48.6	-27.5	2.8	-4.9	-11.2	-7.9	
Very positive	<i>a</i>	26 (2.2%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.1%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.3%)	0 (0%)	28 (0.8%)
	<i>b</i>	9.5	6.9	6.4	1.1	2.4	1.7	28.0
	<i>c</i>	16.5	-6.9	-5.4	-1.1	-1.4	-1.7	
Total	<i>a</i>	1,190 (100%)	863 (100%)	801 (100%)	134 (100%)	306 (100%)	217 (100%)	3,511 (100%)
	<i>b</i>	1,190.0	863.0	801.0	134.0	306.0	217.0	3,511.0

Notes: ^a Count, ^b Expected count, ^c Residual

Because this chi-square test showed that Pegida skewed the results for the first analysis regarding tone (as well as the analysis regarding topic), another chi-square test was conducted in which Pegida were excluded using the *new type group* variable. The following hypotheses were formulated:

H_0 = There is no difference between parties and movements and their tone of language.

H_a = There is a difference between specific groups and their tone of language.

The results were found to be significant, $\chi^2(4, n = 3,294) = 36.738, p < .001$, meaning the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. *There is a difference between parties and movements and their tone of language.* The effect size for this finding was weak, Cramer's V is 0.106 (Cohen, 1988). The results show that the effect size is a lot weaker than it was in the initial analysis: the interpretation of the effect size went down from a medium to large effect in the initial analysis to a weak effect in the current one. This means there is still a statistically significant difference between parties and movements and their tone of voice, but, the difference is not startling.

Both parties (60.0%) and movements (54.3%) primarily use a negative tone of voice, followed by a neutral tone of voice (30.9% and 40.7%, respectively), in the main bulk of their published Tweets. Compared to each other, political parties use a negative tone of voice more often than movements do, while movements are more likely to use a neutral tone of voice than political parties (see Figure 7 and Table 12). The most interesting change is the change in effect size, meaning that the differences between parties and movements have become a lot smaller when Pegida were left out for analysis.

Figure 7 Bar chart on tone of Tweet, broken down to new type of group (in relative percentages)

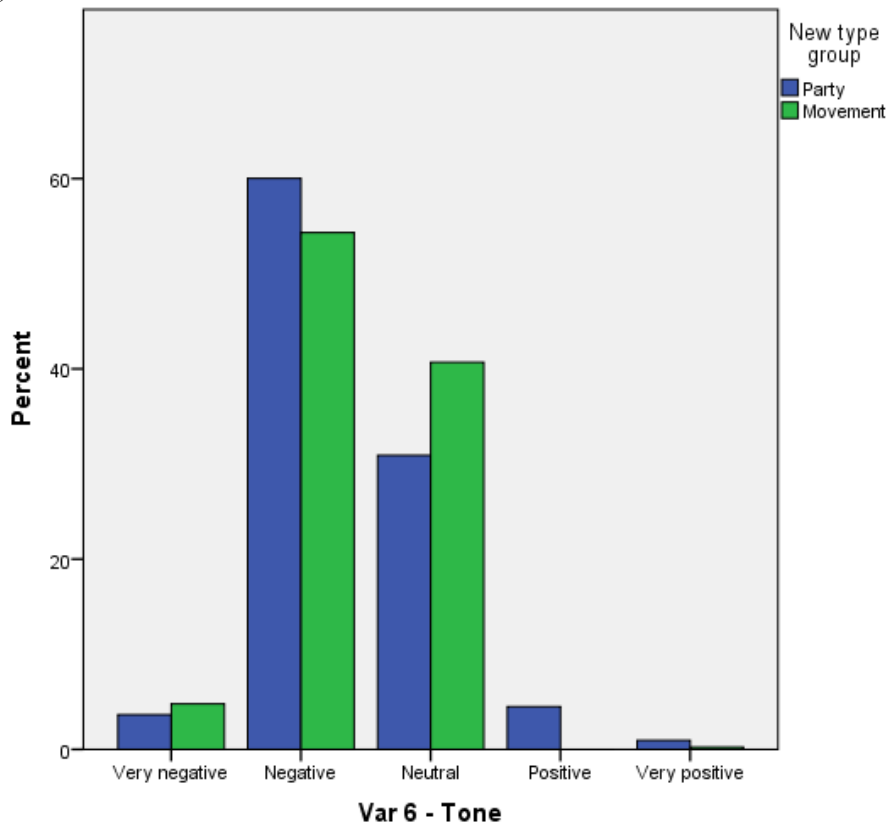


Table 12 Frequency and percentage tone of Tweet, broken down to new type of group

		Party	Movement	Total
Very negative	<i>a</i>	104 (3.6%)	21 (4.8%)	125 (3.8%)
	<i>b</i>	108.3	16.7	125.0
	<i>c</i>	-4.3	4.3	
Negative	<i>a</i>	1,713 (60.0%)	239 (54.3%)	1,952 (59.3%)
	<i>b</i>	1,691.3	260.7	1,952.0
	<i>c</i>	21.7	-21.7	
Neutral	<i>a</i>	882 (30.9%)	179 (40.7%)	1,061 (32.2%)
	<i>b</i>	919.3	141.7	1,061.0
	<i>c</i>	-37.3	37.3	
Positive	<i>a</i>	128 (4.5%)	0 (0%)	128 (3.9%)
	<i>b</i>	110.9	17.1	128.0
	<i>c</i>	17.1	-17.1	
Very positive	<i>a</i>	27 (0.9%)	1 (0.2%)	28 (0.9%)
	<i>b</i>	24.3	3.7	28.0
	<i>c</i>	2.7	-2.7	
Total	<i>a</i>	2,854 (100%)	440 (100%)	3,294 (100%)
	<i>b</i>	2,854.0	440.0	3,294.0

Notes: ^a Count, ^b Expected count, ^c Residual

Another way in which the results could be influenced is through the group's nationality. In some countries, a certain tone of language might be used more often than in other countries. A last chi-square test was conducted to assess whether groups from a specific country prefer to use a certain tone of language. The following hypotheses were formulated:

H_0 = There is no difference between a group's nationality and their tone of language.

H_a = There is a difference between a group's nationality and their tone of language.

The results were found to be significant, $\chi^2(8, n = 3,511) = 176.486, p < .001$. This means the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted: *there is a difference between a group's nationality and their tone of language*. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V, was small to medium, .159 (Cohen, 1988). Dutch (55.0%), British (52.9%) and German (60.5%) groups mostly use a negative tone of language (see Figure 8). Dutch groups use a very negative (5.1%), positive (6.9%) and a very positive (2.0%) tone of language more than average (3.6%, 3.6% and 0.8%, respectively). British groups use a very negative (4.4%) and a neutral tone of language (42.3%) more than average (3.6% and 36.1%, respectively). Lastly, German groups use a negative tone of voice in 60.5 percent of their Tweets, which is more than average (36.1%) (see Table 13).

Figure 8 Bar chart on tone of Tweet, broken down to group's nationality (in relative percentages)

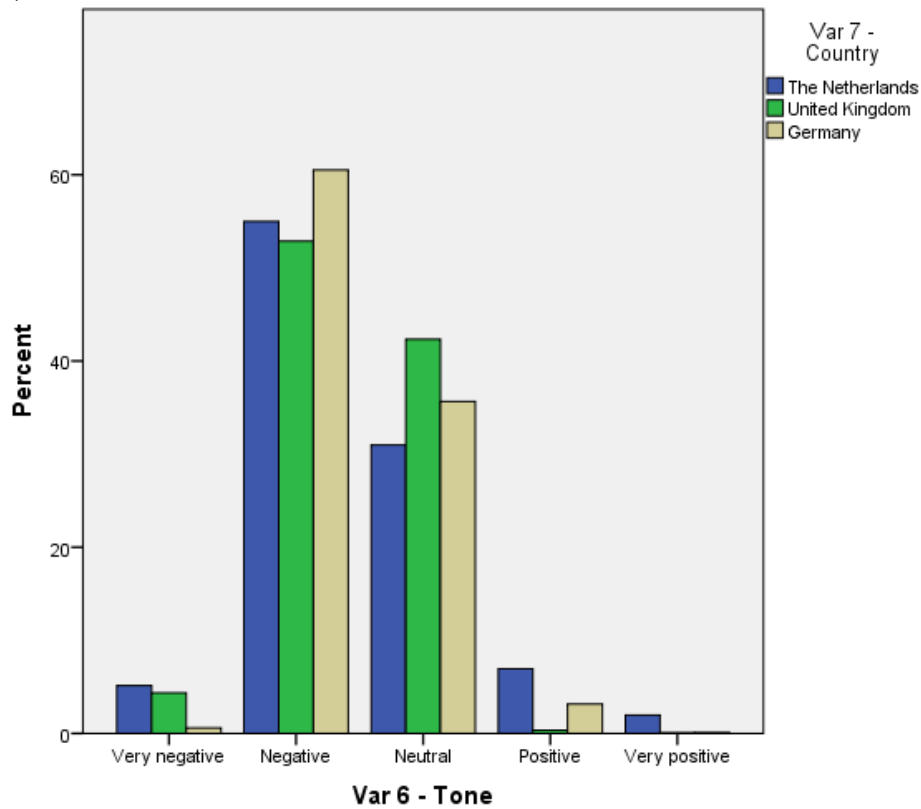


Table 13 Frequency and percentage tone of Tweet, broken down to group's nationality

		The Netherlands	United Kingdom	Germany	Total
Very negative	<i>a</i>	68 (5.1%)	51 (4.4%)	6 (0.6%)	125 (3.6%)
	<i>b</i>	47.1	41.6	36.2	125.0
	<i>c</i>	20.9	9.4	-30.2	
Negative	<i>a</i>	728 (55.0%)	618 (52.9%)	616 (60.5%)	1,962 (55.9%)
	<i>b</i>	739.9	563.3	568.9	1,962.0
	<i>c</i>	-11.9	-35.3	47.1	
Neutral	<i>a</i>	410 (31.0%)	495 (42.3%)	363 (35.7%)	1,268 (36.1%)
	<i>b</i>	478.2	422.2	367.7	1,268.0
	<i>c</i>	-68.2	72.8	-4.7	
Positive	<i>a</i>	92 (6.9%)	4 (0.3%)	32 (3.1%)	128 (3.6%)
	<i>b</i>	48.3	42.6	37.1	128.0
	<i>c</i>	43.7	-38.6	-5.1	
Very positive	<i>a</i>	26 (2.0%)	1 (0.1%)	1 (0.1%)	28 (0.8%)
	<i>b</i>	10.6	9.3	8.1	28.0
	<i>c</i>	15.4	-8.3	-7.1	
Total	<i>a</i>	1,324 (100%)	1,169 (100%)	1,018 (100%)	3,511 (100%)
	<i>b</i>	1,324.0	1,169.0	1,018.0	3,511.0

Notes: ^a Count, ^b Expected count, ^c Residual

Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings from the statistical analysis, without interpreting these findings. It is important to initially focus on what the results of the statistical analysis are, without getting distracted by what that, potentially, means. The first part of the chapter described the different independent and dependent variables, and explained the statistical tests (chi-square tests and Cramer's V) that are used. After that, the chapter was split up into two sections: the first section described the findings regarding topic of Tweet, and the second section described the findings regarding tone of Tweet. All analyses were found to be significant. Moreover, it was found that Pegida skewed the results and, to correct for this outlier, further analyses in which Pegida were excluded were carried out. The next chapter will interpret and enrich the findings presented in this chapter.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The purpose of the statistical analysis in the previous chapter was to find out if there is a statistically significant difference between parties and movements and their choice of topic and their tone of language, and where these differences lay. To enrich the findings from the statistical analysis, a CDA was conducted. The primary aim of the CDA is to find what kind of underlying assumptions about the world the different groups hold. The assumptions they hold could cause a specific choice of topic and a certain tone of language (Nam, 2018). CDA understands language as something that is socially constructed through power relations. Through the topics chosen to talk about, the words chosen to phrase a message in, and, in the case of written language, through the use of punctuation and caps, the publisher gives away clues about his or her worldview and position in the world (Wodak, 2001).

All 3,511 Tweets were analysed to find recurring themes, the way they were addressed and the relation the group has with the specific themes (Unger, Wodak & KhosraviNik, 2016). CDA was employed to find differences (and similarities) that cannot be found through statistical analysis. In the following paragraphs, the results of the statistical analysis will be further interpreted and enriched using CDA. Where possible the differences will be explained based on the available literature and current events; otherwise, additional research will be recommended.

Conway (2006) identified five categories of the use of the Internet for violent extremist groups: *information provision*, *financing*, *networking*, *recruitment* and *information gathering*. The data showed at least four of these categories: information provision in the form of spread propaganda, requesting donations from followers to fund the organisation, using the Internet to network in a decentralised setting and a borderless world, and gathering of information by compiling news articles. There were no signs of active recruitment, but it is likely recruitment is taking place in a more private setting in one-to-one conversations, rather than on a publicly available Twitter page. The web is the place to be to find like-minded people on nearly any topic, including radical

topics. The Internet is relatively anonymous, making for less boundaries to join a radical movement (Koehler, 2014).

The three movements included in this analysis have thousands of followers on their Twitter pages. The selected groups are also interconnected as they follow or are followed by each other (see Table 1). Research has shown that politically right-oriented people are less likely to search for content that is dissimilar to their beliefs than more liberal-oriented people (Barberá, et al., 2015). This fact combined with the interconnectedness of the groups, and Twitter's algorithm suggesting pages a user might be interested to follow (O'Callaghan, et al., 2015), make it likely many of the followers of the different pages overlap and do not digest much information that contradicts their beliefs. When people keep being affirmed in their pre-existing beliefs, their opinions will get increasingly more extreme and alternative beliefs become less acceptable, leading towards a polarised society (Sunstein, 2017).

Topic

Political parties

For the first part of the research question, two hypotheses were formulated. Firstly, it was expected that far-right political parties would focus mostly on the national and European political elite. Secondly, it was expected that extreme-right movements would mostly discuss immigration and Islam (Klein & Muis, 2018). The statistical analysis shows there is a statistically significant difference between parties and movements, and their choice of topic. When looking at what topics political parties address, anti-establishment topics (30.0%) come up very often, but when compared to movements (42.3%) this result is not higher than expected. Both parties and movements frequently address anti-establishment topics. Anti-European topics are addressed in only 6.8 percent of the time, but, when compared to movements, this number is higher than expected; meaning political parties are more likely to address anti-European topics than movements are. Other topics political parties are more likely to address than movements are, are general political (30.9%) and nationalistic topics (4.3%) (see Table 4). In light of their status as a political party, it is understandable that parties address general political topics more often than movements do. They are all active in

their respective national parliaments, meaning that they have to deal with many different political topics on a day-to-day basis.

The results show that hypothesis 1a can be partly accepted: *political parties talk mostly about general political topics and anti-establishment topics*. When compared to movements, political parties talk more about anti-European, general political topics and nationalistic topics. Based on the literature, this result was as expected. Far-right political parties are first and foremost political parties, and they want to gain as many votes as possible. The best way to gain popularity is by showing how the parties currently in power are failing and persuade voters to not vote for these parties next time (Klein & Muis, 2018). The CDA showed that many of the Tweets by political parties are aimed at the establishment. The main part of PVV's Tweets are about Prime Minister Mark Rutte, his party VVD or his cabinet. A hashtag they frequently use is #StemZeWeg, which translates to #VoteThemOut.

It is totally getting out of hand. Terrorists, bearded men, Islamisation, open borders.

A government that does not take its responsibility and puts us all in danger.

Nobody wants a civil war.

Me neither.

But sooner or later the population will revolt. (29/09/2018, @geertwilderspvv)

When politicians say "let's take no deal off the table.." they really mean, let's take Brexit off the table. 17.4M people expect their democratic wishes to be honoured on March 29th. WTO Brexit is truly leaving the EU. Anything less than fully leaving is betrayal. #WTOBrexitNow (18/01/2019, @UKIP)

PVV imply that keeping Rutte in power will cause Islamisation of the nation, which will lead to terrorism and eventually civil war. The party's choice to Tweet this in English combined with general terms, shows their message is not just aimed at the Dutch government but others as well. PVV are careful in their

wording, they do not ask people to become violent. However, their implications could be interpreted as violence being the only option. UKIP blame the establishment of betraying the people by trying to delay or even abolish Brexit. They often refer to the deal Theresa May was trying to negotiate as a “betrayal deal”. Another similarity the parties share is their criticism on policies that try to reduce the effects of climate change. They portray these policies as a waste of money through trying to fix long-term issues that might not even exist, while there are acute problems for the nation that are ignored.

Political parties are not just critical of the national establishment; also, the European Union (EU) is the target of disapproval.

.@Joerg_Meuthen: #Artikel13 & #Uploadfilter - eine riesige #Zensur“maschine!”

Unser #AfD-Bundessprecher und Spitzenkandidat zur #Europawahl wird im #Europaparlament gegen diese Zensurversuche stimmen!
#Artikel13Demo ... (23/03/2019, @AfD)

.@Joerg_Meuthen: #Article13 & #Uploadfilter - a huge #censorship“machine”

Our #AfD national spokesman and leading candidate for the #European election will vote in the #European parliament against these censorship attempts (Translation Tweet above)

A considerable part of AfD’s Tweets is about the so-called upload filter. This refers to an article of a new EU Copyright Directive, making sure that without a licence, no copyright-protected material is uploaded on the web (BBC, 2019c). According to AfD, the EU is introducing this law to be able to control and censor the Internet; they call the law a “censorship machine” (Zensurmaschine). AfD are very critical of the EU, however, they explicitly say they are not against the EU. They believe the EU could be useful if it would be drastically reformed: it should be smaller, less centralised and the costs for Member States should be reduced (Dilling, 2018). PVV and UKIP are more radical in their EU criticism: they want to leave the EU because it is expensive, limits the country’s

sovereignty and is only beneficial for other, less-developed Member States (Ford, Goodwin & Cutts, 2012; Europe of Nations and Freedom, n.d.).

Far-right political parties do not just refer to political actors when addressing anti-establishment topics: they also frequently mention the media. They are referred to as “main-stream media” and “left media”; far-right parties view the media as propaganda machines for the political establishment. According to the far right, the media are an extension of the establishment reinforcing existing power relations.

UKIP policy is to scrap the licence fee entirely.

Nobody should be forced to pay for political propaganda to be pumped into their homes.

#AxeTheTVTax

#BBCSwitchoff (02/02/2019, @UKIP)

UKIP frequently Tweet about how they want to abolish the television licence fee. According to them, it is a “political propaganda” machine and this does not fit in a free Western society. The “mainstream media” only pay attention to left-wing ideas and they withhold the right to freedom of speech by systematically ignoring the right-wing spectrum. Especially news outlets BBC and The Sun are guilty of disregarding and misrepresenting the right, according to UKIP. This way the media reinforce existing power relations and help the establishment to stay in power.

Movements

Movements mostly talk about anti-establishment topics, as mentioned above 42.3 percent of their Tweets concern this topic. Compared to political parties, movements address Islamophobic and anti-immigrant topics more than expected. Movements are more likely to address Islamophobic and anti-immigrant topics than political parties are. Other topics where there was a considerably large difference between movements and parties, were nativist, anti-black people and authoritarian topics. Movements addressed these topics at least double as often as parties did (see Table 4).

Hypothesis 1b cannot be accepted: *immigration and Islam are not the most prevalent topics movements talk about*; anti-establishment topics are. However, movements do address Islam and immigration significantly more often than political parties do; Islamophobic topics in particular, are twice as likely to be addressed by movements than by parties. Therefore, although these topics are not the most popular choice for movements, compared to political parties they address these topics very frequently. The literature suggests that movements address topics that political parties refuse to address adequately (Klein & Muis, 2018). This might be why movements are more likely to address certain topics than political parties are. Because far-right political parties do not talk as much about immigration and Islam topics as often as followers of the far-right would want, extreme-right movements jump in and address these topics to fill the gap.

Another interesting finding concerns anti-Semitic topics. The results show that none of the Tweets of both political parties and extremist movements had an anti-Semitic character. The literature already suggested that, nowadays, the far-right in Western Europe is not as concerned with anti-Semitic topics as they were in the past (Mudde, 2007). However, it was unexpected to find no anti-Semitism whatsoever. Even more striking was that PVV Tweeted in Hebrew once in the past year, and they openly state their support for Israel (Botje & Vuijst, 2009). Anti-Semitism does not seem to apply to the far-right political parties and extreme-right movements chosen for analysis.

When the above results were deepened in additional analyses, it turned out that there is also a statistically significant difference between specific groups and their choice of topic category. This result explained the unexpected result found above; showing movements talk more frequently about anti-establishment and authoritarian topics than political parties do: 80.9 percent of all Pegida's Tweets fell in the anti-democratic category and 23.4 percent of EDL's Tweets were about a stronger state (see Table 6). Pegida and, to a lesser extent, EDL are skewing the result of the earlier analysis.

When, in another test, Pegida are left out for analysis, movements mostly talk about xenophobic topics. It was hypothesised that movements would mostly talk about immigrants and Islam, and both of these topic are grouped under the xenophobic category. Unfortunately, because Cochran's rule was violated in

these analyses, the topic variable had to be transformed into broader categories. Therefore, it is not possible to identify what specific xenophobic topics movements mostly address when Pegida were taken out. EDL's focus on strong state rhetoric has a different effect on the results. Within movements, strong state topics do not become more prevalent, however, when movements are compared to political parties this topic does become more prevalent. In other words, with EDL left in the analysis, it seems like movements talk more about strong state topics than political parties do. However, when EDL would be left out for analysis, political parties would address strong state topics slightly more often than movements do.

Right-wing extremist movements and political parties believe a strong and strict government body is necessary to the state to remain strongest: a state in which offenders get high prison sentences and live in sober prison conditions, and one that does not scare away from the possibility of capital punishment. This way, the state will remain structured and people are inclined to abide by the rules (Carter, 2018). CDA showed that all three movements have an aversion against the, in their eyes, weak punishments criminals receive. Movements often refer to news links about crimes and suggest a very strict punishment.

Alesha Macphail's evil killer, 16, complains he 'has a price on his head' and faces being attacked behind bars for the six-year-old's brutal rape and murder

WHAT A FUCKING SHAME HOPE YOUR TORTURED TO DEATH (@EDLLONDON, 23/02/2019)

Although the statistical analysis showed movements mostly use a neutral tone of voice in their content, they incidentally use very radical language as shown above. In the Tweet above, EDL openly state they hope a 16-year-old convicted killer gets "tortured to death" in prison. In many of EDL's Tweets they refer to news articles to comment on. Often the comment is very negative and all in capital letters like in the Tweet above. They have used the phrase "HANG THE SCUM" on several occasions. Confirming the literature, EDL propagate a society with a strong state in which criminals get high sentences, possibly death sentences, and in which rehabilitation and second chances have no place.

When the first statistical analysis was deepened, the difference between specific groups and their choice of topic category was statistically significant and there was a strong level of association. The level of association between specific groups is stronger than the level of association found in the analysis between parties and movements. There could be two reasons for the stronger level of association in this analysis. Firstly, the topic variable was transformed in one with less, broader topic categories, meaning the differences are likely to be stronger. Secondly, the type of group variable might consist of specific groups that do not have a strong association with each other, causing the effect to be smaller in the first analysis. It is likely the two suggested explanations are both present, and together cause the stronger level of association in the second analysis.

The second analysis between specific groups also showed that Pegida heavily skewed the outcome of the first analysis between parties and movements. When CDA was performed it turned out why Pegida were such an outlier within this study. Far-right political parties use their Twitter accounts as a political tool. They criticise the political establishment and blame certain groups for everything that goes wrong in their respective countries. They present the problems the country is facing and offer a solution, namely give them your vote. Extreme-right movements, on the other hand, are not political parties and have no power to change anything politically; at least through the regular channels of politics. They often present themselves as a victim of the current status quo. Protesting is the only thing they can do to bring about awareness of issues and eventually change.

#PEGIDA #Dresden #dd0904 #dd1604 #AufDieStraße #Sachsen
#Brandenburg #Cottbus #Leipzig #Hamburg #Chemnitz #Erzgebirge
#Osterzgebirge #Görlitz #Plauen #Zwickau #AfD #Merkel #GroKo
#SPD #Kandel #Maas #Nopegida #kandelistueberall #Merkelmussweg
#nopegida (@OFFICIAL_PEGIDA, 12/04/2018)

#PEGIDA #Dresden #dd0904 #dd1604 #OnTheStreets #Saxony
#Brandenburg #Cottbus #Leipzig #Hamburg #Chemnitz
#OreMountains #EasternOreMountains #Görlitz #Plauen #Zwickau

#AfD #Merkel #GrandCoalition #SPD #Kandel #Maas #Nopegida
#kandeliseverywhere #Merkelhastogo #nopegida (Translation Tweet
above)

When Pegida's Twitter account is studied more closely, it becomes apparent that they use Twitter differently than the other groups within the analysis. Pegida are a protest group and they use their Twitter account to announce their protests and to announce about what their protests will be. In the above Tweet they announce protests on the 9th and 16th of April in several German cities. EDL and IV can be viewed as both online and offline groups: they use their accounts to announce protests, but they also use the platform to discuss issues they find important. They talk about how the state is failing them and present solutions, like a more authoritarian state, to effectuate a more successful state. Pegida prefer to mainly act offline and they use the Internet as a bulletin board to announce their offline plans to assemble as many people as possible.

The next analysis that was carried out to deepen the first analysis found a difference between a group's nationality and their choice of topic. This analysis showed that Islamic, anti-black people and anti-democratic topics are prevalent for Dutch groups, anti-European and authoritarian rhetoric are prevalent for British groups, and German groups mostly address topics regarding immigrants. The literature provides no explanation for why Islamic and anti-democratic topics are addressed by Dutch groups more often than by German or British groups. However, the fact that Dutch groups negatively address black people more often than the other groups do can be explained.

Every year on 5 December, the Dutch celebrate a holiday called 'Sinterklaas'. This holiday is similar to Christmas with Santa Claus: Sinterklaas comes to the Netherlands and brings presents to children who behaved nicely. Sinterklaas arrives in the Netherlands in the second week of November, and in the period before 5 December he leaves small presents and candy in the children's shoes, while they sleep. Helpers, called Black Petes, bring the presents to all the children, assisting Sinterklaas. These Black Petes usually wear black gloves and tights, and black makeup over their entire face. Their black faces are explained by the custom of Black Petes bringing the presents entering the house through the chimney. In recent years, action groups have

started to question the blackface-tradition and suggested that they could have black sweeps over their faces, representing the soot from the chimney. These suggestions to alter the Sinterklaas tradition met a lot of resistance, and the far-right is a vocal proponent of a black Black Pete. Every year when the holiday is about to start, the discussion flares up again and both proponents and opponents of Black Pete become vocal (Hilhorst & Hermes, 2016).

The result showing that British groups are mostly concerned with anti-European topics in the year Britain is supposed to leave the European Union is unsurprising; especially considering Brexit is the greatest success of UKIP. In all three countries, the political right is an opponent of open borders and the welcoming of migrants, however, in Germany the political right is most vocal about this topic. The reason German groups mostly focus on topics regarding immigration can be related back to Chancellor Angela Merkel's statement in 2015 in which she said Germany will provide shelter for the many migrants coming to Europe. Far-right groups claim this statement was interpreted as an open invitation for more migrants to travel to Europe, causing the burden to be even heavier. AfD have won many votes over Merkel's statement (Delcker, 2016).

Tone

For the second part of the research question, the following hypothesis was formulated: extreme-right movements use more extreme language than far-right political parties do. The statistical analysis showed that there is a difference between parties and movements and their tone of language. However, political parties mostly use a negative tone of voice (60.0%), while movements most frequently use a neutral tone of voice (58.8%) (see Table 10). Therefore, hypothesis 2 is rejected: *right-wing extremist movements do not use more extreme language than political parties*. Based on the available literature, this result is unexpected. Movements adhere a more radical ideology than political parties, and parties are expected to show some form of political correctness (Klein & Muis, 2018). Therefore, it was expected they would also use more radical language than political parties do.

When deepening the above analysis, it was found that there is a statistically significant difference between specific groups and their tone of language. The three separate political parties all mainly used a negative tone of voice, consistent with the earlier analysis. However, within movements, Pegida skewed the results from a negative to a neutral tone of voice. In 95.4 percent of their Tweets, they used a neutral tone of voice. Pegida do not use their Twitter account as a discussion platform, as the other groups do. This result explains the earlier discrepancy between the expected tone of voice by movements and the found tone of voice by movements.

The difference between specific groups and their tone of language was statistically significant and there is a medium to strong level of association. The level of association in this analysis is stronger than in the previous one, meaning the specific groups differ more from each other than parties and movements do. This suggests that the selected groups for parties and movements respectively, do not show a similar tone of language, causing a weaker effect in the former analysis. Because Pegida skewed the results, another analysis was carried out in which parties and movements are compared but in which Pegida were left out for analysis.

This time the difference between parties and movements was still significant but with a very low effect size, meaning that there is not a large difference between parties and movements and their tone of voice. When Pegida were left out for analysis, both parties and movements mostly use a negative tone of voice in their Tweets (see Figure 7). This extra analysis still means that hypothesis 2 has to be rejected: *right-wing extremist movements do not use more extreme language than political parties*. Both parties and movements use negative language, however no extreme (i.e. very negative) language. It is likely that parties and movements are careful not to use overly extreme language to avoid being taken down for spreading radical content. Although in the past Twitter mostly focused on taking down jihadist content (Pearson, 2018), there are a few recent examples where Twitter have taken down right-wing extremist pages (Wong, 2018).

The last analysis that was carried out to deepen the results found that there is a statistically significant difference between a group's nationality and their tone of language. German groups use almost no 'very negative' language,

whereas Dutch groups are more likely to use positive and very positive language compared to the other groups. However, none of these results influence the results of the main analysis regarding tone.

Political parties

Political parties and movements seem to use a similar tone of language, however the CDA showed there are differences between their tones that cannot be expressed in terms of negative or positive. Many of the Tweets published by the political parties use us-vs-them rhetoric. The literature showed, that many right-wing extremist groups create their identity through the use of us-vs-them rhetoric. Especially the ‘them’ or ‘Other’ rhetoric is important, as the ‘us’ usually consists of a very heterogeneous group whose only similarity is their aversion to the ‘Other’ (Graham, 2016; Berger, 2018; Conway, 2019).

Within the data, the ‘us’ seem to be the citizens of their own respective countries, the ‘them’ are migrants, criminals, and Muslims, but can also refer to people that propagate a multicultural society, the political establishment or the media. By using this rhetoric, the political parties attempt to convince potential voters from their understanding of the problems that prevail in society, and if they vote for their party, they will start solving these issues. All three parties want to stand up for their own nations and its citizens, for the Dutch, British and German, respectively. However, not everyone holding a passport of the respective country are to be protected by these parties.

Islamitisch-Marokkaanse-ISIS-verdachte met Nederlands paspoort gearresteerd samen met nog een paar moslims uit Nederland en Irak.

Iemand nog vóór de dubbele nationaliteit? Iemand nog vóór meer islam in Nederland? Iemand nog vóór open grenzen?

Dan snel melden bij de GGZ. (17/02/2019, @geertwilderspvv)

Islamic-Moroccan ISIS suspect with a Dutch passport was arrested together with a few other Muslims from the Netherlands and Iraq.

Anyone still in favour of the double nationality? Anyone still in favour of more Islam in the Netherlands? Anyone still in favour of open borders?

Then quickly sign up for mental healthcare. (Translation Tweet above)

In the above Tweet PVV refer to an incident where someone with a Dutch and Moroccan passport is arrested. However, according to PVV, this suspect is an “Islamic-Moroccan” person, but has a “Dutch passport”. The Islamic-Moroccan part is inseparably linked to this individual, whereas the person is merely Dutch because of the passport: something that can easily be taken away. For example, by abolishing the “double nationality”, as mentioned in the second part of the Tweet. And, if you do not understand this line of reasoning, you must have mental trouble and need professional care to fix you.

Movements

For movements, the CDA showed that they often present themselves and their followers as a victim of current power relations. The establishment does not care about their rights: the movements and their followers are forgotten and being wronged, and nobody is doing anything about it.

Heftige beelden hoe Nederlanders hun huis moeten verdedigen tegen illegalen die binnen dringen. En de politie? Je raad het antwoord vast wel! Hemeltergend dit! (@Identitair, 04/06/2018)

Powerful images of how Dutch people have to defend their homes against illegal immigrants from entering. And the police? You probably guess the answer! This is clamant! (Translation Tweet above)

In the Tweet above, IV refer to an incident where a group undocumented migrants try to squat a building. They mistakenly thought the building was deserted, but people were living and companies were located there. This resulted in a confrontation, and after the misunderstanding was cleared up, the group of undocumented migrants stopped their attempt to squat the building. In the Tweet, IV imply that the police was not doing anything; in fact, the police was on its way to appease the situation (AT5, 2018). Although IV are technically not lying in this Tweet, they do frame a situation in a way that makes it look like the

Dutchman is a victim of aggressive migrants who are trying to fight them out of their houses, while the police does not care and refuses to act upon this aggression.

Answer to research question

This research intended to answer the following research question:

How does the use of social media by far-right political parties differ from right-wing extremist movements in terms of their choice of topic and their use of language?

The research shows that far-right political parties use their Twitter account as a discussion platform and a way to propagate their political agenda. Movements, on the other hand, have no voters to gain and this is not their focus. Therefore, they employ a slightly different approach. Because they cannot solve issues politically, the most they can do is to gain attention for certain problems. They do this by addressing topics on their platform and gather likeminded people, and by organising protests to show the establishment that large groups of people are unhappy about certain issues. German movement Pegida merely focus on the latter tactic: they organise protests and they use Twitter as an online bulletin board to announce when and where the next protest will be held. For this study, three hypotheses have been formulated, two about choice of topic and one about tone of language:

Hypothesis 1a: Far-right political parties focus mostly on the national and European political elite.

Hypothesis 1b: Right-wing extremist movements' most prevalent topics are immigration and Islam.

Hypothesis 2: Right-wing extremist movements use more extreme language than far-right political parties.

Based on the initial research, the results were unexpected: hypothesis 1a has only been partly accepted and hypotheses 1b and 2 have been rejected. After further analysis, it turned out the truth is more nuanced and hypotheses 1b and 2 cannot be rejected completely, but instead they can be refined.

Both far-right political parties and extreme-right movements address topics that people care about. The most popular topics to address for political parties and movements together are anti-establishment topics, followed by general political topics, immigration, Islam and authoritarianism, respectively. When parties and movements are looked into separately, the same general patterns can be identified, with a few exceptions. Political parties tend to focus more on general political, anti-European and nationalistic topics than movements do. Movements, on the other hand, address anti-establishment topics, Islam, immigration and authoritarian topics more often than political parties do. If the preferred choice of topic is based on the relative popularity instead of on the absolute popularity, hypothesis 1a is still partly accepted and hypothesis 1b is accepted. When the groups are individually compared, it turns out that one movement, Pegida, skewed the results towards movements talking more about topics within the anti-democratic category. When Pegida were left out for analysis, hypotheses 1a and 1b can be fully accepted. On this point, further research is recommended to explore if different movements would be more similar to IV and EDL, which would show they are a good reflection of Western-European movements.

After the initial analysis, hypothesis 2 was rejected: there is a difference between parties and movements and their tone of language, but the difference was opposite from what was expected. Movements used a more neutral tone of voice compared to political parties, instead of the other way around. When another analysis was conducted, comparing the tone of voice of the specific groups, it turned out that Pegida use neutral language in more than 95 percent of their Tweets. Like with choice of topic, Pegida are skewing the results of the initial analysis. When Pegida were left out for analysis, hypothesis 2 could still not be accepted, but the results were much closer to what was expected. Movements and political parties both use a similar tone of language, namely a negative tone.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to discuss the findings of the statistical analysis, and to interpret and enrich these findings through CDA. Furthermore, CDA was employed to find differences (and similarities) that cannot be found through statistical analysis. The chapter discussed the findings regarding topic, subdivided into political parties and movements. It was found that, after taking out the outlier Pegida, political parties mostly talk about the national and European political elite, while right-wing extremist movements mostly discuss immigration and Islam.

Next, the findings regarding tone, subdivided into political parties and movements were discussed. It was found that right-wing extremist movements do not use more extreme language than far-right political parties. In the initial analysis, where Pegida were still included, the opposite was found: parties used more negative language than movements did. When Pegida were taken out for analysis, it was concluded that neither parties nor movements use much extreme language, but they do both use negative language in most of their Tweets. Finally, based on these conclusions an answer to the research question was formulated.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Summary

This research was conducted to find an answer to the question: how does the use of social media by far-right political parties differ from right-wing extremist movements in terms of their choice of topic and tone of language? In terms of the choice of topic, it was hypothesised that far-right political parties would prefer to talk about the national and European political establishment. This hypothesis was partly accepted. It was found that political parties preferred to Tweet about topics regarding general political issues and the national establishment, but not about anti-European topics. Furthermore, it was found that, when political parties' choice of topic is compared to right-wing extremist movements, parties talk more about anti-European topics than movements do, but movements talk more about national anti-establishment topics.

Next, it was hypothesised right-wing extremist movements would mostly talk about Islam and immigration. This hypothesis was accepted and confirmed. Although in absolute numbers, movements mostly talk about topics regarding the national establishment. However, when compared to political parties, extremist movements talk considerably more about Islam and immigration, but also about nativist, anti-black people and authoritarian topics. Furthermore, additional analysis showed that Pegida skewed the outcome of the analysis considerably, causing the results to show that, in absolute numbers, movements talk mostly about anti-establishment topics. When Pegida was left out for analysis, the results showed that xenophobic topics, two of which are anti-immigration and Islamophobic topics, are the most prevalent choice of topic for movements. Groups and their followers seem to have the same topic preferences, as the results of this study are similar to the findings of Klein and Muis (2018).

In terms of tone of language, it was expected that movements would use more extreme language than political parties do. This hypothesis is rejected. The initial results even showed that political parties use more negative (not extreme) language than movements do. Additional analysis showed that Pegida, again, drastically skewed the initial analysis. By using Twitter as an online bulletin

board on which they mostly use a neutral tone of voice to announce their protests, they skewed the average tone of voice of movements in general from negative towards neutral. When Pegida was left out for analysis, both movements and political parties prefer to use a negative tone of voice. Neither movements nor political parties tend to use extremely radical language in their Tweets. It is often angry and negative, but rarely anti-democratic or extreme. Both parties and movements use extreme language in about 3,5 percent of their published Twitter content. In terms of the chosen tone of language, groups and followers do not coincide and the results of this study deviate from those found by Klein and Muis (2018).

Conclusions

This research has shown that political parties are mostly concerned about general political topics. Considering their status as a political actor, it is not surprising the main topic they talk about is related to their day-to-day activities. Therefore, it can be concluded that the difference in choice of topic between parties and movements can be explained in light of their status as a political actor. Movements do not need to deal with general political issues and can fully focus on topics they find most pressing in current society. As expected from the literature, movements talk significantly more about xenophobic topics, such as Islamophobic and anti-immigrant topics, than political parties do.

This can be explained in light of the institutionalised status of political parties and the non-institutionalised status of movements. Political parties need to show some form of political correctness, and although far-right political parties are often pushing the boundaries of what is still politically correct and what is not, movements do not suffer from this pressure at all. Generally speaking, movements have less followers on their social media accounts than political parties have. The movements' smaller follower base is likely to consist of a homogeneous audience that agrees with each other on most topics. The follower base of a political party might not accept some xenophobic topics addressed by movements. Their follower base is larger and often more varied in their opinions.

Following this same line of arguing, it would be expected that movements use a more radical tone of language than political parties do. As Sunstein explains in his book: a group that is only exposed to their pre-existing beliefs is likely to become more extreme in their opinions (Sunstein, 2017). However, this result was not found in the results of this study. Even after correcting for Pegida – who were skewing the results for movements towards neutral – both parties and movements used a similar negative tone of voice, and neither parties nor movements were extremely radical in their used language. It is likely movements are still more radical than political parties in their opinions even if the results did not show it. It seems that the groups are very aware of Twitter's take-down policy for radical content, causing both parties and movements to be careful in the choice of wording to prevent being banned from Twitter.

Limitations

The choice of three Western European countries was made to determine if the findings would hold in different countries, with their own respective context. However, these three countries, the Netherlands, United Kingdom and Germany do not necessarily represent Western Europe as a whole. The size of the dataset and the robust results combined with the cultural similarities the three respective countries share with the rest of Western Europe, do suggest the results might be applicable beyond the three respective countries.

As with any study, this research has some shortcomings. Firstly, taking more groups from different Western-European countries and more groups per country would make the results more suitable for generalisation. Another limitation is found in the step going from collecting data to using the data for analysis: the cleaning of the data. Over 15,000 Tweets were collected, but only 3,000 Tweets were used for analysis. This is partly due to Tweets being empty, or only containing a link to a website that no longer exists. However, most Tweets were removed because much of the group's activity takes the form of Retweeting other material and replying to other Tweets. This means the conclusions only apply to a fifth of the content that can be found on their Twitter pages. This is important to know because the found conclusions about choice of

topic and tone of language and the effects they have on people viewing their pages are therefore considerably reduced.

Secondly, there seems to be a problem with the choice of including Pegida as one of the movements. They make use of their Twitter page differently than the other groups do, meaning they skew the results in every analysis I conducted. Pegida are more an offline movement and they use their page as an online bulletin board, on which they announce their future protests. Other movements will still announce their protests on their Twitter page, but discussing controversial topics with their followers is the main use of their platform.

Relevance for practitioners

There are several reasons why this research will prove to be important for practitioners and thus demonstrate applied impact. Firstly, the far-right are extremely relevant in the current political spectrum and they enjoy a wide range of support from voters throughout Western Europe and the world. With the Brexit referendum and the attack in Christchurch, the far- and extreme-right have shown that rhetoric by parties and movements have led to real-world consequences. Sentiment that is expressed on online platforms does not necessarily stay online, but might transform into offline, shocking events. Therefore, this study has a number of implications for several actors.

The literature shows that being in contact with similar-thinking people online can lead to a feeling of community, which in turn can stimulate differential association, where an individual takes over the norms and values adhered to by the group (Pauwel & Schils, 2016). Some find these developments worrying and see an increasingly divided society in which individuals seem to have trouble understanding each other or to find a middle ground. With the Internet and social media, and Twitter in particular, the far-right have found a platform they can use to reach out to their audience. By using these platforms to discredit other people and groups, this division is affirmed and strengthened. Critical thinking has turned into overall scepticism, news articles contrary to someone's beliefs are considered to be fake news, and the platforms publishing these articles are biased and cannot be trusted.

One of the ways this development in society might be stopped or slowed down is by creating and finding something that seems to be missing at this point in time: some form of understanding. This means understanding for both viewpoints: the ones that are presented by the so-called mainstream media and the alternative viewpoints presented by the far-right. It is not helpful to say that everyone who votes for a far-right political party, or who demonstrates for a right-wing extremist movement is dumb or dangerous. Likewise, it is not helpful to disregard all valid counter arguments as fake news and conspiracies.

This research is important for practitioners as it gives insight into what topics are addressed and what tone of voice is used by far-right political parties and right-wing extremist movements. For security practitioners, it is important to be aware what topics these groups, especially movements that do not necessarily accept the democratic order, are concerned with. Based on this knowledge they could start to develop tools that make it possible to monitor these groups to ensure online rhetoric does not lead to offline actions. These tools need to be balanced, because in free Western societies it is important to adhere to social and judicial norms around freedom of speech. Security practitioners need to find a way to work together with the facilitating platforms, without the measures turning into censorship. Furthermore, practitioners can use this research as a starting point to create policies that aim to reach mutual understanding. The topics that are discussed by these parties and movements need to be addressed for a wider audience where there is room for debate. These debates should not aim to persuade people to ‘be on their side’; it should be about creating understanding to be able to move forward.

This also plays into how this study has implications for the political establishment, as millions of people throughout Europe have voted for far-right parties. These parties did not receive a majority of votes, but a considerable part of the population shares the ideas of the far-right. This means the political establishment should try to consider these voters’ concerns. Currently, none of the far-right political parties are represented in government, and some parties have openly said they will never work together with these far-right parties (Rusman, 2017; Nienaber, 2018). The political establishment needs to be careful to not ignore the sentiment felt amongst a large share of the population. This is not to say they should adopt far-right policies and essentially become the parties

they do not want to work with. However, showing understanding for their voters' concerns and trying to receive understanding from this group about why certain choices are made, could lead to less friction. This is especially important because the literature shows that right-oriented people are less likely to search for content that is dissimilar to their beliefs than more liberal-oriented people (Barbera, et al., 2015). It is important to try to find a way to expose right-oriented people to different points of view and thereby broadening their horizon and harvesting more understanding.

Recommendations for future research

This piece of research complements previous work on the social media use of the far- and the extreme-right. Researchers can use this study and build upon it by repeating the study using different groups. Within the groups selected for this research, Pegida seem to be an odd one. They appear to be an exception in the way they make use of Twitter and therefore they make for unexpected results and outcomes. For future research, I would recommend repeating this research with additional parties and movements from within the three respective countries, but also from other Western European countries. It would be interesting to see if the results found in this research would hold, and if Pegida are as much of an exception as they appear to be.

Furthermore, besides repeating the study with different groups it would also be interesting to repeat this research using different timeframes. When this study is redone in the future, it would be possible to see if there is any development in the choice of topic and tone of language. The far-right are very responsive to current events and issues, and it is likely their choice of topic changes as the time changes. Additionally, it would be interesting to find out if the tone of language of either movements or political parties will get more or less extreme over time.

A final recommendation for future research would be to transfer this research to different platforms. Especially in terms of tone, but potentially also in terms of choice of topic, groups seem to be very aware of the potential of Twitter throwing them off their platform. Therefore, it would be interesting to

compare the language used on public platforms like Twitter, but also Facebook, to less public platforms like Telegram and lesser-known platforms like Gab.

Final remark

Overall, this research showed that the differences (or similarities) found between far-right political parties and extreme-right movements are nuanced. Different factors, such as type of group, specific group, and nationality of a group, all proved to influence the overall results found in this research. This reconfirms that it is difficult to do statistical analysis in social sciences, and shows the importance of additional qualitative research to interpret these results correctly and in a useful manner. For example: when no difference between tone of voice was found between political parties and movements, evaluating these results critically (i.e. what could cause the lack of difference?) showed that this did not necessarily mean there is no difference, but that the groups might censor themselves to avoid being thrown off by Twitter. As all good research within social sciences does: it answers one question, but – at the same time – it also generates a multitude of new ones.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Python script

```
import tweepy
import csv

consumer_key="CONSUMERKEY"
consumer_secret="CONSUMERSECRET"
access_token="ACCESSTOKEN"
access_token_secret="ACCESSTOKENSECRET"

def get_all_tweets(screen_name):
    auth = tweepy.OAuthHandler(consumer_key,
consumer_secret)
    auth.set_access_token(access_token,
access_token_secret)
    api = tweepy.API(auth)
    alltweets = []
    new_tweets = api.user_timeline(screen_name =
screen_name, count=200, tweet_mode="extended")
    alltweets.extend(new_tweets)
    oldest = alltweets[-1].id - 1
    while len(new_tweets) > 0:
        print "getting tweets before %s" % (oldest)
        new_tweets = api.user_timeline(screen_name =
screen_name, count=200, tweet_mode="extended",
max_id=oldest)
        alltweets.extend(new_tweets)
        oldest = alltweets[-1].id - 1
        print "...%s tweets downloaded so far" %
(len(alltweets))
    outtweets = [[tweet.id_str, tweet.created_at,
tweet.full_text.encode("utf-8")] for tweet in
alltweets]
    with open('%s_FRTweets.csv' % screen_name, 'wb')
as f:
        writer = csv.writer(f)
        writer.writerow(["id", "created_at",
"text"])
        writer.writerows(outtweets)
    pass

if __name__ == '__main__':
    get_all_tweets("account_name")
```


Appendix B: Link to data set

The following link will lead to a OneDrive on which you will find an Excel file containing the dataset:

https://1drv.ms/x/s!AtLnjFyv4ifRkiIltmFyjVEm7u_t?e=SK04gQ