DeRadicalisation

in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Reintegrate

Cultural Drivers of Radicalisation

UK/D5.1 Country Report

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Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations……………………………………………………………………………..4

Acknowledgements…………………………………………………………………….....5

About the Project 6
Executive Summary/Abstract 7
1. Introduction 8
2. Methodology 9
3. Media Landscape of Radicalisation in the UK 11
    3.1. The mainstream media and Internet landscape in the UK 11
    3.2. The contemporary far-right media landscape in the UK... 15
4. The TikTok ecology of white supremacy and neo-colonialism 18
*5.*Conclusions………………………………………………………………………………...29
References and Sources.. 31

List of Abbreviations

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

Britain First (BF)

British National Party (BNP)

English Defence League (EDL)

Generation Identity (GI)

Patriotic Alternative (PA)

The European Union (EU)

The Great Replacement Theory (GRT)

The United Kingdom (UK)

United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP)

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About the Project

D.Rad is a comparative study of radicalization and polarisation in Europe and beyond. It aims to identify the actors, networks, and wider social contexts driving radicalization, particularly among young people in urban and peri-urban areas. D.Rad conceptualizes this through the I-GAP spectrum (injustice-grievance-alienation-polarisation) with the goal of moving towards measurable evaluations of de-radicalization programmes. Our intention is to identify the building blocks of radicalization, which include a sense of being victimized; a sense of being thwarted or lacking agency in established legal and political structures; and coming under the influence of "us vs them" identity formulations.

D.Rad benefits from an exceptional breadth of backgrounds. The project spans national contexts including the UK, France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Finland, Slovenia, Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo, Israel, Iraq, Jordan, Turkey, Georgia, Austria, and several minority nationalisms. It bridges academic disciplines ranging from political science and cultural studies to social psychology and artificial intelligence. Dissemination methods include D.Rad labs, D.Rad hubs, policy papers, academic workshops, visual outputs, and digital galleries. As such, D.Rad establishes a rigorous foundation to test practical interventions geared to prevention, inclusion, and de-radicalization.

With aim to capture the trajectories of seventeen nations and several minority nations, the project will provide a unique evidence base for the comparative analysis of law and policy as nation-states adapt to new security challenges. The process of mapping these varieties and their link to national contexts will be crucial in uncovering strengths and weaknesses in existing interventions. Furthermore, D.Rad accounts for the problem that processes of radicalization often occur in circumstances that escape the control and scrutiny of traditional national frameworks of justice. The participation of AI professionals in modelling, analyzing, and devising solutions to online radicalization will be central to the project's aims.

Executive Summary/Abstract

This report analyses the cultural drivers of radicalization connected to the I-GAP index of the D.Rad project (injustice, grievance, alienation) by focusing on the relationship between media and radicalisation in the UK from a historical perspective related to the mainstream press and new online platforms. The report analyses contemporary radicalisation patterns and pathways in the UK, by focusing on the far-right agents of radicalisation with a particular analysis of visual and "ephemeral" drivers of radicalisation on digital platforms. The report identifies parallel discourse worlds on tabloid media, the official posts and profiles of far-right organisations, and the mundane online expression on social media platforms in the UK, which collectively reinforce notions of a shared idealised identity built on nostalgic re-interpretations of an imperial past. The report concentrates on TikTok radicalisation in the UK from a macro to micro perspective, first capturing radicalisation patterns and pathways on widespread hashtags, followed by a deeper analysis of the representation of five popular TikTok videos and their comment-sphere.

1. Introduction

This report situates the current media landscape that indirectly elicits radicalisation on a global scale by focusing on the media presence of far-right groups and individuals in the UK. The overall focus by the mainstream media, public discourse, and policy on Jihadist violence in the UK as well as subsequent immigration paranoia systematically underestimate the severity of right-wing threats and the rise of far-right ideologies. The report first looks at the changes in the press structure, ownership, and contemporary regulation of social media platforms in the UK to understand the macro-political context under which right wing ideologies related to Muslims, immigrants, refugees, and anti-racist social movements are spread and legitimised through media discourse on a wider scale in the UK. In this context, the report views the mainstream press as one of the facilitators of the legitimisation and mainstreaming of the far-right rhetoric and agendas in platform societies, impacting on the wider British public sphere. The report accounts for the various ways in which there is a parallel discourse on tabloid media, the official posts and profiles of various far-right organisations, and the mundane online expression on social networking sites in the UK. While the report provides a holistic overview of the contemporary far-right media landscape in the UK, it also engages in an in-depth analysis of TikTok videos from the UK, with a view to understand the rise of every-day right-wing ideology in the Brexit and post-Brexit era.

Among other radicalised groups, the primary reason why this report focuses on the far-right communication in the UK is that the UK ranks third among Western countries in terms of the far-right incidents between 2002 and 2019 (Institute for Economics and Peace 2020). Although far right groups and organisations engage in relatively lower-level acts of political violence, they engage in a greater frequency. However, even if there are frequent events and acts organised by far-right groups and organisations in the UK, these acts and events are less likely to be covered by mainstream media (Briggs & Goodwin), which is in opposition to the coverage of violent acts committed by the Jihadist groups and individuals. For example, the highest number of far-right marches in the UK in a generation took place in 2018 (Commission for Countering Extremism 2019). Additionally, reported hate crimes increased by 123% over the course of five years between 2012 and 2017/2018, which points to the highest increase in racially motivated crimes (Proctor 2019). During the Covid-19 pandemic, the situation has deteriorated with a 21% increase in hate crimes towards and racism against East Asian and South-East Asian individuals (Commission for Countering Extremism 2020). Importantly, there is a discrepancy between the opportunities afforded to right-wing extremists relative to Jihadists, with right-wing extremists enjoying more freedom online to engage in collective action in 2019 and drawing inspiration from Jihadist factions in building an online eco-system which produces and disseminates online propaganda (Europol, 2020). This report places emphasis on Mondon and Winter's (2020) suggestion that the rise of the far-right is exaggerated today and by over-studying these organisations and their

discourses, research in this area may give further visibility and voice to these groups and their politics. However, this report is also based on the premise that there is the need to identify new pathways and patterns of radicalisation and the ways far-right politics have become more legitimised, especially the ways various forms of racism, misogyny and transphobia have become more acceptable through social media channels and affordances today. This is reflected in the greater sympathy and support for white supremacy and right-wing ideology in Western contexts such as the UK (Hellyer, 2019). In the current climate where racism and hate crimes are on the rise, this report focuses on a discussion and analysis of far-right radicalisation on a fairly new social networking site TikTok, in order to shed light on how short videos, as well as affordances of newer social media platforms, enable the wide consumption of white supremacist message by the public.

The video-sharing social network TikTok was initiated in China in 2016 and it is currently the fastest-growing application and social media platform. Allowing users to create and post short videos of between 3 and 60 seconds with accompanying music and audio-visual effects (Kennedy 2020), TikTok currently attracts a huge audience of 1.5 billion active users, consisting mostly of children and teenagers. Recently, the growing presence of extremist groups on TikTok is becoming increasingly prominent, whilst still going unnoticed by academic research (Weiman and Masri 2020). In the UK, TikTok has 10 million regular users where the average British user used the app for about 66 minutes a day and opened TikTok 13 times in 24 hours by September 2020 (Stokel-Walker 2020). Building on this background, following the methodology section that presents the use of TikTok as a discursive space, this report undertakes an overview of the mainstream media and social media ecology in the UK in relation to far-right radicalisation. The report then analyses the representation and circulation of five recent TikTok videos to shed light on the main themes and discourses on these visual media sources and to study the audience-making strategies by the creators of these videos. Followed by an analysis of the representation of the videos, the report focuses on the circulation and consumption context of these videos, through an engagement with the comment-sphere of these popular TikTok videos that showcases visual and textual accounts of racialisation and white supremacy in the UK.

2. Methodology

The report draws on the cultural circulation model of Stuart Hall (1980, 1997) and uses a media ecology approach to study the cultural drivers of radicalisation and mediated patterns of othering, scapegoating, marginalisation, and dehumanisation. By focusing on TikTok radicalisation, it identifies social media platforms such as TikTok as discursive spaces (Ogola 2015). Understanding hegemonic discourses on these social media platforms throws light on the discourse embedded in the dominant/mainstream media (Lindgren and Lundström 2011), in addition to other conventional public spheres, such as the state actors' public speech.

Methodologically, the report investigates how the discursive space of social media platforms runs parallel to the discourse in the mainstream media in the UK.

In studying the cultural drivers of radicalisation in the UK, the aim of the report is to analyse TikTok videos as representative of the overall cultural radicalisation in the UK and to throw light on the wider right-wing political media ecology today. First, the report analyses the overall media landscape in the UK, followed by a multimodal discourse analysis of the far-right media ecology. Multimodal discourse analysis broadens conventional discourse studies by combining the study of language with other resources such as videos, websites, three-dimensional objects, and events (O'Halloran 2013, 120). The multimodal nature of TikTok interweaves text, images, colour, and other graphical material to create discursive contexts, where hidden ideologies and power interests can be uncovered by examining assumptions and absences in images and text (Machin and Mayr, 2012 quoted in Moran and Lee 2013).

Using a multimodal discourse analysis, the report embraces a macro to micro perspective in analysing the hidden as well as overt ideologies and power interests on popular TikTok content to have a broader understanding of the radicalisation patterns on mainstream and far-right media platforms as well as radicalisation pathways pertinent to the UK context. Furthermore, it analyses the prominence of group identities and emerging boundaries which highlight shared values, beliefs, and norms of what constitutes an 'authentic' British identity and culture. In doing this, the report first identifies the ways mainstream media informs radicalisation channels in the Brexit and post-Brexit period. Second, the report looks at the overall discourses on the far-right media platforms in the UK. Finally, the report engages in a multimodal discourse analysis of five TikTok videos produced and consumed in the UK as representative case studies of the mainstreaming of far-right radicalisation on social media platforms, specifically the rise of white supremacist ideology.

The report first starts its analysis by identifying the overall hashtags, number of views and example users that exemplify the overly nationalist and racist ecosystem on TikTok (see Image I). Videos were chosen by a panel composed of three of the report's authors. The decision was based on three indicators. First was the collection of tags used. For example, to incorporate a broad spectrum of right-wing and covert white supremacist ideologies, we searched for and selected videos which used tags (sometimes in combination) such as "rulebritannia", "britishempire", "unitetheright", "patriotism", and "nationalism". Second, only those videos were selected where the creators had posted multiple videos around these shared themes; in other words, where creators were engaging in a continuing discourse of these ideologies and beliefs, which meant that the videos were less likely to be a product of following a trend, and rather part of the shared eco-system of right-wing, white-supremacist, and conservative beliefs. Finally, we took into account the number of viewers to ensure

selection of videos with relatively high views (at least over 30k, but four of the five videos have over 50k views).

The first video that we discursively analysed was uploaded by the user named @Connorh46 with the hashtag #rulebritannia, which was the reason why we have accessed it. The second video was again uploaded by the same user Connorh46. The third popular video we identified was posted by the user @geo__e entitled “always respect your veterans, because they fought for your freedom”. The fourth video uploaded was “untitled” by the user @themightymogg. The fifth video was “I will not be silenced” by the user @the.old.dawn.v2.

Hashtags	Number of views	Example users
cottagecore	5.9 billion	
rulebritannia	15.7 million	@conorh46 @british_politics
britishandproud	2.8 million	@geo_e
dover	25 million	
englishchannel	455.6k	
defendeurope	111.8k	
defendbritain	0 - banned hashtag	
generationidentity	0 - banned hashtag	
britishpatriot	8687	@thebritishpatriot
makebritaingreatagain	105.7k	
whitecliffs	197.2 k	
godsowncountry	126.7 million	
crusaders	15.6 million	
brexit	272.1 million	
princephillip	538.3 million	
ww2	2.3 billion	
falklands	9.2 million	@themightymogg @conorh46 @britishmilitary @british.raf @britishwarriors1
britishempire	28.2 million	@themightymogg @kizabee @history.and.memes @the.old.dawn.v2 @the.old.dawn.v2
westerncivilization	160.4k	@history.and.memes

Image I: TikTok patterns of white supremacy and racialisation in the UK

3. Media landscape of radicalisation in the UK

3.1. The mainstream media and Internet landscape in the UK

The British press has long defined “the nation" in the UK (Scannell 1992) and has clearly been partisan (Denver 2003). For instance, due to its broadcasting of the 1926 General Strike, the BBC was accused of taking the side of the government. As a public broadcaster, the impartiality of the BBC has been a persistent public debate related to its political coverage (Cushion 2021). In the 1940s, the mainstream British media offered an insular, communitarian, and pastoral image of Britain (Curran

2002), relying on a warm applause of the colonial past. As an era where feminist and civil rights movements were on the rise, the 1960s were partly a rupture to this imagination. The 1960s saw “the imperial and pastoral conceptions of Britishness to be replaced by a more multi-ethnic, multicultural and plural version of Britishness. In the meantime, the popular press has become more entertainment oriented, some papers roughly halving their coverage of public affairs as a proportion of editorial space between 1936 and 1976” (Curran 2002, 51-67). While the predominant mainstream media discourse has slightly changed in the 1960s, it remained in the service of the status quo. As an example, more recently mainstream media in the UK served to ensure a Brexit outcome where many news agencies regularly touted lies fed to them by pro-Brexit politicians whilst exaggerating horror stories of immigration to Europe and the UK, of illegal immigrants, and wild economic projections of Brexit as a financial victory (Martinson 2016; Jackson 2020).

In terms of media ownership, the media ecosystem in Britain is dominated by the mainstream media companies. By 2021, just three companies (News UK, Daily Mail Group and Reach) dominate 90% of the national newspaper market (up from 71% in 2015). When online readers are considered, the same three companies (News UK, Daily Mail Group, Reach) dominate 80% of the market. In terms of local news, just six companies (Gannett, JPI Media, Reach, Tindle, Archant and Iliffe) account for nearly 84% of all titles. Two companies, namely, Bauer and Global control nearly 70% of all local commercial analogue radio stations and 60% of national commercial digital stations. Having a monthly reach of 31.1 million, the Mail is the most read UK national news brand (Walker 2019).

While the UK is also home to several independent news websites such as openDemocracy, The Canary, Byline, and Novara Media, the traffic to these new journalistic enterprises is miniscule compared to the websites of legacy national media such as MailOnline (Media Reform Coalition 2021). Although the Internet has afforded opportunities for wider participation and expression for people on a global scale, it has also created alternative spaces and more visibility for radicalised groups and is dominated by the ownership of big tech companies as well as websites and platforms of legacy media. “Unregulated tech companies and social media platforms dominate the UK media market with revenues far beyond that of any national media organisation, specifically Amazon (£297bn), Apple (£226bn) and Facebook (£66bn), which exercise a considerable gatekeeping power over how UK audiences discover, access and consume media content” (Media Reform Coalition 2021).

There have long been political divisions among British newspapers and their readers in terms of their political views and traditions. For example, broadsheet readers (e.g., The Guardian, The Times, Financial Times) are more favourable toward immigration (Blinder 2013; McLaren 2018). Readers of mid-market papers such as the Daily Mail and Daily Express are supportive of immigration reductions (Blinder 2013), where these papers create narratives based on scapegoating and dehumanising

immigrants for the social and economic ills of British society. The mainstream media, specifically the mid-market and tabloid newspapers, have also framed extreme right-wing ideas and ideologies with positive attributes. This could be exemplified by the Daily Mirror's framing of the perpetrator of the Christchurch attacks in New Zealand as an "angelic boy" that turned into a terrorist (Hellyer 2019). As another example, following Thomas Mair's murder of Labour MP Jo Cox on the 16th of June 2016, who was a Remain campaigner during the Brexit vote and a champion of refugees, Mair was found to have white supremacist and neo-Nazi materials in his home. However, Mair was described as an 'unstable loner' by the UKIP and Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage along with the Daily Mail (Mondon and Winter 2020, 21); in both cases, the perpetrators of political violence are divorced from their ideology and context (right-wing extremism) and presented from an individualist perspective which frames their actions because of their individual motives rather than as being informed by shared group memberships and ideologies (Parker et al., 2019). As such, white supremacist, nationalist, and a populist vision of contemporary Britain are embedded in the discourse of the tabloid press on an everyday basis (Conboy 2006).

The amount of media coverage by the type of political violence influences the public's perception of what constitutes political violence, as they serve to impact on and reinforce shared understandings of the origins of political violence. As such, attacks by Muslim perpetrators received 357% more media coverage in the UK, than attacks by other perpetrators (Kearns, Betus and Lemieux, 2019). A comparison of two similar lone-actor events of political violence, which occurred in the UK during the same year and with the same number of fatalities presents a stark difference in their treatment by the UK media (Parker et al., 2019). For example, the murder of Lee Rigby in Woolwich (an Islamist attack) in 2013 resulted in 21 articles in the immediate aftermath. Conversely, the 2013 murder of Mohammed Saleem and the attempted bombing of mosques in Birmingham (a right-wing attack) resulted in only six articles in the immediate aftermath. The Woolwich attacks were mentioned in 20 articles one year later, whereas the Birmingham attacks were not mentioned again in 2014. This exemplifies the extent to which these attacks were integrated into the shared cultural discourse on political violence. "Indeed, the sense that the UK had been corroded from the "inside" was reiterated across numerous reports of the attack (The Daily Telegraph, 2017), with the cause of the problem being aligned with immigration. Littlejohn added that "The politicians have opened the floodgates to mass immigration without insisting on integration" (Daily Mail, 5 June 2017 cited in Black, 2019).

Mainstream media discourse and the most visible social media expression perpetuate concepts of radicalisation, whilst government policies have served to present "British Muslim communities as marginal to the mainstream of British life and as a threat to the British way of life" (Alam & Husband, 2013, p. 250). These embedded power structures in media that situate the West vs Islam perpetuate racial and religious hierarchies. In doing this, mainstream media legitimises the spread and

visibility of right-wing ideas and ideologies, whilst simultaneously disseminating the seeds of white superiority (Busby 2018). Especially since the so-called refugee crisis in 2016 and the Brexit vote, the tabloid newspapers in the UK also used an abundance of negative discourses against immigrants and refugees in the UK such as the Daily Mail headlines 'Calais 'is besieged' by gangs of migrants' or 'More foreign convicts win right to stay' that dehumanises migrants and conveys the message that migrants are either criminals or they occupy places that are not theirs (see images II and III). Such dehumanizing coverage gives birth to a hostile environment and sets the basis of the anti-immigrant agenda in policy-making and everyday practices.

Image II: Daily Mail anti-immigrant and anti-refugee coverage

DAILY EXPRESS

FREE BELGIAN BUN

GREGGS

BRITAIN'S 40% SURGE IN ETHNIC NUMBERS

DAILY EXPRESS

MIGRANT WORKERS FLOODING BRITAIN

DAILY EXPRESS

BRITAIN OPENS DOOR TO ASYLUM SEEKERS

DAILY EXPRESS

HACKING SENSATION

EU MIGRANT TO GET BRITISH PENSIONS

DAILY EXPRESS

MIGRANTS ROB YOUNG BRITONS OF JOBS

DAILY EXPRESS

IMMIGRATION SOARS 20% IN A YEAR

DAILY EXPRESS

FREE

WORKERS ARE FIRED FOR BEING BRITISH

DAILY EXPRES

MIGRANTS GRA

12,000 JOBS A MONTH

Image III: Daily Express anti-immigrant and anti-refugee coverage

3.2 The contemporary far-right media landscape in the UK

The 1990s saw a significant movement of the European far right towards the centre of national and global politics, including the UK (Atton 2004). This is primarily because of the mainstream media's partisan stance, the electoral gains radical right has gained in Europe as well as the opportunities social media platforms afford to these groups. In the UK, the neoliberal rule of Thatcher and the New Labour governments' support for military interventions in the Middle East consolidated divisions within society whilst helping the mainstreaming of far-right ideologies that rest on colonialist, white supremacist, and racist viewpoints. A key recent event that accounts for the mainstreaming of far-right ideologies is the Brexit vote (2016), the context of which is primarily based on the rising anti-immigrant publics in British society. The Brexit vote rested on and fed the feelings of colonial nostalgia and bolstered the fear of the "other".

The main far right groups currently active in the UK are English Defense League, Ireland United Kingdom, BNP, For Britain Movement, National Action, North West Infidels, Britain First and the British Gang (see Image IV). Global platform rules and regulation policies impact the ways the far-right groups and political parties navigate their online presence, identity, and visual communication on social media platforms. For instance, upon being removed from Facebook due to their conviction of Islamophobic hate crimes in March 2018, Britain First migrated to a less regulated platform entitled Gab, which was founded in 2016. Britain First currently has large

digital influence, which was formed in 2011 by Jim Dowson, a former member of the British National Party, which owes to the decline of the English Defence League (Nouri et al. 2021). As some of the global platforms have banned the profiles of these white supremacist groups, most of their online communication has moved to Telegram or Gab.

Participatory communication and radicalised professional services of journalism are at the heart of far-right radical media. For example, the British National Party's (BNP) 'house publication' has been relaunched as "Identity" where the main motif has been "whites are now the victims" (Atton 2004). This understanding is consistent across other far right media narratives in the UK such as the Patriotic Alternative's website (Patriotic Alternative n.d), as well as their videos, where they present white people as the new victims. Formed recently in 2019, Patriotic Alternative is a far-right group that uses antisemitic and Islamophobic discourse at the core of their ideology.

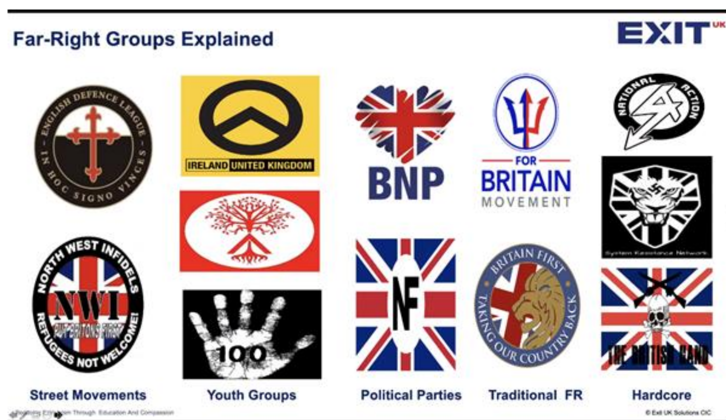

Image IV: Exit UK training material for explaining far-right groups

British far right groups such as the English Defense League (EDL) not only use online platforms to engage in self-representation and to produce their own "alternative media" but also to recruit and train like-minded individuals and groups (see Image VI). As an example, in presenting the profile pf EDL, Counter Extremism Project's website identifies that in its online presence EDL's[1] discourse revolves around the statement that "Britain is under attack by Muslims" where it blames the Muslim community for the societal ills in Britain, such as the oppression of women and organised sexual abuse of children (English Counter Extremism Project, n.d.). Compared to the EDL, the North West Infidels is less active on social media platforms than the EDL and they do not have a professional website but this organisation has various profiles on different platforms with a smaller follower base. Since 2016, the main online discourse of North West Infidels have concentrated on

[1] The website of EDL (http://www.englishdefenceleague.org.uk/) and their social media platforms are banned.

the theme of "refugees not welcome", including the profile and cover pictures of their social media accounts (see Image V).

Image V: North West Infidels social media profile photos

British National Party (BNP), on the other hand, not only actively posts on social media platforms but also provides a "hot line" number for their members and sympathizers. The most visible aspect of their website is their calls for action as well as their strategies to counter "Islamic" terror (BNP 2021), which is not significantly different from the Conservative government's Prevent programme. The Prevent de-radicalisation programme has been called into question by academics and civil societies because of its Islamophobic functions (see, for instance, Heath-Kelly 2013; Cohen and Tufall 2017; Ozduzen, Ferenczi, Rosun, Holmes et al. 2021). Additionally, the BNP's website and social media platforms include a variety of conspiracist posts that inform their readers on the "big plans" of tech companies or "secret plans" of the Conservative government related to "social restrictions, unprecedented loss of freedom and travel bans in the name of 'Coronavirus'" (BNP 2021).

The conspiracist social media posts are common across different social media platforms of far-right groups. For example, Anne Marie Waters, who is the leader of For Britain, defines Covid passports as a tool of constant monitoring. Overall, For Britain Movement uses Facebook, videos, and their websites effectively (For Britain n.d.), in order to disseminate their Islamophobic and anti-immigrant agendas. They have over 35K followers on Facebook. At the time of writing, their larger Twitter account @ForBritainParty was suspended while the Twitter profiles for regional branches were still active, such as For Britain Movement London or For Britain Youth Southend. The main activity of this group on the well-known global platforms is on Facebook where Waters shares videos with close-up shots of her face from her office space that generally reveals her support for the monarchy and disdain for immigrants. As a hardcore neo-Nazi group (as identified by the Exit UK), the small and violent political organisation National Action is even more extreme and uses discourses such as "only bullets can stop us" whilst organising antisemitic hashtag campaigns such as #HitlerWasRight to make their voices heard and call out their

supporters (Macklin 2018). As this group represents a more violent tendency where they openly justify the murder of Jo Cox and other atrocities, such as ethnic cleansing, their website and social media platforms are banned at the time of writing. Through their social media platforms and websites, these groups also offer military training for their followers and members (see Image VI). Overall, this section has exemplified the online presence and activities of some of the most prominent far-right groups in the UK, in order to shed light on the institutional use of social media by organised right-wing groups.

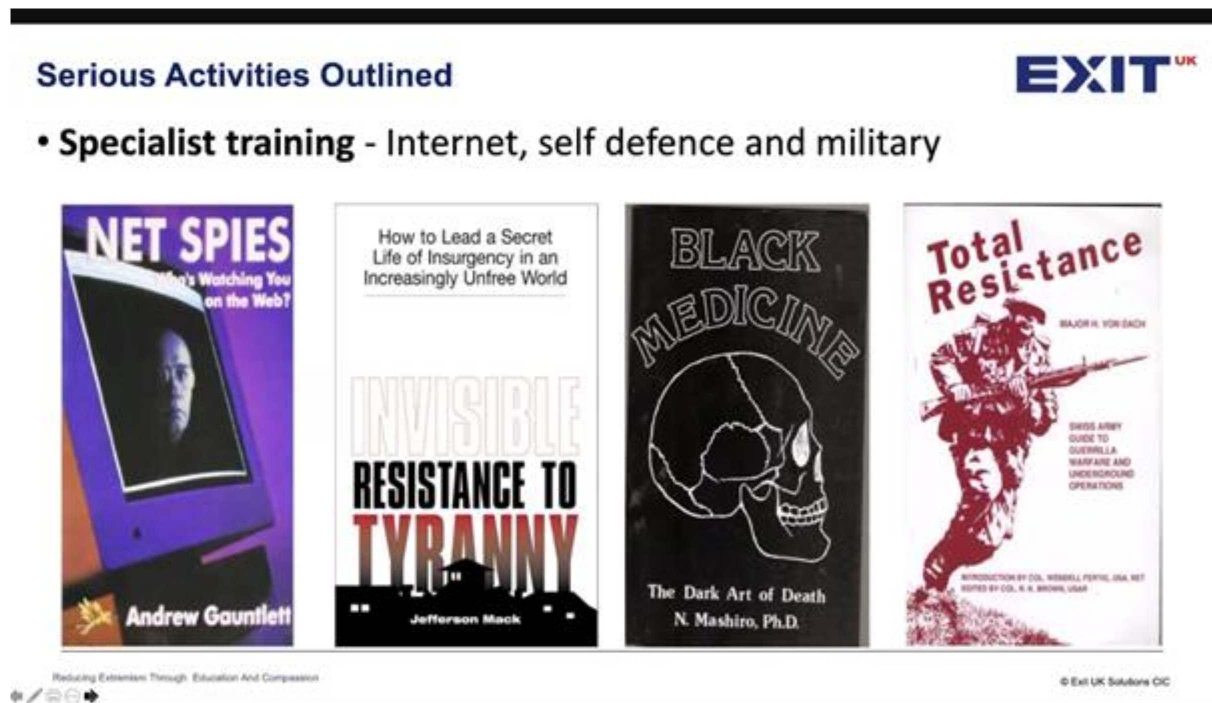

Image VI: Exit UK training material for explaining the militaristic activities of far-right groups

4. The TikTok ecology of white supremacy and neo-colonialism

While some of the organised far right groups in the UK such as For Britain effectively use conventional social media platforms like Facebook or YouTube, most of these groups and their online communication have migrated to less regulated channels such as Gab or Telegram. Amongst other social media platforms, TikTok provides an interesting and effective case study to understand the wider spread and mainstreaming of far-right ideologies in Britain especially because of its popularity amongst children and teenagers as well as its accessible and convenient image-based design. Similar to the early days of YouTube, TikTok arguably embraces a "user and creator first" strategy today, which makes the platform prioritize user generated content rather than strict regulation and ethical issues. As an extension of the far-right organisations' professional and designated media profiles and websites, TikTok presents a more widespread, "enjoyable" and ephemeral consumption of nationalist and white supremacist messages with its sound and comment functions

as well as lesser regulation compared to other similar global platforms in the present day. TikTok also affords opportunities for easy across platform sharing options, whilst its “For You” feed is unique to each personal user and provides recommendations based on users’ interests calculated by their individual engagement with hashtags and trends. Among other reasons for our focus on radicalisation on TikTok lies the argument that “political communication using TikTok is much more interactive when compared to other social media platforms” (Medina Serrano et al., 2020). The boost of interactivity on TikTok is one of the main reasons turning TikTok into an appealing and popular platform amongst younger generations in sharing their everyday lives and identities, including their political views and identities.

*Video 1: “*Legal immigrants are what make this country great” by Connorh46

The first video we have identified as a popular short video that spreads far-right ideologies on TikTok was shared by the user Connorh46. As of the 31st of May 2021, the views on this video are 31.5K, while it has been liked 4368 times and there were 488 comments on the video. We have located this video because it is used the hashtag “rulebritannia”. Additionally, the video also used the hashtags of #🇬🇧, #🔥, #greatbritain, #british, #britannia, and #fypツ. The multiplicity and popularity of these hashtags have given visibility to the video and help it attract more views and attention. The caption of the video reads “(Legal immigrants are what make this country great)”, and with this caption, the video-maker draws a distinction between legal and illegal immigrants, as in the deserving and undeserving poor. The music on the video is a remix of “Crazy” by Gnarls Barkley, in which the first line “I remember when” repeats on a loop throughout this short video. This audio is used widely across TikTok, often as a user responds to a question they present as stupid or unnecessary. In this case, the user is “answering” the question “Why do you support brexit & stricter borders”, which appears at the top of the screen above his face.

The video benefits from various news coverage of Muslim communities allegedly committing crimes in the UK, such as on Sky News. Using short archival footage of these news stories, the creator juxtaposes his own image from his home, news stories, and the remix of the “I remember when” part of the song “Crazy”. Remixing is an inherent part of digital cultures, involving the (re)production of different forms of media by internet users, including individuals without formal media training (Sobande 2019). In the context of this video, the digital remix culture opens room for an easier and enjoyable consumption of the hatred against Muslim immigrants through visual affordances of TikTok where users engage in do-it-yourself visual media production and gain much more visibility partly because of the short video format of the platform.

As we move into the portion of the TikTok that is a response to the question raised at the beginning of the video, we see news coverage of Islamic terrorist attacks carried out in the UK, beginning with the London Bridge attack. Following this, there is a clip of an inflatable dinghy filled with people, which is a reference to immigrants crossing the channel, and a scene from the 2005 London bombings (7/7 bombings). Looking at these two juxtaposed clips whilst thinking of the caption, the creator suggests that illegal immigration and lax border security are directly linked to Islamic terrorist activity. However, one of the London Bridge attackers was a UK citizen, and three of the 7/7 attackers were born in the UK. Continuing this theme, we see images of an injured man being helped to his feet following the 7/7 bombing, and a final image of the Manchester Arena bombing victims. Again, the perpetrator of the Manchester attack was born in Britain.

With this in mind, the viewers ask themselves if the video-maker aims for a reduction in illegal immigration, or if he is in fact more interested in removing Muslims from the UK, regardless of their birthplace or immigration status. There is also a repeated assumption that the Muslims in this video are not British and should not reside in the country, which suggests a definition of Britishness that is white and Christian. Indeed, a further clip shows a demonstration held by a banned extremist Islamist group, Muslims Against Crusades, in which protestors wearing clothing associated with Islam are seen shouting “British police go to hell”. There is no link here at all to Brexit or “stricter borders”, but there does seem to be a portrayal of Muslims as a dangerous group. This narrative echoes the presentation of Islam and Muslims in British mainstream newspapers, where the theme most associated with Islam is terrorism (Centre for Media Monitoring 2018).

A look at the comment-sphere of the video accounts for a more overt continuation of these themes. For example, the top comment with 522 likes reads “import the 3rd world become the third world”. The second most popular comment reads “Europe for europeans!” with the Swedish and British flag emojis. Emojis are ubiquitous digital images that appear and are used in text messages, emails, and social media posts and chats, which are historical, social, and cultural objects and have rich social, cultural, and economic significance (Stark and Crawford 2015). The use of Swedish and British flag emojis helps conveying a white supremacist and exclusive ideology where the disseminated message could be understood and consumed by people of different backgrounds and languages, which becomes a digital “lingua franca” (Wiseman and Gould 2018; Hagen et al. 2019). With these emojis involving the flags as the symbols of these nations, the nationalist message becomes easier for international users to consume and relate to, making it more appealing.

This particular comment “what is meant by Europeans?” is also liked by the creator himself. Given the overall message of the video, we can hypothesise that in this perspective Europeanness means non-Muslim and white. A further comment liked by the creatorr reads “Tommy Robinson for MP”. As such, a mundane video that initially

appears to be about legal immigration can be used as a recruitment clip for far-right activity and organisations. The video-maker himself also repeatedly defends “legal immigration” in the comments but given the clips he produces on his TikTok profile, for this video-maker legal immigration has a different definition, which does not include Muslims.

Video 2: “Part of our culture is loving and embracing other cultures” by *Conorh46*

The second video of analysis, entitled “part of our culture is loving and embracing other cultures” was created by the same user (Conorh46) with over 129.2k views. This video has over 17.1K likes and 2,368 comments. Similar tags are employed as with the first video (#rulebritannia #british #culture #true #fypシ #🇬🇧 #britannia #🔥 #greatbritain #greatbriti) to increase its dissemination. The video begins with the creator pointing to an overlay of text which reads “I’ve been hearing white britons [sic] have no culture”. The text then changes to “Whats [sic] this then [UK flag emoji] [UK flag emoji]” as a montage of archival footage is shown in juxtaposition to the statement. Chronologically, the montage enables the following footage to be seen by the viewers: a clip of Sean Connery as James Bond smoking a cigarette, footage of the Queen’s Royal Guard marching, a clip from the film The Darkest Hour (2010) which centred on Winston Churchill during World War II depicting Churchill giving a speech, historical footage of a Spitfire war plane, footage from a film of a historical British medieval battle, footage of a steam engine, footage of police walking the street, a map of the British empire and its colonies, footage from a film depicting a historic battle between the 17th-20th centuries with soldiers wearing the red coat military uniform, aerial footage of Bodiam castle, generic footage of tea being poured from a teapot, the coronation of Queen Elizabeth, historic footage of a British car race, footage of a cricket match, an aerial shot of London, an illustration of Mahatma Gandhi with the quote “I find that the British Empire guarantees my freedom and governs me least of all”, an image of a cathedral, footage of 10 Downing Street which functions as the residence of the serving UK Prime Minister, further footage of car races, with the final clip showing historic footage of a politician. Throughout the video, the song “Cruisin” by Eazy E is played.

The themes emerging from the above-mentioned footage tap into notions of a collective white British identity. These collective identities that are shared with groups – social identities – provide humans with a sense of belonging, meaning, and social support (Tajfel, 1974; Haslam et al., 2009). Social identity can thus be perceived as an existential statement of belonging (Abrams, 1992). Individuals are motivated to maintain and protect their social identity when it is threatened because much of an individual’s identity is derived from membership to social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In this way, the video makes salient a collective social identity that is prioritised. The set-up of the video – with the creator first sharing the perceived problem of white British group identity not having its own culture and then inviting the viewers to make their own inferences by posing the statement “Whats [sic] this then”,

which engages the viewer in co-creating a white British identity that relies on the images shared in the video. The lack of a question mark in the text frames the response in a confrontational tone, as if to deride the viewer in agreeing with the original sentiment that white Britons do not have a culture. Taken together with the visual imagery that relies on military footage and themes, this video represents a reaction to perceived symbolic threat, such as the erasure of cultural values and norms (Stephan, Ybarra and Bachman, 1999), to white British culture from outgroups.

The video functions to increase self-esteem at the collective level (Luhtanen and Crocker, 1992). The overarching aim of the video, then, is to co-build the conceptualisation of white British culture embedded in a nostalgic reinterpretation of historical events, particularly those linked with war and military expansion. The reliance on archival and fictional footage of British military serves to emphasise the historical power of the UK and encourage its adoption into contemporary identity. The combination of the ask-and-answer format and the footage used evokes notions of pride in a British identity that has existed and remained unchanged all the way back to at least the 11th century through the portrayal of fictional medieval battles. Additionally, the incorporation of everyday imagery such as food (drinking tea), politics (10 Downing Street), and sport (cricket and football) also firmly takes ownership of these cultural and spatial domains to indicate that they are defining aspects of white British culture only. This is further solidified in the use of Christian imagery (cathedral) to link it exclusively to white British culture. The video therefore equates whiteness with power and centres it as the main descriptor of British culture, thereby erasing multiculturalism and freedom of identity, despite these being allegedly two of the tenets of UK culture espoused by government institutions.

In this vein, one other emerging theme of the video is to minimise the impact of British colonialism and position it as a positive influence. This is achieved indirectly through the portrayal of military footage and is overtly addressed through two images; the first is the world map of the British empire. In this context, the map is used as a way to reinforce white British identity as colonisers – effectively reflecting the belief that inherent group hierarchies not only exist, but that they should continue to exist (Pratto et al., 1994). This portrayal is intended to elicit pride and recoup a 'lost' identity of white British culture. In conjunction with this image, and to further alleviate any guilt from the perspective of the coloniser, an image is presented with a quote from Mohandras Karamchand Gandhi. Gandhi, an anti-colonialist lawyer who led the nonviolent resistance to free India from under British rule, has here been co-opted as an affirmer of the benefits of colonisation and is used as a member of the oppressed group to act as a representative. The image of Gandhi is paired with the quote "I find that the British Empire guarantees my freedom and governs me least of all", implying Gandhi's support for British rule. This is an attempt to restructure perspectives about colonialism by positing them as beneficial for colonies. However, this quote cannot be substantiated – searching for this quote showed as a first hit a

document available for public download entitled ‘If you live in freedom, thank the British Empire’ written by HW Crocker for Prager University. Prager University is an American non-profit media company that has no academic accreditation, and which produces content in support of conservative perspectives (Bernstein, 2018). Indeed, this image from the TikTok video appears to have originated in a ‘lecture’ video that was created by Prager University. This demonstrates the transnational spread of right-wing values which aim to establish Western dominance and oppression as positive historical achievements.

The discourse within the comments reflects a collective sense of identity with a reliance on ‘we/us’ rather than ‘I/me’ pronouns which may be motivated by concerns about the collective welfare of the ingroup – in this case, the perceived threat of a distinct culture (Brewer and Gardner, 1996). The comment with the highest ratings directly positions the ingroup (white British individuals) versus a generic outgroup: “they really say we don’t have culture and say it in our language” (1,859 likes). This comment also takes ownership of English as the language of white Britons specifically. The second highest rated comment also draws the distinction between the ingroup and an overarching outgroup; it goes further to stereotype this outgroup as a method of recouping self-image (Fein and Spencer, 1997): “castles, deserts we have so much more as well. Because it’s not a spicy dish or a colourful dress it doesn’t count apparently” (1,339 likes). This comment reflects the homogenisation of outgroups (Allen & Wilder, 1979) by attributing the characteristics of “spicy food” and “colourful dress” as defining aspects of other cultures, thereby making the ingroup (white British) distinct and unique. Reactive differentiation of the ingroup from outgroups is motivated by maintaining a positive social identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1975; Turner, 1975), and is a tactic employed particularly by high identifiers of an ingroup, such as those who may consume and comment on these videos (Jetten, Spears and Postmes, 2004). Other comments list additional descriptors of white British culture, and in this way contribute to co-creating a shared identity that is perceived to be threatened.

Video 3: “Always respect your veterans, because they fought for your freedom” by geo__e

The third popular video collected through widespread hashtags was posted by the user @geo__e, which has been watched by 353.4K users and received 61.6K likes by the 31st of May 2021. The video uses a limited number of hashtags (#blm #veteran #ww2 #history @jhmeller @murican_vader21 @historydweeb7760 #fyp) and directly tags other TikTok content creators; it also co-opts the #blm (Black Lives Matter) tag. While the user is not that popular himself compared to other similar users (with 4438 followers as of the 31st of May 2021), the particular video reached wider audiences because of its intertextuality and the video creator’s role-playing related to the “British past” in order to glorify Britain’s militarist past. In this context of the glorification of militarism, the content creator primarily aims to undermine the

social movement of Black Lives Matter (BLM) and the movement's trajectory and aims. The video associates BLM with 'vandalism', such as destroying monuments that depict and belong to Britain's own "white" past. The video starts with the creator's role-playing as a kid who asks a supposed World War II veteran "you are one of those heroes, aren't you?" with a supposed history book in his hand. To complement the role-playing, the creator uses inserted non-diegetic text with captions such as 'the veterans who have been demonised and their memorials and graves ruined by BLM', when the camera turns to the alleged World War II veteran, who is also played by the creator himself, he replies "not anymore". One example of the statues mentioned on the video as well as its comment-sphere was a statue of Winston Churchill.

In terms of its stylistic elements, the video benefits from a grayscale filter, which adds to the video's depiction of the past. This serves to evoke a mood of nostalgia for the past. This was also mentioned by the creator in one of the comments that "history is grey". The audio that the creator role-played was taken from a video game "Overwatch", which was edited from the original version and used as a meme. The audio that said "not anymore" was from a character in the game known as Soldier 76, hence the content creator used the audio to represent the soldiers who fought in the World War. It also shows how colonialism and racism triggered the BLM movement and the video aims to respond to and challenge both of these historical facts.

The comment-sphere of this short popular video, consisting of 2841 comments by the 31st of May 2021, is in line with the representation on the video. Most comments show support for the video-maker. A user named @thxze_ recounted "when the looting starts, the shooting starts" in a speech by Donald Trump. Other comments also included hostility to the BLM movement and culture, with a depiction of the movement's identity and aims as "Burning, Looting, Murdering". This depiction of the social movement not only creates divisions in British society, but also generates a distorted narrative that dehumanises anyone that is supportive of human rights, particularly civil rights as it associates protestors with "illegality" and "criminal activity". Further comments went even further by highlighting the Schutzstaffel and supporting the SS saying "you did good" with the emoji of a German flag. The creator also called the people who participated in the BLM Movement as "Nazis" on one of the comments. Throughout the video, the problem about systemic racism is completely ignored where anti-Semitism and racism are normalised and bolstered.

Video 4: untitled by themightymogg

The fourth video our report focuses on is posted by the user @themightymogg with the hashtags #britishempire, #british, #britain, #uk and #fyp. As of the 5th of June 2021, the video has 74.5K views, 7743 likes and 1416 comments. As it is the case with the wider far-right media ecology on TikTok, this video also uses intertextuality to become appealing for its audiences, which implies appropriating or alluding to prior linguistic and visual texts to elicit a frame for understanding the situations within

the current text (Hart 2017, 9). This untitled TikTok video uses the chorus of the song "Praise the Lord (Da Shine)" by ASAP Rocky with lyrics printed over images depicting British battles and territorial expansion. This extreme right-wing user, who champions colonialism, uses, and exploits music made by black artists, whilst promoting what is an anti-black message of colonialism. As such, the video is anti-multi-cultural and anti-equality but its style benefits from the tropes and gains of multiculturalism, diversity, and equality to create an ideological space where racism, white supremacy, and repression may appear natural and acceptable (Atton 2004, 89). Throughout the video, the headline "Bring back the Empire GB" is displayed at the top of the frame, and thus the feelings of nostalgia for a time when Britain dominated the global stage are clear. The video fits and represents the overall colonialist and white-supremacist media ecology in the UK.

The video begins with an image of the British Isles with England shaded red. As the song kicks in and the first lyric, "create" appears on screen, Scotland and both Northern Ireland and Ireland also turn red, which symbolises the conquering of both nations. As we hear the next three lyrics "explore", "expand" and "conquer", the audiences see a map of Northern America. In parallel to the earlier part, this part starts with a small area shaded red, which grows to engulf the entire Eastern USA and the East of Canada. The imagery changes again, and we see a painting of the naval battle of Trafalgar with Lord Nelson's portrait superimposed. The lyrics "I came, I saw" appear on screen with a screen capture detailing the casualties on both sides, and the subsequent English victory. As the lyrics repeat, we have a similar imagery of the battle of Waterloo on screen. As it is the case with the overall short video, the discourse in this part is clear, depicting a strong Britain with an "I came, I saw, I conquered" colonial mentality.

As the TikTok video continues, so does the theme. The next image is of a portrait of Queen Victoria, famous for the expansion of the British empire under her rule. The associated lyric reads "I praise the Lord" before changing to "then break the law" as a painting of the burning of the White House with a crying American and ecstatic redcoat appear on screen. The video-maker signals to the viewer that British military dominance is persistent and desired by wider populations by cherry picking an example of British victory in the American war of Independence, which they ultimately lost. The video then returns to a theme of conquest mirroring the lyrics of the song - "I take what's mine then take some more". The viewers simultaneously see a map of India and Pakistan, which turns red as Britain invades it. In contrast to critiques of colonialism, the creator unabashedly glorifies British colonialism in the form of invasion and subjugation of these countries. The lyrics in conjunction with the imagery give the impression of a direct rebuttal to requests for reparations, as though the creator says, "Yes we took your land, and we are proud". This kind of attitude echoes the disdain the far-right has for apologising and acknowledging the harms carried out by white supremacist colonialists and their fear of social and political change.

The lyrics “it rains it pours” are shown over imagery, which is reminiscent of Victorian Britain, for example heavy industry and the houses of parliament. Industrial decline and the loss of traditionally working-class jobs is a common point of contention for those who are recruited by the far-right in the UK, which directly connects to how the creator would nostalgically reference a time when working-class jobs were plentiful. The part of the lyrics “I came I saw” is on repeat once more and we see maps of the British empire, showing trading routes and British global domination. “I praise the Lord” part of the non-diegetic song sees Queen Victoria again on screen. This accounts for how Queen Victoria represents a colonial heroine for the creator and potentially the wider far-right groups. There is more reference to battles won by British forces (The Crimean War, the First Opium War), before the continent of Africa is shown within the frame. As with the other maps used in the video, we see the expansion of British territory over time as “I take what’s mine then take some more” plays. Other European powers are shown here as well, as Africa is carved up between them. The video comes to an end as a picture of a man in traditional colonial dress straddling Africa appears, followed by a clip of Churchill superimposed next to marching troops. All of the videos we analysed recount how for many individuals, immigration and demographic change pose a visible and direct threat to established concepts of nation, identity, and their constitutive social hierarchies (Gest et al. 2017).

Interestingly, and different from other similar videos, the top comments on this TikTok video are more anti-British empire. For example, the most liked comment is “Ya but your all soft now” with 198 likes, and “And then you lose it all 😂” has 113 likes. However, the other highly liked comments are more in line with the themes of the video. For example, “CANZUK”, the acronym for a proposed post-Brexit alliance of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the U.K. has 140 likes. CANZUK fits neatly with the ideas of colonialism, as it takes the four most anglicised English-speaking countries of the commonwealth and unites them, whilst the other 49 nations are excluded. This is an extension of deep-rooted ideas of “Western civilization”, played out on the diplomatic stage (Bell and Vucetic, 2019).

Video 5: “I will not be silenced” by the.old.dawn.v2

The fifth video to be analysed was created by the user the.old.dawn.v2 is entitled “I will not be silenced” and has over 198k views, 24k likes, and 2,145 comments. The tags used (#conservativehypehouse #toryhypehouse #conservative #unitetheright #greatbritain #politics #patriotism #nationalist #britain) reflect overt support for right-wing ideology with the tag of #unitetheright being used in conjunction with the #conservative tag. This demonstrates the overlap of some of the Conservative Party ideologies and that of the far-right, as well as a perceived overlap of group identities. This is further supported by the audio for the video, which is an extract from Michael Portillo’s (then UK defence secretary of the Conservative government) 1995 speech at the Conservative Party Conference. This speech was characterised by an anti-

European, and specifically anti-EU stance through its claim that the UK would not allow its defence forces to be controlled by the EU (Bellamy, 1995). This speech did not receive support outside of the conference and was derided for its jingoism (Katwala, 2001). It was given the name ‘SAS’ after Portillo’s use of the British Special Air Service motto, ‘Who dares wins”. The audio for the duration of the video has drawn on the extract which specifically focuses on the strength of the UK defence forces and the reaffirmation of the UK as a military power which will reclaim its history:

> “Throughout our long history, Britain has been slow to quarrel. But when we fight, we fight to win. I say the freedom for which they spilled their blood, the democracy for which they suffered, the sovereignty for which they died, is not the property for this generation to surrender. Let us, let us teach our children the history of this remarkable country. I don't mean the wishy-washy sociological flim-flam that passes for history in our schools today. I don't mean the politically correct debunking anti-patriotic nonsense of modern textbooks. I mean the real history, of heroes, and bravery.”

The video itself has the text “I posted this last time why not again?” overlaid at the top, implying that this video has been reposted; taken together with the ‘v2’ in the name of the user, it suggests that this account is a second version, potentially because it was previously taken down by TikTok. The video portrays both historic and fictional film footage of the British military forces across time in their different iterations from foot soldiers, cavalry, the Navy, and Air Force – from at least the 17th century and including footage from World Wars I and II. It is interspersed with footage of Michael Portillo and his speech. There are two instances of contemporary footage which depict the March for Europe and Stop Brexit protests which took place following the 2016 Brexit Referendum. The footage has been chosen to emphasise the EU flags. The clips from these two footages are shown in conjunction with the audio “is not the property for this generation to surrender”, directly linking support for the EU to perceptions of weakness and betrayal of the UK. Further it emphasises that support for the EU is a deviation from ingroup norms and expectations that deserves social punishment (Marques, Yzerbyt and Leyens, 1988). By highlighting those who deviate from the prescriptions of the ingroup – in this case – by exerting social punishment through shame, ingroup members can maintain and protect the ingroup and “get rid of the bad ones” (Yzerbyt, Castano, Leyens, & Paladino, 2000, p. 267). Individuals who are high identifiers with the ingroup may be motivated even further to target deviant ingroup members (Hutchison et al., 2008).

By revisiting Michael Portillo’s 1995 perspective as the UK Defence secretary on the position of the UK to Europe and any perceived threats, this video demonstrates that these are perceived by the creator as embedded norms of what it means to be British that still prevail today. Three overarching themes emerge from this video. First, there is the reclamation of the UK as a powerful nation capable of defeating

any threats. The reliance on footage of a number of battles portrays the UK as a defender and also as a colonial invader – together these convey the promise that should the UK enter any conflict, it will emerge as a victor. Due to the context of the passage (which directly placed the UK in opposition to Europe), as well as the EU imagery used in the video, this also conveys that the UK would emerge as a victor at the end of the protracted dissolution of the UK-EU relationship. This serves to remake the UK identity post-Brexit as a nation to be reckoned with. This first theme is thus focused on conceptualising the UK and its identity in an intergroup context.

The second theme turns to identity in the context of the ingroup (the UK), and specifically, the sanctioning of deviant members. By positioning the quote "is not the property for this generation to surrender" over footage of supporters of the UK to remain in the EU, this conveys that supporting remaining in the EU transgresses from the injunctive norms of the UK identity. Thus, those who support the UK remaining in the EU – and those who have attended protests and marches in support of this cause – are judged as deviating from the shared social identity (Marques et al., 1988). Ingroup members who transgress against the ingroup norms and expectations are punished more harshly than deviating outgroup members because they pose a threat to the shared identity and members' wellbeing (Marques and Yzerbyt, 1988; Gollwitzer and Keller, 2010). Indeed, perceived threat to a group's social image is associated with higher intentions to punish in-group deviants, in part due to feelings of shame and embarrassment (Chekroun and Nugier, 2011). In this case, the use of the word "surrender" emphasises that those who support the UK remaining in the EU are betraying not only the UK, but their shared group identity as well. This quote can be perceived as intending to inflict shame and embarrassment on the viewer, and in turn, to function as a tool of social control on those who transgress against this norm.

Relatedly, the final theme that emerges from this video bridges the past with contemporary UK identity by setting out the reconstruction of historical narrative. By relying on footage during the time of the British Empire, it covertly rewrites perceptions of the UK as a colonial power in a positive frame. This is also reflected in the quote which suggests that current interpretations of history are wrong because they are oriented by the contemporary "wishy-washy sociological flim-flam" ideologies which are "politically correct" but are ultimately "nonsense". This also served to place academic and factual perspectives ("sociological") as oppositional to truth – in this case, a "true" history that has been intentionally hidden. This contemporary approach is perceived as threatening due to the reference that it is sanctioned (to some degree) by the government as part of a school curriculum, and that it is indoctrinating future generations away from the true British identity and history. This is further exemplified using "antipatriotic nonsense" as a descriptor of the contemporary approach in contrast to the military imagery used throughout the video as a method of evoking nostalgia. Thus, the video invites the viewer to take

part in uncovering this true history. Collectively, these themes serve to reconstruct what it means to be “British”.

The highest and third highest-rated comments reflects the transnational aims of right-wing ideology by emphasising the allyship of the UK: “Respect from you’re [sic] cousins US [handshake emoji] GB” (723 likes) and “Rule Britannia and all her allies” (158 likes); the latter comment employs the phrase from a British patriotic song and poem from 1740 that has been associated with the British military, and more specifically, its Navy. The second highest-rated comment reflects some of the shared sentiments by emphasising British identity: “British and proud! GB [heart] GB” (415 likes). Taken together, these comments emphasise a collective identity that is linked to the military power of the UK whilst highlighting the shared identity and aims of the right.

5. Conclusions

This report addresses the power of Internet and social media platforms to recruit individuals to radicalise and to disseminate widespread hate speech. In focusing on online channels of radicalisation of far-right and radical right in the UK, this report identifies the recent radical right wing and far-right political discourse not as isolated or exclusive chain of events. More specifically, this report has responded to the increasing unchecked rise of right-wing and white supremacist ideology on TikTok in the UK, where TikTok political communication serves to bolster a shared discursive world of colonialism, nativism, and white supremacy amongst children and teenagers. Although individual TikTok users such as @mehekbukhari06 highlights institutionalised Islamophobia and racial stereotypes on her channel where such users play crucial roles to challenge racialisation and hate speech, the spread and visibility of white supremacist and colonialist posts are not problems related to individual users. Radicalisation on TikTok is a symptom and symbol of wider radicalisation patterns and pathways on far-right media platforms as well as the widespread discourse on British mainstream media. While the report undertakes an in-depth analysis of five popular short videos on TikTok as representative examples of TikTok radicalisation, the report relates the current TikTok ecosystem of xenophobic, misogynist, homophobic, transphobic, antisemitic and white nationalist-supremacist ideas, ideologies and action to the abundance of such discourses on the mainstream media as well as Conservative Party’s overall anti-immigrant and racism denying policy-making.

The report puts mediated forms of radicalisation into historical context in its investigation of the British mainstream media. The report’s ensuing in-depth analysis revolves around accessibility, ephemerality, multi-platform sharing options and the comment-sphere of TikTok as a platform as well as the intertextuality, hashtags and emojis used on the popular TikTok videos, which bolster the spread and reach of right-wing and white supremacist ideologies. The report shows that racist and white

supremacist ideologies are consistent from mainstream media such as tabloid newspapers to organised far-right websites and social media profiles and finally to mundane online communication on TikTok. As a platform, TikTok removes hateful posts by looking into the use of coded language and symbols on the videos as well the comments. Even though neo-Nazi content was taken down by TikTok, the platform has planned to expand the ban "to remove neighbouring ideologies, such as white nationalism, white genocide theory, as well as statements that have their origin in these ideologies, and movements such as Identitarianism and male supremacy" (Rude 2020). The Brexit vote, anti-immigration agendas, and other forms of isolationism and racism have commonly been attributed to older generations (see for instance Hobolt 2016; Finlay et al. 2020), amongst other factors. However, recent findings show that targets of prejudice may have shifted in British younger generations, with higher acceptance of LGBTQA+ and racial minority social groups compared to older generations, but similar levels of prejudice for immigrant social groups in the 18-34 age group compared to older generations (Janmaat & Keating, 2019). Furthermore, when comparing attitudes of the current (18-34) younger cohort to their age counterparts between 1981-1998 (in other words, comparing the attitudes of 18–34-year-olds *in* the 1980-1990s), it was found that there was less tolerance for migrants in the contemporary younger generation; in this way, immigrant social groups may be becoming the new ‘other’ (Janmaat & Keating, 2019). The right-wing authoritarianism in the cohort which came of age under the New Labour government between 1997-2010, reveals the resounding impact of Thatcherism and the Conservative government on ‘Thatcher’s grandchildren’ (Grasso, Farrall, Gray, Hay, & Jennings, 2017). The popularity of anti-immigration and neo-colonial videos on TikTok is thus likely evidence that white supremacist and colonialist views are still common across British younger generations.

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