Policy Brief

Nativism, Islamophobism, and Islamism in the Age of Populism: Culturalization and Religionization of What is Social, Economic, and Political in Europe

ISLAM-OPHOB-ISM

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Policy Brief

This policy paper aims to address policy options, outcomes, and proposals related to radicalisation among European youths, with a focus on the historical juncture marked by the escalation of ethnocultural and religious tensions in the EU. Contrary to the scholarship that studies European youth in separate clusters divided by ethnicity, culture, and religion, such as "Muslim-origin" and "native", we analyse Islamist and nativist radicalisations through a single scientific lens.

We acknowledge several alternative definitions of the concept of radicalisation. The most widely accepted way to define the concept is to focus on the likelihood of violence stemming from individuals. A noteworthy alternative definition of radicalisation is non-violent, emphasising the transformative power of ideologies in favour of a possibly progressive social and political change. The PRIME Youth project's aim to decouple "radicalism" from "extremism" and "terrorism" aligns with this alternative definition. Combined with the prefix "co-", radicalisation denotes increasing hostility between social groups in conflict.

Based on fieldwork on the natives who support movements labelled as far-right and migrant-origin (i.e., Turkish-origin and Moroccan-origin) self-identified Muslims in Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Belgium, this policy brief identifies various units of analysis and, accordingly, offers policies at five governmental levels.

This Policy Brief is relevant for:

EUROPEAN COMMISSION	because	The executive of the EU is competent to create an inclusive European identity, bridging social rifts on a supranational level.
NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS	because	They possess political leverage to tackle social divides and promote inclusivity, equity, and social cohesion among co-radicalising groups at the state level.
LOCAL / REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS	because	They possess distinctive capabilities stemming from their close proximity to local communities, grassroots representation, and accountability for various local services.
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS and CIVIL SOCIETY	because	They are inclusive of networks rooted in local communities, relatively independent of government control, and more flexible than governmental structures in addressing emerging challenges.
MEDIA ORGANS	because	They have a key role in providing accurate reporting, challenging stereotypes and biases, and facilitating social dialogue.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1** – We urge policymakers and practitioners to question the underlying social, economic, and political problems behind radicalisation, rather than assuming it to be a pathological condition.
- **Recommendation 2** – National governments should cooperate more closely with local communities and grassroots movements instead of following vertical and authoritarian approaches to building moderate ideologies and religions.
- **Recommendation 3** – In order to combat violent extremism, national governments should implement community-based de-radicalisation strategies developed in accordance with the specificities of different local conditions and marginalising factors.
- **Recommendation 4** – It is recommended that the European Commission expands its range of initiatives to construct a more inclusive European identity that transcends cultural and religious clustering in Europe and, concurrently, attracts attention to the shared problems and prospects.
- **Recommendation 5** – Actors at the local and national levels should address the conditions of structural exclusion and perceived discrimination that underpin parallel communities.

- **Recommendation 6** – While promoting alternative social integration models against parallel communities, policymakers and practitioners should refrain from producing essentialist and derogatory vocabulary in reference to Islamism or nativism. Such language amplifies the co-radicalisation of natives who support far-right movements and self-identified Muslims from immigrant backgrounds.
- **Recommendation 7** – Prioritising the shared concerns of co-radicalising groups shall not discourage the de-radicalisation and integration programs from paying attention to the unique historical conditions and relativistic knowledge claims which differentiate ideologies and their proponents.
- **Recommendation 8** – The European Commission and national governments are advised to collaborate further in developing formal/informal education programs to reach individuals who are geographically immobile, socially and economically disadvantaged, culturally isolated, and psychologically vulnerable.

The ISLAM-OPHOB-ISM ERC AdG project explores various facets of the concept of radicalisation and the processes associated with it. While considering key insights from the literature on social movements, the research team aims to offer a fresh interpretation of the radicalisation literature.

The ISLAM-OPHOB-ISM project views radicalisation as a symptom of political, social and economic problems and potentially a quest to solve them. This viewpoint contrasts with the approaches that understand radicalisation as a problem in itself and a process to be stopped. We contend that criminalising radicalisation without addressing its root causes further inflates chronic problems, such as deindustrialisation, structural exclusion, and socioeconomic, political, spatial and psychological deprivation. As a result, the ISLAM-OPHOB-ISM project presents a vibrant collection of fundamental arguments raised by youth in response to their socioeconomic, political, spatial, and nostalgic grievances. In this sense, the project is uniquely positioned among other studies aiming at researching and preventing radicalisation.

Overview

The starting point of the ISLAM-OPHOB-ISM project is the escalation of ethnocultural and religious tensions in the European Union, hit by two substantial crises, namely the global financial crisis and the refugee crisis. Although many youths in this generation produce exclusionary discourses, our project posits that they share the frustration of those they exclude. At this historical juncture, ISLAM-OPHOB-ISM utilises a single optical lens to analyse the factors and processes behind the radicalisation of two groups of European youths: **the natives who support movements labelled as far-right** and **the migrant-origin self-identified Muslims (both Turkish-origin and Moroccan-origin)**. Our

Source: https://pbs.twimg.com/card_img/1662040974887903238/aUtB9hRG?format=jpg&name=large

research is unique in that it uses a single scientific lens to understand the root causes of radicalisation among both groups, separated from each other often regardless of a necessitating political context.

While referring to Islamism and nativism at its core, the project aimed to avoid oversimplifying these concepts and the agents they represent. As such, we constantly checked our terminology so that it reflects the heterogeneity of the populations, inclusive of a wide range of historical representations based on various religious, ethno-cultural/national, sectarian and traditional notions. To that end, we prioritised the self-identification of our research participants (e.g., "self-identified Muslim") before using any label (e.g., Muslim) in our research.

While questioning how and why various forms of radicalisation occur, this research project scrutinises alternative cultural and structural explanations for the process. As a result, **it reframes youth disillusionment as a matter of socioeconomic and political cleavages before cultural and religious incompatibilities**. In this context, the project problematises what we call "the neoliberal mode of governmentality" and the globalisation shocks, which underpinned the turn to identity by outlawing radicalisms that fall outside the market of cultural or religious repertoire. All in all, ISLAM-OPHOB-ISM emphasises the social-economic, political, and psychological processes common to the different segments of the European public, including native or migrant-origin populations. **The project's overall objective is to emphasise the value of radical thinking patterns while problematising the confusion between extremism and radicalism and the monopoly of culturalism.**

The project reached several checkpoints in understanding its main concepts and their interactions, as planned in our work packages. Accordingly, the team members focused on various aspects of the relationship between radicalisation, globalisation, Islamism, nativism, and Islamophobism. In less than five years, the research team produced over 100 publications, including one edited volume, numerous peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters, blog posts, city narratives and literature reviews in the form of working papers. We also ran a

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social media campaign called *#LendThemYourEars*. All of these publications and research output are accessible on the project website. In addition, based on a coding manual accompanied by various supplementary materials, the research team completed the coding of 307 interviews on the qualitative data analysis computer software, NVivo 12 Pro. Data will be available in the Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives upon the completion of the research project in January 2024.

Research findings

The research team conducted **307 interviews** across four European countries (Germany, Belgium, France, and the Netherlands) during the two interview rounds in 2020 and 2021. Focusing on the nativist reactionary radicalism in "the places that do not matter" (Rodríguez-Pose 2018), we contacted individuals residing primarily in small towns/cities away from metropolitan capital cities (e.g., **Dresden, Aalst, Bible Belt**). This part of our sample was representative of nativist radicalism. Secondly, we contacted self-identified Muslim individuals with migration backgrounds residing in relatively large towns or capital cities (e.g., **Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam, and Brussels**). Our focus on the capital cities in this context was related to the route of Muslim migration, driven by employment opportunities, better infrastructure and the presence of established Muslim communities. We approached young people aged 18-30, in accordance with the EU's reinforced Youth Guarantee that raised the upper age limit of whom it considered youth from 24 to 30. As a starting point, the project problematised the neoliberal political tendency to criminalise and pathologise radicalisation by reducing the concept to extremism and terrorism. Contrary to this trend, we demonstrate in recent and upcoming publications that many youngsters are prone to radicalisation but not necessarily violent extremism or terrorism.

Taken together, **our dataset suggests that radicalisation closely relates to disenfranchisement, socio-economic neglect, and political underrepresentation. Our publications focus collectively on how youths who feel neglected, excluded, marginalised, alienated, and forgotten generate reactionary forms of radicalisation, including nativism and Islamism.** More specifically, the research team engaged with the existing definitions of radicalisation and came up with alternatives. Laying the groundwork of the project, Principal Investigator (PI) Ayhan Kaya wrote various articles and accessible blog posts to problematise the interchangeable uses of radicalism, extremism, terrorism, and fundamentalism. Kaya argues that radicalism cannot be understood as a stable ideological position as it is historically situated, unlike extremism, theorised as a psychological and ideological state (Kaya 2021a). Analysing both violent and non-violent radicalisation, Postdoctoral

Researcher Metin Koca argued that violent extremism often involves **reducing the ideology into violence**, whereas the complete form of an ideology, and **radicalisation as seeking completeness** as such, involves much more (Koca 2022a).

Project publications share the argument that radicalisation appears as a struggle for democracy rather than a threat to it. A co-authored article, written by Postdoctoral Researchers Jais Adam-Troian and Ayse Tecmen, and PI Ayhan Kaya argued that the threatening context generated by **the four decades of globalisation** acts as a risk factor for youth extremism in the long run (Adam-Troian, Tecmen and Kaya, 2021). Accordingly, the reactionary radicalism of those suffering from the negative effects of **modernisation and globalisation** is more about their quest for saving what they valued in communities, cultural traditions, nativist-nationalist sentiments, and religious aspirations from eradication by the growth of capitalism. In this regard, **reactionary radicalism** is a backward-looking political orientation characterised by anti-stances and dogmatic thinking; associated with values of security, tradition and aversion to stimulation and new experiences; and acted out as anomic, extreme, and violent political actions that foster intolerance towards out-groups and minorities.

Our project seeks to identify similarities between two seemingly different subpopulations: European Muslim youth with immigrant backgrounds and native youth who support far-right movements. Rather than examining their traits, we aim to uncover values and beliefs that reveal similar political processes (Benevento, Koca and Kaya 2022). While these groups have been researched independently up until this point, our study identifies many similarities between the two groups as far as their socio-economic, political, spatial, psychological, and emotional traits are concerned. PI Ayhan Kaya identified the common denominator of these groups as their downward mobility and inclination towards radicalisation (Kaya 2021a). Accordingly, both the populist and Islamist rhetorics are employed by radicalising groups and individuals who have been alienated and swept away by the current **neoliberal forms of governmentality** (Kaya, Koca, and Benevento 2023). Considering **shared gendered values** present in the two groups, Postdoctoral Researcher Benevento (2023b) examined **young women's self-acceptance** and explicit refusal of outside influences. In a study currently under review (*see* Koca 2021a), Postdoctoral Researcher Koca refined the concepts of critical radicalism and violent extremism, arguing that they should be defined by **the reflective methods individuals employ**, rather than their ideologies.

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Part of the project research also identifies the specific conditions that make Islamism and the Radical Right incomparable. Postdoctoral Researcher Metin Koca pointed to key structural, historical, and ideological specificities of the Radical Right and Jihadism, arguing that the Jihadi violent extremism is a **unique post-cold-war phenomenon** unlike right-wing violent extremism, and the Radical Right has always been more **embedded in legitimate politics** in the West (Koca 2023a; 2022a). Also considering the distinctive nature of **religion as a social category and mental experience**, Koca identified unique research contexts to study the Christian conservatives who joined Radical Right movements and migrant-origin Muslims socialising at mosques funded by their countries of origin (Koca 2021b; Koca 2023b). In the same context, a contributor to the edited volume of the ISLAM-OPHOB-ISM project, Olivier Roy argued that **the ideological continuum** between what a moderate individual wants and what a radical wants is less obvious in Islamism compared to the Radical Right (Roy 2023).

Our studies identify some noticeable differences across the countries.

Making comparisons across country contexts is beyond the scope of this project, as the samples are not representative to draw conclusive results. However, we have noted a few **country-specific elements** that deserve special attention particularly in the Netherlands, Germany, and France. While the sampling processes and various situational factors might have influenced their validity, we shall make **the following points**:

- The **housing problem in the Netherlands** plays a crucial role in the ownership claims of both migrant-origin Muslims and right-wing natives. According to a currently under-review research co-authored by Benevento, Koca

and Kaya, the housing problem does not just push the Dutch to claim ownership as a way of opening up a space for themselves, but it also drifts their otherwise clashing claims closer to each other—i.e., for example, against the newcomers.

- PI Ayhan Kaya's research revealed that the motivation to keep **the Heimat (Homeland)** the same and strong remains powerful among the German natives living in remote and ethno-culturally homogenous places (Kaya 2023). Heimat is closely associated with emotional and sensory ties to a location, such as through food, music, traditions, language, or accent. Our native participants in Germany used the term in both historical and contemporary forms of nativism, where the supposed homogeneity of the native population – its *Leitkultur* (leading culture), language, architecture, literature, and industry, for example – is instrumentalised in political narratives on belonging according to an apparent belief that they are more entitled to inhabit Germany than others". Many German native youths with involvement in movements labelled as far-right highlighted the importance of disobeying the law in street protests to pursue political objectives.

- Questioning the appeal of the Populist Radical Right political preferences among **Christian conservatives**, Postdoctoral Researcher Metin Koca identified Germany as an exception. According to Koca's study currently in the production phase, Germany differs partly from the Dutch case and strongly from the French case in that Christian conservatives have a lesser tendency to tag along behind the **Populist Radical Right parties**. While further research is needed to identify a causal mechanism, one explanation is that the **inclusive governance of religion** in Germany renders faith communities feel included in the mainstream.

- Postdoctoral researcher Metin Koca's research on **Yellow Vests** argued that a **cross-ideological dimension** of the protests is its echoing of the frustration, which many Islamists and nativists share, with the electoral processes and the country's political architecture (Koca 2023c). While Emmanuel Macron disappointed self-identified French-Muslims with his exclusionary conception of French values, our nativist research participants shared their proposals to transform the EU into a "European Union of Nations." Notwithstanding their differences, our research participants acknowledged **the Yellow Vests' outreach beyond their parochial identities**. Hence, the movement opened up new (e.g., class-based) radicalisation possibilities other than those relying on the Islamist and nativist vocabularies.

Researching radicalisation calls for locally and contextually sensitive methods

Since there is a difference between accepting radical ideas and actively participating in violent acts because of those ideas, only a small fraction of those who radicalise engage in violent behavior. We derived various arguments from here. As recommended by Horgan (2009), Postdoctoral Researcher Ayşenur Benevento called researchers to stop looking for "profiles" and start mapping "pathways" when studying violent radicalisation, as well as shift their attention from "root causes" to "outer qualities" (Benevento 2023a). The study of those outer qualities involves the examination of contextually meaningful parameters and determination of the ideal environment in the variation of radicalisation experiences as different people become radicalised in various ways and over various issues. As a research based on the preceding conceptualisations, our study concentrated on the processes of radicalisation as a mental activity whose roots lie in interpersonal contexts.

All populisms, radicalisms, extremisms and fundamentalisms are local.

Having adopted a localised focus, the project published several city narratives and country case studies. Firstly, the field researchers of the project focused on the contemporary history of each city in which we conducted our interviews, identifying the local processes of deindustrialisation, unemployment, poverty, exclusion, alienation, and isolation (Weissenberg 2020; Raemdonck 2020; Robert 2020; Zuurbier 2020; Drhimeur 2021). The country case studies followed them. For example, PI Ayhan Kaya published several articles on

the formation of populism in the German state of Saxony, suffering from socio-economic, spatial, and nostalgic deprivation. Examining different uses of the past in Europe, Kaya described the German right-wing party Alternative for Germany (AfD)'s use of the dissonant past as a "political culture of regret and sorrow." By contrast, the French right-wing party National Front's revitalisation of Jeanne D'Arc appears as a case of glorification.

Questioning the relationship between religiosity and support for the Radical Right parties in Western Europe, Postdoctoral Researcher Metin Koca explored the attitudes of Christian conservatives towards the politics of "Muslim de-radicalisation" in France and the Dutch Bible Belt. In support of the campaigns against "Radical Islam," many religiously conservative Catholics in France withdraw their criticisms regarding the line they see between freedom of expression and insult. Conservative Calvinists in the Netherlands refrain from being on the same side as conservative Muslims, even in matters of traditional family values and abortion. Koca described the process as "the religious moderation of Christian conservatives into Radical Right" (Koca 2021b). From a policy-oriented perspective, Koca concluded that promoting a drift to the political center requires keeping an eye on what lies there.

Based on a field trip in the so-called **no-go zones** in Belgium and France, Postdoctoral Researcher Metin Koca questioned how their rigid local identities help the

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residents make sense of a collective loss. "This is where you always feel fine," a research participant said about Molenbeek, Schaerbeek, Anderlecht, and St Joost, as opposed to the Brussels city center where "you may encounter people acting weird and racist." Koca argued that, despite the obstacles, many local youths know that they should not sit and wait for their fates to change suddenly: "You should not wait for the feeling that you are welcome. You have to make this happen yourself" (Koca 2022b).

Findings specific to the two subpopulations of youth are worth listening to

Noticing some patterns between both group members' life stories, we realised that our research was concerned with often inconspicuous individuals than their identity labels may imply, and radicalisation is not necessarily an indication of deviance. This does not mean we ought to look away from their radical thoughts and behaviors but understand why and how their radical expressions come to be within the context of their lives. Many of our participants who perceive themselves as unnoticed or humiliated, expressed gratitude for earning actual attention to their views.

One of the most surprising results has come from the interviews conducted with the native youngsters labelled as far-right extremists. We were expecting to witness a prevalent form of Islamophobic, or Islamophobist, discourse to be used by the native youths. The density of Islamophobic discourse was much less than expected. On the contrary, their focus was mostly

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on the socio-economic, political, spatial, and nostalgic forms of deprivation that they experience in everyday life. Such forms of deprivation have been expressed by our participants using what was available in their cultural and political repertoire: ethno-nationalist, nativist, and

nostalgic tropes. Those youngsters residing in remote towns and being appealed to right-wing nativist/populist discourses are mostly the ones with difficult socio-economic and family backgrounds (unemployed parents, and/or separated/divorced parents).

Another surprising result was to see how much our participants appreciated talking about their everyday life and communicating with our researchers about the hardships that are mostly related to different forms of intersectional discrimination, labelling, framing, exclusion, and humiliation they experience. All these feelings and perceived discriminations were similar among both groups of young people. As a research team, we were convinced that we were with our participants to initiate an act of active listening, something that they had yearned for several years.

We should rethink how 'de-radicalisation' is operationalised.

The trust gap between the individuals' en-route to radicalisation and the government can grow wider if de-radicalisation initiatives are implemented without consideration for local political and economic realities and sociocultural norms. Therefore, those who want to go

De-radicalisation can be then designed as the situation in which the needs that caused the radicalisation are being met.

beyond simply identifying radical organisations and individuals would benefit from strategies that emphasise local and intersectional contexts. Together, we argue that the most effective de-radicalisation strategy would be to develop initiatives that mitigate the emotional and economic distress brought on by social exclusion, such as unemployment and discrimination.

Our publications include several policy implications in this vein. Arguing that Islamophobia has become an ideology (i.e., Islamophobism) produced by the conservative governments and right-wing populist parties, PI Ayhan Kaya argued that this mode of "governmentality" fails as Muslims in Europe are increasingly participating in legitimate political representation in parliamentary democracies. According to Kaya, Muslims who are politically underrepresented, intersectionally discriminated against, and perceived as a threat to the national, social and cultural security of their countries of residence, can be expected to turn inward and establish parallel communities as a response to such acts of structural exclusion and discrimination (Kaya 2021b). According to Postdoctoral Researcher Benevento (2023b), the focus of de-radicalisation programs should shift from lecturing "troubled" individuals to helping them share their personal stories and identify and analyse the way that they attended to their feelings of exclusion, marginalisation and isolation. De-radicalisation can be then designed as the situation in which the needs that caused the radicalisation are being met. Postdoctoral Researcher Metin Koca (2023b) argued that state-led religious reform or conservation projects fail, as European Muslims' relationship with Islam goes beyond the propaganda of both the migrant-sending and receiving states. Koca concluded that a community of believers who feel discriminated against will not accept the terms imposed by state authorities whom they believe play a part in discrimination. Therefore, structuring "national Islam" following the state officials' words is likely counterproductive for the self-identification of migrant-origin individuals. These individuals' Europeanness is in their spiritual needs and accompanying interlocution processes, which have been shaped in Europe and extend beyond the religious politics of their countries of origin (Koca 2023b; 2021c).

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Policy recommendations

At the end of our interviews, each research participant was asked the following question: "In light of what you have told us so far, let's imagine that you are an EU official. Is there anything you would want to change?" The responses indicate a series of cleavages between intergovernmentalism and supranationalism, free market and protectionism, and free travel and border controls. Considering the subsidiarity principle that decision-making and implementation shall occur at the most appropriate level, with the EU intervening only when necessary, our policy recommendations rest on an assessment of the division of labour between the European Commission and the member states. Alongside these actors, we also have recommendations for the local administrations, media organs and civil society organisations.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The responses from our research participants highlight significant disagreements over how the European Union should be structured. That said, there are recurring themes, including a perceived democratic deficit in the European Parliament, disillusionment with the means of representative democracy, frustration about Brussels bureaucracy, and concerns regarding open-border policies. While emphasising on direct democracy (e.g., through referenda) has become a baseline claim of the Populist Radical Right, the discontent with the lack of transparency, accountability and accessibility at the European level went beyond the well-known nativist arguments in our sample.

Nonetheless, the interviews also indicate that the necessity for a European level of politics has been acknowledged by most research participants. Accordingly, many self-proclaimed nativists do not want their countries to leave the EU, but transform it from within. Additionally, most of the participants with migrant origins expressed an interest in identifying themselves as European, sometimes even more than identifying with their countries of citizenship or origin. Except for a small group of research participants, most of them praised the idea or their individual practices of free travel within Europe and meetings with like-minded individuals from other European countries. Our data suggests that opposition towards the EU is often not due to its wrongdoings but due to the feeling that the EU's benefits are not reaching certain groups and individuals. In other words, negative feedback on the EU often concerns a perceived lack of opportunities to participate in the system.

Our research shows that European youth with nativist beliefs often come from socio-economically and spatially deprived regions, such as rural or deindustrialized towns. These individuals may initially resent mobility and diversity but are actually willing to embrace them when given the opportunity. Nevertheless, they are denied access to a fruitful atmosphere of cultural exchange. As such, it is important to note that many of them are not inherently opposed to being mobile or socialising in diverse circles. On the contrary, the value of what was desired and unattainable transforms into something undesirable and worthless, similar to how the fox dismisses the grapes and walks away in denial, in Aesop's Fable 'sour grapes.'

Considering these limitations and successes at the European Level, we recommend the European Commission to:

- continue promoting equality and non-discrimination among EU citizens on all levels (gender, racial, ethnic, religious, intersectional);
- emphasise the socio-economic and political nature of the shared European identity as opposed to relying on essentialist myths such as civilisationalism;
- coordinate and harmonise social policies with states and local administrations in due respect to the principle of subsidiarity;
- increase transparency about the EU's management of migration flows as the lack of information contributes to conspiracy theories such as the Grand Replacement Theory. Although the EU Open Data Portal provides access to

a wide range of datasets, documents, and statistics, there is a need to encourage public efforts to make these sources more accessible and understandable.

- expand its range of initiatives, including the reinforced Youth Guarantee, the EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027, CITYCARE, and Erasmus+, attracting attention to the shared problems and prospects. Through such efforts, the EU is capable of constructing an inclusive European identity that goes beyond perceived cultural and religious boundaries;
- collaborate with the Parliament so that the latter has an increased oversight role in line with the requirements of overcoming the democratic deficit in the EU;
- organise and support mobility actions that improve contact and knowledge exchange between all EU citizens, including the two diverse groups scrutinised in this policy brief;

NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

Nation states remain integral to development, security, justice, and freedom initiatives. Accordingly, our research participants had crucial expectations from their countries, and serious reasons to be discontent about the governments, the decision-making and accountability processes, or more deeply, the political system and historical legacies as a whole. We have found that the government's response to socio-economic, psychological, and political deprivation plays a significant role in addressing youth radicalisation. Many young people fail to detect an inclusive national identity that they can share. The opposite is often true: One symptom of the identity problem is that most of them feel on the losing side. Furthermore, many participants demanded some kind of a redistribution of wealth, but the direction of such redistribution represented different views on welfare chauvinism and radical decolonizing redistribution.

Considering these social polarizations, we recommend that national governments:

- address the conditions of structural exclusion and perceived discrimination that underpin parallel communities. Among the examples we identified are harassment based on ethnic or immigrant background, discrimination resulting from visible religious symbols, Muslim or non-native names, and differences in skin colour or physical appearance when looking for housing.
- refrain from following vertical and authoritarian approaches to building moderate ideologies and religions. Instead, the empirical data suggests that involving the local communities and grassroots movements in ideology-building processes yields more sustainable solutions.
- review cooperation with migrant-sending countries, such as Turkey and Morocco, and establish joint platforms and political frameworks to address disagreements on the governance of international migration and social integration.
- negotiate a balanced yet decisive approach to income redistribution, considering the rise of nativism in economically remote areas that suffer from deindustrialisation and unemployment, and the formation of Muslim parallel communities in ideologically remote areas in city suburbs.
- provide forums where various uses of the past can be discussed and lead to more inclusive understandings of national identity;
- develop and fund programs that would inform citizens about the purpose and the implementation of the welfare state and require citizens' active engagement through democratic processes (e.g., participatory budgeting, etc.).
- provide government employees, teachers, and others who frequently encounter differences, an awareness of the history that normalizes the meeting of different ethnicities and ideologies;

LOCAL / REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS

While the political regimes and administrative systems of each government differ in significant ways, one finding that is relevant for all is the necessity to fill in the gap between central governments and local needs. Our research indicates that

the natives who support movements labelled as far-right and the migrant-origin self-identified Muslims often have personal experiences leading to marginalisation, humiliation and a feeling of destructive competition with each other. These negative feelings and thoughts reinforce their sense of isolation from the rest of society, making them feel like members of a subordinate minority group. Consequently, both "Muslims" and "right-wing natives," who historically have had little interaction, are likely to become even more socially isolated from each other and the rest of society. In the process, they often resort to more extreme narratives to express their grievances. These narratives are often fueled by personal experiences within their communities and can fuel exclusionary ideological statements. At the intersection of the physical and symbolic boundaries, we recommend that local governments and regional administrations:

- develop and implement policies (e.g., public housing restricting aimed at income mixing) to eliminate immigrant-native segregation in capital cities like Berlin, Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam, as well as in remote towns and peripheral areas;
- cooperate with local civil society to establish networks informing the local communities about Islam, country history, and migration;
- organise activities to enable dialogue between different communities to illustrate the diversity among local communities;
- create job opportunities indiscriminately to eliminate harmful competition among citizens;
- establish platforms to discuss the concerns surrounding intolerance, Islamophobia, and Xenophobia in order to reflect the EU's approach to these issues; and
- increase public funding for economic and social inclusion to support participatory, art-based, cultural activities in these fields.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS and CIVIL SOCIETY

Our research identifies the crucial role communal relations and grassroots engagement may play in creating/bridging social divides and underpinning/countering radicalisation. Many of our self-identified Muslim research participants were affiliated with a national or transnational organisation involved in civic activity, refraining from direct political activity. The research participants whom we reached in nativist movements were, by definition, more politicised. Still, many of them recognised the benefits of engaging with less politically oriented organisations outside their bubble. In accordance with our identification of the positive illustrations of civil dialogue, we recommend that NGOs and civil society movements:

- adopt an intercultural lens and invoke narratives that do not provoke the identity politics of possibly co-radicalising groups;
- develop daily activities as sponsors, provide support, and assist vulnerable individuals in becoming self-reliant;
- bring together individuals and groups that may have different perspectives to emphasise an area of mutual understanding, cooperation, and collective action;
- facilitate the formation of coalitions and networks between organisations that otherwise fail to communicate; and
- encourage individuals to become active citizens in community projects and social volunteering activities.

MEDIA ORGANS

The participants reported highly negative experiences with media platforms and the content they produce. Most of them appeared to have a lack of trust in media organisations. For example, the self-identified Muslim youth pointed to the role of media representations in the perceived distance between themselves and the rest of the population. On the flip side, many native research participants criticised the mainstream media for promoting a liberal agenda, neglecting relatively conservative perspectives, and being out of touch with rural communities and the working class. Those who participated in an exit program for right-wing extremists also reported their negative previous experience participating in interviews

conducted by media professionals. According to them, their narratives were distorted, and their anonymity was violated. Considering these problems, we recommend that media organs:

- develop methods to present news in an engaging manner without compromising content reliability;
- spread thorough and accurate information about Muslim communities, avoid sensational generalisations and simplifications that incite public dread and terror;
- gain new insights into the social, political and economic contexts in which radicalisation occurs;
- use accurate and precise language to prevent cases of violent extremism from leading to mass stigmatisation;
- embrace a human-centred storytelling approach, emphasising the pathways, experiences and vulnerabilities instead of identities;
- withdraw from labelling individuals with identity markers that they do not self-proclaim. The examples include "fascists," "far-right groups," "Jihadists" and "Salafists," which may lead to the stigmatisation of broader communities based on their shared values, skin color, religion, ethnicity, and nationality and immigration status;
- rely on source protection to obtain and divulge information from private sources that is in the public interest; and
- develop and implement algorithms that can offer untailored social media experiences and combat desensitisation to users.

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