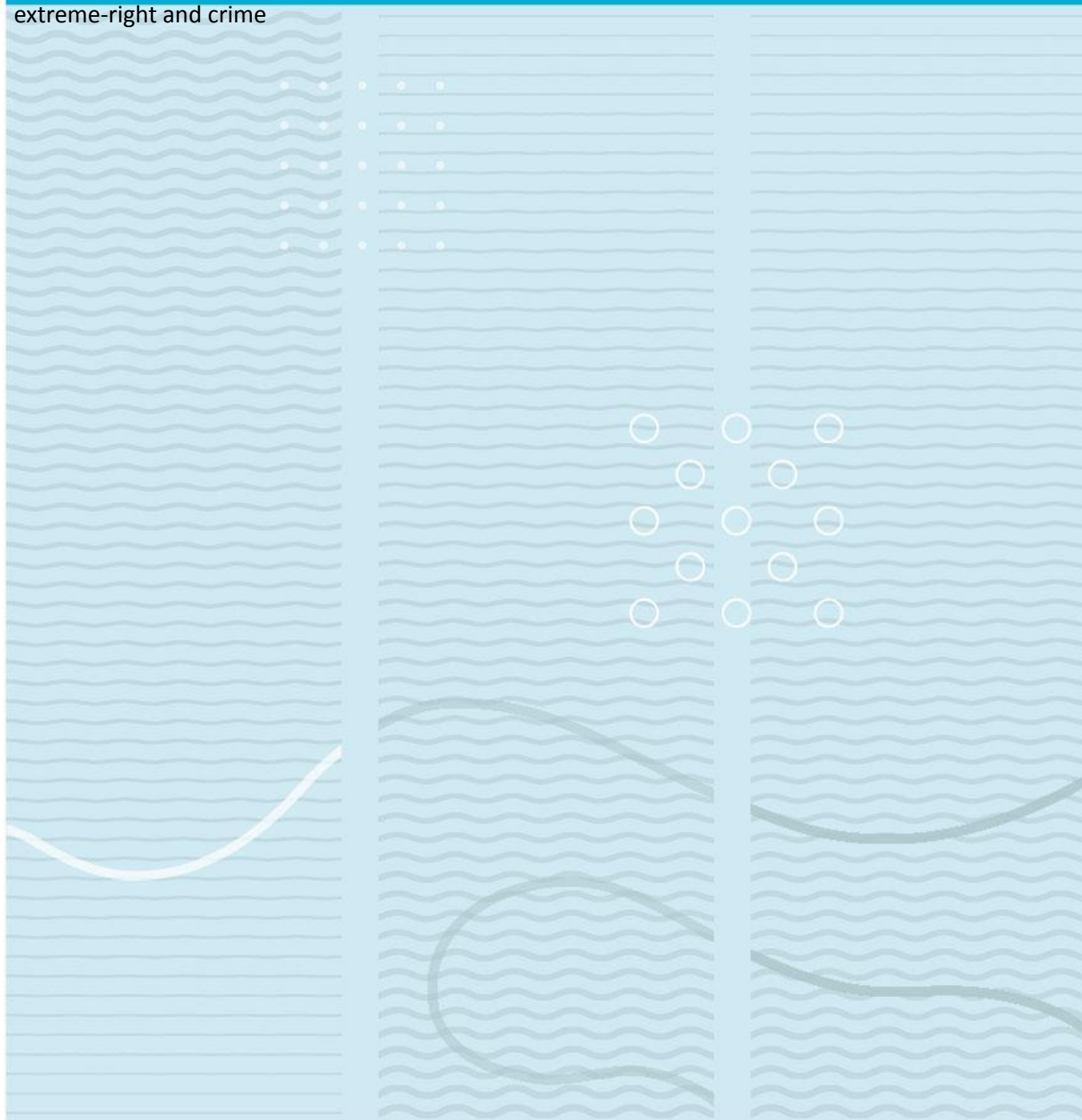


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Capital and the nexus between the extreme-right and crime

A literature-review of the social, cultural and economic mechanisms behind the nexus between the extreme-right and crime



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This thesis is worth 30 study points

Summary

This thesis entails exploring potential factors contributing to the overlap between right-wing extremism and ordinary-crime. That is, how individuals engaged in right-wing extremism seemingly more often have a criminal past than the general public, and sometimes still engage in various forms of criminality after radicalization. Unlike ideological-crimes, which is not the subject of this study. Committed usually as a result of ideological conviction, or other social and/ or relational reasons directly related to extremist involvement, ordinary-crimes refers to as crime committed unrelated to ideology, like robberies and drug-dealing.

Regarding some crimes, it might be challenging to distinguish between ordinary- and ideological-crimes, like violence and weapons-offenses, which may or may not relate to extremist convictions. Ordinary-crimes might also be employed as a means to further extremist goals, like funding.

These blurry lines however are a consequence of this theme, and although ordinary-crimes may be committed as a result of one's extremist convictions, they will still be applicable to explore the overlap, only purely ideological crimes are excluded.

The overlap between ideological-extremism and ordinary-crime, is a field of study, often referred to as *The crime-terror nexus*, which may either refer to the formal pragmatic collaboration between terrorists/ extremists and criminals, through cooperation, or by terrorists engaging in organized-crime or vice-versa. The more informal social approach, regards how terrorists/ extremists and criminals often belong to a similar demographic, often marked by various forms of exclusion and marginalization, and how social milieus and networks may facilitate the overlap.

Islamic-extremism is well researched in regards to the crime-terror nexus, in my opinion the same can not be said for right-wing extremism, even though individuals on both scenes share a criminal background among other common risk-factors. This might be because the overlap is more systematic regarding the extreme-Islamic scene, as well

as the social relevance it gained during the Syrian civil-war and the reign of the Islamic-State.

As right-wing extremism has gained social relevance during these past years in Europe, and the Russian/Ukrainian conflict potentially serving as a battlefield for right-wing extremists, there might be fertile grounds for exploring the overlap between the extreme-right and crime, by drawing parallels to previous research regarding Islamic-extremism. Even though the overlap might not manifest the exact same way, there might still be grounds to explore potential common social, cultural and economic mechanisms that result in this phenomena.

By conducting a literature-review the goal was to collect relevant data regarding right-wing extremism and its overlap with ordinary-crime, creating an overview by drawing inspiration from previous research regarding Islamic-extremism. In the process of collecting data a method emerged organically where in order to create an overview, from exploring different examples and open sources, different seemingly overlapping subcultures were revealed. Thus the approach used to create this overall image of the theme, became to map different subcultures which might facilitate the nexus between ordinary-crime and extremism. Drawing theoretically from Bourdieu's concept of social-room, field, capital and habitus.

Because of the need for scattered data, open sources and theory to conceptualize the theme, there might not appear to be hard proof of systematic overlap between ordinary-crime and right-wing extremism in some of these areas. Still, the findings of this study might serve as grounds for further research, as there seemingly appears many similarities and potential for overlap. The study concludes that it appears that individuals that have experienced various forms of exclusion and marginalization in mainstream society may seek alternative, often violent subcultures. Because these subcultures often attract a similar demographic with shared references, as well as the social networking between them, the subcultures seem to share some common features. Some of these features as well as the burden of exclusion from mainstream society, together with the strong unity within these groups, these subcultures may be vulnerable for criminal or extreme influence.

Contents

1 Introduction	7
1.1 Topic	7
1.2 Research question	11
1.3. Terms and concepts	13
2 Theory	18
2.1 The Crime-Terror Nexus (CTN)	18
2.2. The New Crime-Terror Nexus (NCTN)	20
2.3. Social-room, field, capital and habitus	22
Street-capital, field and habitus	25
3. Method	28
3.1. Operationalization and limitations	28
3.2. Literature-review	30
Semi-systematic review	30
Content analysis	31
4. The far-right (FR)	31
4.1. The Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM)	33
4.2. Soldiers of Odin (SOO)	36
5. Potential factors and overlapping subcultures	39
5.1. War - Foreign fighters and militias	43
Can the war itself breed the nexus?	44
Weapons-trafficking	46
Actors - Groups	48
Actors - individuals/ foreign fighters	51
5.2. The MC-subculture	53
5.2. The MMA-subculture	55
5.3. The Hooligan-subculture	57
5.4. The Drug-subculture	61
Mental-health	63
5.5. The Prison-subculture	64
6. Discussion and conclusion	69
Bibliography	73
self-selected curriculum	87

Foreword

Completing this master-thesis has been both a challenging and rewarding end to my two year masters by USN. Not much could have prepared me for both the scope and workload such a thesis demand, and as well as the academic knowledge gained during this process. The experience of just working with such a task has been illuminating in itself.

The path has proven rocky and challenging, and steps often taken with uncertainty. Therefore I would like to thank my supervisor, Glenn Diesen, for guiding me through this task and providing instructive and engaging conversations, as well as proving to be a fantastic reference, helping me to gain employment in an interesting field after education. Lastly, I want to thank my parents who have been both helpful, supportive and patient during the whole process.

The knowledge and experience gained will follow me far beyond just completing my education.

Tønsberg 16.01.2023

Per Aksel Strand

1 Introduction

This thesis aims to explore the overlap between right-wing extremism (RWX) and ordinary-crime (OC) through investigating potential subcultures that may facilitate the overlap. The thesis will draw from previous research from the field of the crime-terror nexus (CTN) and Islamic-extremism (ISX) in order to draw parallels, applying Bourdieu's terms of social-space, field, capital and habitus, along with extensions of the terms in order to conceptualize the theme.

1.1 Topic

RWX have increasingly posed a threat according to Norwegian Police-security Service (PST) threat-assessments (2016-2022) and have since 2020 been juxtaposed with the threat (ISX). This marked a change because ISX since the years before 2020 alone topped the list over groups PST feared the most (Døvik, Skille and Zondag 2020).

Although, according to The Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI), ISX-terrorism has been six times more deadly than RWX-terrorism, some general developments seem to be happening. According to Nesser (in: Svendsen 2022), the organizing and violent potential of ISX-terrorists are different - they have used people with competence and power of execution. But while ISX-terrorism has experienced a weak decrease, the opposite is true for RWX-terrorism. While ISX-terrorists are beginning to operate more alone, like classical RWX-terrorists, some RWX-terrorists are now establishing terror-cells like classical ISX-terrorists. They are becoming more alike (Svendsen 2022).

The well organized nature, capacity and competence of some ISX-milieus, may in part be attributed to its overlap with ordinary-crime (OC), research like, *From criminals to terrorists and back?* (Rekawek, Matejka, Babikova, Nagy and Rafay 2017) and *Criminal Pasts, Terrorist Futures: European Jihadists and the New Crime-Terror Nexus* (Basra, Neumann and Brunner 2016), reveal overlap between ISX and OC.

According to PST, the common denominator between the people attracted towards RWX- or ISX-milieus, is that they in multiple areas stand outside of society (Krekling and Døvik 2019). This is illuminated by two theme-reports, PST (2016) *Theme-report: What background do people who frequent extreme-Islamist milieus in Norway before they become radicalized*, and PST (2019) *Theme-report: What background do people in right-wing extreme milieus have in Norway?* The samples in both theme-reports show many of the same vulnerability-factors, like crime, drug-use, adaptation-problems, low education, psychological-problems, and weak connection to the workforce.

The overlap between OC and extremism, may manifest in different ways. Hate-crime, ideological-violence and terrorism are types of crimes that obviously relate to extremism. Ideological-crimes are not the focus of this thesis, but rather how RWX may overlap with OC. Still, ideological-crimes might lower the threshold for OC and vice-versa, and thus reinforce the nexus between RWX and OC.

The crime-terror nexus (CTN) is a field of study, related to the connection between OC and extremism/terrorism. Much of the literature is dedicated to ISX. Since people in both ISX- and RWX-milieus seem to often share a similar background and vulnerability factors, knowledge developed on the nexus between ISX and OC, might also be useful for investigating the nexus between RWX and OC. Even though the field of knowledge is named *The crime-terror nexus*, this thesis will mainly focus on the far-right (FR) and extremism, since the threat of terrorism according to Europol and PST, is mainly related to lone-actors. Therefore, I believe it will be more useful to investigate the overlap between RWX-milieus and OC in order to investigate the social and cultural mechanisms of the phenomena.

“Few studies have been conducted about non-ideological crimes committed by the FR. Still the few such existing studies indicates that, although FR-parties and -movements have traditionally advocated law and order politics, their members are often multiple offenders and career-criminals” (Koehler 2016; in Larys 2022, p.3).

The overlap between extremism and crime, may in part relate to similar risk-factors. The Norwegian Police threat-assessment (2022, p.15) lists Socioeconomic differences and exclusion as vulnerability factors for crime, these factors may also contribute to extremism. Both individual, social and ideological factors come into play. Social issues

and exclusion are overrepresented, with causes like low education, weak connection to the workforce over time, and connection to criminal-milieus (Lia and Nesser; in KRUS 2016, p.17).

“Radicalization risk-factors listed by the government, is also recognisable for other types of crime and have many similarities with (*The prisoners loss-list*)” (KRUS 2016, p.21-22) “It is important to base the efforts to combat radicalisation and violent extremism on the same basic principles as the general prevention of crime” (Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2020, p.13) “That which prevents crime, usually also prevents extremism” (Lid, Winsvold, Sørholdt, Hansen, Heierstad and Klausen 2016, p.19).

Risk-factors and characteristics between those in the ISX-scene and criminal-gangs share many similarities. Gang-membership offers friendship, protection, recognition, and admiration. Even though the gang lifestyle is hedonistic, involving women and drugs, contradictory to Islamic rules, many ISX-actors were prior gang-members in Norway (Carlsson 2005; i Carlsson 2017; p.6).

Criminal street-subculture shares many similarities with ISX and other types of radicalization. The same recruitment mechanisms work between radical-groupings and criminal-gangs, with the perceived possibility to gain glory, status, recognition and heroism. According to Lia and Nesser (2014; in KRUS 2016, p.41) these factors make it something cool, give status and work as a kind of counter-movement.

Jihadi-cool is a term describing an interweaving of criminal- and ISX-subcultures, where elements related to radical-Islam is mixed with popular culture like rap and hip-hop (KRUS 2016, p.41), the radical religious messages appearing alongside glorification of drugs, crime, weapons and violence, may present some contradictions (KRUS 2016, p.41).

Some right-wing extreme groups, (RWXGs) are tied up to OC and gang-activity. Thereby possibilities to gain power, status and money, as well as committing violence may serve as attractive features for some (Berntzen 2018, p.88). Thereby there may exist common motivational-factors between OC and RWX-subcultures.

“Lack of education, little social support, few friends, low self-esteem, little access to goods or opportunities – can contribute to people moving away from accepted norms and values in society, and into more alternative norms and values” (KRUS 2016, p.20).

Extreme-groupings, like other criminal-milieus, may serve as a place where vulnerable individuals achieve what they have not in mainstream-society. The members sharing the same references may create a strong unity which cancels the feeling of exclusion, but at the same time increases the distance between “us and them” (KRUS 2016, p.20-21).

People may gravitate towards such groups on the basis of security through the represented cohesion, or if the group appears as a power factor through e.g., fear. It may also seem attractive to thrill-seekers or boys wanting to associate themselves with masculine features like toughness, war and warriors. While for others its the violent potential itself. Ideology may develop over time (KRUS 2016, p.21) Friendship and personal networks seem to play a more important role than ideology both for people joining RWXGs (Berntzen 2018, p.87-88) Thus there might seem like RWXGs might share common features with criminal-milieus and other violent milieus which attracts some people.

This coincides with PST theme-report (2019), that states radicalization often seriously starts and RWX attitudes acquired when persons are socialized into the environment. Since the social and relational dimensions serve as important motivational-factors, coincidences, social relations and acquaintances can influence which persons that are attracted to extreme environments, and the ones who are not (PST 2019, p.9)

Bjørge and Carlsson (2005; in KRUS 2016, p.19) identified ten internal factors that make young people join racist or neo-Nazi groups. The factors can be viewed as relevant for both RWX and ISX (KRUS 2016, p.19)

All of which, only excluding *ideology and politics*, may also apply to individuals joining criminal-milieus, or other violent subcultures:

- *Provocation and anger*
- *Protection*
- *Curiosity*
- *Seeking excitement*
- *Violence, weapons and uniforms*
- *The rebellion dimension*
- *Seeking substitute family or an alternative father figure*
- *Seeking friends or cohesion*
- *Seeking status and identity*

Thus there seems to exist some common features between ISX, RWX and OC, as well as mechanisms which contribute to people gravitating towards them, and away from mainstream society.

1.2 Research question

Exclusion and marginalization may seem like forces contributing to individuals moving away from mainstream society into often violent subcultures with alternative norms and values, while the subcultures themselves may also possess attractive features for some. Exclusion from mainstream-society together with belonging to alternative subcultures may socialize an individual to e.g., violence and group-mentality, and may lower the threshold for radical and criminal behavior.

Some violent subcultures, may potentially attract sociological similar groups of people, may thereby share common social and cultural overlap. As well as belonging one may make it easier to move to another, by already having crossed a social border. I will try

to identify different subcultures and factors, which may contribute to the nexus between RWX and OC, in order to explore potentially common mechanisms.

Belonging to some of these subcultures does not necessarily make one a criminal or extremist, rather both criminal and extremist may have a tendency towards these subcultures. In addition to potentially exposing people to crime, extremism or both through these subcultures.

Empirical evidence may suggest systematic similarities between ISX, RWX and OC, like shown by PST (2016 and 2019) Therefore research within the field CTN and ISX, may provide some useful knowledge relevant for CTNs applicability with RWX.

My research question is:

What is the economic, social and cultural mechanisms behind the nexus between the extreme-right and ordinary crime?

Hypothesis: It may be that deprivation of capital (economic, social, and cultural) can lead some individuals to seek out capital (authority) in groups (subcultures) outside of mainstream society with different norms and rules. These subcultures (criminal and extreme, and others marked by the presence of them) may overlap because of attracting the same type of and in some cases the same individuals – thereby making these milieus share a common symbolic capital and habitus.

1.3. Terms and concepts

Radicalization – A process whereby a person increasingly accepts the use of violence to achieve political, ideological or religious goals. A process of radicalisation that results in violent extremism is characterized by:

- A cognitive development toward a steadily more unilateral perception of reality, where there is no room for alternative perspectives
- thereafter, a further development where the perception of reality is experienced so acutely and seriously that violent actions appear necessary and just (Ministry of justice and public security 2014, p.7)

Violent extremism – Activities of persons and groups that are willing to use violence in order to achieve their political, ideological or religious goals (Ministry of justice and public security 2014, p.7)

Radicalization and violent extremism can happen within all types of ideologies and political directions (Regjeringen.no 2019) Radicalization is therefore a process which can lead a person to become a violent extremist, how long the radicalization-process take, will vary from person to person. Not all in a radicalization-process become violent extremist (Regjeringen.no, 2019)

Radicalization-processes – can vary from person to person and from group to group and can occur within all types of views on life, cultural background and political directions. The process can take place gradually over longer or shorter periods of time, but also appear as an acute change in a person (Ministry of justice and public security 2015, p.13) – sometimes characterized as the radicalization-tunnel, where a person is exposed to a narrow and one-sided world view (Ministry of justice and public security 2015, p.13)

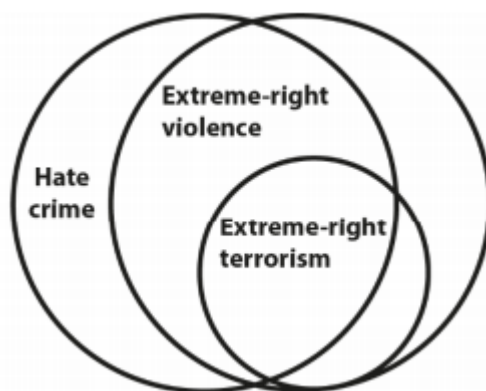


(Regjeringen.no/radikalisering)

There is no clear answer on what happens with a person in a radicalization-process. Lack of social belonging often has a significance, central factors can be lack of identity, change in circle of friends and withdrawal from society. To have committed criminal acts or personal characteristics like being easily influenced is also important.

The process is often characterized by:

- a one-sided world view
- a perception of have the objective truth
- a perception of the ends justifying the means
- a enemy image of “us and them”, that can be used to justify use of violence
- accepting use of violence to achieve political goals
- a perception of a situation being so acute and serious that drastic action is justified as necessary (Ministry of Justice and Public Security 2015, p.14)



(Bjørgero and Randal 2019, p.6)

Extreme-right violence – violent attacks whose target selection is based on RWX beliefs and corresponding enemy categories—immigrants, minorities, political opponents, or governments—qualify as right-wing (RW) violence. This could also include vandalism and spontaneous violence (Bjørgero and Ravndal 2019, p.5)

Terrorism - an premeditated attack, intended to instill fear in a wider population to affect a political outcome (Bjørgero and Ravndal 2019, p.5)

Hate-crime – criminal acts that are fully or partially motivated by negative attitudes to a person or group’s actual or perceived ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender expression or disability. Violent-extremism is the most extreme form of hate-crime (Ministry of justice and public security 2014, p.7) may include incidents that qualify as RWX-violence or terrorism but also includes acts that are non-violent, such as racial harassment and hate-speech (Bjørgero and Ravndal 2019, p.6)

Risk-factors - A term used about conditions that increases the danger for people to develop problems. **protection-factors** - are used about conditions that dampens the risk to develop problems when risk factors are present. To understand the reasons for a phenomena like radicalization, it is important to take into account the interaction between factors on different levels. This can be illustrated with the holistic model (WHO) (Ministry of Justice and Public Security 2015, p.15)



(Ministry of Justice and Public Security 2015, p.15)

The holistic-model - is described through four circles. The innermost circle describes the individual level and shows explanations that are based on the individual’s traits. The other circles describe social psychological/ relational factors. The third circle represents the society level and surrounds the two first. It points to both formal and informal institutions and social structures like e.g., education, work, social networks. The outermost and fourth circle show cultural and structural explanations. Both risk-

and protection factors are found in all the levels, structure, society, relation and individual (Ministry of Justice and Public Security 2015, p.15)

Press- and Motivational factors - two terms used to illuminate radicalization/deradicalization are push (press-factors) and pull (motivational-factors). Press-factors show negative social forces and circumstances that press an individual out of a milieu, something that makes it uncomfortable and not good to be part of a particular social milieu, that pushes one into another milieu. Motivational factors refer to factors that pull and motivates the person into or over to a new milieu (Ministry of Justice and Public Security 2015, p.17)

Vulnerability and risk

<p>Push/ Press factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exclusion - Experience of discrimination - Experience of racism - Feeling of being violated - Experience of injustice - Seeking identity - Poor confidence - Lack of belief in solutions through democratic means - Traumatic experiences - Lack of meaning 	<p>Pull/ Motivational factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respect - Recognition - Power and control - Feeling of doing something meaningful - Bigger purpose in life - Belonging, cohesion, identity - Loyalty to group members - Role models (infatuation or respect) - Confirmation - Attractive ideological arguments - Excitement and adventure - Societal engagement
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(Ministry of Justice and Public Security 2015, p.18)

Exclusion and marginalization - Many people that seek extremist-milieus, share an experience of exclusion and marginalization (Ministry of Justice and Public Security 2015, p.15) These are complex terms that can work differently from person to person. Marginalization can be defined as a process that often occurs in childhood and youth, while exclusion occurs in adulthood often as a result of marginalization. The marginalization-process may involve loneliness, bullying, crime and risk behavior or psychological illness, which can lead to increased exclusion from society through

dropping out of school and education. This increases the risk for later exclusion from work, education, and social arenas in adulthood (Hyggen and Ekhaugen 2021, p.9)

Limitations of marginalization and exclusion, and consequences of marginalization

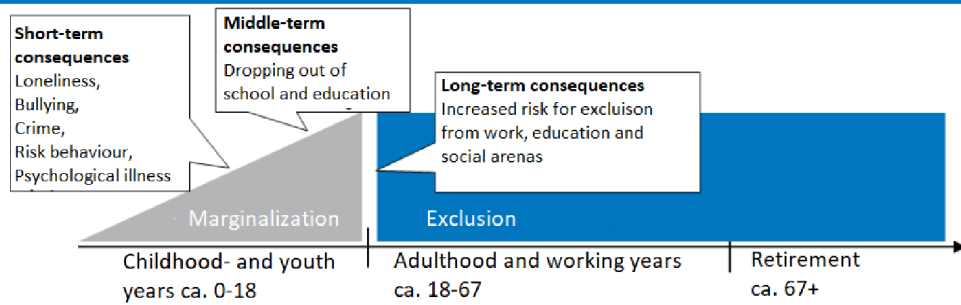


Illustration: Oslo Economics

(Hyggen and Ekhaugen, 2021, p.9)

2 Theory

This thesis will in large depend on previous research in order to draw parallels towards my theme. This is because research specifically targeting RWX overlap between OC, seems sparse, while regarding ISX seems plentyfull. Therefore I will not entirely bind this thesis to one theory, but draw elements from contributions that may be applicable to my research question. In the following I will account for some prior research and theory which I later will try to apply to collected empirical data, in order to explore if there might exist some general mechanisms contributing to the overlap of crime and extremism.

2.1 The Crime-Terror Nexus (CTN)

“CTN is characterized by the joint use of criminal services, a common pool for recruitment, as well as by overlaps in extremist and terrorist suspects’ backgrounds in crime or conversely criminals’ history with extremism or terrorism. Terrorists and violent extremists are also involved in serious and organized-crime activities to expand profits and finance terrorist operations” (Europol 2022, p.19)

This can be categorized into organizational and social. The first involves organizational convergence between criminal- and terrorist-groups, cooperation, strategic and tactical similarities and differences (Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.263) terrorists may directly or indirectly engage in organized-crime , or organized-crime groups (OCGs) may employ terrorist-tactics (Reitano, Clarke and Adal 2017 p.1) The other rather than formal collaboration, views the links to petty-crime and how criminals and terrorists recruit from sociologically similar pools of people (Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.263) where those most vulnerable for radicalization being on the margins of society and the formal economy or in prison (Reitano, Clarke and Adal 2017 p.1)

Criminal experience, skills, connection and access to illicit goods and services, may serve as attractive features to extremist-organizations. Prison also facilitates for radicalization through bonds created between inmates (Europol 2022, p.19-20) In the EU, some suspects affiliated with extremism have a criminal background or maintain

contacts in the criminal-environment (Europol 2022, p.20) The relationship between extremism and crime takes on a variety of manifestations (UNICRI and GCTF 2019, p.2)

Transactional nexus - a criminal- and terrorist-group coming together to fulfill specific operational requirements. (UNICRI and GCTF 2019, p.2)

*Alliances:*An alliance that enables access to specialized knowledge, specialized services, operational support, and/or financial support (UNICRI and GCTF 2019, p.2)

Appropriation of tactics: Adopting the tactics of the other, where a OCG might employ acts of terrorism to instill fear and gain control, whilst terrorist might employ OCG-tactics for financing or disruption (UNICRI and GCTF2019, p.3)

Organizational nexus - when both criminal and terrorist activities occupy the same space and time (UNICRI and GCTF 2019, p.4)

Integration: a criminal faction is integrating into a terrorist-cell or vice-versa, or encompasses the targeted recruitment of a criminal group into a terrorist cell (UNICRI and GCTF 2019, p.4)

Hybrid: The group's purpose/ ideology transforms. A hybrid-entity are simultaneously economically and ideologically motivated, engaging in both terrorism and organized-crime (UNICRI and GCTF 2019, p.4)

Transformation: The aims and motivation changes to the degree that it no longer possesses its original purpose, and a terrorist-group evolves into a criminal-group or vice-versa (UNICRI and GCTF 2019, p.4)

Black-hole: An environment which allows the nexus to thrive. e.g., an area where groups are able to gain control over a territory and economy as the result of lacking governance and security. This promotes and sustain conditions of extreme insecurity whilst groups compete to secure economic and political power through extreme means like, violence and criminal activity (UNICRI and GCTF 2019, p.5)

Regional variations - geography, and the overarching political and security environment is often a function of how the nexus manifest itself (UNICRI and GCTF 2019, p.6)

Politically stable states: Usually involves the transactional nexus, with terrorist-cells use crime for financial gains, or the recruitment of criminals from the same community (UNICRI and GCTF 2019, p.6)

Transitional states: Where places with poor border security, weak law enforcement, corrupt public officials, and established trafficking networks, facilitate the emergence of hybrid-groups, often benefiting from an interchangeable membership/recruitment base (UNICRI and GCTF 2019, p.6)

(Post) conflict states: Places where government control is fragmented and often weak, foster collaboration between organized-crime and terrorism (UNICRI and GCTF 2019, p.6)

2.2. The New Crime-Terror Nexus (NCTN)

The new crime-terror nexus (NCTN) describes the convergence as a result of social networks, environments and milieus, through the common recruitment pool between terrorist- and criminal-groups, and the personal needs and desire of criminals potentially aligning with the ISX-narrative (Basra, Neumann and Brunner 2016, p.26-28)

Overlapping ecosystems' and 'melting pots; converging social networks: refers to the sociologically common recruitment base for criminals and terrorists (*converging social networks*) (Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.263) *Offender convergence settings,* refers to places like local neighborhoods, European jails, and/or sport clubs, which enables socialization and cooperation between deviant actors (Felson, 2003, 2006; in Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.264)

The term *Islamogangsterism* was used to describe Tunisian suburbs where the presence of jihadists overlaps in crime-ridden environments. Beyond specific neighborhoods and districts, European prisons and social settings (gyms, cafes, restaurants) have been *melting pots*, places for forging links between criminals and terrorists (Persi Paoli and Bellasio 2017; in Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.264)

Prisons: are a place where criminals and terrorists mix which both offer extremists a potentially vulnerable recruitment base, and opportunities for collaboration and skill

transfer. Prisoners may also experience few opportunities for reintegration to society after release (Basra, Neumann and Brunner 2016, p.30)

Also personal needs, desires along with competences may also foster the convergence between criminals and extremists. *Ideological-confluence*: emphasize the fluidity and unclear borders between the criminal and terrorist labels, as individuals may move into and back from these identities (Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.268) Terrorism may therefore just be a progression from one type of illegal behavior to another, conditioned by a deviant response to general deprivation, poverty and marginalization (Coolsaet, 2016; in Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.268)

The redemption narrative: refers to when criminals experience “*cognitive openings*” (Quintan Wiktorowicz; I Basra, Neumann and Brunner2016, s.28), “a shocking event or personal crisis which makes them re-asses their life and become open to a radical change of values and behavior”. ISX offers redemption from crime while still fulfilling criminal needs and desires, e.g., experience of power, violence, adventure, a strong identity and a sense of rebellion and anti-establishment (Basra, Neumann and Brunner2016, p.28-29)

Extremist-groups may offer those that prior found belonging in gangs, a new sense of belonging, and transcending from the criminal status (Basra et al., 2016; in Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.269) which may serve to *Legitimising Crime*: offering criminals an opportunity for ‘redemption’ without requiring any change of behavior (Basra, Neumann and Brunner2016, p.29)

Criminals are already good at evading police surveillance and planning discreet logistics, (Basra et al., 2016; in Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.269) and those with a background in violent crime, may easier overcome inhibitions, and thus more easily ‘socialized into terrorism’ (Lloyd and Dean 2015: 40; in Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.269)

Functional confluence: refers to the exchange of goods and services or learning from each others the skillsets (European Parliament, 2012; in Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.265) Criminals sometimes have access to illicit goods and services (National Intelligence Council, 2004; Picarelli, 2012; in Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.265).

Terrorists may either purchase these services or recruit criminals with the relevant experience (Neumann and De Frias, 2017; in Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.265) *Skill Transfers: the potential for criminal skills to be transferred to terrorists* (Basra, Neumann and Brunner 2016, p.32)

Reputation may also be an important commodity, Gallagher (2018; in Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.266) explains; “*if the relationship were to involve criminals and terrorists from a shared background, the former’s “stock” might actually rise through benefit of association with (the cause)*”. The backing of a powerful armed organization can raise the profile of a criminal group or individual, especially if this organization benefits from a positive image within a (diaspora) community (Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.266)

Financial confluence: terrorist-networks benefiting from small- and large-scale illicit trade (Melzer and Martin, 2016; Naim, 2010; in Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.266) criminal pasts also enable financing, e.g., petty crime financing foreign-fighters travels to Syria and terror-plots (Basra and Neumann 2016, p.34)

2.3. Social-room, field, capital and habitus

On one hand, exclusion and deprivation seem to push certain individuals from mainstream-milieus, on the other social needs like identity, cohesion and status seem to often pull people towards alternative-milieus. In other words – crime and extremism may share common risk-factors. These individual factors seemingly work interchangeable with broader societal conditions.

I therefore believe Bourdieu`s conceptualization of social-space, field, capital and habitus can be useful analytical tools for investigating the connection between RWX and OC. Also, since analysis of alternative milieus on the fringes of society will be central, it may be helpful to apply the subculture term.

Sandberg (2011) conceptualized subculture as a collection of rituals, narratives and symbols internally connected and often embedded in larger cultural trends. Individuals

and groups internalize and embody the subculture to varying degrees and use it in creative enactments of the self (Sandberg 2011, p.495)

Gelder (2005; in Sandberg 2011, p.499) defines subcultures as; “groups of people who are being represented as deviant/ or marginalized on the basis of interest or practises, through what they are, what they are doing and where they are doing it. They can also represent themselves this way. Subcultures are usually aware of their own differentness. They can dismiss or celebrate or take advantage of this differentness. But they will always be represented as such by others who can drag on an entire appliance of social classification and categorisation.”

Bourdieu argues that we should think of society as being hierarchically organized or stratified as a three-dimensional space characterized by different types of capital (or power), not just economic-capital: “*a space whose three fundamental dimensions are defined by volumes of capital, composition of capital, and change in these two properties over time (manifested by past and potential trajectories in social space)*” (Bourdieu 1984; in Dillon 2014, p.429)

Within the *social-space* (any society) there are many different classes and class-subcomponents, all of which are primarily distinguished by “*their overall volume of capital, understood as the set of actually usable resources and powers – economic capital, cultural capital and also social capital*” (Bourdieu 1984; in Dillon 2014, p.429)

Economic-capital: money, homeownership, and other property (Dillon 2014, p.429)

Cultural-capital: “exist in three forms; in the embodied state – in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body, in the objectified form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.) ... and in the institutionalized state, a form of objectification ... educational qualifications” (Bourdieu 1986; in Dillon 2014, p.429-430)

cultural-competence: the stylistic ease and familiarity with which an individual carries oneself, and is enhanced by e.g., education and informal cultural habits and experiences. Each social-class (and class-fraction) has its own culture, and individuals have a certain cultural-competence, regarding their belonging. Thus specific cultural-competences vary in value on the basis of different social contexts, but in

society as a whole, some competencies are more highly valued than others (Bourdieu 1984; in Dillon 2014, p.430) *Bodily-hexis*: the physical attitudes and dispositions which emerge in individuals as a result of the relationships between particular fields and individuals' habitus (Webb, Schirato and Danaher 2002 p.10) e.g., gestures and sense of fashion.

Social-capital: the potential resources connected to social networks (Bourdieu 1986; in Dillon 2014, s.430) social networks and alliances may provide individuals to both formal and informal opportunities to enhancing one's stock of capital (economic-, social-, or cultural-capital) (Dillon 2014, p.431-432) Not only the number of people in ones network is of importance, but also how important they are (Dillon 2014 p.432)

Symbolic-capital: revolves around one's reputation and depends on people believing that someone possesses certain qualities, to have any value (Webb, Schirato and Danaher 2002 p.15-16) e.g., reputation for competence, good taste, integrity, accomplishment. Symbolic-capital possesses exchange value to all other types of capital (Dillon 2014, p.449)

Habitus: expresses how individuals (become themselves) through developing attitudes and dispositions, and how these individuals participate in practises (Webb, Schirato and Danaher 2002 p.12) Taste is a part of our cultural-habitus and a consequence of what we have learned to like or value, or think of as cool as a result of the social conditions and class-culture in which we live and in which we have been brought up (Dillon 2014, p.438)

Cultural-field: represents places of cultural practice. A cultural field can be defined as a series of institutions, rules, rituals, conventions, categories, designations and agreements which constitutes an objective hierarchy, and which produce and authorize certain discourses and activities (Webb, Schirato and Danaher 2002 p.10-11)

Cultural-trajectories: an individual's history of movement across and between various, which shapes its habitus (Webb, Schirato and Danaher 2002 p.11)

Street-capital, field and habitus

Sandberg (2008) extended the use of Bourdieus conceptualizations by applying them to marginalized factions of society engaged in violent street-culture (street-field), and the struggle for capital within this field (street-capital) among people with embodied experiences in street-life (street-habitus).

Further, Illan and Sandberg (2019) used the terms to explore overlap between ISX and OC. Suggesting investment in street-capital can be expended within the ISX-field. They argue that embodied street-culture supports continuities in attitudes and behaviors within different violent contexts, and that street social-capital facilitates recruitment to ISX.

The absence of capital in mainstream society may serve as a motivation to seek capital in alternative fields, although this sort of capital may be counterproductive in mainstream society. The street-field is conceptualized as a heterodox arena of social life, where conceptions of worth, value and legitimacy are different from those operating within mainstream fields. What benefits an individual in the street-field will often devalue their positions within orthodox fields socio-economic life (Sandberg 2008; in Illan and Sandberg 2019) “There has been evidence to suggest that those second-generation immigrants who feel marginalized, within their western countries of residence seek alternative fields of life in which to thrive” (Cottee 2011; in Illan and Sandberg 2019)

Hagedorns (2008; in Illan and Sandberg 2019) term “global gangsta-culture” entails that “terrorist-groups share many characteristics with criminal street-gangs and paramilitary militias... The styles, tropes and attitudes associated with “ordinary” street-culture and criminality find expression in political conflicts and violence” (Illan 2015; in Illan and Sandberg 2019)

“Marginalized groups act to generate profit and status, with the capitals available to them and within the areas of social life where they feel such capital will yield dividends” (Illan and Sandberg 2019) Still, marginalized people usually does not

become either criminals or extremists, thus neither the only reason for this phenomenon (Illan and Sandberg 2019)

Street-capital: the competences and skills that provide status in what is often described as street-culture. Exclusion might contribute to Individuals deploying what they perceive as their own advantageous traits in a violent criminal-subculture. The street can be an arena for empowerment, status an alternative recognition (Illan 2015; in Illan and Sandberg 2019)

Street social-capital: organically existing networks of friendship and acquaintance within the street-field, which are in themselves a source “capital” (Bourdieu 1986; in Illan and Sandberg 2019) e.g., tough young men who can be called upon to boost numbers, or connections that facilitate access to criminal markets (Illan 2013; in Illan and Sandberg 2019)

“Street friendship dynamics and the advantages bestowed by street-networks facilitate the transition from street-culture to violent ISX. Both street-gangs and Islamic-extreme groups (ISXGs) offer solidarity and a sense of brotherhood, sometimes occupying affective spaces that might otherwise fill with despair” (Illan and Sandberg 2019)

Violent potential is essential in order to constitute a source of street-capital, a favorable trait among both ISXGs and street-gangs. “The desire not just to take advantage of opportunities made available through friendship but to useful contacts (in turn generating street-capital through building a reputation) sustains systems of street social-capital” (Illan 2013; in Illan and Sandberg 2019)

Street-habitus: is a product of acquired experiences which operate at a pre-conscious level, constituting a range of bodily postures, modes of speech, ways of interpreting the world and patterns of “instinctive” behaviors that both mark people as marginalized and make crime and violence seem like appropriate reactions to particular situations (Fraser 2013, 2015; in Illan and Sandberg 2019) Individuals exist across different fields (Bourdieu 2005; In Illan and Sandberg 2019) thus a street-habitus does not dominate every aspect of an individual's life towards an absolute street orientation.

The link between street-habitus and street-capital may explain why individuals with a background in OC, violence and drug-use join ISXGs, in addition to not changing more after joining. “It seems that newly radicalized individuals from street-culture remain much of their old street-style and old street practices while committed to politico-religious violence” (Illan and Sandberg 2019) Frasers notion of “homologies of habitus” notes the similarities in what is values amongst tough, masculinist cultures of marginalization across different global context (Illan and Sandberg 2019)

Street-field: a heterodox-field where those that have not thrived in mainstream-fields, may devote themselves. Shamas and Sandberg (2016; in Illan and Sandberg 2019) argue that state action/ law-enforcement delineates the street-field by causing individuals to feel that their interests would be best served by investments outside of mainstream life.

ISX may be perceived by street-cultural adherents as more “mature” and “fulfilling” field to invest oneself (Illan and Sandberg 2019) Both street and Islamic fashion can attract attention of authorities, although both styles are also adopted by the law-abiding (Illan and Sandberg 2019)

3. Method

3.1. Operationalization and limitations

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate overlap between RWX and OC, with the help of previous research from the field of CTN and ISX. This will be conducted by drawing heavily from Kapatadze and Argomaniz (2019) *Overlapping ecosystems’ and ‘melting pots; converging social networks, and offender convergence settings*, as well as other relevant contributions when fitting, in order to investigate potential subcultures that may facilitate for the nexus between RWX and OC, and why some gravitates towards these areas of society . Using Bourdieu's terms, along with Illan and Sandberg extensions of them, I aim towards identifying and conceptualizing some common

features and mechanisms that may cause social and cultural overlap between RWX and OC-fields along with related subcultures.

Firstly I will cover the umbrella term of the FR, and its subcategories, as an introduction to the object of this study. To narrow and deepen the knowledge of the nature of FR-milieus, two FRGs (SOO and NRM), will then be examined.

The focus of the thesis is RWX, but because of overlap and similarities, the radical-right (RWR) and other fringe FR-milieus, may also be of use when exploring the nexus. Since the FR-milieus are fluent and overlapping, other groups and individuals may also be mentioned.

RWX and OC-milieus will be referred to as *fields*, while milieus that might facilitate for their nexus will be referred to as *subcultures*. Reality is obviously not this clear-cut, but the thesis will be presented this way in order to create a comprehensible illustration which serves to make it more applicable to theory, that might contribute in giving insight to a complex and fluid aspect of reality. In short the RWX and OC-fields may meet one another through different subcultures that are often marked by cultural and social overlap.

As a result of the thesis goal to view a known theme, RWX through a new light, CTN by creating an overview, I had to resort to a wide spectrum of sources, and the shape and method of the study grew organically during the process of collecting possible relevant data. I found this process of having a relatively loose framework helpful since the thesis depended on scattered data. The boundaries and limitations manifested gradually the theme took shape.

The thesis will be limited to Europe after the year of 2010, since the FR (RWX, RWR) and criminal-subcultures are ever changing and greatly varying through both time and space. Not every aspect of RWX or radicalization will be accounted for, the focus is how different social, cultural and economical mechanisms may contribute to some

individuals gravitating towards violent subcultures with alternative norms and values, which may contribute to the nexus between OC and RWX.

This type of radicalization I hint at may mostly relate to exclusion from mainstream society and socialization into violent alternative subcultures, which may not necessarily be of ideological nature, at least not in the beginning. Thus radicalization via e.g., online-gaming networks, forums, conspiracy theories, ideology etc. is not included since RWX-ideology and the radicalization process as a whole is not the focus of this study, but rather common features which find its way throughout various violent subcultures marked by exclusion and violence.

Summarized; I will try to illustrate the theme by suggesting reasons why some are pushed away from mainstream-fields, and pulled towards alternative fields/subcultures. By individual's common features and references, cultural-trajectories and networking through such fields/subcultures, they become socialized into these areas of society, often marked by violence and exclusion, in addition to creating social and cultural overlap between them, as well as furthering distance from mainstream-fields. This may result in a similar habitus throughout these fields/subcultures, where a common type of capital may be of value and expendable between them, but of negative value in mainstream-society.

3.2. Literature-review

Since the research field *CTN* is established and its mechanisms well researched, but not in terms of the research topic *RWX*, which in itself is a deeply researched theme. There may be fertile ground to apply them to each other. Literature-review may be a constructive way to use established research on *CTN/ISX*, and use the previously revealed mechanisms to investigate if they may be applicable to *RWX* in general.

Since research has not been developed the same way in this regard, I rely on news-, research articles and reports, in order to construct an overall image on how the social, cultural and economic mechanisms of the *RWX/OC*-nexus. There seems to be much relevant research available on *RWX*, in addition to how it might relate to *OC*. Still a

systematic overall review of RWX in relation to CTN is in my opinion lacking. I therefore believe a collection of relevant data viewed through the lens of the CTN, might be a constructive addition to the fields of extremism and crime.

Semi-systematic review

“Semi-systematic review is designed for topics that have been conceptualized differently and studied by various groups of researchers within diverse disciplines and that hinder a full systematic review process” (Wong et al.,2013; in Snyder 2019, p.335) Since both CTN and RWX in themselves have been researched from many different angles and perspectives, and the objective of this paper is to use previous knowledge (CTN/ISX) in an effort apply it to RWX, In order to explore the possibility to illuminate similar mechanisms, this review approach may serve as an appropriate tool. I will in other words depend on exploring many different aspects regarding RWX to search for these mechanisms, but to explore the whole of this field, is not feasible for a paper of this capacity and size.

“In general, the review seeks to identify and understand all potentially relevant research traditions that have implications for the studied topic and to synthesize these using meta-narratives instead of by measuring effect size” (Wong et al., 2013; in Snyder 2019, p.335) Different types of research will be investigated regarding RWX, in order to create an overview of RWX (topic) applicability to CTN (a meta-narrative)

“This provides an understanding of complex areas. However, while covering broad topics and different types of studies, this approach holds that the research process should be transparent and should have a developed research strategy that enables readers to assess whether the arguments for the judgments made were reasonable, both for the chosen topic and from a methodological perspective” (Snyder 2019, p.335)

Since the knowledge may be lacking, the thesis may use sporadic evidence and speculation as a tool to explore possibilities, thus there is not always a certainty and confirmation of the nexus taking systematic shape in some of the areas I touch upon. This however will not be hidden, and is not used without grounds. The main being developing an overview of the theme and maybe also creating an agenda for further research. The contribution will partly be both practical and theoretical.

Content analysis

“Content analysis is a commonly used technique and can be broadly defined as a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns in the form of themes within a text” (Braun and Clarke, 2006; in Snyder 2019, p.335) The general objective is to identify and analyze patterns in the field of RWX that might relate to previous developed knowledge and themes regarding CTN.

4. The far-right (FR)



Figure 1. Originally developed by Berntzen (2018), revised in collaboration with Bjørgo and Ravndal, and conceptually based on Mudde (2002) and Teitelbaum (2017)

(Bjørgo and Ravndal 2019, p.2)

The model above illustrates simplified ideal types, specific groups and activists may not purely belong to one or the other (Bjørgo and Ravndal 2019, p.2-3) In reality the distinctions are less sharp. Even though a group may be placed within one of these categories, there might be wings or individuals that lean towards another. There are

also links and collaboration between groups and activists between the different categories (Bjørngo and Ravndal 2019, p.5)

The FR is an umbrella term that is used for RWX- and RWR-ideologies, and does not necessarily entail extremism (Berntzen 2018, p. 78) Common for both RWX and RWR is nativism – The idea that people and state are one and that foreigners/ strangers are a threat to this community. The fundamental gap between them is their view on democracy and use of violence in order to achieve change (Berntzen 2018, p.80)

RWX covers a broad spectrum of ideologies and movements with some similarities (Bjørngo 2018, p.16) They view groups of people as fundamentally different and explicit or implicit of unequal value, either because of race, culture, nationality, sexuality and nativism (Bjørngo 2018, p.16) A comparative understanding of the world as conspiracies between inner- and outer enemies – the inner enemy is a betrayer who is aiding the outer enemy in destroying us (Bjørngo 2018, p.17)

The borders are not closed between the different idea- and idea traditions inside RWRGs and RWXGs (Berntzen 2018, p.83) and ideas, activists and sympathizers overlap (Berntzen 2018, p.86) Further, two FRGs will be accounted for in order to give an insight to how the milieus might look beyond just an ideological overview. First the RWX-group The Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM) then the RWR-group Soldiers of Odin (SOO)

4.1. The Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM)

The Nordic resistance Movement (NRM) is a transnational neo-Nazi organization with chapters in Sweden, Finland and Norway, with some presence in Denmark and Iceland (CEP p.1) In addition to having a close tie between their branches in the Nordic-countries, they maintain ties with RWXGs outside of the Nordic-states, e.g., Golden-Dawn (GD) in Greece, NPD in Germany, and the Russian Imperial Movement (RIM) in Russia (CEP, p.18)

The Norwegian Resistance Movement, were established by some of the central leaders of the Boot-boys milieu (Bjørngo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.68) After two of the Norwegian leaders were served long prison sentences for bank-robbery (Bjørngo and Gjelsvik 2018,

p.69) The organization went quiet until a resurrection in 2011 with new activists in the leadership.

In an interview with Dagbladet, Norwegian leader Haakon Forwald states *“the old group attracted the wrong people, skinheads and people most interested in drinking and fighting”* (Jarlsbo and Molstad Andresen 2012; in Bjørgo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.69)

In 2016, the branches became a common movement, and changed name to the Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM) (Bjørgo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.69) Many co-founders and early members came from White Aryan Resistance (WAR), notorious for attacks on gay people and immigrants as well as bank-robberies, and its offshoot National Youth (CEP, p.1)

NRM have carried out violence targeting gay people, ideological opponents and Muslim refugees, employing smoking flares, pepper spray, tear gas, knives, and guns in attacks (CEP, p.2) members have been responsible for the murder of at least three individuals. In 2016, NRM-Sweden members in Göthenburg carried out three improvised explosive device (IED) attacks. Two of the men had allegedly received military training in Russia before the bombings (CEP, p.2) The three men convicted for placing out explosive devices expressed dissatisfaction with NRMs guideline of not using violence (Bjørgo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.89)

Members receive martial-arts training and are educated on how to respond if violence arises in the streets. In 2014, A former NRM member told the BBC that he was encouraged by the group’s members to carry a weapon on the streets. Such an ethos has had a widespread effect on level of violence among the group’s members (CEP, p.2)

In the activist handbook members are told that they cannot live as an integrated part of modern society and must expect a low standard of living. For some with a background in crime and drug-use, some of these rules may fill a need for discipline and structure (Bjørgo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.77) While some participants are employed and have families, others have little education and/ or are unemployed and have little connection to society at large. Many are well known by police from before, while others are not (Bjørgo 2018, p.78)

An assessment from a police-district states: *“All the NRM-members in our district are really a little outside of society. They are very lonely without the group. Have no social circle, friends, they are really all alone, it is really NRM that connects them”* (Bjørngo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.79)

A mapping conducted by NRK of the 30 most active members in 2017, found over half are previously convicted and several for serious crime: *“17 of them are together, convicted 24 times by Norwegian courts in the last ten years. Six of the convictions relate to gross acts of violence, three relate to violations of the Weapons Act. Otherwise, there are convictions for stabbings, attacks with firebombs, use of violence, robbery and drug-offenses in addition to a number of less serious matters”* (Bjørngo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.78)

Still, Norwegian members are less characterized by crime than the Swedish, according to police. Interviews with police reveals that some of the members have earlier been part of other RWX-milieus (Bjørngo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.78) Some members were competition shooters in local pistol-clubs, which lead the police to withdraw weapons and weapons licenses from multiple NRM-members – this have also happened in Sweden (Bjørngo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.87) In 2014 weapons and drugs were seized among activists in Rogaland by PST. Which contradicts the clear anti-drug policy (Bjørngo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.74)

NRM appears as a male dominated organization, with a masculine profile, and focus on training of militant character (Bjørngo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.85) physical and psychological-strength and martial-arts training (Bjørngo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.87) Interviews with police indicate that some members previously involved in more violent RWX-groups do no longer engage in violence the same way as earlier. NRM do not believe that use of violence will benefit the organization in today’s situation. Having members in jail or being branded a terrorist- or illegal-organization would be inhibiting (Bjørngo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.87) Violence must only be used in self-defense (DNM 2016; in Bjørngo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.88)

Association with violence, (even though the organization itself claims to distance themselves), weapons and militant training, may reflect the “*global gangsta culture*” or “*armed young men*”. This emphasis of militant-training, masculine ideals and rebellion, may relate to a type of habitus previously belonging to harsh milieus, which coincides well with the criminal history of some members. And may explain the examples of continued violence and drug-use, which also serves as a contradiction similar to *Jihadi-cools*. Although this may only be an anecdotal example of the presence of drugs. Bjørgo and Gjelsvik (2018) notes that some with earlier struggles with drugs and crime may have found the organization helpful with the structure and discipline they otherwise may have lacked. This may also relate to *The redemption narrative* (Basra, Neumann and Brunner 2016)

Also, several of Bjørgo and Carlssons (2005; in KRUS 2016, p.19) factors seems relevant, like the perceived need for protection, seeking friends and cohesion (many do not have much relationship in society at large), the rebellion dimension and perhaps the most important, Violence, weapons and uniforms, in relation to militant training and several of the members owning weapons, both legal and illegal, and being competition shooters.

4.2. Soldiers of Odin (SOO)

Soldiers of Odin (SOO) were established in Finland 2015 by Mika Ranta, a neo-Nazi connected to the Finnish Resistance Movement (Bjørgo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.111) After the Finnish government made steps to ban the NRM, NRM-Finland sought closer cooperation with SOO. Members of both groups have participated in each other’s activities (CEP, p.5) A former local leader participated in a NRM demonstration in Kristiansand 2017 (Bjørgo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.79) RWX foreign-fighter, Yan Petrovskiy, participated in street patrols with SOO in Tønsberg (Svendsen, Skille, Gundersen, Solheim, NRK 2022)

Regarding SOO, NRM leader Haakon Forwald notes: “*The Resistance movement does not cooperate with SOO. If single members have participated in activities in the*

regiment of SOO, then this is done as private individuals and not as representatives of the Resistance-Movement” (Haakon Forwald; in NRK 2016)

The black SOO hoodie is designed with traditionalistic, nationalistic symbols like Vikings, Norse mythology and flag, seemingly inspired by MC-clubs. This provided the opportunity for members to present themselves as a united, uniformed group, with an image associated with both nationalism, masculine warrior ideals, MC-clubs and a strong masculine group identity. Both the organizational structure and initiation process also resembles a simplified version of the outlaw motorcycle-gang (OMCG)-model (Bjørgero and Gjelsvik 2018, p.111)

The Norwegian branch and other national chapters broke away from the Finish mother-organization, because among other things, it developed increasingly racist, anti-Islamic and RWX (Bjørgero and Gjelsvik 2018, p.112) Self-proclaimed spokesperson of SOO-Norway Ronny Alte was kicked out partly because of ties to anti-Islamic organizations. A national leader was set in place in 2016, Steffen André Larsen, but had to resign because of being convicted for violence. The new leader Jan Tellef Aanonsen resigned only two weeks into the chairmanship (Bjørgero and Gjelsvik 2018, p.113) Shortly after SOO-Norway was dismantled in 2017. Jan Tellef Aanonsen stated this: *“There have been the wrong people in the group. Most have been removed, but in my opinion, there are still some left”* (Jan Tellef Aanonsen: in NRK 2017)

There might be telling that both former SOO-Norway leader Aanonsen and NRM-Norway leader Forwald, claimed the groups have attracted *“the wrong type of people”*.

“Although there existed some ties between SOO and RWX, this seems not to have been the general pattern” (Bjørgero and Gjelsvik 2018, p.113-114) SOOs main recruitment base seems to have been other milieus that may have been more marked by xenophobia, but not organized RWX, like the MC- and Amcar-scene, with several having a criminal past.

In both Norway, Sweden and Finland central members and leaders were convicted of more or less serious crimes. A mapping by NRK revealed that 14-20 central members of SOO-Norway were previously convicted with in all 45 convictions: *e.g., violence,*

robbery, violation of the weapons-act, crime for profit, abuse of women, drug-crimes, and threats to police (Bjørngo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.113)

Many of the central SOO-activists are to be found in the police-register, and many of the most central have a big number of cases registered on them. This were not hidden by leaders (Bjørngo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.114) The last leader who was critical of the previous leader's recruitment of a series of people with a criminal past as local leaders, claimed that 70% of SOO-Norway had a background like this. Which is why he broke with the organization (Bjørngo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.115) Steffen Larsen stated that many people with a stained record view SOO as a way of making up for past mistakes (Bjørngo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.115) somewhat comparable to *the redemption narrative* (Basra and Naumann 2016)

Participants were mainly young men in their 20s-30s, and many probably in the end of a career as youth criminals. SOO could be an attractive way to change their stigmatized identities. Since they knew street life and had experience with criminal milieus, they saw themselves as more capable of knowing where and when criminal acts and rapes could occur (Bjørngo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.116) According to Hyggen and Ekhaugen (2021) Youth crime according may increase the risk of marginalization and further exclusion in adulthood. This may have limited some possibilities in mainstream-fields, and SOO might have been viewed as a more mature or responsible road to choose, but still keeping up with some elements reflecting criminal street-culture, e.g., MC inspired fashion, toughness, group identity and cohesion among similar types of people.

As Illan and Sandberg (2019) similarly notes, that ISX may be viewed as more mature and fulfilling, but that it seems many still keep their old street-style and practices after radicalization. This is not to indicate SOO members are radicalized, but rather find belonging in a fringe FR-milieu, thus reflecting similar mechanisms.

According to PST (2019) RWX-milieus seems to attract people with a criminal history, especially people having committed crime at a young age. This is also the case for ISX-milieus in Norway (PST 2019, p.10) Thus marginalization, exclusion and crime may contribute to people adhering to alternative subcultures, where similar types of capital may be expendable between them, but not in mainstream society.

The style, symbols, and the tough masculine image SOO could offer, appealed to a type of young men, from petty-criminal-, AmCar- and MC-milieus and others marked by tough macho values and behavior, with a little racist or immigration-critical attitudes. In addition to Facebook, much recruitment occurred among already existing networks of friends tied to these milieus. This could have contributed to making the scene less attractive for other sympathizers, that did not wish to be associated with a stigmatized, petty criminal milieu (Bjørngo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.117)

After the shutdown of SOO-Norway, a new prospect chapter for the German 1% MC-club, Gremium emerged in Tønsberg. Former SOO-leader Steffen Larsen appears as leader for the chapter. Although information is limited on the Norwegian chapter, in Germany police claim involvement in prostitution, trafficking in humans, drugs and weapons and other serious organized-crime (Vatn 2020) Fashion choices and the overlapping with MC-clubs, may signify a type of cultural-competence and bodily-hexis, developed through cultural-trajectories, where the attitudes, mannerisms and aesthetic sense overlaps the milieus.

The recruitment patterns for SOO may be comparable to the mechanisms of street social-capital, field and habitus (Illan and Sandberg 2019) that attracted individuals from certain milieus with specific attitudes and values, in addition to an overlapping circle of friends.

Also like how Illan and Sandberg (2019) explains that street capital may only be of value in certain fields outside of mainstream society, where it will often be disadvantageous – some active members were met by powerful social sanctions related to their association with SOO (Bjørngo and Gjelsvik 2018, p.117) their criminal past also did not seem to be of negative value in SOO, rather, almost positive – while this would likely not be the case in fields of mainstream society, as Bjørngo theorize, its criminal image may have made them less attractive to some sympathizers.

5. Potential factors and overlapping subcultures

The examples of SOO and NRM, may highlight some of the elements revealed by PST (2019) and KRUS (2016), like social problems like exclusion, violence, psychological issues, drug-abuse, crime, and socialization into subcultures with alternative norms and values. Although these are shared vulnerability between ISX and RWX, their overlap with crime may not manifest the same way.

Many of those connected to RWX-milieu have spent time in prison and have links to MC-gangs, together with the prevalence of social problems, the step towards organized-crime may become shorter. (Swedish Prison and Probation Service 2016, Europol 2016; in Korsell 2022, p.285-286)

Despite this, the connection appears limited (Korsell 2022, p.287) ISX have a stronger connection to organized-crime which may be explained by largely the same background and milieu (Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019; in Korsell 2022, p.293-294) common social and geographical background, and background in economically motivated crimes, might be lacking regarding RWX-milieus (Korsell 2022, p.287)

Narcotics offenses usually only involve possession of small quantities, in addition to doping offenses as physical strength is highly valued, like other traditionally masculine characteristics (MUCF 2016; in Korsell 2022, p.287) Still, RWX-milieus have to some extent certain points of contact with organized-crime, in the main a common background in traditional-criminality (primarily violent crimes) and an interest in weapons (Korsell 2022, p.287)

Members of RWX associated groups, and subcultures are often connected to the music and mixed martial-arts (MMA) scenes, or to football-hooliganism, and are generally more likely to be known by law enforcement authorities. Traditionally these groups attract people of all ages from marginalized factions of society with a lower education and low economic status (Europol 2022, p.51) Members are overwhelmingly male and can often be recognised by their attire and tattoos. They usually have great distrust for

new members and respect has to be earned over time. Some have connections to organized-crime (Europol 2022, p.52)

Offline-radicalisation and recruitment often occurs in sports-clubs, gyms, MMA-clubs, RWX music-concerts, football-games and demonstrations (Europol 2022, p.55) Some members of OMCGs adhere to RW-ideology, OMCG-members have been found cooperating in serious and organized-crime with RWX-individuals (Europol 2022, p.20)

According to Europol, OMCGs specifically target members of prison-gangs, RWXGs, the hooligan-scene and members of the armed-forces, in an attempt to recruit new members with specialist knowledge and skills (UNODC 2020, p.68) The growing overlap between RWX with criminal behavior and networks, like criminal MC- and hooligan-milieus is not yet fully understood (CEP, 2020 p.5)

PST Threat-assessment (2011) states that there are indications of contact between Norwegian RWX and organized-criminal milieus, which may facilitate access to weapons and increase the violent potential. The need for belonging and fascination with violence are often important recruitment-factors for young people, while ideology seems secondary. Norwegian RWX-milieus also has contact with Swedish and Russian RWX-milieus. The Russian RWX-milieus are far more violent than other European milieus (PST 2011)

A related article points to the increased connectivity between the Norwegian RWX-milieus, with English and Russian RWX-milieus, along with OMCG-milieus and football-supporters. Erik Jensen, previous Oslo-Police gang project leader, claims that because of a lack of growth and leadership many in the RWX-milieu have sought other milieus. PST claim many actors want to revitalize the milieu (Solem, Bakkeli and Torgersen 2011)

Although somewhat old, this may mark the start of a growing trend, as part of the rapid development of the European RWX-field, and how increased globalization and networking may influence their nature. The members seeking other milieus back then, may have contributed to the spread of RWX elements to e.g., MC-, MMA- and hooligan-subcultures, along with increased connectivity with more serious extremists abroad. This, as well as a wish to revitalize the milieu, might have been contributing

factors in creating the seemingly more connected, serious and organized, European RWX-field of today.

Like a cultural-trajectory, not only influencing the habitus of individuals moving through the different milieus, but also the milieus habitus being influenced by the individuals themselves. It is plausible that the individuals seeking different milieus, sought out those with some common features with the RWX-milieu, with a masculine and violent group-identity, rebellious, “us and them”-mentality etc. as well as some spending time in prison.

Thus these subcultures may have already shared common features with RWX, which may have increased through RWX immigration into these milieus. Along with the RWX-milieu increased organizational capacity and networking with foreign extremists. Networking between RWX-groups across national borders and migration through different fields/subcultures, is likely not exclusively a Norwegian phenomenon. As noted, people belong and move through different fields. This might have expanded and shaped the RWX-field along with related subcultures.

Drug-abuse and psychological-issues are common risk-factors regarding radicalization and crime. The drug-milieus may therefore serve as a subculture facilitating socialization. As well as drug-use and mental-health problems itself potentially being a contributing factor for criminal and/ or extreme behavior.

Regarding the Russian/Ukrainian conflict, Europol recognizes the risk of increased crime in multiple areas, like drugs- and human-trafficking, but also weapons-trafficking, which may serve as a crime area which especially links OC with extremism.

RWX-fighters have been involved in both sides of the conflict. Some claim Russia uses proxy-actors to further its goals, among them allegedly both FRGs and OCGs. The black-hole typology may be applicable to Ukraine in a similar manner to Syria, in addition, potentially serving as a hub for criminals and extremists alike.

Convergent social networks- and settings may be illustrated by these different subcultures. By the individual's cultural-trajectories and competence, a common habitus and capital might take shape through these networks, settings and individuals.

Europol notes that members of such groups are overwhelmingly male and can often be recognised by their attire and tattoos – which may point towards distinction from mainstream-society expressed through a shared aesthetic taste and bodily-hexis.

According to Illan and Sandberg (2019) street-capital has the potential to be transferred between different fields outside of mainstream-society, but is counterproductive in mainstream-society itself. Cottee (2011; in Illan and Sandberg) states that evidence to suggest that those second-generation immigrants who feel marginalized, within their western countries of residence seek alternative fields of life in which to thrive. KRUS (2016) also points out people may seek criminal- or extreme-groups to gain what they have not in mainstream society.

Similarly western white males who feel excluded and marginalized may also try to find alternative fields to thrive. Additionally, a type of street-capital and -habitus may take shape between these fields/subcultures if in a different manner. Terms like Islamo-gangsterism and Jihadi-cool, may represent manifestations of social, cultural and economic mechanisms not isolated to the immigrant-marked street-culture and ISX-fields.

All these elements touch upon both structural, societal, relational and individual/psychological factors. Thus *the holistic-model* may be used as an analytical tool which may map the mechanisms of crime and radicalization. The model may relate to Bourdieu, by symbolizing the overall structures which entail the social-room, with relational factors representing fields/subcultures, while on an individual level people act with agency and develop their habitus through the different areas of the social-room they engage.

I will try to identify possible subcultures that may contribute to the nexus between RWX and OC – these factors likely do not work separately and may seemingly often overlap each other.

Drawing from Kupatadze and Argomaniz (2019) I will try to investigate potential contributing factors for the nexus, mainly *convergent social networks and offender convergent settings*, while also using Illan and Sandbergs conceptualizations, applying Bourdieu's terms to explore the nexus. In this chapter there are mentioned some

potential subcultures and factors for the nexus between RWX and OC - these will in the following be explored more deeply:

1. *War - Foreign fighters and militias*
2. *The MMA-subculture*
3. *The Hooligan-subculture*
4. *The MC-subculture*
5. *The Drug-subculture*
6. *The Prison-subculture*

5.1. War - Foreign fighters and militias

The Syrian conflict of 2011 and the emergence of IS, influencing the CTN and ISX on multiple levels and areas, may serve as a parallel and analytical tool for the Russian/Ukrainian conflict of 2014, and the invasion of 2022. This might include both the societal conditions created by conflict and individuals and groups engaged

Can the war itself breed the nexus?

As a result of the Russian/Ukrainian conflict the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) have identified crime patterns in a number of areas e.g., human-trafficking, online-fraud, cybercrime and firearms-trafficking (Europol 2022)

The conflict has provided social legitimacy to FRGs, bringing with it unprecedented levels of sophistication, funding, recruitment, and organizational capacity (Gordon 2020, p.2) *“just as jihadists exploited conflicts in Afghanistan, the Balkans and Syria, so too are white-supremacists using the conflict in Ukraine as a laboratory and training ground”* (Rose and Soufan 2020; in Rekawek 2022, p.6)

Since the conflict is viewed as potential fertile grounds for both RWX and OC, it may also serve as a contributor to their nexus. Since 2014, crime has allegedly been deep

rooted in the conflict, and has helped sustain the pseudo-states of Donbas, Donetsk and Lugansk People`s Republic (DNR and LNR) collectively (LDNR) (Galeotti and Arutunyon 2022, p.1) Tough Russian and Ukrainian criminals were able to exploit the situation during the first part continuing cooperation (Galeotti and Arutunyon 2022, p.1) the invasion of 2022 challenged this (Galeotti and Arutunyon 2022, p.1)

Still, conflict may both limit and present opportunities, especially the outflow of refugees (Galeotti and Arutunyon 2022, p.2) There are serious concerns regarding human-trafficking and migrant-smuggling as a result of the conflict . Reports entails potential abusive and exploitative situations inside Ukraine, and among those fleeing to neighboring countries (UNODC 2022, p.1)

Even before 2014, subcultures based on criminal activities, informal hierarchies and violent potential, had been mobilized for political purposes (Galeotti and Arutunyon 2022, p.9-10) OCGs were selling their capacity to carry out violence, notably to political groups. Links between criminal-gangs and political elites in the Donbas were already strong (Idris 2022, p.16-17) In both Crimea and Donbas, oligarchs with ties to organized crime possess substantial power (Galeotti, 2014; in Idris 2022, p.21) Ukrainian oligarch and Putin supporter, Viktor Medvedchuk, has been accused by Ukrainian officials of financing the extremist-groups that organized the violent uprising in eastern Ukraine (Jensen, 2017; in Idris 2022, p.21)

In 2015 former US ambassador to Ukraine, John Herbst warned about the nationalist-right sector involved in extortion and smuggling, and others have also noted racketeering and theft (Galeotti and Arutunyon 2022, p.11)

Criminals seem to have filled the ranks of some militias, among them, gangsters from Beshmaki and Salem, the two main ethnic Russian-OCGs in the Crimean Peninsula (Galeotti and Arutunyon 2022, p.3) The DNR unit, Russian Orthodox Army (RPA), has been linked with the alleged underworld figure known as Chort (Devil) (Galeotti and Arutunyon 2022, p.10) RPA is an FR, Tsarist/ monarchist insurgent group (Laruelle 2019, p.201) with alleged ties to RNU (Likhachev 2016, p.20)

At the start of the conflict, OCGs and street-gangs appears to have provided a significant amount of fighters (Galeotti and Arutunyon 2022, p.10) LDNR-militias has

been accused of becoming the gangs competitors for recruiting similar kinds of locals (Galeotti and Arutunyon 2022, p.10) Regarding NCTN, ISX and criminal-groups often recruit from sociological similar groups of people. Allegedly some militias had themselves become in effect OCGs as well as combat-units (Galeotti and Arutunyon 2022, p.11) Which may point towards the hybrid/ transformational-entities.

Russia's alleged use of FRGs and OCGs as proxy-actors, may also be a potential contributor to the nexus. Galeotti (2017) claims The Russian state use OCGs for a variety of purposes, e.g., black-cash, cyber-attacks, political influence, trafficking of people and goods, and targeted assassinations (Galeotti 2017, p.1) FRGs may be perceived as an effective way to exacerbate tensions in the west (Lewis 2022, p.50) The emergence (DNR/LNR) and Russia`s active involvement in the Donbas war, created significant discord in Russian radical nationalist organizations in 2014 (Holzer, Larys and Mares 2019, p.127)

The Kremlin strategy (*Managed Nationalism*) is described as a set of measures to manipulate the nationalist-sector, taming and harnessing the extremist and xenophobic forces (Horwath 2014, p.469) According to the VICE documentary (2022) *Putins secret neo-Nazi armies – decade of hate*, Managed Nationalism were created in response to pro-democracy demonstrations in Ukraine in the early 2000s, and fear of similar movements emerging in Russia. The strategy allegedly involves the government forming behind the scenes relationships with various Russian FRGs, co-opting them as counterweight to liberal pro-democracy movements.

Jessikka Aro claims a connection between Russia and RWR- and neo-Nazi-milieus in the Nordics via the activist Johan Bäckman and MV-Lehti, (*a web-page that emerged around the time Russia began involvement in Ukraine, 2014*). Allegedly, Bäckman has close ties to The Russian institute for strategic studies (RISS), led by retired FSB general Leonid Resjetnikov. Bäckman and his like-minded are positive to movements like SOO, and there are clear ties to the NRM (Jentoft 2022) At least some NRM-members were on the pro-Ukrainian side, but since 2015 the NRM have been on the pro-Russian side (Rekawek 2020, p.25)

Weapons-trafficking

The conflict may have been a driver for weapons-trafficking. In 2014 rebel militias pillaged Ukraines (one of the world's biggest arms-manufacturers) arsenal. On the Ukrainian side, irregular militias were formed, and given, or scavenged, weapons from official supplies (Prentice and Zverev 2016)

Armed conflict creates an environment that can enable organized-crime to prosper. Non-state armed groups (NSAGs) and OCGs use illicit arms to engage in both conflict and crime, as well as weapons-trafficking. The lines between these types of groups often blurr, particularly in conflict and post-conflict settings (UNODC, Pinse 2022, p.1)

This view may illuminate how weapons-trafficking has the potential to play a key part of the functional and financial confluence between OCGs and extremist-groups, as well as being a product and reinforcer of the societal conditions referred to as a black-hole.

Europol has warned about potential increase in trafficking of weapons and explosives from Ukraine to the EU (Europol 2022) e.g., a criminal network illegally transported weapons and explosives from Ukraine to conflict zones in North Africa and the Middle East, subjected to international embargoes (Europol 2020)

As well as firearms as being the lifeblood of organized-crime in Europe (European Commission) both suspects connected to the RWX and ISX, have been seeking to buy weapons and explosives from criminal networks, while some engaged in firearms-trafficking themselves (Europol 2022, p.19) In several EU Member States, firearms have been used in attacks by RWX-terrorists and seized from RWX-actors. Cases of transnational illicit firearms-trafficking between RWX-actors and participation in military training camps have also been observed (UNODC 2020, p.16) There is e.g., evidence that Azov-Regiment members have engaged in weapons-trafficking (Rassler 2022, p.19)

A 25-year-old Frenchman with ties to FRGs tried to enter Poland from Ukraine with weapons including rocket launchers and Kalashnikov assault rifles (Prentice and Zverev 2016) In 2020 links between FRGs and organized-crime were uncovered during a drug investigation, when Austrian police seized automatic weapons, explosives and hand grenades intended for a German RWXG (Aljazeera 2020) The same year, Spanish police

found a warehouse full of Nazi-memorabilia as they arrested three suspected leaders of an international arms-ring that sold guns acquired in eastern Europe, to drug-traffickers (Allen 2020)

Fascination with weapons among the RWX-field, may create problems distinguishing between weapons-trafficking networks and collectors. A RWX-Norwegian in the Ukrainian foreign-legend were previously convicted for illegal possession of weapons parts, stolen weapons and ammunition (Skille and Svendsen 2022) His defender claim the weapons were merely collection pieces (Akhtar, Hansen and Svendsen 2022) In 2021 a seizure of older, but functional weapons, were tied to a network of people buying and selling illicit-weapons, with RWR ties. Defenders emphasize this is a case of collecting and a collection-milieu (Lysvold, Olavsel, Solås and Skille 2021)

Thus weapons-trafficking, may serve as a key link between RWX and OC, playing a part in both the financial and functional confluence of their convergence. Having one's identity tied up to weapons and military-ideals, may reflect Ideological-confluence (Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.268) Access and knowledge of how to use weapons may also be related to street- social and cultural-capital and competence. Bjørge and Carlsson (2005; in KRUS 2016, p.19) factors of weapons, violence and uniform, may relate to a cultural-habitus prevalent among those involved in militias and weapons.

Actors - Groups

The Azov Regiment: was established by members of Ukrainian Patriots, a neo-Nazi group from Kharkiv (Paszkievicz 2022). Its leadership includes individuals known for their ultra-nationalist and violent RWX-views (Rekawek, Ritzmann and Schindler 2020, p.13-14) According to Færseth, the Azov-Battalion consisted of Russian speaking football-hooligans, people accused of attacking foreign students in Kharkiv and other RWX-actors. Azov is known for arranging the Asgardsei-festival with nationalist black-metal, and hosting MMA-competitions (Paszkievicz 2022)

The Norwegian Intelligence Service states this in their threat-assessment from 2020: *“A potential arena to create unity and tie bonds between RWX elements in Europe is the conflict in Ukraine, where multiple RWX-individuals have joined the Azov-Battalion”* (Paszkievicz 2022) RWX is also present among the Russian paramilitary entities, the Russian Imperial Movement (RIM), Wagner-Group, and Rusich. According to Michael Colborne, there also exist a degree of RWX-views among Russian soldiers (Rassler 2022, p.20)

RWX-views in the military is not exclusively a Russian phenomenon, Flade (2021) points to RWX-infiltration of German military and police, e.g., RWX presence in The Special Commando Unit KSK (DW 2020), military personnel in the Reichsbuerger-movement (Goldenberg 2022) and police and military members of the FRG Nordkreuz (Taddonino 2021) The RWX-military nexus may manifest in a variety of ways, ranging from terrorist-plots, to open display of RWX-symbols by military personnel (Dongen, Veilleux-Lepage, Leidig, Arkhis 2022).

Some nationalist Russian paramilitaries allegedly have had connections to crime. Russian Cossack units were involved in e.g., blackmail, robbery, marauding and ransom (Donday 2015; in Holzer, Larys, Mares 2019, p.133), and the Russian Orthodox Army, closely linked with RNU, were largely involved in marauding and criminal activities (Holzer, Larys and Mares 2019, p.137).

Many RWX foreign-fighters on both sides wanted a post-war career in private military contracting (PMC) (Rekawek, Ritzmann and Schindler 2020, p.16).

Wagner-Group: is the largest and the most well-known Russian PMC (Bukkvoll and Østensen 2020, p.5) and has a history of displaying Nazi-insignia as well as being antisemitic and against LGBTQ-rights (Rekawek 2022, p.62). Wagner-Group was founded by Dmitry Utkin, a retired veteran of Russia’s intelligence agency, the GRU (an alleged admirer of Hitler and Nazi-Germany, its believed the group is named after Richard Wagner, Hitlers favorite composer), and bankrolled by Yevgeny Prigozhin (Putin’s cook), an oligarch with ties to organized-crime and Putin (Faulkner 2022, p.29).

Wagner-Group, are accused of enlisting prisoners as soldiers (NRK 2022) According to Romanova, around 3000 prisoners have been recruited to the war in Ukraine. Wagner

experts, Åse Gilje Østensen by the Norwegian Naval Academy, alleges that Russia resorts to criminals to recruit enough soldiers. The American Financial Department estimates that around 50 000 prisoners could be recruited in the near future (Olsson 2022)

Rusich: which is part of Wagner-Group (Rekawek 2022, p.62) is a paramilitary-group fighting on the pro-Russian side, with their core consisting of neo-Nazis from St. Petersburg, with Alexey Miltsjakov as leader, and Yan Petrovsky second in command (Hauken, Gigsted and Skjeggstad 2021) The founders were trained by the militia arm of RIM, Russian Imperial Legion (Rekawek 2022, p.62) Also many “founding members” of Wagner also belong to RIM (Rassler 2022, p.20)

The Russian Imperial Movement (RIM): is a fascist-group based in St. Petersburg (CEP, p.1) with members and sympathizers linked to violent activity abroad. Imperial Legion, reportedly has sent fighters to Ukraine, Syria, and Libya (CEP, p.1). Partizan, a training course run by RIM, reportedly by ex-Russian military members, conduct trainings on bomb-making, marksmanship, combat medicine, and small group tactics such as assaulting and clearing buildings (CEP, p.1). Two members of NRM-Sweden, allegedly underwent the Partizan military training course before carrying out a series of bomb attacks in Gothenburg (CEP, p.1).

RIM is designated as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) by the US (Rekawek 2020, p.3-4).

The strategic-approach emphasize the fluidity of non-state armed groups engaged in conflict, rather than viewing criminal-groups and non-state armed groups as two different entities pursuing two distinct objectives (Boer and Bosetti 2015, p.3-4)

In addition to Institutional weakness and state dysfunction creating the conditions for violent conflict and crime to thrive and connect (Boer and Bosetti 2015, p.5). conflict may also create opportunities for both OCGs and conflict-actors e.g., *convenient alliances, criminality financing rebellion and state-supported proxy-actors, particular goods and services being in demand as a result of conflict, lootable resources and low risk* (Boer and Bosetti 2015, p.5).

In the decline of state authority organizations like Russian National Unity (RNU), Golden-Dawn (GD) and Azov flourished (Larys 2022, p.18). Militant vigilante-groups often consist of criminals and people using membership to gain tools, contacts and know-how to become involved and experienced in OC for financial reasons (Larys 2022, p.19). The contradiction of representing law and order, while engaging in OC, may be legitimized through the targeted victims. Like IS-followers in the west permitted stealing, drug-dealing and violence, if targeted towards non-Muslims “Kafirs” or “fake”-Muslims (Cottee 2016; in Larys 2022, p.6). Both RNU and GD legitimized extortion against people not included in their subjectively defined community (Larys 2022, p.5).

As well as these examples displaying all the levels of the regional variations of the nexus, some organizational aspects may also be revealed. The hybrid entity (UNICRI and GCTF 2019, p.4) and The transformation typology (UNICRI and GCTF 2019, p.4).

Being part of a vigilante-FRG may serve as a way of legitimizing crime. Basra, Neumann and Brunner (2016) states that ISX may serve to legitimate crime. This offers criminals an opportunity for ‘redemption’ without requiring any change of behavior (Basra and Neumann 2016, p.29).

Actors - individuals/ foreign fighters

Most RWXGs focus on physical, tactical, survival, and weapons training, and take part in training camps in remote rural areas in the EU, Ukraine and Russia where they attend lectures, self-defense classes, MMA and boxing training, and weapon courses (Europol 2022, p.54).

After the Russian/Ukrainian conflict, Russian-speaking and eastern-European groups began to position themselves as hubs for the violent transnational RWX-milieu (Rekawek, Ritzmann and Schindler 2020, p.13-14). But, according to Rewakew, even though many of those enlisting had FR- and RWX-views before the Russian invasion of 2022 (Hauken, Gigsted and Skjeggstad 2021) the motivation to travel has now changed, and there will be a composite company of foreign-fighters in Ukraine this time around (Thommessen, Engen, Rørslett, Jørstad 2022).

There are some different motivational factors that contribute to becoming a foreign-fighter; Thomas Hegghammer by (FFI) lists, identity-cohesion and altruism. He notes that the typical foreign-fighter in Europe is often young, socioeconomic underrepresented male that comes into contact with a radical-network (Hauken, Gigsted and Skjeggstad 2021) Ukrainian-expert Tom Bukvoll by (FFI), notes seeking value-cohesion and romanticizing violence (Hauken, Gigsted and Skjeggstad 2021).

Rekawek, by (Globesek and C-rex), notes the acquisition of arms and combat-experience. War may also be viewed as a springboard: imagining returning home after the war and achieving great things like terror or political activism. Also wanting to press a “reset” button on their life and make a new start, and experience adventure may be motivational-factors (Hauken, Gigsted and Skjeggstad 2021).

Joachim Furholm represents an example which may relate to some of those who joined IS. A young man with feelings of exclusion and hate, wanting to be rebellious starts to mix in extremists circles, and commits a mini-bank robbery, which lands him in prison. He traveled to Ukraine, motivated by war and adventure. During his short stay at the Georgian-Legion 2018, he witnessed drug-use and theft at the camp.

Furholm states; *“I became a neo-Nazi, a skinhead type that hated all things and all. I wanted to be rebellious”* (Hauken, Gigsted and Skjeggstad 2021). Relating to both the push-factors of exclusion, crime and prison, and pull-factors, rebellion, excitement and adventure.

Rusich-fighter, Yan Petrovskiy, previously belonged to a Nazi-milieu in Norway, and have patrolled with SOO in Tønsberg, (Svendsen, Skille, Gundersen, Solheim, NRK 2022) A picture shows Petrovskiy together with the Russian-Norwegian, Oleg Neganov – a former neo-Nazi which later joined IS in Iraq (Svendsen and Alayoubi, NRK 2020), an example that may illuminate that radicalization not necessarily is all bound to ideology.

Petrovskiy belonged to a marginal Russian-Norwegian nazi-milieu which resided in the tattoo-studio *Metal Tattoo* in Oslo. In 2010 police uncovered the milieu in relation to the MMA-practitioner and prior front figure in the neo-Nazi organization Slavic-Union, Vjatsjeslav “Red-Tarzan” Datsik, an escapee from a psychiatric department in St. Petersburg, who arrived in Oslo with the help of Norwegian connections. Police found

weapons, ammunition and Nazi paraphernalia during a raid in the studio (Svendsen 2020). According to Einar Aas with the section for organized-crime, they found a loaded handgun during the raid on the tattoo-studio in addition to findings related to other types of crime (NRK 2010)

In 2014 Petrovsky was active in the Rusich-militia (Svendsen 2020) At the same time as fighting in Ukraine, he had regular contact with RWX-actors in Norway, and lived with Ronny Bårdsen, a veteran in the milieu and known NRM supporter (Skille and Døvik 2019) In 2016 Petrovskiy was deported from Norway – UDI and PST claimed he posed a threat to national security (Svendsen 2020)

Like the ideas of functional- and ideological confluence, which in short describes that criminals can become good terrorists/ foreign-fighters, and vice-versa, and that terrorism and extremism are just one progression of criminal behavior driven by deviant behavior as a response to deprivation – so too might war experience relate to criminals, extremists or those who fit into both categories;

Terrorism is much more about quality than about quantity. Foreign violence-oriented extremists traveling to Ukraine and returning back to their home countries represent clear and present security risks (Rekawek 2022, p.64) Despite linkages between the FR, and the concerns that the Russian invasion of 2022 might result in large flows of foreign-fighters to FR-units on both sides of the conflict. These concerns have not materialized, and the flow of foreign-fighters has been much smaller than anticipated (Rekawek 2022)

5.2. The MC-subculture

As well as some OMCG-members adhering to RW-ideology and cooperate with RWX-actors (Europol 2022, p.20), OMCGs also specifically target members of prison-gangs, RWXGs, the hooligan-scene and members of the armed forces, in an attempt to recruit new members with specialist knowledge and skills (UNODC 2020, p.68) which may reflect functional confluence and transactional nexus, often based on

exchange the learning process from the skillsets of each other (European Parliament, 2012; in Kapatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.265) which may be purchased or adopted through recruitment. Some members of SOO also came from the MC-milieu, In addition may SOO use of elements of OMCG-culture with fashion and recruitment-model – former leader Steffen Larsen also appeared as head of the 1% club, Gremium-MC, Tønsberg (K.Vatn 2014) These examples illuminate social and cultural overlap between the milieus.

City-Crew 81 is an Hells-Angels supporter gang, consisting of former members of a Vestfold based MMA-club. According to Henning Fosaas, by Vestfold organized-crime department, several of the members were previously known by police, convicted with e.g., violence, robbery, carrying weapons in public places and abuse (Vatn, 2014).

Gordon Petterson, by KRIPOS notes; *“The support-groups have all different names, but a common term is (Support-Crew 81). They are established groupings in Oslo, Skien and Stavanger. Members in these groupings are mainly youth recruited from fighter- and bodybuilding-milieus”* (Petterson 2014; in Vatn 2014). Even though there is no clear RW-influence, this may illuminate a linkage between the MMA- and MC-scene, which may potentially serve as a link between RWX- and MC-milieus, as RWX have on occasion infiltrated MMA-subcultures. In addition common features may float between these milieus.

A link between Hells-Angels and RWX-milieus were uncovered in Kristiansand 2010, were 10 individuals in an RWX-milieu (*marked by violence, drug-use and racist symbols*) had gotten emblems symbolizing acceptance from Hells-Angels (TV2 2010)

Multiple places in the country, like Kristiansand and Stavanger, the police report connections between the RWX- and MC-milieu. Kristiansand Police chief, Ole Hortemo, states; *“People from Support-81 Stavanger regularly came here to recruit RWX-individuals”* (Solem, Bakkeli and Torgeresen 2010).

A link may be drawn by the overlapping use of symbols. A City Crew 81, club jacket is depicted with Thor's-hammer (Mjölñir) (Vatn 2014). According to ADL's Hate on

display, - a database providing an overview of symbols used by white supremacist- and hate-groups, the symbol has been appropriated by RWXGs. Another symbol that according to ADL is appropriated by both RWX and bikers is the Iron-Cross, which e.g., appears in the logo of Gremium-MC. These symbols are not RWX in their nature and thus not exclusively used in RWX-settings.

Links between RWGs and OMCGs have been drawn in association with drug- (steroids) and weapons-trafficking (Europol 2018). Danish OMCG-members with RWX tendencies, have sold firearms to ethnic street-gangs (UNODC 2020, p.97) Larys (2022) illuminated the sometimes contradictory relationship between ideology and opportunism. This may also reflect an example of a hybrid-entity (UNICRI 2019, p.4) where financial self-interest triumphs over ideology.

The Russian government or Russian oligarchs have allegedly funded FRGs in Europe, such as the Night-Wolves MC (New York Times; in CEP, p.7) which Russia alleged uses as part of a strategy to influence the activities of civic institutions, non-government organizations, and the FR-milieu (Harris 2020, p.2)

Described as a nationalist Hells-Angels like club (Holtzer, Larys and Mares 2019, p.138) They dress comparably to an OMCG (Harris 2020, p.1) Gaining the Kremlin's endorsement through their shared conservative and nationalist values, and their patriarchal, homophobic, and anti-West beliefs. While on occasion individuals implicated in criminal acts, there is no information indicating the club coordinates these crimes (Harris 2020, p.5)

In 2019 when The Night-Wolves expanded to Finland and other countries under the sub-group Russian Motorcycle International (RMI) Finnish Police acknowledged RMI had not committed any crimes in Finland but suggested the links to organized-crime (Harris 2020, p.5) The Night Wolves do not wear the 1% patch – a symbol used by OMCGs (Harris 2020, p.7). There exist some examples of connection with Spetsnaz units as well as involvement in Ukraine (Harris 2020, p.13).

Galeoetti (2015) states this about the Night-Wolves MC; *“Outlaws yet tools of the state; feted by the Kremlin yet deniable: classic tools of Russia's modern hybrid politics”*.

5.2. The MMA-subculture

MMA has been targeted by both RWX- and ISX-recruiter (Handle and Scheuble 2021, p.8). For RWXGs, MMA, may provide both training, networking, recruitment, and funding (Handle and Scheuble 2021, p.7) MMA is regularly integrated into music festivals, e.g., Asgardrei Festival and Call of Terror (Rekawek, Ritzmann and Schindler 2020, p.21) A potential networking and recruitment hub is the major RWX, MMA event “Battle of the Nibelungs”, participants reportedly include RWX-actors from several subcultures, FR-parties like Azov, neo-Nazis and the RW hooligan-scene (Rekawek, Ritzmann and Schindler 2020, p.21)

According to the VICE documentary *Inside a Neo Nazi Fight Club | Decade of Hate* (2021) many similar FR, MMA-events takes place worldwide e.g., Propatria, Pride-France, White-Rex , and the Rise-Above Movement. Also mainstream MMA-promoters, UFC and Bellator, has signed on fighters with links to the FR

Brands like Pride-France and White-Rex, may function as propaganda tools as well as consolidate feelings of brotherhood and unity (Handle and Scheuble 2021, p.7) In addition to larger scale sports events and tournaments, which serve as networking opportunities for RWXGs on a national and international level. Some groups own sports studios and gyms (Handle and Scheuble 2021, p.8) which may function as a “offender convergence settings” (Felson, 2003, 2006; in Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.264)

The MMA-practitioner, Alex Celotto may illustrate how RWX influence on the bodily-hexis, through both his RWX-views and tattoos (Berg and Rasmussen 2017) Like Europol (2022) suggests people in subcultures marked by RWX, like parts of the MMA-subculture, some are easily recognizable by attire and tattoos. Tattoos and attire may also serve as distinction from mainstream society.

According to Ravndal, MMA is used as RWX propaganda and is an important recruitment-tool for those seeking excitement. RWXGs use rhetoric that they are threatened and under attack, and must be prepared and capable of defending themselves. In countries like Sweden, Germany, Greece and Italy the threat of attack is real among activists (Ravndal; in Berg and Rasmussen 2017)

Zidan (2022) draws a link between King Of The Streets (KOTS) an underground fight-club arranging events at secret locations in Sweden, with RWX; *“Whether by accident or design KOTS have become a platform for some of the most notorious hatemongers in Europe, united by a shared penchant for violence and mutual affection for combat-sports”* (Zidan 2022)

KOTS emerged from soccer-hooliganism, and one of their winning fighters is a hooligan, allegedly affiliated with Bandidos-MC. According to the article both RWX-actors and neo-Nazis have established a fanbase emphasizing physical fitness, competitive violence and hypermasculinity (Zidan 2022)

5.3. The Hooligan-subculture

In multiple European countries links between the hooligan-subculture have been drawn to OC- and RWR-milieus, as well as the MMA-subculture. Organized hooligan-gangs train in MMA and indoctrinate to a xenophobic ideology that heavily employs Nazi-symbolism” (CEP, p.6). In Leipzig, the MMA-gym Imperium Fight Team (IFT), allegedly served as a networking point for the neo-Nazi scene, and members accused of violent crimes” (Ford 2020).

The DW documentary *“How far-right hooligans hijack MMA for training and recruitment”* (2020) claims FR-hooligans are using MMA to train and mobilize. RWX-expert Klymenko notes, this illuminates the cross-fertilization of ideas and membership between the football-hooligans and the MMA-scene, and the FR are trying to use certain qualities and characteristics of the sport like violence and hyper-masculinity.

In Poland hooligans are often connected to organized-crime, (Czop and Juszcak 2017, p.1), fans also follow a code of honor, with several rules, e.g., not cooperating with police (Czop and Juszcak 2017, p.149), following a so-called “conspiracy of silence” (Czop and Juszcak 2017, p.154-156).

According to a country security report by the U.S. Department of States Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) several Serbian hooligan-clubs have very strong ties

to OCGs, RWGs- and ultranationalist-organizations. These hooligans are often culprits in turf wars between criminal-organizations, and have strong ties within the political structure of Serbia (OSAC 2020), some fan leaders and skinheads, develop a particular subculture within these groups (Bakic 2013, p.4).

As well as membership to ultra-groups providing a sense of belonging and shared identity, it may also serve as an entry point to organized-crime (Đorđević and Scaturro 2022, p.14). Family ties and connection to childhood neighborhoods exert a strong influence over which ultra-group one joins. *Offenders convergence settings* (Felson, 2003, 2006; in Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.264), may seem applicable for individuals connected to the RWX/OC hooligan-subculture potentially, through neighborhood connection. Family relations playing a part may be viewed as a form of social-capital. Like the term *Islamogangsterism* was used to describe Tunisian suburbs where the presence of jihadists overlaps in crime-ridden environments (Parsi Paoli and Bellasio 2017; in Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.264). So to may OC, RWX and Hooligan-subculture overlap through certain areas, stadiums, pubs, MMA-gyms and social circles.

Group-behavior within criminal- and hooligan-groups may resemble each other, where in order to gain acceptance, youngsters imitate the behavior of older members, engaging in violence and criminal acts. Some allegedly view membership as an opportunity to engage in drug-dealing (Đorđević and Scaturro 2022, p.15). Many of the traits within ultra-groups make them attractive to criminal-groups (Đorđević and Scaturro 2022, p.16).

Occasionally criminals have taken control of a group using football as a cover for illegal activities (Đorđević and Scaturro 2022, p.17). Criminal-groups with hooligan members have employed sophisticated communication tools that with added security features (Đorđević and Scaturro 2022, p.18). Both the groups structure, violent potential, criminal know-how and use of secure communication are all features relating to *functional confluence*, thus making hooligan-groups attractive for both RWXGs and OCGs.

Indoctrination into extreme nationalism or recruitment into criminal-groups often takes place in stadiums or through personal contacts with the groups (Đorđević and

Scaturro 2022, p.19), as well as crime and extremism there are indications that some are involved in paramilitary activities in Syria and Ukraine (Đorđević and Scaturro 2022, p.19) Both in Europe and Western-Balkan fascist symbols are sometimes displayed (Đorđević and Scaturro 2022, p.20-21). There are also clear FR links with the hooligan-subculture in the UK, e.g., English Defence League (EDL) and the Football Lads Alliance (FLA) (Haanstra and Keijzer 2018, p.5).

The VICE documentary (2021), *Why the Far Right Tries to Recruit Football Hooligans | Decade of Hate*, traces the links back to England in the 1970s, when the National-Front recruited from football terraces and surrounding pubs. During the Yugoslavia conflict of the 90s, the career criminal Željko Ražnatović (Arkan) a former security guard for the Serbian football-club Red-Star Belgrade, recruited from the supporters (The Delje) when he formed The Serbian volunteer Guard (SDG) a paramilitary-group also known as Arkan's-Tigers.

As well as being portrayed as the father of modern Serbian organized-crime (*which is intertwined with football-hooliganism*) In the documentary *Arkans Legacy: The Serbian Mafia* (Mokiejewski and Pierrat 2018) he is also celebrated by the neo-Nazi organization Ruskii Obraz, as an exemplary man of action (Horvath 2021, p.51)

Hooligan- and extremist groups share several traits, like an "us and them" mentality, justification for violence, a well defined group structure, as well as providing belonging collective identity and purpose. Hooligans are organized-groups, willing to break the law and resort to violence. Thus, they are both susceptible for radicalization and suitable to carry out the 'soldiers' work' of RWXGs (Haanstra and Keijzer 2018, p.9)

Many of the Russians who attacked England supporters at Euro 2016, have been suspected by the UK-government to be sanctioned by the Kremlin fighting Putin's "hybrid warfare" (Boffey, 2016) A 2017 BBC documentary "*Russia's Hooligan Army*" followed some of these gangs, which declared themselves to be "Putin's foot soldiers." These gangs recruit at Russia's stadiums but have traveled beyond Russia's borders (CEP, p.6)

Even though most Russian hooligan-groups are not members of political parties some allegedly have participated in Kremlin- backed projects on the basis of opportunism (Holzer, Larys and Mares 2019, p.93) After Ukraines Orange-revolution cooperation between the hooligan-groups Gladiators, and the pro-Kremlin movement Nashi were revealed. After the 2014 revolution in Ukraine, there were renewed focus on hooligans and to consolidate them, many Russian hooligans support pro-Russian separatists (Holzer, Larys and Mares 2019, p.94)

Among some RW-politicians, their association with ultras-group may provide street-credibility (Đorđević and Scaturro 2022, p.25), where in return for providing muscle at political rallies, the ultras gain lucrative business opportunities and political protection against prosecution in return (Đorđević and Scaturro 2022, p.27)

This may relate to the aspect of functional confluence where the backing of a powerful armed organization can aid in gaining reputation raise the profile of a criminal-group or individual, especially if this organization benefits from a positive image within a (diaspora) community (Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.266)

Hooligans alleged recruitment as foot soldiers for both extremist-groups and OCGs, as well as militias, and crimes associated with hooliganism may contribute to the socialization into other types of crime or extremism easier. As Illan and Sandberg states in regards to street social-capital; In the context of marginalized young men involved in street culture, this can consist of other tough young men who can be called upon to boost numbers in the case of conflicts (Illan 2013; in Illan and Sandberg 2019)

This may also be reflected in the concept of ideological confluence that suggests that engagement in terrorism is just a progression from one type of illegal behavior to another and is conditioned by a deviant response to general deprivation, poverty and marginalization (Coolsaet, 2016; in Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.268)

RWX-recruitment often takes place where alcohol and drugs are consumed, these are also aspects of the hooligan-subcultures, which may facilitate recruitment, and links between the two. Those attracted to RWX are often young men with little education and a negative outlook on their economic circumstances, often driven by thrill-seeking

and opportunism rather than ideology, with a history of alcohol/substance-use and crime (Carlsson 2021, p.5)

In addition to alcohol and cocaine use (Ayres and Treadwell 2012; in Ayres and Treadwell 2014, p.49) drug-dealing may also be one aspect that fits with the culture of the football-firm, hedonistic, hyper-masculine, competitive and violent (Ayres and Treadwell 2014, p.49-50)

Frasers (in Illan and Sandberg 2019) notion of “homologies of habitus” notes the similarities in what is valued amongst tough, masculinist cultures of marginalization across different global contexts. May be illustrated through the hooligan-subculture which allegedly have crossover with both MMA, organized-crime, paramilitary activity, drug and alcohol use and RWX.

5.4. The Drug-subculture

As well as drug-use may contribute to extremism or crime, e.g., members of SOO and NRM, on both a relational and psychological level, drug-trafficking may also function as a potential arena facilitating for both. Members of drug-trafficking networks in the EU have been affiliated with both RWX and ISX (Europol). Still, *“there is a notable lack of results from the FR relation with the drug-trade, with only a handful of instances noted in open sources, yet this may be because the pool of FR-terrorists in Europe is relatively low”* (Basra 2019, p.7)

In 2012, an Italian man, formerly associated with the armed Italian neo-fascist movement, was arrested with 165 kg of cocaine. “Rather than demonstrating systematic, long-term, or formal collaboration between terrorist-groups and the drug-trade, these cases show how individuals can shift between these two worlds” (Basra 2019, p.45) Ideological-confluence emphasize the fluidity of terrorist and criminal labels, with individuals moving into and back from one of these identities. (Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.268)

Other examples may include e.g, England, where The North West Infidels (NWI) reportedly engaged in drug-dealing (Rekawek, Ritzmann and Schindler 2020, p.24) and

Germany, where eight people were arrested as part of a mega operation targeting FRGs allegedly involved in trafficking of drugs, arms and money laundering (Sleian 2021)

Regarding the Russian/Ukrainian conflict, firstly, more people may be at risk of developing drug-addiction and thereby be at greater risk for related individual vulnerability-factors for both OC and RWX. Secondly, both RWGs and OCGs in the region may engage in the drug-trade for financial reasons, potentially creating financial and functional links between RWGs and OCGs. According to UNODC (2022) the outbreak of the armed conflict in Ukraine can have a significant impact on people who use drugs and on drug-trafficking inside and around Ukraine. Exposure to trauma and lack of access to economic opportunities are one of the main risk-factors of increased drug-use among internally displaced persons and refugees (UNODC 2022, p.1)

Past experience, like Syria, shows that conflict can potentially have two opposite effects on drug-trafficking and manufacturing in Ukraine. On one hand, the growing destabilization of the conflict could increase impunity for the drug-trade and increase drug-trafficking and production (UNODC 2022, p.3-4). On the other hand, trafficking through hostile areas may prove too risky (UNODC 2022, p.4).

Drug-abuse may reinforce negative life challenges and worsen existing psychological illness (PST 2022, p. 6-7), both people involved in ISX and RWX, are in PSTs registers, and Psychological-illness and drugs often appear to be mutually negatively reinforcing in a risk-perspective (PST 2022 p.7).

In RWXGs, drugs and alcohol play an important role in social practices (Carlsson 2021, p.6) despite contradicting ideology it has also been reported in ISX settings. Both alcohol and drugs have been linked to violent behavior, as well as vulnerabilities that trigger pathways to extremism, as well as lowering the thresholds for committing violent acts (Carlsson 2021, p.4). Social relations and acceptance in extremist-groups can be a key factor for radicalization among vulnerable people that have experienced social rejection (Carlsson 2021, p.5) extremist views often take hold after the socialization process.

The social and psychological consequences of drug-abuse may lead to negative feelings, creating a need to restore control and redeem oneself (Al-Attar 2019, p.34), this may relate to the redemption narrative (Basra, Neumann Brunner2016). Drugs and extremism may fulfill the needs of those in need of risk, stimulation and intensity as well as escapism (Al-Attar 2019, p.34), adventure and excitement are known pull-factors. Drug-use may also be used as a tool to overcome inhibitions committing crimes (Al-Attar 2019, p.34-35)

Both having parents with psychological problems/substance-abuse, as well as one self struggling with these issues, increase the risk of committing crimes (Ministry of Justice and Public security 2020-2021, p.43) Almost 1/3 of murders and murder attempts between 2014-2021 was committed by people with serious psychological-illness, and are often involved in drug-use and belong to a drug-milieu (KRIPOS 2022)

Mental-health

Some violent-extremists and radicalized individuals tending to violence have a mental-health illness (Adams 2019, p.5), Al-Attar (2019) suggests some mental-health and personality disorders may act as vulnerability factors and risk of general violence (Al-Attar 2019, p.25).

Among those with *antisocial disorder*, extremism may be viewed as an opportunity to regain status and rebrand oneself from social failure or criminal, as well as taking revenge and rebel against society (Al-Attar 2019, p.25). The idea of branding oneself from past failure and criminal to morally superior, as well as the need to fight authority may resonate with the redemption narrative (Basra and Neumann 2016, p.28-29). For thrill seekers It may also be a exciting self-serving way of gaining short-term financial, material or criminal rewards (Al-Attar 2019, p.25). Power, status, and revenge may also be a motivation among those with *Narcissistic personality* (Al-Attar 2019, p.26). Bjørgo and Carlsson (2005; in KRUS 2016) notes status as a factor for extremism, as Illan and Sandberg (2019) suggests, if one has failed to gain substantial amounts of economic,

social or cultural capital in mainstream society, one may seek symbolic power in other areas if one feels deserving of this.

As noted, social and relational factors like friends, cohesion and identity often play the most important role for extremist-recruitment, people with *borderline personality* may be especially vulnerable to this element of radicalization, as well as having a need for structure, rules, predictability, and safety (Al-Attar 2019, p.29) Bjørgo (2018) noted that the NRM may have provided structure and discipline for people that had earlier struggled with drug-abuse and criminality, KRUS (2016) also noted a need for protection as a reason for joining both criminal and extremist-groups.

The radicalization-process has no uniform profile for extremists, and a broad spectrum of factors may influence an individual. This may be tied to both personality, behavior, upbringing, psychological illness, ideology and propaganda to different various external stresses and experiences (PST 2022, p.5) There is no concrete diagnosis that is typical of terrorists, and psychological illness is not a direct radicalization risk-factor. Rather it may work along other vulnerability-factors for radicalization, like, exclusion, low socioeconomic-status, crime and drug-abuse, life-crisis and experience of loss (PST 2022, p.6).

But, terrorism and psychological illness also may not be understood as mutually exclusive categories. Psychological-illness may increase the risk of violence through e.g., drug-use, isolation, time used in extreme web-milieus or as a consequence of crime, serving time in prison with extremists (KRIPOS 2022, p.21). The occurrence of psychological illness among convicts in Norwegian prisons is markable higher than in the general public (Magnussen and Tingvold 2022, p.1), and psychological-illness and substance-abuse are the biggest health challenge among Norwegian inmates (Magnussen and Tingvold 2022, p.65).

5.5. The Prison-subculture

As well as prison fostering a culture that socializes inmates into a set of informal norms and values, various factors regarding life as an inmate may give the feeling of loss of identity (Ministry of Justice and Public Security 2011, p.19). Prisons bring together criminals and terrorists/extremists facilitating opportunities for cooperation, networking, and the transfer/ integration of skills (UNICRI 2019, p.3).

Prisons remain a fertile ground for radicalisation, often facilitated by the bonds created between inmates (Europol 2022, p.19-20), due to more vulnerability-factors, loss of freedom, and being cut off from normal societal influence, Inmates may be more vulnerable to radicalization than the general public (KRUS 2016, s.27). Despite the potential for prisons to facilitate recruitment, radicalization and networking, there is limited evidence for suggesting that significant numbers of prisoners are being radicalized to violence and proceed with committing violent extremist acts upon release (UNODC 2016, p.107)

Imprisonment is a personal crisis for many new inmates, they are cut off from their normal lives and networks, in an unfamiliar, tribal environment. They are mentally and physically vulnerable, and may experience ‘cognitive openings’—the willingness and desire to identify with new ideas, beliefs, and social groups (Basra, Neumann and Brunner 2016, p.30) One way of handling Incarceration crisis could be to seek extremist-milieus and an extreme-ideology that will give more purpose (KRUS 2016, s.28)

Many Inmates may also belong to the demographic that pose as attractive recruits for ISXGs, risk-taking, impulsive, young men, with a muslim background and who have been in conflict with authorities. A criminal background may have desensitized them to crime and violence, and may have provided them with competences useful in ISX settings (Basra, Neumann and Brunner 2016, p.30) Prisons may facilitate these milieus converging, and may provide both radicalization targets, and criminal skills and connections (Basra, Neumann and Brunner 2016, p.31)

This may also ring true for RWX, attracting an eerily similar demographic of marginalized, risk-taking and impulsive young men with a criminal past. This thesis has not been able to prove a systematic connection to organized-crime on the same level as ISX. Still prisons may be viewed as a shared offender convergent setting for both RWX and ISX where young men already socialized to violence and exclusion with criminal competences converge.

On one hand radicalized inmates can face stigmatization and violence from the general prison population, on the other they can be idolized as heroes (Walkenhorst, Baaken, Ruf, Leaman, Handle and Korn 2020, p.7). Extreme ideologies may be strategically employed as counter-movements, against the prison system (KRUS 2016, p.17), as well as imprisonment itself potentially serving as a propaganda tool (Thompson and Hart 2021, p.141), that might be used as a quasi rite-of-passage or viewed as a demonstration of one's commitment to an ideological cause (Thompson and Hart 2021, p.141) Thus time served in prison may include the extremist mindset, giving increased status, make it possible to present oneself as a victim of the counter-power (KRUS 2016, p.27)

Both imprisonment itself, cutting inmates off the general societal influence and the socialization with other inmates may increase the distance from "normal society", which reduce the possibility to reintegrate and increase acceptance and support to or use of extreme means of action (KRUS 2016, p.27-28) Imprisonment may further create distance between (us and them), and might be experienced as unjust, oppressive and stigmatizing, as well as removing some possibilities a period after release (KRUS 2016, s.28) Some inmates have belonged to harsh milieus and experienced violence, and thus feel a need for both protection, status and salvation/ forgiveness. Fear of exclusion on the inside does not disappear after incarceration. A failed return can worsen or increase the risk for lasting exclusion (KRUS 2016, p.28)

Veterans that have engaged in combat abroad can get a special status among the inmates. They will achieve a status in the inmate milieu that accelerates the

radicalization process among vulnerable inmates. A situation like this have many similarities with what is recognized from other criminal groups like e.g. organized biker gangs (KRUS 2016, p.30) Like ISX foreign-fighters that serve time in prisons, some individuals belonging to RWX-militias active in the Russian/Ukrainian conflict, may also enter the prison population at some point, meeting criminals and extremists and gain status from their combat experience.

Wagner-Groups alleged recruitment of prisoners, the status of combat experience may come after time served, as well as being a potential motivating factor for enlisting. There might potentially even be status tied to time served in prison in paramilitary circles. In short there may be status tied to both combat experience and time served in prison, in both RWX and OC-fields. Sandberg (2008) states that wartime experiences can be transformed into street-habitus, and be a way of accumulating symbolic-capital which is power, and provides both self-respect and respect from others (Sandberg 2008, p.166)

Prisons may also be one of the more prominent examples of 'offender convergence settings (Kupatadze and Argomaniz 2019, p.264), and a place where individuals are particularly vulnerable to the the redemption narrative(Basra and Naumann 2016), longing for meaning, salvation and forgiveness. Bjørngo and Carlssons (2005; in Krus 2016) factors may particularly find place in prisons, e.g., rebellion, seeking friends and cohesion, status and identity and a perceived need for protection, and facilitate recruitment into both extreme- and criminal-groups.

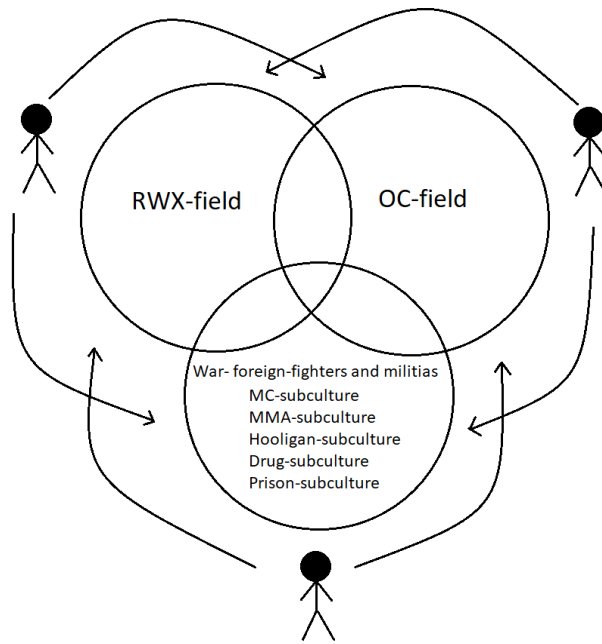
In addition according to KRUS (2016) can time served give status. This coincides with Illan and Sandberg`s (2019) idea that street-capital may be useful in certain marginalized fields, but at the same time be counterproductive as capital in mainstream society. Like both KRUS (2016) and The Ministry of Justice and Public Security (2015) states, both prison and different kinds of exclusion can contribute to individuals seeking out and be socialized into informal norms and values. Cottee (2011; in Illan and Sandberg 2019) suggest that second-generation immigrants who feel marginalized within their western countries of residence may seek alternative fields of life in which to thrive, earlier in the paper I suggested this may also apply to marginalized white men, but in a different manner. The idea that certain

life-experiences, competences and characteristics may overlap as something that increases status in both RWX and OC-milieus, but are viewed as negative by society at large seem ever more likely, and something that may increase the distance between "us and them" where "us" may in large not be exclusively criminals or extremists but sometimes both, as well as other violent subcultures on the margins of society.

6. Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this thesis has been to investigate the social and cultural overlap between RWX and OC, By using previous contributions from the field of CTN and ISX. Different aspects of RWX, had to be explored due to a lack of literature directly addressing RWX and CTN, through this I found that modeling the thesis by mapping overlapping subcultures that may facilitate the convergence between RWX and OC, to be a constructive given what was available to me. The subcultures/fields may seem to manifest themselves through what up Katadze and Argomaniz (2019) refers to as, convergent social networks and offender convergent settings.

It seems that some people exposed to certain push-factors like exclusion, socioeconomic challenges, drug-use, mental-health issues etc. may move away from mainstream-society, while certain pull-factors like status, excitement, cohesion, identity etc. may draw them towards alternative subcultures/fields. Since some general mechanisms and features attract people with certain sociological similarities between them towards these areas of society, the subcultures/fields may share some common features, most notably; *notions of masculinity and warrior ideals, violence, exclusion from mainstream-society, rebellion, "us and them"-mentality, strong group-identity etc.*



Although the illustration shows these areas as separate, this is only done in order to conceptualize the theme by creating a fictional order of divided subcultures/fields. The reality is not this clear-cut and defining each milieu as separate units, is not a direct reflection of reality which is more fluid and dynamic, without clear borders. Rather the illustration is a way of mapping a real-life theme in a comprehensible manner.

Additionally since belonging to these areas of society may socialize an individual to these features, it may work as a type of radicalization process in itself, where one is socialized into violence and alternative norms and values, without necessarily ideology playing a part. This may make the step to move through other areas in society marked by exclusion and violence easier, by having somewhat crossed a social border.

Thus one might move through these subcultures/fields, unintentionally creating both social and cultural overlap between them, and adopting traits from them along the way. As well as cultural-trajectories between these areas may influence the individuals themselves. The individuals moving through them, bringing with them past experiences and competences from each one, might also influence the fields/subcultures as a whole. Thereby creating a common type of habitus in both the individuals and subcultures/fields.

In reality this take place through the social networks one develops by engaging in these subcultures/fields (convergent social networks), e.g., overlapping circle of friends, family relations and acquaintances and physically residing in areas where these subcultures/fields thrive (offender convergent settings) e.g., MMA-gyms, music concerts, demonstrations, pubs, football-stadiums, prisons, tattoo-studios, militia training-camps, neighborhoods and areas (e.g., areas of Serbia and LDNR) etc.

Therefore it might seem like these different areas of society may provide much of the same, to individuals who seek them out as mainstream society might not have worked out. Either with e.g., one's personality type being driven towards these areas, like a need for excitement, or one feels excluded from the mainstream. Thus the subcultures/fields may represent alternative areas to thrive, find belonging and develop an identity. Thus reinforcing distance from mainstream society.

Many of the fields/subcultures seem to represent themselves with a strong group-identity, manifested through e.g., symbols, fashion, tattoos and banners. Like seen in militias, hooligan and MC-subcultures, as well as NRM and SOO, and by the members sharing the same references and engaging in the same activities.

Thereby expressing distinction from mainstream society through a bodily-hexis and cultural-competence developed through one's experiences, in these heterodox-areas. Since the competences one develops and which are of value belong to areas marked by exclusion and alternative norms and values, these competences may be of negative value in society as a whole, e.g., *access and competence with weapons, capacity and experience with violence, "us and them" mentality, evading police, criminal know-how etc. along with fashion choices and mannerisms.*

Militias recruiting RWX-individuals, hooligans, prisoners and gangsters, or OMCs especially recruiting RWX-individuals, prison- and street-gangs, military, hooligan- and fighter-milieus, and both SOO and NRM having members with criminal past, etc. may not only illuminate the competences which are sought after in these heterodox-areas of society, but also that the individuals may find value in these areas and seek them out, as the multiple possibility for gaining capital are present, while the doors to achieve this in mainstream society may be perceived as closed.

Thus a further distance may be reinforced and created from mainstream society by having developed a habitus marked by exclusion, violence and alternative norms and values, along with a capital type, which may be of great value and expendable between these subcultures/fields, but of negative value elsewhere.

Although the alleged use of proxy-actors and collaboration with politicians and oligarchs, may hint at this type of capital sometimes being convertible outside of these heterodox-areas. This seems limited, its mechanisms unclear, and by its very nature it is applied to such groups for the sole reason that figures that present themselves more legitimate/mainstream may claim deniability, by using “illegitimate” actors. Thus such competences are still in the main isolated to excluded, violent heterodox-areas of society. Thereby gains made by converting this capital outside of its respected field, are seemingly murky in nature and work through diffuse and shady channels, and the extensions of gains made by such alleged collaboration unclear.

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Self-selected curriculum

16.01.2023, 12:31

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RE: selvvalgt pensum aksel

Glenn Diesen <Glenn.Diesen@usn.no>

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Denne selvvalgte pensum listen er godkjent!

Med vennlig hilsen

Glenn Diesen

—

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