¡No Pasarán!:

How anti-fascist activists in Oslo (re)configure strategies in relation to history, social relations and far-right movements

Fredrik Fosaas

Master's thesis in Sociology

Faculty of Social Sciences

Department of Sociology and Human Geography

22.06.2020

UiO : Department of Sociology and Human Geography
University of Oslo

¡No Pasarán!:

How anti-fascist activists in Oslo (re)configure strategies in relation to history, social relations and far-right movements

Anti-fascist counterdemonstration at Tøyen torg, 28.09.2019
Photo: Fredrik Fosaas

© Fredrik Fosaas

2020

¡No Pasarán!:
How anti-fascist activists in Oslo (re)configure strategies in relation to history, social relations and far-right movements

Fredrik Fosaas

http://www.duo.uio.no

Summary

This thesis explores the ways in which contemporary anti-fascist activism in Oslo is shaped by history, politics and social relations, with a particular focus on far-right movements. Using the strategic interactionist perspective (SIP) and the *Dynamics of Contention* (DOC) research program as theoretical frameworks for the analysis, this thesis answers four research questions. These research questions are concerned with i) the activists' subjective legitimations of contemporary anti-fascist activism, ii) who are perceived as central influencing actors, iii) how the activists perceive contemporary far-right movements, and iv) how anti-fascist networks (re)configure repertoires and strategies in relation to their contemporary operating environment.

The data material consists of six qualitative, in-depth interviews with five anti-fascist activists and participant observation of two counterdemonstrations. The respondents were recruited using snowball sampling via encrypted messaging apps. Due to anti-fascist activists' fear of reprisals from political opponents and the police, anonymity and acquisition of trust are essential aspects of this thesis. This thesis pursues an understanding of individual activists' subjective interpretations and experiences of their activism.

The theoretical frameworks emphasise the role of *relations* among actors in collective political action. SIP and DOC allow for interpreting processes of collective action as being constituted by the relations between present actors. As the anti-fascist movement fundamentally exists as a physical reaction to its political opponents, the relations between them are seen as essential for the movement's developments.

This thesis finds that the diversification of the far-right in particular has a significant impact on anti-fascist activism. The diversification has made the far-right challenging to define, which consequentially restructures the anti-fascist activists' strategies, constraints and possibilities. The anti-fascist movement has also become diversified as a response, and several distinct anti-fascist networks coexist. Two main trajectories are identified. First, some networks pursue conventional anti-fascist strategies that are grounded in historical and ideological reasonings. These networks are able to maintain the anti-fascist collective identity and forms of protest learned by the movement's history. The second strategic evaluation highlights pragmatic and broader forms of protest, which poses a strategic dilemma between maintaining the anti-fascist heritage versus (re)configuring their strategic evaluations for

contemporary contexts and goals. The cooperation between these networks constitutes the sum of the anti-fascist movement in Oslo and allow the networks to construct an approach that is both composed of its political heritage as well as wider participation.

Other influencing actors and developments are also examined. Specifically, the police force and recent US media representations shape the activists' ability to reach contemporary aims and participate in public discourse. The internet is identified as an important arena of interaction, as contemporary processes of far-right radicalisation necessitates a discussion on the strategic limitations of anti-fascism. This is because anti-fascism traditionally has *physically* confronted *organised* far-right movements, which is inevitably transformed in the context of online manifestations of the far-right.

The findings of this thesis are linked to recent research on anti-fascist activism and radical left-libertarian movements in Sweden and Denmark. This thesis does therefore contribute to a fuller understanding of the anti-fascist movement in Scandinavia as a whole, which is important due to the movement's critical developments towards pragmatism and its augmented attention in international media.

Foreword

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the anti-fascist activists for sharing their knowledge and experiences. I would also like to thank the activists who chose not to participate but helped me understand the scope and prospects for this thesis.

I would also like to thank my supervisors, Kjell Erling Kjellman and Jacob Aasland Ravndal. I deeply appreciate the honest feedback and insights you have given me in this process, which have greatly improved the quality of this work.

Furthermore, I would like to thank my co-students in the SOS4090 seminar and Mette Andersson. I appreciate your constructive comments and moral support throughout.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family for encouraging me during this venture. In particular, I owe Maria and Emmanuelle a great debt of thanks for helping me cope in these hectic times.

Table of contents

1. Introduction 1

1.1. Research questions 3

1.2. Definition of central terms 3

2. Background 5

2.1. Phases of anti-fascism: developments and challenges 6

2.1.1. Origins of anti-fascism 7

2.1.2. 1970s-1980s: Resurgence of anti-fascism in countercultural movements 8

2.1.3. 1990s: Radical and direct confrontation 9

2.1.4. 1997-2016: Towards pragmatism 11

2.2. The far-right and 'fascism' as a concept 13

2.2.1. Neo-fascism: extreme right 14

2.2.2. Post-fascism: radical right 15

2.2.3. Consequences of far-right developments 17

2.3. Conclusion 18

3. Social movement theory: the relational approach and strategic interactionist perspective 19

3.1. Social movement theory 19

3.2. Contentious politics: a relational perspective 24

3.3. Strategic interactionist perspective 28

3.4. Construction of collective identities and framing 31

3.5. Conclusion 32

4. Methods: Qualitative in-depth interviews and participant observation 34

4.1. Research design 34

4.2. Getting access: trust, preliminary research, encrypted messaging and information sheet 36

4.2.1. Preliminary research 37

4.2.2. Encrypted messaging, information sheet and choices of interview structure 38

4.3. Sampling 40

4.4. Qualitative interviews 42

4.4.1. Transcription, coding and analytical procedures of the semi-structured interviews 44

4.5. Participant observation 45

4.5.1 Coding and analytical procedures of participant observation data 47

4.6. Ethical considerations 48

4.7. Limitations — *49*

5. Subjective interpretations of anti-fascism and their implications — 50

5.1. Subjective definitions of anti-fascism: towards an anti-fascist minimum? — *51*

5.2. Anti-fascism as (collective) identity — *54*

5.3. The political importance of anti-fascism — *58*

5.4. Conclusion — *60*

6. Anti-fascist activism in Oslo in a relational perspective: central actors — 61

6.1. Anti-fascist networks and organisations — *62*

6.2. Cooperation and divergence — *63*

6.3. Anti-fascism as local and transnational: international solidarity — *65*

6.4. Media and civil society — *67*

6.5. Police as state security forces — *70*

6.6. Conclusion — *72*

7. The multiplicity of the far-right and its consequences for anti-fascist activism — 73

7.1. To define the enemy: From SIAN to NMR to internet fascism — *74*

7.1.1. “Discursive fascism”: SIAN and the discursive threat — 75

7.1.2. “Transgressive fascism”: NMR and the violent threat — 77

7.1.3. “Internet fascism”: strategic ambivalence — 78

7.2. Strategies and the anti-fascist toolbox — *80*

7.3. Conclusion — *83*

8. Relational dynamics between anti-fascist activists and far-right movements — 83

8.1. Broad organisation versus anonymity and security — *84*

8.2. Pragmatism as a response to far-right diversification — *86*

9. Conclusion — 89

9.1. Recommendations for future research — *91*

10. Bibliography — 92

Appendix I: Information sheet and consent form — 103

Appendix II: Interview guide — 108

1. Introduction

Anti-fascism has existed as a reactive political movement for over 100 years and has faced a wide array of conflicts and political climates. The anti-fascist movement is not homogenous with *one* single or continuous strategy, but is rather decentralised, fluid and flexible. Yet, one overarching aim prevails, which is to use direct action to confront the growth of fascism, Nazism and far-right politics before they are able to gain political power. From the state-oriented fascism of the 1930s and 40s to neo-Nazis in the 1980s and 90s, up until the alt/far-right governments and movements of contemporary society, anti-fascist strategies have been forced to evolve while still maintaining a sense of political cohesiveness and identity. This makes the anti-fascist movement multifaceted and complex, and its strategies, aims and motivations are inevitably developed in relation to opponents and socio-political contexts. Anti-fascism can therefore be argued to be politically and spatiotemporally contingent, as its presence depends on the characteristics of the time and space it is constituted in as well as political climates.

In Norway, the anti-fascist movement in Oslo in the 1990s has been portrayed as a violent and reciprocally escalating conflict between militant anti-fascists and neo-Nazis (Fangen 2001), despite there being diminutive academic research directly focusing on anti-fascists activism in this context (Bjørgo & Gjeldsvik 2015:108). However, past decades have shown that the far-right has become highly diverse, meaning that the anti-fascist movement faces a higher diversity of opponents than before. Far-right individuals are no longer predominantly young, violent and in the streets. Rather, the far-right has become progressively visible online, and physically organised movements are diversified and formalised (Bjørgo & Gjeldsvik 2018). Concurrently, European states has seen an increase in far-right populist movements (Heinisch & Mazzoleni 2016), which implies that the anti-fascist movement encounters new and more complex opponents and operating environments.

These developments and representations make it crucial to understand activists' rationales of action, both on the far-right and among anti-fascist activists, how local contexts matter, and which actors are seen as influential. Limited research exists on the most recent developments of anti-fascist and radical left-libertarian movements in Scandinavia. Yet, some studies find that they face new challenges in relation to the transformations of the far-right (Jämte 2017), that collective identities are becoming increasingly pragmatic rather than countercultural

(Jämte, Lundstedt & Wennerhag 2020), and that soft repression through labelling and framing affects them unevenly (Jämte & Ellefsen *forthcoming*). Yet, these encompassing studies have not included Norwegian environments or perspectives, which makes this thesis an important supplement to our understanding of contemporary anti-fascism. There has also been an augmented focus on the anti-fascist movement, labelled "antifa" in the US in particular, since 2017, which has resulted in discussions of whether or not it can be considered a terrorist group (Busch 2019; LaFree 2018).

In light of this lacuna, the aim of this thesis is to understand the ways in which anti-fascist activists in Oslo perceive their operating environment and the development of contemporary far-right movements, and how strategies and motivations are evaluated and renegotiated in relation to them. This thesis employs a qualitative research design, and the data material consists of 6 in-depth, one-to-one interviews with 5 anti-fascist activists as well as participant observation of two separate and distinctive counterdemonstrations. The interviewed activists were mainly affiliated with the anti-fascist network Oslo mot Rasisme (OmR) and Antifascistisk Aksjon (AfA). [1]

The theoretical and analytical framework of this study is grounded in *dynamics of contention* (DOC) and the *strategic interactionist perspective* (SIP). These approaches emphasise the relational nature of contentious politics and seeks to understand the ways in which various actors dynamically develop in relation to one another. Whereas DOC seeks to identify common mechanisms/social processes that alters contentious politics across time and space, the SIP framework accentuates the importance of emotions and micro-level rationalisations of protest.

My findings show that the diversification of the far-right does affect and restructure the anti-fascist movement in Oslo. The characteristics of their opponents have created a need for a broadened anti-fascist movement, which has produced separate anti-fascist networks with different aims, strategies, ideologies and identity traits. Most importantly, the networks are divided between conventional anti-fascist organisational structures and increasingly pragmatic strategies and formations. The latter pose a strategic dilemma for the activists. The pragmatic anti-fascist orientation entails a re-evaluation of fundamental aspects of the anti-fascist

[1] The anti-fascist networks are presented by using the data material in section 6.1.

identity and strategy. The anti-fascist identity as an alternative and countercultural movement is conflicted when aiming for broader engagement among civil society and less hard-line forms of protest. Yet, conventional anti-fascist networks are able to maintain their ideological and cultural heritage to a higher degree.

1.1. Research questions

The aim of this study is to understand how anti-fascist activists analyse their contemporary political climate and their role in confronting new forms of far-right movements. Due to the loose organisational structures of anti-fascist networks, the thesis highlights the subjective interpretations of individual activists, and not networks as ensembles. This leads to a more precise understanding of the activists' life worlds, as no activist can or will claim to be the spokesperson of an anti-fascist network. [2]

Therefore, the four overarching research questions of this thesis are the following:

- *In what ways do anti-fascist activists subjectively legitimise anti-fascism as a political movement in contemporary society?*
- *Who are perceived as central actors by anti-fascist activists, and how do they influence their activism?*
- *How does antifascist activists characterise contemporary far-right movements as opponents, and what are seen as appropriate political tools for reactive action?*
- *How does anti-fascist networks (re)configure repertoires, strategies, and aims in relation to their contemporary operating environment?*

These research questions are examined in chapter 5, 6, 7 and 8, respectively. However, the last research question permeates the analysis throughout.

1.2. Definition of central terms

As anti-fascism can be difficult to sufficiently define and clearly understand, there are some key terms that are frequently used in the following chapters that need to be elucidated.

[2] No anti-fascist activists can claim to be a spokesperson for an anti-fascist network due to their loose and anti-hierarchical organisational structures. This is explained in more detail in section 4.3.

First, there is a need to distinguish between the anti-fascist *movement*, *networks* and *activists.* These three categories correspond to a macro- meso- and micro levels, as illustrated in *Table 1*. The anti-fascist *movement* refers to a broader and ideal typical conceptualisation of anti-fascism. Anti-fascism is a sub-category of anti-racism that has a particular focus on directly opposing far-right movements (Jämte 2017). The anti-fascist movement can be described as the totality of anti-fascist resistance and is therefore independent of spatiotemporal contexts. This categorisation is general and does not account for the (dis)similarities among the different networks. Anti-fascist *networks*, therefore, are different groups that exist within the rationale of the broader anti-fascist movement. Anti-fascist networks can differ in several ways, such as organisational structures, (sub)cultural traits, ideology and strategy. Anti-fascist *activists* are individuals who constitute the networks and engage in anti-fascist political action with some form of political rationalisation of their activism. [3]

Level	**Term**	**Characteristics**
Macro ↓	Anti-fascist movement	Encompasses all networks that apply the self-designation “anti-fascist”. Spatiotemporally independent. Ideal typical description.
Meso ↕	Anti-fascist network	A formation of anti-fascist activists with some degree of organisation. An anti-fascist network can e.g. be a local Anti-fascist Action group. Spatiotemporally contingent. Concrete activism.
↑ Micro	Anti-fascist activist	An individual who labels him/herself as an anti-fascist and are actively engaged in one or several anti-fascist network(s).

Table 1.: Clarification of the terms anti-fascist movement, network and activist.

[3] A supplementary term that is not frequently used in this thesis but should be kept in mind is *radical* anti-fascism. Jämte’s (2017) research on developments of anti-fascism in Scandinavia emphasise the term. *Radical* anti-fascism, he argues, implies a systemic and materialist approach that sees fascism as a consequence of capitalism. Therefore, radical anti-fascists do not limit themselves to existing structures or law and see their opposition to the far-right as a civil concern. Another supplementary term that is used in the literature is *militant* anti-fascism, which according to Copsey (2018:245) is “an adjective, to define or describe a specific type of anti-fascism [...] *physical force* anti-fascism”. These descriptions/labels can certainly be applied to several respondents. Yet, as this thesis stresses the subjective reflections of individual activists, I do not find it beneficial to acquire labels on the activists in which they do not present themselves.

Second, the term *far-right* is used here in a broad sense. As shown in chapter 7, the anti-fascist activists do not have a clear definition of who fascists are, but rather focus on opposing far-right movements with perceived *fascist tendencies*. Hence, I find it more beneficial to use the established term *far-right* rather than the ambiguous and unclear term *fascist*. Fascism as a political concept is discussed in greater detail in chapter 2.2. The far-right can be seen as a broad landscape on the right of traditional conservative parties, which is characterised by authoritarianism and nativism (Bjørgo & Ravndal 2019). The far-right can be further categorised into the *radical* and *extreme* right, which characterises their relationships to democracy, violence and nationalism. The radical right seeks to uphold democracy, but it is liberal elites that must be replaced. The radical right entails cultural nationalism, which seeks to protect Western culture from Muslim immigration and Islamization. The extreme right, however, seeks to replace democracy, legitimise violent methods and involves racial nationalism, which sees the white race as superior. This broad characterisation is beneficial in the context of this research as it allows the anti-fascist activists to identify and categorise their opponents.

2. Background

It is important to consider the history of anti-fascist movements and their opponents in order to understand the context for contemporary anti-fascist activists. Anti-fascism was in many ways traditionally situated in the institutionalised Left and originated in 1930s Germany as a response to fascist movements (Copsey 2018). However, anti-fascism as a political movement became increasingly countercultural and noninstitutional in its appearance when it reappeared in the 1970s and 80s (Copsey 2016). These new forms of anti-fascism were inspired by the former anti-fascism through the use of symbols and tactics, while at the same time reconfiguring its characteristics through subcultural traits and present issues. Therefore, the development of anti-fascism has shown to be highly adaptable but yet loyal to, and inspired by, its roots.

Copsey (2000:2) argues that anti-fascism is a historically important focus of study due to its scale of political participation. The cumulative participation from the 1920s to the present day extends to hundreds of thousands of people, which makes anti-fascism worth considering in its own right. Seidman (2016) argues that anti-fascism was, in its origins, a highly diverse and inclusive movement that traversed ideological, racial and religious differences in order to

develop a collective front against fascism. He therefore suggests that anti-fascism, despite being highly heterogenous, can be argued to be one of the most powerful ideologies in the twentieth century due to its success in synthesising extensive oppositions against the threat of Fascism. In this sense, the anti-fascist movement can be seen to be founded in longitudinal political experience and knowledge of practice, and it is therefore crucial to recognise its history in order to understand contemporary activism.

This chapter consists of two main parts. Part one explores the historical background of the anti-fascist movement by identifying phases of anti-fascist movements, which challenges they have faced in different periods, and how they have been able to adapt to various situations. I will show that anti-fascism is a multifaceted and dynamic form of political action with a dual heritage. The dual heritage is grounded in both the resistance against institutionalised Fascism from the 1920s onwards as well as its countercultural revival in the 1980s that opposed neo-Nazi movements in the streets. I also lay forward some of the main trajectories of anti-fascist reasonings and logics. As social and political movements are dependent on their local contexts, this part will also examine aspects of the anti-fascist movement in Norway.

Part two elaborates further on the use of the term 'fascism'. I find that the term is undeniably ambiguous, and therefore requires some examination. On the one hand one could argue that fascism is a political ideology, while on the other it is more suitable as an ideal typical description of far-right movement characteristics. Next, I present some contemporary developments of the far-right, specifically 'extreme right' and 'radical right'. I argue that these two broad categories show some of the main trajectories in the development of far-right movements. I also draw lines of these two concepts to 'neo-fascism' and 'post-fascism', respectively, which I argue can show some of the historical (dis)similarities to fascist ideology and rationale. These diverge in important ways and present different challenges for anti-fascist activism.

2.1. Phases of anti-fascism: developments and challenges

The following sections present an outline of the background of anti-fascism, its main ideological and historical trajectories, and provide an account of the Norwegian context. As there is a limited amount of literature on Scandinavian anti-fascism in the period after the turn of the millennia, I will support this historical assessment with recent literature on radical

libertarian-left movements (RLLM) in Sweden. The development of anti-fascism and related radical movements is not linear, but a periodisation of their main developments allows for highlighting broad development patterns (Jämte, Lundsted and Wennerhag 2020).

2.1.1. Origins of anti-fascism

The birth of the anti-fascist movement was contrived by the intense social and political situation of the 1920s onwards. Anti-fascism has been argued to have existed as long as fascism has existed (Copsey 2018:243), and Bray (2017) draw historical lines as far back as to the Dreyfus affair in France in 1898. [4] From the 1920s onwards, nation-states, international relations and people on the micro-level were defined and shaped by the threats of authoritarianism and holistic, conflicting ideologies such as communism and capitalism (Hobsbawm 1994). This binary world view did, according to Hobsbawm (1994:144), result in a situation where international politics in a lesser degree was viewed as conflict between nation states but rather as an international and ideological civil war. Rabinbach (1996) argues that the 1930s anti-fascist resistance appealed to left-wing and communist writers, artists and intellectuals. The threat of fascism was not only seen as a political threat but also a cultural one. In this sense, anti-fascism represented one side in a binary political and social epoch.

Rabinbach states that "anti-fascism was the binary of binaries, the geo-political bifurcation between spirit and power [*Geist* and *Macht*], humanism and terror, reason and unreason, past and future, that framed the first half of this century as much as communism and anticommunism can be said to have framed the second" (1996:5). Anti-fascism transcended therefore ideological, racial and religious borders in order to making the fight against fascism a top priority with the consequence of concrete sacrifice (Seidman 2016:43), and the original "Antifascistische Aktion" (i.e. *Antifa*), an organisation affiliated with the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) in the 1930s, aimed "to provide a framework in which people from all walks of life could be brought together in loose coalition to fight economic, social, and legal repression, and above all a basis on which Social Democrats and Communists could join in self-defence against the Nazis" (Bray 2017:25). Interestingly, Dørum (2019) argues that the escalation of violence between anti-fascists and fascists in Norway in 1933 and 1934 made traditional parties (some of whom previously supported fascism) condemn them both due to

[4] The Dreyfus affair triggered a conflict centred around the incorrect imprisonment of a French Jewish General. This event developed a conflict between proto-fascist *anti-Dreyfusards* and left-wing and anticlerical *Dreyfusards.*

their revolutionary and anarchist attributes. In this sense, the civil conflict between anti-fascists and fascists helped limiting the growth fascist ideology in institutionalised politics. However, García, Yusta, Tabet and Clímaco (2016) argue that the association of anti-fascism and communism has been a hindrance to understanding anti-fascism as a historical phenomenon, especially due to its adaption into the Soviet identity as "the image of the Red Army soldier who 'liberated Europe from the scourge of fascism'" (Faraldo 2016:208).

2.1.2. 1970s-1980s: Resurgence of anti-fascism in countercultural movements

The 1960s and 1970s saw the development of new social movements and the "New Left". The New Left movements have been argued to be a political, social and cultural response to concerns of the binaries of the Cold War (Sotirakopoulos 2016:18). The moral failings of Soviet Union communism on the one hand and the bureaucracy and capitalism of the West on the other developed therefore a longing for a 'third way' between Stalinism and capitalism (Andrews 1999:67). While some New Left movements were inspired by 'traditional' and holistic ideologies (Jämte *et al*. 2020), they were by and large civil movements concerned with direct democracy, equality, oppression and environmentalism (Andrews 1999; Sotirakopolos 2016:19).

The resurgence of anti-fascism, however, did not evolve within these trajectories. Rather, anti-fascist rationales for action resurged in the countercultural and alternative movements of the 1980s (Jämte *et al*. 2020), which emphasised anarchist and radical left-libertarian ideals of autonomy, decentralisation and local self-governance. These alternative social movements criticised the New Left social movements of the 1960s for accommodating to the establishment. Rather than orienting themselves to 'the proletariat' or other ideological categories, the new alternative movements developed a 'politics of the first person', which sought to involve people directly in decisions that affect their lives (Katsiaficas 2006:15-16). They criticised totalitarianism on both the Left and the Right and rejected the existing models of society. These movements constituted alternative directions to what social movements ought to be, as they were inherently reluctant to participate in mainstream politics. This led observers to frame them as 'lunatic fringe' movements that would never gain real power (ibid.:16). Instead of seeking power through established means, autonome movements aimed at dissolving the established, whether it was "pseudo democratic capitalism" or soviet style authoritarian socialism (ibid. 18).

Autonome movements offered countercultural and alternative ways of living than already existing political systems could offer. They emphasised anti-racism, environmentalism and feminism, and regarded anarchist principles of localised and decentralised decision-making as fruitful systems of governance (Davis 2010; Jämte *et al.* 2020). Katsiaficas (2006:16) illustrates autonomous movements:

> *"In contrast to the centralized decisions and hierarchical authority structures of modern institutions, autonomous social movements involve people directly in decisions affecting their everyday lives. They seek to expand democracy and to help individuals break free of political structures and behaviour patterns imposed from the outside. Rather than pursue careers and create patriarchal families, participants in autonomous movements live in groups to negate the isolation of individuals imposed by consumerism. They seek to decolonize everyday life".*

Interestingly, the countercultural forms of anti-fascism made use of the symbols and strategies of the inter-war period, which Bray (2017) argues gives anti-fascism a sense of chronological stability despite its countercultural and alternative qualities. By adopting symbols of the 1930s, like the two flags of the Antifascistische Aktion, the three arrows of the Iron Front [5], and slogans, such as "¡No Pasaran!" (They shall not pass) and "Alerta Antifascista" from the Spanish Civil War, anti-fascist activists are able to place themselves within a broader historical continuity.

2.1.3. 1990s: Radical and direct confrontation

As the 1970s and 1980s produced the foundations for autonome social movements, the 1990s saw the developments of more militant and directly confrontational networks, which Jämte *et al*. (2020) argue partly grew out the politicised punk scene. Moore and Roberts (2009) argue that the punk scene's subcultural traits were effective for political mobilisation. Through their do-it-yourself ethic, which means that punks took cultural production into their own hands, they argue that "the punk scene has also been about the creation of a material infrastructure that helped to create and sustain a series of protest actions" (Moore & Roberts 2009:288). The alternative autonome movements became increasingly organised during the 1990s, and

[5] The Iron Front was a paramilitary organisation with the aim of coordinating social democratic actors to defend the Weimar Republic against the Right, in particular the *Nationalsozialistische Deustche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP) (Harsch, 2009)

connected radical feminists, anti-fascists, social ecologists, squatters, animal rights activists and other radial left-libertarian activists (Jämte *et al.* 2020:10).

These movements and networks organised themselves as *affinity groups*, which emphasise relations in which adherents should have a strong sense of confidence in each other and see decisions as being collective. Affinity groups, at least if they are functioning properly, demonstrate that people are capable of organising deliberately and collectively in complex situations and "transforming a crowd into a rational political actor endowed with a capacity for tactical thought" (Dupuis-Déri 2010:48, 53). These organisations and networks became increasingly transgressive and militant in their political praxis, but it is still important to acknowledge that the political repertoires of these groups contain more than transgressive forms of protests (Jämte & Ellefsen, forthcoming). Jämte *et al.* (2020:10) suggests that radical left-libertarian movements (RLLM), which encompasses anarchists and autonomists, were bound together by primarily two theoretical concepts. First, the idea of "triple oppression" deemed capitalism, racism and sexism as interconnected axes of structural oppression. In this sense, capitalism is seen to uphold the structural inequalities and power-relations that withhold structural oppression. Second, "reactionary mobilisation" suggests that upsurges in radical right activism is connected to a general "turn to the right" in society, where political parties and other actors defend structural inequalities.

In the Norwegian context, the subcultural hub and political gathering place *Blitz* played an important role of developing Norwegian anti-fascism. Holm and Kvaran (1989:39) suggest that unemployment, difficulties in university enrolment and lacking organised activities for youth played a part in their radicalisation. Hence, Blitz and the punk movement in Oslo was inspired by the international punk movement, with a particular focus on England (ibid. 132). They adapted therefore their struggles and adjusted them to Norwegian needs. This combination of countercultural politics and the punk scene made Blitz a central symbol for alternative political and social movements from the early 1980s and has become directly associated with the anti-fascist movement in Oslo (Wilkins 2018:34).

The first organised Anti-fascist Action network in Norway was founded in Oslo in 1994 (Benneche 2017:38). Bray (2017:124) states that autonomous punks at Blitz formed the affinity group Anti-Fascist Action in order to defend themselves from Nazi skinhead groups such as the Boot Boys, Viking and Anti-Antifa. These groups carried out several bombings

and shootings during this era, resulting in several violent clashes between them and militant anti-fascists (Wilkins 2018:46). As an example, the violent conflict between neo-Nazis and anti-fascists at the *nazihouse* at Sandaker in Oslo in 1995 led to the arrest of several neo-Nazis for weapon possession (Bray 2017:125). [6] Hence, the anti-fascist networks in Oslo evolved out of autonome and anarchist movements that resisted the power-structures of both capitalism and soviet-style socialism, as well as generating resistance against violent neo-Nazi groups.

2.1.4. 1997-2016: Towards pragmatism

As neo-Nazi movements in Norway decreased after the killing of Benjamin Hermansen in 2001 (Ravndal 2018), the anti-fascist movement also became less prevalent on the street level. As Bray (2017:125) notes, the killing of Hermansen produced a huge mobilisation and public backlash which eliminated overt fascism in Norway. As there are few subsequent historical accounts on the Norwegian anti-fascist movement, one can possibly draw similarities to Swedish developments. By analysing the protest issues and collective identity of Swedish radical left-libertarian movements (RLLM) from 1997-2016, Jämte *et al.* (2020:15-16) state that RLLMs changed their perspectives and aims during this period. The concept of triple oppression was expanded, and direct action was continuously used as a political tool. The extension of structural oppression-analyses led not only to a wider critique of society, but also to critiques of the movements themselves which furthermore strengthened notions of individualised ‘activist lifestyles’ (ibid.:17). As the 1990s was countercultural and grounded in direct action, the new developments saw a throwback to more traditional Marxist-based frames and shifted the focus toward everyday life resistance in the period of 2002-2009 (ibid.:19).

Furthermore, RLLM in Sweden became increasingly open and pragmatic in the period between 2010-2016. Jämte *et al.* (2020:22) writes that “instead of being an “invisible” force carrying out subversive acts of resistance, the RLLM was now framed as a key actor for making visible, connecting, and strengthening struggles against capitalism”. This resulted in cross-movement coalitions aimed at mobilising local populations. The protest frames were

---

[6] I have not been able to find any reliable source on the exact number of arrestations. Bray (2017:125) states 78, while Ringerike Antirasistisk Ungdom (RAU) (2001:50) state ‘approximately 80’. RAU also states that 8 Nazis were arrested in confrontation with anti-fascists. See: RAU (Online) Hønefoss – rasisme: 1-0. Retreieved from: http://www.rau.no/bakgrunn.html. [Accessed 19.03.2020].

still transgressive, but decreasingly violent. Interestingly, even though anti-fascists have been framed as violent and transgressive actors, Jämte *et al.* (2020) finds that the protest tactics of RLLM actors in Sweden in the period of 1997-2016 was predominantly non-violent. They found that there were 2405 protests that used accepted tactics (i.e. spread of information, street performances, rallies, marches etc.), while there were 1429 transgressive protests (i.e. civil disobedience, counterdemonstrations, blockades, occupation/squatting, attack on persons/property). 248 accounts included attacks on individuals or groups, whereas demonstrations and spread of information had 953 and 582 accounts, respectively. This shows that the toolbox of RLLM and the anti-fascist movement is diverse and consists of many more protest tactics than violent clashes, even though they too occur.

As a celebratory text to their 25-year anniversary, Anti-fascist Action (2019) in Oslo published a sequence of Facebook posts in which they presented their main struggles, trajectories and antagonists from their own perspective from the early 1990s until 2019. These posts suggest that the Norwegian trajectory has been similar to the Swedish development of pragmatism, broader mobilisation tactics and increased openness (Jämte 2017). The authors state that their resistance to the Nordic Resistance Movement (NMR) [7] in 2017 was concerned with mobilising in a non-violent manner. They aimed at transparency, broader mobilisation and cooperation with political parties, trade unions, autonome organisations, LBGT+ movements and minority group organisations in order to manifest non-violent forms of protests against their opponents. The authors of the Facebook posts proclaim that far-right ideologies and rationale become increasingly accepted, and that the far-right have become increasingly organised. They argue therefore that the threat differs from the situation in the 1980s and 1990s. The threat of the far-right is not only posed by street-level neo-Nazis, but also by an increasing acceptance of their ideologies by politicians and other central actors. Hence, they argue that broader initiatives and wider cooperation must be considered, which arguably fits with the analysis provided by Jämte *et al.* (2020). Whereas militant activism was seen as effective against the neo-Nazi gangs of the 1980s and 1990s, contemporary far-right movements require broader and non-violent countermobilisation.

[7] Translation: *The Nordic Resistance Movement.* The abbreviation NMR refers to the Swedish name for the movement, *Den Nordiske Motståndsrörelsen.* The respondents used the abbreviation NMR, so it is used in this thesis.

2.2. The far-right and 'fascism' as a concept

It is unreasonable to discuss the development of anti-fascist resistance without exploring the characteristics of its prime antagonist. Fascism is in many ways an ideologically and politically ambiguous concept. It is important to note that there is no consensus or comprehensive definition of what fascism really is (Allardyce 1979; Griffin 1995). Even though some scholars have suggested that the term should be restricted to Mussolini's movement in Italy or the so-called 'era of fascism' of 1919-45 (Allardyce 1979), other observers propose a definition that is not confined to certain nations or the 'era of fascism', but rather as a generic political concept. This ambiguity has resulted in a situation where fascism is commonly used as a descriptive term without adequate definitions. As any other *ism*, one can argue that fascism is an ideal type (Griffin 1991, 1995). Ideal types aim at formulating approximations of common phenomena in order to gain interpretive grasps of the inherent meaning, even though it might not be explicitly aligned with the complexity of social life (Weber 1968).

Broad definitions of what fascism entails can still be heuristically useful as conceptual tools of analysis (Griffin 1991, 1995). One could suggest a view of fascism as an evolving and varied concept that is situated in various spatiotemporal contexts. It can therefore be advantageous to distinguish '*fascism*' with '*Fascism*' (Griffin 1991; Passmore 2017). 'Fascism' is used to designate the Italian fascist movement and regime, while 'fascism' refers to the generic concept. Payne (1980:7) delivers a typological description of fascism for analytical purposes. He separates the descriptions into three categories: i) fascist negations, ii) ideology and goals and iii) style and organisation. The fascist negations are primarily descriptions of what fascism is against. Payne suggests that the three main fascist negations are 'antiliberalism', 'anticommunism', and 'anticonservatism'. The ideology and goals category deliver a set of fundamental aspects of fascism, arguing that it first and foremost is a nationalistic and corporatist ideology with aims of an authoritarian state. The last category, style and organization, emphasises the ways in which the aesthetic structure of symbols and political choreography shape mass mobilization and legitimations of violence. These categories are not meant to deliver a complete assessment of what fascism as an ideology entails, but rather to propose a wide-spectrum description that can identify a variety of differing allegedly fascist movements.

I find it beneficial to treat fascism as a generic concept in this thesis as it allows for placing contemporary movements in a broader spectrum of fascist tendencies. Far-right movements can have fascist qualities, but the distinction between 'fascist' and 'non-fascist' is not clear cut and requires close examination. Therefore, I will now present three contemporary forms of far-right movements that might debatably pose new challenges for anti-fascist activists, namely neo-fascism, post-fascism and internet-based extremism. I will also follow the conceptual classifications put forward by Bjørgo and Ravndal (2019), which clarify distinctions between often interchanged prefixes of the far-right, namely *radical* right and *extreme* right. It is important to note, however, that these categories are by and large analytical. In reality, political actors, movements and organisations overlap and mix in complex ways (Gattinara & Pirro 2019). The forthcoming portrayal of the identified forms of contemporary fascism does not intend to fully encompass their complexities, but rather to give an overview of the movements as potential actors in the dynamic and contentious relationships between anti-fascists and far-right movements.

2.2.1. Neo-fascism: extreme right

According to Bull (2010:1), neo-fascism can be demarcated as "those political and ideological groups and parties which operate after 1945, especially in Europe, and were directly inspired by the experience of the inter-war fascist and Nazi regimes in Germany, Italy, and other European countries". In this sense, neo-fascism applies to all post WWII movements that in some form are inspired by historical 'Fascism'. Bjørgo and Ravndal (2019) deliver characterisations of the term 'extreme right', which arguably resembles portrayals of neo-fascist movements. The extreme right calls for replacing democracy and find violence against enemies of the people legitimate. They are seen as *racial nationalists*, and therefore embrace ideas of racial purity and totalitarian principles. Hence, they are directly inspired by National Socialism and other forms of white supremacy. The key distinction of neo-fascism, or extreme right, is that they are capable and willing to use violence and sees it as a legitimate and necessary course of action.

Ravndal (2018) shows that there were increasing amounts of racist violence in all the Nordic countries in the late 1980s and 1990s. This increase was said to be generated by immigration, skinhead subcultures, sharpened anti-immigrant rhetoric in the public sphere and media coverages. Despites its smaller size, the Norwegian militant environments became progressively organised from 1993 onwards. Militant activists from these groups were

involved in several violent attacks on immigrants and political opponents during the 1990s and 2000s. Fangen & Eiternes (2002:91) write that violence was a central part of the self-image of neo-Nazis in Norway as they regarded themselves as 'warriors' engaged in a 'race war'. In this sense, violence was not seen as merely a political tool, but as a part of the movement sui generis.

As previously mentioned, however, the racially motivated killing of Benjamin Hermansen in 2001 increased the public opposition to such movements and henceforth reduced their activity. It is important to note, however, that this event cannot be seen as an isolated factor for the decaying of the Norwegian far-right movements, as far-right terrorism and violence declined generally in Western Europe after the 1990s (Ravndal 2016). Nonetheless, the terrorist attack on Utøya in 2011 and against the al-Noor mosque in Oslo in 2019 show that the threat is not depleted. The Norwegian Police Security Service (PST 2019) updated their evaluation of the threat from the extreme right in 2019 and found that it is growing. The Norwegian division of The Nordic Resistance Movement (NMR) maintains its activity and cites National Socialism as its worldview and overarching life-philosophy rooted in biological reasoning (Riis-Knudsen 2016). It is argued that the street-activism of neo-fascist groups in the 1990s onwards has increasingly moved over to internet platforms and are to a larger extent able to mobilise adults rather than youth (Bjørgo & Gjelsvik 2018). Yet, street activity endures throughout Scandinavia, which was for example clearly shown in 2017 when NMR marched illegally through the streets of Kristiansand (Ullvang & Weiby 2017), when a member of NMR assaulted a bypassing civilian during a demonstration in Finland, resulting in death (Krekling, Strand & Nordstrøm 2017), and when 35 people were arrested in Gothenburg during clashes between NMR and counter protestors, including NMR's leader (Veberg & Bjørnestad 2017).

2.2.2. Post-fascism: radical right

Whereas neo-fascism is associated with skinhead-culture and white supremacy movements, post-fascism indicates a discursive shift for the far-right. Some might see them as two sides of the same coin, but with different of strategies and appearances, while others might see them as two distinct trajectories. Rather than being extra-parliamentary and primarily on the fringes of society, radical right parties are entering formal politics on a global scale. These parties highlight nationalism, populism and xenophobic attitudes, and the world has not experienced a similar growth in the radical right since the 1930s (Traverso 2019). Adorno (2005:90)

warned that neo-fascist groups on the fringes of society do not pose as much of a threat as National Socialism *within* democracy. In this sense, Adorno argues, it is the occupation of power-roles within democracy and its ability to organise that is the key threat of fascist movements, which Schain (2006) shows the radical right in Europe has increasingly been able to do. He argues that even though the radical right in Europe previously has been by and large isolated from policy making, there has been an emergence of the radical right and their impact on policy during the last 20 years. This does not only have an effect on e.g. immigration policy, but also an interactive effect on democracy itself as these movements realign structural and normative stability among established political parties. Bjørgo and Ravndal (2019) suggest that the term 'radical right' should be used for actors within the far-right universe who believe that democracy should be maintained, but that it is the liberal, governing elites that must be replaced.

Traverso (2019) argues that a central issue with post-fascist movements is that it they tend to distance themselves from earlier definitions of fascism, unlike neo-fascist movements who seek to regenerate its old forms. In this sense, post-fascism offers a semantic shift away from more traditional forms of fascism. One could argue that post-fascist far-right movements present themselves as challengers of the neo-liberal and globalist hegemony. Rasmussen (2018:683) argues that "post-fascism could thus be described as fascist without fascism, without a political movement and paramilitary storm troopers marching the streets", but still remain culturally embedded by "its ability to translate social justice into reactionary identity politics in which structural economic dynamics are reduced to a politics of fear and easily identifiable enemies". New migration patterns, EU's intergovernmentalism and neo-liberal economic policy have given post-fascist far-right movements and political parties the possibility to present themselves as 'utopian' protectors of European culture, civilisation, national identity and national sovereignty (el-Ojeili 2019). Expressions like 'protectors of identity' inevitably inhabits notions of xenophobia, nationalism (with a political emphasis on exclusion) and conservative values. By gaining wider support in many countries, post-fascists are able to pressure mainstream parties and shuffle the norms of political relationships (Joon Han 2015). Post-fascist movements are frequently framed as 'populist', which entails that they present themselves as existing alongside the people and being against some form of corrupt, untrustworthy and governing elite (Mudde 2004; Miller Idriss 2019).

2.2.3. Consequences of far-right developments

As this project seeks to understand how anti-fascist activists conceive and react to developments of the far-right, it is important to outline some broad trajectories that might pose particular challenges to contemporary anti-fascists. The characteristics of the far-right are evolving from previously being primarily oriented around subcultural traits and street level activism to now engaging in formal politics and online environments.

The first apparent challenge that needs to be addressed is the ways in which far-right movements seek to ground their politics in liberal roots. Instead of directly promoting totalitarianism, they emphasise their view of Muslims and immigrants as incompatible with Western values, cultures and societies. Berntzen (2019) argues that anti-Islamist and far-right movements, who frame Islam as a homogenous and totalitarian ideology rather than heterogenous religion, balance between liberal values on one hand and embrace traditional and authoritarian values on the other. This can arguably be a restructuring force for anti-fascist activism, as it 'hides' and/or 'blurs' the characteristics of far-right movements and presumably make their claims more digestible and legitimate, which in turn might rearrange the political discourses in society (Fekete 2014).

Second, the entry of far-right movements into the formal political system might also pose a significant challenge for anti-fascist activists. The ways in which radical far-right parties present themselves as democratic may influence anti-fascists' possibilities for direct confrontation. In turn, this might lead to a restructuring of classic anti-fascists tools and strategies. According to Copsey (2011:128-9), as the British National Party (BNP) went from a 'march and grow' strategy to a new 'hearts and minds' approach and withdrew from confrontational strategies in 1994, they simultaneously reduced the militant anti-fascists' opportunity for direct action.

The third challenge for the anti-fascist movement is the role of the internet when it comes to far-right activism and radicalisation. As the far-right decreasingly comprises skinhead gangs, but rather adults who engage in online-discussions and formal politics (although this is definitely not clear cut), the possibilities for physical confrontation decrease. Bjørgo and Ravndal (2019) argue that the main challenge from the extreme right in Western Europe comes from lone actors and small, autonomous cells that self-radicalise on online forums. Henceforth, the physical threat of the far-right becomes increasingly individualised and

disorganised. Even though they are not highly coordinated and the amount of 'likes' on a facebook-page does not equal physical organisation (Hanshuus & Jupskås 2017), online forums give leeway for anonymity, connectivity and spread of information that does not require physical embeddedness. Instead, internet infrastructure can develop new forms of 'swarm' collectivity that constantly restructures itself according to the continuous stream of uploaded data (Wiedemann 2014). Yet, an overemphasised focus on individualised characteristics and 'lone wolf' representations can arguably undermine the potentially systematic and social aspects of online radicalisation (Fekete 2012).

2.3. Conclusion

This chapter presented the main trajectories in anti-fascist history and reasoning, presented the ambiguity of discussing 'fascism' as a concept, developments of new far-right movements and consequences these might have for anti-fascist activists. The anti-fascist movement has a rich history and a dual heritage. Anti-fascism originated as a broad resistance against the institutionalised Fascism and Nazism of Italy and Germany. However, the anti-fascist movement gained its resurgence in the autonome and countercultural movements of the 1970s and 1980s. Consequentially, anti-fascism was synonymous with counterculture and radicalism. Recent research on the Scandinavian context suggests that radical left libertarian movements and anti-fascist networks develop increasingly towards pragmatism, which implies an effort to build broad alliances.

The term 'fascism' is argued to be an ambiguous term, and it is therefore useful to treat it as an ideal typical description rather than a holistic ideology. Nevertheless, one can draw some parallels to contemporary far-right movements. It is argued here that it is useful to distinguish between radical and extreme far-right movements. This categorical distinction reveals crucial differences in attitudes towards democracy, ethnicity and violence, which implies that the anti-fascist movement must reconfigure strategies and aims when confronting them. Additionally, the far-right has become increasingly diverse in the sense that some attempt to frame themselves as protectors or liberal values, which has indicated a sense of formalisation and political legitimation. The far-right turn towards the internet and new and individualised forms of far-right radicalisation also challenge some fundamental aspects of the anti-fascist strategy, namely its aim to confront *physical* and *organised* far-right movements.

3. Social movement theory: the relational approach and strategic interactionist perspective

This chapter discusses literature and theory that focus on social movements, collective action and collective identity. The theoretical discussions give deeper understanding of analytical tools and theoretical frameworks used in this thesis to explore the anti-fascist movements' developments in relation to other actors. First, this chapter explores discussions of what social movements really are and attempts to reach a satisfactory definition. Social movement studies include a wide array of movements who operate in drastically different ways. It is important to acknowledge that the use of the term can be vague and imprecise, and that it is therefore imperative to find suitable definitions for the movements in question. In so doing, this section discusses ways to characterise different social movements and the corresponding analytical consequences and implications.

Second, this chapter discusses McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly's (2001) relational sociology and the corresponding *Dynamics of Contention* (DOC) research program. This analytical approach offers a useful framework for examining social movements not only as isolated entities, but as dynamic performers who continually restructure themselves in relation to other actors through contentious politics. Third, this chapter explores the *strategic interactionist perspective* (SIP). This perspective is a critique of the structuralist tendencies of the early relational approach. SIP stresses the importance of developing a theory about strategy from the ground up. Hence, it aims for developing a dynamic and processual analytical model that rejects structuralist explanations of dynamic and strategic collective action and emphasises micro-level motivations and strategies. Fourth, this chapter investigates the role of collective identity making and framing in context of radical social movements. Following the relational approach, it argues that collective identities are formed in relation to other players in various arenas.

3.1. Social movement theory

Social movements have become a central part of Western democracies (della Porta & Diani 2006). The protest movements of the late 1960s, which promoted fundamental societal changes and social revolutions, shaped the study of social movements. Social movements are now intrinsically linked to democracy and are seen as a way for civic society to channel their political action without alignment to formal politics. Therefore, it has been suggested as

appropriate to speak of Western democracies as ‘movement societies’ (Rucht & Neidhart 2002). Barber (2003: xiii) argues that social movements and political activism are crucial aspects of democracies, as negligence of civic political action yields political alienation. The responsibility of political change is not trivialised to elected representatives but is intrinsically linked to civic society itself. Social and political movements have a wide array of aims, strategies, possibilities, constraints and motivations, and it is therefore crucial to analyse them in their spatiotemporal and political contexts (della Porta & Diani 2006; Kriesi, Koopmans, Dyvendak & Giugni 1995). The turn of the millennia saw new forms of transnational protests, which were increasingly concerned with the globalization of neo-liberalism (della Porta & Tarrow 2005). Some argued in the 1990s that the post-Cold War neo-liberal hegemony, which Fukuyama (1992) famously coined as “the end of history”, would develop a “global civil society” where social movements would have a global reach beyond the reach of nation-state governance (Keane 2003). However, it was recognised that the notion of a “global civil society” is utopian in its nature and must therefore be used with caution, as it undermines the constraints, possibilities and local contexts in which the actors find themselves in (della Porta & Tarrow 2005:233). Yet, as global politics increasingly involve transnational agents, such as transnational corporations or intergovernmental bodies, della Porta and Tarrow (2005:238) propose that some activists become progressively able to balance the resources and opportunities of their societies and activism between international and domestic affairs. Nonetheless, it is important to recognise that social movements, whether national or transnational, are not necessarily related. They prioritise different causes with different logics, rationales and strategies. This chapter therefore proceeds with a discussion on how social movements can be defined and important analytical properties that needs to be acknowledged.

In order to define and theorize social movements as a political concept it is important to acknowledge some of its inherent conceptual challenges. Rucht (2017) presents challenges that rise in the attempt to analyse and define social movements. He argues that some scholars have offered too inclusive definitions. A definition of social movements needs to include some specific aspects that outline all social movements while still recognising their diversity. This can e.g. be participant activity level and organisational/structural aspects. Rucht also argues that the scholars’ political affiliations might influence definitions of social movements by using laden and ideological terms such as ‘progressive’ and ‘emancipatory’. Rucht suggests therefore that the inclusion of such terms in a definition reveals political sympathies, which is logically not beneficial for social sciences. Another concern is to define the

opposition. Rucht suggests that it is important to not only acknowledge characteristics of social movements, but also consider other engaged actors in political conflicts. He exemplifies this by criticizing a definition delivered by Tilly, which suggests that a social movement is "a sustained series of interaction between power-holders and persons successfully claiming to speak on behalf of a constituency lacking formal representation" (Rucht 2017:41). This reduces the definition of social movements to a power-struggle between powerholders and a constituency and does therefore not encompass the ways in which some social movements contest counter-movements rather than powerholders. Also, the term 'powerholder' is in itself unclear as social movements can obtain significant amounts of power and hence become powerholders themselves.

In order to reach a fitting definition of social movements, Rucht proposes four key elements in his formula. First, social movements aim to bring about or resists fundamental social change of society. An emphasis is here placed on 'fundamental' change, which refers to distribution of power and material resources as well as values and justifications for this demand. In this sense, Rucht argues that social movements challenge societal and political normativity. Second, a social movement is a network in structural terms. This point implies a certain spatiotemporal size and duration, and that a social movement needs some form of organisational framework. Following this, the third key element is self-attribution. This means that a social movement entails a sense of collective identity and we-ness. Lastly, Rucht argues that public protest is a key element of social movements in order to promote their own agenda and/or contend their opponents. Rucht summarizes these four key elements of social movements into a definition stating that a social movement is "a network of individuals, groups and organizations that, based on a sense of collective identity, seek to bring about social change (or resist) primarily by means of collective public protest" (Rucht 2017:45). This definition is meant to be able to include a wide range of social movements across ideological borders, strategic focuses and thematic concerns.

Even though Rucht's formula definition is broad but sets theoretical boundaries of what a social movement is, it is beneficial to discuss ways social movements might require different analytical approaches. By looking at contemporary social movements, such as the Occupy movement, Kreiss & Tufecki (2013) argue that new communication technologies shape social movements' possibilities and constraints of collective action and actual policy change. They argue that this has resulted in a conflicting duality for these movements. On the one hand,

they are able to promptly gain attention and participants through the use of social media. On the other, they suggest that these movements lack the pragmatic intention that a movement needs in order to generate tangible societal changes. The authors claim that the Occupy movement's lack of participation and demand-making in the formal and established political sphere resulted in no genuine changes, but rather created a protest culture without any real aims and goals. Kreiss & Tufecki suggest therefore "that social transformation can only exist through some engagement with institutional politics that makes change durable" (2013:165).

Fitzgerald & Rodgers (2000), on the other hand, contest this notion by arguing for an expansion of social movement models. They criticise social movement theories for primarily recognising social movement organisations as reformist movements. It is possible that the Occupy-movement had difficulties producing concrete political changes, but its reluctance to participate in formal politics could also be a signal of the movement being fundamentally opposed to contemporary structures, and not an organisation whose aim is to formalise and become institutionalised. Fitzgerald & Rogers argue therefore that it is appropriate to distinguish between moderate and radical social movement organisations (SMO and RSMO, respectively) (Haines 2013). SMOs and RSMOs are argued to differ in internal structures, ideology, use of tactics, communication and how they value success. These differences include e.g. their willingness to participate with the formal political system and their ability to communicate through mainstream media, which can result in soft oppression (Ferree 2005; Linden & Klandermans 2006).

Not recognising the intentional differences among social movements' characteristics that might require different theoretical models for analysis is seen as limiting. One must further acknowledge that the use of social movement *organisations* implies a shift towards resource mobilisation theory, which is based in economic theory and emphasises the ways in which management of resources enable or disable social movement organisations to reach their aims (McCarthy & Zald 1987). Even though resource mobilisation theory is not the applied theoretical framework in this thesis, the distinction between radical and moderate SMOs effectively illustrates how movements like the anti-fascist movement differs from formal social movement organisations and why it is important to analyse social movements by their particular rationales for action.

The main contribution of Fitzgerald & Rodgers' theoretical model for radical social movements is that it is important to acknowledge their heterogeneity. It is therefore crucial to apply different analytical lenses based on the political actions of any given social movement. The authors do, however, emphasise their model's ideal typical nature, and that it is not applicable to all radical social movements. Kreiss and Tufecki's (2013) notion that social movements need some form of institutional engagement to become influential is therefore reductive, as some social movements do not *intend* to engage in the system that they are fundamentally criticizing. Therefore, the tactics and rationales of these movements must be analysed in their own terms in order to gain satisfying insights into their courses of action and developments.

Furthermore, it is argued that it is important to also recognise the differences among radical social movements in form of their tactics and protests (Jämte & Ellefsen *forthcoming*). One proposed approach for developing a further distinction between forms of protest is to distinguish between *contained* and *transgressive* forms of contention (Ellefsen 2018; Tilly & Tarrow 2015). Contained contention refers to forms of protest that follow established institutional routines, which Fitzgerald and Rodgers (2002) would argue is more applicable to moderate social movements. Transgressive contention, on the other hand, pushes the margins for what is accepted and "crosses institutional boundaries into forbidden or unknown territory" (Tilly & Tarrow 2015:62). Transgressive protest pushes, renegotiates and restructures the state's boundaries (as it is the state as a powerholder that is able to define the tolerated forms of protests) for what is prescribed and accepted forms of contention (Ellefsen 2018: 9). Which forms of protest are deemed transgressive and which are deemed contained is a dynamic process and dependent on socio-political contexts. Yet, as contained forms of protest are aligned to societal norms, one could argue that e.g. peaceful protests and demonstrations are contained because they are recognised and accepted. Transgressive protests challenge the boundaries of what is accepted, which can therefore e.g. be destruction of property and violent acts.

These conceptual challenges clearly show that the study of social movements is complex and multifaceted. On the one hand, it is useful to develop general definitions that embody what social movements comprise at a minimum. Yet, social movements are everything but static and homogenous. They exist and develop in spatiotemporally contingent contexts with multitudes of actors who interdependently affect each other's possibilities and constraints.

This chapter therefore proceeds by exploring the two analytical frameworks that will be used in this thesis, namely the relational approach in the Dynamics of Contention (DOC) research program and the strategic interactionist perspective (SIP). These two models of analysis accept the complexity of social movements and offer useful analytical tools and frameworks for approaching radical social movements in particular by examining the relations that (re)arrange their strategic repertoires.

3.2. Contentious politics: a relational perspective

The relational approach and Dynamics of Contention research program (DOC) holds that contention is an inherently dynamic process involving multitudes of actors. Emirbayer advocates in his *Manifesto for a Relational Sociology* (1997) that sociologists have focused too much on entities rather than the processes and relations that shape them. Emirbayer criticises holistic and structuralist approaches that primarily see actors as static. He suggests instead that dynamic relations among entities is key for understanding the processes of change. The relational approach is therefore, according to Emirbayer, the opposite of essentialist and substantialist thinking because it seeks to place greater importance on the relations among entities rather than their static characteristics, whether collective or individual. Emirbayer & Goodwin (1994:1414) calls this the *anticategorical imperative*, which is a rejection of categorical explanations of human action. In this sense, the relational approach rejects treating entities solely in terms of the analytical categories imposed on them, but rather emphasises the importance of relations in meso-level of analysis.

Even though theoretical disagreements prevail within the relational approach, its usage has become more influential during the last three decades and spread to other disciplines (Mische 2011). The New York School has been the centre point for the development of the relational approach and shaped the relational toolbox during the 1990s (ibid.:80). Charles Tilly was a leading figure in this process and put forward a response to poststructuralist stances. He argued that there was a need for a greater recognition of the processes that shape social life and to acknowledge that "a great deal of social construction goes into the formation of entities – groups, institutions, markets, selves" (ibid. 2011:83). Demetriou (2018:311) argues that Tilly's work delineated the academic field of political contention by not taking normative positions. As Tilly increasingly discovered that processes of historical developments are shaped by relations, he coined the ontological stance 'relational realism', which he contrasted

with ‘methodological individualism’, ‘phenomenological individualism, and ‘holism’ (Tarrow 2008:228; Tilly 2008b:7-8).

Relational realism maintains that “transactions, interactions, social ties, and conversations constitute the central stuff of social life” (Tilly 2008b:7). In this sense, relational realism is different than the other ontologies as it does not regard the individual in an individualist sense (methodological and phenomenological individualism), nor societal structures, as the essential drivers for social life. Tilly emphasised that networks and relations produce the conditions for collective action (Diani 2007:317). However, Tilly’s relational ontology does not only regard relations in space as crucial for collective action. As he views relations and collective action as reconfiguring *processes*, temporality also becomes vital. This led Tilly to distinguish between contentious *incidents* and *episodes* of contention (Tarrow 2008:229). Isolated incidents are events that happens once, whereas contentious episodes are occurrences that take part in broader historical progressions. This distinction is important, as it allows for analysing contentious episodes, such as for example a violent protest, not only as spatiotemporally contingent actions that are isolated from historical processes, but rather as a part of broader frames of reference. This analytical outlook is beneficial when examining the continuous relations between far-right movements and anti-fascist activists, as the ways they interact and intersect continuously restructure their strategies and appearances.

Tilly approaches contentious politics in an innovative and systematic way and argues that contentious *episodes* could be seen as “bounded sequences of continuous interaction, usually produced by an investigator’s chopping up longer streams of contention into segments for purposes of systematic observation, comparison and explanation” (Tilly 2008b:10). These sequences of continuous interaction, Tilly argues, constituted *performances*. Tilly retains that the strategic approaches he discovered in his historical studies of contention was limited, and that these performances are therefore learned and historically grounded ways of making claims (Tilly 2008a:5). Making claims, Tilly argues (ibid.), is central to contentious politics as it creates frictions with someone else’s interests.

These performances are channelled through *repertoires*. Tarrow (2008:237) states that “this theatrical metaphor calls attention to the clustered, learned, yet improvisational character of people’s interactions as they make and receive each other’s claims”. Performances and repertoires transpire differently due to regime constraints (as regimes permit or disallow some

forms of performance, which in turn shapes them), historical contingencies and political opportunity structures (ibid.). By inspecting contentious episodes as sets of (governmentally restricted or permitted) performances in which actors make claims using learned repertoires that bears on someone else's interests, one is able to place contention in a broader perspective. It opens up the possibility for tracing reasonings and motivations of a variety of actors in a processual manner. It is important to note, however, that contentious episodes are not regarded as linear sequences of contention, but as "iterative sites of interaction in which different streams of mobilization and demobilization intersect, identities form and evolve, and new forms of action are invented, honed, and rejected as actors interact with one another and opponents and third parties" (McAdam *et al.* 2001:30).

This arguably shows one of the strengths of the relational approach to episodes of contention. It permits analysing episodes of contention and contentious actors as continuously developing, not only in relation to other parties, claimants and themselves, but also in relation to the strategies and motivations learned from past and present. It is, however, important to note that Tilly did not seek to limit this analytical framework to only include social movements, but rather all forms of contention (Tarrow 2008:236). McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly's (2001) book *Dynamics of Contention* emphasise these dynamic and processual aspects of social relationships but highlight the use of the relational analytical framework for *contentious politics*. By *contentious politics* they mean

> "*episodic, public, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when (a) at least one government is a claimant, and object of claims, or a party to the claims and (b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at least one of the claimants."* (McAdam *et al*. 2001:5)

It is important to note that the specificity of the government being a claimant does not necessarily imply that governments need to take part in all contentious episodes or processes. It merely implies that governments have the ability to define and structure the limits of which forms of contention are accepted and which are not through coercive means.

Dynamics of Contention highlights the importance of identifying 'causal mechanisms' (Flacks 2003:100). Mechanisms have also been described as social processes that change the relations among various actors similarly in a range of situations and contexts (Opp 2009:307). For

McAdam *et al.* (2001:27), processes are “frequently recurring causal chains, sequences, and combinations of mechanisms”. Therefore, the mechanism-based approach of McAdam *et al*. (2001:72) does not seek to develop general laws of collective action, but rather to identify similar mechanisms in situations that vary in time and space.

McAdam *et al.* (2001:142-148) identified four recurrent causal mechanisms in the episodes of contention they explored, specifically i) *brokerage*, ii) *category formation*, iii) *object shift*, and iv) *certification*. *Brokerage* refers to the linkage of two or more unconnected social sites by a third unit that mediates their relations. *Category formation* refers to the creation of identities by drawing boundaries, which also has been called *boundary formation* (Alimi, Bosi, Demetriou 2015:28). This mechanism produces notions of us-and-them and is argued to highly affect the identities of participants in contentious episodes. *Object shift* is an important mechanism, as it means shifts in relations among contesting parties. Object shift is therefore somewhat a strategic mechanism as it modifies the actors’ actions, performances and repertoires in relation to their opponents’ acts. In addition, *certification* is a significant mechanism as it entails the validation of the actors, claims and performances by external authorities. McAdam *et al*. (2001:146) argue that processes of certification are always prevalent, as every polity continually define the criteria for accepted contentious actions. It is important to note that the relationship between mechanisms and process are purely analytical in the sense that it is arbitrary whether one chooses to call e.g. *brokerage* a process or a mechanism (Alimi *et al.* 2015:28; McAdam *et al.* 2001:27).

Alimi *et al.* (2015) apply this relational framework in their effort to theorize processes of radicalisation and aim for a utilisation of the relational framework in a comparative perspective. This comparative perspective seeks to trace similarities and dissimilarities of various contentious episodes, although with some modifications of the relational approach delivered by McAdam *et al*. (2001) and Tilly’s *The Politics of Collective Violence* (2003). The latter disputes scholars who are not willing to treat political violence as a relational and dynamic form of political action, but rather as individualised characteristics of the actors involved (see also Tilly 2004; 2005). Tilly therefore seeks to apply the relational epistemology in order to explain “what causes collective violence, when it occurs (a) to vary so greatly in form and (b) to make significant shifts, sometimes quite rapid, from one form to another” (2003:13).

Alimi *et al*. (2015) acknowledges that Tilly's approach recognises the effect of mechanisms on parties on both sides of a contentious conflict. However, Tilly's primary focus on the *escalation* of violence undermines the importance of radicalism, or what Alimi *et al.* calls "the interplay between the different types of mechanisms in early stages of contention that are not necessarily violent" (2015:36). Whereas Tilly treats violence as a given and examines ways collective violence either increases or decreases by relational processes, Alimi *et al.* seek to expand the relational approach to also examine the earlier stages of contention that potentially lead to collective violence. Social movements, and their prospects for radicalisation, are shaped and affected by i) the characteristics of the contemporary political climate they are constituted in; ii) hetero/homogeneity in movement compositions and its consequences for development of collective action(s); iii) relationships with state security forces on the ground and their competitive struggle for control; iv) relationships with the public and civic society and how perceptions alter possibilities and constraints; and v) relationships with counter-movements based on other population-segments and how objectives and aims change. Alimi *et al.* thereby state that "the radicalization of social movement organizations [...] is dynamic, multifaceted and open-ended, and thereby subject to the contingency of interactions as well as to the structures characterizing the movement and the broader historical context in which it operates" (2015:40).

3.3. Strategic interactionist perspective

The strategic interactionist perspective (SIP) offers an alternative outlook to the relational approach, but they still complement each other rewardingly. Instead of focusing on mechanisms and structuralist explanations for strategic action, Jasper advocates the need for micro-oriented levels of individualist explanations for strategic action. In the introductory section in his book, *Getting Your Way: Strategic Dilemmas in the Real World* (2006), Jasper criticises structuralists and game theorists for not really explaining the real-world sui generis. Social scientists of the structuralist tradition, he argues, have had a tendency to treat agency as the residue of models that attempt to reveal the hidden structures that shape people's lives. The structural metaphors that are developed by social scientists are seen as too static and narrowly framed and misses the open-ended nature of political conflict (Jasper 2004). Jasper also disapproves of game theory and rational-choice approaches, as their 'rational-actor' models never fully recognise the complexities of micro-levels of analysis. These approaches downplay and neglect the function of emotions and sees them as interferences in strategic

action. Jasper, on the other hand, holds that emotions contribute to strategic action by altering motivations, objectives and alliances (Jasper 2010). Too many social scientists have, according to Jasper, attempted to "[explain] either our choices or why we have none" (2006:3), and suggests therefore that "strategy is anything but the cold calculation of game theory" (ibid.). In contrast, Jasper recognises that an actor is a spatiotemporally constituted and emotional character and therefore constructs reality in collaboration with other present actors.

What does this perspective contribute with beside a critique of structuralist approaches, and how does it differ from the DOC program? In a nutshell, SIP seeks to place focus on micro-levels of analysis and, perhaps most importantly, agency. Jasper follows the DOC relational approach by acknowledging that protesters are players who participate in fields of strategic and dynamic contention with other players (Ellefsen 2018:47). Yet, SIP rejects the notion of mechanism-based approaches, which Jasper criticises for being too vaguely defined and somewhat a concealed structuralist approach (Jasper 2010:967). Therefore, DOC is not able to capture the complex dynamics of strategic action (Jasper 2004:3).

Whereas the DOC programme is primarily concerned with finding similar outcomes in various contentious episodes, the SIP approach seeks to understand strategic processes from micro-level descriptions to broader macro-level results (ibid.). Hence, the initial outlook of Jasper's strategic interactionist perspective offers a framework that rejects a priori sociological categories and models that attempt to holistically describe the social world and actor's strategic rationales (Duyvendak & Fillieule 2015). Jasper's (2006:5) use of the word *strategy* entails five dimensions which actors devise. These dimensions are i) *goals*; ii) *means* to attain your goals; iii) *resistance* from other actors with their own goals and means, which making strategy vi) *social and interactive*. Lastly, strategic actors are also v) *future*-oriented actors, which Jasper argues necessitates creativity, imagination and subjectivity. Strategic players can be seen as *simple* (individuals) or *complex* (i.e. teams, groups, organizations, networks), which both face choices that require strategic evaluations (Jasper 2004:5-7). Jasper (2004; 2006) formulates these strategic choices through dilemmas, which symbolise conflicting issues players face when attempting to conduct strategic action. These dilemmas, he argues, requires an inquiry into the cultural, psychological, emotional and structural factors (Jasper 2004:11). It is therefore reductive to not first consider micro-level of analysis, as it is fundamentally the creativity and flexibility of social life that is under investigation.

In *Getting Your Way* (2006), Jasper lists 37 dilemmas that strategic players face. This list is undoubtedly too long for a full evaluation in this thesis. Nevertheless, five dilemmas will be considered briefly for exemplification. I argue that such strategic dilemmas are applicable to the dynamic contexts of anti-fascist contention. The analysis of this thesis uses the concept of dilemmas to show how alterations in the far-right and general operating environment force strategic re-evaluations.

Firstly, the dilemma of shifting goals (Jasper 2006:75) refers to the ways strategic actors find, change and evaluate their goals in relation to their means. In other words, the means of goal-attainment has an effect on the goals themselves, as they need some form of risk/cost evaluation of its importance. The second dilemma is concerned with being naughty or nice (ibid.:106). The appearance and actions of strategic actors emit various attitudes, and Jasper maintains that it is difficult to be both intimidating and friendly simultaneously. Yet, both approaches can be tools for goal-attainment. Third, the extension dilemma (ibid.:129) raises the question of whether expansion of a movement is beneficial. On the one hand, breadth and wider identities can incorporate more goals and strategies, but potentially lose coordination and control. A smaller movement, on the other hand, can be more specialised and focused in its aims, means and goals. Fourth, the security dilemma (ibid.:137-138) implies that power is relative and that the strengthening of one player entails the weakening of others. This dilemma reminds us of the flexibility of power-structures between players and that they transform in relation to their strategic actions. Fifth, and last, the radicalism dilemma (ibid.:153-154) refers to the publicity of radical ideas within a movement. On the one hand, radical parts of a movement can gain publicity and recognition by transgressive actions and henceforth negotiate compromises with the moderate flank. On the other hand, radical flanks can become vexatious as the movement as a hole might meet repression from authorities and the media. These five dilemmas exemplify ways in which players in contentious fields analyse their spatiotemporal setting and thereby evaluate their course of strategic action. These evaluations are not, according to SIP, rational and calculated (as e.g. game theory or rational-choice theory might propose), but rather embedded in emotional and relational processes among a wide variety of other players and arenas.

3.4. Construction of collective identities and framing

At the outset of their article on the collective identity of contemporary radical left-libertarian activists in Sweden, Jämte *et al.* state that "collective identity is central for all types of social movements – providing them with a common conception of the past, the present, and the future, as well as a sense of "we-ness" [...] a movement's identity is constantly renegotiated and thus evolves over time" (2020:1). Therefore, it is arguably beneficial to examine the concept of collective identity in a theoretical perspective, as it can help visualising development processes for motivations, strategies, power-relations, solidarity and comradery among and in social movements. In line with the DOC and SIP frameworks, social movement theories engaged with framing processes view social movements as signifying agents that are actively engaged in restructuring and maintenance of meaning (Benford & Snow 2000). In other words, social movements are continuously engaged with preserving or renegotiating their own identity in relation to the media, governments and other significant actors.

Snow (2001) distinguishes between three different forms of identity, namely *personal*, *social*, and *collective*. Snow recognises that other forms of identity might exist, although these three forms have a special need for distinction. Personal identities, Snow argues, are attributes that the actor places on oneself in order to make oneself distinct in the social world. Social identity does in some ways overlap with personal identities. Yet, social identities are seen as identities attributed to others in order to situate them in social space. Social identities are composed by social roles and categorical identities, such as 'teacher', 'sister' or 'anti-fascist'. In turn, collective identity is seen as an ambiguous construct that somewhat overlaps with social identities. Yet, Snow argues that its essence entails a sense of shared 'we-ness' in contrast to one or more actual or imagined sets of 'others'. This also necessitates some form of collective action or agency.

Snow further argues that social identities and collective identities can be distinguished in two ways. First, whereas social identities are based on common understandings of roles (e.g. gender roles), collective identities are not necessarily rooted in such established social categories as they are dynamic and evolving. Second, collective identity is unique in the sense that it can motivate for collective action, which in turn can generate collective agency. Yet, collective identities entail both risks and benefits (Jasper & McGarry 2015). On the one hand, they are useful tools for mobilizing, recruitment and self-understanding. Also, collective identities emit to others and can therefore function as a political and social legitimator. On the

other hand, however, if collective identities become too fixed, they run the risk of distorting reality on behalf of what is 'right' according to their collective frames. Hence, collective identities require *identity work* (Snow 2001), which means the activities people engage in to express their collective or individual identities in relation or contrast to others. *Frames* have generally been conceptualised as "the interpretive packages that activists develop to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, appeal to authorities, and demobilize antagonists" (Polletta & Kai Ho 2006:4) and are therefore undoubtedly linked to collective identities.

Hall (1982:66) states that ideology in collective movements is not a given or static variable but rather depends on the forces in a particular historic conjuncture, which he calls "politics of signification". In this sense, the ideology and strategic fundaments of a social movement is seen as dependent on the dynamic relationship with other actors, as well as how one perceives said movement. Fominaya (2015) argues that autonomous social movements, who largely ground their existence in opposition to something else, are reluctant to produce static facets of collective identity because their oppositional nature implies a rejection of self-definition. Hence, she argues it is important to make a distinction between collective identity as a *process* or a *product.* Collective identity as a product implies static identity markers independent of space, time and socio-political contexts. Collective identity as a process acknowledges identity work as "deriving from shared experiences, solidarities, and meaning generated through reciprocal interaction between activists" (Fominaya 2015:65). This processual view of collective identity certainly aligns to the relational framework and strategic interactionist perspective in particular, as it highlights the creative and interactive dynamics of political actions and relations. Yet, it is important to note that to view collective identity as a process, as presented by Fominaya, seems to only refer to experiences and meanings that are generated among activists in contemporary spatiotemporal contexts. It does not account for e.g. strategic learning from a movements' history or heritage, but only existing interactions.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter discussed conceptual challenges in the study of social movements and presented the theoretical frameworks that are used in this thesis. It is important to acknowledge the diversity of social movements, as they have a wide range of characteristics. Definitions and analyses must therefore reflect this diversity. Whereas some social movements aim for

reformist strategies for reaching their aims, others are reluctant to participate in formal politics due to ideology or strategic evaluations, which must be sufficiently accounted for. It is thus crucial to examine social movements on their own terms, as they are ultimately constituted by individuals whose operating environment is dependent on local, socio-political contexts. Social movements' strategic developments and re-evaluations can therefore be seen as evaluations grounded in ongoing relations.

The relational perspective of the Dynamics of Contention (DOC) research program and the strategic interactionist perspective (SIP) offer analytical and theoretical frameworks for this thesis. Despite having some epistemological differences, DOC and SIP emphasise the role of *relations* and interactions among actors as determining forces for collective action (Ellefsen 2018). Therefore, the relational approach has also been called the anticategorical imperative (Emirbayer & Goodwin 1994:1414), which means that it abandons sociological categories for explaining contentious politics. The main focus of DOC is to pinpoint similar mechanisms (i.e. social processes) that constitute contentious politics across spatiotemporal settings. SIP is a reaction to this approach and argues that analyses of contentious politics and collective action must be approached from a micro-perspective. These frameworks complement each other as they both seek a dynamic analysis of contention across arenas and episodes. Whereas DOC focus on social movements as entities that are restructured by relations within contentious episodes, SIP contributes with a more dynamic perspective by including the expectations, emotions, choices and reactions of creative micro-level players (Ellefsen 2018:51). In other words, it is important to acknowledge the motivations and rationales of individual actors that constitute social networks. This will be the main contribution of these theoretical frameworks in the analysis of this thesis. The analysis sheds light on the ways in which individual anti-fascist activists subjectively perceive their political activism and how relations shape them. The micro-perspective of SIP allows for such understanding by acknowledging that contentious politics and strategy are constituted by the creative and subjective relations among individuals who constitute collective action. Yet, DOC is used to analyse anti-fascist networks as collective entities that are part of a longitudinal, complex and broad movement that both develops and maintains strategies and identities across time and space.

4. Methods: Qualitative in-depth interviews and participant observation

The following chapter will present and evaluate the research design and applied methods of this research project. This chapter first discusses the justifications for the research design and describe the preparatory research that was conducted. Second, I explain how I gained access to the anti-fascist activists in Oslo, the security measures that had to be taken and the challenges of gaining the activists' trust. Third, the snowball sampling method that was used in this research project is outlined. Fourth, I elaborate on the use of in-depth qualitative interviews and participant observation as the data collection methods for this research project and show how the data was analysed and coded. Lastly, I discuss the ethical considerations that had to be taken into account when conducting the research, as well as the thesis' limitations.

4.1. Research design

The data material consists of six qualitative in-depth and semi-structured interviews with five anti-fascist activists in Oslo and participant observation data from two anti-fascist counterdemonstrations. This thesis recognises anti-fascist activists as legitimate political actors, which gives them the authority to define and present their own political selves. This research is therefore grounded in an abductive logic of inquiry (Blaikie & Priest 2019:18). The abductive logic of inquiry emphasises the importance of the subjects' subjective lifeworld and thus aims for re-describing their situation in the technical language of social scientific discourse. Unlike the deductive and inductive logics of inquiry, the abductive logic is able to answer both 'why' and 'what' questions, and incorporates "the meanings and interpretations, the motives and intentions, that people use in their everyday lives, and which direct their behaviour" (ibid.:99). This gives the abductive logic of inquiry two main steps; namely first to describe the activities and meanings of the subjects, and thereafter deriving concepts and categories that form the basis for an understanding of the issue (ibid.:101). This entails for this thesis that the subjective meanings of the respondents are the fundaments for an elevated sociological understanding of apparent issues, which in this case is the relational dynamics among anti-fascist activists and other inflicting actors.

Any methodological reasoning requires a consideration of epistemological and ontological assumptions. Epistemological assumptions evaluate the construction of knowledge and how it

can be obtained. It therefore lays out the reasonings behind intentions of research and how the researcher relates to knowledge as either constructed or discovered (Blaikie & Priest 2019; Kvale 2007). Ontological assumptions are reflections on the nature of social reality. These assumptions correlate with the different logics of inquiry and signifies important aspects of how the research is conducted. Blaikie & Priest (2019) state that the abductive logic is most commonly used with the combination of *idealist* and *subtle realist* ontological assumptions and the epistemology of *constructivism*. The idealist and subtle realist ontological assumptions imply that social reality is made up of shared interpretations, and that a knowable social reality exists independently of social scientists. Social reality is therefore seen as being produced and reproduced by the interrelations of actors. This is in contrast to *shallow*, *conceptual*, *cautious* and *depth* realist assumptions, which proclaim in some way or another that social phenomena exist independently of social actors. In this sense, the world is observable also without reflections and subjective constructions of reality. The idealist and subtle realist ontological assumptions can arguably be associated to the relational approach of this thesis and the strategic interactionist perspective, which emphasise the micro-foundations of relations as driving forces for continuous (re)structuring of social processes. This makes these ontological and epistemological assumptions apposite for this thesis, as social life is seen as social processes that is continuously produced by relations among actors. Hence, the social world and our knowledge of it is socially constructed and reassembled by shared interpretations and relations.

Constructivism is an epistemological assumption that sees the language of participants as a central access point to the social world. Rather than being distorted by theories and concepts, knowledge is acquired by mediating the language of social life and social scientific language. The constructivist epistemology entails that the social world is not objectively observable, but is rather constituted by multiple constructed realities that are grounded in subjects' interpretations and interactions (Gibbs 2012), which arguably can be compared to the anticategorical imperative's reluctance to categorise social life into predetermined sociological labels (Emirbayer & Goodwin 1994:1414). This is in contrast to e.g. empiricism and the positivist paradigm, which implies that knowledge is produced by observations that accurately represents the external world. This epistemological distinction can be formulated by the classic *miner* or *traveller* metaphor (Kvale 1996:3). A miner unearths valuable metals which remain constant and objectively 'true', and the process of knowledge production is therefore seen as grounded in the world sui generis. The miner represents the positivist

paradigm's focus on empirical and observable knowledge. On the other hand, the traveller metaphor understands the researcher as a traveller that tells a tale grounded in the subjective realities of the people he meets on the road, which is a relational process. In this sense, the discovery of people's subjectively interpreted life worlds become the point of attention. The traveller does therefore represent the constructivist epistemology and the interpretivist paradigm, which sees social reality as the product of people's subjective interpretations of the social world (Blaikie & Priest 2019:107).

4.2. Getting access: trust, preliminary research, encrypted messaging and information sheet

Anti-fascist activists are known to be reluctant to participate in research and interviews due to security threats and fear of misrepresentation (Bjørgo & Gjelsvik 2015:108). Thus, I had to foretake several considerations in order to gain access and the participants' trust. The establishment of trust was therefore particularly important, and it is consequently important to establish what *trust* is. Hosmer (1995) states that there is a lack of consensus in the attempt to reach a clear definition. Yet, Hosmer suggests that trust can be seen as the belief of an individual in the good faith of others and their future intentions. Hence, the establishment of trust necessitated an honest representation of my aims and intentions in order to make the respondent feel secure that I would not misrepresent him/her. Rogers (1987) claims that interviewing political activists might entail further implications. He argues that the interpretation by researchers can be particularly problematic, as it "will almost invariably contradict the essence of an actor's vision of himself/herself as a maker of history" (ibid.:169), and the transcription and interpretation of political activists will therefore inevitably be problematic (ibid.:182).

Political activists construct themselves through conflict and opposition, and the identity of the activists is therefore seen to become a physical manifestation of the struggle's history. Yet, even though Rogers argues that an interpreter will inescapably alter the activists' stories, a sense of importance prevail. An interview will never be able to fully capture the essence of the activists' political struggle and place in history, but there is an agreement that the activists' life is of historical significance. This aspect was also relevant to the establishment of trust in my respondents. When contact was established with new potential informants, it became important to acknowledge that I wanted to gain a genuine understanding of their

activism, experiences and interpretations to minimise potential misrepresentations. Cohen & Arieli (2011:425) argue that distrust and suspicion are common in conflict environments, which they define as "[environments] in which people, whether individuals or groups, perceive their needs, goals or interests to be contradicted by the goals or interests of the other side". Additionally, the snowball sampling method played a considerable role in the acquisition of respondents' trust in this thesis, which is discussed further in section 4.3.

Due to the sensitivity of anti-fascist activism and its small and diverse networks, it became important to identify respondents as individual activists and not representatives or spokespersons for their networks. This was done primarily for two reasons. First, it was an instrumental measure to acquire respondents. I argue that the threshold of wanting to be interviewed is reduced when the activist is only representing oneself. The dynamic of self-representation arguably lowers the threshold for discussing the nature of their own subjective experiences as activists, as they do not feel burdened by speaking on behalf of other activists. Second, I argue that an expectation to interview anti-fascist activists as representatives for their networks would not acknowledge or comprehend the nature of the horizontal and loose organizational structures. As these networks do not have members or roles in a traditional sense but rather consists of various collaborating groups, it would be naïve to suggest that anti-fascist activists can be seen as representatives for fellow activists or networks internally. Additionally, this is also the reason why this thesis is careful of not specifying the respondents as 'anti-fascists', but rather as 'anti-fascist activists'. This, I argue, does not limit their associated affiliations to Anti-fascist Action specifically, but rather implies that they are individual activists who have the potential to be engaged in a multiplicity of networks.

4.2.1. Preliminary research

Prior to the sampling process, qualitative interviews and participant observation, I conducted preliminary research through informal conversations with anti-fascist activists. The initial reason to do the preliminary research was to get an overview of what kind of data that was possible to obtain, as well as investigating whether or not anti-fascist activist would be willing to be interviewed at all. In total I had conversations with three activists about the possibility of interviewing anti-fascists and what they possibly would (or would not) reveal to me as a researcher. The conversations allowed information about this research to spread to other activists and were, to a large extent, crucial when defining the research questions. The conversations are not included in the data material or used in the analysis due to the

conversations' informal settings and the research design being in its initial stages at the time. Nonetheless, they gave valuable insights into the feasible scope of the thesis.

It became clear that anti-fascists would be cautious of discussing specificities regarding the practical aspects of their activism, as well as how the networks are organised in detail. Yet, the conversations allowed me to gain an insight into the complexities and fluid structures of the anti-fascist movement early on. In order to gain access to anti-fascist activists I used a gatekeeper who was willing to participate in this project. The gatekeeper was an already acquainted anti-fascist activist. I had several informal dialogues with this person prior to the actual research in order to establish what could and could not be expected by me as a researcher. The gatekeeper provided access to other activists in the network, one of which became a research assistant. A research assistant is, according to Andrews & Vassenden (2007) participants or informants who are engaged in developing the sample. However, instead of wanting to personally participate in the research, this person attempted to legitimise and spread information about the project to other potential respondents.

4.2.2. Encrypted messaging, information sheet and choices of interview structure

As previously mentioned, I acknowledged early on that I had to establish a sense of trust between me and the participants. This meant in practice that the sampling procedure had to be conducted by respecting the activists' premises and requirements for engagement. Alongside the snowball sampling method, the development of trust was established in mainly three ways, namely by i) communicating through their desired channels, ii) the information sheet and iii) the possibility for two interview sessions. Yet, these three means can be reduced to basically one principle: to allow the respondents to participate on their own premises. The information sheet and consent form are available in Appendix I.

The fact that all communication prior to the interview sessions was via encrypted messaging apps allowed the activists to directly communicate with me as a researcher with anonymity and distance. I gained access through referrals from other activists, which arguably increased the sense of trust in me and my project. These apps also allowed me to get information and sensitive details about upcoming demonstrations in a safe and anonymous manner. Further reflections on the use of encrypted messaging can be found in section 4.3.

Then, I made sure to explain the aims and methods of the project alongside research main questions to all participants when we established contact through the encrypted channels. I also offered to send the information sheet through these channels, which elaborated on the project's intentions, themes and what participation would entail for potential respondents. I made sure to underscore that the themes were aspects I was interested in as a researcher, and that the main focus was to understand *their* subjective reality. Hence, I emphasised that the participants were free to discuss whatever they sought to be relevant. Rubin & Rubin (2012:47) argue that topics of research have to be important to the interviewees as well as for the researchers. Hence, the information sheet included information on why this study is important. The information sheet stated that there is a need for the subjective accounts of anti-fascist activists in contemporary research. In this sense, I wanted to present participation as meaningful for the activists as they were given the chance to anonymously express the logics and rationales behind their activism without being framed as e.g. 'radical and angry youth'. Hence, the information sheet stressed that the project intends to treat anti-fascist activists as legitimate political actors and that the project might contribute to a more correct public understanding of contemporary anti-fascism.

The information sheet additionally highlighted the rights of the participants. These rights entailed anonymisation procedures, which made sure that participants understood that they would not be identified in the project through personal characteristics, actions or networks; that participation is voluntary and that participants can withdraw at any time without consequences (as all data would be permanently deleted); and that participants were free to not answer questions if they did not want to. The information sheet additionally stated that all interviews would be recorded on an external, digital recorder and then digitally transcribed; the interviews would be transcribed in a way that was representative of the interview-situation and they would recognise; no personal characteristics would be revealed in the transcriptions; the recordings would be stored on an external hard-drive that is only available for the researcher and not in any way connected to the internet; and that the recordings would be permanently deleted after the completion of the project. Due to security reasons, I established that I would not require a handwritten signature or any form of identification for participating in the study if the participant would feel uncomfortable doing so. Even though such measures are usually taken to establish the rights of the participant, I argue that this would rather decrease the security of the participants in this study. I therefore stated that I would accept a verbal consent before the interview session.

Lastly, in order to make the participants as comfortable in the situation as possible, I offered the possibility of conducting two interview sessions. The interviews were oriented around political beliefs and complex analyses of contemporary society, which might not be easy to discuss spontaneously. It is possible that only one interview session about such topics potentially reduce their ability to accurately express their political beliefs and analyses. Therefore, the opportunity for a second interview session was given to allow the respondents to reflect on their arguments and responses after the interview session, or to allow them to elaborate on topics they felt got too little attention. A possible limitation of allowing two interview sessions is that the activists could potentially streamline their answers and thoughts by discussing internally what others responded. However, this is not recognised as a significant limitation of this study, as only one participant desired another interview session. This participant also accepted that both interviews could be used as data material. Therefore, rather than being a limitation it would instead give insights into both immediate reactions as well as developed argumentation.

4.3. Sampling

The sampling process of this thesis was conducted using the snowball sampling method. This sampling method yields a study sample through referrals made through persons with similar interests and characteristics (Andrews & Vassenden 2007). Snowball sampling is therefore particularly well suited for researching sensitive topics and where gaining informants might otherwise be difficult (Biernacki & Waldorf 1981). Hence, snowball sampling requires a gatekeeper that can lead the researcher to other potential respondents. This sampling method has the possibility of giving access to groups that are otherwise not accessible to the public eye, such as anti-fascist activists and networks.

The snowball sampling method was crucial in the attainment of respondents' trust. Arieli & Cohen (2011) suggest that the snowball sampling method has a particular capacity to directly address (dis)trust between the researcher and participants. This capacity is grounded in the fact that snowball sampling elevates cooperation between the researcher and the participant. The participant is never simply a randomly selected entity that is interviewed and then 'forgotten', but an essential part in the expansion of the sample. Not only does this empower the participant to feel engaged and important in the research process, but it also flattens the

inevitable power relation between researcher and informant because the researcher is inherently dependent on the informants' networks. This aspect also makes it somewhat ambiguous to describe the establishment of trust from my point of view, because it has been to a high degree an external process that I have not had access to. Except for preliminary messages and the information sheet, the trust in me as a researcher was fundamentally dependent on the activists' networks and internal communication.

Coleman (1958:29) argues that the snowball sampling method creates a two-sided sample. On the one hand snowball sampling allows for a population of individuals, and on the other it simultaneously produces a *relational* population. In this sense, the snowball sampling method gives the potential to apprehend networks that otherwise would not be apparent. This sampling method gave me access to activists in a way that established levels of trust through previous participants. It also gave me the opportunity to utilise my own personal social network at the outset of the sampling process by an already acquainted gatekeeper. I do not think that other sampling methods could have accomplished this level of trust in the sampling process, as it provided high degrees of autonomy for the activists. I argue that this is a strength due to the sensitive nature of the activists' political activities.

My approach was not imposing, as I was referred to new informants through their own trusted networks. Hence, potential participants were given information about the project by someone who had already contributed to the project before ever being in contact with me as a researcher. As all contact prior to interviews occurred through encrypted messaging apps, the activists were able to freely raise concerns and questions about the project with me prior to meeting in person and thus without fear of being identified. Endorsements from interviewed activists became a valuable and rewarding system of interdependent trust, which arguably reduced the scepticism towards me as a researcher.

However, the snowball sampling method also posed some challenges. Even though the sampling method allowed activists to engage with the project on their own terms, it might have provided activists from a particular segment of an otherwise multifaceted anti-fascist population. As the activists themselves were given the agency to recommend and refer respondents, this project runs the risk of not capturing the full spectrum of anti-fascist activism. Hence, this research might only have been able to include those who are close to the initial respondents and perhaps share the same views.

Another challenge was the fact that communication through encrypted messaging apps require a lot of time, and I was continuously afraid of reaching the end of the line before a sufficient data material was developed. It often took a long time to gain the trust of potential interviewees, and even longer time to decide on a date and time for the interviews. However, I found that this process got easier after the initial interviews and when other activists in the network gained knowledge of the project. I had to stop the sampling procedure primarily due to time limitations. However, I see the data material as sufficient, as all of the interviews were engaging, comprehensive and in-depth.

4.4. Qualitative interviews

The data material is comprised of six semi-structured interviews with five anti-fascist activists in Oslo. One activist wanted to have a second interview session, which allowed the participant to reflect further on the questions from the first session and elaborate on complicated topics. Qualitative interviewing allowed the research to gain knowledge of the activists' subjective experiences and rationales for anti-fascist politics. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that the qualitative interview has a certain structure and purpose, which ultimately is determined by the researcher (Kvale 2007). This does not mean, however, that the qualitative interview is a one-sided survey with fixed questions and direct answers. Instead, qualitative interviews are construction sites of knowledge that seeks to understand the meaning of the subjects' life worlds (ibid.).

As the aim of the research is to understand the underlying analyses and motivations of operating anti-fascist activists in Oslo, it became crucial to act as a 'qualified naïveté' (Kvale 2007; Kvale & Brinkmann 2015). Being a qualified naïveté entails a continuous aim for asking open-ended questions that are not pre-formulated by own presuppositions.
Instead of aiming at objective neutrality, one can argue that exploring the respondents' life worlds with mutual and intersubjective depth allows for a deeper understanding of their responses (Foley 2012:3). It is therefore a key intention to be curious and follow up questions to what the activists say during the interview. The interviews can therefore be defined as semi-structural, as the pace, time and order of themes and questions were not unified. Rather, the activists' own stories became the engines for the construction of knowledge. In this sense,

the interviewees were active participants and sources of knowledge, which Foley (2012) characterises as using the respondent as a teacher.

My role as a researcher during the interviews involved a structural focus, where the conversations were mainly led by my themes and topics in an open-ended manner in order to allow respondents to engage with the interview situation on their premises. This allowed the activists to reflect freely while still maintaining a certain topical continuity. Rubin & Rubin (2012:3) argue that this is the particular strength of in-depth interviews, as they allow researchers to explore details, opinions and motives of others and to see the world from other perspectives than their own. This made the in-depth interview particularly fruitful as the fundamental ambitions of this thesis is to understand how anti-fascists interpret their own experiences and political reasonings as individuals. Also, due to the loose organisation and secrecy among anti-fascist networks, in-depth interviewing gives a unique insight into their lives as activists on an individual level. They are no longer masked activists appearing on the news for protests and demonstrations open for interpretation by the larger society, but individuals with political opinions and rationales. The in-depth interviews therefore give the activists a voice that otherwise would not be heard due to their emphasis on secrecy and safety (Rubin & Rubin 2012:5).

The interviews lasted between 1 hour and 1 hour 20 minutes. The place and time of the interviews were decided by the participants in accordance to their security concerns and comfort. Four of the six interviews were conducted at calm and public cafés, one was conducted in a private room at the University of Oslo and one interview was conducted in the home of the participant. The interview sessions commenced using an interview guide, which can be found in Appendix II. This guide was used as a way of establishing the main themes as well and a way to start the interviews in a relatively comparable manner. However, as the interviews progressed, more emphasis was put into developing conversations based on the answers the respondents provided. The interview guide was comprised of 35 questions divided among three main categories. These categories were i) anti-fascist activism in a personal perspective, ii) contemporary fascism – challenges and analyses, and iii) contemporary anti-fascist activism and reasoning. These three broad categories allowed the interviews to have some form of structure and made it possible to compare and contrast the different accounts. However, the interview guide served more as a helpful tool if the conversation ran to a halt or the interviewee wanted to change the subject. Many of the topics

and themes in the interview guide were brought up intuitively in the dynamic interview settings.

4.4.1. Transcription, coding and analytical procedures of the semi-structured interviews

All interviews were recorded on an external recorder and transcribed shortly after completion. Recording the interviews allowed me to concentrate on the dynamic and topical continuity of the interviews without having to take notes, which might have drawn the attention from the participant (Kvale & Brinkmann 2015:205). Every interview was transcribed within 24 hours after the session. This was done to ensure that my memory of the interview situation was fresh, but also to allow me to discover new subtleties and nuances of the interview in the process of transcribing. As the interview sessions were temporally sporadic, the continual transcription process allowed me to gain a broader understanding of the topics for upcoming interview sessions.

The interviews were transcribed in Norwegian and in a way that intended to reflect the real interview-situation. This meant in practice that the transcripts include noises, sounds and pauses that might signal the respondents emotions and whether or not questions are regarded as difficult to answer. Even though transcription is the first abstraction away from the real interview situation, this inclusion allowed me to gain access to potentially important reactions of the respondents even after the physical interview sessions were conducted (Kvale & Brinkmann 2015:208). This process acknowledges that the qualitative interviews are construction sites of knowledge. It is not *only* the words themselves that carry meaning - manifestations and reactions that are not inherent to spoken words can also reveal essential emotional qualities. The inclusion of such reactions helps bridging the gap between the physical interview session and the abstraction of transcription processes. A second abstraction away from the interview situation was the translation of the quotations used in this research. Even though this was also an anonymising abstraction, it remained important to maintain the feel of the quotes in question and thereby reflect their emotional responsiveness.

The finished transcriptions were coded using NVivo 12. This software allows for categorisation and sorting in a highly organised manner. By sorting quotes and fragments of interview conversations into *nodes*, NVivo 12 allows for structuring the main themes into various categories and sub-categories. This resulted in 10 main nodes (i.e. categories), with 35 sub-nodes (i.e. sub-categories). Some nodes were specific, while others remained fairly broad.

The codes were primarily derived from the data material itself, and not pre-existing literature and research. Gibbs (2012:47-48) calls this 'open coding' or 'data-driven coding', and it aims at coding without presupposed ideas, which arguably follows the logic of the interpretivist paradigm (Blaikie & Priest 2019:107). This concept is in opposition to 'concept-driven coding', where the researcher applies pre-existing codes to the data material. Even though these are not necessarily mutually exclusive and that complete 'openness' might be unattainable, the coding procedure in this research was by and large data driven.

The system of sorting quotes and fragments of the interviews into categories allowed me to gradually see central topics that were brought up by the respondents. NVivo 12 also shows the number of citations in every given category and sub-category. This feature helps keeping an overview of how many of the respondents reflect upon the categories. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that NVivo 12 did not analyse the data material in any way. Instead, the software was used as a tool for structuring the interviews into suitable codes which helped categorising the data material.

4.5. Participant observation

This research project also applies the participant observation method in order to gain insights into the contentious politics of anti-fascist activism in Oslo. Participant observation aims at taking part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people (DeWalt & DeWalt 2011:1), and therefore allows researchers to learn about the people under study in a natural setting (Kawulich 2005). This method allowed me to experience and further understand the realities of anti-fascist activism. Additionally, the observations supplemented the in-depth interviews pleasingly, which DeWalt & Dewalt (2011:110) is a strength of the participant observation when used alongside other methods.

Two events were analysed using this method, both of which were counterdemonstrations to far-right organisations manifesting themselves physically in the streets of Oslo. The first event was a counterdemonstration against Stopp Islamiseringan av Norge (SIAN) [8], a radical far-right group that sees Islam as a militant and dangerous ideology, at Tøyen torg in Oslo the 28th September 2019. The second event was a counterdemonstration against Scandza Forum at Sinsen in Oslo the 4th November 2019. Scandza forum is a series of conferences that

[8] Translation: *Stop the Islamization of Norway*

attracts well known radical and extreme far-right individuals and networks. These counterdemonstrations illustrate variances and nuances of anti-fascist contentious action and gives an insight into how anti-fascist activists dynamically alter their tactics and strategies in relation to various opponents. Both demonstrations conjured reactions afterwards, which show some of the longitudinal relational and processual aspects of anti-fascist protests and how they engage with other present actors. It is also important to note that several of the interviewed activists participated in these protests. As the interviews took place weeks and months after the counterdemonstrations, it gave valuable insights into the activists' reflections and reactions to these situations and how they were handled by various actors.

Fangen (2010:12) asserts that an overreaching aim of participant observation is to describe what people do and say in situations that is not controlled by the social scientist. Participant observation allows the researcher to observe the subjects' natural settings in a relatively non-intrusive manner. Unlike experiments, in which the scientist creates a 'sterile' situation for reproducibility and empiricism, and in-depth interviews, which arguably contains some form of structured relationship between interviewee and interviewer, participant observation allows for studying the real life and dynamic processes of the subjects from a relative distance. Whereas interviews can uncover the understanding people have of their subjective experiences through words and reflections, participant observation makes it possible to get a more immediate impression of events and situations that is not constituted in the participants' subjective perspectives (Fangen 2010:15).

However, as the term *participant* observation implies, the researcher is also involved, sometimes merely by being present. In my case, I found that observing counterdemonstrations needed some form of engagement from me as a researcher. I was not attempting to be a passive figure on the side-lines of the protests in order to gain an outside-in point of view. Instead I tried to immerse myself in the spirit of the protests so I could understand the motivations and the emotional and physical reactions of the activists, which arguably makes me somewhat of a "fully participant observer" (Fangen 2010:75). One could argue that my attendance as a researcher might have affected the way the activists acted in the observed situations. However, I did not find this to not be an issue in the case of my research, as both counterdemonstrations were *intended* to summon large crowds in *public* spaces. As these demonstrations transpired in public arenas and the anti-fascist movement does not dictate strict in-and-out memberships, my presence did not interfere in the actions of the activists to

any noticeable extent. This would be a more posing issue if, for example, the observational data would be centred around private gatherings and closed off settings.

4.5.1 Coding and analytical procedures of participant observation data

It was challenging to transcribe and code the observation data in a structured fashion. The nature of such events made it difficult to take notes, as they developed quickly and required my full attention. However, I was constantly attempting to mentally construct overviews of the situations in ways I would remember. I also experienced that protest situations, even though they at first might seem bewildering and unstructured, left several strong impressions and mental images. I find that these kinds of relatively intense situations are easy to remember as they are in stark contrast to the mundanity of every-day life. I acknowledge that this risks a sense of subjectivity and selectivity, but yet it allowed me to be submerged in the experiences of the activists while still maintaining an analytical outlook. After both events I reflected on the situations and wrote down descriptive keywords and impressions in order to develop overviews of situations and actions I deemed important for analytical purposes. Some impressions were naturally more powerful than others, and some involuntary selectivity must be acknowledged as a limitation.

Though, what left the strongest impressions seemed sometimes to be rather random. For example, a vivid memory and strong impression was when a member of SIAN at Tøyen opened an umbrella with rainbow colours (perhaps to signal "support" for liberal values and/or the LBGTQ+ community) as protection from thrown vegetables. Another was when suddenly four anti-fascist activists suddenly walked aimfully in line away from the protest in a rush, signalling that their communication and emphasis on direct confrontation was streamlined and focused. Also, as a group of roughly 50 participants of the Scandza Forum conference walked past me at Sinsen (among them were many known white-supremacists), one young man looked me directly in the eye and winked while his face was largely hidden by a hoodie. This wink made me uncomfortable in a most peculiar way, as it seemed to signal something in the lines of "I am your opponent, we are in greater numbers, come at me!". Even though I was not an active participant in the counterdemonstration but rather observed from a relative distance, this interaction made me somewhat understand the conflictual tensions that rise in contentious episodes among anti-fascists and fascists and the potential subtleties in conflictual (inter)actions.

4.6. Ethical considerations

This study is approved by NSD.

I have attempted to acknowledge the main ethical considerations during the course of this chapter. By and large the ethical considerations are concerned with protecting the anonymity of the participants. Therefore, here I will try to summarise the main considerations and add some new insights into how I dealt with them.

As I have repeatedly stressed, it has been crucial for this thesis to accentuate the anonymity and security of the participants as they fear reprisals by state security forces and political opponents. Thus, as a breach in the anonymisation procedures can lead to negative consequences for participants, it is crucial that their demands for anonymity are maintained. This is the reason why I have not included any characteristics of the participants in this thesis. Whereas it could be interesting to traverse this study with characteristics such as gender, age, political or sexual orientation etc., I deem the inclusion of such information possibly harmful for the participants. It is therefore, as previously stated, the label 'anti-fascist activist' that is central for this thesis and its research questions. Yet, I can reveal that all participants are in their twenties, and both males and females are represented in the sample.

The anonymity measures also lead to a technical consideration in terms of the inclusion of direct quotes in this research project. As the anti-fascist networks are local and activists have knowledge and trust in each other, it is important that anonymity measures also protect participants from being identified by other activists. A direct quote from a participant might not enable outsiders to identify him/her, but the participant might imaginably be identifiable by in-group activists. I deal with this issue on two levels. First, direct quotes of activists in this project are translated from Norwegian to English. I argue that this is an anonymity measure as it further conceals individual traits and add another level of anonymity to the quote. Yet, it was essential that quotes are translated in a way that maintains the integrity of the statements. Secondly, I do not include quotes that disclose any personal characteristics or reveal activities the participants might have been involved in. As the participants know each other, fairly small details might be revealing. More importantly, what might be revealing is not known to me as a researcher. Therefore, I use citations with great caution and avoid potentially revealing specificities. This is also why I chose not to use pseudonyms, but merely present the quotes by themselves. Yet, I made an effort to include citations from all

participants, and not to rely too much on one or two activists but rather focus on a broad representation of the sample in the included quotes.

4.7. Limitations

There are some impending limitations in this thesis that needs to be addressed. The limitations are oriented around the limited sample and the snowball sampling method, time constraints and the application of the participant observation method.

The sample in this study can be argued to be a limitation as it does not reflect the entirety of the anti-fascist movement in Oslo. As this thesis applied snowball-sampling, which arguably was the most fruitful option for data collection in this context, it did not give leeway to acquire respondents outside of the gate-keepers' social and political network. Hence, the sample arguably runs the risk of only representing a definite population of the anti-fascist movement. The consequence of this limitation is that the most radical and transgressive (or the most contained, for that matter) activists might not be represented, as well as younger activists. The inclusion of such segments of the anti-fascist movement would definitely be beneficial in order to gain a broader understanding of the complexities of the anti-fascist movement. However, I argue that an inclusion of the most transgressive population segments in the sample of this research would require a larger time frame and a more elaborate engagement with the networks. Also, due to the secrecy of some anti-fascist networks, it can be argued that recruitment would not be probable due to security concerns. The sample size of this research can also therefore be argued to be a limitation. However, the quantity of respondents is not necessarily the focus in qualitative research. This study does not aim at being able to generalise findings. Rather, it is a deep dive in the subjective reflections of a segment of the anti-fascist movement.

The agency the activists were given in the sampling procedure can also raise questions of whether this research is used as a mouthpiece by the respondents for promoting the anti-fascist agenda. This is an inevitable risk which must be acknowledged, but it is difficult for me as a researcher to expose this potential incentive. Nonetheless, the respondents did not seem to glorify their political activism during the interviews, as they willingly discussed issues and concerns regarding the movement. This suggests that the respondents did not participate merely to promote their agenda to outsiders.

As discussed in section 4.5, the participant observation method was used to observe two distinct counterdemonstrations. This can perhaps reveal a limitation of the observational data in this project. I did not permeate the anti-fascist networks and I did not commit longitudinal field work that could give me "thick descriptions" of everyday interactions (Geertz 1973). Instead, the observational data in this project represents snapshots of anti-fascist contentious episodes. These events did not allow me to be a participant observer of everyday interactions. Rather, I became an observer of intense and quarrelsome situations that were more oriented towards direct action than everyday interaction among activists. The reliability and objectivity of the participant observation can be useful to discuss as a potential limitation. As the observation carry inevitable subjective reflections from me as a researcher, I argue that the reliability of the method in this application is increased because it overlaps with the respondent's experiences in the interviews. As several of the interviewed activists were present during the demonstrations, the interviews became vehicles for developing an increased understanding of the observations (DeWalt & DeWalt 2011:113).

5. Subjective interpretations of anti-fascism and their implications

It is important to acknowledge that anti-fascism is by default heterogenous and in a constant state of flux due to its reactive nature (Copsey 2016). In order to understand the dynamic mechanisms and relations that shape anti-fascist activists as players in a local context, it is important to form a depiction of subjective motivations and justifications that constitute the emotive and creative micro-foundations of contentious episodes (Jasper 2015; Ellefsen 2018). Subjective meanings and emotions are also crucial for player's actions, as they permeate goals, means and self-understanding (Jasper 2015). However, anti-fascism is not only grounded in direct political action, but also subcultural and value-laden characteristics that rely on historical symbolism, ideology and strategies (Jämte 2017).

This chapter analyses therefore the ways in which activists in Oslo subjectively interpret, legitimise and apprehend their own political activism. First, this chapter explores the ways in which the respondents define anti-fascism as a concept. The respondents provide a variety of suggestions to an 'anti-fascist minimum', but generally emphasise broad definitions of the term. Second, this chapter analyses perceptions of 'anti-fascist collective identity' and shows that the activists relate contemporary anti-fascism to their historic and symbolic heritage.

Third, this chapter explores the perceived political importance of anti-fascist resistance. This importance is primarily embedded in the idea of anti-fascism being a civil mission and that freedom of speech is not boundless.

5.1. Subjective definitions of anti-fascism: towards an anti-fascist minimum?

During the interviews, activists often attempted to reach an 'anti-fascist minimum'. An 'anti-fascist minimum' is the common elements that are seen as necessary to be able to define oneself as an anti-fascist. Copsey (2010:xviii) argues that the anti-fascist project can be compared to a many-hued kaleidoscope in which all its varieties share a common point of intersection. Hence, as the multiplicity of anti-fascist networks is many-hued, it becomes useful to analyse the ways in which anti-fascist activists perceive their central commonalities.

Unsurprisingly, as the anti-fascist movement comprise activists from various backgrounds, the respondents emphasised a range of defining characteristics and themes. Even though there are similarities in their accounts, they also diverge in several aspects, which suggests that the anti-fascist movement in Oslo is not a unified entity but comprised of activists' subjective legitimations. However, the activists by and large agree that there should be a low threshold for being an anti-fascist:

> *I think that... one of the most common slogans at demonstrations is... at least partly, that "we are all anti-fascists", which I think is like... I think that there should be a low threshold for calling oneself an anti-fascist. We do not want to make it to a closed thing where you have to earn it.*

This quote show that the activist embraces a very broad perception of anti-fascist activism and that it is not a label that is acquired by, for example, in-group and internal membership relations. The slogan "*we are all anti-fascists*" arguably signals an attempt to comprise the broader population into their project. Alongside the classic slogans that draw inspiration from its historical heritage, such as "*Alerta, Alerta, Anti-fascista!*", and slogans that attempted to encompass 'everyone', such as "*Everyone in Oslo hates Nazis!*", were unremittingly called by the activists at the counterdemonstrations at Tøyen torg and Sinsen. The variety of slogans give insights into how the activists attempt to embrace broad mobilisation among civil society and still withhold their anarchist and alternative traditions. The duality between anti-fascist

historicism and broad mobilisation is highly prevalent in many aspects of the anti-fascist project in Oslo, which is indicated throughout this analysis. This suggests that parts of the movement develop towards more pragmatic and diverse forms, which can be associated to research committed in Sweden and Denmark (Jämte 2017; Jämte, Lundsted & Wennerhag 2020). One respondent elaborates why this might be the case in the attempt to pinpoint the central qualities of anti-fascist activism:

> *Anti-fascism is... self-defence.* [...] *if not self-defence of the individual "I", which it often can be if you belong to an* [anti-fascist] *group, then self-defence of a collective "we", as a community that consists of different people. Yeah, so anti-fascism is... if you're going to apply a wide definition, then it is every conceivable way of working against fascist politics.*

This quote elaborates on the duality of slogans that attempt to encompass 'everyone' and shows that there are political evaluations and strategic reasonings behind them. Following the strategic interactionist perspective, one can associate the duality in the anti-fascist slogans with the *extension dilemma* presented by Jasper (2004:8). The strategic evaluations that are developed in the interactions among players produce the rationale for either proclaiming to be a broad and inclusive movement or a collective entity with common aims and motivations, which both imply certain possibilities and constraints. Even though the respondent acknowledged that self-defence is a key feature of anti-fascism on the movement-level due to its transgressive and conflictual praxis, anti-fascism is also seen as a movement that attempts to protect the general population against forces who attempts to diminish its diversity. Hence, anti-fascism is seen as self-defence not only against structural or individual threats, but also on behalf of minorities that are susceptible to far-right politics. [9]

In this sense, the anti-fascists recognise themselves somewhat as a shield that redirects fascist violence towards themselves rather than prone minorities. This evaluation suggests that the anti-fascist movement in Oslo inevitably pursues broad support as it seeks to protect segments of the population from external threats. The focus on inclusiveness and broad mobilization arguably resembles the origins of anti-fascism in the inter-war period, which was grounded in broad mobilization against the threat of institutionalised Fascism (Rabinbach 1996). One

[9] Minorities refers to a broad spectrum of minority populations, e.g. ethnic, racial, religious and sexual minority groups.

could argue that this context resembles the contemporary far-right's turn to institutionalised politics across Europe (Schain 2006). However, it does, perhaps paradoxically, simultaneously contrast the resurgence of the anti-fascism in alternative and autonome movements. These movements were arguably more exclusive in the sense that they relied on more specific identity traits and alternative political trajectories (Moore & Roberts 2009; Cuninghame 2010). Nevertheless, the focus on a low threshold for calling oneself an activist does not necessarily directly connect to the desire for a broad mobilisation against the far-right. Instead, when activists state that there should be a low threshold for becoming an anti-fascist activist, it can rather suggest that there is no boundary to *who* can mobilise, and which *tools* are seen as applicable.

The activists' experiences show that anti-fascism often is mobilised in form of small groups and networks, without necessarily considering already existing networks. These small groups sometimes derive from groups of friends with political motivations and incentives, which arguably shows that a focus on interactive and creative aspects of collective action is important, as suggested by Jasper (2004). One respondent recalled one particular event that exemplifies the locality and disperse nature of anti-fascist activism. The informant had established an Anti-Fascist Action network in a relatively small town with some politically engaged friends. At one they arranged a counter-protest against SIAN, who held a stand at one of the town's squares. They were soon expelled from the area by the police as a consequence of direct action. Interestingly, as this happened, another group of masked anti-fascists suddenly appeared (the respondent recalled these activists to be significantly older and more militant than their own network), ready for direct action. The respondent emphasised that they did not have any knowledge of other AfA-networks in the area, and they were surprised that they were not the only network. This event shows that AfA-networks can be so local that several, distinct networks with no knowledge of each other can co-exist with diverse strategic evaluations shared environments.

One respondent stated that anti-fascism is not an ideology, opinion or an argument in a discussion. Rather, anti-fascism is primarily something you *do*. In this sense, some of the respondents emphasised the *praxis* of anti-fascism and neglected its ideological and identity underpinnings to some degree:

> *I think that anti-fascism is active work to limit the growth of fascism. So, I think that anti-fascism is on the practical side of thing. It is something you do, in a way. I wouldn't define it as an ideology or something like... values... it is actions, and it can involve a large variety of actions* [...] *but it can't only be on the level of belief.*

This respondent sees anti-fascism as broad project that encompass every form of physical activity that is in opposition to the far-right, and this activity can be of many different categories. Copsey (2010:xv) elaborates on the distinction between what he calls *active* versus *passive* anti-fascism. Active anti-fascism refers to the *act* of opposing, whereas passive anti-fascism refers to the *state* of being in opposition. Passive anti-fascism is therefore seen as the more intricate forms of opposition that does not rely on direct confrontation. Copsey suggests that this distinction is initially useful but becomes unclear in the sense that 'passive' anti-fascism also is a central part of the physical resistance, such as e.g. planning a counterdemonstration or spreading information, which some respondents stated they spent a lot of time doing. This blurred distinction is thus also present in the respondents' reflections. As shown above, some respondents emphasised the physical and practical dimensions of anti-fascism. Yet, others identified more ideologically and historically oriented dimensions that are more oriented towards identity work.

5.2. Anti-fascism as (collective) identity

The attempts to define anti-fascism as a political project raised questions of whether or not a "anti-fascist identity" exists, and further suggests that segments of the anti-fascist movement in Oslo both attempt to preserve their subcultural and countercultural roots as well as aiming for wider and more pragmatic mobilisation. Hence, the activists' relationship to the anti-fascist history and symbolism was somewhat conflicted. On the one hand, activists valued the anti-fascist symbols and history as it placed their own activism into a historical context. On the other hand, some activists argued that anti-fascist symbolism and subcultural traits, that are associated with anti-fascist collective identity, were hinderances for achieving contemporary aims. Rather than suggesting that there is a distinct "anti-fascist subculture", one respondent suggested that the leftist political movement in Oslo could be seen as a broader subculture that attracts a variety of identity traits:

Well, there is a... yeah, because you can see the leftists in Oslo as a subculture, in a way, but like, I don't think it is subculturally tied to the punk movement or to hip-hop or anything like that. The punks are there, of course, and that's nice, but I wouldn't even say that they are the majority most of the time. But the fact that Blitz exists as a house, a physical place, as a place that has speakers for demonstrations, a place to organise events and gigs makes it kind of important, as there aren't many places to do that stuff. That makes it kind of legit and not so subcultural.

This quote shows that Blitz is not merely a subcultural hub for alternative politics, but more as an advantageous strategic arena for political planning and storing materials for demonstrations, which arguably allows for collective community building rooted in a do-it-yourself logic (Finn & Checkoway 1998; Moore & Roberts 2009). Even though the respondent recognises the subcultural elements and identity traits that are traditionally associated with anti-fascism and alternative politics, such as punk or hip-hop music, the anti-fascist movement is recognised as politics rather than culture. In this sense, the respondent suggests that the anti-fascist movement is comprised of various collective identities and politically engaged people that cooperatively form the anti-fascist movement. As collective identities are constantly renegotiated by the relations among players (Jämte *et al.* 2020), one can suggest that the focus on broad mobilisation as a consequence of new far-right threats has reduced notions of collective identity among the respondents. Rather than seeing anti-fascism as a specific collective identity or being subculturally embedded, it is rather described as 'pure politics' that is comprised by a variety of subcultures and identities.

This can be aligned to Jasper & McGarry's (2015) notion of collective identities being central for recruitment potentials. Rather than framing the anti-fascist movement as transgressive and inaccessible, a shift towards pragmatism and inclusion gives the movement the ability to frame themselves as more inclusive. Yet, as the framing of collective identities also entails risks (ibid.:3), the shift towards 'pure politics' runs the chance of decreasing the internal solidarity of the movement. However, it is argued that autonomous movements that ground their existence in negations, such as *anti*-fascists, reduce the wish for collective identity, as it does not imply "we-ness", but rather an opposition to "others", which implies a refusal of self-definition (Fominaya 2015).

Even though the respondents did not see the anti-fascism as a distinct identity per se, they valued its symbolism and history, which definitely implies some form of collective identity work. The history of anti-fascism gave the activists a sense of belonging and legitimised their political project not only for personal motivation, but also functioned as a presentation of their 'political selves' to outsiders as a part of a longitudinal history, as this respondent states:

> *Well, there is something about connecting things to great historical movements that, in a way, gives legitimation and belonging which lets people see that this isn't something we've come up with, but that it is... a long history.*

The anti-fascist history is therefore central for their political understanding, as they regard fascism as a structural concern that grows alongside the capitalist economic system. In this sense, the anti-fascist heritage encircles the activists' political selves in an established and longitudinal political movement with a comprehensible worldview. However, it also gives the activists the ability to configure strategies directly from historical experiences and lessons. Two respondents highlighted that family members who resisted the Nazi occupation of Norway during WWII was inspirational and drew direct lines from their resistance to their own activism. Hence, the collective identity of anti-fascism is complex as it draws lines back to as long as the 1940s, which gives the activists an inevitable sense of identity, at least on a personal/family level, grounded in historical perspectives. The accumulation of anti-fascist resistance results in a strategic toolbox, which the activists use deliberately and to some degree shape, or perhaps even is a central part of, the anti-fascist collective identity. The same respondent elaborated on the concept of "the anti-fascist toolbox":

> *Well... There are some fundamental things in the toolbox when it comes to anti-fascism, which... which doesn't change much depending on the situation... like, it is supposed to be uncomfortable and cost energy and time to be a Nazi* [...] *So if you think that the law isn't the best solution to contest these movements then you'll have to look for methods that are available at the grass-root level.*

The respondent illustrates a linkage between the anti-fascist heritage and the struggle being an inherently civil mission.[10] Interestingly, while explaining the establishment of the anti-fascist

[10] The notion of anti-fascism being a civil mission is discussed further in section 5.3.

network Motmakt [11], one respondent furtherly exemplified the importance of the anti-fascist history:

> *Yeah, there were very few people involved in the beginning, and there were a lot of people of the type that enjoyed reading and studied at University. It was kind of... kind of a history club where we sat and discussed Spain in 1936 and why those experiences meant that we had to carry out those particular forms of politics now.*

While this respondent recalled the establishment of Motmakt as being an academic history club, it also arguably shows that the history is not only there for history's sake. The anti-fascist history does have an impact on their perception of contemporary activism and how it should be carried out. As the activists look at history to see the patterns of fascist surgencies from an economic-materialist rationale, the tools for direct action also become collective identity traits that are applicable to contemporary conditions. Fominaya (2015) finds the same notions in her research on collective identity among autonomous movements and suggests that strategies are important aspects of convergence and collective identity.

However, the dual heritage of the movement does not only make some strategies and tools for direct action against fascism spatiotemporally independent, but it also shapes other, perhaps more cultural, aspects of the movement. As previously mentioned, the activists' motivations and legitimations also become visible in their use of symbolism. The symbolism in question is comprised of slogans, logos and clothing, which is oriented towards developing a common identity by being distinct political markers. As some of the activists pursue a more pragmatic and open-ended anti-fascism, the symbolism was seen as somewhat problematic as they create a further distinction between in- and out-group members. Yet, the activists by and large agreed that anti-fascist symbols, which are used on stickers, posters, clothing and banners, are a significant part of their activism which they appreciate on a personal level.

As Fominaya (2015:65) argues that collective identity can be either a *product* or a *process*, one can argue that the collective identity among anti-fascist activists in Oslo carry references to both. Their collective identity is processual in the sense that the activists deprioritise subcultural traits for 'pure politics' and broad mobilisation in response to the diversification

---

[11] A presentation of Motmakt can be found in section 6.1.

of the far-right, which signals notions of identity work founded in the relations and interactions of the present actors. However, their symbolic, historical and strategic heritage is arguably a collective identity product. These symbolic aspects of the anti-fascist movement remain static and cherished and are maintained in the processual development of the anti-fascist networks.

5.3. The political importance of anti-fascism

Whereas the two previous sections discussed the ways in which anti-fascist activists in Oslo define anti-fascism and its relationship to subcultural traits and symbolism, this subchapter explores *why* anti-fascism is perceived as being an important movement in contemporary society. As previously mentioned, the activists claim that anti-fascism is a form of self-defence that opposes movements whose politics would entail exclusion of minority groups based on nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or religion. However, defining anti-fascism as self-defence raises some analytical questions. Why is do the anti-fascist activists see anti-fascism as their own responsibility, and why is it a civil mission? How do they legitimate direct action alongside freedom of speech and no platforming? What follows is an analysis of the ways in which the activists reflect upon these questions.

As Bray (2017:xv) states, anti-fascism can be seen as a rejection of the classical liberal phrase incorrectly ascribed to Voltaire: “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it”. This quote, alongside its liberal tradition of freedom of speech, entails that freedom of speech is absolute, and that any idea or political opinion should be disputed without physical confrontation. One could argue that this tradition implies that opinions exist on a marketplace of ideas (Gordon 1997), where the most rational ideas will win and hence contribute to the progression of society. Despite stating that they do not oppose freedom of speech, the activists by and large defied the notion of a marketplace of ideas and argued that fascism is not a logical form of reasoning but rather a damaging symptom of the inequalities of capitalism. Hence, as fascism is perceived as an inherently violent and exclusionary consequence of the economic system, the activists saw no benefit in engaging in conversation with perceived fascist movements. Rather, the aim was to resist their growth.

I guess I can call myself a freedom of speech-fundamentalist in a way. It shouldn't be up to the state to fix these things [...] *I think that we shouldn't pre-censor anything. I think that people should be able to say whatever the fuck they want, but it's not like they're not going to face consequences when they agitate for genocide. That has nothing to do with freedom of expression.*

Well, they call it freedom of expression and democracy while at the same time they spit and hate on groups which means that those groups cannot participate in said democracy if they're allowed to stand there and remain uncontested. So that I will not tolerate. And we don't.

These two quotes illustrate how activists align themselves, the state and their political opponents in relation to freedom of speech. Several of the activists proclaim that freedom of speech is essentially a relationship between an opinion-holder and the state. Therefore, due to the activists' inherent scepticism towards the state as a power holder, they argue that it should not have the right to infringe on freedom of speech. A state infringement on freedom of speech was argued to carry strong authoritarian connotations which the activist maintained could be used against themselves in other contexts. As freedom of speech is seen as a relationship between the state and civic society, it is consequently seen as irrelevant in the relations between opposing civic movements. This illuminates how the activists see anti-fascism as a civil concern, and how the activists' fundamental rationales for strategic action is founded in relations between themselves and the state as an actor. Interestingly, this indicates that the anti-fascist activists also label acts by the state as a power holder as contained or transgressive, and that this evaluation of accepted forms of action is not as one-sided as Tilly & Tarrow (2015) would perhaps suggest. Any attempt to silence or deem social and political movements illegal would be considered authoritarian (i.e. transgressive, as it crosses the boundaries for what is accepted by *civil society* rather than the state), and the activists fear that any normalisation of such measures could affect themselves.

The second of the preceding quotes exemplifies how the activists deemed their political resistance as important. The anti-fascist did not only see their resistance as being a defence against far-right physical violence, but also far-right discourse. The far-right is not only considered violent in terms of physical action, but it also poses a discursive threat for the democratic engagement of minority groups that are seen as being threatened. Therefore,

public expressions of the far-right infringe the rights of others and are therefore seen as threatening to democracy, minority groups and freedom of speech in a broader context. In this sense, the activists see anti-fascism as being an altruistic movement, as it seeks to restrict the threatening potential of far-right movements on behalf of the various groups that would be discriminated against if said far-right movements would gain influence. Any civil discussion with organised fascism and to allowing them platforms to express themselves was seen to merely socially legitimise their viewpoints in the public sphere and thus give them prospects for further recruitment.

> *I don't think that fascists build support by having good arguments, because they don't. So, I don't think that to have good arguments against fascism necessarily is effective. It's not like there's a marketplace of ideas where the best ideas get the most support just by being rational. I think fascism mobilises by exploiting people's emotions. People feel disempowered, they feel small, they feel stepped on, and they're told a story where everything is the fault of a group of people, it's the immigrants' fault, and it's like that the fascists recruit. It has not much to do with argumentation.*

This activist sees the far-right as essentially manipulative and discards the influence discussion might have on reducing its political impact. Rather, to allow the far-right to speak publicly provides a leeway for influencing people that are in economic and social deprivation. Hence, anti-fascism is seen as an important way of resisting this manipulation. Giving the far-right platforms to broadcast their views will only, according to the activists, result in normalisation and an escalation of the problem. This is in part why the activists saw it as crucial to engage in direct and civil action to silence the far-right.

5.4. Conclusion

This chapter has showed the ways in which anti-fascist activists in Oslo subjectively legitimate and comprehend their incentives, strategies and actions. It is apparent that anti-fascism is not an easy concept to clearly define, and the activists diverged on what it entails in theory and praxis. Yet, it is clear that anti-fascism is seen primarily a physical reaction to organised far-right movements grounded in structural analyses of societal historicism. The most interesting aspect is the ways the anti-fascist networks strategically develop in order to both be able to be considered a broad movement as well as embracing their prominent cultural

and political heritage. On the one hand, some activists argued that anti-fascism needs to be a broad an inclusive movement because it inherently attempts to protect minority populations from external threats. On the other, other activists valued the historical heritage, which was seen as an important factor in the construction of their collective identity. These two aspects were seen as somewhat oppositional and conflicted.

Following Jasper's extension dilemma (2004:8), one can clearly see that the anti-fascist movement is divided between their heritage and a longing for broader mobilisation, which forces identity work on what anti-fascism should involve in relation to other actors (Snow 2001). Yet, as the anti-fascist activists highlighted a set of political tools and strategies that are legitimised by historical lessons, the activists maintain a continuity in their collective identity despite having to strategically evaluate other symbolic aspects of the movement, such as their use of symbols and slogans. The collective identity of the anti-fascist movement has largely been grounded in countercultural and ideological traits, and the focus on broad mobilisation arguably weakens their symbolic collective identity. Therefore, the anti-fascist activists seek to restructure the meaning of anti-fascism activism in relation to the mainstream population and new far-right movements (Benford & Snow 2000).

6. Anti-fascist activism in Oslo in a relational perspective: central actors

Anti-fascist networks are, as previously demonstrated, highly diverse and diverge on several central aspects, such as strategies, participant base and political affiliations. Most respondents are, or have been, engaged in more than one network. Some helped establishing new networks and abandoning former. Hence, this research is able to present these networks and show how they develop alongside each other and focus on different aspects of the anti-fascist opposition. In this sense, anti-fascist networks do not only develop alongside the far-right and other external actors, but also alongside other anti-fascist networks.

Whether or not anti-fascist networks are able to cooperate is dependent on their underlying ideological motivations, their choice of strategies and the underlying social relations that manifest them. Following the strategic interactionist perspective (Jasper 2004), one could argue that it is reductive to frame anti-fascist networks as already defined collective entities.

Rather, they should be perceived as autonomous social groups, consisting of individuals with experiences and emotions, who collectively make political decisions grounded in their common interpretations of anti-fascist identity and frameworks. The ways in which these networks cooperate shape the developments of the contemporary anti-fascist movement.

6.1. Anti-fascist networks and organisations

The anti-fascist networks the respondents were affiliated with are various Anti-Fascist Action (AfA) networks, Motmakt and Oslo Mot Rasisme (*Oslo Against Racism,* OmR). One respondent had also previously cooperated with Tjen Folket (TF). What follows is a short presentation of each of these organisations and networks in order to being able to exemplify their cooperation and divergences. It is important to note that I do not claim to be able to present them in their entirety but ground these presentations in the data-material of this research.

Anti-Fascist Action is perhaps the most established and well-known form of organised anti-fascism and carry long-lasting ideological, subcultural and political connotations. These networks, despite being heterogenous in the sense that they exist independently of each other in local settings, are grounded in autonome, anarchist and alternative traditions. AfA in Oslo is part of the international AfA network, which makes it part of a broader movement than the other networks and organisations that were identified in this research. AfA was described as the spearhead of anti-fascism by some respondents, and the activists are therefore inaccessible and anonymous due to their transgressive strategies and ideology.

Motmakt was an autonome organisation that was established in Oslo in 2009. This organisation was seen by some of the respondents as a divergence from the typical subcultural aspects of the Blitz house and punk movement. As Blitz became increasingly cultural, activists who founded Motmakt longed for a more politically oriented movement that was not subculturally contingent. It was emphasised that this was not a distinct break away from Blitz and its surrounding environment, but rather an attempt to direct themselves towards political struggles rather than culture. Motmakt was not a purely anti-fascist network, but a broader anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian organisation grounded in radical left-libertarian and socialist ideology.

Oslo mot Rasisme (OmR) is the newest network in Oslo and arguably illustrates some of the most interesting developments of anti-fascism in Oslo. Rather than defining itself as an organisation with its own aims and goals, OmR is instead a loosely connected network of many various actors. In contrast to AfA and Motmakt, OmR is not grounded in an overarching ideological analysis. Rather, the network is comprised of a wide array of activists who belong to various cohorts from the political left. According to one of the respondents, OmR was founded as a necessity when Motmakt no longer was active. Thus, OmR is seen as a broader expansion of the role Motmakt otherwise would have in terms of organising demonstrations against the far-right. Instead of being a fixed organisation, OmR stressed the importance of cooperation between actors from various organisations and political parties. The subjective political analysis behind the activism and why the activists choose to take action against the far-right is not the most important aspect. What matters the most for OmR is to build a unified resistance against far-right movements on a larger scale than transgressive and alternative movements would be capable of doing.

Tjen Folket (TF) is a revolutionary marxist-leninist-maoist communist group founded in 1998. This group works for an armed revolution and is therefore perhaps the most ideological and transgressive movement that respondents of this research have been involved with. It is important to note that this research has not interviewed any members of TF, and the organisation will therefore not have a major focus in this analysis. However, one respondent maintained to have worked with activists from TF in anti-fascist settings, which can shed some light on the variances among anti-fascist cooperation and divergences.

6.2. Cooperation and divergence

The anti-fascist networks do cooperate in several ways and can be seen as interacting players with the same overarching aim. Interestingly, the cooperation among movements such as AfA and OmR rely on the movements' strengths and weaknesses. In a more concrete sense, they are able to allocate tasks and areas of expertise among the movements in order to build an anti-fascist movement that is simultaneously broad and narrow. Even though the activists by and large agreed that anti-fascism should generally be a broad and civil project with a low threshold for engagement, they also often saw the need for a more specialised and secretive effort. In this sense, the cooperation between AfA and OmR shows that anti-fascist networks have a sense of duality between the transgressive and the contained forms of action, and there

is an elaborate attempt to make both camps exist simultaneously with intimate cooperation through relational dynamics.

The cooperation between AfA and OmR was seen during the counterdemonstration against Scandza Forum 4th November 2019 at Sinsen in Oslo. Scandza Forum is a series of conferences that have been arranged in Sweden, Norway and Denmark since 2017. The conferences have strong ties to white supremacy movements and the most radical parts of the alt-right movement (Færseth 2019). The place and time of the event was supposed to be secret, but activists from AfA managed to find this information and OmR formed the counterdemonstration against the conference. The aim of the counterdemonstration was to set up a blockade to hinder the participants to get to the forum. By shouting anti-fascist slogans and making themselves heard, anti-fascist activists sought to make the situation uncomfortable for participants of the conference as well as alarming the surrounding area of what was happening. The demonstration was terminated when the police arrested 28 activists for not following their instructions. They were held in custody by the police and were in total fined for approximately 300 000 kr. The way the networks organised this demonstration is interesting and illustrates their cooperation. One respondent that was affiliated with OmR described AfA in this way:

> *They are a group that work continuously. Like, at Scandza for example, they worked with information and research and they are very good at that sort of stuff. My impression is that their work is... They are kind of a constant in changing times. You know that they are there and that they have control.* [...] *Now Oslo Against Racism takes more care of the mobilisation, that can be less comprehensive in terms of security measures. They make things easier for us, and it would be more difficult for AfA to do many of the things that we do.*

This description illustrates the ways in which AfA and OmR cooperate and how they utilise each other's strengths and weaknesses in order to construct a unified and broader anti-fascist movement. The cooperation allows for having a physical impact with more participants while still doing research that require high levels of secrecy. In this sense, they are also able to maintain the anti-fascist heritage while simultaneously developing pragmatic opposition. This aspect is interesting, as it implies that the diversification of the anti-fascist movement, which

is by and large a response to the diversification of their far-right opponents, has led to a situation where anti-fascist networks relationally depend on each other's abilities.

Even though AfA and OmR do cooperate by sharing information and emphasising various aspects of their movements, there are also divergences among the some of the anti-fascist networks and organisations. Most notably, one respondent emphasised the reluctance for anarchist movements like Anti-Fascist Action to cooperate with Tjen Folket. The divergence was seen to be rooted in strategic, organisational and ideological differences. AfA and TF were seen to differ strategically due to the ways they root their activism in ideological reasoning. Whereas the anarchist and autonome movements emphasise flat organisational structures and neglect any form of authority, TF is more oriented towards charismatic leadership and political efficiency. The respondent who had worked with TF in the past complimented their efficiency and uncompromising forms for action. The activist argued that this was largely a result of the holistic and revolutionary political framework and ideology, which is undoubtably embedded in transgressive action. Anarchist anti-fascists, the respondent argued, are not able to mobilise with the same efficiency because their organisational practices are centred around joint decision making and not holistic ideological legitimations. This example illustrates that organisational practices, strategy and ideology are factors that play into the cooperation (or lack thereof) among anti-fascist networks. Despite having some common aims in terms of anti-fascism, their other organisational values and practices are seen to be too conflicting to cooperate in any functional sense.

6.3. Anti-fascism as local and transnational: international solidarity

Anti-fascism is a fascinating movement as it is embedded in both local contexts and transnationalism simultaneously. Anti-fascist networks do not only manifest itself in local settings, but they are also rooted in a transnational association that disregards national borders as limitations for political action. Yet, the activists see anti-fascism as primarily being a local form of activism because it seeks to confront the far-right directly. Even though the anti-fascist movement is longitudinal and appears in a wide array of national, political and cultural contexts, the networks draw inspiration from many of the same strategic lessons, ideological ideals and historical events. Hence, the anti-fascist movement is highly diverse but yet maintain the same fundamental values and strategies internationally. This section examines

the ways in which the respondents in Oslo manifest their activism in a local context while still maintaining relations with the transnational association.

One activist stated that local know-hows and experiences are important aspects of anti-fascist organising. Anti-fascism was claimed to be fundamentally designed to be street-level politics. The anti-fascist movement is dependent on the networks that constitute it in any given context and is therefore concerned with building confidence and trust among the networks and general population over time. This was seen as a necessity for manufacturing broader and more inclusive forms of mobilisation. One activist also argued that only local networks could build the mutual trust that is needed for transgressive and direct forms of action. The emphasis on seeing their activism as mainly grounded in local contexts was rooted in ideological analyses, practicalities and historical experiences. The activists cherished flat organisational structures grounded in anti-authoritarian rationales, which they argue creates a sense of personal responsibility for participation. Therefore, all decisions are made locally which was argued to give the ability for tailoring strategies, tactics and aims for specific cases and situations.

Yet, anti-fascism it is simultaneously rooted in a transnational association. One respondent argued that this is one of the central premises of the movement as it sees fascism as a structural issue that grows regardless of national borders. As the activists are largely anti-nationalistic, they also regarded national borders as an inept concept for political activism in its own right. Instead of limiting their cooperation with other networks to nationality, one activist explained that travel time was a more suitable measure for defining who one could support. In this sense, it is seen as more natural to cooperate with e.g. Swedish anti-fascists in Gothenburg rather than other Norwegian cities as Trondheim, as the travel distance is significantly lower, and the threats were evaluated to be inherently alike regardless of context. The aftermath of the demonstration at Scandza Forum illustrates the transnational aspects of the anti-fascist movement and how they support each other regardless of borders. 28 anti-fascist activists were detained by the police and fined in total over 300.000 NOK. Shortly after the activists started a fundraiser:

> *Well, often it becomes quite regional. But we travel, exchange experiences, participate on each other's events, give material support to the extent it is possible. The Swedes have collected a lot of money after the blockade at Scandza, and they're gonna do the*

same in Denmark and probably Finland as well. The Brits have started fundraisers for the activists, Plan C has started a fundraiser...There's money being sent across borders in all sorts of ways. So, it is like, we see it as... international trends that must be dealt with everywhere, right?

In a local context, support meant arranging concerts and events, but their presence online allowed for a wider and transnational backing. Various anti-fascist networks and organisations in several countries contributed with economic support, which suggests that the networks are loyal and helpful to each other despite not knowing each other personally. The transnational support are important relations for the execution of anti-fascist protests, as it makes monetary penalisation less threatening for future action. It relieves individual activists of the penal consequences of collective action, and thus allows the anti-fascist resistance to be an inherently *collective* struggle.

6.4. Media and civil society

The media is certainly a powerful actor in terms of the development of social and political movements (McAdam *et al.* 2001:44), and the activists did to varying degrees elaborate on how media outlets can be seen as actors who influence the possibilities and constraints the activists face. An utmost interesting matter, which every single activist brought up in the interviews, was how the representations of anti-fascism in the US was seen to affect Norwegian attitudes towards their activism. The representations were deemed harmful, and none of the activists seemed to relate to their American counterparts. This is an interesting perspective, as the activists simultaneously embrace the movement's transnational solidarity. Anti-fascism in the US is seen as a somewhat simplified caricature of European anti-fascism. Yet, as they carry the same symbols, flags, slogans and anonymous black clothing during protests, it is inevitable to become associated with them.

I was thinking about something I wanted to specify, like, that the American discourse around how people in the US use the expression "antifa" and that kind of thing... It is interesting how it affects the discourse here. The American discourse gets a lot of attention in general, and it takes a lot of space due to the culture we live in. The fact that people often talk about "AfA" and "Antifa" as something concrete and use the logo as if it symbolises anti-fascists generally, but as I've understood it there are more

loosely organised affinity groups, while we got a different tradition here in Europe. I think AfA, or Anti-Fascist Action, has a different role here. They're like... it's like a group that we cooperate with, like Motmakt and Oslo mot Rasisme, we cooperate with them but in the US there probably wouldn't be as clear-cut lines like there are here.

So Black Bloc Antifa has gotten a lot of negative attention in the US, and they talked about labelling it as a terror organisation at some point. Cause... they've gotten a so... when people first start talking, it spreads so rapidly, right? And you don't need more than a few episodes and a couple of comrades who film that they do stuff with some flags with anti-fascist logos on... and then all the commentators will get right at it, from the far-right to liberals to social democrats, like, everyone who doesn't really get anti-fascism.

These two quotes reflect some interesting aspects about how media representations of anti-fascism in the US affect their Norwegian counterparts. First, the activists think that the discourse on anti-fascism in the US spreads internationally and has a direct effect on Norwegian perceptions of the movement. Second, anti-fascism in the US was seen to be less organised and differentiated than in Oslo. Instead of consisting of various actors who specialise in e.g. research or broad mobilisation, anti-fascism in the US was understood to be more loosely structured. Third, the second quote exemplifies one way the symbolism and transgressive action in certain cases might be damaging to the movement as a whole and makes the movement easy to generalise among actors who does not have any clear knowledge of the movements' history or motivations.

Even though the activists regarded the situation in the US and media representations of the anti-fascist movement there as somewhat damaging, it was also argued that the civil responses to anti-fascism in Oslo was somewhat different. The *certification* mechanism, which entails external validation on actors, claims and performances (McAdam *et al.* 2001:146), has therefore a significant impact on anti-fascist activism in Oslo. Despite feeling that international media misrepresents them due to the transgressive and perhaps more intense forms of anti-fascist contention in the US, the activists argued that the local population of Oslo were by and large supportive of their political stance and actions. Hence, the certification by the media and civil society is both restricting and enabling.

One respondent exemplified this support by the counterdemonstration against SIAN at Tøyen Torg on the 28th September 2019. OmR were one of the central actors in terms of organising and spreading awareness of this counterdemonstration, and between 200-400 people participated. Several organisations, movements and political parties also showed their support alongside the anti-fascist organisations. The event can by and large be described as a broad, yet somewhat transgressive form of mobilisation. People were throwing vegetables and eggs at members of SIAN. Still, the counter-protest was also described as a 'good family event' (Solberg 2019). There was no direct physical violence, but three people were taken in custody by the police and five people were expelled from the area (Lofstad *et al.* 2019). One activist recalled a sight which was seen to exemplify the broad support for anti-fascist organising in Oslo:

> *I think the main story that was carried out was that Tøyen had stopped them. And that's really cool, and that's what we have to build upon. Then you'll show that anti-fascism is more than the stereotypical image people have in their heads... But we still cannot leave our principles and the cultural history. I think that one of the most beautiful things about the demonstration at Tøyen was... we stood there and shouted and coursed, right, and then I see a woman with a hijab, I would guess she was about forty years of age or something. Quite tiny. She wandered around, and she was so relieved. Her smile was so broad, and she shouted really loud, like, "No! Fascists! In our streets!", and that was so cool, so that's something we have to build upon...*

This interpretation shows that the activist cherishes broad mobilisation, and that this is a feature that is recognised as a critical development. Even though SIAN is not recognised as a very serious threat in terms of physical violence, but rather as promoters of hateful discourse and rhetoric, the inclusivity of the demonstration against them indicated a development away from the perception of the far-right and far left as each other's' sole opponents. Instead of primarily framing the demonstration as a conflict between anti-fascists and fascists, the demonstration at Tøyen was seen to exemplify that the far-right is opposed by the general public *accompanied* by anti-fascists, not vice versa. The anti-fascists were a central organising force and a visible part of the demonstration, of course, but the aim was, which they deemed successful, to frame the demonstration as primarily civil resistance.

However, a strategic dilemma appears in the relationship between US media coverage of "antifa" and the anti-fascist activists' emphasis on framing the counterdemonstration as civil resistance. Jasper (2006) argues that the *radicalism dilemma* is present when a movement is divided between transgressive sections of a movement that are able to gain media attention (i.e. US media representations of "antifa") and moderate sections (in this case OmR's organisation of the protest) who does not get as sensational reactions. This dynamic develops an unequal amount of attention to the transgressive sections of the movement, which the activists in Oslo did not have any inclination to be compared with. This also shows the consequence of anti-fascism being a transnational movement, as framing in one context can be transmitted to completely different contexts.

6.5. Police as state security forces

As previously mentioned, the activists largely root their activism in anti-authoritarian and variations of left-libertarian leftist ideologies. This entails that the activists recognise the threat of the far-right as being an issue that should be confronted by grass-root and civil opposition. Hence, it is perhaps no surprise that their relationship to state security forces is somewhat conflicted. Yet, one activist did not see the need to fabricate a bigger conflict than absolutely necessary:

> *Well, there is a conflict there, as the police is instructed to make sure that the fascists are able to hold their events. But apart from that... I think that is no point in, kind of, go too hard against the police, as it quickly can take attention away from the struggle against the fascists. But at the same time, we've seen that the police do what is the easiest for them in any given situation. There's a police legislation which allows them to take in and fine people for simply not following their directions* [...] *and they use that often, they use it preventively, to make things easier for themselves. We saw that at Scandza Forum, where they chose to... it was easier for them to remove 28 counterdemonstrators outside the building that shouted slogans rather than empty the venue of Nazis, which the landlord wanted.*

The activist did not see the need to amplify the conflict with the police but recognised that their interests are inherently oppositional. Some activists also deemed the police as an actor that played a significant role in their own political radicalisation, which is similar to the

analyses by Alimi *et al.* (2015). Police forces thereby become important actors that shape the possibilities and constraints, as well as the radicality, of anti-fascist networks. Interestingly, this conflict is arguably grounded in the activists' reluctance to accept the established societal power structures and their analyses of fascism as a structural threat. Hence, the conflictual relations between the anti-fascists and the police are not merely embedded in oppositional interests during protests but also in ideology. The activists' world view and political analyses are contradictory to what the police as state security forces represents. The activists are largely anti-hierarchical, and while some engage in formal politics, there is still a persistent scepticism towards the state's ability and legitimation to handle what is perceived as grass root level politics.

Vysotsky (2015) argues that this is a form of anarchist policing, as it implies that civil society should be able to manage their own affairs without state interference. Yet, as the activist in the quote above states, there is little interest in actively resist the police as they are not their inherent opponents, despite they function as a hinder for direct action. It is clear, however, that the police force is a central actor that alters the dynamics of anti-fascist activism, as they control and manipulate the configurations, possibilities and outcomes of protests and demonstrations. The relations between police forces, far-right and anti-fascist activists therefore produce the brokerage mechanism (McAdam *et al* 2001), as the police functions as a mediating force between the anti-fascist activists and the far-right. As the activists perceive far-right movements as fundamentally threatening that needs immediate public responses through direct action, the police are seen to interrupt this process and thereby contributing to their growth.

Hence, the relations between state security forces and anti-fascist activists also implicate the category formation mechanism (McAdam *et al.* 2001). However, it is important to note that the effect of this relational mechanism is somewhat one-sided. The police force remains relatively static in their responses, but the activists' ability to alter the police's reaction during contention episodes is limited. Arguably, this dynamic relationship also motivates the turn towards pragmatism, as it gives the activists the incentive to seek anonymity and contained opposition in numbers rather than transgressive action with few activists. The constraints the police pose on activists during protests also showed that the creative and dynamic feature of strategy development is founded in micro-relations and agency in contexts (Jasper 2010), as several activists seemed to attempt to find alternative ways of approaching their opponents

during the observed counterdemonstrations. It is important to note that the aftermath of the counterdemonstration at Scandza Forum produced reactions in form of online news-paper articles which criticised the police for protecting the Forum's participants, as the landlord did not want the event to take place when information about the event and its content was exposed. In this sense, the relationship between anti-fascist activists and the police is one-sided *during* contentious episodes due to the police's coercive power, but reactions afterwards can possibly alter their relations in future contexts.

6.6. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the main recognised actors that influence the development of the anti-fascist movement in Oslo. The main actors were i) the variety of conjoining anti-fascist networks, ii) the anti-fascist movement as a transnational effort, iii) media representations and civil society, and iv) the police force.

The diversity of anti-fascist networks and their ability to cooperate, make them interactive relational players among each other. The various networks devise ideological and strategic differences, and their cooperation (or lack thereof) is important for the movement's ability to oppose far-right opponents as a whole. In terms of cooperation, the data material shows that anti-fascist networks that differ in degrees of secrecy, transgressiveness and ideology are able to construct a more holistic approach to anti-fascist contention through cooperation. The networks are able to cooperate by delegating tasks and areas of expertise based on their capacities, which gives the movement as a whole the ability to stimulate both transgressive and narrow anti-fascist tactics as well as focusing on broad and pragmatic mobilisation.

As the anti-fascist movement is also part of a broader and longitudinal transnational association, international support shapes the abilities of activists in Oslo. This can be embedded in sharing strategies and information, but this was also seen in the monetary support activists in Oslo received in the aftermath of the arrestations during the counterdemonstration against Scandza Forum. Media and civil society were seen to be important actors in the development of anti-fascism in Oslo. The activists highlighted the representations of anti-fascism in the US as damaging to the civil society's understanding of the movement. They argued that the socio-political situation in the US, as well as the characteristics of their anti-fascist resistance, could not be compared to the Norwegian

context. This arguably supports the significance of contextual understandings of the anti-fascist movement. Lastly, the police force was seen as an important actor. As the anti-fascist activists claim that anti-fascism is an obligation for civil society, the police force is seen as a protector for far-right ideology and the capitalist system and thus an hinderance for achieving their goals.

7. The multiplicity of the far-right and its consequences for anti-fascist activism

As discussed in chapter 2.2., the term 'fascism' is ambiguous and challenging to pinpoint (Allardyce 1979; Griffin 1995). Nonetheless, in order to understand the ways in which relational dynamics affect anti-fascist networks and strategies, it is important to understand the activists' interpretation of the term and how they apply it to contemporary far-right movements. This chapter therefore outlines the main recognised opponents and which strategies and tactics are seen as viable for opposing them. Despite some might argue that anti-*fascists* need to apply a suitable definition to their logic, this was not a main concern for the respondents. The main concern is not to find a holistic definition to fascism and then evaluate whether or not far-right groups equate this definition completely. Rather, the activists focused on fascist *elements*. [12] Far-right groups are not seen to have to be fundamentally or holistically fascist in order for the activists to form direct action. Instead, they can contain elements that are perceived as having fascist inclinations. The pursuit then becomes to establish what these elements are and which movements they are applicable. The respondents highlighted three main characteristics of far-right movements that are considered threatening and in need for direct opposition. These three key features were *nationalism*, *organised activity* and *violence*.

Political movements that promote nationalism was seen as threatening because nationalism accentuate exclusion grounded in a *us* and *them* logic. This is perhaps not surprising as nationalism arguably is a key feature of far-right movements (Bjørgo & Ravndal 2019) and anti-nationalism a key feature of anti-fascism. The activists made it clear that the anti-fascist project aim to confront *organised* fascist movements. This feature suggests some interesting aspects of the limitations of anti-fascism. Rather than resisting fascism in all forms, it became

[12] Some activists used the term *fascistoid tendencies* to describe characteristics of opponents.

clear through the interviews that anti-fascism is by and large concerned with far-right movements that exist between the individual level and the formal political system. In this sense, the anti-fascist activists were not directly concerned with unorganised individuals nor far-right political parties that are involved in formal political processes. This evaluation was grounded in strategic concerns, responsibility and moral. The activists did not see it as morally justifiable to mobilise against persons with far-right attitudes or opinions. They argued that it is primarily a private concern when an individual is not organised. Hence, dealing with unorganised individuals with fascist attitudes and opinions requires personal resistance in the form of conversation and persuasion and not direct action. In contrast, any far-right movement that directs itself towards the formal political system is seen to become an issue of broader leftist politics and not the anti-fascist movement.

7.1. To define the enemy: From SIAN to NMR to internet fascism

The interviews and observed counterdemonstrations led to the identification of three main opponents. The identified opponents can be aligned to Bjørgo & Ravndal's (2019:3) conceptualisations of 'radical right' and 'extreme right'. This distinction divides far-right movements into their ideological and strategic differences, such as their relationship to democracy and legitimations of violent tactics. The following categorical presentations do not imply that they are entirely unconnected fragments of the far-right nor that they are here presented in full, but they pose different challenges to the strategies and opportunities of the anti-fascist networks. In reality, they are not absolutely separable, and they overlap in several ways. It is also important to point out that the following presentations are grounded in the activists' perceptions of the movements as antagonists in order to illustrate consequences they have for their activism. It would therefore be problematic to suggest that these are representations that everyone would accept.

These categories, exemplified primarily by two concrete movements, illustrate how anti-fascism develops as a reactive political movement in relation to contemporary far-right movements. To argue that these movements are the only political opponents for the anti-fascist activists would also be misleading. However, they are the ones that were present during the observed counterdemonstrations and the activists highlighted them frequently in the interviews. The multiplicity of threats necessitates diverse forms of action, but the common factor is that they require some form of direct confrontation. Hence, the activists

evaluate what kind of threat the different opponents represent. The activists' understanding of their political opponents range from primarily posing discursive threats to violent threats.

7.1.1. "Discursive fascism": SIAN and the discursive threat

The first opponent of the far-right that the activists frequently face is *Stopp Islamiseringen av Norge* (SIAN). The active members of the movement were not seen to be particularly intimidating or dangerous in a physical sense, but their political agenda as an organisation is seen as discursively threatening. Some activists regarded their opposition to SIAN almost as a chore, and their members as disillusioned. SIAN was also not seen as exceptionally threatening in a physical sense because of their small membership base and inability to engage many campaigners.

> *But yeah, well, the SIAN-people are just a big group of idiots. They aren't achieving much, and it's not attractive to organise with them. I think that perhaps the reason these movement only consists of, like SIAN and Selvstendighetspartiet, consists exclusively of idiots is the resistance they meet all the time as well. There are few people who aren't idiots who would bother with a project like that. Who bother standing at Tøyen torg and listen to poorly written speeches that doesn't make any sense, like, while a thousand people shouts at them to go home?*

This quote illustrates the ways in which SIAN is not perceived as a violent threat, and the activist sees their physical confrontation as effective for reducing their potential for broader mobilisation and physical organisation. Yet, their presence poses a discursive threat in the sense that their world view fundamentally implies some form of exclusion of "others" and pushes the boundaries for legitimate discourse:

> *So that's an aspect, right. That, the space fascists occupy in public is a space where everyone who doesn't fit in with their world view gets excluded from. That's a key difference to other political opponents. For example, if the Conservatives, whom I disagree with deeply, use Tøyen torg, it doesn't mean that they exclude large groups from using that space that day. It doesn't make people feel insecure. That doesn't*

> *happen when the Progress Party has a stand, but it happens when fascists have a stand.* [13]

The activist here accentuates anti-fascism as being inherently oriented towards street politics. It also arguably demonstrates a certain rationale for determining who are seen as fascists. Even though members of SIAN are portrayed as incompetent and annoying, their presence as an organised movement in local contexts is nonetheless seen as threatening for the local population. Despite having several thousand followers on social media (Haanshuus & Jupskås 2017), SIAN managed to mobilise approximately 10 people at their demonstration at Tøyen torg, which shows that it primarily manifests itself online. Their stand carried a certain symbolic significance, as Tøyen is a highly multicultural area with large immigrant populations. In the Facebook event for the stand, SIAN wrote that Tøyen has become a 'no-go zone for good Norwegians' and that it is one of the best examples of how 'the problem of Islam change and destroy areas' (SIAN 2019). Unsurprisingly, these statements formed many reactions and a debate on whether or not SIAN should be allowed to proclaim their views this highly multicultural area (Boger 2019). SIAN stated that: "the politicians believe they can disallow the exercise of democracy. We will come whether they like it or not" (SIAN 2019), which arguably illustrates how SIAN see themselves as protectors of Norwegian culture and democracy while also being oppositional to a perceived political elite. OmR posted prints of flyers online for the counterdemonstration for activists to spread and advised activists to wear hoods and scarves so that SIAN could not identify them or take photos. Members of SIAN did take photos of the counterdemonstration, which is why the anonymous clothing during protests is seen as a necessity and an important safety measure, which is discussed in section 8.1.

SIAN indicates a peculiar development in relation to the anti-fascist activists. This is mostly due to SIAN's political agenda and rationales for action. Instead of aligning themselves to traditional fascist characteristics, they frame themselves as protecting 'their' people from Islam, which they do not perceive as a religion but rather as a totalitarian political ideology. This implies that SIAN can be argued to be a radical far-right movement, as portrayed by Bjørgo & Ravndal (2019). One activist expressed that SIAN and similar groups tend to frame *themselves* as being anti-fascists, as they neglect the religious, social and cultural aspects of

[13] *The Conservatives* refers to the political party *Høyre*. *The Progress Party* refers to *Fremskrittspartiet* (FrP)

Islam but simply frame it as an authoritarian political ideology that threatens Western culture, much like anti-fascists deem fascism as integrally violent and threatening. SIAN attempts to distance themselves from the inherent racism in their political logics and thereby portray themselves as protecting liberal ideas as well as their civilisation from a foreign threat.

7.1.2. "Transgressive fascism": NMR and the violent threat

One of the main opponents of the anti-fascist activists in Oslo is *Den Nordiske Motstandsbevegelsen* (NMR). This movement was seen to be inherently violent in its ideology and praxis. Whereas members of SIAN were not taken too seriously, but yet seen as a discursive threat, NMR was seen to represent the more transgressive and inherently violent aspects of the far-right. The activists see NMR and similar groups as being more oriented towards the classic definition of fascism and national socialism, and therefore pose a more holistic and physical threat. Whereas SIAN and similar networks who are by and large only able to mobilise on internet platforms, NMR and similar networks and organisations are seen to be highly organised in the real world, more ideologically positioned and not as case specific as SIAN.

This can be exemplified by contrasting the observed demonstrations. Whereas SIAN *politicises* Islam and attempts to root themselves in liberal traditions, NMR and other networks and organisations who were represented at Scandza Forum discussed human biological diversity. The aim was to "break these taboos, discuss the "nature versus nurture" debate and human diversity from an evolutionary perspective" (MacDonald 2019). This shows that NMR and similar organisations are more explicitly concerned with race and ethnicity, and they can therefore be perceived as more extreme than SIAN. Scandza Forum is a series of conferences that have been arranged in Sweden, Norway and Denmark since 2017. The conferences have strong ties to white supremacy movements and the most radical parts of the alt-right movement (Færseth 2019).

NMR was presented in the interviews as tougher opponents and prevalent on the street level. Whereas SIAN mainly consists of older adults online, members of NMR were seen as younger, more intense and participating in local and territorial street politics, such as tagging and use of stickers. In this sense, the activists seemed to classify NMR and similar movements in part as a continuation from the conflict between anti-fascists and neo-Nazis in the 1980-90s, despite having a few crucial differences. Firstly, NMR exists across borders and

are highly organised. They were not perceived to be thugs in particular, but rather as an organised movement that attempts to formalise fascism in order to present themselves as respectable and upright.

7.1.3. "Internet fascism": strategic ambivalence

As the far-right has gained a resurgence on the internet (Haanshuus & Jupskås 2017), it is important to understand the ways in which anti-fascist activists reflect upon and handle this development. The local context of the 22 July 2011 terrorist attack by Anders Behring Breivik and the attack against the Al-Noor mosque in Bærum by Philip Manshaus on the 10th August 2019 signifies the importance of discussing such terrorism with anti-fascist activists and whether they see it as their responsibility to contest. There were certain disagreements among the activists about their role in combatting online far-right extremism. The main disagreement was whether or not anti-fascist strategies can be tailored to online manifestations of the far-right. This suggests that the development of the far-right being increasingly exhibited online has made internet itself an arena of interaction (Alimi *et al.* 2015). The strategies that are tailored for internet contention, such as doxing and surveillance, modify the possibilities and constraints anti-fascist activists face. The shift towards internet manifestation of the far-right therefore challenges fundamental aspects of anti-fascism, such as its purpose to oppose physical and organised movements.

Still, Anti-fascist activists do map and investigate their opponents by researching online forums and websites. This was for example seen in the demonstration against Scandza Forum. Whereas activists affiliated with OmR were in charge for organising the physical protest, more secretive activists worked behind the scenes to research the place, time and participants of the conference, which laid the groundworks for the counterdemonstration. Despite the activists' disagreements on their ability to combat fascism online, they agreed that it is a misjudgement to define far-right terrorists as "lone wolves". The biggest challenge of online mobilisation of the far-right was seen to be its ability to recruit and radicalise without necessitating physical appearances. The activists referred to both Manshaus' and Breivik's affiliations and contact with groups like NMR, and they largely agreed that these terrorists did not emerge in a vacuum and to think so would undermine the organisational powers the far-right has on the internet.

However, physical episodes of contention can arguably push the oppositional actors towards online platforms, which perhaps can illustrate why the far-right is increasingly moved over to internet platforms. If one is to follow the activists' conception that anti-fascist opposition is a crucial factor in the far-right's (in)capacity to physically organise, one could argue that the relational dynamics between anti-fascist opposition and the far-right's development is interlinked. As the anti-fascist movement contributes to the reduction of the far-right's ability to physically organise, the far-right would be increasingly pushed towards internet and non-physical platforms, which then in turn could radicalise individuals who commit terrorist acts framed as acts of 'lone wolves'. This reflects the prevalence of the *object shift* mechanism in the arena between the movement and countermovement (McAdam *et al.* 2001:142-148; Alimi *et al* 2015:41), as their relations forces re-evaluations of objectives and characteristics.

As previously mentioned, one activist argued that anti-fascism is primarily concerned with *physical* opposition. Online radicalism of the far-right was therefore seen as a broader political concern. Even though the internet gives leeway for normalising fascist ideology and expressions, the activists argued that this becomes an anti-fascist concern only when it manifests itself physically through organised movements. Other activists stated that anti-fascism could, and to some degree already do, engage in anti-fascist activism online. This suggests perhaps that the relational dynamics on the internet as an arena for contentious politics is not yet sufficiently developed for the reconfiguration of strategies and repertoires. If one is to follow the relational approach, contentious episodes are the social contexts in which relations materialise, which then in turn alter involved actors' repertoires and strategies. This further raises the question of whether the internet as an arena for contentious politics is able to sufficiently establish meaningful relations that alter strategies, due to its diffuse and continuously developing characteristics (Wiedemann 2014). The internet does not allow for contentious *episodes*, but perhaps rather continuous surveillance and spread of information, which arguably does not necessitate alterations in strategy. In this sense, one could argue that actors' strategies solidify by the fluidity of internet relations.

However, this logic is arguably simplistic as it does not consider the multiplicity of relevant actors and the chaotic and continuously developing nature of internet infrastructures (Wiedemann 2014). To acknowledge local anti-fascist movements to be the prime force of reducing the far-right's ability to physically organise is perhaps also simplistic, as the structure and organisation of such movements are, just alike anti-fascist networks, constituted

by individuals with different experiences and aims. The development of far-right movements is arguably also constituted in internal relations and other external actors. Nonetheless, if one is to follow the activists' rationales of the anti-fascist projects' limitations, the transition from physical organisation of the far-right to primarily be metaphysical on internet platforms makes it a broader and discursive project that is not fully adjusted for anti-fascist traditions and strategies.

7.2. Strategies and the anti-fascist toolbox

Whereas the previous section outlined the anti-fascist activists' perceptions of their opponents and how their relational dynamics influence their possibilities and constraints, this section explores the strategies and tactics activists deem most effective and legitimate in various contexts. The activists found the traditional anti-fascist tools and tactics to be relevant and valuable, but the diversity of far-right movements was seen to necessitate strategic differences depending on the context. This suggests that the developments of the far-right do have significant impacts on the anti-fascist movements' possibilities and constraints, and they are therefore forced to evolve in relation to their political antagonists. I will present and discuss four main tactics and strategies that the anti-fascist activists thought to be effective and in which settings they are used. These four strategies and tactics are: i) *doxing*, ii) *counterdemonstrations and protests*, iii) *no platforming* and iv) *territorial street politics*. It is important to note that these are not isolated but often intertwined in the activists' contentious politics. The evaluation of which strategy or combination of strategies to use depends on the opponent, situation and context. The following quote from one of the interviewed activists illustrates how and why these methods are deemed important:

> *I think that we should seek to actively make it so uncomfortable and stigmatised to a be a fascist so that people stop. I think that they should be barred from Oslo. They should not feel as if they've got any room here or be able to do anything without meeting massive resistance. So, I think that how one is going to do it varies from case to case. One strategy is to have massive counterdemonstrations where you drench them with noise and make it difficult for the event to take place, like we did at Tøyen and Scandza. Another can be to expose fascists publicly or on the internet. A third can be to push third parties to not cooperate with fascists, like, people who rent out spaces and... yeah...*

Doxing was seen as an effective tool for reducing fascists' willingness and motivation for organising and appearing in public, and it the main tool for political action in the online arena of interaction. Doxing involves releasing someone's personal details onto the internet with the intent of threatening, humiliate, delegitimatize or intimidate the person (Douglas 2016). As a central aim for the anti-fascist activists is to make it uncomfortable and stigmatised to be a fascist, they argue that it is effective to humiliate and warn the general public of their existence. This, however, can be argued to be strategically problematic in the sense that the activists primarily aim at confronting *organised* movements rather than individuals. However, this distinction was seen to be diminished once an individual become engaged in organised far-right movements. Once this happens, the individual is seen as a representative of the movement and they should therefore bear the consequences it brings. The internet has therefore become a valuable source of information, as one activist stated:

> *Even though the internet has opened up new structures and opportunities for fascists to organise, it's... I think that we don't have to update the analysis but rather update the tools. And in many ways, that's easy because stuff become more accessible when it's online. They write and talk and say stuff on the internet and it's more like "oh, you say so? Here's your name!", in a way.* [...]

In this sense, the internet has allowed the surveillance and sharing of information made the relational dynamics between the far-right and anti-fascist activists more accessible and prominent, as they both use it for mapping and investigating each other.

Counterdemonstrations and protests are probably the most recognisable and established form of anti-fascist activism, and functions primarily as a direct confrontation of the far-right whenever it manifests itself physically. This is arguably the strategy which involves a multitude of actors simultaneously and creates influential episodes of contention. It is during these episodes the activists, opponents, police, civil society and the media generate relational dynamics directly through contentious politics. The two observed counterdemonstrations in this research exemplify two ways anti-fascist protests differ depending on the context and opponent. The demonstration at Tøyen was largely framed as a civil protest derived from the local people of Tøyen. Rather than framing the counterdemonstration as being driven by anti-fascist activists, it was presented as broad and relatively contained. Scandza Forum, on the

other hand, where the opponent was deemed more threatening and graver, the organising and execution of the protest became narrower, more secretive and more transgressive, resulting in 28 arrests.

No-platforming is the ways in which the anti-fascist activists, organisations and networks encourage other actors to exclude the far-right from accessing public spaces. This strategy is certainly aligned to the activists' perspectives on freedom of speech for fascist ideologies. Reducing fascisms' manifestation in public space is of high priority as it is deemed to be fundamentally threatening for both societal structures as well as minority citizens that does not fit in their world view. No-platforming as a strategy can be mutually reactive and proactive. It can be reactive in the sense that anti-fascist activists can build pressure on actors who lease spaces to far-right groups. In this sense, the anti-fascist activists diminish the perceived threat before it manifests itself, which is a form of proactive action.

The use of stickers in the public sphere is an interesting strategy, as it is embedded and executed behind the scenes while simultaneously being visible in public. Even though some activists engage in this form of activism because it is fun and a way of broadcasting their existence, it is arguably also a form of territorial politics deprived of physically present actors. Both anti-fascist activists and members of NMR do engage in this form of territorial politics, which involves overlapping or tearing down each other's stickers in order to establish their presence in the public sphere, as seen in *Figure 1*. [14] The stickers contain a broad variety of slogans, symbols and pictures, and effectively use the anti-fascist heritage for portraying historical continuity. Interestingly, the activists did not see the use of stickers as a strategy for recruitment, but rather as symbols of existence to people who are already engaged with them, either sympathisers or opponents. This implies that invisible arenas of relational dynamics exist, and the streets of Oslo somewhat prevail as arenas for territorial politics among oppositional movements.

Figure 1: Stickers as territorial politics. Photo: Fredrik Fosaas

[14] The territorial politics of political stickers can be further exemplified by the Instagram account @fjernhatpropaganda (https://www.instagram.com/fjernhatpropaganda/). This account shares anonymous pictures and videos of activists removing far-right propaganda.

7.3. Conclusion

This chapter has presented and discussed the ways in which anti-fascist activists in Oslo perceive and identify their political opponents, and in which ways they influence their strategies and legitimations for political opposition. The anti-fascist activists identified three main oppositional categories which influence the possibilities and constraints anti-fascist contention. These categories are ideal typical in the sense that there are not strict boundaries in the cooperation between them. These categories are i) *discursive fascism*, which is deemed threatening for attempting to legitimate exclusionary and racist in public arenas which restructures the boundaries for public acceptance for fascist tendencies; ii) *transgressive fascism*, which is seen to root their ideology in violent tactics and extreme far-right affinities, and; iii) *internet fascism*, which is the shift from the far-right being increasingly manifested online.

These categories show that the diversification of the far-right produces strategic consequences for anti-fascist resistance. Discursive fascism was seen to be most beneficially resisted by broad and contained mobilisation, as the issue is mainly centred legitimations of ideology. Transgressive fascism, which is seen to pose a physical and violent threat, was seen to sometimes require more transgressive forms of action, even though it was not desired by the anti-fascist activists. Internet extremism and radicalisation produces questions of the strategic fundaments of anti-fascist activism. This is because the internet functions as a new arena of interaction in which physical strategic action becomes obsolete. New forms of online radicalisation, which manifests itself physically in a more unorganised, violent and individual manner, necessitate a re-evaluation of the limitations of anti-fascist strategies for action.

8. Relational dynamics between anti-fascist activists and far-right movements

The diversification of the far-right has in many ways, alongside various other actors such as the police and mainstream media representations, transformed anti-fascist activism in Oslo. Contemporary far-right movements are seemingly difficult to clearly define, and anti-fascist activists do no longer only engage in direct confrontation against neo-Nazis and skinheads. The formalisation of the far-right poses a discursive threat that the anti-fascist activists sees as legitimising fascist ideas. Yet, other organised far-right groups that are more militant and

transgressive might pose more physical threats in terms of violence and terrorist acts. The fact that the far-right is able to increasingly manifest itself online pose a third and difficult challenge. The activists' opponents no longer only manifest themselves physically in the streets but rather in a multiplicity of manners with different aims and strategies. This in turn shapes the characteristics of anti-fascism as a political project.

This chapter considers some of these relational dynamics that shapes anti-fascist activism in Oslo. First, this chapter discusses a central dilemma the anti-fascist activists face when confronting new variants of the far-right. The activists seek to construct a broader resistance against the far-right that is not submerged in subcultural and alternative traits, but they also deemed anonymous clothing a necessity due to security concerns. This was argued to have unfortunate consequences for mobilising broad demonstrations. Second, this chapter discusses the ways in which the variety of far-right opponents require different strategies and how this affects the anti-fascists' activism in a relational perspective. I argue that the multiplicity of far-right threats in some ways has forced anti-fascism to become more pragmatic and diverse in its opposition. Even though these are findings that have been prevalent throughout this thesis, I will here synthesise them using the relational approach for increased clarity.

8.1. Broad organisation versus anonymity and security

The dilemma between security through anonymity and broad organisations affect the strategic action of anti-fascist networks in Oslo. Jasper (2006) states that dilemmas are strategic evaluations committed by players, both individually and collectively. These evaluations shape the relational dynamics and processes various actors experience through contentious politics. Even though the anonymous clothing that anti-fascist activists use during demonstrations and public appearances might be perceived as symbolic or subcultural, it was largely argued by the activists to be a safety measure. This can be associated to Jasper's "naughty or nice" dilemma (2006:129), which implies that the attitudes actors emit shape the relations to the public sphere by altering its presentation.

Public representations of anti-fascism are often correlated with black bloc tactics, which Juris (2005) argues has a communicative logic. In the anonymity and uniformity of black clothing and face masks, black bloc protest aims for "destruction of the symbols of corporate capitalism and the state" (Juris 2005:420). In this sense, Juris argues that black bloc and

uniform clothing is a form of collective identity that develops an accentuated distinction between protesters and the state. Rather than aiming at generating collective identities in the public sphere by applying anonymous and uniform clothing, the anonymous clothing was rather seen as a necessary evil by the anti-fascist activists in Oslo. Being anonymous through uniform clothing was seen to reduce the possibility for the political opponents and police forces to identify the activists during protest. Yet, the masked clothing was also seen to clash with their concurrent aim for broader participation among the public.

> *We want more people to join, like, at the counterdemonstration against SIAN at Tøyen torg, we want most people to join our strategy which is to make it uncomfortable for SIAN to be there. And then I think that we definitely should think about what kind of picture we send out of ourselves, and to arrive in completely black clothing with masks is... perhaps not always so beneficial, kind of. But then again, the situation is that the far-right extremists have a tendency to take pictures of people and put it out on the internet which can result in death threats et cetera...*

This activist exemplifies this dilemma and shows that the practice of wearing black clothing during demonstrations is not always beneficial even though it is seen as crucial for the activists' safety. The level and form of threat is produced by the interaction among anti-fascist activists and other present actors, but most notably, the far-right (Vysotksy 2013).

This dynamic makes anonymity not only important collectively during physical protest, but also on an individual and personal level. Anonymous clothing is a way of disallowing their opponents to identify them, but this dynamic is also relevant when it comes to the anti-fascist activists' opportunities to participate in public discourse. The activists stated that it is problematic to engage in public discussion due to the fear of being recognised by both their political opponents and the police. This was seen to be problematic in relation to the activists' goal to attain broader mobilisation, as their opportunity for spreading their political agenda on their own terms in public was limited. One activist argued that the necessity of their security measures might be reduced if they succeed in mobilising larger demonstrations:

> *It is both a risk from the Nazis and a risk from the police and how they handle political activism in general which makes anonymity a necessity. But anonymity does*

not need to be secrecy though, like, anonymity can also occur by being five thousand people, where it doesn't make sense to pursue individuals, right? And that's better.

The activist states that anonymity is a necessary feature of anti-fascist protest, but anonymity can also be upheld by having large quantities of participants. This can arguably be linked to the findings of Jämte, Lundstedt & Wennerhag (2020), who found that the collective identity of radical left libertarian movements (RLLM) in Sweden have become increasingly pragmatic. They found that countercultural aspects are downplayed in favour of generating "broad, inclusive and locally grounded alliances" (Jämte *et al.* 2020:29). Jämte *et al.* also argue that RLLMs are flexible and adaptable due to their dual heritage. The dual heritage refers to the ways in which RLLM draws inspiration both from early labour movements and new social movements of the 1960s. This can also arguably be relevant in the case of anti-fascism in Oslo. The anti-fascist activists suggested that their new aims of broader mobilisation somewhat comprise their countercultural heritage. In turn, this implies that the activists seek to engage a broader leftist resistance against the far-right, which somewhat can be associated with its heritage of inter-war anti-fascism. This situation, where the anti-fascist activists experience a duality between public engagement and anonymous political tradition, shows that the relational dynamics that produce collective action frames for anti-fascist networks is highly interdependent and complex. The anti-fascist activists pursue a broader public engagement, but the fear of reprisals from political opponents and police makes it difficult to reach a situation where contained forms of protest is a viable option. The aim is therefore to reach a high quantity of protesters so that individual anonymity becomes less vital, which in turn can make protest more contained and non-violent.

8.2. Pragmatism as a response to far-right diversification

The activists do not seem to primarily ground their legitimation of their activism in the dual heritage, but rather emphasise pragmatic responses to the new developments of the far-right. Even though the anti-fascist toolbox contains strategies that are still used and recognised as effective, the activists argue that the multiplicity of political opponents require development, adjustment and evaluations of these strategies. Even though fascism is still seen as an inherently violent ideology that needs physical confrontation, the variety of contemporary far-right movements pose several challenges for the activists and anti-fascist networks. Jämte (2017) argues that the formalisation and institutionalisation of the far-right in Sweden and

Denmark has restructured anti-fascists collective action frames. Jämte (2017:264) suggests that "compared to the militant and relatively uniform radical anti-fascism of the 1990s, developments in recent years have led to a broader radical anti-fascist milieu, but also to increased fragmentation and intra-movement frame disputes". This suggests that the situation in Sweden and Denmark can be compared to the experiences of anti-fascist activists in Oslo.

Similar to Jämte's (2017) findings, the anti-fascist activists in Oslo embrace the transgressive strategies that are embedded in the anti-fascist rationale and history, but the different anti-fascist networks make different use of them and interpret them differently. The diversity of far-right movements has produced a response that has resulted in increasingly diverse anti-fascist networks. Whereas some networks, such as Oslo mot Rasisme, focus on developing broad mobilisation and alliances across ideological differences, others advocate traditional anti-fascist strategies that are deployed for street level contentious politics.

An interesting aspect of this diversification of anti-fascist networks is that they are interchangeable and interconnected, and different networks and organisations apply strategies of varying degrees of transgressiveness which in sum constitute the total anti-fascist opposition. An example of this situation is the counter-protest against Scandza Forum at Sinsen in Oslo. As previously mentioned, AfA and OmR delegated responsibilities between them to be able to produce a wider support through the loosely connected and ideologically diverse OmR while AfA worked "behind the scenes" to research the event and its participants. It is also important to note that participants in these networks also can be engaged in several networks simultaneously.

The DOC research programme seeks to identify mechanisms (i.e. social processes) that occur in similar ways over a variety of situations and change the relations among various elements/involved actors (Opp 2009:307). As Jämte (2017) and Jämte, Lundstedt & Wennerhag (2020) find that RLLM and anti-fascist networks become increasingly pragmatic and less countercultural in both Sweden and Denmark in response to the formalisation and diversification of the far-right, one can suggest that this is a dynamic mechanism that occurs similarly across local contexts. The mechanism that the activists in Oslo indicate, i.e. the social process that alters the relations among the far-right and anti-fascist activists, can be illustrated like this:

Formalisation/diversification of the far-right → Re-evaluation of anti-fascist strategies and tactics → Diversification of anti-fascist movements

This dynamic mechanism can arguably be seen to be somewhat obvious in the case of anti-fascist resistance, as anti-fascism is inherently a reactive movement. Yet, the recent developments of the far-right force anti-fascist activists to re-evaluate strategies and tactics that are not only rooted in practicality, but a dual history that is both derived from countercultural and autonome politics and the resistance against institutionalised fascism in the 1930s and 1940s. Therefore, this mechanism forces anti-fascist activists to re-evaluate the relevance of their multifaceted political heritage, which has led to a wider definition of anti-fascism that embodies many approaches and rationales. The interviews with anti-fascist activists in Oslo and the observed counter-protests suggest two main developments, which can follow the previous illustration like this:

[...] → *Diversification of anti-fascist movements*

➔ *i) Pragmatic anti-fascism (i.e. Oslo mot Rasisme):*
- *Seek anonymity in high numbers of participants*
- *Increasingly contained forms of protest: noise-demonstrations, blockades*
- *Towards broad mobilisation*
- *Turn away from subculture and alternative politics, cross ideological borders*
- *Merge with mainstream/public: dual and somewhat conflicting relationship to anti-fascist history/identity*

➔ *ii) Conventional anti-fascism (i.e. Anti-fascist Action):*
- *Seek anonymity in masked clothing*
- *Maintain transgressive strategies, but seeks cooperation with other networks*
- *Persistence of narrow organisation*
- *Maintains shared ideological frameworks*
- *Distinct from mainstream/public: preservation of anti-fascist history/identity*

These two variations of contemporary anti-fascism in Oslo show the process of re-evaluation of tactics and strategies in relation to the development of the far-right. Yet, the illustrations above does not include the media or state security forces as actors, as their relationship to anti-fascist movements are complex and not uniform. One could possibly also further continue this illustration by including the anti-fascist networks' potential for cooperation.

9. Conclusion

This thesis has explored the ways in which anti-fascist activists in Oslo (re)configure their strategies and subjectively legitimise their political agenda in relation to history, their operating environment and developments in far-right movements. Its overarching finding is that the diversification of far-right movements has restructured the anti-fascist networks' strategies and evaluations. This has consequentially resulted in a variety of anti-fascist networks, and their cooperation allows the movement as a whole simultaneously aim for broad and pragmatic mobilisation while maintaining their collective identity and customary strategies. Previous research by Jämte (2017) and Jämte, Lundstedt and Wennerhag (2020) have emphasised the ways in which radical left-libertarian and anti-fascism in Sweden and Denmark have moved towards increasingly pragmatic forms of protest and focus on broad mobilisation rather than narrow contention. As the findings of this research project is largely concurrent to their verdicts and analyses, but in a different context, it extends the understanding of anti-fascism as a political movement in Scandinavia as a whole. The focus on anti-fascism in Oslo does therefore provide a broader insight into the movement on a Scandinavian level, and it clearly shows that there are common trajectories in Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

The data material was acquired by a mixed-method qualitative approach and consists of 6 interviews with 5 anti-fascist activists and participant observation of two counterdemonstrations in Oslo. The snowball sampling method was used in order to gain access to anti-fascist activists, and all contact was established using encrypted messaging apps. The snowball sampling method, mediated by anonymous and encrypted communication, allowed the activists to have control over their own network and the sampling process. The analysis is grounded in four main research questions, which is concerned with how anti-fascist activists in Oslo i) subjectively legitimate anti-fascism as a political project, ii) identify central influential actors that affect their opportunities, iii) frame and understand contemporary far-right movements and the consequences they pose, and iv) reconfigure their repertoires of action in relation to their contemporary operating environment.

The anti-fascist activists' subjective legitimations of anti-fascism as a political project was analysed in chapter 5. The main contribution of this chapter is that anti-fascism is primarily

interpreted as a physical praxis that entails direct confrontation against all far-right movements that are deemed threatening in some way or another. The activists delivered broad definitions of anti-fascism, which demonstrate that it is a dynamic movement grounded in various rationales for action. Yet, pragmatic and broad physical organisation was seen as favourable for confronting the variety of contemporary far-right movements. This, in turn, had consequences for the activist's relationship to the anti-fascist heritage. The contemporary anti-fascist movement's heritage derives from countercultural and autonome traditions with strong symbolic connotations and strategic traditions. This political identity was partly seen as an hinderance to gain a broader recognition, which explains why new anti-fascist networks such as Oslo mot Rasisme (OmR) relies less on traditional symbolism and focus on political inclusiveness rather than identity and ideologically driven political action.

Chapter 6 presented and interpreted central actors that influence anti-fascist activism in Oslo. Most importantly, contemporary anti-fascist networks function as central influential actors to each other, and their developments depends on these relations. This development has given the anti-fascist movement new capabilities, such as both having secretive and narrow networks that work in synergy with broader and more inclusive networks. The transnational feature of the anti-fascist movement is also important, as transnational transactions of monetary support relieves individual activists of financial burdens after protests, which allows anti-fascism to permeate as a collective endeavour. The media was seen as an influential actor as its representations of the movement in the US was seen to misrepresent anti-fascism in the Norwegian context. The activists did argue that there is a mismatch between media representations of the movement and how it is embedded in Oslo. The police force was also seen as an important actor that affects the possibilities and constraints of anti-fascist activism. This conflictual relationship was grounded in the activists' assertion that anti-fascism is an inherent civil mission, and that police interference increases the far-right's ability to grow.

The ways in which the anti-fascist activists perceive their political opponents and how they alter anti-fascist activism was discussed in chapter 7. The main contribution of this chapter is that the diversification and formalisation of the far-right develop decisive consequences for anti-fascist activism. The far-right was primarily distinguished into two categories, one that poses discursive threats, such as SIAN, and the other are seen as more inherently violent in a physical sense, such as NMR. The different forms of far-right opponents require different tactics and strategies, which gives the anti-fascist networks special areas of expertise and

abilities. However, the role of the internet shifts the manifestation of the far-right from physical arenas and concrete organisation to metaphysical and bewildering appearances. This has direct consequences for anti-fascism as it is traditionally concerned with direct and physical confrontation, and the activists are forced to evaluate their customary strategies.

Chapter 8 reflected on the previously stated developments in a relational perspective. The main finding is that the desire for broader and more pragmatic opposition stands in contrast to the necessity of anonymity and security. As the anti-fascist activists fear reprisals, high levels of security and anonymity are seen as necessity. This makes it difficult for the anti-fascist activists to publicly express their political agenda and consequently difficult to mobilise in accepted forms of protests. Even though it is a central theme throughout this analysis, the diversification of the far-right is here argued to produce a dynamic process in which anti-fascist activists have re-evaluated their tactics and strategies, which in turn has resulted in a diversified anti-fascist movement with re-structured limitations and aims.

9.1. Recommendations for future research

Conclusively, I want to present two recommendations for future research on contemporary anti-fascist activism. First, it would be interesting for future research to elaborate on the notion of the internet as an arena of interaction when it comes to anti-fascist activism and how it restructures limitations and strategies. The second interesting aspect for future research could be an augmented focus on the diversity of anti-fascist networks and how they are able to cooperate on a local level. Even though narrow, secretive and transgressive networks such as Anti-fascist Action still endures, they exist alongside more pragmatic and inclusive segments of the movement. The ways in which the differentiated anti-fascist networks are able to develop a holistic programme for anti-fascist resistance would therefore be an interesting starting point for future investigations.

Word count (chapter 1 - 9): 35 506

10. Bibliography

1. Adorno, T. W. (2005) The Meaning of Working Through the Past. In: Goehr, L. (ed.) *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords.* Colombia University Press: New York.
2. Alimi, E. Y., Bosi, L., Demetriou, C. (2015) *The Dynamics of Radicalization: A Relational and Comparative Perspective.* Oxford University Press: Oxford.
3. Allardyce, G. (1979) What Fascism Is Not: Thoughts on the Deflation of a Concept. *The American Historical Review.* 84 (2) pp. 367-388.
4. Andrews, G. (1999) The Three New Lefts and their Legacies. In: Andrews, G. Cockett, R., Hooper, A., Williams, M. (eds.) *New Left, New Right and Beyond: Taking the Sixties Seriously.* Macmillan Press LTD: Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and London.
5. Andrews, T. & Vassenden, A. (2007) Snøballen som ikke ruller: Utvalgsproblemer i kvalitativ forskning. *Sosiologisk tidsskrift.* 15. pp. 151-163.
6. Antifascistisk Aksjon (13.05.2019) [90-TALLET DEL 1]. www.facebook.com/antifascistiskaksjon. [Facebook update] Retrieved from: https://www.facebook.com/antifascistiskaksjon/posts/1230008047161733?__tn__=K-R. [Accessed 13th May 2019].
7. Arieli, T. & Cohen, N. (2011) Field research in conflict environments: Methodological challenges and snowball sampling. *Journal of Peace Research.* 48 (4) pp. 423-435.
8. Arlow, J. (2019) Antifa without fascism: the reasons behind the anti-fascist movement in Ireland. *Irish Political Studies*. 35 (1) pp. 115-137.
9. Barber, B. R. (2003) *Strong Democracy: participatory politics for a new age. Twentieth Anniversary Edition with a new Preface.* University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles, London.
10. Benford, R. D. & Snow, D. A. (2000) Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment. *Annu. Rev. Sociol*. 26. pp. 611-639.
11. Benneche, T. (2017) Ideologiske knyttnever: Konflikt mellom blitzere og nynazister på 1980- og 1990-tallet. Master's thesis, University of Oslo, Norway. Retrieved from: https://www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/60207/Benneche_Masteroppgave-.pdf?sequence=1 [Accessed 19. March 2020].

12. Berntzen, L. E. (2019) *Liberal Roots of Far Right Activism: The Anti-Islamic Movement in the 21st Century.* Routledge: London & New York.
13. Biernacki, P. & Waldorf, D. (1981) Snowball Sampling: Problems and Techniques of Chain Referral Sampling. *Sociological Methods & Research.* 10 (2) pp. 141-163.
14. Bjørgo, T. & Gjelsvik, I. M. (2015) Forskning på forebygging av radikalisme og voldelig ekstremisme: En kunnskapsstatus. *PHS Forskning 2015:2*.
15. Bjørgo, T. & Gjelsvik, I. M. (2018) Utvikling og utbredelse av høyreekstremisme i Norge. In: Bjørgo, T. (ed.) *Høyreekstremisme i Norge: Utviklingstrekk, konspirasjonsteorier og forebyggingsstrategier*. Politihøgskolen: Oslo.
16. Bjørgo, T. & Ravndal, J. A. (2019) Extreme-Right Violence and Terrorism: Concepts, Patterns, and Responses. *ICCT Research Paper.* pp. 1-23 Extreme-Right Violence and Terrorism
17. Blaikie, N. & Priest, J. (2019) *Designing Social Research*. Polity. 3rd Ed.
18. Boger, C. (2019) Sian får likevel holde stand på Tøyen torg. Kommuneadvokaten mener vedtak i bydelsutvalget var ulovlig. *Vårt Oslo.* 29th September. Retrieved from https://vartoslo.no/sian-far-likevel-holde-stand-pa-toyen-torg-kommuneadvokaten-mener-vedtak-i-bydelsutvalget-var-ulovlig/. [Accessed 9th March 2020].
19. Bray, M. (2017) *Antifa: The Anti-Fascist Handbook.* Melville House: Brooklyn & London.
20. Bull, A. C. (2010) Neo-Fascism. In: Bosworth, R. J. B. (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism.* Oxford University Press: Oxford.
21. Busch, A. E. (2019) The Specter of Fascism in American Life. In: Doyle, E. (ed.) *Antifa and the Radical Left: Current Controversies.* Greenhaven Publishing: New York.
22. Christensen, A-D. (2010) Resistance and violence: Constructions of masculinities in radical left-wing movements in Denmark. *Norma: Nordic Journal for Masculinity Studies.* 5 (2) pp. 151-168.
23. Coleman, J. S. (1959) Relational Analysis: The Study of Social Organizations with Survey Methods. *Human Organization.* 17 (4) pp. 28-36.
24. Copsey, N. (2000) *Anti-Fascism in Britain.* MacMillan Press Ltd., Basingstoke.

25. Copsey, N. (2010) Preface: Towards a New Anti-Fascist 'Minimum'? In: Copsey, N. & Olechnowicz, A. (eds.) *Varieties of Anti-Fascism: Britain in the Inter-War Period.* Palgrave MacMillan: Basingstoke.
26. Copsey, N. (2011) From Direct Action to Community Action: The changing dynamics of anti-fascist opposition. In: Copsey, N. & Macklin, G. (eds.) *The British National Party: Contemporary Perspectives.* Routledge: London & New York.
27. Copsey, N. (2012) Fascism Studies (and the 'Post-Fascist era'): an ideal meeting ground? *Fascism* (1) pp. 55-56.
28. Copsey, N. (2016) Crossing Borders: Anti-Fascist Action (UK) and Transnational Anti-Fascist Militancy in the 1990s. *Contemporary European History.* 25 (4) pp. 707-727.
29. Copsey, N. (2018) Militant Anti-fascism: An Alternative (Historical) Reading. *Society*. 53. pp. 243-247.
30. Cuninghame, P. (2010) Autonomism as a global social movement. *WorkingUSA: The Journal of Labor and Society.* 13. pp. 451-464.
31. Dahl, H. F. (1972) *Hva er Fascisme? Et Essay om Fascismens Historie og Sosiologi.* Pax Forlag A/S, Oslo.
32. Davis, L. (2010) Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unhelpful Dichotomy. *Anarchist Studies.* 18 (1) pp. 62-82.
33. della Porta, D. & Diani, M. (2006) *Social Movements: An Introduction.* 2nd ed. Blackwell Publishing: Oxford
34. della Porta, D. & Tarrow, S. (2005) Conclusion: "Globalization," Complex Internationalism, and Transnational Contention. In: della Porta, D. & Tarrow, S. (eds.) *Transnational Protest & Global Activism: People, Passions, and Protest.* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc. New York.
35. Demetriou, C. (2018) Chapter 15: Charles Tilly and Relational Sociology. In: Dépelteau (ed.) *The Palgrave Handbook of Relational Sociology.* Palgrave MacMillan: Cham.
36. DeWalt, K. M. & DeWalt, B. R. (2011) *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers.* 2nd ed. Altamira Press: Plymouth.
37. Diani, M. (2007) Review essay: The relational element in Charles Tilly's recent (and not so recent) work. *Social Networks.* 29. pp. 316-323.

38. Dørum, K (2019) Conservative fascist sympathies and anti-fascism in 1930s Norway. In: Braskén, K., Copsey, N., Lundin, J. A. (eds.) *Anti-Fascism in The Nordic Countries: New Perspectives, Comparisons and Transnational Connections.* Routledge: Oxon.
39. Douglas, D. M. (2016) Doxing: a conceptual analysis. *Ethics and Information Technology.* 18 (3) pp 199-210.
40. Dupuis-Déri, F. (2010) Anarchism and the politics of affinity groups. *Anarchist Studies.* 18 (1) pp. 40-61.
41. Duyvendak, J. W. & Fillieule, O. (2015) Conclusion: Patterned Fluidity: An Interactionist Perspective as a Tool for Exploring Contentious Politics. In: Duyvendak, J. W. & Fillieule, O. (eds.) *Players and Arenas: The Interactive Dynamics of Protest*. Amsterdam University Press: Amsterdam.
42. Eatwell, R. (2004) Introduction: The new extreme right challenge. In: Eatwell, R. & Mudde, C. (eds.) Western Democracies and the New Extreme Right Challenge. Routledge: London & New York.
43. el-Ojeili, C. (2019) Reflecting on Post-Fascism: Utopia and Fear. *Critical Sociology.* 45 (7-8) pp. 1149-1166.
44. Ellefsen, R. (2018) *Performing and policing transgressive protest: A relational approach to the SHAC-HLS conflict in Britain (1999-2014).* PhD thesis. University of Oslo, Faculty of Law: Oslo.
45. Emirbayer, M. (1997) Manifesto for a Relational Sociology. *American Journal of Sociology.* 103 (2) pp. 281-317.
46. Emirbayer, M. & Goodwin, J. (1994) Network Analysis, Culture, and the Problem of Agency. *American Journal of Sociology.* 99 (6) pp. 1411-1454.
47. Færseth, J. (2019) Scandza Forum: Raseteorier, jødekonspirasjoner og antimodernitet. *Fri tanke*. 12th November. Retrieved from: https://fritanke.no/raseteorier-jodekonspirasjoner-og-antimodernitet/19.11344. [Accessed 9th March 2020].
48. Fangen, K. (2001) Demonisering eller ansvarliggjøring? *Tidsskrift for Ungdomsforskning*. 1 (1) pp. 28-46.
49. Fangen, K. (2010) *Deltakende Observasjon*. 2nd ed. Fagbokforlaget: Bergen.
50. Fangen, K. & Eiternes, T. K. (2002) *Bak Nynazismen*. Cappelen: Oslo.
51. Faraldo, J. M. (2016) An Antifascist Political Identity? On the Cult of Anti-fascism in the Soviet Union and post-Socialist Russia. In: García, H. Yusta, M.,

Tabet, X. and Clímaco, C. (eds.) *Rethinking Antifascism: History, Memory and Politics, 1922 to the Present.* Berghahn: New York & Oxford.

52. Fekete, L. (2012) *Pedlars of Hate: the violent impact of the European Far Right.* Institute of Race Relations: London.
53. Fekete, L. (2014) Anti-fascism or anti-extremism? *Race & Class*. 55 (4) pp. 29-39.
54. Ferree, M. M. (2005) Soft Repression: Ridicule, Stigma, And Silencing in Gender-Based Movements. *Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change.* Vol. 25. pp. 85-101.
55. Finn, J. L. & Checkoway, B. (1998) Young People as Competent Community Builders: A Challenge to Social Work. *Social Work.* 43 (4) pp. 335-345.
56. Fitzgerald K. J. & Rodgers, D. M. (2000) Radical Social Movement Organizations: A Theoretical Model. *The Sociological Quarterly*. 41 (4) pp. 573-592.
57. Flacks, R. (2003) Review [Review of the book *Dynamics of Contention*, by McAdam, D., Tarrow, S., Tilly, C.] *Social Movement Studies*. 2 (1) pp. 99-102.
58. Foley, L. J. (2012) Constructing the respondent. In: Gubrium, J. F., Holstein, J. A. Marvasti, A. B. & McKinney, K. D. (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Interview Research: The complexity of the craft.* SAGE: Thousand Oaks.
59. Fominaya, C. F. (2015) Autonomous Social Movements and the Paradox of Anti-identitarian Collective Identity. In: Jasper, J. & McGarry, A. (eds.) *The Identity Dilemma: Social Movements and Collective Identity.* Temple University Press: Philadelphia, Rome, Tokyo.
60. Fukuyama, F. (1992) *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press.
61. García, H., Yusta, M., Tabet, X., Clímaco, C. (2016) Introduction: Beyond Revisionism: Rethinking Antifascism in the Twenty-First Century. In: García, H., Yusta, M., Tabet, X., Clímaco, C. (eds.) *Rethinking Antifascism: History, Memory and Politics, 1922 to the Present.* Berghahn Books: New York.
62. Gattinara, P. C. & Pirro, A. L. (2019) The far right as social movement. *European Societies.* 21 (4) pp. 447-462.
63. Geertz, C. (1973) Thick Description: Toward and Interpretative Theory of Culture. In: *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books: New York.
64. Gibbs, G. R. (2012) *Analyzing Qualitative Data.* SAGE Publications, Ltd.: London.

65. Gordon, J. (1997) John Stuart Mill and the “Marketplace of Ideas”. *Social Theory and Practice.* 23 (2) pp. 235-249.
66. Griffin, R. (1991) *The Nature of Fascism.* Routledge: London & New York.
67. Griffin, R. (1995) Introduction. In: Griffin, R. (ed.) *Fascism.* Oxford University Press: Oxford, New York. pp. 1-20.
68. Haanshuus, B. P. & Jupskås, A. R. (2017) Høyreklikk! En analyse av ytre høyre på sosiale medier i Norge. *Tidsskrift for samfunssforskning.* 58 (2) pp. 145-165.
69. Haines, H. H. (2013) Radical Flank Effects. In: Snow, D.A., della Porta, D., Klandermans, B., McAdam, D. (eds.) *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements.* John Wiley & Sons: Hoboken.
70. Hall, S. (1982) The rediscovery of ‘ideology’; return of the repressed in media studies. In: Gurevitch, M., Bennett, T., Curran, J., Woollacott, J. (eds.) *Culture, Society and the Media.* Routledge: London and New York.
71. Harsch, D (2009) The Iron Front: Weimar Social Democracy between Tradition and Modernity. In: Barclay, D. E. & Weitz, E. D. (eds.) *Between Reform and Revolution: German Socialism and Communism from 1840-1990.* Berghahn Books: Brooklyn.
72. Heinisch, R. & Mazzoleni. O. (2016) Introduction. In: Heinisch, R. & Mazzoleni, O. (eds.) *Understanding Populist Party Organisation: The Radical Right in Western Europe.* Palgrave MacMillan: London.
73. Hobsbawm, E. (1994) *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991.* Abacus: London.
74. Holm, J. & Kvaran, I. (1989) *Opprør!: En bok om blitzere, pønkere, politi, presse og politikere i Oslo.* J. W. Cappelens Forlag A/S: Oslo.
75. Hosmer, L. T. (1995) Trust: The Connecting Link between Organizational Theory and Philosophical Ethics. *The Academy of Management Review.* 20 (2) pp. 379-403.
76. Jämte, J. (2017) Radical anti-fascism in Scandinavia: Shifting frames in relation to the transformation of the far right. In: Wennerhag, M., Frölich, C. & Piotrowski, G. (eds.) *Radical Left Movements in Europe.* Taylor and Francis.
77. Jämte, J. & Ellefsen, R. (Forthcoming) The Consequences of Soft Repression. Accepted for publication in Mobilization: An International Quarterly.
78. Jämte, J., Lundstedt, M., Wennerhag, M. (2020) From Radical Counterculture to Pragmatic Radicalism: The Collective Identity of Contemporary Radical Left-

libertarian Activism in Sweden. *Journal for the Study of Radicalism.* 14 (1) pp. 1-36.

79. Jasper, J. M. (2004) A Strategic Approach to Collective Action: Looking for Agency in Social-Movement Choices. *Mobilization: An International Journal.* 9 (1) pp. 1-16.
80. Jasper, J. M. (2006) *Getting Your Way: Strategic Dilemmas in the Real World.* University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London.
81. Jasper, J. M. (2010) Social Movement Theory Today: Toward a Theory of Action? *Sociology Compass.* 4 (11) pp. 965-976.
82. Jasper, J. M. & McGarry, A. (2015) Introduction. In: Jasper, J. & McGarry, A. (eds.) *The Identity Dilemma: Social Movements and Collective Identity.* Temple University Press: Philadelphia, Rome, Tokyo.
83. Joon Han, K. (2015) The Impact of Radical Right-Wing Parties on the Positions of Mainstream Parties Regarding Multiculturalism. *West European Politics.* 38 (3) pp. 557-576.
84. Juris, J. S. (2005) Violence Performed and Imagined: Militant Action, the Black Bloc and the Mass Media in Genoa. *Critique of Anthropology.* 25 (4) pp. 413-432.
85. Katsiaficas, G. (2006) *The Subversion of Politics: European Autonomous Social Movements and the Decolonization of Everyday Life.* AK Press: Oakland.
86. Kawulich, B. B. (2005) Participant Observation as a Data Collection method. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research.* 6 (2) Art. 43.
87. Keane, J. (2003) *Global Civil Society?* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
88. Kreiss, D. & Tufecki, Z. (2013) Occupying the Political: Occupy Wall Street, Collective Action, and the Rediscovery of Pragmatic Politics. *Cultural Studies,* Critical Methodologies. 13 (3) pp. 163-167.
89. Krekling, D. V., Strand, T., Nordstrøm, J. (2017) Nynazistisk organisasjon forbys i Finland. *NRK.no.* 1st December. Retrieved from: https://www.nrk.no/urix/nynazistisk-organisasjon-forbys-i-finland-1.13803270 [Accessed 19th June 2020].
90. Kriesi, H., Koopmans, R., Dyvendak, J. W., Giugni, M. G. (1995) *New Social Movements in Western Europe: A Comparative analysis.* UCL Press: London.
91. Kvale, S. (1996) *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Sage Publications Ltd: London.
92. Kvale, S. (2007) *Doing Interviews.* SAGE: Los Angeles & London.

93. Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2015) *Det kvalitative forskningsintervju*. 3rd ed. Gyldendal Akademisk: Oslo.

94. LaFree, G. (2018) Is Antifa a Terrorist Group? *Society* 55. pp. 248-252.

95. Linden, A. & Klandermans, B. (2006) Stigmatization and Repression of Extreme-Right Activism in the Netherlands. *Mobilization: An International Journal*. 11 (2) pp. 213-228.

96. Lofstad, R., Andersen, Ø., Mosen, Ø. N., Hagen, A., Rydning, E., Mogen, T. (28.09.2019) Kastet frukt, egg og flasker på SIAN. *Dagbladet.* Retrieved from: https://www.dagbladet.no/nyheter/kastet-frukt-egg-og-flasker-pa-sian/71651588. [Accessed 9th March 2020].

97. MacDonald, K. (2019) Scandza Forum: Oslo, November 2. *The Occidental Observer: White Identity, Interests and Culture.* 15th August. Retrieved from: https://www.theoccidentalobserver.net/2019/08/15/scandza-forum-oslo-november-2/. [Accessed 9th March 2020].

98. McAdam, D., Tarrow, S., Tilly, C. (2001) *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

99. McCarthy, J. D. & Zald M. N. (1987) Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory. In: Zald, M. N. (ed.) *Social Movements in an Organizational Society: Collected Essays.* Routledge: New York.

100. Miller-Idriss, C. (2019) The Global Dimensions of Populist Nationalism. *The International Spectator.* 54 (2) pp. 17-34.

101. Mische, A. (2011) Relational sociology, culture and agency. In: Scott J. & Carrington, P. J. (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Network Analysis*. Routledge: London.

102. Moore, R. & Roberts, M. (2009) Do-It-Yourself Mobilization: Punk and Social Movements. *Mobilization: An International Journal.* 14 (39) pp. 273-291.

103. Mudde, C. (2004) The Populist Zeitgeist. *Government and Opposition.* 39 (4) pp. 541-563.

104. Neocleous, M. (1997) *Fascism: Concepts in the Social Sciences.* Open University Press: Buckingham.

105. Opp, K. D. (2009) *Theories of Political Protest and Social Movements: A Multidisciplinary Introduction, Critique and Synthesis.* Taylor and Francis.

106. Passmore, K. (2017) Chapter 20: Fascism as a Social Movement in a Transnational Context. In: Berger, S. & Nehring, H. (eds.) *The History of Social Movements in Global Perspective*. Palgrave Macmillan UK, London.
107. Payne, S. G. (1980) *Fascism: Comparison and Defintion.* University of Wisconsin Press: Wisconsin.
108. Polletta, F. & Kai Ho, M. (2006) Frames and their consequences. In: Goodin, R. E. & Tilly, C. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis.* Oxford University Press: Oxford.
109. PST (2019) Oppdatert vurdering på trusselen frå høgreekstreme. [Online] Retrieved from: https://www.pst.no/alle-artikler/pressemeldinger/oppdatert-vurdering-pa-trusselen-fra-hogreekstreme/. [Accessed 25th February 2020]
110. Rabinbach, A. (1996) Introduction: Legacies of Antifascism. *New German Critique.* No. 67, Legacies of Antifascism. pp. 3-17.
111. Rasmussen, M. B. (2018) Postfascism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism. *Third Text* 32 (5-6) pp. 682-688.
112. Ravndal, J. A. (2016) Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe: Introducing the RTV Dataset. *Perspectives on Terrorism.* 10 (3)
113. Ravndal, J. A. (2018) Right-wing Terrorism and Militancy in the Nordic Countries: A Comparative Case Study. *Terrorism and Political Violence*. 30 (5) pp. 772-792.
114. Riis-Knudsen, P. H. (2016) Nasjonalsosialismen – den biologiske verdensanskuelsen. [Online] Retrieved from: https://www.frihetskamp.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Nasjonalsosialismen-Den-biologiske-verdensanskuelsen.pdf. [Accessed 10th March 2020]
115. Ringerike Antirasistisk Ungdom (2001) *Såkalte Antirasister: En bok av Ringerike Antirasistisk Ungdom.* Eget forlag: Hønefoss.
116. Rogers, K. L. (1987) Memory, Struggle, and Power: On Interviewing Political Activists. *The Oral History Review.* 15 (1) pp. 165-184.
117. Rubin, H. J. & Rubin, I. S. (2012) *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data.* 3rd ed. SAGE: Los Angeles & London
118. Rucht, D. (2017) Studying Social Movements: Some Conceptual Challenges. In: Berger, S. & Nehring, H. (eds.) *The History of Social movements in Global Perspective*. Palgrave MacMillan: London.

119. Rucht, D. & Neidhardt, F. (2002) Towards a 'Movement Society'? On the possibilities of institutionalizing social movements. *Social Movement Studies.* 1(1), pp. 7-30.

120. Schain, M. A. (2006) The extreme-right and immigration policy-making: Measuring direct and indirect effects. *West European politics.* 29 (2) pp. 270-289.

121. Seidman, M. (2016) Was the French Popular Front Anti-fascist? In: García, H., Yusta, M., Tabet, X., Clímaco, C. (eds.) *Rethinking Antifascism: History, Memory and Politics, 1922 to the Present.* Berghahn Books: New York.

122. SIAN (2019) SIAN Stand på Tøyen. *Facebook Event*. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/events/818304701885528/. [Accessed 9th March 2020].

123. Snow, D. (2001) Collective Identity and Expressive Forms. *UC Irvine: Center for the Study of Democracy.* Retrieved from: https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2zn1t7bj [Last accessed 20th June 2020]

124. Solberg, K. (28.09.2019) – Hundrevis av motdemonstranter overdøver hatet og det rasistiske budskapet SIAN kommer med nå. *Dagsavisen*. Retrieved from: https://www.dagsavisen.no/oslo/hundrevis-av-motdemonstranter-overdover-hatet-og-det-rasistiske-budskapet-sian-kommer-med-na-1.1592721. [Accessed 9th March 2020].

125. Sotirakopoulos, N. (2016) *The Rise of Lifestyle Activism: From New Left to Occupy.* Palgrave Macmillan: London.

126. Tarrow, S. (2008) Charles Tilly and the Practice of Contentious Politics. *Social Movement Studies.* 7 (3) pp. 225 -246.

127. Tilly, C. (2003) *The Politics of Collective Violence.* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

128. Tilly, C. (2004) Terror, terrorism, terrorists. *Sociological Theory*. 22 (1) pp. 5-13.

129. Tilly, C. (2005) Terror as strategy and relational process. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology.* 42 (1-2) pp. 11-32.

130. Tilly, C. (2008a) *Contentious Performances*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

131. Tilly, C. (2008b) *Explaining Social Processes*. Paradigm Press: Blouder.

132. Tilly, C. & Tarrow, S. (2015) *Contentious Politics.* 2nd ed. Oxford University Press: New York.

133. Traverso, E. (2019) *The New Faces of Fascism: Populism and the Far Right.* Verso: London and New York.

134. Ullvang, I. E. & Weiby, H. E. (2017) Demonstrerte mot «homolobbyen» i Kristiansand. *NRK.no*. 20th July. Retrieved from: https://www.nrk.no/sorlandet/nynazister-demonstrerer-i-kristiansand-1.13621490 [Accessed 19th June 2020]

135. Veberg, A. & Bjørnestad, S. (2017) Nazistene marsjerte i Göteborg: 35 personer er pågrepet. *Aftenposten.no*. 30th September. Retrieved from: https://www.aftenposten.no/verden/i/xKp7V/nazistene-marsjerte-i-goeteborg-35-personer-er-paagrepet? [Accessed 19th June 2020]

136. Vysotsky, S. (2013) The influence of threat on tactical choices of militant anti-fascist activists. *Interface: a journal for and about social movements.* 5 (2) pp. 263-294.

137. Vysotsky, S. (2015) The Anarchy Police: Militant Anti-Fascism as Alternative Policing Practice. *Crit Crim.* 23. pp. 235-253.

138. Weber, M. (1968) "Basic Sociological Terms", in Roth, G. & Wittich, C. (eds) *Economy and Society.* University of California Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: Press.

139. Wiedemann, C. (2014) Between swarm, network, and multitude: Anonymous and the infrastructures of the common. *Distinktion: Scandnavian Journal of Social Theory.* 15 (3) pp. 309-326.

140. Wilkins, A. (2018) Motvold: Ideologisk bakgrunn for “konfrontasjonslinja» blant militante antifascister 1990-2001. Master’s thesis, University of Oslo, Norway. Retrieved from: https://www.duo.uio.no/handle/10852/63109 [Accessed 2nd March 2020].

All references that are used in this thesis have been cited.

Appendix I: Information sheet and consent form

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

«Antifascistisk Aksjon i Oslo, 2019:
(re)organisering i møte med høyreekstremisme i forandring»?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å opparbeide en forståelse av antifascistisk aksjon i Oslo ved å beskrive bevegelsens formål og strategier, samt danne et bilde av aktivistenes selvforståelse og politiske/aktivistiske overbevisning.

I dette skrivet vil du finne informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Det har blitt gjort lite forskning på antifascistisk aksjon i Norge siden 1990-tallet, og bevegelsen er også underrepresentert i forskningen. Høyreekstremisme har et stort fokus, og det er anerkjent at høyreekstremismens karakteristikker utvikles og endres. Det er derfor også viktig å danne et bilde av hvordan høyreekstremismens mest sentrale motreaksjon organiseres. Det er et behov for en større forståelse for hvordan antifascisme utartes i dagens samfunn. Med andre ord ønsker jeg å forstå hvordan antifascister arbeider for å hindre fremveksten av høyreekstremisme og fascisme og hvordan organiseringsstrategien(e) ser ut.

Formålet med dette forskningsprosjektet er å danne et bilde av hvordan antifascister subjektivt oppfatter sin aktivisme og hvordan de reflekterer rundt antifascistisk mobilisering i Oslo i 2019. På denne måten vil antifascistenes egne erfaringer, tanker og forståelser danne grunnlaget for analysen. Jeg ønsker ikke å ramme inn aktivistenes virkelighetsforståelse og

politiske aktivisme i en kontekst av deres alder, kjønn, rase, legning, sosiale bakgrunn eller andre karakteristikker med mindre respondentene legger vekt på dette selv.

En overordnet problemstilling vil dermed lyde:
Hvordan organiserer antifascistisk aksjon seg i Oslo i siste halvdel av det tjueførste århundret som en motreaksjon til nye former for høyreekstremisme?

Dette forskningsprosjektet er en masteroppgave, og opplysningene vil ikke bli brukt til andre formål.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?
Institutt for sosiologi og samfunnsgeografi ved Universitetet i Oslo er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?
Du får spørsmål om å delta i dette forskningsprosjektet basert på nettverksrekruttering. Dette betyr at din deltakelse rekrutteres gjennom ditt eksisterende sosiale eller politiske nettverk.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?
Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at du deltar i et intervju. Dette intervjuet vil ta ca. én time, men avhenger av ditt samarbeid. Dette innebærer at intervjuet varer så lenge du ønsker med tanke på hvor mye du vil bidra. Intervjuet vil inneholde spørsmål om dine politiske overbevisninger og din politiske aktivisme i henhold til antifascistisk aksjon. Opplysningene du oppgir under intervjuet vil samles inn gjennom lyd-opptak og vil deretter transkriberes digitalt.

Det er frivillig å delta
Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykke tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle opplysninger om deg vil da bli anonymisert. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg. Din aktivisme, ditt politiske engasjement og din deltakelse i politiske miljøer vil ikke bli påvirket hvis du velger å trekke deg, da alle opplysninger om deg vil bli slettet permanent.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Kun forfatteren av forskningsprosjektet og veilederne for forskningsprosjektet vil ha tilgang til dataene og opplysningene du oppgir.

Lyd-opptakene vil bli lagret på et dedikert minnekort som kun vil være tilgjengelig for forfatteren av forskningsprosjektet. Du trenger ikke oppgi navn eller annen personlig informasjon mens lydopptaket pågår. Når intervjuet er digitalt transkribert vil minnekortet formateres, som vil si at alle lydopptak slettes permanent. Lyd-opptak vil ikke flyttes over på andre enheter (dvs. datamaskiner/smart-telefoner/harddisker e.l.), så dataene vil aldri kunne kobles opp mot internett. Når ditt intervju transkriberes vil det bli lagt vekt på å presentere intervjuet på en måte som reflekterer intervjusituasjonen på en måte du vil kunne kjenne deg igjen i. Ditt navn vil konsekvent bli erstattet med et pseudonym som ikke kan kobles til ditt. Ditt virkelige navn vil aldri oppgis i prosjektet. Du vil dermed ikke kunne gjenkjennes i publikasjonen, og det er kun dine opplysninger og refleksjoner rundt ditt politiske engasjement og din politisk aktivisme som vil publiseres.

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 25. mai 2020.

Dine rettigheter

Hvis du føler at du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og
- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Universitetet i Oslo har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

Universitetet i Oslo,

Institutt for sosiologi og samfunnsgeografi, ved

Kjell Erling Kjellman

Førstelektor ved Institutt for sosiologi og samfunnsgeografi

E-post: k.e.kjellman@sosgeo.uio.no

Senter for ekstremismeforskning: høyreekstremisme, hatkriminalitet og politisk vold, ved

Jacob Aasland Ravndal

Postdoktor

E-post: j.a.ravndal@c-rex.uio.no

- Vårt personvernombud
  Maren Magnus Voll
  Seniorrådgiver, personombud
  m.m.voll@admin.uio.no
  +47-22859778

- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen

Fredrik Fosaas

fredrfos@student.sv.uio.no

phone number (deleted here, but included in the original given to respondents)

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet ***«*Antifascistisk Aksjon i Oslo, 2019 (re)organisering i møte med høyreekstremisme i forandring*»***, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

☐ å delta i intervju

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet, 25. mai 2020.

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix II: Interview guide

Innledning

- Kort om prosjektet og meg selv
- Lagring og bruk av intervjudata
- Garantere anonymitet
- Mulighet til å lese gjennom passasjer som bygger på intervjuet
- Tre hovedtemaer:
    - Din aktivisme i et personlig perspektiv
    - Fascisme i dag – utfordringer og analyser
    - Antifascisme i dag – aktivisme og miljø

1. Din aktivisme i et personlig perspektiv

- Hvor lenge har du regnet deg selv som politisk aktiv?
- Hvilke saker/problemstillinger/politiske overbevisninger gjorde at du ble politisk aktiv?
- Kan du beskrive din politiske overbevisning?
- Hvor lenge har du regnet deg selv som antifascist?
- Kan du fortelle noe om hvordan du ble antifascist?
- Hvorfor anser du antifascisme for å være ditt ansvar?
- Hvorfor tenker du at antifascisme er nødvendig i dag?
- Har du noen refleksjoner rundt antifascistisk aksjon som en historisk bevegelse?
- Kan du fortelle noe om hvor mye tid du bruker på antifascistisk arbeid?
- Hva tenker du kreves for å kalle seg for en antifascist?
- Er det noen fordeler og/eller ulemper ved å organisere seg utenomparlamentarisk i kampen mot fascisme?

2. Fascisme i dag – utfordringer og analyser

    - Hvordan vil du definere fascisme i dag?

- Hvor går grensen mellom høyreradikal/ekstrem og fascisme? Kan de sammenliknes?
- Hva tenker du om argumentet om at «troll sprekker i sollys»? Hva er problematisk med å inkludere høyreekstreme i den politiske debatten?
- Hva tenker du om en forbudslinje mot høyreekstreme organisasjoner?
- Hvordan tenker du at fascister *blir* fascister? Har du noen tanker om radikaliseringsprosessen til høyreekstreme? Hvordan stiller antifascisme seg til dette i praksis?
- Hvilke konsekvenser har internett for kampen mot fascisme? Er trollterror og chanekstremisme en like stor utfordring som organisert høyreekstremisme? Hvilke konsekvenser har dette for deres arbeid?
- Det har blitt argumentert at utviklingen/formaliseringen av f.eks BNP i Storbritannia gjør antifascisme på gateplan overflødig. Hva tenker du når jeg sier dette?
- Høyreekstreme partier blir i større grad en del av det politiske landskapet i Europa. Hva tenker du om dette?
- Kan du fortelle om en aksjon du har vært med på?

3. Antifascisme i dag – aktivisme og miljø

- Kan det være riktig å anse antifascistiske bevegelser som en form for borgervern? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke? Hvorfor anser dere det ikke som statens/politiets oppgave?
- Hvis du ville beskrevet det antifascistiske miljøet i Oslo i dag, hvordan ville du gjort det?
- OmR ser ut til å være et nettverk som ønsker å skape en bredere front mot fascisme – hvordan går dere fram for å gjøre dette?
- Hvor går skillene mellom AfA og det å være antifascist? Hva er forskjellene og/eller likhetene?
- Hvilke strategier tenker du er mest effektive i kampen mot fascisme i dag? Hvorfor?
- Hva tenker du rundt blitzhusets politiske/sosiale rolle i dag? Hvordan tenker du at det var tidligere? Har blitzhuset endret seg?
- Har antifascister med forskjellige politiske overbevisninger forskjellige prioriteringer/strategier i det antifascistiske arbeidet?

- Hvordan tror du antifascismen har utviklet seg de siste ti/tjue årene? Hvorfor tenker du denne utviklingen har skjedd?
- Klistremerkenes rolle – territorielt eller propaganda? Hvordan/hvorfor brukes de?
- Hvordan vil du beskrive antifascismens forhold til politiet i Oslo?
- Kan du fortelle noe om hvordan antifascistisk aktivisme i Oslo organiseres?
    - Hvordan dannes strategier
    - Flat struktur/primus motor aktivister tar kontroll?
- Antifascister og fascister har tidligere blitt beskrevet som radikale ungdommer som blusser opp hverandres hat og som danner en voldsspiral. Hva tenker du når jeg sier dette?
- Hvordan tror du «storsamfunnet» oppfatter antifascisme? Er bildet dere sender utad noe dere tar hensyn til?
- Hvordan tenker du at antifascisme blir representert i media og av andre?
- Hvordan tenker du framtiden til antifascistisk aktivisme ser ut? Hva blir viktig for antifascismen å fokusere på i framtiden?