TOWARDS A VIGILANT SOCIETY

From Citizen Participation to Anti-Migrant Vigilantism

Matthijs Gardenier

TOWARDS A VIGILANT SOCIETY

A British Academy Monograph

The British Academy has a scheme for the selective publication of monographs arising from its British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships, British Academy Newton International Fellowships and British Academy / Wolfson Fellowships. Its purpose is to assist individual scholars by providing a prestigious publishing opportunity to showcase works of excellence.

Matthijs Gardenier is Doctor in Sociology. His research is on social movements, political violence and social media. He completed a PhD on the sociology of crowds and on crowd policing at the University of Montpellier Paul Valéry. Since then, he has been working on anti-migrant movements and on conservative participation in security and policing, with a focus on vigilantism. From 2019 to 2021, he conducted a British Academy Newton International Fellowship at the University of Manchester on anti-migrant groups in Dover and in Calais. Matthijs Gardenier has also been teaching at the Universities of Montpellier and Brasilia (Brazil) since 2012. He has also produced several sociological documentaries.

TOWARDS A VIGILANT SOCIETY

From Citizen Participation to Anti-Migrant Vigilantism

Matthijs Gardenier

Contents

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Tables

Acknowledgements

Introduction

This monograph aims to provide an empirical and theoretical contribution on the phenomenon of vigilantism, particularly in Western Europe. For those who may not be familiar with the term, vigilantism refers to the act of policing by ordinary citizens in place of the police. Researchers such as Tore Bjørgo,[1] Gilles Favarel-Garrigues and Laurent Gayer[2] define vigilantism as an organised activity aimed at defending legal or moral norms and repressing offenders by inflicting alternative forms of punishment to that of the judiciary system. Vigilantism presents several facets: surveillance (e.g. patrols), direct intervention (e.g. apprehending offenders) or the administration of sanctions (e.g. a public caning). Because of its voluntary dimension, it can constitute a form of social movement. Indeed, it also forms a type of mobilisation which attempts to define the contours of the norm[3] of what is licit or not, not hesitating to disobey the law to do so.[4] Finally, vigilantism can target deviant acts committed by individuals (crime control vigilantism) but also groups or minorities perceived by vigilantes as problematic or even criminogenic (social group vigilantism).[5]

In popular culture, vigilantism is often associated with the conquest of the West in the United States. In reality, particularly in the Global South, vigilantism is a phenomenon that remains relevant today. In Latin America (e.g. Brazil, Mexico, Colombia), Africa (e.g. Nigeria, South Africa) and South Asia (e.g. India, Pakistan), this phenomenon has become part of policing, as shown by the work of Sen and Pratten[6] and of Favarel-Garrigues and Gayer.[7] The anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff consider this resurrection of vigilantism a 'cheap form

---

[1] Bjørgo, Tore, Mareš, Miroslav (eds). 2019. *Vigilantism against Migrants and Minorities*. London: Routledge.

[2] Favarel-Garrigues, Gilles, Gayer, Laurent. 2016. 'Violer la loi pour maintenir l'ordre. Le vigilantisme en débat', *Politix*, 115: pp. 7–33.

[3] Johnston, Les. 1996. 'What is vigilantism?', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 36(2): pp. 220–36.

[4] Abrahams, Ray. 1998. *Vigilant Citizens: Vigilantism and the State*. Cambridge: Polity Press

[5] Rosenbaum, Jon, Sederberg, Peter. 1976. *Vigilante Politics*. Pittsburg: University of Pennsylvania Press.

[6] Pratten, David, Sen, Atreyee. 2007. *Global Vigilantes*. London: Hurst.

[7] Favarel-Garrigues, Gilles, Gayer, Laurent. 2021. *Fiers de punir. Le monde des justiciers hors-la-loi*. Paris: Seuil.

of law enforcement', in a context where the states of the Global South have been weakened by globalisation processes.[8]

While this hypothesis appears to be a relevant explanatory factor for understanding the return of vigilantism to the Global South, it does not suffice when explaining the resurgence of this phenomenon in the North. For example, in the United States, vigilantism has occurred on the Mexican border against migrant crossings,[9] while numerous armed far-right militias have developed during the 2010s. These played an important role in the Capitol riots on 6 January 2021.[10] In Europe, vigilantism has developed significantly in the wake of the 2015 'migrant crisis',[11] although it is not limited to this dimension. Moreover, citizen participation in policing activities has been growing, encouraged by public authorities. In this context, citizens are being encouraged to take on the role of 'watchful citizens', taking part in social control processes previously reserved for law enforcement officers.[12]

This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that the social relationship to security in Northern societies has been undergoing significant changes. In a political context that some describe as 'authoritarian liberalism'[13] or as 'post-democratic',[14] the neoliberal governance of the economy is accompanied by an amplification of securitarian logics. Indeed, in this case the development of economic liberalism does not go hand in hand with an increase in public liberties. On the contrary, a reinforcement of securitarian logics in all social spheres has been unfolding. Surveillance and control devices (biometrics, facial recognition, video surveillance, smart cities) have grown exponentially. At the same time, there has been a legislative inflation in terms of security and anti-terrorism: in France, 31 laws between 1994 and 2019. More broadly, most social problems are being defined through the paradigm of security: in the words of Didier Fassin, punishing has become a contemporary passion.[15] According to Loïc Wacquant, the difficulties of the poorest are no longer treated as social problems, but only in terms of security: there has been a shift from a social state to a penal state.[16]

---

[8] Comaroff, Jean, Comaroff, John. 2006. *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony.* Chicago: Chicago University Press, p. 5.
[9] Shapira, Harel. 2013. *Waiting for José: The Minutemen's Pursuit of America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
[10] ACLED & Militia Watch. 2020. *Standing By: Right Wing Militia Groups & The US Election,* Joint Report.
[11] Bjørgo, Mareš, *ibid*.
[12] Walsh, James. 2014. 'Watchful Citizens: Immigration Control, Surveillance and Societal Participation', *Social & Legal Studies* 23(2): pp. 237–59.
[13] Chamayou, Grégoire. 2018. *La société ingouvernable: Une généalogie du libéralisme autoritaire.* Paris: La Fabrique.
[14] Crouch, Colin. 2004. *Post-democracy.* London: Polity Press.
[15] Fassin, Didier. 2017. *Punir: Une passion contemporaine.* Paris: Seuil.
[16] Wacquant, Loic. 2004. *Punir les pauvres, le nouveau gouvernement de l'insécurité sociale.* Marseille. Agone.

Max Weber conceived law and order functions and the exercise of violence as a legitimate monopoly of the state.[17] The new security model challenges this view: citizens are called upon to participate actively in policing within the framework of a 'security continuum' associating public authorities, private actors and citizens with the exercise of law and order. Thus, in 2019, the French President Emmanuel Macron, in the fight against terrorism, called for the implementation of a 'society of vigilance'. This implies 'knowing how to spot at school, at work, in places of worship, near one's home, those small gestures that signal a move away from the values of the Republic'.[18] This injunction drew strong criticism. For some it would lay the foundations for a society of surveillance and mutual denunciation.

In reality, citizen participation in policing is already largely in place. In the section of the book devoted to the field research, we will see that many actors engage in citizen policing. For example, there are several tens of thousands of neighbourhood watches in France, set up under the supervision of the public authorities in some cases but with no supervision in others (see Chapter 3).

Through the study of voluntary participation in policing, this monograph aims to provide a better understanding of the changes in the social relationship to security. In a context where the investment in the law and order domain by the state seems to be forever expanding, how can we understand the phenomena of vigilantism and participation in policing? Explaining the emergence of vigilantism through the weakening of the state does not correspond to the situation of the countries in this study: France and the United Kingdom. If the social state seems to be in retreat, this is not the case for the sectors that Bourdieu called the 'right hand of the state' (police, army, judiciary). In France, for example, the budgets of the Ministries of the Interior and the Armed Forces have been growing over the period studied, while the private security sector has been expanding rapidly.[19]

This book aims to question the role of vigilantism in a context where it is neither a response to the weakening of the state nor a cheap form of law enforcement. To what extent does voluntary participation in policing contribute to the deployment of securitarian logics? If it does not correspond to a lack of policing, should we understand these specific forms of vigilantism as presenting above all a political dimension? In a context of securitisation, are they a way for certain actors to accumulate political capital and influence public opinion? How do practices of vigilantism become part of the repertoire of social movements? Why is it that social movement vigilantism

---

[17] Weber, Max. 2003. *Economie et société, tome 1: Les Catégories de la sociologie*. Paris: Pocket.
[18] 'EDITO. "La société de vigilance" voulue par Macron ne contribue pas à l'unité mais à la division' [Online: https://www.lejdd.fr/Politique/edito-la-societe-de-vigilance-voulue-par-macron-ne-contribue-pas-a-lunite-mais-a-la-division-3925113] Accessed 8 March 2022.
[19] 'Le budget du ministère de l'Intérieur va augmenter de plus de 900 millions d'euros en 2022' [Online: https://www.lefigaro.fr/conjoncture/le-budget-du-ministere-de-l-interieur-va-augmenter-de-plus-de-900-millions-d-euros-en-2022-20210726] Accessed 21 August 2021.

aspires to reform the contours of the established order rather than challenge its foundations?

In order to address these questions, social reaction to migration seems central to understanding contemporary vigilantism in Western Europe, particularly in France and the United Kingdom. Immigration, the rejection of which is an essential element of the electoral support for the far right,[20] is the field *par excellence* of vigilante mobilisation in France and Britain. Practices of vigilantism have been deployed by various social movements and vigilante groups who mobilise around what they consider to be intolerable or insufficiently punished by authorities. Their action has often been a reaction to what the vigilantes perceive as a peril, a figure of the enemy that should be fought. The contours of this enemy are protean, but a recurrent pattern is that of organising in reaction to socio-racial otherness. The vigilantes always fear the figure of 'they', strangers to the community, potentially criminogenic, and so on.

This has been the case with anti-migrant groups in Calais, who monitor the 'threat' posed by migrants, or even fight them through direct action (laying siege to squats; through physical attacks; and so on). On the other side of the Channel, Britain First has mobilised under the theme of 'security': organising patrols on the coastline in Dover, while in the North-West of England, its members claim that they have been flushing out 'grooming gangs' from mosques. All these groups use social media as a sounding board and as a tool to stage their actions. These voluntary monitoring initiatives are not just voluntary support to the public authorities. They are, above all, a political attempt to construct some populations as a danger, or even an internal enemy. The aim is to change not only migratory policies, but also to redefine who can and cannot be part of the national community.

These elements paint the picture of a society where citizen participation in policing reinforces social control. Vigilantes play the role of moral entrepreneurs, fuelling a social demand for security from certain groups, but since they also take part in the daily exercise of security in certain areas, they also redefine social relations to security.

This monograph is the result of research undertaken between 2019 and 2021, during a British Academy Newton International Fellowship in the Department of Sociology at the University of Manchester. It builds on earlier research carried out in the context of the production of a documentary film, *Amateurs d'ordre* (law enforcement amateurs).[21] The aim is to bring a theoretical and historical perspective to the phenomenon of vigilantism, drawing from fieldwork on the very specific space of the Franco-British border, and the 'crisis' situations that these spaces

---

[20] Arzheimer, Kai. 2018. 'Explaining Electoral Support for the Radical Right' in Rydgren, Jens (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.
[21] This documentary film project still in development, produced by Acronyme Films and Pages et Images, intends to provide an overview on vigilantism and citizen participation in security in France.

periodically experience when crossings become 'too visible' at Dover or, on the contrary, when a 'stockpiling' population becomes too disruptive on the French side, as in 2016 when the Jules Ferry jungle counted more than 10,000 inhabitants.[22] This is complemented by a study on neighbourhood watches in France. Their participation in local community surveillance is directly political, and their vision of danger presents clear similarities with those of the anti-migrant groups in Calais and Dover, but without obvious links to far-right social movements.

I made numerous trips to the field to meet different actors. The fieldwork in the offline space was accompanied by fieldwork in the digital space since digital exchanges have become an increasingly important facet of contemporary social life.[23] Methodologically, the approach is qualitative, comprehensive and ethnographic. Qualitative in the sense that the objective was not to collect bare statistics that would make it possible to represent the phenomenon in numbers, but to carry out local in-depth case studies of groups whose importance lies less in their numbers than in what they say about the research issues. The research approach is comprehensive in the sense that the stated objective is to understand the mental universe and representations of these groups and, through this, the motivations behind the actions of vigilantes. It also aims to understand the reasons why they can be received positively by parts of the population in the localities where they are active, and how they can build an online communitarian audience through their social media. Finally, the research is ethnographic in the sense that the objective was to immerse oneself in the research field (where possible) in order to understand its social and mental universe.

Several methodological tools were used. The first was the semi-structured interview. Where possible, these interviews were supplemented by freer comprehensive interviews in order to deepen the ethnographic dimension of the research. When the opportunity arose, observation complemented the interview, for example by participating in patrols and guided tours of neighbourhoods (with neighbourhood watches) or by observing demonstrations or press conferences. This was further complemented by digital ethnography: through registration to pages and groups on various social media (Facebook, Twitter, Telegram) and long-term monitoring of these spaces and content analysis methods. The intersection of these various methods made it possible to draw up a precise picture of the practices, ideologies, representation and sociology of these various groups and, at the same time, provide empirical elements that enrich the theoretical questions put forward in this monograph.

Naturally, there were obstacles and difficulties encountered during the survey. The first was the difficulty in securing the participation of activists. Far-right

---

[22] Alaux, Jean-Pierre. 2015. 'Calais vaut bien quelques requiem', *Plein droit*, 104: pp. 3–8.
[23] Susca, Vincenzo. 2016. *Les affinités connectives*. Paris: Editions du Cerf.

activists are known to be reluctant to be the subjects of social science research,[24] which makes access more difficult. The second limitation was, of course, the unforeseen pandemic, which necessitated the use of online interviews for the Dover fieldwork. Despite these limitations, with occasional disparities in the quality of interview, the majority of the target groups could be studied satisfactorily.

The monograph is divided into three theoretical chapters and four chapters devoted to the various field surveys conducted during the research project: two in France and two in Britain. These seven chapters are grouped into two main parts. The first part, consisting of two theoretical chapters and one chapter devoted to a field study, is intended to outline the questions that led me to this monograph. The first chapter proposes a theoretical and historical reflection on the phenomenon of vigilantism. Under what conditions does vigilantism emerge? From which social classes do vigilantes stem? Why do they take risks in providing unpaid policing labour? What services does vigilantism provide to the communities that experience this phenomenon? Is this phenomenon built against the state or is tolerance from the authorities a precondition for the success of this type of policing? Does vigilantism aim primarily to regulate acts of delinquency or, on the contrary, to exercise control over groups perceived as problematic (ethnic and sexual minorities, trade unionists, communists)? Chapter 1 provides some answers to these fundamental questions by discussing several historical examples: the well-known vigilantism of the American frontier in the 19th century, but also movements not often studied from the perspective of vigilantism: the anti-minority vigilantism (social group vigilantism) of the Ku Klux Klan, as well as the militias that were the antechamber of historical fascism in Europe.

Chapter 2 considers vigilantism in its contemporary dimension: its manifestations in the Global South, but also in the countries of the North. As mentioned above, the phenomenon of vigilantism in the North has been characterised by the fact that it does not appear in the context of the withdrawal of the state but, on the contrary, in an extension of the state's law and order competences in countries where a strong bureaucratic state (not necessarily centralised in the case of the US and the UK) has existed for hundreds of years.

As we shall see, the social reaction to migration has been crucial in the development of this phenomenon. Chapter 3 therefore concludes this first part of the book with a a case study: the development of neighbourhood watches in France. The chapter presents a study of a dozen communities in localities where the vote for the far right is high. It aims to better understand this watchful citizens' mechanism, which is halfway between participation in policing and autonomous organisation of surveillance against potential acts of delinquency. This chapter

---

[24] Ashe, Stephen, Busher, Joel, Macklin, Graham, Winter, Aaron. 2021. *Researching the Far Right: Theory, Method and Practice*. London: Routledge.

also considers the political dimension of the action of these watchful neighbours. Are there links with the far right? Is it possible to reduce their politics to an affiliation with the *Rassemblement National* [RN – National Rally] or does it reflect the wider diffusion of security-related themes throughout the French political arena?

The second part of the book comprises four chapters and constitutes the core of the field research. Chapter 4 is theoretical, aiming to examine the links between vigilantism and, more generally, the social response to migration. It draws on the theory of political cleavages, but also on Robert Castel's reflections on the treatment of people from outside the community as soon as they are in need of assistance.[25] These theoretical elements provide explanatory frameworks for the ways in which anti-migrant vigilantism, often linked to the far right, constructs migrant populations as ontologically criminogenic.[26]

The final three chapters in this part of the book consider these dimensions by examining anti-migration mobilisation around borders in France and Britain. Based on a study of both sides of the Channel over the chronological period 2015 to 2021, Chapters 5 to 7 interrogate the sociology of these social movements (who are the participants?); their framings and ideologies; and their social movement practices. Although their numbers are small, these groups nevertheless reach a significant audience through the use of social media, in a strategy of social influence close to Serge Moscovici's theorisation of active minorities.[27]

The core of their action is the performative and even spectacular implementation of vigilantism: patrols, calls for self-justice, digital vigilantism. These practices constitute a central element of their repertoire of action. It is also this performative vigilantism that provides a specific framing for their worldview. Rather than defining the context as one of social and humanitarian crisis, these actions frame the situation in Calais and Dover as the theatre of a confrontation between, on the one hand, migrants represented as invaders and, on the other hand, vigilantes who define themselves as the brave resistance. It should be noted that this vigilantism is mainly symbolic and performative in the sense that these actions are performances for social media, but this is not always the case: in Calais, anti-migrant groups moved from symbolic practices to real action: attacks on squats, assaults on migrants, pro-refugee activists and participation in law enforcement operations alongside the French police. In a context of the securitisation of borders, these actions raise questions about the attitude of the authorities towards these groups, whose actions become illegal as soon as they move from the performative to direct action. Finally, these three chapters allow us to consider the use of social media by

[25] Castel, Robert. 1999. *Les métamorphoses de la question sociale*. Paris: Folio.
[26] Simonneau, Damien, Castelli Gattinara, Pietro. 2019. 'Prendre part aux logiques d'exclusion: les mobilisations anti-migrants en France, en Italie et aux États-Unis', *Critique internationale*, 3(3): pp. 105–24.
[27] Moscovici, Serge. 2015. 'Psychologie des minorites actives', *EcoRev'*, 42: pp. 5–14.

these groups, particularly through the figure of the video activist, half activist, half journalist, as well as the determining role that these media play in the dissemination of vigilante practice.

Finally, the conclusion chapter allows a discussion of the causes of the renewal of vigilantism, its links with the broader social context as well as its politics. It will also discuss the differences and similarities of anti-migrant groups across the Channel.

1

Practitioners of Vigilantism

Understanding the emergence of what can be called a 'society of vigilance' makes a theoretical and historical discussion necessary. This first chapter outlines what vigilantism actually is. How can one explain the fact that people voluntarily carry out activities that usually fall within the scope of policing? This question will be partly answered by a definition of vigilantism. It is also necessary to question its objectives: does vigilantism only target acts perceived as criminal? Is it a form of social control that aims to be an alternative to the one carried out by state authorities? Who are the vigilantes: do they belong to the middle or the working classes?

This chapter then moves on to a historical perspective on vigilantism. It will begin with vigilantism in the American West. Then other types of social control vigilantism will be discussed: in the United States, the Ku Klux Klan whose objective was to keep the black minority in subjection will be covered, as well as the fascist-style militias in Italy (*squadristi*) and Germany (*Freikorps*, SA.) whose existence was an important dynamic in the rise to power of fascism in the 1920s and 1930s. This historical panorama concludes with a brief overview of the historical peculiarities of vigilantism in France and Britain. All of these political and sociological historical elements allow the reader to better understand this very particular phenomenon which sees citizens voluntarily appropriate attributes that are supposed to be the monopoly of the state.

Defining vigilantism

In the first place, tackling the subject of vigilance in society requires reflection on the concept of vigilantism used in anthropology, political science and criminology. Etymologically, vigilantism comes from the Latin root *vigilie*, meaning watch and surveillance.[1]

---

[1] Abrahams, Ray. 1998. *Vigilant Citizens: Vigilantism and the State*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

According to Favarel-Garrigues and Gayer, vigilantism may be defined as 'collective coercive practices undertaken by non-state actors in order to enforce norms (social or judicial) and/or to take the law in their own hands'.[2] This phenomenon involves citizens acting collectively to exercise social control over, or administer justice to, acts perceived as deviant. The aim is to implement or preserve a social or moral order. It emerges in political formations characterised by a modern bureaucratic state where, as Max Weber saw it,[3] the legitimate monopoly of violence belongs to the state. The old adage 'no one can dispense justice on his or her own behalf' applies in this case. Yet paradoxically, this state monopoly considers those who intend to enforce order to be operating strictly outside the law.

However, such a view did not always exist in Europe. In *State Formation and Civilization*, Norbert Elias explains that in the Middle Ages, all forms of private justice existed (community justice, seigniorial justice, etc.) and that neighbourhood quarrels were often settled with butcher's knives without the courts being disturbed. During the French *Ancien Régime*, when serious cases such as murders occurred, the courts only intervened if the victims or their relatives filed an appeal, which was far from systematic.[4]

Therefore, the phenomenon of vigilantism can only exist under a modern state with a criminal justice system. Accordingly, vigilante citizens do not act autonomously to ensure security and administer justice – they act in parallel with the police and judicial institutions even if they are dissatisfied with how the criminal justice system functions. To use the words of Ray Abrahams, 'vigilant action can be justified by an inefficiency (real or perceived) of a country's justice system'.[5] It can also be aimed at exercising control over populations or at enforcing moral standards that are not legal standards. In all cases, the aim is to redefine social order through voluntary action and to influence what is lawful and what is not.

In his seminal article, British criminologist Les Johnston suggests several criteria for defining vigilantism:[6]

> it involves planning and premeditation by those engaging in it; its participants are private citizens whose engagement is voluntary; it is a form of autonomous citizenship and, as such, constitutes a social movement; it uses or threatens the use of force;[7]

---

[2] Favarel-Garrigues, Gilles, Gayer, Laurent. 2016. 'Violer la loi pour maintenir l'ordre. Le vigilantisme en débat', *Politix*, 115: pp. 7–33, at p. 18.
[3] Weber, Max. 2003. *Economie et société, tome 1: Les Catégories de la sociologie*. Paris: Pocket.
[4] Elias, Norbert. 2003. *La dynamique de l'Occident*. Paris: Pocket.
[5] Abrahams, *ibid*, p. 22.
[6] Johnston, Les. 1996. 'What is Vigilantism?', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 36(2), pp. 220–36, at p. 221.
[7] We shall see later that the criterion of the use of force is not necessarily always present in the actions of the vigilantes that we study. Some of them claim a form of non-violence, although their actual practices are not necessarily so clear-cut. I propose to clarify this concept by affirming that vigilantism is intended to impose a form of power and constraint on the localities where it is to be exercised, and that the use or threat of force is part of this, but not exclusively limited to it.

it arises when an established order is under threat from the transgression, the potential transgression, or the imputed transgression of institutionalized norms; it aims to control crime or other social infractions by offering assurances (or 'guarantees') of security both to participants and to others.

Significantly, Johnston also notes that vigilantism is a form of control linked to locality: the action does not aim to impose order on a national scale but within a community, a neighbourhood or a small town. There is thus an affirmation of local power. Johnston links the emergence of vigilantism with late modernity because, according to him, the communitarian and social fragmentation that characterised this period led to its perceived necessity by vigilante groups.[8]

Vigilantes emerge from determined groups. They share the same social framework, the same perception of a problem and the same need for direct action in addressing that problem. They therefore need an ideology, or a framework of understanding based on a pre-existing social link – whether a network of farmers,[9] a network of far-right activists,[10] or a group of neighbours.[11] The combination of a network, a social group and a series of action-oriented beliefs facilitates vigilante action.

The functions and objectives of vigilantism

Vigilante practices can be further defined through reference to two typologies. In this study, two typologies are presented: one according to their functions and the other according to their objectives. However, these distinctions are not always as clear-cut in the field, as we shall see.[12]

Typology 1: the components of vigilantism

Les Johnston distinguishes three main components, all of which are part of the sovereign attributes of the state.[13] First, vigilantism, as a long-term activity, is based on intelligence actions: surveillance of an area in order to detect and

---

[8] Johnston, 1996, *ibid.*
[9] 'Sivens: les milices pro-barrage agissent dans l'impunité alors que l'expulsion de la Zad se dessine' [Online: https://reporterre.net/Sivens-les-milices-pro-barrage] Accessed 8 May 2020.
[10] 'NordLittoral Migrants: Un message de Natacha Bouchart crée le buzz sur Facebook', *NordLittoral* [Online: http://www.nordlittoral.fr/fait-divers-justice/migrants-un-message-de-natacha-bouchart-cree-le-buzz-sur-ia6b0n26840. Accessed 30 September 2017.
[11] Malochet, Virginie. 2017. *La participation des citoyens en matière de sécurité locale: Diversité des regards et des modes d'implication*. Report to the IAU IDF.
[12] Nevertheless, these typologies, if they do not describe reality exactly, at least help to explain it better, as Max Weber explained to justify the concept of ideal type.
[13] Johnston, Les. 1992. *The Rebirth of Private Policing*. London: Routledge.

identify deviant acts. This surveillance is fundamental to concrete action by these groups. Surveillance may lead to informing law enforcement authorities, or to the second component distinguished by Johnston: direct intervention, i.e. action against offenders who may thus be followed, monitored, questioned or become targets of violence. An example being the eviction of squats without legal process, as in the case of a squat in Coulogne which was besieged and removed.[14] Surveillance and direct intervention are the two components usually undertaken by the police.

The third component of vigilantism is judicial action, that is to say, the assessment of the seriousness of a transgression and its sanctioning. This judicial component is rarer in contemporary manifestations of vigilantism for two reasons: the first is that it involves a strong state withdrawal or a strong collective sense about the inadequacy of the state's judicial activity, which is rarer in Europe. The second is that it concerns only vigilantism that attacks individual acts and not social groups, which reduces the scope of the phenomenon.

Moreover, the sanctions exercised by vigilantes can be quite spectacular and symbolic: vigilantes cannot arrest all criminals but can make punishment into a symbol to frighten others. Sanctioning often takes the form of physical punishment, public humiliation or, more rarely, execution. These sanctions are part of what Foucault calls the ability to destroy bodies by exemplary punishment.[15] These sanctions are opposed to those imposed by modern bureaucratic states, which aim to constrain bodies through electronic bracelets or imprisonment.

Contemporary vigilante groups rarely practise all three components. In France, the first two components – surveillance and intervention – generally appear but the third remains rare. On the European continent, some anti-migrant groups in Germany or Eastern Europe sometimes resort to sanctions.[16] Examples are several cases of extra-judicial executions or live streaming torture videos of real or presumed paedophiles in Russia.[17]

Typology 2: The objectives of vigilantism

Political scientists Jon Rosenbaum and Peter Sederberg distinguish three broad categories of political violence: revolutionary violence aimed at bringing about a new order, reactionary violence aimed at restoring a past order, and violence

---

[14] 'Squat de Coulogne, jeunesse identitaire: Sauvons Calais dans la tourmente (VIDÉO)' [Online: http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/archive/recup/region/squat-de-coulogne-jeunesse-identitaire-sauvons-calais-ia33b48581n1947081] Accessed 3 September 2018.
[15] Foucault, Michel. 1975. *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*. Paris: Gallimard.
[16] Koehler, Daniel. 2019. 'Anti-immigration Militias and Vigilante Groups in Germany: An Overview' in Bjørgo, Tore, Mareš, Miroslav (eds), *Vigilantism against Migrants and Minorities*. London: Routledge.
[17] Johnston, 1992, ibid.

aimed at maintaining the *status quo*.[18] The latter can be subdivided into two elements: legitimate violence carried out by state agents, and non-state violence which is defined illegitimate in view of the law and human rights. Based on this conception, two variables explain the emergence of vigilantism: the fact that a regime is not capable of managing protest and threats to the established order, and the idea that this violence is effective. These conceptions follow Ted Gurr's model which conceptualises the emergence of political violence.[19]

In Sederberg and Rosenbaum's model, vigilantism is not understood as violence exercised in parallel with the state but as 'establishment violence', which seeks to implicitly exercise violence that the state cannot politically ensure. This view has been criticised by Abrahams[20] as well as Favarel-Guarrigues and Gayer.[21] For this conception would ultimately amount to denying the autonomy of vigilant citizens and greatly reduces their agency. This conception is simplistic as vigilante action is aimed at imposing a different conception of the established order.

Moreover, in this conception the distinction between violence perpetrated by the state and by autonomous actors becomes blurred, which makes a precise understanding of the phenomenon difficult. Thus, the category of police vigilantism seems questionable. This term refers to violence exercised by law enforcement officers without legal texts or orders. While it is possible to consider, as highlighted by Max Weber, that the state is characterised by the revendication of the legitimate monopoly of violence,[22] this does not mean that state violence is necessarily legitimate. Carl Schmitt[23] and Giorgio Agamben[24] assert that what characterises state sovereignty is also the capacity to suspend the rule of law, and therefore to exercise brutal violence which is not subject to legitimacy. In this perspective, exercising illegitimate violence outside the rules of engagement is not a matter of vigilantism but on the contrary is at the heart of state sovereignty. Indeed, beyond the category of police vigilantism, we should acknowledge the action of vigilante groups in supporting 'legitimate' law enforcement action which is an integral part of the crowd policing of several states, such as Egypt,[25] Ukraine[26] and Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region of the PRC).[27]

[18] Rosenbaum, Jon, Sederberg, Peter. 1974. 'Vigilantism: An Analysis of Establishment Violence', *Comparative Politics*, 6: pp. 541–70.

[19] Gurr, Ted. 1971. *Why Men Rebel*. Boston: Princeton University Press.

[20] Abrahams, *ibid*.

[21] Favarel-Garrigues, Gayer, *ibid*.

[22] Weber, *ibid*.

[23] Schmitt, Carl. 2009. *La notion de politique: Théorie du partisan*. Paris: Editions Flammarion.

[24] Agamben, Giorgio. 2003. *Etat d'exception*. Paris: Le Seuil.

[25] 'Affrontements et répression place Tahrir' [Online: https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/monde/afrique/affrontements-et-repression-place-tahrir_958124.html] Accessed 8 May 2020.

[26] Marples, David R., Mills, Frederick V. (eds). 2015. *Ukraine's Euromaidan: Analyses of a Civil Revolution*. London: Ibidem.

[27] 'Hong Kong: L'ombre des triades sur la répression des manifestants' [Online: https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2019/07/24/hongkong-sous-le-choc-apres-les-attaques-des-triades_5492855_3210.html] Accessed 8 April 2020.

The conceptualisation of vigilantism as being covert establishment violence as opposed to 'legitimate' state violence is questionable. However, other categorisations by Rosenbaum and Sederberg remain highly relevant. Significantly, they distinguish between vigilantism and crime control vigilantism, linked to the prevention of certain acts, and between vigilantism and social group control vigilantism, which relates to entire social groups:

> **Crime control vigilantism**: this action is directed against deviant acts. The purpose is to protect people and especially property. These deviant acts are targeted either because the state does not consider them to be deviant or because they are considered insufficiently sanctioned by vigilantism actors. This type of vigilantism may come from the survival of community justice based on locality and represents a competing legitimacy to the state. It is strong when traditional communities persist and mechanical solidarity has not completely disappeared. This type of mechanism can be found in the American West in the 19th century, in Guatemala, Nigeria, South Africa, Bolivia and also in the traditional institution of Samosud in Russia.[28]
>
> **Social group control vigilantism:** this vigilantism targets entire social groups perceived as threatening to social order. Examples include the Untouchables in India or the civil rights movement in the United States. It targets entire groups and seeks to impose its dominance. The targets are populations (social or ethnic groups) or social or political movements (strikers, trade unions, far left-wing, communists). Social group vigilantism does not come from the traditional community but rather from actors with a political project, often linked to nationalism: it often stems from extreme right-wing groups. Examples are the Ku Klux Klan in the southern United States targeting the black community,[29] *squadrismo* in Italy or paramilitary Freikorps activity in Germany which targeted the labour movement[30] after the First World War, or the Hindu women's militias described by Atreyee Sen, which target Muslim populations in India.[31]

These two categories are fundamental to defining different vigilante movements. Indeed, the project scope and political dimension of these groups vary greatly depending on whether they target deviant acts only or a population as a whole. Rosenbaum and Sederberg add a third category to their typology: 'regime control

---

[28] Rosenbaum, Sederberg, 1974, *ibid*.

[29] Blee, Kathleen, Latif, Mehr. 2019. 'Ku Klux Klan: Vigilantism against Blacks, Immigrants and Other Minorities' in Bjørgo, Tore, Mareš, Miroslav (eds), *Vigilantism against Migrants and Minorities*. London: Routledge.

[30] Clark, Martin. 1988. 'Italian Squadrismo and Contemporary Vigilantism', *European History Quarterly*, 18: pp. 33–49.

[31] Sen, Atreyee. 2007. 'Everyday and Extraordinary Justice: Woman Vigilantes and Raw Justice in the Bombay Slums' in Pratten, David, Sen, Atreyee (eds), *Global Vigilantes*. London: Hurst.

vigilantism', which consists in or militia groups being used to put pressure on the regime.[32]

Vigilantism: historical examples

Understanding the phenomenon of vigilantism requires an overview of its various historical occurrences. These historical manifestations vary in their purpose as much as in their social anchoring. However, knowledge of these historical manifestations allows us to identify similarities but also significant divergences with contemporary manifestations of vigilantism.

The American West: vigilantism to control delinquency

Some examples of vigilante groups are necessary to understand how theories of vigilantism apply to historical examples, starting in the United States where vigilantism is deeply rooted. Many vigilante societies developed in the American West in the 19th century in the context of colonisation. The federal state was distant and the local authorities had little competence. In Texas, vigilantes named themselves 'regulators'[33] although other vigilante groups, called 'moderators', were set up to fight against the excesses of regulators. The phenomenon of vigilantism in the American West is best known in San Francisco. In the 1840s, following a series of crimes, San Francisco's vigilantes targeted Chilean immigrants, perceived as a criminal population. The committee defined itself as a committee of merchants and an association of smallholders. After a temporary lull, a second vigilance committee was founded in the 1850s, targeting Australians, also perceived as a criminal population.[34]

After an official investigation, vigilante committees held secret justice sessions to keep their leaders anonymous. Sanctions were then enforced by masked vigilantes. The most common sentences were summary execution or deportation to the city borders. These phenomena reveal a vigilantism where local elites, associated with smallholders, directly ensured repression against delinquency (which was mostly property crime). They were structured in a similar way to freemasonry and were tolerated by the city authorities, satisfied that they did not have to deal with all crime. These vigilante groups targeted general delinquency,

---

[32] Rosenbaum, Jon, Sederberg, Peter. 1976. *Vigilante Politics*. Pittsburg: University of Pennsylvania Press.
[33] Abrahams, *ibid*.
[34] Many Australian citizens were originally English thieves deported to Australia who later immigrated to San Francisco after serving their sentences.

but also crimes perpetrated by specific social groups from the lowest part of the working classes.[35]

The Ku Klux Klan: vigilantism in the service of social and moral order based on racial inequality

American vigilantism is often associated with the American frontier but the US also witnessed social control vigilantism. The clearest example is the Ku Klux Klan, which has been perpetrating dominance over the descendants of slaves for decades.

The Ku Klux Klan was formed to re-establish a racist order threatened by the abolition of slavery in the aftermath of the Civil War. It was organised as a secret society[36] by local elites in different counties, and its purpose was not only to terrorise the black population, but also to keep the 'poor' white people on the side of white landlords. The sexual dimension of vigilantism in the South is highly significant: many punishments targeted black people who had allegedly 'raped white women', which resulted in numerous lynchings. The stated aim was to preserve 'white racial purity' from the lust of the dominated racial group.

Kathleen Blee distinguishes four particularly active KKK periods. From the 1860s to the 1880s, its activity was part of the movement that saw the implementation of the segregation system and the Jim Crow laws that *de facto* excluded black people from the electoral system. From the 1920s and 1930s, the KKK also developed in the North, targeting Jews and Catholics in addition to the black community. Its development led to the implementation of immigration quotas in 1928.[37] According to historians Robert Paxton[38] and Larry Portis,[39] the KKK was the only mass fascist movement in the United States during this period.

In the 1950s and 1960s, its main objective was to oppose the African-American civil rights movement. Blee notes that during this period, the KKK developed mainly in counties where racial discrimination was less pronounced. It therefore corresponds to an alternative movement to promote racial discrimination when the authorities were not sufficiently receptive to it.[40] During these periods the KKK had the overwhelming support of churches, schools and local white elites in the South. However, from the 1970s onwards, the KKK entered its fourth period where it became marginalised. It lost its broad political support and it associated, sometimes very closely, with neo-Nazi groups. This suggests that

---

[35] Abrahams, *ibid*.
[36] Blee, Kathleen, Latif, Mehr, *ibid*.
[37] *Ibid*.
[38] Paxton, Robert. 2004. *Le fascisme en action*. Paris: Le Seuil.
[39] Portis, Larry. 2011. *Le fascisme*. Paris: Ed Alternative Libertaire.
[40] Blee, Kathleen, Latif, Mehr, *ibid*.

a strongly developed vigilantism requires the following factor: organisation or support from local elites.

Squadrismo: social control vigilantism at the root of fascism

This brings us to *squadrismo*, which also relied on collusion from local elites. Vigilantism developed massively in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s. Militias were formed at the end of the First World War in order to confront the revolutionary turbulence of the labour movement. These paramilitary groups were an important factor of the repression of the 1919 German Revolution and the labour protests in Italy. Indeed, fascist movements that came to power in Italy and Germany were fuelled by a massive phenomenon of social control vigilantism: *squadrismo* in Italy, *Freikorps* in Germany. These consisted largely of war veterans with hundreds of thousands or millions of members.[41] These groups were integral to the political matrix of fascism: the *squadristi* federated within the National Fascist Party led by Benito Mussolini.[42] In Germany, part of the *Freikorps* joined with the National Socialist German Workers' Party led by Adolf Hitler.[43]

The militia form of these groups did not allow them to take immediate power in Germany, any more than in Italy. It was the transition to a party-militia structure with a charismatic leader, as well their timely intervention in a period of crisis of hegemony, that led the national elites to co-opt fascist parties into power.[44] Initially in Italy, the fascist party leadership could only control the *squadristi* to a limited extent as they remained, above all, localised and quite autonomous.

Matteo Millan has shown that *squadrismo* was an essential element of the Italian fascist regime. Despite attempts to control them, the *squadristi* remained important within the regime. For example, the assassination in 1924 of the socialist Member of Parliament Giacomo Matteotti by a gang of ex-squadrists marked an important step in the growing authoritarianism of the fascist regime. It was not until the Consolidated Public Safety Act put in place a state emergency regime that the squadrist groups were sidelined in 1926, although this did not prevent former *squadristi* from playing an important role in the radicalisation of the regime in the 1930s.[45] In the German case, the SA (Sturmabteilung) claim for a second 'social'

---

[41] Paxton, *ibid.*
[42] Gentile, Emilio. 2015. *Soudain, le fascisme: la marche sur Rome, l'autre révolution d'Octobre*. Paris: Gallimard.
[43] Paxton, *ibid.*
[44] Paxton, *ibid.*
[45] Millan, Matteo. 2013. 'The Institutionalisation of Squadrismo: Disciplining Paramilitary Violence in the Italian Fascist Dictatorship', *Contemporary European History*, 22(4), pp. 551–73.

revolution after the 'national' revolution was one of the factors that led to the elim-
ination of the SA during the Night of the Long Knives.[46]

The historian Martin Clark theorised *squadrismo* as a form of vigilantism,
studying the periods between 1919 and 1922 and after the Second World War (in
particular, the periods between 1945 and 1952 and between 1968 and 1972). Clark
defines *squadrismo* as a movement of politicised militias that aimed to 're-establish
order' through direct action, and to bring about a new post-liberal order. These
groups mainly targeted 'subversives' and their violence was carried out with the
approval of authorities and elite members at a local level.[47] Moreover, *squadrismo*
differed from terrorism in that it was committed openly and used a lower level of
violence. Nevertheless, some movements practised both *squadrismo* and terrorism at
the same time, such as the *Organisation Armée Secrète* (secret armed organisation) in
French Algeria,[48] or Italian neo-fascist movements in the 1970s.[49]

Clark distinguishes several conditions for the emergence of *squadrismo*:

1 Elites and ruling groups at local level are under threat, or think they are, e.g.,
   from the wrong party winning at local elections, or from locally powerful
   unions, local strikes and so forth.
2 The local elites do not control their own means of force, i.e. the local branches of
   the army, police and judiciary are under central control.
3 The local elites differ significantly from those at the state's political centre; in
   other words, there is no Establishment, nomenklatura, etc.
4 The local elites feel isolated, and may well feel that central authorities are
   supporting their enemies against them. Often they will be right about this.
   Certainly they cannot influence the central authorities enough to protect
   their own positions, i.e. they cannot persuade them to send in the army. Local
   branches of the central state – army, police, etc. – agree with this analysis, and
   are willing to help the local elites, or at least to turn a blind eye, even against the
   wishes of their own superiors.
5 There are enough people available to form paramilitary groups that will
   defend the local status quo effectively; there are also enough guns, vehicles,
   money, etc.
6 There is a 'mentality' or ideology available, to boost morale and to justify the
   fight against the 'subversives'.
7 There is not only an 'adversarial' political culture, but one in which ritual
   humiliation of opponents, and visible control of public places, are key elements.
   'Politics' is not something that occurs secretively in ballot booths, but among
   crowds, in the main square.[50]

---

[46] Paxton, *ibid*.
[47] 'unofficial, initially smallscale violence, or ritual violence, carried out by paramilitary groups against
"subversives", with the approval of most state authorities and elite members at local level, and some-
times at their instigation.' In Clark, Martin, *ibid*, p. 34.
[48] Courrière, Yves. 2001. *La Guerre d'Algérie*. Paris: Fayard.
[49] Clark, Martin, *ibid*.
[50] *Ibid*: 35.

The initial social dynamic of fascism thus originates from social group vigilantism. It is therefore important to think of these fascist militias as a significant illustration of social group vigilantism. This allows us to highlight the elective affinities between the far right and vigilantism.

Historical overview of vigilante practices in France and the United Kingdom

After this brief foray into some historical examples, we now turn to discussing the historical dimensions of vigilantism in the two countries that are at the heart of our research: France and the United Kingdom.

France

Historically, France is a European state with particularly developed forms of centralisation and bureaucracy. This phenomenon, highlighted by Tocqueville[51] in particular, has existed with little interruption. Pietro Gattinara asserts that vigilantism has never really developed in modern France.[52] Moreover, the memory of the Second World War and the numerous denunciations during the Vichy regime have given bad press to the phenomena of vigilantism.[53]

This is true regarding crime control vigilantism, but our perspective soon changes if the focus is broadened to include social control vigilantism and regime control vigilantism. Indeed, France's modern history reveals a very rich range of highly politicised militia groups that have played an influential role in French politics. For example, in the 1930s, fighting groups and militias related to political parties developed in particular on the far right[54] (but not exclusively) – quite similar to *squadrismo*. On 6 February 1934, fighting groups of the far-right leagues staged riots aimed at the French parliament and came within a hair's breadth of overrunning the police.[55] This was followed up by a ban on fighting groups and militias, which were subsequently disbanded.[56]

After the Second World War, the main political parties reconnected with such vigilante services. An example is the 1953 demonstration organised by the

---

[51] Tocqueville (de), Alexis. 1985. *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*. Paris: Folio.

[52] Gattinara, Pietro. 2019. 'Beyond the Hand of the State: Vigilantism against Migrants and Refugees in France', in Bjørgo, Tore, Mareš, Miroslav (eds), *Vigilantism against Migrants and Minorities*. London: Routledge.

[53] Brodeur, Jean-Pierre, Jobard, Fabien. 2005. *Citoyens et délateurs: La délation peut-elle être civique?* Paris: Autrement.

[54] Bouchenot, Matthias. 2014. *Tenir la rue*. Paris: Libertalia.

[55] Boucheron, Patrick. 2018. *Histoire mondiale de la France*. Paris: Points.

[56] Boucheron, *ibid.*

Communist Party against the arrival of American general Ridgway.[57] As the work of historian François Audigier shows, clashes between Gaullists and communists were frequent.[58] The Gaullist Party even implemented a militia called *Service d'Action Civique* (civic action service), which served as a parallel police force led by Jacques Foccart. It was dissolved in 1981 following the murders of an entire family in a killing (called *tuerie d'Auriol*) perpetrated by members of the militia.[59]

Another important group in contemporary French history was the OAS or *Organisation Armée Secrète*, a clandestine organisation of Algerian French settlers and soldiers at odds with the French Army. It was formed in Algeria in February 1961. Its objective was to prevent the country's independence process through armed action. It numbered several thousand members and was active from 1961 to 1965, mainly in Algeria and in metropolitan France.[60] The OAS assassinated between 1,500 and 2,000 victims according to estimates.[61] It targeted left-wing activists, Muslims, as well as police and soldiers, while displaying its intention to defend a threatened colonial order that it believed the French state had betrayed. To this extent, the OAS fits perfectly into the category of social group control vigilantism developed by Rosenbaum and Sederberg.[62] Nevertheless, the extreme violence of the attacks also places the OAS in the field of terrorism: attempted assassination of the French President Charles de Gaulle, murderous bombings, assassinations…[63] This case shows that social group control vigilantism and terrorism are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories, but on the contrary may overlap.

The *Front National* (National Front – FN), a far-right political party that made its first national electoral breakthrough in 1983, also had an armed wing called the *Departement Sécurité et Protection* (Department for Security and Protection – DPS). In the 1990s, this paramilitary group, whose members wore uniforms similar to those of the police, developed a large strike force. The DPS even equipped its members with riot gear similar to those of CRS (*Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité*, republican security companies) to charge anti-fascist demonstrators in Monceau-Les-Mines in 1996. The violence emerging from the group led to a parliamentary enquiry, which hampered its actions. A few months later, further weakened by the split between the National Front and the National Republican

---

[57] Audigier, François, Girard, Pascal. (eds). 2012. *Se battre pour ses idées: La violence militante en France des années 1920 aux années 1970*. Paris: Riveneuve.

[58] Audigier, *ibid.*

[59] Audigier, *ibid.*

[60] Kauffer, Rémi. 2007. 'Les soldats perdus de l'OAS' in Faligot, Roger (ed.), *Histoire secrète de la Ve République*. Paris: La Découverte.

[61] Thénault, Sylvie. 2008. 'L'OAS à Alger en 1962: Histoire d'une violence terroriste et de ses agents', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 63(5): pp. 977–1001.

[62] Rosenbaum, Jon, Sederberg, Peter. 1976. *Vigilante Politics*. Pittsburg: University of Pennsylvania Press.

[63] Ruscio, Alain. 2015. *Nostalgérie: L'interminable histoire de l'OAS.* Paris: La Découverte.

Movement, the group reduced its activities without disappearing completely.[64] These elements evidence the existence of political vigilantism, and that this has existed in one form or another in France despite the state being highly centralised.

United Kingdom

The history of vigilantism differs in the United Kingdom. In contrast to France, the state developed in a more decentralised way and vigilantism was largely directed towards controlling delinquency. Thus, in 18th and 19th-century England, various 'societies' were responsible for fighting certain acts of delinquency, particularly theft and property crime: felons associations and vigilante committees. These societies essentially replaced the state justice system, which would only take up cases if the victim appealed. On a local basis, these associations/societies countered both property crime and crimes against the individual, both lethal and non-lethal. They were led by the biggest taxpayers in a county, such as large landowners and the upper middle-class, and included many smallholders. Their objective was to immediately guarantee the property of their members and protected persons. Their judicial procedures were more expeditious than those of the courts. They were aimed primarily at people from the 'dangerous classes', in particular vagrants and daily workers, which corresponds to what historian Louis Chevalier[65] described as 'working classes, dangerous classes', associating those who do not have property with potential criminals.[66]

Vigilantes justified the existence of these associations by their supposed efficiency compared to that of legal justice. Another argument was put forward: this form of summary justice would make it possible not to raise taxes. This argument is interesting because according to the landowners, the tax would be an underlying exchange between them and the state: tax in exchange for property protection. In this perspective, the fact that the owners of a locality exercise their own justice would be correlated with a low tax burden. This phenomenon gradually faded with the development of the police forces. It should be recalled that the United Kingdom, following the foundation of the Metropolitan Police by Sir Robert Peel, was the first country to adopt modern police forces.[67]

More recently, vigilante practices also became significant in Northern Ireland with the onset of the 'Troubles'. In both Catholic and Protestant neighbourhoods,

---

[64] 'Le service d'ordre du Front National vu de l'intérieur' [Online: https://www.liberation.fr/evenement/1997/11/13/le-service-d-ordre-du-front-national-vu-de-l-interieur_222254] Accessed 8 April 2020.
[65] Chevalier, Louis. 2002. *Classes laborieuses et classes dangereuses*. Paris: Perrin.
[66] Johnston, 1992, *ibid*.
[67] Jobard, Fabien, de Maillard, Jacques. 2015. *Sociologie de la police: Politiques, organisations, réformes*. Paris: Armand Colin.

Republican and Loyalist groups had their own justice systems which included the deployment of punishment for certain crimes. They thus produced a normative order parallel to that of the UK state. Both justice systems implemented a gradation of punishments: beating with bare hands, eviction from the neighbourhood, beating with a weapon, and kneecapping for the most serious cases. Sanctions were accompanied with a gradation of different types of threats: threatening letter, letter accompanied by a gun bullet, firing upon homes, etc. In the 1990s, the Belfast police counted 200 punishments per year, but various experts estimate that the actual number was much higher.[68]

The voluntary dimension of vigilantism: acting for safety

To gain a further understanding of the phenomenon, it is also important to question the vigilantes' motives. Why are they willing to take risks and dedicate time and energy to unpaid vigilante action? The explanation forwarded by Laurent Fourchard relates to the possibility of acquiring social capital for future use.[69] It will also be seen that this dimension exists among French neighbourhood watchers who use their involvement as a lever to enter politics. Nevertheless, it should be recalled that, according to Parsons, and following Max Weber,[70] social action is strongly value-oriented. To a large extent, it is therefore the content of these values that explains the collective action of these groups.

A social movement?

The voluntary aspect of vigilante action has also been theorised by Johnston. He states that vigilante action is set up by private citizens who voluntarily engage in a form of autonomous citizenship, thereby making it a social movement.[71] Nevertheless, vigilantism is not only an enterprise for the preservation of social order as such. Indeed, while the demand for policing is essential, vigilantism is relatively autonomous as it promotes a different conception of what the established order should be. Thus, vigilantism targets specific acts that are prohibited but insufficiently punished by law (real or perceived), and also targets acts that are not prohibited by law but are perceived as deviant by vigilantes: morality, incivility, etc. In all cases, vigilantism is understood as an attempt to change the established order through collective action.

---

[68] Roche, Rosellen. 2007. 'Continuing Intracommunity Vigilantism in Urban Northern Ireland' in Pratten, David, Sen, Atreyee (eds), *Global Vigilantes*. London: Hurst.
[69] Fourchard, Laurent. 2008. 'A New Name for an Old Practice: Vigilante in South-western Nigeria', *Africa*, 78(1): pp. 34–56.
[70] Weber, *ibid*.
[71] Johnston, 1996, *ibid*.

It should be recalled here that vigilantism intends to defend norms and rules, but in doing so, breaks the legal norms that confer a monopoly of legitimate violence to the state. In this context, in order for this action to be perceived as necessary, vigilantes must develop a value system justifying this non-compliance with the law: framework, worldview and ideology. From this perspective, vigilantism is a movement of social control whose objective is to define what is lawful and what is not. Generally, vigilantism is not intended to bring about a radically new order, but it is a key for redefining the content of the established order. It is because vigilantism is a voluntary undertaking aimed at establishing norms and values defining what is acceptable and what is not (relatively independently of the state) that it is understandable as a social movement and collective action.

The social anchoring of the vigilante dynamic

It is also interesting to think about vigilantism in terms of its social anchoring in order to locate its place in society. Does it stem from the elites or on the contrary does it have a broader social base? Indeed, which socioeconomic groups are mobilised for their safety in a dynamic of direct action? Laurent Fourchard recounts that the groups he studied in Nigeria and South Africa have a leadership composed of local notables. Furthermore, the troops (rank and file) are mostly composed of men and women in precarious situations, which allows them to patrol in their free time (unemployed young people, retirees, part-time workers, etc.).[72]

According to Abrahams, the two main types of vigilantism in the United States present similar dynamics. In the West (Montana and San Francisco), the leaders of vigilante societies in the 1860s were local elites, but the recruitment of members was broader as it included daily workers.[73] In the case of crime control vigilantism, the defence of property was the main driving force. It would be up to owner-producers to defend themselves directly without state mediation when faced with a social threat posed by a deviant group. The vigilantes studied by Fourchard, those of San Francisco and Montana and the associations of merchants described by Les Johnston in 18th-century Britain would fall under this category.[74]

The Ku Klux Klan[75] – social control vigilantism – has a similar social composition. Local elites were in charge, but the KKK recruited largely from the white communities in the South. In the case of the KKK, vigilantism was used as an instrument of social control over the black community, as part of a system

---

[72] Fourchard, *ibid.*
[73] Abrahams, *ibid.*
[74] Fourchard, *ibid.*
[75] (From 1860 to 1890, in the 1920s and 1930s, and finally in the 1950s and 1960s.)

linked to the Democratic Party, which would defend the interests of a 'white bloc' between landowners, local elites and 'poor' white people.[76] The formation of this alliance was not obvious. Indeed, in the years following the defeat of the South in the American Civil War, the former slave states saw many social revolts in which 'poor' white people and former slaves allied themselves to demand better social conditions.[77]

In this case, vigilantism was a means of activating a racial alliance between factions of the ruling class and poorer white people in order to recreate a social order favourable to landowners in the South, excluded from the management of the federal state: the development of the first KKK and the Democratic Party in the South allowed the implementation of the Jim Crow segregationist system.[78] It is possible to explain the enlistment of the southern 'little whites' in this racist project with the theory of the Buchanan golf club applied to politics. This theory states that certain economic goods have an optimal number of users. In a context of relative overpopulation, excluding a surplus would then amount to valuing the conditions of the remaining ones. Excluding black people from certain jobs would then amount to valuing 'poor' white people. Subordinating part of the labour force on an ethnic basis would make it possible to lower wages and also to symbolically enhance the status of white working-class members who were in the process of being downgraded.[79]

Therefore, vigilantism is not necessarily a tool for the ruling upper class only – it can be tool for more peripheral fractions of the dominant classes to defend their interests directly by associating with members of the community whose socio-economic position is less favourable. Vigilantism therefore raises the question of the role and function of the local community, which is the glue that makes possible the alliance between local elites and wider social recruitment.

Constituting a community?

Vigilantism and traditional communities

As we have seen, vigilantism is often associated with members of local elites, with people from the wage-earning sector or smallholders on a local basis. This association raises the question of community and social ties on the basis of geographical proximity and neighbourhood. Research has also shown that to ensure safety in many areas of urban life, informal networks of sociability are necessary for

[76] Blee, Kathleen, Latif, Mehr, *ibid.*
[77] Guérin, Daniel. 2010. *De l'oncle Tom aux Panthères Noires*. Paris: Bons Caractères.
[78] Guérin, *ibid.*
[79] Gallandier, Mathieu, Ibo, Sebastien. 2017. *Temps obscurs, nationalisme et extrême droite en France et en Europe*. La Buissière: Acratie.

social control.[80] This element relates to the work of Sen and Pratten,[81] who show that certain forms of vigilantism go hand in hand with the existence of a traditional community and with strong ties to locality, which could be assimilated to forms of mechanical solidarity.[82] In this case, vigilantism is the emanation of a community which implements its own justice regime: that is the case in the townships of Port Elizabeth in South Africa,[83] vigilante groups in Tanzania,[84] the Samosud in Russia[85] and also in Nigeria.[86]

Since it stems from the community, the social control that is vigilantism enforces rules and sanctions that do not correspond to the letter of the law. For example, in Northern Ireland, with the tolerance of the authorities, vigilantes on both the Catholic and Protestant sides directly enforced community standards, whose moral dimension is more significant than that of modern states.[87]

An attempt to restore community?

Taking Durkheim's categories of solidarity, modern societies are characterised more by organic solidarity[88] – a society of individuals[89] where one is freed from the community ties that prevailed before capitalist modernity. According to Lewis Mumford, urban planning is shaped by this conception – public spaces are thought of as places of circulation rather than sociability. Unlike cities of the past, most residential neighbourhoods are not designed for their inhabitants to maintain horizontal social ties based on locality. A good example of this new conception of urban space is the peri-urban space where suburban neighbourhoods are constituted of identical houses and no meeting places.[90]

For these reasons, contemporary forms of vigilantism do not always stem from local communities. On the contrary, their vigilantism goes hand in hand with attempts to recreate the community. In the case of anti-migrant vigilantism, the fight against the enemy (that migrants represent) would allow for the recreation of a local and national community. In the case of neighbourhood watchers, vigilantism would allow for the recreation of a community of neighbours asserting themselves together.

---

[80] Johnston, 1996, *ibid.*
[81] Pratten, David, Sen, Atreyee. 2007. *Global Vigilantes*. London: Hurst.
[82] Durkheim, Emile. 2013 [1893]. *De la division du travail social*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
[83] Lars, Buur. 2007. 'Fluctuating Personhood, Vigilantism and Citizenship in Ports Elizabeth's Townships' in Pratten, David, Sen, Atreyee (eds), *Global Vigilantes*. London: Hurst.
[84] Abrahams, *ibid.*
[85] Abrahams, *ibid.*
[86] Fourchard, *ibid.*
[87] Roche, *ibid.*
[88] Durkheim, *ibid.*
[89] Elias, Norbert. 1998. *La société des individus*. Paris. Pocket.
[90] Mumford, Lewis. 2011. *La cité à travers l'histoire*. Marseille: Agone.

As Fourchard and Sen point out, the attempt to recreate a community opens up the possibility of rewarding vigilantes through a symbolic 'valorisation' by members of the community. It also opens up a network of sociability and inter-knowledge via the vigilante group, which can be, in turn, valued by public authorities. Representing the community also means being recognised by the authorities as an interlocutor. In Bourdieuan terms, this attempt to activate the community allows for the acquisition of social capital.[91]

Another reason makes the issue of the community (or at least its representation) essential for vigilante groups. Indeed, according to Johnston, these groups are supposed to act in the interests of third parties who are members of a threatened social group. It is this act of representation that gives them a form of social legitimacy. Indeed, facing the state, which possesses legitimacy, social power and a certain number of guarantees (legal, political), how can one justify the extra-legal action of vigilantes when they interfere with the state's statutory activities? While criticism of the inadequacy of state action is necessary for vigilantism, it is not enough. In order to be entitled to act against an enemy or deviancy, vigilantes must do so not in their own name, but as representatives of a social group. This community can be linked to the locality – that is the case of Calais vigilantes, who want to protect the 'Calaisians' (local inhabitants), or the 'residents of the Chemin des Dunes', or, in the case of neighbourhood watchers, the district. This demand for community anchoring serves to legitimise vigilantism as it becomes the direct expression of its community.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to question the practical reach of this community and the type of community that is being re-created. Does participation in the vigilante group open up the possibility of a community? But is this community real? Is there tangible support from the members of the social group that the vigilantes claim to represent? How does this support materialise?

Relations between the state and the vigilante groups

Vigilantism necessarily raises the question of the relations to the state. Indeed, vigilantism is characterised by the fact that it exists alongside a modern bureaucratic state system in which the public authorities claim the monopoly on legitimate violence. In this sense, although vigilantism intends to defend norms that the state does not enforce (real or supposed), it constitutes a form of deviation from the law. As Ray Abrahams points out, vigilantism is a form of crime control which is itself criminal.[92] It is therefore necessary to think about the relation

[91] Fourchard, *ibid.*
[92] Abrahams, *ibid.*: 23: 'form of crime control which is itself criminal'.

between vigilantes and public authorities, one necessarily encroaching on the monopoly of the other.

Sustainability linked to state tolerance

Gary Marx's work on vigilante groups in the United States provides some answers to this question.[93] He distinguishes four possible types of relations between public authorities and vigilante groups:

1 Supplemental and encouraged by the police: independence is low and the organisations are generally unarmed and police-supporting citizens. Most housing project patrols such as neighbourhood watch programmes fall within this category.
2 Supplemental and opposed by police: organisations are police-supporting citizens, but the police may express a general dislike of these and reject their support.
3 Adversarial and encouraged by police: although these groups are against the police, they allow for better control of a neighbourhood as they sometimes exercise crime control in difficult neighbourhoods. That is especially the case during periods of race riots. The groups studied by Gary Marx are from African-American communities. They allow the observation of an anti-police and anti-Ku Klux Klan vigilantism whose objective is to protect the black community. The largest group is the Deacons for Defense and Justice, which claimed more than 8,000 members in 60 chapters throughout Louisiana.[94]
4 Adversarial and opposed by the police: the groups rapidly experienced severe police repression. It is difficult for the groups to exist as they are enemies and direct competitors of the police. A good example is The Black Panther Party, which was rapidly reduced by the strong repression of the police.[95]

At the end of this typology, Gary Marx addresses the question of the sustainability of these groups. He notes that the groups that tend to last the longest are those that encounter a favourable attitude from law enforcement agencies. The others are targets of repression (arrest, trial), and must cease their activities. From this observation, it is possible to say that vigilante activity, in order to be sustainable, must receive support, or at least tolerance, from public authorities. It is indeed possible to perceive vigilantism as a form of autonomous citizenship, as Les Johnston does,

[93] Marx, Gary. 1976 'Community Police Patrols and Vigilantism' in Rosenbaum, Jon, Sederberg, Peter (eds), *Vigilante Politics*. Pittsburg: University of Pennsylvania Press.
[94] Marx, Gary, *ibid*.
[95] Nelson, Alondra. 2016. « Corps et âme ». Le parti des Black Panthers et la lutte contre la discrimination médicale', *Agone*, 1(1): pp. 19–50.

but the condition for its sustainability is the establishment of a form of tolerance from public authorities. This element tends to confirm the views of Rosenbaum and Sederberg, who see vigilantism as aligned with the maintenance of social order. To this extent, long-term vigilantism (albeit illegal) is not against the state – it is on its side. It is not intended to create a radically new order, but rather to negotiate the conditions and contours of the established order.

This level of permissiveness of the state that is supposed to exercise the state's monopoly of legitimate violence may vary. It may involve non-enforcement of the law and weak repression. In this case, vigilantism is not systematically repressed but may be according to circumstances. There is vigilantism that is openly tolerated – it is exercised in view of everyone and with no state intervention. One notes that, as a general rule in France, the state generally limits vigilante action to surveillance. The intervention of vigilante groups is only tolerated in specific contexts: crisis, repressive action hampered by the context of political opportunities (such as the *jungle* in Calais, or the *ZAD* [*zone à defendre*, zone to defend in French] *du Testet* in South-Western France).[96]

All of these elements show that a form of vigilantism tolerated by the state is not totally autonomous but could be thought of as a 'less legitimate' halo of violence that would be placed around the state's legitimate monopoly of violence. The latter emanates from actors who are more or less autonomous, but who must find a *modus vivendi* with the state to see their activity continue.

Decolonisation wars and counter-insurgency

Analyses of the emergence of vigilante practices in the context of the decolonisation wars offer further insights into the relation to the state. The colonial and decolonial question brings what could be called a fourth category of vigilantism alongside those of Rosenbaum and Sederberg: vigilantism seeking to establish structures that relate to the state. In a context of armed struggle, vigilantism stems from a para-state organisation whose vocation is to substitute itself for the power of the metropolis.

This may come from the settlers, who manage to become autonomous from the metropolis. This could be called settler vigilantism. Examples include the Israeli militias (*Haganah*, *Irgun*, *Lehi*)[97] which led a war against the United Kingdom in Palestine in the aftermath of the Second World War, or the Protestant paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland.[98]

These insurrectional movements seek to implement their own justice regime. Thus, the decolonisation movements in Algeria and Indochina created their own

---

[96] 'Sivens: Les milices pro-barrage agissent dans l'impunité alors que l'expulsion de la Zad se dessine' [Online: https://reporterre.net/Sivens-les-milices-pro-barrage] Accessed 8 May 2020.
[97] Dorlin, Elsa. 2017. *Se défendre: une philosophie de la violence*. Paris: Zones.
[98] Roche, *ibid.*

justice system which is part of the OPA (*organisation politico-administrative*, political-administrative organisation), constituting an embryonic administrative state. Thus, in the film *The Battle of Algiers*, produced in 1965 by the Algerian regime, the establishment of a vigilante justice system is the precondition for the Algerian insurrection. The scene showing children from the neighbourhood expelling an alcoholic tramp from the Kasbah of Algiers is the symbol of the new moral order that the insurgents want to establish: youth expel an elderly man marked by the vice of alcohol, a degrading drink assimilated to colonialism. In the film, this act of collective vigilance paves the way for an insurrection against French colonial power.[99] This is also the case with the Maoist guerrillas in India, locally supported by the small-scale entrepreneurs that they protect in the regions where they are established. Ensuring protection is also a means of producing an alternative social order.[100] In Northern Ireland, from the 1970s onwards, the situation is particular – both Catholic and Protestant communities have experienced these two types of vigilantism: insurrectional vigilantism and counter-insurgency vigilantism.[101]

These two types of vigilantism, whether they stem from autonomous settler groups or from movements of anti-colonial armed struggle, have one thing in common: they do not want to act only in parallel with metropolitan powers. They have the potential for a new order: to constitute the embryo of a sovereign state capable of substituting itself for colonial power. This is obviously the case of anti-colonial insurrections, as the OPA showed after Algeria's Independence. It is also the case of settler vigilantism: the Israeli militias insurgent against the United Kingdom merged in 1948 to create Tsahal, the army of the young Israeli state that had just proclaimed its independence.[102]

Vigilantism and counter-insurgency

Vigilante groups can also be used in counter-insurgency. This was the case in Africa and Asia during the wars of decolonisation (by Britain, the United States and France), and also in Latin America against communist guerrillas and leftist governments.[103]

Indeed, counter-insurgency as theorised by Colonel de Lacheroy intends to control the population of a country, not the territory. Population is then the

---

99 Pontecorvo, Gilles. 1966. *La Bataille d'Alger*, Fiction, 2h01mn.
100 Shah, Alpa. 2007. 'Markets of protection: the Maoist Communist Centre and the state of Jharkhand, India' in Pratten, David, Sen, Atreyee (eds), *Global Vigilantes*. London: Hurst.
101 Roche, *ibid.*
102 Dorlin, *ibid.*
103 Rubenstein Jérémy. 2014. 'La sédition militaire de Semana Santa de 1987: Le peuple au secours du régime démocratique argentin', Thesis completed on 10 June 2014, Annick Lempérière (dir), Université Paris – I.

major issue in the conflict between the insurrectional movement and the metrop-
olis. In this framework, vigilantism is a way of associating the population with
the military effort. This dimension is even more important since vigilante groups
are more strongly anchored in the population than the state. Vigilantism is thus
part of the curriculum of the US Army School of the Americas. In the 1970s,
this military structure coordinated the training of officers of authoritarian Latin
American regimes and the doctrine of the Revolutionary War.[104] In a counter-
insurgency framework, regular units (army, police, intelligence) and special units
are distinguished. These special units may be irregular: they are armed forces
that do not explicitly belong to the security services, making it easier to carry out
violence outside the legal framework. These irregular special units take various
forms: *baltajiya* against Tahrir Squarein Egypt in 2011,[105] Kitson's 'counter-gang'
in Kenya,[106] the creation of *harka* in Algeria, anti-Vietminh *maquis* in Indochina,
or *titushky* against Euromaidan in Ukraine.[107] The advantage of these irregular
forces is that they present a distance from the official image of the state and a
greater degree of autonomy, the whole facilitating practices that are more violent
than those of the regular forces.

The second element[108] is the semi-autonomous mobilisation of the population
in the framework of counter-insurgency conflict in paramilitary groups. These are
groups whose organisation copies military organisation but with a higher degree
of autonomy. Elements from the population are constituted with armed forces,
often linked to a political movement whose main project is counter-insurgency,
and in the colonial framework, the maintenance of settler settlements. In this
framework, we can once again take the organisation of the loyalist militias in
Northern Ireland, the organisation of the OAS in Algeria and globally the organ-
isation of the *Pied-Noirs* (French settlers), constituted as a political movement
(several ephemeral structures had hundred thousand members, including the
Front Algérie française).[109] The paramilitary *autodefensas* in Colombia can also be
classified in this category.[110]

Settlers organised as a semi-autonomous political force can aggravate conflict
by putting pressure on the colonial state. In this case, the use of these forces by
the state reduced the possibility of a negotiated peace, as in Algeria[111] or Northern
Ireland.[112] Thus, the organisation of Protestants into militias worsened the conflict

---

[104] Rubenstein, *ibid.*
[105] 'Affrontements et répression place Tahrir' [Online: https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/monde/afri
que/affrontements-et-repression-place-tahrir_958124.html] Accessed 8 May 2020.
[106] Rubenstein, *ibid.*
[107] Marples, David, Mills, Frederick. 2015. *Ukraine's Euromaidan: Analyses of a Civil Revolution.*
London: Ibidem.
[108] Which can partially overlap the former.
[109] Courrière, *ibid.*
[110] Rubenstein, *ibid.*
[111] Courrière, *ibid.*
[112] Jarman, Neil. 2007. 'Vigilantism, Transition and Legitimacy: Informal Policing in Northern Ireland'
in Pratten, David, Sen, Atreyee (eds), *Global Vigilantes*. London: Hurst.

in the 1910s, in the 1960s and in the 1970s. According to Neil Jarman, the violence of the Protestant militia brought down the peaceful civil rights movement and left the Irish with no choice but to wage a civil war.[113] Here, vigilantism is the expression of the autonomy of the settlers' interests regarding the metropolis, whose action exacerbates the conflict. This was also the case in Algeria, with an initial success in 1958, but in the end an extreme failure for the colonisation party, which lost the power struggle against the French state at the end of the 'week of barricades' and the 1961 coup d'état.

Conclusion

Vigilantism is best understood as a form of social movement. It is a voluntary and alternative attempt to assert a social order that may function as an alternative to state norms. It is characterised by its components, of which the three main ones are: surveillance, direct intervention and, in some cases, the administration of sanctions alternative to those of the instituted justice system. Vigilantism also varies in terms of purpose: it may be geared to the repression of those crimes or offences that are insufficiently punished by the state according to the vigilantes, but also to exert social control over specific groups (ethnic minorities, political groups) perceived as problematic by the vigilantes.

Finally, vigilantism can be defined by its place vis-à-vis the state. It targets deviant acts and groups in parallel to the police and the judicial action of the state. Vigilantism can therefore act in a supplementary manner but also in a demanding manner: its action is an attempt to redefine what is the norm and how it is applied. To this extent, vigilantism is both a means of supplementing the state, but also a means of putting pressure on the state in order to define the contours of the social and legal order. Vigilantism can only be sustained if it succeeds in ensuring that there is some form of tolerance on the part of the authorities. These elements are important for understanding the return of vigilantism that we are witnessing in European societies today. Indeed, it is emerging under very different conditions from the historical manifestations that we have discussed: the state is not so distant, and European societies have not experienced the convulsions they did after the First World War. This begs the question: how can contemporary vigilantism be explained? This is what we consider in the next chapter.

---

[113] Abrahams, *ibid.*

2

Return to Vigilantism

We turn now to vigilantism in the contemporary era. As David Pratten and Atreyee Sen have revealed in their global panorama, vigilantism has grown on a global scale[1] and Western Europe is no exception to this trend. In the United Kingdom, for example, private actors have become increasingly important in maintaining public order – Les Johnston calls this phenomenon the 'rebirth of private policing'.[2] Here, in the 1980s, vigilantism made a comeback, manifested in radical practices such as the fight against paedophilia.[3] In conjunction with public authorities, neighbourhood watch programmes also became widespread.[4] This was also the case in France (and in the Netherlands), where hundreds of thousands participate in programmes implemented in the 2010s.[5] More recently, vigilantism has also developed around migration issues. Indeed, vigilante groups, often connected to the far right, have sprung up throughout Europe to 'secure' cities and borders against migrants, perceived as a civilisational danger.[6] As we shall see, the use of social media has become increasingly important in the dynamics of these different types of vigilantism.

Contemporary vigilantism

This return to vigilantism in Europe may seem paradoxical. Vigilantism in the American West appeared in a context of colonisation and of the perceived weakness of the American federal state.[7] European countries do not currently

[1] Pratten, David, Sen, Atreyee (eds). 2007. *Global Vigilantes*. London: Hurst.
[2] Johnston, Les. 1992. *The Rebirth of Private Policing*. London: Routledge.
[3] Johnston, Les. 1996. 'What is Vigilantism?', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 36(2): pp. 220–36.
[4] Malochet, Virginie. 2017. *La participation des citoyens en matière de sécurité locale: Diversité des regards et des modes d'implication*, Report to the IAU IDF.
[5] Malochet, *ibid*.
[6] Bjørgo, Tore, Mareš, Miroslav (eds). 2019. *Vigilantism against Migrants and Minorities*. London: Routledge.
[7] Abrahams, Ray. 1998. *Vigilant Citizens: Vigilantism and the State*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

experience crisis situations similar to those that occurred in Italy and Germany after the First World War.[8] On the contrary, most European societies have not been involved in wars on their territory since the Second World War.[9] Moreover, as Robert Muchembled[10] and Laurent Mucchielli[11] point out, various indicators of violence have decreased significantly. In France, the homicide rate has fallen continuously since the 1970s.[12] Therefore, in the context of a global decrease of the level of violence or, to use the wording of Norbert Elias,[13] of 'curialisation', how can this return to vigilantism be explained? One factor is put forward by Laurent Mucchielli, according to whom the level of tolerance to violence decreases more rapidly than the level of violence. This disparity would explain the emergence of a feeling of growing insecurity, which does not correspond to statistical realities.[14] More generally, security issues have occupied a greater focus in public debate and public policies.

Securitisation process

These changes in violence perception may be understood through the social process that the scholars of critical security studies call 'securitisation'. It consists of adopting an exclusively security-oriented point of view regarding a social problem, leading to a political 'solution' that is defined in terms of security. This dynamic results in an increase of private security services offered by individuals and public authorities and in the implementation of situational crime prevention measures.[15]

Moreover, since the 1980s, a decline in the scope of state intervention in public affairs can be observed as part of a global neoliberal shift. However, this decline is not uniform. The state dominance over society decreases, but it is specifically what Bourdieu calls the 'left hand of the state' that has been reduced: public services, social work or indirect wages financing various benefits such as unemployment insurance, pensions or health insurance.[16] On the contrary, the army and the police (which Bourdieu calls the 'right hand of the state') have managed to maintain their funding and have a growing importance in public policies. In the

[8] Paxton, Robert. 2004. *Le fascisme en action*. Paris: Le Seuil.
[9] With the notable exception of the countries of the former Yugoslavia and Ukraine.
[10] Muchembled, Robert. 2012. *Une histoire de la violence: De la fin du Moyen Age à nos jours*. Paris: Points.
[11] Mucchielli, Laurent, Spierenburg, Pieter. 2009. *Histoire de l'homicide en Europe: De la fin du Moyen Âge à nos jours*. Paris: La Découverte.
[12] Mucchielli, *ibid.*
[13] Elias, Norbert. 1973. *La civilisation des mœurs*. Paris: Pocket.
[14] Mucchielli, *ibid.*
[15] Buzan, Barry, Waewer, Ole, De Wilde, Joao. 1998. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
[16] Jourdain, Anne, Naulin, Sidonie. 2011. *La théorie de Pierre Bourdieu et ses usages sociologiques*. Paris: Armand Colin.

case of the United States, from the 1980s onwards, Lois Wacquant asserts that it is a series of social issues, such as the difficulties that ghettos experienced, that are no longer treated from a social policy perspective but from a securitarian perspective only. While funding for most social programmes is being reduced or removed, the criminal treatment of the poorest populations, including ethnic minorities, replaces social policies. The criminal response to various criminal acts becomes increasingly severe and incarceration rates have risen sharply. In the 2000s, up to 1 per cent of the US population was incarcerated and up to 3 per cent of the population was under judicial supervision, parole or alternatives sanctions.[17] It is therefore necessary to conceive of vigilantism in the light of this process. Paradoxically, the retreat of the social state has caused a strengthening of social control by the regalian sector of the state, whose prerogatives and latitude of action have been undergoing a phase of expansion.

Is the social demand for security compatible with civil liberties?

This securitisation process is fuelled by a social demand for security with paradoxical effects. In this context, it is interesting to conceive contemporary vigilantism as a semi-autonomous movement in favour of securitisation constituted by citizens who become moral security entrepreneurs. The implications of this social demand will now be presented.

    Security is quite difficult to define as it consists of an absence of aggression and unpleasant events. According to Steven Spitzer, this characteristic makes security a very particular economic good: if individuals are not subject to immediate attacks, this does not mean that they are safe.[18] The vague knowledge (media, rumours, etc.) of acts of aggression may cause fear of their manifestation. Similarly, the non-immediate threat does not preclude the aggression, perceived as a potentiality that may materialise at any time.

    Thus, Zygmunt Bauman considers that the figure of the criminal crystallises what he calls a 'derivative fear', i.e. 'a general fear of vague dangers that would swarm out of sight'.[19] Within this framework, Spitzer considers security as a product that may be labelled and sold. That commoditisation of security carries a contradiction. Its visibility would tend to remind of the threat: in that sense taking preventive measures potentially reinforces the feeling of insecurity. Consequently,

[17] Wacquant, Loic. 2004. *Punir les pauvres, le nouveau gouvernement de l'insécurité sociale*. Marseille: Agone.

[18] Spitzer, Stephen. 1987. 'Security and Control in Capitalist Societies: The Fetishism of Security and the Secret Thereof' in Lowman, John, Menzies, Robert, Palys, Ted (eds), *Transcarceration: Essays in the Sociology of Social Control*. Aldershot: Gower.

[19] Bauman, Zygmunt. 2007. *Le Présent liquide: Peurs sociales et obsession sécuritaire*. Paris: Le Seuil, p. 50.

the implementation of prophylactic measures would give social visibility to security issues and increase the subjective presence of the securitarian threat.

This conception corresponds to Robert Castel's considerations on the concept of security. Castel considers that the organisation of the state's strength by rules of law, ensuring respect for civil liberties, is incompatible with certain security policies. On the basis of Hobbes' *Leviathan*, he explains that the individual subjects of liberal philosophy are liberated from their insertion in the traditional community that was characteristic of the pre-modern era. Freed from communitarian social pressure, they have become also deprived of the protection that they used to receive from the community. Due to the lack of immediate communitarian ties, they feel vulnerable and must turn to the state for protection.[20] However, as threats are multiple, only the power of an absolute state can ensure total security. According to Castel, 'the more a state deviates from the model of Hobbes' *Leviathan* and provides a complex legal apparatus, the more it is in danger of disappointing the requirement of ensuring the absolute protection of its members'.[21]

In this context, the social demand for security can only be permanently disappointed: security measures create new security needs and civil liberties guaranteeing the rights of society members regarding the state become increasingly perceived as obstacles to security. The combination of these elements could be a factor in explaining the significant legislative inflation in terms of security.[22] This may also partly explain the devitalisation of democratic institutions, described as authoritarian liberalism by Chamayou[23] and post-democracy by Colin Crouch.[24]

This constantly renewed demand for security would also explain what Didier Fassin calls penal populism, i.e. the establishment of retributive justice, focused on the harshness of the sanction for offenders with no concern other than punishment.[25] These analyses are shared by David Garland, who describes an ideologic shift regarding criminal justice, which he calls the advent of law-and-order ideology. It would be characterised by an explicit call to emotion, a focus on the victim rather than on the needs and motivations of offenders and the emergence of security issues as political issues leading to constant escalation. To this must be added the framing of otherness of criminals and offenders, presented as monsters for whom redemption is impossible. This is joined by demand for

---

[20] Castel, Robert. 2003. *L'insécurité sociale: Qu'est-ce qu'être protégé*. Paris: Seuil.
[21] *Ibid*: 34.
[22] 'Trente ans de legislation antiterroriste' [Online: https://www.vie-publique.fr/eclairage/18530-trente-ans-de-legislation-antiterroriste] Accessed 8 April 2020.
[23] Chamayou, Grégoire. 2018. *La société ingouvernable: Une généalogie du libéralisme autoritaire*. Paris: La Fabrique.
[24] Crouch, Colin. 2004. *Post-democracy*. London: Polity Press.
[25] Fassin, Didier. 2017. *Punir: Une passion contemporaine*. Paris: Seuil.

the suppression of the delinquents' liberties. Finally, punishment would be spectacularised through mass media.[26]

   This return of vigilantism is thus to be understood in the context of penal populism and law-and-order ideology, denouncing the supposed leniency of the police and justice and calling for harshness, valuing self-defence.[27] It legitimises the creation of private police and security, profit-making private prisons and high-security residential parcels for the wealthiest. According to Garland, this phenomenon allows an increased penetration of capital in spheres where it was less present and opens the way to a commodification of justice and police.[28] The law-and-order ideology would thus be a tool for legitimising massive capital movements allowing the development of the security industry.

Outlines of neo-vigilantism

This rebirth of vigilantism however takes different forms according to the geographic area and different social structures.

Vigilantism in the Global South

Anthropologists have shown that, in a context of neoliberal globalisation, the phenomenon of vigilantism has extended on a global scale. Indeed, vigilantism is present on almost every continent: Americas, Africa, Asia and Europe. Its manifestations are very diverse. In the Global South, the dynamics of vigilance stem from local communities, which is less evident in Europe and North America. Here are some examples:

> In Port Elizabeth, South Africa, vigilante groups operating in the townships organise community justice courts that deal with domestic violence and alcoholism. Punishments are penalties such as beatings or eviction from the neighbourhood. Judgements takes place in school or church premises and refer primarily to religious values rather than legal norms. It is tolerated by the authorities, relieved from the management of such situations.[29] In Nigeria, the government has been encouraging the development of vigilante groups since the 1980s. Indeed, vigilante groups play an important role in

---

[26] Garland, David. 2001. *The Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
[27] Codaccioni, Vanessa. 2018. *La légitime défense: Homicides sécuritaires, crimes racistes et violences policières*. Paris: CNRS Editions.
[28] Garland, *ibid.*
[29] Buur, Lars. 2007. 'Fluctuating Personhood, Vigilantism and Citizenship in Port Elizabeth's Townships' in Pratten, David, Sen, Atreyee (eds), *Global Vigilantes*. London: Hurst.

the implementation of Sharia law in some parts of the country. They enforce both legal and moral standards.[30] In Tanzania, the dagambas are hunters' associations that assume police functions through a delegation of powers conferred by the state. They form a structured system with several levels of hierarchy.[31]

In some favelas in Brazil, gangs administer a form of justice. They sometimes co-exist with militias composed of former police and military officers who claim to fight crime but who are in fact financed by drug trafficking. Death squads carry out extra-judicial executions in direct contact with the police.[32] In Guatemala, lynchings are common in the poorest communities. This does not correspond to vigilantism as such, as the perpetrators do not stem from an organisation as such, but follow denunciations leading to collective violence. In their work on Guatemala, Burrell and Weston give the example of a village where the mayor delivers 'deviant' individuals to the angry inhabitants. In other cases, rumours lead to lynching: an example is a black bus with tinted windows carrying Japanese tourists that arrived in a village. The bus was rumoured to be carrying members of a satanist group. As a result, two people were killed following the lynching of the vehicle occupants.[33] In Mexico, local communities created their own community police forces to protect themselves from *narcos* and from police services, perceived to be corrupt. This process marked an empowerment of the localities as the Mexican federal state has retreated after years of civil war and has become unable to ensure the security of the population against the cartels.[34]

In the poorest slums in India, groups of women target Muslims, using violence against businesses or individuals. These women are part of an Indian far-right political movement, the Shiv Sena, and enjoy the complicity of the police.[35] This violence perpetrated by women is a form of social group vigilantism: the objective is to expel the Muslims and thus to revalorise the sense of belonging to the Hindu community. Their action presents the sacrificial mechanisms of the scapegoat that allows the community to reunite – a process described by René Girard.[36]

---

[30] Pratten, David. 2007. 'Singing Thieves: History and Practice in Nigerian Popular Justice' in Pratten, David, Sen, Atreyee (eds), *Global Vigilantes*. London: Hurst.
[31] Abrahams, *ibid.*
[32] Abrahams, *ibid.*
[33] Burrell, Jennifer, Weston, Gavin. 2007. 'Lynching and Post-war Complexities in Guatemala' in Pratten, David, Sen, Atreyee (eds), *Global Vigilantes*. London: Hurst.
[34] in Pratten, David, Sen, Atreyee (eds.). 2007. *Global Vigilantes*. London: Hurst.
[35] Sen, Atreyee. 2007. 'Everyday and Extraordinary Justice: Woman Vigilantes and Raw Justice in the Bombay Slums' in Pratten, David, Sen, Atreyee (eds), *Global Vigilantes*. London: Hurst.
[36] Girard, René. 2011. *La violence et le sacré*. Paris: Fayard.

These examples show that, in the Global South, vigilantism is a form of security exercised within poor communities. While the wealthiest live in gated communities and are protected by private security guards and electronic surveillance systems, the poorest communities in townships, favelas, slums or rural villages directly assume policing tasks in a context of tolerance or incapacity of the public authorities.[37] This form of vigilantism stems from the different communities that implement it – it is therefore to be distinguished from many vigilante movements in the Global North where vigilantism is practised by more politicised actors who do not necessarily receive support from local communities.

Anti-migrant vigilantism in Europe and the United States

There can be no doubt that vigilantism relating to migratory phenomena is an important element in the renewal of global vigilantism. The scale of the phenomenon was striking in Europe particularly during the 2015 'migrant crisis'.[38] Vigilantism could be found in all sub-regions of the European continent. This form of vigilantism is interesting because it crystallises two very important trends in the political arenas of Western countries: on the one hand, the social reaction to the phenomenon of international migration, and on the other, the growing tendency to prioritise a securitarian treatment of issues that were previously embodied within social policies. This highlights the particular role of contemporary vigilantism in countries of the Global North.

Borders are a securitarian apparatus where the logic of securitisation is deployed, with an extremely large numbers of law enforcement officers. For example, in addition to substantial situational prevention devices (barbed wire, walls, etc.), several hundred officers are permanently stationed in Calais.[39] However, it is around these borders that anti-migrant vigilante groups tend to mobilise. In this sense, they do not act in place of the authorities. On the contrary, their action acquires a political dimension aimed at influencing the shape of migration policies. Tore Bjørgo and Miroslav Mareš have shown the importance of the phenomenon in their work on the emergence of anti-migrant vigilantism in the wake of the 2015 'migrant crisis' in Europe.[40] This specific type of vigilantism will be further studied in Chapter 4 by questioning the links between the social reaction to migration and this particular form of vigilantism.

---

[37] Abrahams, Ray. 2007. 'Some Thoughts on the Comparative Study of Vigilantism' in Pratten, David, Sen, Atreyee (eds), *Global Vigilantes*. London: Hurst.
[38] Bjørgo, Mareš, *ibid*.
[39] Alaux, Jean-Pierre. 2015. 'Calais vaut bien quelques requiem', *Plein droit*, 104: pp. 3–8.
[40] *Ibid*.

Moving towards a vigilant society?

These developments, in a context where the securitarian sector of the state is not in decline, raises questions about the dynamics of this phenomenon. James Walsh's work makes a valuable contribution to understanding the return to vigilantism in Europe and North America. He hypothesises that citizens in Western societies have been reconfigured into 'watchful citizens'. This dynamic is characterised by both a neoliberal management of public security policies and a penetration into the social sphere of surveillance logics and commitment to security. The consequence is that 'the state is no longer the exclusive agent in governing disorder and insecurity but one, albeit important, node in a diffuse network of practitioners'.[41] In this context, security companies, civil servants and citizens become the agents of a security system that was previously the exclusive prerogative of the state. An example of this is the Virtual Border Watch Program. In 2008, public authorities provided $5 million in funding for this programme, which provides live access to surveillance cameras watching the US-Mexican border. This crowd-sourcing operation of voluntary vigilance, presented as a 'virtual neighbourhood watchers' group, resulted in 2,780 reports made in the first month of operations and led to the arrest of 30 groups of migrants.[42]

According to Walsh, the worldwide development of vigilantism is two-fold: first, it consists of the enlistment of non-police officers in policing activities. Second, it consists of the empowerment of more extreme groups who implement actions that support the police forces.[43] This conception echoes the work of Jacques de Maillard and Fabien Jobard, who refer to the 'pluralisation process' of police activity: there is the police and there is 'policing', i.e. activities that are part of security but which are not necessarily exercised by the police.[44]

---

[41] '…the state is no longer the exclusive agent in governing disorder and insecurity but one, albeit important, node in a diffuse network of practitioners' (p. 251) in Walsh, James. 2014. 'Watchful Citizens: Immigration Control, Surveillance and Societal Participation', *Social & Legal Studies*, 23(2): pp. 237–59.

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] 'On the one hand, formal agents authorize, encourage and compel direct participation and personal responsibility. Alternately, citizens themselves, albeit quite selectively, have independently acted to enforce, enhance, and extend their country's immigration laws. As a result, the legal production of citizenship and alienage as well as political surveillance and social control has emerged as the duty and responsibility of ordinary citizens.' *Ibid.*, p. 252.

[44] They distinguish between several types of policing, taking up Ian Loader's proposals: 'Through government' when governments buy security services on the market, 'above government' when states set up forms of international police cooperation, 'beyond government' when it is commercial arrangements between private operators, and 'below government' when it is the public that provides surveillance and patrol activities, which would concern the various vigilance phenomena we are discussing. In Jobard, Fabien. De Maillard, Jacques. 2015. *Sociologie de la police: Politiques, organisations, réformes.* Paris: Armand Colin.

The development of 'vigilant citizenship' should also be considered in the context of the ever-growing social demand for security mentioned above. Thus, the development of vigilantism in Europe and the United States is not caused by disengagement of the state. On the contrary, it accompanies the expansion of the securitisation process by taking on some of the tasks that were previously the monopoly of the state. This reinforces the idea of vigilantism being exercised in parallel to the state. In this conception, using Ted Gurr's categories,[45] there is a disparity between security needs (expectations) and the security means implemented by the state: while the social demand for security and police action is increasing, the means of the forces of law and order remain the same (United Kingdom)[46] or increase only slightly (France).[47] In the context of a growing social demand for security, public action implemented by the state can only partially meet expectations. The gap between this demand for security and the state supply of security is first filled by the development of the security market: surveillance cameras, alarms, gated communities, and second, by the development of citizen vigilante practices.

To this extent, the development of a vigilantism in Europe is not the consequence of a neoliberal withdrawal of the state from the public security service. Contemporary vigilantism therefore does not emerge in a moment of dereliction of the state, but on the contrary in a period of increased security. Indeed, as Alain Bihr recalls, the free rein of the market can only take place with the support of a strong authoritarianism in order to bend the social forces that oppose the 'free rein' of Darwinian mechanisms.[48] As Polanyi says, the separation of the social from the market is the result of a strong and authoritarian political intervention intended to allow the exercise of the free market against social resistances.[49] Thus, authoritarian liberalism and securitisation form the outlines of another type of society: a society of vigilance.

Studying neo-vigilantism in France and the United Kingdom

Thus far we have reflected on the nature of vigilantism and contextualised its renewal. In this section, the focus will fall specifically on France and the United

---

[45] Gurr, Ted. 1971. *Why Men Rebel*. Boston: Princeton University Press.
[46] Johnston, 1992, *ibid*.
[47] 'Evolution du budget de la police et de la gendarmerie nationales, en milliards d'euros' [Online: https://www.alternatives-economiques.fr/evolution-budget-de-police-de-gendarmerie-nationales-milliards-deuros-0110201662911.html] Accessed 8 April 2020.
[48] Bihr, Alain. 2019. *Le premier âge du capitalisme (1415–1763): Tome 2, la marche de l'Europe Occidentale vers le capitalisme*. Paris: Syllepse.
[49] Polanyi, Karl. 2009. *La grande transformation: Aux origines politiques et économiques de notre temps*. Paris: Gallimard.

Kingdom in order to understand the phenomenon in these two respective countries in more depth.

Contemporary vigilante practices in France and the United Kingdom

In France, since the early 2010s, vigilantism has been reviving. In the United Kingdom, according to criminologist Les Johnston, it had already emerged by the late 1980s.[50] Contrary to the historical examples discussed in the first chapter, these (neo)vigilante practices are directly associated with the context of securitisation. Three main types of vigilante practices can be distinguished in France and in the United Kingdom:

1 **Mass development of watchful citizens.** With or without help from the police and mainly in suburban neighbourhoods, residents organise surveillance and security of their district. The phenomenon involves hundreds of thousands of people and mainly concerns the first level of vigilantism, i.e. the organisation of surveillance. Direct interventions are rare. The phenomenon may be understood as part of a neoliberal shift from police to policing which implies an agreement between the state, a company (e.g. *Voisins Vigilants*) and the voluntary activity of neighbourhood watchers. In France, as of 2018, the phenomenon combines hundreds of thousands of households.[51] In the United Kingdom, the implementation of a neighbourhood watch scheme began in the 1980s and by the 1990s involved between 3 and 4 million households,[52] which remains the case today.[53]

2 **Autonomous vigilant practices.** Vigilante groups autonomously target crime perpetrators or entire populations (social group vigilantism). This is the case with anti-migrant groups in Calais, or Defend Europe that intends to 'secure' borders.[54] They stem from far-right groups that have abandoned practices inspired by squadrism in order to exercise 'spectacle' vigilantism through social media.[55] These practices should be understood as social movement activity. Indeed, they are aimed at responding to security-related demands, and rather than yielding immediate results, their aim is to increase their social visibility.

---

[50] Johnston, 1992, *ibid.*

[51] Malochet, *ibid.*

[52] Johnston, 1992, *ibid.*

[53] Pridmore, Jason, Mols, Anouk, Wang, Yijing, Holleman, Frank. 2019. 'Keeping an Eye on the Neighbours: Police, Citizens, and Communication Within Mobile Neighbourhood Crime Prevention Groups', *The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles*, 92(2): pp. 97–120.

[54] 'Migrants dans les Alpes: Opération « Defend Europe » par des militants d'extrême droite' [Online: https://www.lemonde.fr/immigration-et-diversite/article/2018/04/22/migrants-dans-les-alpes-francaises-renforts-importants-pour-controler-les-frontieres_5289094_1654200.html] Accessed 8 April 2020.

[55] Lebourg, Nicolas, Sommier, Isabelle. *La violence des marges politiques en France des années 1980 à nos jours*. Paris: Riveneuve.

This is the case with *Les Identitaires*[56] (the Identitarians) or anti-migrant groups in Calais.[57]

In the United Kingdom, these practices in part relate to migrant flows: this is the case with far-right groups such as Britain First[58] and South East Coastal Defence. But the practices of vigilantism within the British far right also relate to the fight against paedophilia, which the far-right associate with Muslim minority groups, so-called 'grooming gangs', who are said to prey on young adolescent (white) girls in many towns and cities.[59]

3   **Digital vigilantism.** This third type of practice, common in France and the United Kingdom, uses social media as a powerful means to amplify vigilantism. For Benjamin Loveluck, social media allow forms of vigilantism specific to the digital sphere:[60]

- Organisation of surveillance
- Communication and 'spectacularisation', allowing vigilante activity to be staged as a spectacle
- Vigilantism tools such as online tracking, doxing and online denunciation – in this case vigilante practices are entirely digitised.

These different types of contemporary vigilante activity can also be approached by thinking about how different far-right groups can be 'cause entrepreneurs' around issues of security, generating a moral economy of the threat, and the necessity of 'protection' against that threat.

Security, the far right and search for community

Based on the elements previously presented, it is clear that the role of the far right requires analysis. Is the development of the far right and that of vigilantism directly correlated? Many vigilante groups claim to be of far-right affiliation – the elective affinities between far-right ideology and vigilante practices are obvious. But how can this be explained? Is the parallel development of vigilantism and far-right politics symptomatic of the evolution of security capitalism and its moral economy?

[56] 'Patrouilles" d'extrême droite dans le métro' [Online: https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/patrouilles-d-extreme-droite-dans-le-metro_1542930.html] Accessed 8 April 2020.
[57] Gardenier, Matthijs. 2018. 'Sauvons Calais, un groupe anti-migrants. Une perspective: rétablir l'ordre', *Revue Européenne des migrations internationales*, 34(1): pp. 235–57.
[58] Bjørgo, Mareš, *ibid*.
[59] 'Viols collectifs l'affaire de Rochdale et son équation raciale' [Online: https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2012/11/19/viols-collectifs-l-affaire-de-rochdale_1792776_3210.html] Accessed 8 May 2020.
[60] Loveluck, Benjamin. 2016. 'Le vigilantisme numérique, entre dénonciation et sanction. Auto-justice en ligne et agencements de la visibilité', *Politix*, 115: pp. 82–94.

Might certain far-right groups use vigilante practices instrumentally in order to legitimise and 'de-radicalise' their image? In this context, a vigilante framework allows far-right activists to avoid confrontation with counter-demonstrators who may draw upon greater mobilisation capacity. Moreover, as we shall see later in this study with regard to vigilante groups in Calais, to guarantee autonomy of action, these groups must preserve a framework that presents them as 'vigilant citizens', thus avoiding assimilation to the political radicalism of far right.

Second, the relation to the community needs to be examined. As previously seen, in the Global South, vigilantism emanates from local communities where forms of mechanical solidarity seem to predominate. In France and the United Kingdom, these forms of solidarity have strongly declined. What is the relation between vigilantes and the community? Without a pre-existing community, how might vigilantes attempt to recreate a community? On what basis? What might be the references? Territory? Ethnicity? Are these attempts to recreate community only related to the fight against the enemy, or, on the contrary, are these community-organising initiatives?[61]

Finally, the political legitimacy of vigilantes should be considered. The action of the state presents a certain number of guarantees (legal, political) that accountability is present and legitimises the actions of the judicial system and police officers. In a legal-rational bureaucratic system, judges and police officers are trained, compete and have their actions framed by legal texts and norms. In the case of vigilantism, what are the forms of legitimation? It might be hypothesised that the claim to defend a local community and the desire to represent a group constitutes legitimation. Legitimacy would then emerge from the representation of the locality.

The performative dimension of the action of vigilante groups needs to be probed too. As a type of autonomous and non-institutional political practice, vigilante activity also forms a social movement. It produces interpretative frameworks and demands. As we shall see, this performative dimension is particularly present. This gives rise to a repertoire of actions that can be called 'spectacular' social media vigilantism.

The relation to violence will also be examined. Vigilantism implies the use of force, especially in the case of intervention and sanctioning. In a European context where the state is strong, how do these groups undertake activities that break the law? Do they manage to circumvent the law? Do they disguise? Do they focus on surveillance and demonstrations of force that are more difficult to repress? Do they receive occasional tolerance or support from the public authorities?

---

[61] Talpin, Julien. 2016. *Community organizing: De l'émeute à l'alliance des classes populaires aux Etats-Unis*. Paris: Raisons d'agir.

Three field studies to understand this transition to vigilantism

In this study, the development of vigilante practices will be examined through multi-sited ethnography. Three separate field research projects were undertaken: first, a study of neighbourhood watch in France. Members of a dozen communities were engaged with in the South and North of the country. This research was directed towards understanding how, on a local basis, the inhabitants of suburban neighbourhoods implement a social organisation of surveillance. This phenomenon can be analysed as a way to recreate community in response to a threat often defined in terms of socio-racial otherness. As we shall see in the next chapter, these surveillance networks may present political ulterior motives sometimes closely linked to the National Rally (previously known as the National Front) and other political parties.

A comparative study of vigilante social movements between the United Kingdom and France then follows. Stemming from far-right movements, these social movements patrol and stage their vigilantism against the 'threat' of immigration. They sometimes generate violence without explicitly claiming it, a phenomenon that may be called 'halo violence'. Their actions present an eminently 'spectacular' dimension – a spectacle – attempting to create an emotional community around their political framework. In France, the groups *Sauvons Calais* and *Calaisiens en Colère* were studied. In the United Kingdom, several groups were analysed in order to understand how social movement activity against migration flows in Dover constitute an attempt to construct migration as a securitarian, and even a civilisational, threat.

3

The Social Organisation of Neighbourhood Surveillance

This chapter examines security practices through a different lens. At first glance, the neighbourhood watchers who organise surveillance in a relatively peaceful manner may seem totally opposed to anti-migrant vigilantism. Nevertheless, although their forms of action differ, these two types of voluntary participation present similarities. First of all, both are part of a voluntary and unpaid practice aimed at making a locality 'secure'. Second, both types of movements are based on defending a 'community' that they intend to protect and revitalise. Third, neighbourhood watchers also base the return of this 'lost' community on distancing of the enemy, even if it takes more varied forms than in Calais.

In France, two types of neighbourhood watch schemes co-exist. The first type is the citizen participation scheme, supervised by the 2011 Guéant circular.[1] The scheme operates through a tripartite agreement between local councils, the police and the Prefecture (central state authority). It concerns a well-defined area or district. Potential neighbourhood watchers are first identified during a meeting. Several referrers are then selected by representatives of the authorities, and they can, in turn, recruit new neighbourhood watchers. It is clearly stipulated that the remit of the watches is surveillance only and they must not under any circumstances intervene in place of the police. In early 2017, the general division of the National *Gendarmerie* reported that 2,900 protocols had been signed, i.e. 8.2 per cent of municipalities in metropolitan France, and that 300 additional protocols were in the process of being validated.[2]

---

[1] 'Le dispositif de participation citoyenne' [Online: http://circulaire.legifrance.gouv.fr/pdf/2011/06/cir_33332.pdf] Accessed 4 October 2017.

[2] It should also be noted that this tool is only rarely used by the National Police. Most tripartite agreements are implemented by the Gendarmerie, which shows a different approach to dealing with insecurity and citizen participation. Malochet, Virginie. 2017. *La participation des citoyens en matière de sécurité locale: Diversité des regards et des modes d'implication*. Report to the IAU IDF.

The second type of scheme relates to the *Voisins Vigilants* website, which is managed by a private company founded by Thierry Chicha. The central element is an online social network with an alert system as its main function, complemented by social functions such as a *gazette* sharing information on the daily life of the neighbourhood. The communities are geographically defined and are also managed by one or more referrers co-opted by the neighbourhood watch network. These in turn recruit members of their community, which gives them an important role. The scheme is completed by visibility markers: panels and stickers, on sale on the site, identify the group's presence in a neighbourhood, providing it with a material and symbolic mark on a territorial basis. The neighbourhood watchers' website also offers a private service to town halls called 'watchful town halls', which allows municipal services to access messages by various communities. Thierry Chicha, director of the French Neighbourhood Watch programme, claims that more than 500 municipalities have joined this private service, which is distinct from the citizen participation scheme.

These communities, unlike the *Participation Citoyenne* scheme, are not in any way supervised by the police. Indeed, some of them have intervened against 'potential offenders', as we shall see seen. Public engagement with *Voisin Vigilants* is significant. In September 2017, its website listed 25,804 communities spread throughout the country including more than 10,000 in four regions: Île de France (Paris), Nord-Pas-Calais (Northern France), Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur and Languedoc-Roussillon (Southern Mediterranean France).[3] The site did not mention the number of participants per community, but during an interview Thierry Chicha claimed that 250,000 households participated in 2016.[4] While these numbers can be misleading (being registered does not necessarily imply active participation), they reveal that in both the schemes (*Participation Citoyenne* and *Voisins Vigilants*) the members reached into the hundreds of thousands, and that it is therefore a mass phenomenon concentrated in the suburban perimeter.

It should be recalled here that Les Johnston considers vigilantism as a social movement conducted by citizens acting voluntarily and with the autonomy to fight against 'crime' by using or threatening to use violence.[5] In functional terms, he characterises vigilantism according to three criteria. The first is the monitoring of activities deemed to be reprehensible; the second is direct intervention against these activities; and the third is the administration of a sanction, that is, self-justice. The different groups studied here have all satisfied the first: surveillance but not the other two (even though some groups intervene sometimes). Therefore, they do not have all the characteristics defining 'full-blown' vigilantism. Nevertheless,

---

[3] For the time being, the site retains the old regional division (definitions of French administration were changed in 2015).

[4] 'Notre histoire' [Online: https://www.voisinsvigilants.org/notre_histoire] Accessed 8 March 2022.

[5] Johnston, Les, 1996. 'What Is Vigilantism?', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 36(2): pp. 220–36.

because of their inclusion in the voluntary and social organisation of surveillance on a territorial basis, these groups are still representative of the phenomenon of vigilantism. It should be recalled that neighbourhood watch members are not supposed to intervene, although it will be seen later in this chapter that this prohibition is not always respected.

The concept of 'watchful citizens', as developed by James Walsh, is useful in understanding the phenomenon. He qualifies that these activities occur under several modalities. The first is the recruitment of civil servants to monitoring activities. Examples of this are the Prevent programme in Britain,[6] the obligation for psychiatrists (under debate in France[7]) to report radicalised individuals, and the obligation for civil servants to report illegal immigrants in the US.[8] The second modality is that surveillance groups are comprised of ordinary citizens. In France, neighbourhood watchers correspond to this type. The third modality of 'watchful citizenship' consists of spontaneous and autonomous surveillance groups. This is where citizens spontaneously organise surveillance (e.g. those who joined the network through the *Voisins Vigilants* website).

It is also revealing that, in the Netherlands, the citizen participation scheme mainly exists in affluent neighbourhoods with relatively low crime rates. Its implementation is much lower in poorer urban areas where the crime rate is higher.[9] Studies from Dutch sociologists on neighbourhood watches in the cities of Tilburg and Rotterdam suggest that there is not necessarily a link between the existence of the watch system and the presence of crime. This is more to do with effecting social control over a neighbourhood by some of its inhabitants.[10] This social control is also reinforced by the use of digital media. According to recent work in the Netherlands, vigilantes on WhatsApp (WhatsApp neighbourhood crime prevention) are present in nearly 7,250 neighbourhoods, which greatly exceeds the number of communities implementing patrols.[11] This research shows that these groups enable the establishment and reinforcement of informal social control over neighbourhoods.

---

[6] Clarke, Zoe. 2017. *What We Talk About When We Talk About Terrorism: The Definitions of Terrorism and the Consequences Thereof*. Master degree. Department of Politics, University of York.

[7] Andrzejewski, Cécile. 2017. 'Les «radicalisés», pas plus fous que la moyenne' [Online: https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/260817/les-radicalises-pas-plus-fous-que-la-moyenne]   Accessed   10 October 2017.

[8] Walsh, James. 2014. 'Watchful Citizens: Immigration Control, Surveillance and Societal Participation', *Social & Legal Studies*, 23(2): pp. 237–59.

[9] Steden, Ronald, Van Caem-Posch, Barbara, Boutellier, Hans. 2011. 'The "Hidden Strength" of Active Citizenship: The Involvement of Local Residents in Public Safety Projects', *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 11(5): pp. 433–50.

[10] Van Der Land, Marco. 2014. *De buurtwacht: Naar een balans tussen instrumentalisering en autonomie van burgers in veiligheid*. Communication at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

[11] Pridmore, Jason, Mols, Anouk, Wang, Yijing, Holleman, Frank. 2019. 'Keeping an Eye on the Neighbours: Police, Citizens, and Communication Within Mobile Neighbourhood Crime Prevention Groups', *The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles*, 92(2): pp. 97–120.

    Vasco Lub has noted significant difference between 'poor' neighbourhoods (which he calls low income) and richer ones.[12] In the former, the action of these groups consists of discreet support to the investigative activities of law enforcement agencies by identifying networks of small-scale traffickers. In the latter, where there is little delinquency, patrols promote good security practices and impose social control. Members on patrol might check whether garage doors are properly closed. However, since this involved trespass, it could occasion conflict. Neighbours might be asked to cut down some trees in order to allow better visibility of their property from the street. Lub also offers the example of repeated requests to a family of 'immigrants' not to leave a ladder in their garden as it could facilitate burglaries. He analysed this recent phenomenon in the Netherlands as an illustration of the process of 'securitisation'.

    The concept of social capital, as developed by Bourdieu, is also of value in understanding the motivations of those within these communities who refer others. This is a set of relationships that an individual might mobilise in their own interest.[13] Furthermore, these accumulations of social capital should be considered in relation to local political spaces. Residential districts are thus spaces where the networks of sociability produced by neighbourhood watches provide easy access to the local structures of power.

Participation with a perspective beyond immediate security

The development of these schemes in France leads to several research questions. It should be recalled here that in a context of securitisation, the voluntary participation of citizens in public security policies is an integral part of this process. It can mobilise public agents who do not work in law and order functions such as social workers. It may also take other forms, as Elisa Pieri showed with the 2011 public appeal in Manchester to watch hundreds of hours of CCTV footage to identify rioters.[14] Neighbourhood watch schemes belong to this global movement and possess a degree of autonomy from law enforcement agencies. On the one hand, this scheme follows precise rules that seem to be

[12] Lub, Vasco. 2017. *Neighbourhood Watch in a Digital Age: Between Crime Control and Culture of Control (Crime Prevention and Security Management)*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
[13] Bourdieu, Pierre. 1980. 'Le capital social: Notes provisoires', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 31: pp. 2–13.
[14] Pieri, Elisa. 2014. 'Emergent Policing Practices: Operation Shop a Looter and Urban Space Securitisation in the Aftermath of the Manchester 2011 Riots', *Surveillance & Society*, 12(1): pp. 38–54.

understood and accepted (although not always respected): no weapons and no direct intervention. On the other hand, members have a fairly high degree of autonomy: although they are obliged to appoint referrers, they are free to organise themselves in ways they deem to be the most appropriate. This leaves a relatively wide space for interpretation. Moreover, depending on the socio-logical characteristics of the different groups, the implementation of schemes can also vary.

Neighbourhood watchers are interesting: their participation in security is intermediate. Indeed, their involvement goes beyond a surveillance reflex, i.e. a call to the police to report suspicious behaviour. Neighbourhood watch networks reach further as they effect a social organisation of surveillance activities within a neighbourhood: reporting tools allow communication with other members, recruitment of members and even, in some cases, patrols. This constitutes social organisation of surveillance on a territorial basis. Although linked to the police, watchers have relative autonomy. Reporting of suspicious behaviour is not the direct result of a call from a specific person, but the product of socially organised surveillance activities on a local scale. Nevertheless, it should be recalled that these activities do not fall within the scope of pure vigilantism as defined above since direct intervention and administration of sanction are most often absent. The neighbourhood watchers in the observed areas are, in a way, at a crossroads: their action goes beyond simple surveillance yet does not escalate into full-blown vigilantism. In this respect, these schemes fall within a grey area where inhabitants of a neighbourhood create an autono-mous organisation to support the security duty of public authorities without replacing the police.

Several questions are raised by these schemes. In the first place, how can the sociological composition of such groups be characterised? To which professions and socio-professional categories do neighbourhood watchers belong? Are there differences between communities? Another question relates to the motivations of neighbourhood watchers: what motivates them to get involved in such schemes? As we shall see, when it comes to the referrers, participation in the Neighbourhood Watch programme is often coupled with involvement in municipal politics. Is it possible to conceive of referrers' engagement as a means of accumulating social capital for future political use?

Paradoxically, most members of the Neighbourhood Watch programme encountered during the research for this book stated that they did not feel a sense of immediate insecurity. Indeed, according to many interlocutors, their community is barely affected, if at all, by burglary and delinquency. This echoes the research of Skogan who found that neighbourhood watch programmes develop mainly in affluent residential neighbourhoods with a

lower-than-average delinquency rate.[15] Tellingly, work on neighbourhood watches in Australia report a similar dynamic. Much work criticises these schemes as being ineffective in reducing crime since they are located in neighbourhoods with relatively low crime rates and only involve the oldest age groups in these neighbourhoods.[16]

These impressions are further corroborated by a comparative study of the United States and the United Kingdom. According to an evaluation of the results of neighbourhood watch programmes in these two countries, it has not been possible to establish a strong correlation between the implementation of such schemes and a decline in delinquency figures.[17] This has also been pointed out in more recent work on Wales. Bullock and Brunton-Smith have suggested that a relationship between home ownership and participation in neighbourhood watches could explain this phenomenon.[18] If this is true, this would draw a similarity with what Les Johnston described as pre-modern vigilantism in 18th-century Britain where smallholder associations did most of the policing in the communities in which they lived.[19]

This lack of correlation between the feeling of insecurity and voluntary participation in neighbourhood watch programmes is paradoxical: how can it be that municipalities and groups of individuals voluntarily organise surveillance activities in their free time to confront delinquency which is almost non-existent?

In order to examine this 'paradox', the research underpinning this book established a typology of communities studied. Two types of groups were distinguished. The first type of group is located in residential suburbs where established working classes, with stable jobs and access to residential property, reside and where there is a feeling of immediate threat: in this case, members go beyond simple surveillance. Their action is aimed at excluding elements that are deemed 'external' to the neighbourhood. Enclosing physical space and recreating a community thus appears central. In contrast, with the second type of group, better off, there is an absence of feelings of immediate delinquency in these communities. As we shall see, these groups seek to establish a separation between themselves and those parts of the working classes that are perceived as 'others'.

---

[15] Skogan, Wesley. 1986. 'Fear of Crime and Neighborhood Change', *Crime and Justice*, 8: pp. 203–29.
[16] Fleming, Jenny, O'Reilly, Juani. 2007. 'The "Small-scale Initiative": The Rhetoric and the Reality of Community Policing in Australia', *Policing*, 1: pp. 214–23.
[17] Holloway, Katie, Bennett, Trevor, Farrington, David, 2008. 'Does Neighbourhood Watch Reduce Crime?' *Crime Prevention Research Review*, 3: pp. 42–9.
[18] Brunton-Smith, Ian, Bullock, Karen. 2019. 'Patterns and Drivers of Co-production in Neighbourhood Watch in England and Wales: From Neo-liberalism to New Localism', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 59(1): pp. 85–106.
[19] Johnston, Les, 1992. *The Rebirth of Private Policing*. London. Routledge.

This present study also hypothesises that in the communities of Hénin-Beaumont and Montpellier, where people belonging to the established working classes reside,[20] the higher degree of organisation and activity of neighbourhood watches can be explained by the perception of a more immediate danger. Indeed, the social groups perceived as criminogenic are closer geographically: neighbourhoods are close to housing projects (housing at moderate rent). And closer socially: there is little difference in terms of income and activities between neighbourhood watchers and the populations they fear. Thus, the need to distinguish from 'the others' appears more important to the neighbourhood watchers. This explains a greater vigour and organisation. This is materialised through the symbolic importance of walls, which, as will be seen further, are important to the security apparatus of these communities. Walls allow a physical and symbolical separation between the community and the 'other' that threatens it.[21]

The wall, embodying the action of separation, thereby generates the figure of the 'suspect', associated *a priori* with people outside the delimited space. More broadly, the construction of these physical barriers speak to the role of social groups, and particularly dominant groups, in the reproduction of the social order. In this respect, vigilantism can be assimilated to the field of 'conservative mobilisations' whose explicit objective is the maintenance of an existing order, from which the mobilised individuals benefit.[22]

The 'dominant' position of these individuals is of course relative and is the result of a 'triangular social consciousness', evident among the vigilant communities implanted in the most stable parts of the working classes: the 'we' of these working-class categories is not only defined in relation to the 'they' of the rulers and the powerful, but also in relation to the 'them' of the 'poor' families who benefit from assistance, the immigrants who do not want to 'integrate', and the young people who are part of the 'riff-raff'.[23]

Field research

The locations for the field research were in *Nord* (Northern France) and the *Herault* district (Southern Mediterranean France), where neighbourhood watch programmes have been particularly well established. These regions are both

[20] Girard, Violaine. 2017. *Le vote FN au village: Trajectoires de ménages populaires du périurbain*. Paris: Editions du Croquant.
[21] Agrikoliansky, Eric, Collovald, Anne. 2014. 'Mobilisations conservatrices: Comment les dominants contestent?', *Politix*, 106: pp. 7–29.
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] Collovald, Anne, Schwartz, Olivier. 2006. 'Haut, bas, fragile: sociologies du populaire'. *Vacarme*, 37: pp. 19–26.

characterised by high rates of poverty and strong support for the National Rally (former *Front National*).[24] Some 30 semi-structured filmed interviews were conducted with members of a dozen communities. Some of the interviews were conducted as part of the *Amateurs d'ordre* documentary by a team including the researcher (myself) and filmmakers.

In Nord, we met G., vice-president of the neighbourhood watch of Konin I district in Hénin-Beaumont, and T., member of the community and victim of assault in his garage. This assault was key to the launch of Konin's Neighbourhood Watch programme. Although it was launched autonomously, it then became the subject of a citizen participation protocol with the town hall of Hénin-Beaumont whose *Front National* mayor was elected in 2014.

In Herault, five different communities were part of the project, including the referrer of the Neighbourhood Watch programme of Malbosc district in Montpellier. We also met with four referrers from the citizen participation scheme of Palavas-les-flots, a seaside resort. In Montpellier, we interviewed a member in charge of an autonomous Neighbourhood Watch programme of Montpellier's city centre. This member was concerned by night-time nuisances rather than against burglaries, in particular by people urinating in the streets.

Neighbourhood watchers in Villeneuve-les-Béziers and Sérignan were also interviewed. The research was conducted in greatest depth in two communities in Malbosc and Valras. In Valras, we met G. and J-N., both members of a neighbourhood watch network, J-N. also being a substitute Member of Parliament and member of the National Rally. Repeat interviews were undertaken, and more informal time was also allocated with interviewees (sometimes an afternoon, sometimes a whole day) in order to get beyond the standard formatted discourse of a semi-structured interview.

In addition, local public law enforcement policy stakeholders were interviewed (as they are public figures, they have not been anonymised). In the *Nord* district, we met with Christopher Szureck, deputy National Rally mayor of Hénin-Beaumont. In the *Hérault* district, we interviewed the deputy mayor in charge of security in Vendargues and the Head of the municipal police. A similar interview was conducted with the deputy mayor for security in Montady, a village on the outskirts of Béziers. Finally, two actors with opposing views were interviewed: Thierry Chicha, director of the French Neighbourhood Watch programme, and Bruno Bartocetti, a leading member of the FO (*Force Ouvrière*) police union, who is very critical of neighbourhood watches.

---

[24] For more details on the socioeconomic situation, see 'Panorama – Hauts-de-France', *Insee* [Online: https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2018919] et [https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2128959] Accessed 10 October 2017.

Surveillance with no sense of immediate danger

With the exception of the communities of Hénin-Beaumont and Malbosc (Montpellier), whose members belong to the category of intermediate professions, the sociological profile of the five other groups in Palavas, Sérignan (citizen participation scheme), Valras-Plage, Villeneuve-les-Béziers and Montady (participation via the website) is surprisingly homogeneous. Therefore, our subject communities were divided into two groups according to sociological profile.

The first group is therefore comprised of Hénin-Beaumont and Malbosc, where community members belong to the established working classes. These profiles are quite similar to the families described by Girard in her work on the working classes within the suburban perimeter.[25] The second group comprises the five other communities and presents other sociological characteristics. Of the 12 study participants in the second group, all are retired. Membership in neighbourhood watch networks is also 'a man's game' as G. phrases it: eleven men but only one woman were interviewed.

Almost all of these retirees in the second group belong to the category of highly qualified working population. We thus met a commercial executive who has spent most of his career as head of Renault car dealerships, a former police commander, a former owner of a small business with about ten employees in the field of battery sales, a former head of the Department of Foreigners at the Prefecture of the Herault district, and a former commercial executive in the pharmaceutical industry.

No feeling of direct insecurity

Surprisingly enough, the five communities of the second group were all characterised by the absence of feelings of immediate insecurity. Indeed, the interviewees stated that there was very little or not at all crime in their locality. For example, in Palavas-les-flots, they stated that they were not confronted with acts of insecurity, but were mostly called upon by the residents for vehicle surveillance: 'we receive calls for cars that stayed parked for a long time. We checked them before informing the police. People often call because they've been for a long time on parking spaces they'd like'.[26]

In Montady, P. was already a neighbourhood watcher before his election as deputy mayor for security. He says that there is very little delinquency and that he was mainly dealing with anti-social behaviour by young people, such as

---

[25] Girard, 2017, *ibid.*
[26] Interview with F. on 14 November 2019.

making noise in the evening or leaving rubbish behind. Similarly, in Villeneuve-les-Béziers and Sérignan, communities were not confronted with burglaries. In Valras, G. reported that tourists' cars were regularly broken into, and states that 'burglaries increased during the months following the settlement of a Traveller community'. However, when asked more specifically if there were burglaries in his community, he said that there were none in his neighbourhood last year, and only one the year before.

An unclear threat

Therefore, it does seem that the implementation of neighbourhood watches in these communities is not justified by an immediate feeling of threat but rather by fear of a potential threat. Their creation is thus considered a deterrent to a potential danger rather than as a measure taken against actual crime. This brings up the notion of 'derivative fear'. According to Sygmunt Bauman, societal representations of the criminal figure crystallises what he calls a 'derivative fear', that is, 'a general fear of vague dangers that would swarm out of sight'.[27] This threat explains the existence of neighbourhood watches in these districts.[28] Thus, in the Guéant circular, the representation of the delinquent figure (enemy) was not specified. Similarly, on the Neighbourhood Watch website, criminals are not specifically mentioned, but criminal acts are: 'theft', 'suspicious behaviours of overly insistent canvassers', and 'preventing burglaries'.[29] In the same way, in the official communication of the Prefecture and the gendarmerie, the figure of the enemy was not specified, but rather the acts that were supposed to carry risk. During interviews, the figure of the enemy was present, but remained unnamed. For example, in Vendargues, members mention 'people who steal and come by the motorway', evoking Travellers, while the deputy mayor for security mentions a fear of 'theft from vehicles'.[30]

The enemy profile is unclear and protean. Members vaguely refer to people from outside the district as those most likely to engage in acts of delinquency. Thus, the enemy could be any outsider to the community. It should be noted that this imaginary profile, geographically located outside the community, is of

[27] Bauman, Zygmunt. 2007. *Le Présent liquide: Peurs sociales et obsession sécuritaire*. Paris: Le Seuil, p. 14.
[28] The report 'Local governance of crime prevention' produced by the *Mission permanente d'évaluation de la prévention de la délinquance* points out that there are no figures establishing a correlation between the 'Citizen Participation' scheme and a decrease in the number of burglaries. [Online: https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/content/download/88430/.../gouvernance-sept2014.pdf] Accessed 12 September 2017.
[29] 'Pourquoi devenir Voisin Vigilant et Solidaire?' [Online: https://www.voisinsvigilants.org/voisin] Accessed 22 September 2021.
[30] Interview with H., November 2019.

the 'Other'. This brings us back to the territorial dimension of vigilantism. The threatening figure of the outsider, even though vague, enables strengthening of the 'in-group' versus the 'out-group'.

Lack of social links

Thierry Chicha (head of company Voisins Vigilants et Solidaires) has noted that neighbourhood watchers do not limit themselves to ensuring security: their purpose is also to maintain, or restore, sociability and solidarity, which is why the French Neighbourhood Watch website changed its name in 2017 from '*Voisins vigilants*' (watchful neighbours) to '*Voisins vigilants et solidaires*'[31] (watchful and supportive neighbours). For Chicha, the goal is to deal with 'a maximal degradation of social ties', the scheme allowing for the reconstruction of social ties: 'Saying "we communicate" between neighbours to create conviviality... this will reduce the risk of insecurity and burglary'.[32] Indeed, the platform offers carpooling services and can be used to organise a Neighbour's Day (this is the case in Hénin-Beaumont).

Yet paradoxically, a lack of social ties between the members of the five communities in the second group can be identified (unlike those of Malbosc and Hénin-Beaumont). With the exception of Palavas,[33] there is no community activity involving socialising. In Villeneuve-les-Béziers, Montady, Sérignan and Valras, the objective is not to create communitarian social ties but to help each other specifically with regard to surveillance and security. Ultimately, participation in the scheme is more a case of offering assurance as it mainly provides a service: an individual checks over their neighbour's house in exchange for a similar service.

G. (from Valras) expressed this assurance logic very well: 'To me, the word community is not pejorative, but I don't like it much'. He added: 'The goal is not to get together, to have neighbourhood parties or anything. The goal is to help each other'. He explained that he had raised the alarm to help find his neighbour's cat, but he does not want to do anything more 'social': 'They found the cat, but I can't help with a baby-sitter. I say hi to people, I meet them in Béziers, I meet them at Carrefour (supermarket), that's all'. He returned to the subject during a second interview: 'It's the South, they don't want to waste money, I don't want to interfere in your private life. The social buddy thing doesn't work, they don't want to be bothered, it doesn't work... they want to have peace... I want to have peace'.

---

[31] 'Voisins Vigilants – Notre Histoire' [Online: https://www.voisinsvigilants.org/notre_histoire] Accessed 21 February 2018.
[32] Interview with Thierry Chicha on 3 April 2016.
[33] There is no sociability specific to the watch in Palavas, but it is the leaders of the neighbourhood associations who have been appointed as referents by the town hall.

Building symbolic and material borders

Socio-professional differences

The neighbourhood watch communities of Hénin-Beaumont and Malbosc differ from the other on two points. The first is the socio-professional category of the members, which reflects the social composition of their neighbourhoods. Konin I is a suburban district of Hénin-Beaumont. As noted earlier, inhabitants tend to belong to the established working-class families described by Violaine Girard.[34] The community referrer, S., is a security guard in Lens. He explained that most of the 120 members of the community are 'sales representatives, tilers, production agents (workers), nurses, dentists, childminders'. He added that his wife is a caregiver. The Malbosc district in Montpellier is quite similar. Indeed, it combines council housing and suburban privately owned homes. The district is built close to La Mosson district where a large part of the council housing of Montpellier is concentrated. This proximity is an obvious concern for neighbourhood watchers. The five members that we met were a housewife, a disabled person living off the *Allocation aux Adultes Handicapés* (allowance for disabled adults), a stretcher-bearer at Montpellier Hospital, a social worker and a civil security agent. It should be noted that these members are in their forties or fifties. This contrasts with the retired members of the other communities.

The second common point between the groups in Hénin-Beaumont and Malbosc is the immediate existence of a perception of petty crime in their neighbourhood. In Malbosc, burglaries are said to be a regular occurrence. According to members, it is mainly a question of opportunity delinquency: if a person leaves a French window open or leaves property in their garden, they are at high risk of being robbed. In Hénin-Beaumont, the Konin district suffered a burglary wave and T. was attacked with a box-cutter in his garage.[35] This attack occasioned a moral shock, as defined by Jasper,[36] and it led to the rapid growth of the neighbourhood watch in the area.

From surveillance to intervention

Another difference with the first group of communities is the nature of the watchers' activity. They do not limit themselves to watching and reporting via text

---

[34] Girard, Violaine. 2013. 'Propriété et classes populaires: Des politiques aux trajectoires', *Politix*, 101(1): pp. 7–20.

[35] 'Hénin Beaumont des inquiétudes sur la sécurité' [Online: http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/archive/recup%3A%252Fregion%252Fhenin-beaumont-des-inquietudes-sur-la-securite-mais-ia34b54038n2533005] Accessed 21 September 2018.

[36] Jasper, James. 1998. 'The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions in and Around Social Movements', *Sociological Forum*, 13(3): pp. 397–424.

message, Facebook or other communication features offered by the network, but they also engage in activities that fall under what Johnston refers to as the second dimension of vigilantism: intervention.[37] Both communities have implemented patrols. In Hénin-Beaumont, these are regular. S. stated that 'we patrol every night… well, every week'. T., who took part in patrols following his aggression, confirmed this. These patrols were made on foot.

There are two types of patrols in Malbosc. I went along with M. on some of those – the first one done by car (a Dacia Duster 4x4). The neighbourhood is large and the purpose is to watch over neighbours' houses and identify anything out of the ordinary. During this patrol, M. spotted a broken car window. The following day when we went back to the neighbourhood, he explained that he had investigated and discovered that the window had not been broken by an offender, but by the owner who had left his keys inside the vehicle. The second type of patrol is made on foot in a park between Malbosc and the council housing buildings of La Mosson.

Patrols may also result in interventions regarding individuals perceived as potential offenders. In Hénin-Beaumont, S. explained that he had stopped young people on mopeds as he considered them to be roamers: 'we caught them'. The police then checked them. S. does not think that this action constituted an obstacle to freedom of movement. He stated: 'we didn't touch them, we just stopped them'. The neighbourhood watchers also intervene in Malbosc: R. explained that he spotted a person breaking into a car during a patrol. He called the police and followed the person throughout the neighbourhood, informing officers in real time who then arrested the person. R. proudly explained that his action had been reported in the local press (rather inaccurately[38]).

The interventions of the neighbourhood watchers of Malbosc are mostly concentrated in the park that separates the district from the council housing buildings of La Mosson, where members make regular rounds on foot. M. said that interventions were frequent: since young people from La Mosson neighbourhood come in this area, it was perceived as a sensitive zone. Since the neighbourhood 'must be calm', they considered these 'gatherings of young people' to be 'anti-social'. They went there and told these young people that they were breaking the law. M. said that 'there are people having barbecues in the woods: we intervene … we tell them nicely that it's forbidden to have barbecues, and if they don't leave we call the police'. Similarly, he stated: 'there are young people with scooters and quads … we're on edge here … we tell them to leave'. He also talked about interventions regarding homeless sleepers settling in the park: 'for our safety and that of the park, we decided to dislodge the homeless'. They told them to leave and called the police

---

[37] Johnston, 1996, *ibid*.
[38] 'Le voisin vigilant neutralise un voleur à la roulotte' [Online: https://e-metropolitain.fr/2017/12/27/montpellier-voisin-vigilant-neutralise-voleur-a-roulotte] Accessed 21 September 2018.

when they refused to leave. In the end the homeless men were evicted from their makeshift homes. It should be noted that these interventions deviate from crime control vigilantism. Indeed, in the park (perceived as a 'no man's land'), it seems that it is not only 'anti-social behaviours' that are targeted, but the populations that may possibly commit them in the eyes of the watchers. Indeed, theses potential perpetrators are called 'SDF' (person of no fixed address) and 'youngsters from La Paillade' (the nearby council housing projects), and interventions are a way of controlling and regulating the presence of these populations. To this extent, such interventions would be more akin to social group vigilantism targeting social groups collectively perceived as threatening or criminogenic.[39]

Walls and community closure

These interventions were supplemented by another element which seems central to the action of these groups: the implementation of a physical boundary between the neighbourhood, perceived as under threat, and the rest of the urban space. In Malbosc, the question of the border arises around the geographical separation with La Mosson: indeed, Malbosc is linked to La Mosson by a road which is closed from 9 pm. Similarly, the passage between the park and Malbosc is delimited by an impressive water-retaining wall. Some of the inhabitants have even petitioned for the permanent closure of the road to La Mosson. According to A., this option has not yet been adopted by the municipality. M. is not in favour of the closure option as, according to him, the absence of traffic would create a greater chance of lawless zones being established. He also challenges the symbolic character of the wall – it could be conceived as a social separation instrument but he sees it mainly as a means to fight flooding.

In Hénin-Beaumont, T.'s mugging was the trigger for inhabitants and watchers to become increasingly active. They called for the road that crosses the sub-division to be closed permanently. The municipal council (National Front) agreed, occasioning a polemic that attracted national media attention.[40]

The municipality then built a temporary wall, turning the road at one end of the sub-division into a dead end. S. assured that this closure was essential for the safety of the neighbourhood as it prevented 'big theft' and allowed watchers to 'quickly seal off the area with a vehicle at the other exit'. T. said that 'burglaries have decreased' since the building of the wall. This wall is also the symbol of a recovery of community, reinforcing the 'us' of the neighbourhood against the protean 'outsider' ('them').

[39] Rosenbaum, Jon, Sederberg, Peter. 1976. *Vigilante Politics*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
[40] 'A Hénin-Beaumont, le mur anti-cambrioleurs de la mairie FN... divise' [Online: https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/politique/fn/a-henin-beaumont-le-mur-anti-cambrioleurs-de-la-mairie-fn-divise_1648343.html] Accessed 21 September 2018.

Figure 3.1 M., referrer of the Malbosc community, and the water-retaining wall separating Malbosc and La Mosson.

Figure 3.2 The gabion wall blocking vehicle access to Konin I district in Hénin-Beaumont.

Recovery of community

Physical boundaries territorially delimit the 'us' of a community. According to this study, the action of the neighbourhood watchers represents a dual function: on the one hand, they have been acting against real waves of burglaries; on the other hand, symbolically, they seek to separate the lower-middle-class population from the 'sub-proletariat' of council housing. The former is a working population with a suburban lifestyle and the latter is assimilated to foreigners and represents a 'socio-racial' danger. This action of separation is also part of the schizoid pattern outlined by Gilbert Durand as it enables the restoration of the community within the neighbourhood.[41] In this respect, the case of Hénin-Beaumont is particularly noticeable: the gabion wall is somehow the founding element of the community. Thus, Thierry said that 'the closure allowed for security and serenity', as the return of tranquillity made social events possible: the Neighbourhood Watch programme is used to organise events such as Halloween and a Carnival for the children. He also explained that Neighbours' Day has been celebrated every year since the closure: 'we bring an arbour and have lunch on the wall'. The extremely symbolic aspect of this meal should be noted. Indeed, sharing a meal is the basis of social bond. Here, meals are shared on the wall – the action of closure against the enemy is thus the basis of the restored community.

Finally, it might be suggested that these communities' perception of the 'social' can be linked to Carl Schmitt's thoughts. Schmitt conceives the political community only in opposition to the figure of the enemy, making it possible to assert the 'us' in relation to the 'them'.[42] This operates in residential neighbourhoods, where traditional community-based ties have almost completely disappeared, in favour of associative or professional sociability.[43] Suburban planning excludes traditional social places: shops and workplaces are located outside the neighbourhood and thus no longer have a social role. Thus, neighbourhood watchers not only fight against real insecurity, but against a 'feeling of insecurity'. Organising surveillance creates an opportunity to fight a vague enemy and, to some extent, to recover a 'lost' community in the locality.

A parallel can be drawn with gated communities: symbolic walls create protection from the 'outside' and thus enable their residents to define the boundaries of a community that has been dissolved by modernity and contemporary lifestyles.[44] Nevertheless, a question arises: should the 'us' be defined solely in relation to

---

[41] Durand, Gilbert. 1993. *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*. Paris: Dunod.
[42] Schmitt, Carl. 2009. *La notion de politique: Théorie du partisan*. Paris. Flammarion.
[43] Girard, 2017, *ibid*.
[44] Mardore, François. 2012. 'Ensembles résidentiels fermés en France et montée d'un ordre sécuritaire', *L'espace politique: Revue en ligne de géographie politique et de géopolitique* [Online: https://espacepolitique.revues.org/2338].

the 'them', a hostile, threatening and polymorphous otherness?[45] Or, on the contrary and as Durkheim thought,[46] should the community not be based on social interactions and shared solidarity mechanisms, which generate a real involvement around the common good?

Vigilance networks, social capital accumulation and insertion in local politics

We should also understand the implementation of vigilance networks from a broader perspective: that of the municipality. In municipal politics, different social networks will support one municipal majority or another. Neighbourhood watches form a network of residents which can lead to the establishment of links with municipal authorities. This encourages some members within these networks to become active in municipal politics.

A source of social capital for referrers?

The paradoxical development of these communities where there is no perception of real delinquency can also be explained by the potential for accumulation of social capital by the referrers. Indeed, as Laurent Fourchard's studies have shown, participation in vigilance schemes is often coupled with rewards for those who take part in it: the development of social capital creates relationships that can be mobilised in the interest of these individuals.[47] This seems to be the case with neighbourhood watchers. Thus, these often have close links with municipal authorities and sometimes neighbourhood watches will use their role to obtain a position on municipal councils.

   Thus, in Villeneuve-les-Béziers, R. has been part of the municipal team for more than 20 years and sees his involvement in neighbourhood watches as part of that commitment. He also planned to stand as a candidate in the 2020 municipal elections. This was also the case in Montady. P. was a neighbourhood watch member when he took part in a list during the 2014 municipal elections. During the campaign, his list promoted a security-oriented discourse, highlighting Neighbourhood Watch programmes. After they won the elections, P. became deputy mayor for security. His team used the neighbourhood watch scheme as a

---

[45] Schmitt, *ibid.*
[46] Durkheim, Emile. 2013 [1893]. *De la division du travail social.* Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
[47] Fourchard, Laurent. 2008. 'A New Name for an Old Practice: Vigilante in South-western Nigeria', *Africa*, 78(1): pp. 34–56.

way to respond to a feeling of insecurity even though was no 'real' insecurity in his city. Indeed, the municipal team then chose to prioritise the neighbourhood watch scheme rather than install CCTV cameras as 'it is not very expensive'. Through this scheme, 200 households signed up, i.e. 500 members.

Similarly, G. has maintained good relations with the National Rally (former National Front) Council of Hénin-Beaumont. Moreover, it was in the town hall that Christopher Szureck, deputy mayor, introduced him to us, stating 'he's at the town hall every day'. G was also the president of the Federal Union of War Veterans. Clément Golka, former president of this association, was elected to the city council of Hénin-Beaumont as a National Rally candidate. When Steeve Briois became mayor, the Human Rights League was expelled from its council-owned premises, and the Federal Union of Veterans replaced the league. The association's new premises were inaugurated by Marine Le Pen in person.[48]

Further evidence of this is the support the town hall gave to neighbourhood watches: a public consultation was undertaken, which led to the building of the wall in the Konin neighbourhood. Mr Szurek claimed that, after several meetings organised by the town hall and a petition,[49] a local consultative referendum legitimised the building of this wall.[50] G. stated that he supported the town hall as it would fight 'effectively against insecurity', and explained that he worked hand in hand with the municipal police, but not the national police. G. did not hide his far-right acquaintances but did not openly claim his affiliation to the National Rally. He preferred to insist upon his closeness with the mayor without explicitly mentioning any political affiliation.

T., victim of the mugging that strongly galvanised the neighbourhood watchers of Konin, told us that after the attack, mayor Steeve Briois and other deputies offered him a fruit basket. T. stated that he 'does not share the ideas of the National Rally' but 'fully supports its local action'. He thinks that it is necessary to extend the neighbourhood watch scheme to a national level. It should be added that the individuals interviewed carefully avoided any reference to racism.

In Valras, G. wanted the scheme to be officially recognised by the town hall and to extend it to the whole town. He made this statement about ten times during the four interviews conducted. He claimed to have no particular political opinion and to accept all point of views within his community: 'I accept everyone, there

---

[48] This has been denounced by the local section of the French Communist Party of Hénin Beaumont. 'Pourquoi l'Union Fédérale des anciens combattants est-elle tellement choyée par la municipalité?' [Online: http://www.lheninois.com/2015/10/serge-gomichon.html] Accessed 12 July 2019.

[49] 'Hénin-Beaumont: Le mur anti-cambriolages divise les habitants' [Online: http://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/henin-beaumont-le-mur-anti-cambriolages-divise-les-habitants-04-02-2015-4506215.php] Accessed 9 March 2022.

[50] However, the researcher was not able to find any publication concerning the holding of this referendum, either on the Hénin Beaumont Town Hall website or in the local press.

are even red and blue people'. He remained vague when asked about people's affiliations in his community, saying that 'it was none of his business'.

Nevertheless, the only member he introduced us to, J-N., was involved in politics. During a two-and-a-half-hour interview conducted with G. and J-N., the latter talked about his professional activities. He claimed to be a former member of the Paris Judicial Police, having participated in the hunt for Jacques Mesrine and for the *gang des postiches*. He is now retired and fully devoted to the management of a small publishing house of detective novels and geopolitical essays, which bring together 'a diversity of opinions that may sometimes offend cultural events organisers'.[51] It was only at the end of the interview that J-N. gave us two business cards: his editor business card, and another card revealing his position as Deputy Member of Parliament of Emmanuelle Ménard (National Rally) in the National Assembly, unveiling his political affiliation. Thus, when G. asserted that 'his ambition is not to be mayor of Valras', J-N. laughed and suggested the opposite. He then said that 'such a watcher network was gold for the municipal elections'. Furthermore, in March 2019, J-N. announced his candidacy for the municipal elections of Sauvian, a nearby town.[52]

This inclusion in local political networks could also be found in Montpellier, but here we found links to the Socialist Party. M., a neighbourhood watch referrer, was a member of this party. He was elected to the city council from 2008 to 2014. When Socialist Party candidate Jean-Pierre Mourre was defeated by Philippe Saurel, a dissenting Socialist Party member, he lost his seat but maintained his activity within the party. He announced that he wanted to join the Socialist Party list for council elections in 2020. He was also a member of the Neighbours' association of Malbosc and told us that he was very active in associations promoting free software.

For the neighbourhood watchers of Malbosc, the term of office of former socialist mayor Georges Frêche[53] had benefitted the neighbourhoods of Montpellier by providing a community spirit among residents, supported by a series of social events, particularly in the Aiguelongue disctrict. R. left this neighbourhood in 2011 and settled in Malbosc, where he did not regain this community spirit: according to R. the daily life of the inhabitants of Malbosc was marked by 'individualism and insecurity'. He lamented the disintegration of Georges

---

[51] 'Un éditeur ex superflic recompense un polar' [Online: https://www.midilibre.fr/2013/11/11/un-editeur-ex-super-flic-recompense-un-polar,781575.php] Accessed 27 October 2019.
[52] 'Jacques Nain se lance pour les municipales' [Online: https://www.midilibre.fr/2019/02/08/jacques-nain-se-lance-pour-les-municipales,8001744.php] Accessed 23 October 2019.
[53] Georges Frêche, Mayor of Montpellier, then President of the Montpellier Agglomeration and the Languedoc Roussillon Region until his death, was a very popular local political figure, but was strongly criticised for his racist remarks, as well as his clientelist management of the city. Excluded from the Socialist Party in 2007, he died in 2011.

Frêche's legacy and deplored the new municipal management, which he called 'catastrophic'.

From security-based involvement to inclusion in local politics

How can this frequent inclusion of referrers in local politics be interpreted? Julian Mischi asserts that 'the objectivation of social ties into political relations occurs within the interaction between a doctrinal and organisational model and social groups with a territorial or professional basis'.[54] This pattern, found in Neighbourhood Watch networks, is the element which explains the inclusion of referrers in local politics.

On the one hand, insecurity, or rather the feeling of insecurity, is an issue for local politics and a concern often highlighted during municipal elections.[55] On the other hand, neighbourhood watch networks are groups that participate voluntarily in public security policies. These networks are based on common values stemming from security concerns, regular communication between members and mutual conceptions of public security. The combination of these factors creates, to use the wording of Max Weber, an 'elective affinity' between the local political arena and surveillance networks. On one hand, in order to exist and obtain municipal power, political parties need to rely on territorially established groups to obtain significant electoral mobilisation. On the other hand, in a context of securitarian public policies, neighbourhood watch networks, which voluntarily mobilise, have a tendency towards inclusion in local politics.

The referrers know all the members of vigilance networks, are volunteers and have accumulated social capital. They thus constitute the interface or 'bridge-individuals' between local political parties and neighbourhood watchers, as Rogers and Kincaid theorised in their work on network analysis.[56] This position favours the electoral mobilisation of all or part of the neighbourhood watchers in support of specific candidates. In return, this interface position between political parties and watchers allows referrers to increase their social capital, who acquire relationships within political parties and municipal teams. Moreover, they sometimes monetise their referrer position in exchange for electoral positions. That is the case of M., who was elected councillor of the City of Montpellier from 2008 to 2014, and of P., who became deputy mayor in charge of security in Valras in 2014.

Finally, it should be noted that the political affiliations of the referrers are quite broad, ranging from the left to the far-right wing. In Hénin-Beaumont and Valras,

---

[54] Mischi, Julien. 2003. 'Travail partisan et sociabilités populaires: Observations localisées de la politisation communiste', *Politix*, 63: pp. 91–119, at p. 97.
[55] Bonelli, Laurent. 2010. *La France a peur: Une histoire sociale de «l'insécurité»*. Paris: La Découverte.
[56] Rogers, Everett, Kincaid, Lawrence. 1981. *Communication Networks: Toward a New Paradigm for Research*. New York: Free Press Collier Macmillan.

the mobilisation of the neighbourhood watchers is clearly an instrument that is used to garner support for the National Rally. Nevertheless, the RN is not the only party that concerns itself with security issues. Thus, P. became deputy mayor in charge of security in 2014 after an electoral campaign focused on security issues. The mayor of Montady, Alain Castan, claims to be *divers gauche*[57] (miscellaneous left). Similarly, the neighbourhood watchers of Malbosc are associated with the Socialist Party, although they claim a 'frêchist' affiliation (Georges Frêche was excluded from the party in 2007[58]). This relatively broad partisanship reflects the influence of securitarian issues on the greater part of the political spectrum.

Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, different types of neighbourhood watch communities can be identified. The first and most frequent type concerns communities with little or no delinquency.[59] Members are highly qualified retired individuals from the upper middle class. The activities of the members tend to be limited to surveillance and there is no attempt to create wider social ties.

These individuals provide each other with surveillance services, but mostly in the form of offering each other assurance. Indeed, participants often refer to the fact that the scheme is free – the voluntary commitment of the referrers is not financially rewarded. However, it can be rewarded with social capital if referrers obtain a position on local councils.

The second type of neighbourhood watch community presents a different profile: its members are professionally active and have socially stable, established working-class jobs. However, their suburban lifestyle associates them with the lower middle class (it should be noted that these terms have to be taken with caution in this study as they designate lifestyles rather than social classes). These communities have experienced real delinquency. They organise regular patrols but also intervene directly when confronted with what they consider to be criminal acts or problematic behaviour. This is what Johnston calls the second level of vigilantism (intervention). A strong emphasis on the wall theme and a separation of the 'us' (inhabitants) from the 'them' (potentially criminogenic populations) could be found. The wall, which closes off the space and creates a border with the rest of the urban space, is thus an expression of the 'us'. This 'us', which allows for

---

[57] 'Le nouveau conseil municipal autour d'Alain Castan est en place' [Online: https://www.midilibre.fr/2014/04/09/le-nouveau-conseil-municipal-autour-d-alain-castan-est-en-place,846442.php] Accessed 12 October 2019.

[58] 'Georges Frêche a été exclu du Parti Socialiste' [Online: https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2007/01/27/georges-freche-a-ete-exclu-du-parti-socialiste_860675_3224.html] Accessed 13 October 2019.

[59] It should be noted that these are not necessarily representative of all neighbourhood watches.

the recovery of social ties within the community, is well illustrated by the Hénin-Beaumont Neighbours' Day: the celebration takes place symbolically under an pergola placed around the wall which closes the district to traffic.

These two types of communities are the illustration of the diversity of forms that surveillance may take when citizens become 'watchful citizens'.[60] They confirm the theories of Walsh, for whom the development of vigilantism is twofold: on the one hand, the participation of those who are not police officers, and, on the other, the empowerment of more extreme groups who maintain order alongside the police.

Furthermore, in the communities of Hénin-Beaumont and Malbosc, similar dynamics to those highlighted by Violaine Girard in her work on established working-class families in the Vallée du Riboire can be found. Girard shows that a distinction is intentionally made from the most deprived parts of the working classes. These distinction strategies revalue one's status and identity.[61]

From our perspective, the experience of the neighbourhood watchers studied here falls within this dimension. The assertion of who belongs to the community highlights who does not. In Malbosc and Hénin-Beaumont, the less established parts of the working class are being pointed at: watchers not only fight against delinquency – they also define who can legitimately circulate in the district and who cannot. The actions of the watchers of Malbosc are very revealing in this respect: they rely on the regulations of the green spaces of the city of Montpellier (no barbecues or motor vehicles) to intervene and remove young people from neighbouring spaces perceived as potential delinquents.

Therefore, it can be seen that by pretexting a fight against insecurity, neighbourhood watchers go beyond it, allowing them to define themselves as belonging to the established working classes in the face of the 'socio-racial' danger represented by the most unstable working classes. In those communities of the first group in our typology (Palavas, Valras, Villeneuve-les-Béziers, Sérignan and Montady), these dynamics of preservation of the 'us', and of separation with regard to populations perceived as criminogenic, might be less obvious but are also at work. The preservation of this 'us' against 'them', those social groups perceived negatively, therefore goes beyond the surveillance of criminal acts: the ultimate goal is to target certain groups perceived as criminogenic and external to the locality. In the next chapter the return of vigilance will be linked to the social reaction to migration.

---

[60] Walsh, James. 2014. 'Watchful Citizens: Immigration Control, Surveillance and Societal Participation', Social & Legal Studies, 23(2): pp. 237–59.
[61] Girard, 2017, *ibid*.

4

Vigilantism as a Social Reaction
to Migration

This chapter offers an overview of anti-migrant social movements across Europe and Northern America, exploring how far-right street activism and vigilantism and its use of social media frames immigration as a social threat to the native population. It will address the moral economy of anti-migrant feeling: how immigrants are portrayed and framed by the far right as a social or cultural threat. The chapter will also examine economic discourse since the removal of migrants is often presented as a means to better the economic situation of native citizens in regard to the job market, housing and access to welfare.

Migration related to globalisation is not a new phenomenon, nor are anti-immigration movements. However, what seems relatively new is the scale and scope of the social reaction to immigration on the European continent and in North America. Anti-immigration sentiments emerge as the single most important driver in support for the far right in elections. For sure, the political use of anti-immigrant social reaction has fuelled support for far-right populist parties and leaders. It partly explains the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States of America, the rise of AfD in Germany, the growing political importance of the *Rassemblement National* in France (former *Front National*) as well as the emergence of Vox in Spain. Immigration also played an important part in shaping the outcome of the Brexit referendum.[1]

This chapter intends to better characterise the social reaction to immigration, exploring the political discourses and practices associated with anti-migrant feelings. The starting point will be those actors belonging to the far right, even if it is not possible to reduce social reaction to migration to that political current entirely. To be clear about terms, it is necessary to clarify what 'far right' means from a social science perspective. Unfortunately, this concept is deployed with

[1] Arzheimer, Kai. 2018. 'Explaining Electoral Support for the Radical Right' in Rydgren, Jens (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.

significant variability in the media but also in the social sciences. Nonetheless, it is possible to conceptualise the 'far right' in two ways: the first regarding its intrinsic characteristics, the second in relation to its position with regard to democracy. Cas Mudde's conception is particularly interesting. While finding intrinsic approaches within the scientific literature informative, he points out that every author retains their own set of characteristics and these do not necessarily overlap. In the end, this adds more confusion. In order to try to solve this problem, Mudde adopts a minimal base of intrinsic criteria for the definition of far right, which is strong nativism as well as the desire for an authoritarian remaking of society. He then adds a criterion of relativity: the positioning in relation to liberal democracy. These two approaches allow him to classify the far right into two subgroups. The first is the extreme right, which fundamentally rejects the essence of democratic regimes; the second is the radical right, which accepts the essence of democracy but rejects key elements of liberal democracy, such as the rights of minorities and the rule of law.[2] Radical-right populist parties largely mobilise their electorate by referring to the threat that immigration supposedly poses. For instance, Donald Trump heavily based his 2016 election campaign on the promise of a wall at the Mexican border.

A range of conservative and even far-right social movement actors and organisations frame the issue of migration as a threat to the national community. They reach out and mobilise the public around this issue. These social actors take on the role of moral entrepreneurs[3] and intend to construct immigration as a social and cultural problem needing a 'law and order' response from authorities. According to a recent comparison of anti-migrant social movements in France, Italy, the United States and Israel, these movements present two main forms.[4] The first consists in groups of 'experts' that produce a 'factual' framing of immigration in order to offer 'facts' that challenge the worldview of the mainstream media. These 'experts' produce an intellectual construction of migration as problematic and even threatening, for instance, the surveys carried out by the elected representatives of the *Lega* in Italy and of the think tank Migration Watch UK in the United Kingdom. The latter produces a series of 'alternative statistics' on immigration as well as an observatory of illegal crossings between France and Great Britain.

The second important form of anti-migrant social movement activity comprises vigilantism, whether by groups specifically dedicated to vigilantism or

---

[2] Mudde, Cas. 2000. *The Ideology of the Extreme Right*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
[3] McCarthy, John, Zald, Mayer. 1977. 'Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory'. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82: pp. 1212–41.
[4] Simonneau, Damien, Castelli Gattinara, Pietro. 2019. 'Prendre part aux logiques d'exclusion: Les mobilisations anti-migrants en France, en Italie et aux États-Unis'. *Critique internationale*, 3(3): pp. 105–24.

by social movements incorporating practices derived from vigilantism. Let us be reminded that Sederberg and Rosenbaum[5] distinguished two types of vigilantism. The first is crime control vigilantism: action targeted against specific deviant acts. Far-right activists engage in this type of vigilantism in relation to, for example, sex crime offenders (paedo-hunters in the UK, 'execution' of a refugee accused of rape in Germany). The second type of vigilantism is social group vigilantism. In this case, social groups as a whole may be perceived as 'criminogenic' and threatening the social order. These 'criminogenic' groups can be specific populations (religious or ethnic groups) or social and political movements (strikers, trade unions, the far left, communists). Anti-migrant vigilantism defines migration as illegal in essence: undocumented migrants are perceived and targeted as inherently criminogenic and undesirable.

Furthermore, there is as strong link between social media and contemporary vigilantism. Social media may be used as a platform for acts of spectacular vigilantism, such as patrols and direct action in Calais,[6] or for spectacles of punishment and humiliation, in Russia for example.[7]

Anti-migrant vigilantism as a social movement practice

Anti-migrant social movements must be understood from this perspective. Migration processes from the South to the North give rise to the action of multiple cause entrepreneurs. Their actions range from the constructions of 'expertise' to processes of direct action taking the form of vigilantism. Needless to say, the performative dimension of vigilantism is very important. This consists in direct action: patrols, forcing evacuations of premises occupied by migrants, or even in some cases confrontations with the police, but one must bear in mind that the purpose is above all the creation of images – the spectacle – intended to mobilise opinion via social media.[8] This form of vigilantism is also strongly performative in the sense that it serves the framing of these movements: the existence of vigilantism implies the repression of criminal actions. The very fact that the repertoire of action of social movements takes this particular shape operates a performative shift in the representation of migrants as a social group. From vulnerable people, refugees possibly eligible for asylum, they become a potentially criminal population, not only because of the acts they may commit (sexual violence, theft,

---

[5] Rosenbaum, Jon, Sederberg, Peter. 1976. *Vigilante Politics*. Pittsburg: University of Pennsylvania Press.
[6] Gardenier, Matthijs, Monie, Aymeric. 2018. 'De l'utilisation de Facebook à des fins de mobilisation par le groupe Sauvons Calais', *Communication*, 35(1).
[7] Favarel-Guarrigues, Gilles. 2020. 'Digital Vigilantism and Anti-paedophile Activism in Russia: Between Civic Involvement in Law Enforcement, Moral Policing and Business Venture', *Global Crime*, 21(3–4): pp. 306–26.
[8] Simonneau, Castelli Gattinara, *ibid*.

terrorism), but also in an ontological way: it is the very status of migration that becomes illegal for anti-migrant social movements.

This phenomenon became particularly important in Europe, during the so-called refugee crisis of 2015.[9] Indeed, no sub-region of the European continent was spared: it was present in Central and Eastern Europe, particularly in Russia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. In Eastern Europe, the actions of these sometimes-paramilitary groups ranged from street patrols to extra-judicial executions and bomb attacks targeting Roma and refugees. The phenomenon is also present in Southern Europe with the *Fuerza Nova* patrols in Italy and in Greece with *Golden Dawn*, a militia-party whose activists did not hesitate to kill migrants and political opponents. This phenomenon could be found in Western Europe, notably in Calais, France, where vigilantes patrolled the edges of the jungle to 'protect the locals', and in Britain where *Britain First* activists organised 'Christian patrols' in neighbourhoods populated by Muslim immigrants. The phenomenon seems to be particularly developed in Germany, with numerous groups, as well as large-scale demonstrations, particularly in Chemnitz, as well as arson attacks and extra-judicial executions (for instance that of former Prefect Walter Lübcke in June 2019). Scandinavia has also been the scene of the development of *Odin's Soldiers*, a group partly stemming from the biker community, which rapidly became international with chapters in 21 countries.[10]

These groups present similarities. First of all, they belong or stem from the far right, even if they are not all linked to a specific political party. In general, their membership has been relatively small: from a few dozen to a few hundred members. These groups stage their vigilante actions so as to take advantage of the development of a decline in trust in established institutions, as well as the existence of a strong anti-immigrant sentiment in public opinion. This also reveals one of the keys to the sustainability of the action of these groups. Not only do they need to find a favourable echo within public opinion, but they also require some degree of toleration by local authorities. When authorities decided to crack down on these groups, as is the case in Russia after 2014, or in Greece after the assassination of the anti-fascist rapper Pavlos Fyssas in 2013, the action of the vigilante groups became significantly impacted and even nullified. This underscores the importance of the state's attitude towards groups which may potentially threaten its monopoly of legitimate violence.[11]

These movement draw a particular, binary vision of the world: the figure of 'them', of migrants, is often presented as the figure of the absolute enemy. Migrants, who are depicted as a criminogenic population, are in fact framed as an ontological

[9] Bjørgo, Tore, Mareš, Miroslav (eds). 2019. *Vigilantism against Migrants and Minorities*, London: Routledge.
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] *Ibid.*

threat: it is the very core identity of the national community that is endangered by migratory phenomena. In the case of the anti-migrant collectives in Calais, it is the city of Calais that is threatened with permanent cultural change. Indeed, for groups anchored in the locality, the reference to a local identity is very important because it allows the vigilante groups to establish territorial anchorage. Thus, in the face of the danger supposedly posed by migration, vigilante groups propose to restore a weakened local (and national) identity that has supposedly dissolved. It is interesting to note that the community that activists intend to recover does not intend to solicit all the members of a locality, but only those who are determined to act, constituting a community through political action.[12]

Be that as it may, anti-migrant groups oppose not only migrants, who are seen as a danger external to the national community, but also those who give succour to migrants (e.g. the supposedly lax public authorities accused of organising the reception of migrants). Anti-migrant groups demand security and the repression of migration. Thus, the main demand of *Sauvons Calais* was the confinement of all migrants in a closed camp, to be followed by their expulsion. While the government is criticised, the authorities are not conceived as an absolute and irredeemable enemy. This is not the case with anti-racist movements, however. They are portrayed as the absolute enemy of the nation. The more radical tendencies within these movements such as 'antifa', 'No Borders' or the 'Black Lives Matter' movement are all the more abhorred, sometimes even more so than the migrants themselves.[13]

The staging of vigilante practices such as naval patrols (Defend Europe), securing borders (Minuteman on the US-Mexico border, Defend Europe in the Alps and Pyrenees), or direct action against places occupied by migrants or migrants themselves as in Calais or Germany[14] constitute acts of vigilantism whose dimension is mainly performative and aimed at social media. This allows us to categorise a whole series of actions by vigilantes as belonging to the category of spectacular social media vigilantism.

These acts are performative and spectacular in the sense that their purpose is above all *symbolic*: intended to reveal in an immediate and highly visual way the idea that the authorities are failing to secure borders and that concerned citizens are trying to make this failure visible within the public space constituted by social media. This visual staging is intended to influence the imaginary of the audience and thus generate support: this spectacular dimension makes it possible to attain greater visibility. Even though anti-migrant groups often bring together

---

[12] Gardenier, Monie, *ibid.*

[13] Gardenier, Matthijs. 2020. 'Calais: Le rapport ambigu à la violence des groupes anti-migrants' in Jacques, Walter, Fleury, Béatrice (eds), *Violences et radicalités militantes dans l'espace public en France des années 1980 à nos jours*. Paris: Editions Riveneuve.

[14] Quent, Matthias. 2016 'Vigilantistischer Terrorismus', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 66: pp. 24–5.

small numbers of activists,[15] the use of spectacular tactics from the new social movements described by Alain Touraine[16] effects greater impact even when they are not able to conjure the numbers supposed to show the importance of 'classical' social movements theorised by Charles Tilly.[17] This reference to NGOs is even claimed by groups such as Generation Identity, which claims to act as 'whistleblowers in the same way as NGOs such as Greenpeace'.[18]

These practices of vigilantism aimed at social media are most often non-violent and constitute above all performances in the sense that Tilly gave to the term. Nevertheless, this is not always the case and acts of violence may occur. These acts can be covert, and manifest as 'halo' violence, that is to say, they occur without constituting the core of practices. But vigilante violence can in some cases be directly undertaken by the members of vigilante groups. This has been the case in Germany, for example: the vigilantes of the FTL/360 group executed migrants perceived as criminals, or the terrorist cell Gruppe S, which emerged from the vigilante group *Bruderschaft Deutschland*.[19]

Moreover, the phenomenon of anti-migrant vigilantism is far from being limited to the European continent: it also exists in the United States of America. Indeed, in this country the state monopolisation of legitimate violence is less strong than in Europe. Vigilantism and militias are common in the US, benefitting to some extent from the legal protection offered by the US Constitution's Second Amendment. The conservative counter-movement that has been developing since the election of Barack Obama, and which culminated in the election of Trump in 2016, is embodied in a series of militia groups, some of which were involved in the Capitol riots on 6 January 2021.[20]

In the United States, anti-migrant vigilantism has primarily developed on the Mexican border with, for example, the Minute Men Project launched by Jim Gilchrist and Chris Simcox in 2005. Harel Shapira's work paints a picture of militias being made up of middle-aged men, often veterans of the various wars fought by the United States. They furthered the military community they experienced in combat through their involvement in motorised patrols on the Mexican border – putting pressure on the Border Patrol to increase its numbers. These demands were partially met by a surge in the numbers of Border Patrol personnel under

---

[15] This is the case for most of the recent anti-migrant vigilantism in Europe. However, there are some exceptions in which anti-migrant movements are able to draw significant numbers such as the Chemnitz demonstrations in 2018 (Koehler, *ibid.*).

[16] Neveu, Eric. 2011. *Sociologie des mouvements sociaux*. Paris: La Découverte.

[17] Tilly, Charles, Wood, Lesley. 2009. *Social Movements, 1768–2008*. New York: Paradigm.

[18] 'Dissolution de Génération Identitaire: Ce que l'on sait du groupe d'extrême droite' [Online: https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/dissolution-de-generation-identitaire-ce-que-l-on-sait-du-groupe-d-extreme-droite_2144864.html] Accessed 9 March 2022.

[19] Koehler, Daniel. 2019. 'Anti-immigration Militias and Vigilante Groups in Germany: An Overview', in Bjørgo, Tore, Mareš, Miroslav (eds), *Vigilantism against Migrants and Minorities*. London: Routledge.

[20] ACLED & Militia Watch. 2020. *Standing By: Right Wing Militia Groups & the US Election*, Joint Report.

George Bush and, above all, by Donald Trump's attempts to build a wall on the Mexican border.[21] Damien Simonneau's work shows that border vigilantes knew how to revitalise themselves and invest in cybersecurity, notably through the use of drones.[22] These forms of vigilantism in the United States are also part of a process in which the authorities involve citizens in the surveillance of migratory processes. For example, the State of Texas has set up a Virtual Border Watch Patrol: Texans are invited to log on to a website to monitor cameras placed at strategic points on the border and report to the authorities any crossings of the border by migrants. James Walsh sees these developments, which involve the whole population in the production of security policies, as the advent of a society of 'watchful citizens', of which autonomous vigilante groups are only one modality,[23] a view shared by the political scientist Vanessa Codaccioni.[24]

Vigilantism against migrants and minorities is not unique to Europe and the United States. The phenomenon can also be found on the Indian subcontinent where far-right vigilantism is a significant phenomenon. Atreyee Sen's work on the Shiv Sena movement in the Bombay region provides a detailed ethnography of the phenomenon. Sen shows how the involvement of women in these groups allows for both a revaluation of their collective and individual identity, but also for rewards, such as access to a solidarity network to alleviate the poverty experienced by the vigilantes in the slums of Mumbai. The targets of the Shiv Sena were initially poor migrants from the South of India, before aligning themselves with the BJP and claiming an attachment to Hinduism, and directing vigilantism against Muslim minorities. The vigilantism of these groups also presents an economic dimension: it aims to exclude Muslims from access to housing and certain jobs in order to reserve them for Hindus.[25]

Political and moral economy of the social reaction to migration

In an attempt to understand these social reactions to migratory processes, political science hypothesises the emergence of a new cleavage around the question of the integration or not of nation-states within transnational political spaces and

[21] Shapira, Harel. 2013. *Waiting for José: The Minutemen's Pursuit of America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

[22] Simonneau, Damien. 2018. 'Militer pour murer la frontière: Les acteurs pro« barrière » d'Israël et d'Arizona (États-Unis)' in Dubet, François (ed.), *Politiques des frontières*. Paris: La Découverte.

[23] Walsh, James. 2014. 'Watchful Citizens: Immigration Control, Surveillance and Societal Participation', *Social & Legal Studies*, 23(2): pp. 237–59.

[24] Codaccioni, Vanessa. 2020. *La société de vigilance: Autosurveillance, délation et haines sécuritaires*. Paris: Textuel.

[25] Sen, Atreyee. 2007. *Shiv Sena Women: Violence and Communalism in a Bombay Slum*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

more broadly the globalisation process. Strong reactions to migration, particularly from the Global South to the North, are to be understood in this perspective.

Yet the debate on migration can also be interrogated through the historical genesis of assistance to the destitute. Since the end of the Middle Ages, in Western Europe, as far as the destitute is concerned, i.e. those who have no property or stable employment position, assistance was conditional on prior membership of the community. Indeed, it is important to note that social reactions to migration are strongly influenced by this dimension. Let us be reminded that migratory flows between European countries and the United States or from rich countries such as Japan do not arouse the same passions as migration coming from the Global South. The process of migration is more sensitive when the people that migrate are without property or employment, which raises the question of their assistance.

A new political cleavage around globalisation?

The relationship to globalisation sheds new light on the social reaction to migration. This relationship can be approached through the theory of political cleavages.

As formalised by Peter Mair,[26] a political cleavage is a form of social conflict which has three distinct elements: a conjunction between ideological values and representations, an opposition along the lines of structural interests, and finally the existence of organisations (institutions, parties, social movements) which mobilise along the lines of this cleavage. According to a recent seven country research,[27] the main political cleavage in Western societies during the 20th century was between the right and the left, according to a class divide. But these fault lines have now become more complex with the emergence of another major cleavage around the issue of globalisation. The development of economic globalisation, but also of transnational institutions of which the European Union is the best example, brought this issue to prominence. On the one hand, there are those who favour further integration of nation-states within transnational institutions, as well as the development of international free trade: the camp of 'cosmopolitans'. On the other hand, there are those opposed to this integration, favouring political management of most of the problems at the national level: the 'communitarian' camp. This cleavage would explain the recent successes of various populist politics around the world: the election of Donald Trump in the United States, Brexit in the United Kingdom, success of the far-right populist parties in France (RN) and in Germany (AfD), and even *a priori* unnatural alliances between the left-wing

---

[26] Mair, Peter. 2006. 'Cleavages' in Katz, Richard S., Crotty, William (eds), *Handbook of Party Politics*. London: SAGE Publications.
[27] De Wilde, Pieter, Koopmans, Ruud, Merkel, Wolfgang, Strijbis, Oliver, Zürn, Michael. 2019. *The Struggle Over Borders: Cosmopolitanism and Communitarianism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

party Syriza and the independent right (ANEL) in Greece between 2015 and 2019. Research suggests that 'communitarians' would mainly appeal to the working classes of these countries whose members would be less equipped in social and cultural capital, leading to difficult adaption to the economic and social conditions brought about by the process of globalisation.[28]

A significant political cleavage around globalisation seems to have emerged in the countries in which the surveys have been conducted. However, the data highlighting the variation in attitudes towards different themes such as migration, free trade and even climate change show that the cleavage between the left and the right remains persistent. Thus, the populist parties strongly opposed to immigration or to the European Union will not necessarily oppose neoliberal reforms and international trade. On the contrary, certain leftist groups will oppose certain aspects of globalisation such as neoliberal reforms driven by the EU or the IMF, but stand resolutely in favour of opening borders regarding immigration. Accordingly, this new cleavage around the question of globalisation and transnational integration opposed to national sovereignty is superimposed on the classic right–left divide. One of the consequences of that is the emergence of a political space allowing the far right in its radical right form (more moderate than the extreme right wing) to mobilise around the issues of borders, migration and national sovereignty opposed to transnational integration, and yet appeal more to 'communitarian' (working-class) voters.

This political space is filled by different parties in Europe and North America: FN, AfD, Geert Wilders' Vrijheid, Lega and Fratelli d'Italia in Italy, Fidesz and Jobbik in Hungary, Trump in the US, xenophobic parties in Scandinavia, and so on. In countries where the far right has not been able to structure itself and find durable political form, such as Britain, this political space exists nonetheless as shown by the results of the Brexit referendum.

According to economists Bruno Amable and Stefano Palombarini, the evolution of the French political landscape can be explained by the development of this cleavage between communitarians and cosmopolitans. The neoliberal and pro-European positioning of the *Parti Socialiste* and the policies of the liberal right have alienated part of the traditional support base of these two blocs (workers and employees for the left and independent workers for the right), leading to electoral marginalisation.[29] What the authors call the *bourgeois* bloc is centred around the person of Emmanuel Macron, who is simultaneously positioned on the side of the well-to-do classes on the left–right divide with the implementation of neoliberal policies and on the cosmopolitan side with a very strong alignment in favour of European integration. The coalition around this bloc is a social minority, bringing

[28] *Ibid.*
[29] Amable, Bruno, Palombarini, Stephane. 2017. *L'illusion du bloc bourgeois: Alliances sociales et avenir du modèle français*. Paris: Raisons d'agir.

together middle class and the urban upper classes (the cosmopolitan profile). On the other hand, there is a 'sovereigntist' pole divided by the left–right divide. This 'communitarian' political space struggles to find its coherence: the left is crossed by the divide, while the radical right attracts part of the working class, independents and small businesspeople but without managing to ever be in a position to win the election because of the divisive character of its politics and the weight of history. The juxtaposition of both cleavages, causing a situation of deadlock, would be an explanatory factor behind the political crisis in most of the major Western democracies: the US, France, Great Britain (Brexit), Germany, Italy. However, the superimposition of cleavages has different impacts according to the party systems and modes of suffrage.[30]

It is in this political context that the issue of migration has risen to prominence. The communitarians mobilise two types of discourse. First, they refer to the contours of the people, understood as *ethnos*. These currents oppose migration from the position of the racial and cultural homogeneity of the 'nations that are under attack'. The second is not so much based on the question of the social cohesion of the nation as on the question of flows and border control. These currents call for a reaffirmation of national sovereignty through an act of control over migratory flows – if possible symbolised by a visual securitarian device like the wall promised by Donald Trump at the Mexican border.[31]

Who is eligible for assistance? Understanding the rejection of migration through social history

An important element of the rejection of immigration is access to jobs and social benefits, which migrants are supposed to deny to nationals in a form of unfair competition. Thus, a very important discursive argument of anti-migrant social movements in Britain is the opposition between veterans who are often deprived, and migrants who would be entitled to numerous benefits and accommodation upon arrival. In France, anti-migrant groups frequently contrast the figure of the French homeless who struggle to find accommodation with that of migrants. Opposition to immigration is thereby posed in relation to the idea of social justice: that those perceived as outside the community may have potentially better access to support mechanisms than nationals, which is a powerful driver of engagement with far-right groups.[32]

A deeper understanding can be reached by looking back at the historical process of the development of welfare in Western European societies. According

---

[30] *Ibid*.
[31] Rasmussen, Michael. 2019. *La contre-révolution de Trump*. Paris: Divergences.
[32] Pilkington, Hilary. 2016. *Loud and Proud: Passion and Politics in the English Defence League*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

to Robert Castel, who theorises the process of social disaffiliation, traditional societies – whether urban or rural – were societies of orders and guilds. There was a system of benefits from institutions and mechanisms of solidarity for those who had absolutely nothing, but on the condition that they belonged to the local community. Thus, many laws in the 16th century in France and Britain made assistance conditional on residence in the locality. Conversely, the vagrant, the destitute outside of community ties, was seen as both criminal and undesirable. As Castel notes, from a strictly Marxist point of view, the vagrant is the proletarian par excellence because he had no social ties, no possessions and only had his arms to work with. However, in a traditional society where the ties of patronage, family and corporation ordered social life, this figure of the 'proletarian' was still defined as a social threat.[33] It is in this perspective the great confinement of the poor described by Foucault must be understood.[34] From the end of the 16th century to the 19th century, unemployed vagrants were captured and locked up in hospices in France and workhouses in Britain and subjected to forced labour and, in some cases, corporal punishment.

This distinction, determining who is eligible for assistance, still persists. With the process of industrialisation, wage labour developed. In the 20th century, with the establishment of the welfare state, the social status of wage labour was revalued as it generated social guarantees (health insurance, unemployment insurance, pensions). Nevertheless, regarding the claim to benefits, the figure of the foreigner to the community always remained suspect. It is in this perspective that social reactions to immigration must be understood. Across the globe, as industrial development and the rural exodus continued, it uprooted and threw millions of people onto the roads. There were often violent reactions to the latest arrivals – disaffiliated from their communities – lacking social capital and often reduced to assistance or to the most precarious forms of work. This context explains anti-immigration movements. In France, this process was to be found first against migrants from the interior uprooted by the rural exodus, then against European immigration – we can cite the example of the deadly riots in Aigues Mortes where several dozen Italians were murdered in 1893 – and then, from the Second World War onwards, against migrant workers from the colonies of the Empire.[35]

At each stage of this migration process, migrants were racialised as belonging to another 'race'. Thus, in France, during the 19th century, many racist pamphlets described southern inhabitants of France as racially inferior to the northern French. In the following phase of immigration, Italians were similarly described.[36]

---

[33] Castel, Robert. 1999. *Les métamorphoses de la question sociale*. Paris: Folio.
[34] Foucault, Michel. 1993. *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*. Paris: Gallimard.
[35] Noiriel, Gérard. 2018. *Une histoire populaire de la France: De la guerre de Cent Ans à nos jours*. Marseille: Agone.
[36] *Ibid.*

After the Second World War it was the non-European immigrants that became the target of violent racist reactions. In India, the Shiv Sena, a violently xenophobic regionalist party in the Mumbai region, presents similar dimensions. The action of women organised in a vigilante group aims to reserve a certain number of jobs and resources for people, defending the regional identity of the Mumbai province to the detriment of internal migrants from southern India: Tamil Nadu, but also Muslims.[37] This process of communal protection and rejection varies from time to time, but according to Castel, the indigent perceived as foreign to the local or national outside community will be rejected and persecuted.[38] According to Noiriel,[39] processes of ethnicisation and racialisation becomes superimposed on this phenomenon: the political community, in designating a social group as foreign and ontologically inferior by assigning them to another racial category, legitimises the process of rejection. Historically, the targets of this process shift: some groups can be rehabilitated and gain acceptance and place. For instance, the Irish minority in the US underwent this process,[40] escaping this process of racist assignment as members of the Irish minority became increasingly integrated in the economy.

While some of these structures of discrimination of the indigent outside the community belong to history, the core scheme seems to persist nowadays, even though its form may vary. This dimension can be found in surveys based on testing how far access to housing in France is subject to racist discrimination. The results of one survey in the private-owned housing sector show that discrimination on a racial basis exists in the housing sector independently of income levels: an application with a North African name will have a lower response rate than one with a 'native' name, whatever the income level. However, the refusal rate will vary enormously: for low incomes (minimum wage) the difference between 'French' and 'North African' names will vary much more (40 per cent) than for higher incomes, where the difference is only 10 per cent. This discrimination can be explained, in our opinion, by the persistence of assistance being conditional on membership of the community (in this case the national community). Even if racial discrimination exists for high-income applications, the gap widens when incomes fall and families get closer to the realm of assistance.[41]

Regarding eligibility for assistance, the rejection of people with 'out-of-community' status is, of course, not specific to the far right. To some extent, ever since the development of industrial modernity, it has characterised the social dynamics of welfare and the labour market. The far right's political appropriation of

[37] Sen, *ibid*.
[38] Castel, *ibid*.
[39] Noiriel, *ibid*.
[40] Ignatiev, Noel. 2008. *How the Irish Became White*. New York: Routledge.
[41] Le Gallo, Julie, L'Horty, Yannick, Du Parquet, Loic, Petit, Pascale. 2017. *Les discriminations dans l'acces au logement en France:Un testing de couverture nationale*. Report, no. 2017–11. Paris: TEPP.

anti-immigration rhetoric was not always central to its ideology. It came relatively late in the political history of this current. For example, initially, the campaigns of the French far right targeted Jews, Freemasons, socialists and communists – all social, political or ethnic minorities accused of threatening the national body,[42] but they did not specifically target non-European immigration. Similarly, in the US, the Ku Klux Klan, the only fascist mass organisation in this country according to Robert Paxton,[43] was founded first as a social group vigilantism targeting African Americans – not migrants given that the presence of African Americans in the US is the result of forced deportations. It was only the second Ku Klux Klan that broadened its focus to include Jews and Catholic immigrants in the 1920s. In Britain, post-colonial immigration did not become an issue for the far right until the 1950s.[44] In France, it was not until the 1970s that immigration became an important issue for the far right. In 1973, the neo-fascist movement *Ordre Nouveau* was dissolved after massive clashes with leftist groups during a meeting 'against savage immigration', while in Marseille a vigilante campaign against immigration resulted in several murders.[45]

It is also worth drawing from the economic theory of the golf club to understand the discourse of the far right regarding immigration. This economic theory, as developed by James Buchanan,[46] conceives of certain collective goods, such as a golf clubs, as having an optimal number of users. Thus, in the example of a golf club, if there are too few members, the price of the membership fee to maintain the lawns and all the infrastructure will be exorbitant. Conversely, if there are too many members, if the cost of membership fees falls sharply, the quality of the service will deteriorate as a consequence: the golf courses become over-used and the overall quality of access to the asset decreases. This type of collective goods must therefore find an optimal number of users, enough to support the common costs of maintenance, but not too many, in order to maintain an optimal quality of service.

In this perspective, the far right presents immigration from a discourse that is akin to the theory of the golf club. The nation is a communitarian asset similar to a golf club. Its current state would be characterised by overpopulation with deleterious effects. In this perspective, immigrants would be the supernumeraries. The pressure related to supernumeraries would be exerted on the labour market and on the social benefits system. For several far-right parties, unemployment as well as the deficits of the various social security systems are

[42] Sternhell, Zeev. 1978. *La droite révolutionnaire. 1885–1914: Les origines françaises du fascisme.* Paris: Le Seuil.
[43] Paxton, Robert. 2004. *Le fascisme en action*. Paris: Le Seuil.
[44] Macklin, Graham. 2019. *Failed Führers: A History of Britain's Extreme Right*. London: Routledge.
[45] Gastaut, Yves. 1993. 'La flambée raciste de 1973 en France', *Revue européenne des migrations internationales*, 9(2): pp. 61–75.
[46] Buchanan, James. 1965. 'An Economic Theory of Clubs', *Economica*, 32(125): pp. 1–14.

explained by this overpopulation. Thus, the French *Front National* conducted many campaigns from the 1970s to the 1990s on this theme, using the slogan '3 million unemployed = 3 million immigrants'. Similarly, the *Front National's* 2012 manifesto explained the deficit of the French social security system by the existence of several million false healthcare access accounts. In Britain, the perceived competition between natives and immigrants for social housing seems to be a powerful driver of engagement in far-right social movements such as the English Defence League.[47]

This concept offers an important explanation for anti-immigrant sentiment. It not only labels this population as responsible for the economic difficulties of 'nationals'. Its strength is that it also holds out the promise of social upgrading if the pressure exerted by non-nationals is removed. For the sections of the working classes attracted by the discourse of the far right, stopping immigration holds out the promise of being revalued as citizens belonging to the national community. If the labour market and access to benefits are like a golf club, the exclusion of immigrants holds out the promise of easier access to employment, higher wages and better access to health care, social housing and social benefits. Hannah Arendt pointed out that one of the elements of Nazism's appeal to the German working class was the promise of a significant upgrading of the symbolic and economic status linked to belonging to the German national (and racial) body.[48]

Similarly, the slogan 'Make America Great Again' as espoused by Donald Trump should be understood in the same way: the construction of the border wall was supposed to protect American workers from the competition of Latin American immigrants. At the same time, economic protectionist measures were supposed to allow the return of jobs that had been moved overseas – revaluing the economic condition of the white American working class all the more, presenting the nation as being protected from the ravages of economic globalisation.[49]

However, the rejection of immigration can not only be explained by economic factors, and as Cas Mudde pointed out, several far-right actors have also extensively used arguments based on identity, allowing both discourses on economic and identitarian arguments to co-exist.[50] One of the main theories based on identity is that of the 'Great Replacement'. That theory was put forward in 2010 by the French far-right writer Renaud Camus. According to this author, the migratory flows that Western countries are experiencing should be understood in the light of a dark plan, or even a plot, by 'multicultural elites' leading to the possible extinction of Western civilisation. 'Western values' would be slowly replaced by Islamic values, while the populations would also be biologically replaced with the

---

[47] Pilkington, *ibid*.
[48] Arendt, Hannah. 1951. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co.
[49] Rasmussen, *ibid*.
[50] Mudde, Cas. 2019. *The Far Right Today*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

extinction of the 'indigenous' people. The cosmopolitan left-wing elites would be the accomplices and even the active agents of this replacement.[51]

Native populations would be threatened with extinction which only energetic action would be able to reverse, leading some researchers to consider that there is a direct link between this theory and the use of political violence. Some political groups endorsing the theory of the Great Replacement even consider that the only solution would be 'remigration', i.e. the forced displacement of immigrant populations to their countries of origin. It should be noted that this theory, promoted by far right-groups, particularly the Identitarian movement, has also led to terrorist acts, the most emblematic of which is that of Brendon Tarrant, who killed 51 Muslims on 15 March 2019 in Christchurch. The latter, a major financial contributor to the Identitarian campaign 'Defend Europe', explained his action in a manifesto entitled 'The Great Replacement'.[52]

One of the main groups focusing on identity issues is the Identitarian movement, which is present in several European countries (France, Britain, Germany, Austria, etc.). Focusing its discourse on the supposed civilisational threat posed by Islam and taking up the theses of the Great Replacement, the identitarians intend to form an activist community based on action. These are mainly stunts targeting Islam or immigration. Staged for social networks, these actions are intended to strike the spirits with their spectacular character, often entering the repertoire of 'spectacle vigilantism'. Thus, the *Identitaires* have carried out actions such as the hanging of a 'White Lives Matter' banner during an anti-racist demonstration in Paris in 2020 or security patrols on public transport as well as the occupation of a mosque in Poitiers in 2012. The *Defend Europe* campaign has been the most mediatised illustration of this: the chartering of a boat to 'intercept' migrants in the Mediterranean Sea and actions of blocking and patrolling the borders in the French Alps and Pyrenees. It was these actions that led to the dissolution of the *Generation Identitaire* group by French authorities in the spring of 2021.

Conclusion

To conclude, social reaction to migration and particularly vigilantism against migration can be understood through several approaches. The first concerns the entrepreneurs of this reaction. More than the major electoral parties of the radical

[51] Bancel, Nicolas, Blanchard, Pascal, Boubeker, Ahmed. 2015. 'Les réactionnaires médiatiques: De la théorie du déclin à celle du « grand remplacement »' in Bancel, Nicolas, Blanchard, Pascal, Boubeker, Ahmed (eds), *Le grand repli*. Paris: La Découverte.
[52] Obaidi, Milan, Kunst, Jonas, Ozer, Simon, Kimel, Sasha. 2021. 'The "Great Replacement" Conspiracy: How the Perceived Ousting of Whites Can Evoke Violent Extremism and Islamophobia', *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*. doi:10.1177/13684302211028293

right, specific actors comprise the entrepreneurs of reaction: groups producing 'alternative' knowledge and, above all, social movements practising vigilantism. Indeed, the staging of patrols and border surveillance interventions seems to be essential to the political constitution of these movements, because it allows an immediate framing of the migratory phenomenon not as a matter of assistance to vulnerable people, but as a reaction to a social danger to the national community. Spectacular vigilantism, communicated through social media, produces an immediate image of the phenomenon and makes migratory flows visible in an attempt to frame a powerful narrative opposed to those discourses advocating the reception of migrants. The use of vigilantism thus becomes a powerful element of the far right's repertoire of action, whose discourse, according to Rasmussen, follows the example of Donald Trump's use of social media.[53]

The second approach conceptualises the importance of the resonance and attention that social movements against immigration receive through an understanding of the political factors of its context. Research has shown the importance of new political issues. Some even consider that a new cleavage similar to the left–right cleavage of the 19th and 20th centuries has emerged: the opposition between cosmopolitans and communitarians around globalisation and transnational circulation processes. The advocates of cosmopolitan internationalism and universalism face the defenders of national communities and of a sovereign nation-state offering protection at the economic and social level. This opposition crosses the left–right spectrum and particularly favours the electoral expression of support for parties belonging to the radical right. The relationship with immigration is particularly important in the construction of this political space because it enables activation of the feeling of a community in the face of a migrant flow that should not be assisted as they are foreign to the national community. To this extent, the exclusion of migrants from the labour market, but above all from the benefits of the welfare state, promises recovery of community through the exclusion of the other. To those whose social status is threatened by contemporary neoliberal policies, it also offers the promise of becoming revalued as a member of the nation, with privileged access to employment, housing and social benefits.

---

[53] Rasmussen, *ibid.*

5

Anti-migrant Groups in Calais:
the Spectacle of Vigilance

Since the start of the 2000s, the city of Calais has become an important crossroads for migratory flows across Europe. After the Touquet agreements between France and the United Kingdom,[1] border controls are no longer carried out in Dover, but in Calais, France. This had the consequence of generating a situation where hundreds or even thousands of refugees found themselves stuck in Calais waiting for an opportunity to pass through the border. Alaux describes these refugees as a population 'in storage'.[2] They are very often left without resources and live in makeshift camps called *jungles* (from the Iranian word *djangal*, which means forest[3]). Living conditions are very harsh, and the *jungles* are regularly evicted by the French police. Refugees reside there for months or even years before getting a chance to cross the border, hiding in lorries or using small boats.

After the Arab revolutions of 2011, the number of refugees increased. After 2015, which saw an influx of migrants throughout Europe, the number of refugees in Calais increased to reach about 10,000 in 2016, concentrated in the Jules Ferry jungle.[4] This giant makeshift camp was closed down in November 2016 and its occupants sent to CAOs (Reception and Orientation Centres) throughout France. Since then, the situation in Calais, although less publicised, has remained similar but law enforcement officers have dislodged any new settlement swiftly, a situation denounced by NGOs such as Amnesty International.[5]

---

[1] Wannesson, Philippe. 2015. 'Une Europe des jungles', *Plein droit*, 104: pp. 18–21.
[2] Alaux, Jean-Pierre. 'Calais vaut bien quelques requiem', *Plein droit*, 104: pp. 3–8.
[3] Pette, Mathilde. 2016. 'Venir en aide aux migrants dans le Calaisis: Entre action associative locale et crise migratoire internationale', *Savoir/Agir*, 36(2): pp. 47–52.
[4] 'Le nombre de migrants dans la « jungle » de Calais n'a jamais été aussi élevé' [Online: https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2016/08/19/le-nombre-de-migrants-dans-la-jungle-de-calais-n-a-jamais-ete-aussi-eleve_4985171_3224.html] Accessed 23 November 2018.
[5] 'Migrants: Un rapport d'Amnesty International accuse la police de harceler les bénévoles' [Online: https://www.lavoixdunord.fr/593710/article/2019-06-05/un-rapport-d-amnesty-international-accuse-la-police-d-intimider-les-benevoles] Accessed 6 June 2019.

A complex political game

This situation has caused strong reactions from the population of Calais. Rather than a wholesale rejection of migrants, it has polarised the public in two directions. From a humanist perspective, one side positions itself in favour of helping and welcoming the refugees. On the other side, there is hostile reaction. These two stances have been quite intense and have even led to confrontations. A very complex political game has developed around this issue. Five main political actors can be distinguished in this conflict:

1   The first is the French state. Under the direction of the Prefecture of Pas-de-Calais, a dedicated police force has been permanently stationed in Calais and its surroundings. These forces control the surroundings of the border in order to prevent crossings and also manage squats and temporary camps, leading very often to eviction. There are very violent interactions with migrants and No Border activists.[6] Clashes are frequent and many NGOs have singled out police officers for repeated violence.[7] Moreover, the policies of the French state work under a double constraint. As a result of the Touquet agreements, the French state has an obligation to block passage to the United Kingdom. On the other hand, it is not legally possible for French authorities to expel migrants who often come from countries at war. As a result, this double constraint gives rise to a situation where many refugees find themselves trapped in Calais.

2   The local elected officials are mainly represented by the team of Natacha Bouchart, mayor of Calais (LR) since 2008. These officials have little room to effect policy change. Nevertheless, the mayor of Calais can achieve significant media impact. It was her denunciation of squats occupied by refugees that led to the creation of *Sauvons Calais*.

3   Humanitarian charities. These, such as Salam, MSF, Solid'R and *La vie active*, provide immediate aid to migrants: tents, clothes, shoes, but also meals. Their contribution allows the migrants to survive but remains insufficient to ensure decent living conditions.

4   The pro-refugee social movement. This is distinct from humanitarian charities as it places itself in a dynamic of collective struggle and encourages for self-organisation of migrants. Its objective is to secure decent living conditions for the migrants in the jungles and help the crossing of refugees through collective action. It has several components, such as No Border, is present in the

---

[6] 'France: Les migrants et les demandeurs d'asile victimes de violence et démunis', Human Rights Watch [Online: https://www.hrw.org/fr/news/2015/01/20/france-les-migrants-et-les-demandeurs-das ile-victimes-de-violence-et-demunis] Accessed 29 July 2016.
[7] *Ibid*.

jungles, and brings together activists from several European countries, such as the Calais Migrants Solidarity[8] group.

5   Anti-migrant movements. These claim to be 'citizen' groups even though they are close to the far right politically. There have been two main groups, *Sauvons Calais* and *Calaisiens en Colère*.

Natacha Bouchart, mayor of Calais, published on her personal Facebook page in November 2013 a call to the citizens of Calais. It asked them to list and report houses and dwellings occupied by refugees to the authorities in order to expel them.[9] This call to police the situation through vigilantism was heard beyond the mayor's initial expectations.

Sauvons Calais, an 'apolitical' collective, defining itself as a group of 'concerned citizens', was formed to respond to this call. Its aim was to map migrant camps and alert public opinion. The apolitical character of the group quickly became questioned when media revealed that Kévin Rêche, the spokesperson, has a swastika tattoo on his chest.[10] In reality, the group was close to the far right, especially the *Parti de la France*, a right-wing split from the *Rassemblement National* (formerly the *Front National*). Kévin Rêche was also present on the lists presented by this party for the local elections of March 2015.[11] During the summer of 2015, a new group appeared, *Les Calaisiens en Colère*. While claiming to be apolitical, its spokespersons had connections with the *Rassemblement National* and *Generation Identitaire*.[12]

These groups in Calais emerged in a particular political context, that of a border zone. This border is not the frontier of 19th-century American vigilantism where the state was distant and ineffective. On the contrary, this is a frontier where the presence of the French state is obvious both in terms of manpower, with several thousand police officers on the ground, but also in terms of an extremely developed physical security system (walls and fences), financed by the United Kingdom.[13] This situation of crisis, which partly explains the emergence of these

[8] No Border. 2015. 'Des No Border sans frontière', *Plein droit*, 104: pp. 3–8.

[9] 'Migrants: Un message de Natacha Bouchart crée le buzz sur Facebook' [Online: http://www.nordl ittoral.fr/fait-divers-justice/migrants-un-message-de-natacha-bouchart-cree-le-buzz-sur-ia6b0n26 840] Accessed 30 September 2017.

[10] 'FN: Marine Le Pen en photo avec Kévin Reche, le porte parole de "Sauvons Calais" au tatouage nazi' [Online: http://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/hauts-de-france/2014/03/11/fn-marine-le-pen-en-photo-avec-kevin-reche-le-porte-parole-de-sauvons-calais-au-tatouage-nazi-430961.html] Accessed 24 August 2017.

[11] 'Histoire de l'extrême droite à Calais' [Online: http://www.psmigrants.org/site/histoire-de-lextreme-droite-a-calais/] Accessed 6 June 2019.

[12] 'Calais: Les Calaisiens en colère, collectif « apolitique », a rassemblé 300 personnes' [Online: https://www.lavoixdunord.fr/archive/recup/region/calais-les-calaisiens-en-colere-collectif-apolitique-ia3 3b48581n3083793] Accessed 6 June 2019.

[13] 'Le mur « anti-intrusions » de la rocade de Calais est achevé' [Online: https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2016/12/13/le-mur-anti-intrusions-de-la-rocade-de-calais-est-acheve_5047836_3224. html] Accessed 9 April 2020.

groups, is therefore not linked to the absence of the state. This rules out explaining the emergence of the groups in Calais by a lack of action and presence of public authorities. On the contrary, it is the consequence of French public policies, carried out in a vigorous manner, which arouses the anger of these groups. Indeed, the action of authorities consists in deploying police forces to secure the border between France and Great Britain and thus prevent migrants from leaving the territory. The presence of migrants is therefore the consequence of this securitisation policy since refugees have no other choice than to remain in Calais while waiting for an opportunity to pass through.

Anti-migrant groups appeared in a context of political deadlock in which public authorities, bound by international agreements, were obliged to prevent refugees from crossing the border but, paradoxically because they are prevented from leaving French territory, had no desire to take care of them. Anti-migrant groups linked to the far right have been calling for a radical solution: the suppression of the presence of migrants through mass expulsion. The vigilantism of these groups is to be understood in the light of this political objective.

To take up Rosenbaum and Sederberg's categories,[14] their action is not crime control vigilantism aimed at individual acts. It is social group vigilantism, targeting a social group as a whole: it is the presence of migrants perceived as criminogenic that is targeted as such.

These groups do not reproduce the model of political vigilantism that has been historically characteristic of the far right: squadrism, which is openly organised political violence.[15] The action of these groups presents certain elements of squadrism, notably through acts of violence against migrants, but it also differentiates itself from squadrism by aspiring to be legitimate and non-violent. As a result, the vigilantism of these groups presents a mixed dimension, displaying several characteristics of squadrism, while holding aspirations for non-violence that seems closer to classic social movements. It is also possible to conceive this vigilantism above all as a *spectacle*, staged almost permanently on social networks.

Conceptualising the action of these groups is no easy task. Indeed, at first glance their approach seems to be oriented towards classical non-violent demonstrations. Nevertheless, violent acts against migrants do occur in the wake of these events even if this violence is not 'claimed' by anti-migrant groups. This violence makes it difficult to categorise these groups as classical social movements that would fit into the WUNC quadrilateral described by Charles Tilly (Worthiness, Unity, Numbers and Commitment[16]). Likewise, although their roots in the extreme right

[14] Rosenbaum, Jon, Sederberg, Peter. 1974. 'Vigilantism: An Analysis of Establishment Violence', *Comparative Politics*, 6(4): pp. 541–70.
[15] Clark, Martin. 1988. 'Italian Squadrismo and Contemporary Vigilantism', *European History Quarterly*, 18: pp. 33–49.
[16] Tilly, Charles, Wood, Lesley. 2009. *Social Movements 1768–2008*. New York: Paradigm.

are obvious, they do not have the full characteristics of squadrism. These groups do not form a political militia whose goal is to fight and terrorise opponents.[17]

The seemingly paradoxical nature of the action of these groups can be better understood by referring to the definition of vigilantism by Les Johnston, who conceives it as a social movement whose objective is the restoration of order, but one that is prepared to use violence or at least threaten its use in order it to achieve its goals.[18] This use of the concept of vigilantism to categorise social movements against immigration seems particularly germane. Thus, Lesley Wood, in her analysis of anti-immigration movements in the United States and Canada, has distinguished two kinds of movements.[19] The first consists of broad-based demonstrations with a non-violent perspective that seek to mobilise as many as possible, while the second uses direct action vigilantism, such as the groups that monitor the border between Mexico and the United States.[20]

It is worth conceiving the action of these groups from an interactional perspective. Their mobilisation takes place in relation to a figure of the enemy, personified by the social group of migrants, portrayed as the threatening 'Other', or even an invading force. In the face of this danger, the objective is to mobilise Calaisians to put pressure on the state, including through direct action against migrants – always with the argument of 'protecting local residents' from migrants. This interactional perspective will be developed further by examining how these groups conceive the figure of the enemy. The ambiguous relations that these groups maintain with public authorities will be studied too: it alternates between the denunciation of the government and open support for the actions of police forces. Similarly, the way in which the public authorities position themselves regarding these groups will come under scrutiny.

As we shall see, and according to Rosenbaum,[21] vigilantism cannot be reduced to its tangible dimension: in other words, it is the social staging of the threat that confers its social existence. This perspective is relevant because the actions of the anti-migrant groups in Calais mix elements from the action *repertoire* of classical social movements with harder vigilantism. If this seems separate and contradictory, it is still based on the same logic of performing an action intended to capture the minds and emotions of the audience. This audience is not only the mainstream media, but their own communitarian audience, reached through social media, notably through their Facebook pages. This guides the style and content of the actions. Even though these groups can only rely on a core group

---

[17] Clark, Martin, *ibid.*

[18] Johnston, Les. 1996. 'What is Vigilantism?', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 36(2): pp. 220–36.

[19] Wood, Lesley. 2017. 'Anti-Immigrant Protests, Past and Present (1920–36 and 2000–16)', presented at the social movement conference, *For Alternative Futures*, Manchester, April 2017.

[20] Simonneau, Damien. 2016. 'Entre suprématie blanche et cybersécurité: Mutations contemporaines des pratiques de vigilantisme en Arizona', *Politix*, 115: pp. 79–102.

[21] Rosenbaum, Sederberg, *ibid.*

with small numbers – 15 to 20 activists for *Sauvons Calais*, while the *Calaisiens en Colère* number around 10 – their strategy enables them to effect a disproportionate impact.

Moreover, their small numbers do not prevent them from having the capacity to mobilise numbers. The events they organised drew up to several hundred people. Moreover, their Facebook audience is large: publications are widely viewed and shared.[22] The *Sauvons Calais* group has called numerous demonstrations, and these are often banned by the public authorities. The most publicised occurred on 7 September 2014, which brought together several hundred far-right activists from all over France, and that of 6 February 2016 co-organised with the group PEGIDA. Participants clashed with the police, leading to the arrest of retired parachutist General Christian Piquemal, which was widely reported in the media.[23] In addition, in February 2014, for a period of several weeks the group organised a grassroots mobilisation of locals against a squat in Coulogne. What started as a peaceful sit-in turned into a siege, and the house became the target of stone throwing. It was set on fire after its occupants were forced to leave.[24]

In the autumn of 2015, the group *Calaisiens en Colère* held demonstrations that drew up to 800 people. Nevertheless, it has been through their patrol activities that they have gained most visibility. By car, they cruised the streets of Calais and filmed migrants in order to report on their activities. Their videos became very popular, viewed tens or even hundreds of thousands of times. In December 2015, activists abandoned car patrols to organise 'support rallies' for French residents living near the Jules Ferry jungle. These rallies were streamed live and, in a tense security context, activists would physically confront refugees. One live video posted online by activists caused a media uproar, because one of the activists pulled out a rubber bullet gun and detonations were subsequently heard (although it was not possible to attribute them to his gun with certainty).[25]

Taking note of the difficulties highlighted by Mudde concerning the study of far-right groups, two complementary approaches to field research were chosen.[26] We conducted some 15 semi-structured interviews during three trips to Calais,

---

[22] 'Une affiche de Décathlon crée la polémique' [Online: http://www.bfmtv.com/societe/immigration-une-affiche-de-decathlon-cree-la-polemique-1047889.html] Accessed 12 January 2017.

[23] PEGIDA, or Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West, was a far-right social movement positioned against Islam in Europe. Initially based in Germany, it spread with varying degrees of success throughout Europe. 'La triste histoire du brave Général Piquemal' [Online: http://www.slate.fr/story/113757/calais-arrestation-piquemal Accessed 12 January 2017.

[24] 'Squat de Coulogne, jeunesse identitaire: Sauvons Calais dans la tourmente (VIDÉO)' [Online: http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/archive/recup/region/squat-de-coulogne-jeunesse-identitaire-sauvons-calais-ia33b48581n1947081] Accessed 3 September 2018.

[25] 'Calais: Des vidéos publiées par "Les Calaisiens en colère" sèment le trouble' [Online: https://www.20minutes.fr/lille/1758439-20160102-calais-videos-publiees-calaisiens-colere-sement-trouble] Accessed 3 September 2018.

[26] Mudde, Cas. 2007. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

in March 2015, June 2015 and December 2018. These interviews were conducted with activists of anti-migrant groups, inhabitants of Coulogne who took part in the siege of the squat in Coulogne without being members of anti-migrant groups, migrants and activists of the movement in support of refugees who were victims of attacks, and finally resource persons (lawyers, associative activists, local journalists) who extensively documented the action of these groups. These interviews were supplemented with the direct observation of a press conference on 7 June 2015. From a visual sociology perspective,[27] we filmed interviews when people agreed to do so. An analysis of the content published on the Facebook pages of the two groups was also conducted.

Activist profiles and trajectories

In socio-professional terms, it was not possible to access data on all the members of the *Sauvons Calais* collective, but interviewed members present fairly similar profiles. Kévin Rêche left high school at the age of 16 without graduating. He is unemployed, having failed to pass the security guard exam. E., with whom we have had contacts over the phone but who finally refused an interview, was 21 years old at that time. He is a shopkeeper in the supermarket sector. M., for his part, was 36 years old and an unemployed former fixed-term administrative agent. Finally, D., a former member of the collective also aged 36, was a temporary construction worker with a high school degree. Although in the absence of data on all the members, it is not possible to generalise about the sociology of the collective as a whole, it is nevertheless possible to state that the activists present a profile similar to those of the Aisne skinheads studied by François,[28] with precarious employment and a working-class background.

There will be a further focus on two members and their participation in the group. The first is D., a 36-year-old man. He was employed as a casino dealer, and then became a temp construction worker after he lost his casino job. He felt that he experienced difficulties finding work. The second is M., a 34-year-old man, who was a contractual administrative agent in National Education. He had been unemployed for two years at the time of the interview.

Their activist careers are quite long. D. was a member of the Identitarian movement for ten years, in the *Jeunesses Identitaires*, then in the *Bloc Identitaire*, which he left because of political disagreements, because according to

[27] Durand, Jean-Pierre, Sebag, Joyce. 2015. 'La sociologie filmique: Écrire la sociologie par le cinéma?'. *L'Année sociologique*, 65: pp. 71–96.
[28] François, Stéphane. 2017. 'La violence skinhead dans l'Aisne' in Bugnon, Fanny, Lacroix, Isabelle (eds), *Territoires de la violence politique en France de la fin de la guerre d'Algérie à nos jours*. Paris: Riveneuve.

him: 'They have adopted a rather hard Catholic line and I am an atheist'. He then became part of the National Front list in the 2014 council elections, but felt very disappointed about this experience because 'they [the National Front] did not propose anything for Calais'. He claimed that he had come across 'incredibly incompetent people'. Now 'without label' (meaning being part of a political organisation) he participated for some months in the actions of *Sauvons Calais*. He then left the collective, because he felt that the role of the *Parti de la France* was too important within the group. He then joined *Les Calaisiens en Colère*, which he helped create.

For his part, M. was both a member of the *Parti de la France* and *Sauvons Calais*. He said he moderated the Facebook page and attended meetings. He presented himself as a former organiser of the National Front, of which he was a member and activist for many years. He left it after the 'de-demonisation', which was a move by Marine Le Pen to steer away from the extreme right wing to populist radical right, trying to make the party more acceptable to French public opinion. He criticised the National Front for not talking enough about immigration 'to avoid media stigmatisation or accusations of antisemitism'.

Both were extremely careful not to disclose any sensitive information about the internal life of the group that may compromise its secrecy. Thus, D. only made general statements, saying several times 'Kevin is nice' even though he seemed strongly critical of his political positions. In the same way, M. made little mention of the group's actions, focusing the interview on more general ideological considerations as soon as the subject was evoked. Concerning the lexicon used by the two activists, several terms seemed particularly interesting. First of all, there are terms frequently used in the 'fachosphere',[29] which in France is the name given by the media to the far-right online communities. Thus, D. used terms such as 'socialist dictatorship', which was very popular in the 'fachosphere' and comes from the Hollande Resign campaign, launched by activists of the Identitarian movement and taken up by the *Manif pour tous* (social movement against same-sex marriage). He also used the term '*#pasdamalgam*' to label the 'anti-racist do-gooders' who refused to equate immigration and delinquency. It should be noted that these terms are both put forward by the Identarian movement.

Both used the word 'squat' very frequently to refer to migrants, with animosity in their voices. The opening of squats seemed to be an important element in their engagement, which they perceived as particularly intolerable. Regarding immigration, M. described it as 'shared suffering'. On the one hand, the 'French' would suffer from the deterioration of their living conditions caused by economic

---

[29] The term 'fachosphere' refers to all far-right websites, blogs, forums and social media pages in France.

competition and insecurity, which would be linked to migrants. On the other hand, the exiles would suffer from being 'uprooted', in Western countries whose culture would be 'foreign' to them. This concept of 'shared suffering' stems from the National Front's very harsh discourse on immigration in the 1990s, calling for 'forced returns'.[30]

Concerning the reasons for his activism, D. explained that he became involved because he felt 'fed up with migrants', because 'they squatted two houses away from my house, it was unbearable'. More than a desire for justice or dignity, he expressed a desire to 'put an end to the situation' for 'a return to normality', because 'the shopkeepers have lost their customers because of the illegal immigrants'. For him, the solution to restore order would be 'a closed centre' to lock up all refugees. He believed that this closed camp should be managed by the British state 'who is responsible for the situation', a claim shared by M. who, for his part, considered that the camp should be managed by the French state, but also by 'concerned citizens' such as members of *Sauvons Calais*.

These two activists have in common a long history of activism, marked by interruptions and breaks. Their involvement in anti-migrant groups is seen as the result of the 'inaction' of the National Front. The fact that they went through this party is another common point, as well as their split, which is also the case for Kévin Rêche, who despite his young age went through the National Front.[31] We can see that the National Front does indeed play a role as a matrix for activists (which may be compared to UKIP in the UK even though the political positionings of both parties present significant differences). They are thus experienced activists, strongly inserted within the field of the far right. Another common point can be noted: their limited economic integration. One is unemployed and the other regularly alternates periods of employment and inactivity. This situation of economic precariousness is also shared by Kévin Rêche, who holds a vocational aptitude certificate (CAP), has never been employed and still lives with his mother.

K., from participation in *Sauvons Calais* actions to the solidarity movement for refugees

We also had the chance to conduct a very interesting interview with K., whose profile is quite different. She resides in Coulogne and participated in campaigns

---

[30] Crépon, Sylvain, Dézé, Alexandre, Mayer, Nonna. 2015. *Les faux-semblants du Front national.* Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.
[31] It is also possible to find online a photo of Kévin Rêche with Marine Le Pen (France 3 Nord-Pas-de-Calais web, 2014).

organised by *Sauvons Calais* against a squat when it was opened by activists. She was moved by rumours spread online, but also by the neighbours, according to which a squat accommodating around a hundred migrants had just been opened by the No Border group. At first, she participated in the protests, which turned into a besiegement of the squat.[32] This was her first experience of activism.

She then left the campaign and switched to the side of the refugee solidarity movement following a trigger event: she went to talk to the No Border activists occupying the house, which convinced her to shift positions. She stated that the cause of this switch was the 'threshold of numbers': she realised that it was not 'a hundred migrants' who inhabited the house, but 'about a dozen', which reassured her and led her to question her commitment to the anti-squat campaign, then to withdraw from it, and finally to join the opponents of *Sauvons Calais*, the movement in solidarity with refugees. She joined *Calais Ouverture et Humanité* and participated for several months in their activities as well as in the food distributions of the charity Salam.

She also talked about the conversations she had online with Kévin Rêche's ex-girlfriend, S. She claimed to be one of the people who had encouraged her to leave the group. It is interesting to note that S., since her break-up with Kévin Rêche, had rejected the ideas of the group, and has married an Afghan refugee.[33] She was for a time involved in the same pro-refugee group as K. (*Calais Ouverture et Humanité*). K. then gradually discontinued her involvement. There were several reasons for this withdrawal, the first being that she felt she had been over-invested, with a pace that was hard to keep up with. In addition, she experienced a series of pressures. Her son was bullied at school because of her involvement. For her part, she was regularly harassed online by the residents of Coulogne as well as by *Sauvons Calais* activists. She mentioned also that her mother blamed her for her activism. After she saw a photo of her with refugees, she told her 'you're crazy, you're putting your children in danger, you're going to bring illnesses back home'. At the end of the interview, she also confided that her 'husband was not too keen for me to get involved'.

K.'s profile is very different from that of the two previous activists. Without any prior background in activism, she became involved after a moral shock, in the sense given by Jasper, i.e. an event that arouses a strong emotion capable of modifying a person's framing and vision of the world.[34] This is prompted by the opening of the squat, which pushed her to join one camp, then another. Moreover,

---

[32] Further on, there will be a focus on this particular episode.
[33] 'Sonia change de camp' [Online: https://www.pressreader.com/france/causette/20150225/281569469175255] Accessed 16 December 2021.
[34] Jasper, James. 1998. 'The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions in and Around Social Movements', *Sociological Forum*, 13(3): pp. 397–424.

at the time we met her, her commitment had ceased several months earlier, as it seemed to be challenged by the social pressure she was under from her environment (family, community).

An agonistic vision of the world

It is also interesting to consider the relationship of anti-migrant groups to other actors in the local political arena. A politics defined by conflict seems essential in the construction and orientation of their group identity. This is characterised by two oppositions: the first, extremely strong, aimed towards migrants and their allies. The second, which may vary in intensity, is their opposition to the public authorities. They will sometimes denounce the government's inaction but at other times voice their support for law enforcement agencies.

Strong antagonism: the figure of the enemy

The agonistic relationship to the enemy is essential to the identity of these groups. For sure, it is the extremely strong opposition to the migrant social group that is the driver for collective action.[35] These groups present the Calaisian identity as 'ruined' and in 'decay', in a nutshell, a debilitated identity. They proposed to recover it through participation in a fighting community bringing together activists in a political struggle. This opposition to migrants who represent an external enemy is supplemented by an internal enemy: NGOs and above all No Border have been portrayed as a treacherous fifth column.

These two extremely strong oppositions were in evidence at the press conference of 7 June 2015. Migrants were referred to by terms such as 'invasion' and 'colonisation'. The situation in Calais was described as an 'abscess'. Yvan Benedetti (leader of the *Parti Nationaliste Français*) spoke about a 'migratory flood', which would presage not only an apocalyptic future for the city, but also for the whole of France.[36]

Speakers insisted that the French government would not allow the police to do their job. A lack of political will on the part of the state justified the use of vigilantism. *Sauvons Calais* called for the dissolution of 'migrationist' groups supposedly bringing migrants to the slaughterhouse 'like slave traders', for the benefit of 'international finance and the oligarchy'. They also demanded the 'dissolution

---

[35] Schmitt, Carl. 2009. *La notion de politique: Théorie du partisan*. Paris: Éditions Flammarion.
[36] For more information regarding Yvan Benedetti, important leader of the French far right, refer to Pujol, Philippe. 2017. *Mon cousin le fasciste*. Paris: Le Seuil.

of all NGOs' that help migrants in one way or another, especially No Border, perceived as 'the worst enemy of the French people'.

This was coupled with a call for the closure of borders and a total halt to extra-European immigration. According to Yvan Benedetti, 'when the plate is empty, there should no question of bringing in extra mouths, foreign mouths to share what little we have left'. Moreover, this closure was a humanitarian response – to avoid 'human trafficking'. Over the longer term, non-European populations should be repatriated in order to 'protect the French'. Labelling immigration as 'shared suffering', for Benedetti, mass deportation would end suffering for both the 'uprooted' and the 'native populations'. Finally, Benedetti adds, there is no need to welcome refugees or asylum seekers: according to him, refugees are 'cowards'. If a situation is unbearable, in a country at war, refugees should stay and fight against oppression, rather than flee to Europe. Challenging the notion of political refugee, he even calls into question their masculinity: 'These men have no courage, what do they have between their legs?'.

In Calais, the immediate objective of the anti-migrant groups was to lock-up all migrants in a closed camp. Citizen self-defence committees should be set up to support the police in the round-up of refugees, helping in their arrest.

A weak agonistic relationship: an ambivalent relationship with public authorities.

If strong opposition to the figure of the refugee is obvious, opposition towards public authorities is weaker, ambivalent and variable. In the first place, it should be recalled that the creation of *Sauvons Calais* was not an autonomous act. Its activists responded to the call from the mayor of Calais who asked local residents to list and report migrants' dwellings. The group therefore started its activities from the perspective of supporting public authorities. Moreover, it targeted its demands to public authorities: the dissolution of the NGOs and No Border; the request for the migrants to be interned in a camp is addressed to the state. In that sense, the relationship to authorities is similar to that of classical social movements.

These demands were accompanied by a strong denunciation of the government, at the time led by PM Manuel Valls. He was accused of not allowing the police to do their job. It would be a lack of political will on the part of the state that justified their vigilantism. However, there has still been residual support for police officers, fighting on the 'front line' when dealing with refugees. Action would sometimes be oriented in support of the police, going as far as to make claims to be fighting alongside the police during confrontations between police forces and migrants. This can be seen on the Facebook page of *Les Calaisiens en Colère*:

Figure 5.1 Exchange of comments regarding field support to law enforcement agencies.

Translation from French: '**XXXX**: Riot police, we are at your service. We did well last night, didn't we? … but it was difficult, they were very motivated and ready to fight…'

Les Calaisiens en Colère: 'XXXX, thanks for your quick response and your efficiency. This is the first time we have faced so many determined illegal immigrants'.

Ambivalence is also reflected in the way that public authorities have interacted with these groups. This is particularly obvious when speaking with Emmanuel Agius, First Deputy Mayor of the City of Calais. When interviewed, Agius labelled anti-migrant activists as 'far-right thugs' and 'good-for-nothings' and declared to us that 'extremist groups that preach hatred should be banned'. He claimed he had never met them. Yet these statements have been contradicted by activists of *Sauvons Calais* who, on the contrary, claim to have had a meeting with Emmanuel Agius in his office. Agius was said to have listened attentively to the demands of the activists.

Ambivalence can also be found in the attitude of law enforcement towards the actions of anti-migrant groups. For example, during the sit-in against the squat in Coulogne, demonstrators threw stones at the squat every night for a whole week, sometimes in front of police patrol cars. According to La *Voix du Nord*, this squat was opened on rue Émile Dumont in Coulogne near Calais on 2 February 2014.[37] It was inhabited by activists of the No Border movement. Members of *Sauvons Calais* organised a sit-in, joined by residents from the neighbourhood, and demanded eviction of the squat. With the active participation from

[37] 'Squat de Coulogne, jeunesse identitaire: Sauvons Calais dans la tourmente (VIDÉO)' [Online: http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/archive/recup/region/squat-de-coulogne-jeunesse-identitaire-sauvons-calais-ia33b48581n1947081] Accessed 3 September 2018.

neighbours, this sit-in rapidly turned into a siege, which lasted 15 days. Scores of stones were thrown by demonstrators: they made the house uninhabitable as the roof was damaged beyond repair; the building was then destroyed by fire once the occupants had been forced to leave.

Interviews were carried out with the protagonists of these events: the mayor of the village, local residents who participated in the mobilisation, activists of *Sauvons Calais*, as well as the pro-refugee activists who occupied the squat. In psychological terms, there was some embarrassment among most participants in these events. They had difficulties acknowledging their contribution, and even more so their responsibilities, passing the buck regarding the violence that led to the destruction of the squat.

Thus for J., a resident who took part: 'The people of Coulogne didn't want it to get bigger', an expression he repeats several times. J. did not want to talk about the events at first. He then explained that: 'It wasn't done with any brutality, there was no violence'. He then added that people threw stones at the tiles of the roof for eight days, but according to him: 'There was no brutality' and 'It was very well organised'. Comparing these statements to the rest of the witnesses, it is possible to note minimisation of violence. For his part, the mayor of Coulogne tells us that the mayor's office handled the problem in a legal manner. According to him, it was *Sauvons Calais* that organised the sit-in and was at the origin of the violence. He added that the activists of *Sauvons Calais* went 'to fill big bags of stones on the railway tracks and brought them to the protests to organise the stoning'.

According to M., an activist from *Sauvons Calais*, there was no violence. Accusations linking *Sauvons Calais* to the stone throwing were said to originate from the 'pro-immigration lobby and more particularly No Border'. He claimed that *Sauvons Calais* is a 'respectable group' and that violence formed no part of its modus operandi. According to him, the various attacks on the squat originated from people he did not know: 'There is no evidence that the members of our group are involved in this violence'. 'We can't take responsibility for all individual acts committed by disturbed people.'

K., who took part in the sit-in before changing her position towards refugees, told us a rather different version of events. According to her, there were rumours in the neighbourhood that 'the occupied farm was going to take in about 100 migrants'. *Sauvons Calais* then organised a demonstration in front of the farm, which attracted many local residents. She took part, as did most of her neighbours. She says: 'I went there several times, I participated'. Then she went to talk to the No Border activist who occupied the farm. This interaction led her to switch sides in this conflict. She stopped participating and got closer to the pro-refugee movement. She told us that she heard people yelling at night near the squat: 'words like gas chamber' and she witnessed attempts to break into the squat by *Sauvons Calais* activists. She said: 'What worries me most is that it was a general madness, there were parents and

their children throwing stones. *Sauvons Calais*, they're not stupid, they didn't throw stones in public, they went to groups, encouraged them and gave them stones'.

W.'s account, a pro-refugee activist, corroborates what K. said and criticises the non-intervention of the police. Despite Molotov cocktails being thrown on two occasions and stones being thrown continuously, police forces were only present during the day, the police patrol car leaving around 8 pm. The most serious violence took place just after the police left. The No Border activists organised phoning sessions where many people called the police to report the violence but there was no police intervention to stop it. According to W.: 'What I learned that day is that you can stone your neighbour's roof, and according to the local precinct, this is not a public order disturbance'.

This event reveals elements from the action *repertoire* of both vigilantism and classical social movements. It begins with the grassroots mobilisation of the neighbourhood against an occupation and with the organisation of daily demonstrations. In a second stage, vigilantism takes over. In this way, the attacks on the property opened the way. These were organised by the activists of *Sauvons Calais* who did not compromise themselves publicly. It was only at night, when the police were not present, and when most of the locals had returned to their homes, that the most serious violence took place: death threats, attempted break-ins, stone throwing, but also throwing of Molotov cocktails. It was also at night that the squatted house was set on fire, once its occupants had abandoned it.

A similar lack of police intervention could be found during 'support rallies' for the police against residents of the Jules Ferry jungle in December 2015 and January 2016. As we have already seen, the support of the activists during skirmishes with refugees was acknowledged by the police, who had no problem with ordinary citizens supporting them during policing operations, even though, according to French law, these operations are the exclusive prerogative of the state. It was only in February, after two months of interventions and skirmishes, that the *Calaisiens en Colère* declared in the press that they had received a visit from a police officer who politely asked them to stop their activities.[38]

That being said, while the public authorities seemed to ignore or at least tolerate vigilante activities, this was not the case with several demonstrations by *Sauvons Calais*. The demonstration of 7 September 2014 led to violence and highly publicised Nazi salutes by some demonstrators.[39] Following that, the public authorities showed little tolerance for *Sauvons Calais* demonstrations. These were frequently banned, such as the demonstration of 7 June 2015 or the PEGIDA

---

[38] 'Migrants: Les Calaisiens en colère arrêtent provisoirement leurs rondes nocturnes' [Online: http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/archive/recup%3A%252Fregion%252Fmigrants-les-calaisiens-en-colere-arret ent-ia33b48581n3264028] Accessed 4 September 2018.

[39] 'Calais: Dérapages nazis lors d'un rassemblement anti-migrants' [Online: https://www.rtl.fr/actu/debats-societe/calais-derapages-nazis-lors-d-un-rassemblement-anti-migrants-7774167328] Accessed 4 September 2018.

demonstration of 6 February 2016. When activists tried to defy the ban, the police attacked the crowd and made arrests.[40]

These elements underline the ambivalent relationship between actors. Anti-migrant groups claimed to support the government when their objectives were similar, but also to position themselves in the 'camp of order'. At the same time, they have denounced the general attitude of the government in order to forward their demands. On the government side, we have the impression that the management of anti-migrant groups has been eminently political, rather than in strict application of the law. Some illegal activities did not elicit a response from law enforcement agencies, while other activities that were nevertheless legal, such as demonstrations, were prohibited.

The spectacular dimension of action: 'paper' vigilantism

To better understand their action repertoire, it should be recalled that according to Charles Tilly, the existence of social movements in their modern form implies the existence of public opinion.[41] In contrast to revolutionary or insurrectional movements, the tactics of these social movements are as follows: by implementing actions, which are part of a tactical repertoire, the aim is to raise public awareness and apply pressure on the authorities, which may be sensitive to the variations of public opinion.

Target audience and staging

As Patrick Champagne states, following Bourdieu, public opinion does not exist in itself, but is an artefact: major media and polling institutes produce or rather construct 'public opinion' that does not necessarily correspond to the actual conceptions of the people who constitute the body of citizens. For Champagne, this public opinion is generated by the action of its measurement: polls, whose reliability is questionable, to say the least, or micro-surveys presenting the opinion of specific users chosen 'randomly'. In this conception, public opinion is artificial: a few media actors and polling institutes have the power to construct a social image of what citizens supposedly think.[42]

In this model, these actors are the gatekeepers of media visibility. Not surprisingly, the actions of social movements will be oriented towards the production of images fit into the frame constructed by these gatekeepers. Actions are staged

---

[40] 'La triste histoire du brave Général Piquemal' [Online: http://www.slate.fr/story/113757/calais-arrestation-piquemal Accessed 12 January 2017.
[41] Tilly, Wood, *ibid*.
[42] Champagne, Patrick. 2015. *Faire l'opinion: Le nouveau jeu politique*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.

according to the ways in which the media will report on them. This orientation conceives the action of social movements as *spectacle*. Describing a farmers' demonstration in the 1980s, Champagne asserts that it was a 'paper demonstration', because the actions undertaken were above all aimed at achieving maximum press coverage. Here, the action is not direct, but mediated, towards the media, which has the power to shape or define 'public opinion'.[43]

To this extent, the action of social movements consists at least partly in the production of a *spectacle* for media audiences. The nature of the media will influence the content of the actions of social movements. According to Marshall McLuhan, each medium presents different characteristics. These characteristics then determine the format of the actions:[44] depending on the nature of the media, the content will adapt and the *spectacle* of the social movement will therefore be different. There is therefore a link between the nature of a social movement's action *repertoire* and that of the targeted media.

The model described by Patrick Champagne speaks to the media landscape of the 1980s. Yet, as Stefano Cristante phrases it, in his model of the doxa sphere,[45] the construction of public opinion has since been modified by the growth of social media (Facebook, Twitter, and so on). Critically, social media allows social movement actors to directly reach audiences by building a communitarian following without necessarily going through the gatekeeping of mainstream media.

This creates a two-headed orientation for the action *repertoire* of social movements. Some groups, especially far-right groups, tend to target their audience through social media such as Facebook, which has been particularly important because of its high rate of use. Social media thus constitutes a new outlet for social movements. By a logic built on 'going viral', widely shared content can sometimes compete with the audiences of mainstream mass media in terms of reach. This explains why the action of anti-migrant groups is carried out with the objective of creating a *spectacle* for its public reached through social media.

Vigilantism as a spectacle

The most successful expression of this logic can be found in the patrols of the *Calaisiens en Colère*, which have been broadcast either live on Facebook or after a rough editing. The comments in these videos picture Calais as a war zone between the police and migrants, with migrants allegedly invading the city and sowing chaos.

The activists who patrolled by car intended to provide some kind of 'war report' of the front line, documenting the presence of migrants in real time and providing

[43] *Ibid.*
[44] McLuhan, Marshall. 1977 *Pour comprendre les média: Les prolongements technologiques de l'homme*. Paris: Seuil.
[45] Cristante, Stefano. 2005 *Media Philosophy: Interpretare la comunicazione-mondo*. Naples: Liguori Editore.

Figure 5.2 Example of a field surveillance.

Translation from French: 'Here is the route taken by the illegal immigrants today, Thursday, December 17, on their way to the highway. They are going to attack lorry drivers. This is just the route. The video of the attacks is coming in a few dozen minutes. You can see how many illegals there are on that route'.

a map of the 'danger'. In a second phase, the activists no longer limited themselves to monitoring and public exposure but started to intervene. For instance, they started clearing barricades erected by migrants on roads.

As time went on, the interventions grew bolder. In December 2015 and January 2016, the group organised 'security rallies' on the outskirts of the Jules Ferry jungle, where police and migrants regularly clashed. The activists filmed themselves fighting the migrants and supporting riot police interventions, acting as a supporting force for the police (which initially seemed to accept this help). This support for the police was thus claimed on the Facebook page, even calling on the public to join in the actions.
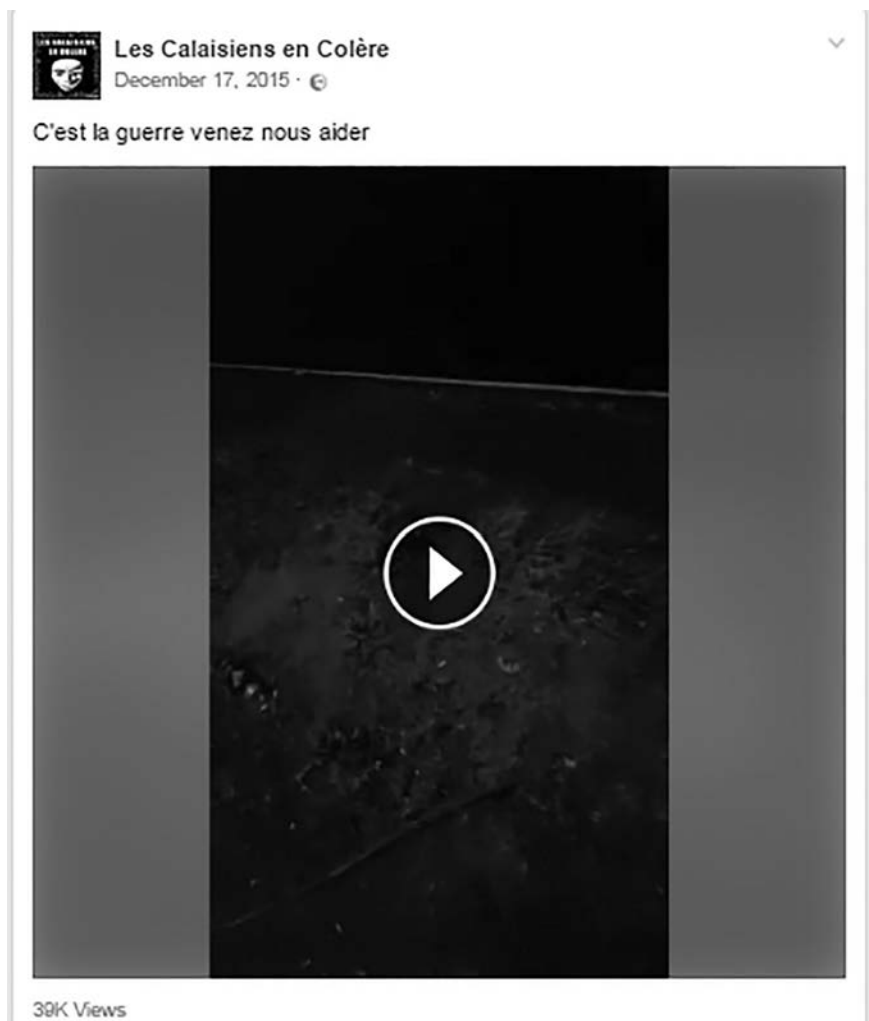
Figure 5.3 Appeal for support from *Calaisiens en Colère*.

Translation from French: 'This is war, come and help us'.

These videos became very popular. While the page of *Sauvons Calais* reached 20,000 followers after three years of existence, the page of *Calaisiens en Colère* was followed by 80,000 people. Published videos were viewed tens of thousands of times and drew many comments, which shows that this *spectacle* has managed to attract the attention of a large audience.

Thus, the staging of the patrols was clearly intended to engage the public and create a 'communitarian' audience around the Facebook page, which in turn encouraged *Calaisiens en Colère* to undertake further actions. However, when the mainstream media took an interest in the actions filmed on Facebook things turned sour. When a video of clashes was posted online (mentioned above), it became possible to see a participant in the 'security rounds' declare 'I'm pulling out my gun', and then that person could be seen drawing what looks like a rubber bullet gun. Afterwards, detonations could be heard but it is impossible to know precisely whether these shots are fired by the police or by *Calaisiens en Colère* activists.[46]

This video, posted on the page of *Calaisiens en Colère*, before being quickly removed, went viral until it attracted the attention of mainstream media.[47] The media commentary pointed out that the participation of the *Calaisiens en Colère* in crowd policing alongside the police was entirely illegal.

This tends to show that social media have not completely replaced traditional media in the representation of social movements. On the one hand, the spectacle of vigilance makes it possible to reach a wide and sympathetic public. On the other hand, when the same actions pass into the 'traditional media' sphere, they can provoke the indignation of a much wider public and this can negatively impact on the claims that *Calaisiens en Colère* made to being 'apolitical', 'non-violent' and 'respectable'. The group tried to use distancing strategies. But these did not seem very effective and the group announced on Facebook that the patrols would end in February 2016.[48]

The following is a statement by 'Laurent', a member of the *Calaisiens en Colère* who tried to justify himself in the columns of *Nord Littoral*: 'Wednesday I was there, yes, but I wasn't armed with a stick'. He confided, however, that some of the activists were armed with sticks, 'but it wasn't us! That's another reason why we're standing back'. And then he added, in defence of the group's image of respectability: 'Some people want to come with pepper spray etc. We don't want to be seen as violent people'. According to witnesses, he was seen carrying a club. He kicked from the sidelines. 'Three people wear the same jacket as me.' A simple coincidence, according to him.[49] Different action *repertoires* clash depending on whether they are aimed at one representation regime or the other.

[46] 'VIDEO. Calais: Des vidéos publiées par "Les Calaisiens en colère" sèment le trouble', *op. cit.*
[47] *Ibid.*
[48] 'Migrants: Les Calaisiens en colère arrêtent provisoirement leurs rondes nocturnes' [Online: http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/archive/recup%3A%252Fregion%252Fmigrants-les-calaisiens-en-colere-arretent-ia33b48581n3264028] Accessed 4 September 2018.
[49] *Ibid.*

Conclusion

The action of these groups constitutes a form of vigilantism whose objective is not direct territorial control of Calais: this ground is firmly held by the police. The action *repertoire* of vigilantism is primarily used by these groups to increase their visibility and communicate their action through social media. The idea is to create a communitarian audience to mobilise its public more widely. This political use of vigilantism may impact on public debate but this is difficult to quantify precisely. However, for indicative purposes, it is worth by noting that the two groups have been the subject of 64 press articles in the regional and national daily press (listed in the Europress database) across a three-year period. This coverage is in addition to their audience reach on social networks, which is their core audience. This attracts hundreds of thousands of views, one publication being shared more than 37,000 times, for example.

In the end, their demands were partly met in November 2016 with the dismantling of the Jules Ferry jungle and the transfer of migrants to refugee centres across French territory. However, it is difficult to assess the extent to which it was the specific action of these groups that influenced public policies. Nonetheless, their actions brought three elements together that seem characteristic of movements against immigration in France: a willingness to implement practices that are akin to vigilantism; a vision of the world where community is made possible by opposition to a figure of the enemy; and finally the spectacular staging of a repertoire of action in order to 'go viral' on social media.

6

Contentious Migration in Dover

In France, debates, demonstrations and campaigns around migratory issues largely crystallised around the situation in Calais. Indeed, the existence of settlements such as the 'jungles' in Calais intersect with two important political issues within the public arenas of Western Europe. The first is that of immigration, the rejection of which is an essential element in the development of the far right.[1] The second is that of sovereignty: the control of borders in the face of transnational circulations is a political issue at a time when the opposition between communitarians and cosmopolitans has become an increasingly important political cleavage.[2] Moreover, the border areas between France, a member of the Schengen area, and the United Kingdom, which has just left the European Union, have a very high media profile. This major axis of transnational exchange at the heart of Western Europe is the stage for spectacular images: whether 'jungles' in Calais or treacherous small boat crossings. It has also become the subject of political discourse by a series of actors and moral entrepreneurs: political parties, local elected officials, NGOs, pro-refugee social movement organisations, and on the opposing side, anti-migrant social movements.

The previous chapter examined the tactics used by anti-migrant groups in Calais that originated from the repertoire of vigilantism in a very tense and sometimes chaotic situation. This chapter will reflect upon the ways in which anti-migrant social movement actors attempt to construct migratory flows in Dover as a securitarian issue. The situation in Dover and its surroundings differs significantly from the one in Calais, which is a staging point where people are stuck for weeks or months. Conversely, Dover is an arrival point through which refugees transit before applying for asylum or leaving for large urban centres. In

---

[1] Arzheimer, Kai. 2018. 'Explaining Electoral Support for the Radical Right' in Rydgren, Jens (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[2] De Wilde, Pieter, Koopmans, Ruud, Merkel, Wolfgang, Strijbis, Oliver, Zürn, Michael. 2019. *The Struggle Over Borders: Cosmopolitanism and Communitarianism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

addition, in order to avoid potential political unrest, public authorities have put in place a policy[3] which consists of swiftly collecting and receiving asylum seekers' applications without creating a 'stockpile' population as in Calais.[4]

As a result, for anti-migrant moral entrepreneurs', making migratory processes visible has become essential to their mobilisation of public opinion. The increase in highly visible small boat crossings has offered an opportunity in this regard. Indeed, until recently, the majority of crossings between France and England were made by hiding in trucks. From 2019 onwards, small boat crossings have become more common. French and British Navy and Border Force vessels usually spot and escort the boats into the port of Dover, where asylum seekers are registered and their asylum claims processed. They are then directed to accommodation (Napier barracks, Penally Camp, hotels or shared accommodation). According to the British Home Office, the year 2020 saw a significant increase in small boat crossings: more than 8,400 arrivals in 2020, compared to nearly 1,600 in 2019.[5]

The objective of groups that are active in the field of migratory issues is to make this process visible and, above all, to spin a counter-narrative that presents migrants as a securitarian issue rather than a humanitarian one. Indeed, following the 1951 UN Charter, asylum seekers and refugees are legally considered as vulnerable populations that need to be protected by international law.

By drawing on the typologies of Cas Mudde[6] and Fabian Virchow,[7] three types of actors in the field of the contention of migration can be distinguished. The first type is that of political organisations in the form of a party-movement, but whose running in elections is not a central part of their political activity. Even though some of these organisations have been running for office, their activity is not only geared towards electoral perspectives (Britain First, Patriotic Alternative, the For Britain Movement). The second is that of single-issue organisations, often small localised actors rarely bringing together more than a dozen activists. They mobilise on a specific and localised aspect of the migration process (the surveillance of the coast of the South of England, the Penally Camp, marriage fraud, the investigation of smuggling networks). Finally, the emergence of a third type of actors can be noted, video activists. These video activists, not aligned with particular movements, exploit the possibilities offered by broadcasting on social media in order to make the situation visible and to put forward their narrative.

---

[3] 'Asylum and refugee resettlement in the UK' [Online: https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migration-to-the-uk-asylum/] Accessed 25 May 2021.

[4] Alaux, Jean-Pierre. 2015. 'Calais vaut bien quelques requiem', *Plein droit*, 104: pp. 3–8.

[5] 'Channel migrants: More than 8,000 people make crossing in 2020' [Online: https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-kent-55501123] Accessed 25 May 2021.

[6] Mudde, Cas. 2019. *The Far Right Today*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

[7] Virchow, Fabian. 2007. ' "Capturing the Streets": Marches as a Political Instrument of the Extreme Right in Contemporary Germany' in Reiss, Matthias (ed.), *The Street as Stage: Protest Marches and Public Rallies since the Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The description and characterisation of the repertoire of action of all actors will be developed further.

The aim of this chapter is to understand how a series of actors stemming from the far right (either from the radical right or the extreme right) use social movement tactics in order to construct migration as a threat in the eyes of the public. Their aim is to present migrants not as vulnerable populations in need of protection but, on the contrary, as a criminogenic social group requiring securitarian treatment. Practices of vigilantism (mainly symbolic and performative in the direction of social movements) seem to be an essential element of this framing of migration.

In the first place, however, two distinct sets of questions need to be addressed. The first concerns locating anti-migrant mobilisation in the political field of the British far right. Does this represent a renewal of political discourse? Are the categories of civic nationalism and ethno-nationalism relevant to the understanding of these discourses? Are the campaigners only active on migratory issues or do they integrate these social movement activities into a broader political commitment? Is it possible to detect common matrices in activist trajectories? Do the ideological framings of the groups and organisations intersect with individual appropriation of ideologies?

Let us recall that Graham Macklin distinguishes two poles within the British far right: ethnic nationalism on the one hand, and civic nationalism on the other.[8] This distinction is based on respective conceptions of the nation. Ethnic nationalism is based on ethnos and the idea of race; civic nationalism concerns the defence of Western culture in the face of a perceived threat from Islam. These ideological mutations have been influenced by the French New Right, which – although remaining within the field of ethno-nationalism through its theorisation of blood, soil and culture – opens the way to a cultural racism rather than a racism defined by blood and heredity.[9]

The second set of questions relate to the specificities of the activist repertoires of far-right social movements. Indeed, these mobilisations are far from presenting the canonical characteristics of social movements as defined and theorised by Charles Tilly: Worthiness, Number, Unity, Commitment.[10] If they present themselves as demonstrating worthiness and commitment (as evidenced by the repeated injunctions to donate in order to allow this commitment to continue), maximising their numbers does not seem to be a particular objective. Nor is unity (given the very polemical nature of the framing of the migratory situation by these

---

[8] Macklin, Graham. 2019. *Failed Führers: A History of Britain's Extreme Right*. London: Routledge.
[9] Lebourg, Nicolas. 2019 *Les nazis ont-ils survécu?: Enquête sur les internationales fascistes et les croisés de la race blanche*. Paris: Seuil.
[10] Tilly, Charles, Wood, Lesley. 2009. *Social Movements, 1768–2008*. New York: Paradigm.

groups). In this perspective, it is interesting to hypothesise that the action of far-right groups can be best understood as the action of an 'active minority',[11] that is to say, that their framing aims above all to exert social influence on the British political field and public opinion, rather than mobilising numbers directly on the ground.

How does this particular positioning differentiate them from classical social movements? How does it orient their repertoire of action and practices? This dimension will be examined through the analysis of two sets of practices intrinsically linked to the use of social media. The first can be understood as social media spectacular vigilantism, whose aim is, as we have seen previously, to try to change the perception of asylum seekers, from vulnerable persons to be protected to the status of potential criminals justifying securitarian treatment. The second series of practices relate to video activism, defined as the production of images and videos by individuals and groups engaged in social movements as a specific activity. This also renews the way social movements address media and the public. Indeed, reaching mass audiences becomes possible without gaining clearance by gatekeepers of classic media. This shift renovates the stakes around the mobilisation of resources and the role of social movement organisations, as social media allow some actors to bypass classical grassroots organising usually characteristic of social movements. Video activism opens new possibilities of professionalisation of activism. It also allows individual actors to become important or even central actors in the framing of mobilisations around migratory issues.

Methodology: using a mixed methods approach

Our field research in Britain presented two major methodological difficulties which had to be overcome. Specific investigative strategies were necessary in order to yield results of interest. The first is a structural difficulty: social sciences have difficulty accessing actors within the field of the far right. The second is situational: the Covid-19 epidemic and the subsequent restrictions that followed made access to the field complex, leading to a re-evaluation of the research protocol and a switch towards online methods.

Cas Mudde[12] points out that far-right groups are reluctant to be investigated by social sciences for several reasons. The first is that these groups see social sciences and academia as assimilated within the left and broadly aligned with the global elites these groups denounce; their work is therefore considered 'biased'.

---

[11] Moscovici, Serge. 2015. 'Psychologie des minorites actives', *EcoRev'*, 42: pp. 5–14.
[12] Mudde, Cas. 2007. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

In addition, membership of far-right groups is socially stigmatised, making activists reluctant to reveal their commitment for fear of backlash.[13] Finally, the activities of these groups may be illegal for a variety of reasons (hate crimes, street violence, etc.), and refusal to participate may be linked to concerns about self-incrimination. These issues have been documented and highlighted by Joel Busher, Bert Klandersman, Nigel Copsey and Amy Smith.[14]

The second difficulty was that after March 2020 access to the field became impossible due to social distancing, and lockdowns. In order to mitigate these difficulties, the decision was made to switch to online methodologies, such as online interviews and digital ethnography.[15]

The structural difficulty of access has led many researchers to opt for work on open sources and to analyse the textual and visual content produced by various far-right movements. Although this is obviously essential for study in this field, the research has not been limited to open-source material. Instead, a mixed methods approach has been adopted. Digital ethnographic observation tools allow us to capture interactions that are not accessible in open-source analysis. An ethnographic approach (already adopted for previous research) is capable of going much deeper, making it possible to capture the mechanisms of individual engagement as well as the diversity of the ideologies of grassroots participants.[16] It also allows for an analysis of activist trajectories using methodological perspectives developed by Eric Agrikoliansky.[17] The combination of these methodologies yields very interesting results in terms of acquiring an in-depth understanding of social dynamics that open sources and secondary data can only touch upon.

However, this raises the question of access: these groups are notably distrustful of social sciences as previously mentioned. Furthermore, the researcher has expertise in getting access to interviews. Several methods were used to gain access to interviews, drawing on the experience of the researcher. The first was an introduction by the researcher that may not put off first interviewees. Another way to gain access to interviews was approaching former members of these groups that may have a critical point of view regarding their past engagement.

Another important element has been the adaptability of the number of groups studied. Indeed, the far right is experiencing strong organisational instability

---

[13] Pilkington, Hilary. 2019. ' "Field Observer: Simples." Finding a Place from Which to Do Close-up Research on the "Far-right" ' in Toscano, Emanuele (ed.), *Researching Far-Right Movements, Ethics, Methodologies, and Qualitative Inquiries*. London: Routledge.

[14] Ashe, Stephen, Busher, Joel, Macklin, Graham, Winter, Aaron. 2021. *Researching the Far Right: Theory, Method and Practice*. London: Routledge.

[15] The researcher participated in several training sessions in online research, particularly methods of digital ethnography, in order to adapt to Covid-19 disruption. Some of these methods, such as epistolary interviews, have been used as a substitute for face-to-face online interviews when not possible.

[16] Ashe, Busher, Macklin, Winter, *ibid*.

[17] Agrikoliansky, Eric. 2001. 'Carrières militantes et vocation à la morale: Les militants de la LDH dans les années 1980', *Revue française de science politique*, 1(51): pp. 45–54.

(appearance of new groups, splits, etc.), and large numbers of activists who do not belong to formally established groups are mobilising. For this reason, the scope of the groups included in the study takes into account this essential dimension of organisational plasticity.[18]

The following methodological tools were employed:

> <u>Semi-structured interviews</u> with activists of the groups included in the study were conducted in order to understand the trajectories of their activists and the actions they have undertaken. Access to such primary data is very interesting because it allows us to understand the motives that lead individuals to participate in such groups, as well as to grasp the ideological divergences within these groups that cannot be understood by a study limited to such groups' official communications. Gaining access to interviews was significantly more difficult than expected, as the switch to online methods limited the means of approach to potential interviewees. Identifying who to interview and reaching out to them became significantly more difficult. In the end, members of eight out of the thirteen social movement groups were interviewed, comprising a total of nine interviews.
>
> <u>Social media content analysis</u>: semi-structured interviews were supplemented with content analysis of the social media output of ten actors, as detailed in Table 6.1. This output was analysed thematically, identifying categories that allows us to understand the contours of the group's communication framework. 500 social media postings were drawn at random during the period between March 2020 and April 2021. This timespan includes a time of significant social movement activity, especially around the summer of 2020. This output was analysed lexicometrically using the Reinhert method using the free software Voyant Tools, which proceeds in the same manner as the Alceste method. The automatic methodology proceeds by splitting the text into several types of textual units, within a global corpus: random units cut mechanically (pieces of sentences of similar size) and initial units, determined by the researcher. The lexicometric analysis was carried out on this corpus of 500 postings which were treated as a single text; each posting was treated as a paragraph. The advantage of this methodology is that it defines, by taking into account the structure of the text (sentences, paragraphs), coherent sets of word usages and allowed the researcher to free himself from his methodological *a priori*. In addition, six corpora of five videos produced by video activists were also analysed thematically, as well as hermeneutically.

---

[18] Counter Extremism Project. 2020. 'Violent Right-Wing Extremism and Terrorism – Transnational Connectivity, Definitions, Incidents, Structures and Countermeasures'. Report.

	Single-issue social movement structures	Far-right political organisations	Video activists	Total
Actors active in the field of social movements critical of immigration in the UK	Migration Watch UK, Protest against Penally Camp (Wales), Little Boats, Stop UK Marriage Fraud, South East Coast Defence	Britain First, the For Britain Movement, Patriotic Alternative	Active Patriot, Steve Laws, John Lawrence, Chris Johnson, Darren Edmundson (Voice of Wales)	13 groups or video activists
Semi-structured interviews	South East Coast Defence (2 interviews), Protest against Penally Camp, Little Boats, Stop UK Marriage Fraud, Migration Watch UK	The For Britain Party, Patriotic Alternative	John Lawrence, Darren Edmundson (Voice of Wales)	9 interviews
Social media publication corpora (text + image) (50 social media postings by corpus randomly selected)	South East Coast Defence, Protest against Penally Camp, Little Boats, Stop UK Marriage Fraud	Britain First, The For Britain Party, Patriotic Alternative	Chris Johnson, Active Patriot, Steve Laws,	10 publication corpora
Video corpora (analysis of 5 videos)	Protest against Penally Camp	The For Britain Party, Britain First	John Lawrence, Active Patriot, Steve Laws	6 video corpora

Table 6.1 Overview of interviews and corpora.

This mixed methods approach did not focus on one group, but rather on the field of social movement activity against migration around Dover and migrant accommodation in Britain per se. This allows a panorama of framings, repertoires of action and activist trajectories to be drawn up that may further the detailed understanding of the dynamics and interactions between actors in this field.

Thirteen different actors whose activity was relevant to the field of anti-immigration social movements belonging to three categories of actors – political organisations, single-issue social movement organisations and video activists – were identified. The contents of the semi-structured interviews were complemented by the thematic and lexicographic analysis of 10 corpora of 50 social media postings, as well as by the hermeneutic and thematic analysis of six video corpora

(30 videos). As many actors have been banned from mainstream social media, most of the social media postings are extracted from the Telegram channels of these groups, with the exception of Chris Johnson (on Facebook), Steve Laws and Small Boats (on Twitter). The videos have either been published on YouTube or on Telegram.

Actors in the field of contentious migration

The first step in our attempt at an understanding and interpretation of the field of contentious mobilisations around migration will be a description of the political actors and the repertoires of action they use. The anti-migrant social movements in Dover and more widely in Britain use a different repertoire of action than in Calais. In Dover, the situation is more diffuse, as there are no central Dover-based actors, and the mobilisation is carried out by several actors whose form and repertoire of action vary. As mentioned before, three types of actors can be distinguished: political organisations, single-issue organisations and video activism.

Political organisations

The first type of actors comprise what Cas Mudde calls political organisations: groups that present a party form, but do not stand for elections or, if they sometimes run for office, do not prioritise electoral competition.[19] Instead, they focus on propaganda actions, mainly on social networks, as well as forms of street action that typically belong to the repertoire of social movements. Fabian Virchow describes these formations as 'party-movements' with a mixed form between a classical political party and a social movement organisation.[20] The particularity of these groups' actions is that they do not take place in broad coalitions that many members of the public may join. Participation is limited to core members and sympathisers of these groups. They most often have a prominent leader figure which embodies the party. Quite often, the leader has written a book, and is the most important face of the organisation on social media. Several organisations engaged in social movement activities on migratory issues can be identified:

Britain First. This group, created in 2011 by former British National Party activists, has an estimated membership of 500 members and is led by Paul Golding.[21] This nationalist group focuses on the denunciation of Islam and

[19] Mudde, 2019, *ibid*.
[20] Virchow, *ibid*.
[21] Hope not Hate. 2021. 'State of Hate 2021: Backlash, Conspiracies & Confrontation'. Report.

immigration, which are closely linked and presented as a civilisational threat. Moreover, the group claims a strong Christian identity, which stands in opposition to the peril supposedly posed by Islam. The group was barred from running in elections by a 2017 decision by the British Electoral Commission.[22] Its politics are characterised by a heavy reliance on social media where the group acquired a massive audience. Before it was deplatformed, the Facebook page of Britain First was followed by nearly two million people.[23] Apart from organising public meetings and leafleting, the most frequent type of action undertaken by this group is the staging of 'performative' vigilante actions. For example, regarding migration, several 'spectacular' actions were carried out: patrols on the cliffs of Dover, in the former WWII bunkers, but also attempts to float a boat to patrol the Channel. The group also specialises in 'video patrols' where activists go to 'migrant hotels' and film asylum seekers in order to 'expose' them, a concept that belongs to digital vigilantism: the public staging of a social actor on social media as problematic through public exposure and stigmatisation.[24]

The For Britain Movement. This party-movement is led by Anne Marie Waters, a former Labour Party activist, who was also a leading figure in UKIP. This group can be categorised as civic nationalist (although it does contain former members of the ethno-nationalist BNP). The For Britain Movement is one of the few British far-right groups to have local elected representatives – standing more than 50 candidates in the 2021 local elections. Illegal immigration is one of its main campaigning issues, linked to the supposed danger posed by Islam. The For Britain Movement organised two demonstrations in Dover and in front of a hotel housing asylum seekers, gathering a few dozen supporters in August 2020.

Patriotic Alternative. This organisation was founded in 2019 and is led by Mark Collett, former leader of the British National Party youth organisation, and by Laura Towler (Deputy Leader). This organisation is ethno-nationalist, and close to neo-Nazism. For this party, the issue around the refusal of migration is a 'demographic issue' to be understood as the preservation of a certain percentage of 'white Britons' in the United Kingdom. This assertion of a racial conception of nationality is quite different compared to most groups that perceive migration above all as a religious and cultural threat. Since its creation, the group's repertoire of action seems to be focused on

---

[22] 'Britain First fined £44,000 over electoral law breaches' [Online: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/16/britain-first-fined-electoral-law-breaches-electoral-commission]   Accessed   25 May 2021.

[23] Hope not Hate, *ibid.*

[24] Trottier, Daniel. 2017. 'Digital Vigilantism as Weaponisation of Visibility', *Philosophy and Technology*, 30(1): pp. 52–64.

community building: hikes, rubbish collection, video game tournaments. The only social movement action on the subject of migration has been a video banner drop, but the migratory issue is very important for the group, which runs a specific website on the subject, 'We were never asked',[25] and the member of the leadership that we interviewed conceives it as a single-issue organisation whose main field of action is 'demographics'.

Single-issue organisations

Social movement activities around the migratory situation in the UK are also carried out by single-issue organisations. These organisations are small structures with a few activists and have a localised scope of action. They present the particularity of organising specifically around migration, and more precisely in relation to a specific aspect of migration: small boat crossings in Dover, a specific camp and marriage fraud. Several of these single-issue organisations engaged in social movement activity in the period from spring 2020 to spring 2021.

The first was **South East Coastal Defence** led by Elaine Renton. It is based in Romney Marsh, not far from Dover. Its primary objective is to put forward demands for the closure of the borders. Its main actions are leafleting, patrolling (not very developed) and participation in demonstrations.

Little Boats, led by Jeremie Davies, is another single-issue organisation that organises in relation to small boat crossings. In addition to numerous tweets on Twitter, the stated objective of this group, which claims around 20 members, is the investigation and exposure of illegal activities around migration in Dover. Its action takes the form of a citizens' investigation into criminal networks organising crossings between France and the UK (coastal surveillance, tailing supposed traffickers). The group has been raising funds in order to buy a small boat to patrol the Channel.

Stop UK Marriage Fraud, led by Michelle Nawar, focuses specifically on marriage fraud: foreign men who meet women online and take advantage of their vulnerability to obtain papers, exploit them financially and abandon them. Activists of this organisation participate in demonstrations and actions in Dover.

Another group is **Protest against Penally Camp**. It specifically organises against the establishment of a camp hosting asylum seekers in Penally (Wales). Its leader and spokesperson is Darren Edmundson. This group has led a specific campaign around the demand for the closure of the camp, with grassroots mobilisation of the population and demonstrations. This has links to the local elected representative of UKIP, Neil Hamilton, member of the Welsh Senned Cymru who acts as the institutional relay for the group's activities.

---

[25] 'We Were Never Asked' [Online: https://wewereneverasked.co.uk/home] Accessed 25 May 2021.

Finally, **Migration Watch UK** holds a specific place in the field of single-issue organisations. This does not organise or engage in protest actions. On the contrary, it produces studies that intend to produce an alternate factual discourse and framing on migration. This is similar to many actors of social movements against migration in countries such as Italy or the United States.[26] This includes detailed reports on the social and economic impacts of migration on land reclamation in Britain or a count of small boat crossings of the English Channel. Migration Watch UK claims to be solely concerned with migratory issues and does not support any political party. However, one of its founders, Oxford University Emeritus Professor David Coleman, is a controversial figure. He has been criticised for his membership of the Galton Institute, is in favour of eugenicism, and funds birth reduction programmes in Ethiopia.[27] David Coleman is also the author of a demographic model predicting that by 2060 white Britons will become a minority unless a drastic restriction on immigration is implemented swiftly.[28]

Video activism

Another set of individual activists with significant audiences on social media are self-styled video activists. They film, and then post on social media, images of migrants arriving in Dover. Their objective is to stream online everything that happens: small boat crossings as well as social movement activity such as demonstrations. The phenomenon of video activism constitutes an emerging trend in social movements, which has also been witnessed in the French Yellow Vest movement (*Fly Rider*, *Oliv Oliv*, *Eric Drouet*).

If their practices can sometimes border on digital vigilantism as they implement activities of surveillance, their actions should not be reduced to this dimension. Quite the contrary; their position is a mix between social movement activity and journalism: they do not adhere to journalist deontology and phrasing – however, they provide footage and live coverage. The first category of images is typically the factual documentation of the crossings: the number of people arriving each day and how they are received – this belongs to the construction of alternative factual discourses around migration and attempts to make the phenomenon more visible, similar to the work of

---

[26] Simonneau, Damien, Castelli Gattinara, Pietro. 2019. 'Prendre part aux logiques d'exclusion: Les mobilisations anti-migrants en France, en Italie et aux États-Unis', *Critique internationale*, 3(3): pp. 105–24.
[27] 'David Coleman' [Online: https://www.spi.ox.ac.uk/people/david-coleman] Accessed 25 May 2021.
[28] Coleman, David. 2010. 'Projections of the Ethnic Minority Populations of the United Kingdom 2006–2056', *Population and Development Review*, 36(3): pp. 441–86.

Migration Watch UK. Video activists give visibility to social movement activities: rallies during trials, demonstrations around barracks but also protests. They also play a mobilising role: the 5 September 2020 demonstration was initially called by 'Little Veteran' and widely shared on social media.[29] Similarly, the demonstration in defence of the statues of the Lads and Vets in July 2020, which brought together several thousand people, initially originated from a call by Tommy Robinson,[30] former English Defence League leader turned video activist, before being followed up by social movement organisations such as the DFLA (Democratic Football Lads Alliance).

As far as the situation in Dover is concerned, several important video activists can be distinguished. The first is a group of four video activists who call themselves the 'migrant hunters': Little Veteran, Active Patriot, Steve Laws and Tyrant Finder UK. Their videos and social media postings are mainly centred around the situation in Dover, but not exclusively. They also broadcast demonstrations in London against Covid-19 restrictions as well as demonstrations demanding the deportation of persons convicted in grooming gang scandals. If their main objective is increasing the visibility of small boat crossings, they provide links for these videos with commentaries, and offer a political framing within the field of civic nationalism, linking Islam, terrorism and illegal immigration.

This group, which has managed to reach a very high level of notoriety on social media, does not have exclusivity on video activism on migration. Activists such as Darren Edmundson from the campaign 'Protest against Penally Camp' has shot and broadcast videos on his YouTube channel in order to publicise demonstrations, the camp itself and moments of tension with agents of the private security company guarding the camp. Chris Johnson, based in the South-East of England, has documented small boat crossings on a daily basis, but unlike the 'migrant hunters' offers a very limited political framing, as he mainly documents the crossings. The migratory situation in Dover has also been addressed by video activists covering a wider range of themes, making immigration one of the several themes in their video production. This is the case of John Lawrence, a Manchester-based activist who produced numerous videos on immigration and occasionally travelled to Dover for banner drops or demonstrations.

[29] 'Port of Dover is brought to a standstill by far-right groups' [Online: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/05/port-of-dover-is-brought-to-a-standstill-by-far-right-groups] Accessed 25 May 2021.
[30] Tommy Robinson withdrew his support for the demonstration a few days before it actually happened: 'Tommy Robinsons' call for June 13 2020 demonstration' [Online: https://twitter.com/i/status/1269890787661303808] Accessed 25 May 2021.

Repertoires of action

The mobilisations around Dover were not the consequence of a single social movement organisation, nor of a coalition that organised a more or less unified campaign around a common frame. During the period between April 2020 and April 2021, a series of actors mobilised around the issue in a dispersed and unco-ordinated way. Groups integrated the situation in Dover into their repertoire of action quite diversely. Political organisations included the migration situation in their overall political framing of the situation. They articulated their actions around Dover and facilities hosting asylum seekers with other issues and campaigns such as Islam, coronavirus restrictions or grooming gangs. In contrast, single-issue actors focused on a specific aspect of the situation and constructed a counter-narrative around it. The number of activists engaged in these activities was quite small: ranging from several dozen to several hundred (for the most important demonstration in Dover on 5 September 2020). But it is above all on social media that the action of activists finds discursive space. This remained the case despite having their access to social media platforms hindered by the move to deplatform far-right groups, accentuated by the attack on the Capitol on 6 January 2021 by Donald Trump supporters.[31] Therefore, the situation in Dover was not a focal point in which these social movements acted in concert, but rather a political issue on which the far-right narrative was shaped by a series of actors varying in size, repertoire of action and territorial dimension.

In fact, the repertoire of action of these different groups can be broken down into several elements:

First of all, the various actors organised demonstrations in the town of Dover but also around the camps and hotels housing asylum seekers. These were held at regular intervals but generally attracted few participants. For example, the demonstration organised by the For Britain Movement outside a hotel housing asylum seekers attracted between 20 and 30 participants.[32] Similarly, according to the BBC, the demonstration organised in front of the Penally Camp in Wales in autumn 2020 attracted more than 55 participants.[33] The demonstration of 5 September 2020, called by the video activist Little Veteran, is the one that brought together the largest numbers: around 400 participants. However, this is still a far cry from the thousands of people who attended the freedom of speech demonstration in

---

[31] 'Where the far right is meeting now' [Online: https://slate.com/podcasts/what-next-tbd/2021/01/deplatforming-far-right-facebook-twitter] Accessed 25 May 2021.
[32] Hope not Hate, *ibid.*
[33] 'Penally asylum camp protest: Man and woman arrested' [Online: https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-54583888] Accessed 25 May 2021.

March 2018,[34] the EDL protests[35] or the mobilisation in defence of the Lads and Vets statues in June 2020.

The small numbers mobilised might suggest that, as in a classic social movement model, these low turnouts would demobilise more than anything else. However, this is not the case: despite these low numbers, these demonstrations mobilised others in the online space. As a result, a larger audience was secured and thereby opened the possibility of wider and more direct influence on public opinion. For instance, the audiences of different Telegram channels can be measured using Telemetrio, and their reach is between dozens of thousands a month and hundreds of thousands. Take Britain First: their 24 posts a day were each viewed on average 4,227 times in the week between 7 August and 14 August 2021.[36]

In order to reach wider audiences, actors also deployed the repertoire of 'spectacular' social media vigilantism: they staged actions related to vigilantism such as patrols, security interventions and more general actions designed to render 'deviant' acts visible. In Dover, and in relation to migration issues on British territory, three types of social media vigilantism can be observed: staging patrols, building an investigation around the criminal actions of smugglers and the practice of 'exposure', which belongs to the field of digital vigilantism.[37]

Finally, another element identified by Castelli Gattinara and Simonneau in their study of anti-migrant mobilisations in France, Italy and in the US[38] was the construction of alternative knowledge aimed at giving a 'factual' basis to anti-immigration discourse. The first modality was implemented by Migration Watch UK: the production of knowledge with claims to scientific objectivity – statistics on Channel crossings and the production of reports on the impact of migration on the UK. The Patriotic Alternative website 'We were never asked' also presented a number of statistical data purporting to predict that white Britons will become an ethnic minority by 2060.[39]

The second type of factual discourse by these actors was the production of images, mainly by video activists (photos and videos). The aim was to make Channel crossings visible. While the approach was similar, the produced content

[34] 'Thousands march in "free speech" protest led by rightwing figures' [Online: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/06/thousands-of-far-right-protesters-march-in-london-in-support-of-free-speech] Accessed 25 May 2021.

[35] Pilkington, Hilary. 2016. *Loud and Proud: Passion and Politics in the English Defence League*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

[36] 'Britain First' [Online: https://telemetr.io/en/channels/1440870040-britainfirst] Accessed 19 August 2021.

[37] Loveluck, Benjamin. 2016. 'Le vigilantisme numérique, entre dénonciation et sanction: Auto-justice online et agencements de la visibilité', *Politix*, 115: pp. 82–94.

[38] Simonneau, Castelli Gattinara, *ibid*.

[39] 'We Were Never Asked' [Online: https://wewereneverasked.co.uk/home] Accessed 25 May 2021.

was different – the production of images, the gaze of the video activists, all deemed essential in making the phenomenon visible. Fabian Virchow highlights the importance of the image in far-right politics, as does Michael Rasmussen when he analyses Donald Trump's communication. According to him, far-right politics are not using images in order to push forward their ideas.[40] On the contrary the essence of its politics is image rather than discourse: to show a phenomenon is to confer it existence, as the video activist Steve Laws phrases it on his personal website:

> I suppose the easiest way to explain would be to go back to my first video I uploaded. It was a poor-quality video but what it showed was roughly 30 illegal immigrants being loaded onto coaches ready to be transported to hotels. The video was seen by over a million people on social media, this led me to believe that an awful lot of people was completely unaware that this was happening. … Myself and others who constantly slung out the content forced the mainstream media to report on this issue.[41] [so he claims]

Significantly, the mobilisation of far-right actors around small boat crossings between France and England is different from previous years. Indeed, in 2016, in Dover, the main demonstration organised by far-right groups led to large-scale clashes between anti-fascist protesters and anti-migrant demonstrators: throwing of bricks, stones, smoke bombs and numerous fights.[42] Although some scuffles between police and demonstrators broke out during the demonstration on 5 September 2020, they were not on the same scale as January 2016. More generally, the use of violence does not appear to be part of the repertoire of action of these demonstrations. Thus, unlike in Calais, there were no acts of halo violence as part of the performative social media vigilantism. This use of non-violent social movement tactics can be explained by several factors. First, a change in actors: it was not the same groups that mobilised in January 2016. The 2016 demonstration was organised by the North-West Infidels, a group whose members can be described as neo-Nazi hooligans,[43] and by National Action, a political organisation dissolved for its support of the murder of Labour MP Jo Cox.[44] These actors were no longer present in 2020–2021. Moreover, according to Gareth Harris[45], other factors also explain this abandonment of violence. The first would be

---

[40] Rasmussen, Michael. 2019. *La contre-révolution de Trump*. Paris: Divergences.

[41] 'Why I report on illegal immigration' [Online: https://stevelawsreport.co.uk/why-i-report-on-illegal-immigration/] Accessed 25 May 2021.

[42] 'Angleterre: Heurts entre anti et pro-immigration à Douvres' [Online: https://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/hauts-de-france/angleterre-heurts-entre-anti-et-pro-immigration-douvres-917397.html] Accessed 25 May 2021.

[43] Pilkington, 2016, ibid.

[44] 'Neo-Nazi group National Action banned by UK home secretary' [Online: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/12/neo-nazi-group-national-action-banned-by-uk-home-secretary] Accessed 25 May 2021.

[45] Interview with Gareth Harris on 21 December 2020.

utilitarian in the sense that Ted Gurr gives to the term.[46] Faced with numerous and determined anti-fascist opponents, the confrontations would not necessarily turn to the advantage of the far-right activists, potentially leading to a fiasco as in Liverpool in 2016[47] and in London in 2020. Moreover, there are also political reasons that may explain this non-use of violence: the mobilisation campaigns of far-right groups were hybrid campaigns, attempting to embed far-right activists in local communities through the single issue of migration. In this context, the use of violent tactics could have a demobilising effect, a phenomenon that was observed in Calais, in particular in the aftermath of the patrols of 'local residents' around the Calais Jungle (see the chapter on Calais).

A final series of actions was carried out by Patriotic Alternative. Beyond occasional banner drops and leafleting actions, most of the actions were undertaken from a 'community-building' perspective. Its leader considers that the 'White British' majority is the only community that does not have a communitarian life as such; PA's action goes beyond politics in the sense that most of the activities are aimed at building a 'White British' community: hiking, video game tournaments, collecting waste on natural sites, helping to report burglars, but also helping each other to write CVs and cover letters. This community-building action was justified by the organisation's leader. Collett stressed the need to build group cohesion, which he believes was lacking in all major British nationalist parties such as the BNP and UKIP. This kind of repertoire of action, from a structure that defines itself as an 'organisation' and not a political party, is best understood as a reinterpretation of the categories of 'us' and 'them', of the friend/enemy categories of the political scientist Carl Schmitt.[48] Building a 'white British' camp does not involve the practice of political struggle against enemies, but the implementation of a community – an 'us' delimited by adherence to the ethno-nationalist project. These positive practices construct the 'we' that would then allow the political struggle to be conducted:

> And now, we're aiming to bring people together but our movement isn't just about democracy, it's not just about standing in an election, it's something far greater. It's more of a community-based movement.

> Now, while we do believe in electioneering, our primary focus is building a community of people who are like-minded people who get on with each other. … I think we stand out from right wing, other right-wing political movements, based on the fact that we are a community first, that we bring people together …

> Those people find friends, some people have found their wives and husbands at these events. This year we'll be having some of our first patriotic alternative babies being born … We're far more than just a political movement, we are a social movement, we are a

---

46 Gurr, Ted. 1971. *Why Men Rebel*. Boston: Princeton University Press.
47 'Far-right Group North West Infidels gather in Liverpool' [Online: https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/far-right-group-north-west-10959063] Accessed 25 May 2021.
48 Schmitt, Carl. 2009. *La notion de politique: Théorie du partisan*. Paris: Flammarion.

> community-based movement … we have book reviews, we do gaming nights, we do, as I said, hiking, fitness, all of these things are things that we're engaging because we're not just about people going out and putting out leaflets, trying to win elections we're about building a genuine community.

> … every other ethnic group here in the West has a community-based movement to represent their interests and I've got absolutely no problem with that. If the black community wants to come together and have a community-based movement, fair enough, the Jewish community come together, they've got a community-based movement, the Muslim community, the Hindu community, but I think that people of European descent should be allowed to have communities-based movements too. That should not be closed off to them and that's what we are running.[49]

Although the substance of Patriotic Alternative's political discourse is similar in its designation of an enemy external to the national body, the proposal for the construction of a political body is very different from usual far-right discourses: instead of affirming an 'us' defined by solely by the threat of the enemy, Patriotic Alternative intends to construct the 'us' (defined on ethno-nationalist grounds) through practices of metapolitical social linkage, allowing, according to the leadership member we interviewed, a cohesion superior to that of the other British nationalist formations.

Social movement framing and political ideologies

How can the claims, framing and ideologies of social movement actors be understood? This social movement activity intends to reach out to members of the public who do not belong to the immediate sphere of the far right. The communication of actors can be analysed using the theory of frames. Frames are interpretative schemas that allow individuals to 'locate, perceive, identify and label' the social world.[50] Social movement organisations identify a problem (diagnosis framing), a way to address it (prognostic framing) and invoke the need to act (motivational framing). Their conjunction forms a 'collective action framing', i.e. 'a set of beliefs and representations oriented towards action'.[51] Furthermore, it is necessary to add that framings are distinct from ideologies as defined by Mannheim[52] in the sense that they are voluntarily reduced to the identification of a problem, the need to act and a means of addressing it – allowing actors from different political currents to be brought together around this voluntarily minimalist framing. In order to better

---

[49] Interview with Mark Collett on 11 May 2021.
[50] Fillieule, Olivier, Mathieu, Lilian, Péchu, Cécile. 2009. *Dictionnaire des mouvements sociaux*. Paris: Les Presses de Sciences Po., p 30.
[51] *Ibid.*: 32.
[52] Mannheim, Karl. 1936. *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co.

understand this process, the actors' discourses will be examined as constituting two sets of frames.

The first is the narrow framing specific to the migratory issue, which crystallises around small boat crossings in Dover and ultimately relies on mechanisms similar to those that present immigrants as disaffiliated individuals in the sense that Robert Castel give the term,[53] unknown to the community and therefore potentially criminogenic – and who would be entitled to 'luxury hotels' to which indigenous members of the national community, such as 'vets', would be deprived.

Second, this narrow framing of immigration, which can be primarily understood as a social movement framing, will be contextualised (in different ways) by the actors of these movements in a narrative linked to the political discourse of the far right. The migratory issue would be typically connected to other issues that are also the focus of movement mobilisations, such as Islam, grooming gangs and so on.

Two further analytical distinctions can be used to better characterise these discourses. The first is the distinction made by Cas Mudde, who divides the far right into two subgroups according to their compatibility with liberal democracy. For Mudde, the far right has an extremist wing, the so-called 'extreme right', and a more moderate, 'radical-right' populist wing. The extreme right's perspective is geared towards the creation of a post-democratic, authoritarian nationalist regime and it often engages in political violence. In contrast, the radical right accepts the general framework of liberal democracy even if it questions certain aspects of it, notably in terms of fundamental freedoms, while pushing forward claims for full popular sovereignty.[54]

The second distinction of interest is that between civic nationalism and ethno-nationalism, which is based mainly on characterisation of the national body and, in particular, the danger posed by the 'enemies' of the people. Ethno-nationalism, in the historical lineage of the British extreme right (BUF, NF, BNP), is based on an ethno-racial vision of the British nation. The latter is defined above all on racial and biological grounds in connection with an anchorage in the British Isles and the culture attached to it. The danger posed by immigration to this current is the prospect of a demographic change which would see white Britons becoming a minority or even disappear.

Civic nationalism, which emerged from the counter-jihad movement, presents another conception of the national body. Its community can be defined above all by the cultural adherence to civilisational values characteristic of the West: Enlightenment, rationality, human rights, secularism and, for some,

---

[53] Castel, Robert. 1999. *Les métamorphoses de la question sociale*. Paris: Folio.
[54] Mudde, Cas. 2019. *The Far Right Today*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Christian values. This national community, close to the conception of the nation developed by Ernest Renan,[55] is not defined on ethnic or racial grounds but on cultural grounds – adherence to national and Western values guarantees the integration of individuals from other backgrounds. This conception of the nation is also compatible with the French conception of nationality, which is granted on the basis of acquisition of the French language and adherence to republican values. However, what makes this brand of civic nationalism specific and places it within the field of the far right is the belief in the existence of a worldwide fight to the death between Islam and Western civilisation, which manifests in international relations (international terrorism, Israeli–Palestinian conflict) as well as in the internal situation: Muslim immigrants are believed to not be assimilable and their objective is held to be to establish Islamic supremacy in the West. Immigration would be the marker of this civilisational peril in the sense that it would favour the Muslim invasion, potentially leading to a great population change sometimes called the 'Great Replacement'.[56]

It becomes possible to classify the actors into two main groups, by cross-referencing the variables of civic nationalism and ethno-nationalism on the one hand and the radical right and the extreme right wing on the other. The first and most important group of actors, which is simultaneously positioned in the field of the radical right and civic nationalism includes most single-issue organisations, video activists and the For Britain Movement (although the For Britain Movement does include former members of the ethno-nationalist BNP). The second, smaller group is, on the other hand, positioned at the intersection of the extreme right wing and ethno-nationalism, and includes groups such as Britain First and Patriotic Alternative.

Narrow framing: immigration, dangers and competition with domestic national vulnerable publics

The framing of immigration relies on two elements. The first is the illegality of the migratory process. This tends to frame migrants arriving in Dover as individuals whose status is ontologically illegal. The second element is the lack of knowledge about incoming migrants and, given the impossibility of prior checks, raises the possibility that some migrants may be potential criminals or terrorists. According to activists, not every immigrant is a terrorist, but they oppose the risk that the uncontrolled nature of the migration process supposedly poses to the British public. As mentioned above in the fourth chapter regarding the social reaction to

---

[55] Renan, Ernest. 1882. 'What is a Nation?' cf. Chaim, Gans (ed.), *The Limits of Nationalism*, 2003. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[56] Macklin, Graham. 2019. *Failed Führers: A History of Britain's Extreme Right*. London: Routledge.

migration, it is possible to draw a parallel between these discourses and those in the 17th and 18th century regarding vagrants outside of local communities, who were not eligible for assistance and, because of their outsider status, would pose a potential threat to the local community..[57] Thus E. tells us:

> I have been called a xenophobe a million times. [This is] Absolute rubbish and I keep saying to people it is not about skin colour, it is not about race, religion, creed or skin colour, it is about national security and that's what they don't get. [migrants have] no fingerprints, no Interpol checks, no police checks, no background checks at all, no passports or identification for people, and these people are flooding into our country, a lot of them are just disappearing.[58]

J., head of a single-issue organisation, presents a similar viewpoint:

> We are not targeting the people in those boats, because they are human beings, … The thing is, our problem is we have people arriving on our shores that we don't know anything about, and it is totally different if they were to come here via the normal channels … We are not complaining about that, but we are complaining about those people who we don't know anything about. … I'm more angry at the government than the migrants themselves. If they are genuinely coming from a war zone that's totally different. We had it in Vietnam in years gone by, the '70s, people came here and started new lives because they were being killed. … But this is whole-sale usering, this is economic migrancy on a massive scale, and as we just said earlier, they need to be deported. But this has to be a no-go area.[59]

Similarly, K., activist in a single-issue organisation, says he is not anti-migrant but rather opposed to uncontrolled immigration policies:

> We are not anti-migrants, obviously, we are anti our government allowing people who we know nothing about coming into the country. [If] they were coming through the correct routes, not coming over illegally, right, I would support them, I would be there, I would give them my old clothes, I'd be there giving them food, but they're not. They're doing everything illegally. I'm not racist, I'm not far right at all, but they're doing it as the wrong routes and they're coming over here and the crime rate has gone up by about 80 per cent I think at the minute since the migrants have been there. Yeah, that's my views on that.[60]

The issue of government assistance is also juxtaposed with the position of those Britons that need assistance. This can also found in Hilary Pilkington's research that revealed that the feeling of competition between white British and immigrants in securing access to social housing and benefits was a key driver behind support for the EDL.[61] It is also worth making reference to the work of Olivier Schwartz,

[57] Castel, *ibid*.
[58] Interview with E. on 20 December 2020.
[59] Interview with J. on 18 October 2020.
[60] Interview with K. on 13 October 2020.
[61] Pilkington, 2016, *ibid*.

who describes the social perception of the French working classes as characterised by a 'triangular social consciousness'.[62] According to Schwartz, theirs is an identity defined in relation to the 'they' of the dominant classes but also to the 'they' of immigrants who are precarious and in need of assistance. They are likewise perceived as potentially criminogenic and as competition for access to the benefits system. It is in this perspective that the discourse on migrants must be understood. Furthermore, migrants are set side by side with army veterans, with the latter deemed to be worthy of assistance and yet denied it, whereas the former are deemed as unworthy and yet benefit. In this perspective, and in a context of scarcity of resources where it would not be possible to provide for everyone, priority should be given to people who are legitimate by virtue of their nationality, and even more so to veterans who have fought for the national community. Thus J. told us that:

> I think one of the big problems we have, … is the homeless in Britain. I am sure it is the same in France. We have a lot of members who are British, who worked … or for whatever reason whether they were in the military or had drug or alcohol problems, they are on the streets and to us that is wrong. … The other thing is we noticed a great deal of the migrants coming here, a lot of them have the latest mobile phones that we can't afford, a lot of them. We see it. We saw it, you know, the other … last week, and you will see them and you wonder 'who are these people and why are we putting them in hotels', and some of them have thousands and thousands of euros on them.[63]

D., an activist from a single-issue organisation, thought that migration is best explained by the draw of the British benefits system:

> That's my opinion, yeah, the benefit system. I think they believe they come over here and they'll have a better life. They don't have to work at the minute; they're getting benefit, asylum seeker benefit and I believe they're also working illegally.[64]

K. made a similar point, saying that the British population is dissatisfied with migration because migrants:

> Are given free housing, healthcare, priority treatment over an estimated 80,000 British living on the streets including war veterans.[65]

Anne Marie Waters, leader of The For Britain Party, shared this view:

> The vast majority don't work, so we are told they are paying tax. Give me a break! Give me a break! The benefit bill just gets bigger, and bigger, and bigger. … the vast majority do not work, will not work, so the idea that it's an economic opportunity

---

[62] Collovald, Anne, Schwartz, Olivier. 2006. 'Haut, bas, fragile: Sociologies du populaire', *Vacarme*, 37: pp. 19–26.
[63] Interview with J. on 18 October 2020.
[64] Interview with D. on 25 November 2020.
[65] Interview with K. on 13 October 2020.

is ridiculous. We are paying through the nose for this. We have 13,000 British veterans sleeping on the streets in this country. People who put their life on the line to fight for their country and to do, at the behest of a corrupt government, to put their lives on the line for a corrupt government. 13,000 of them sleep on the streets in this country every night. Migrants arrive, strangers, and are housed in 4-star hotels by our government. Well look, if you, look, if we are talking about immigration of people coming in to work in the financial district or to work in technology or medicine and sciences, that would be fine. That would be an economic addition to the UK. This is not what is happening in the vast majority of cases. The vast majority are coming here as refugees, asylum seekers, not neither. They meet the definition of neither and will spend the bulk of their life on benefits, so I don't understand. So, what we are doing is taking millions of people from these cultures, third world cultures, and putting them into Europe. Now a lot of them are illiterate in their own language, much less in ours and this has been, the benefit bill is astronomical. The vast majority of people who come to the UK from these countries don't work, will never work.[66]

Activists do not simply develop a discourse on immigration at Dover and small boat crossings. This issue is linked with related political issues.

Broad framing: connecting issues

The first is the security threat supposedly posed by Islam. For example, D. linked Islamist terrorist attacks in the UK to refugees:

> The Manchester Bomber, the Arena Bomber, the Arianna Grande Bomber, his parents was refugees, asylum seekers from Libya, and they were linked to extreme groups already, and there has been dozens of other attacks done by refugees and immigrants, and I believe we are getting too many in, way too many, and that's why the crime figures have gone up across the board in England on particular crimes.[67]

Anne Marie Waters shared this point of view and articulated it with a negative feeling towards Islam itself, and added that she was specifically against immigration originating from Muslim countries:

> I am very, very clear that I don't like Islam. I think it's a dangerous, violent religion and I've studied it in depth for years. … as someone who knows the religion, has studied the Quran, has studied the Hadith, the Sunnah, the Muhai, … I know that it's a violent religion and it's a massive threat to our safety and our freedom, and that is proven every day. For that reason, I don't believe there should be immigration from Muslim societies into ours. We are not compatible. There are individuals, of course, but as a collective. I'm not suggesting every individual Muslim is the same, that would be absurd, but as a collective, we are not compatible. Free democracies, for example, France is not compatible with Pakistani culture. … So, what we've done

---

[66] Interview with Anne Marie Waters on 27 November 2020.
[67] Interview with D. on 25 November 2020.

is move millions of people from the Muslim world into Europe, without any regard for the cultural differences, the religious differences, the difference in values. We were told that everyone was the same, which is an absolute lie, a blatant lie, and an absurdity and now we are reaping the reward of that. People are being beheaded in France for cartoons is the reward of that. You cannot, you simply cannot put oil and water together and expect it to mix.

No this may sound trivial to you, but it is just an example of how different we are. We've had take-aways, fast food, run by Pakistanis, for example, where we've found faecal matter, human faeces around the place … even our toilet habits are so spectacularly different, that we ended up with take-away venues being found to have human faecal matter strewn around the place … What I am trying to say is we are completely different.[68]

The civilisational danger posed by Islam is also linked to sexuality. The sexuality of Muslims, driven by different cultural values, is deemed a threat to British women. Thus M., organiser of a single-issue social movement organisation, told us that:

I've obviously been around a lot of Muslims myself, and they are, some of them can be quite fanatical about their religion and I do think that the extremists talk within religion itself. Muslims basically believe that Western woman are whores and this is across, and the two reasons are, as I say, because I have also worked in the Middle East as I have said, the two reasons are because we don't cover up and we generally have relationships before marriage.[69]

She also established a link between marriage fraud, immigration, Islam and terrorism:

And men overseas, they basically groom them online, online grooming, sort of like a romance scam, sort of grooming … basically are really full on, so they are like, they become the only person in their life so, you know, if you look up the term love bombing, you will see it in English what that means. Rachid Redouane, which was the first London Bridge bomber, his estranged wife, Charisse O'Leary, was linked to one of my marriage fraud groups, so I believe that she was a victim of marriage fraud and as I say, he was a failed asylum seeker, and I do believe that he was on fake *identity*. … Terrorism is linked to the marriage fraud. Obviously, what is going on in Dover is linked to marriage fraud.[70]

Similarly, D. considered that adult asylum seekers would have no problem having sex with 12-year-old girls. He emphasised the need for education to fill that cultural gap:

Educate them on our laws, obviously. Obviously they thought it was OK to sleep with a 12 year old, have sexual intercourse with a 12 year old, when that's not the

---

[68] Interview with Anne Marie Waters on 27 November 2020.
[69] Interview with M. on 10 December 2020.
[70] Interview with M. on 10 December 2020.

case at all. We asked one of them saying, 'Do you know the legal age to have sex in this country?' and one of them turned around and said, 'Yes, it's 12 years old.' …[71]

Finally, for some activists (it is not the case for all of the interviewees), migration endangers Western civilisation.

The decline of the West

Some activists considered immigrants as fighters against Britain. If these comments by respondents seem extreme it is worth noting that they are held by members of single-issue social movement organisations, which tends to show that despite a relatively open position towards democratic institutions, some of them do view immigrants as an absolute enemy, an attitude that could be considered as belonging more to the extreme right wing rather than the radical right. This problematises the neat distinction between radical right and extreme right wing. One interviewee considered that the youth of migrants implied that they would be fighters and immigration is thereby considered part of a governmental design:

> Why is it only men and why are they taking over our army barracks? Are these …
> and why is it fighting age men from the age of 20 to 35 only allowed in? I don't know.
> I said, the people that are migrating into this country and taking over our army
> barracks they're at fighting age, 20 to 35 and ISIS said years ago that they will take
> over Europe and it looks like they're starting to. Now, are these men actually ISIS
> soldiers? We don't know. … Yeah, exactly, yeah, but is the government forced? Why
> is the government allowing all these in? … I don't really know.[72]

For Anne Marie Waters, only Western countries would undergo the demographic transformations caused by immigration:

> It seems to me that every Western white majority country is being transformed and
> this is what I said when I said it's not about – we're not living in a global world. Not
> all moving around. The traffic is coming in one direction from the rest of the world
> to the first world. That's what's happening. It's not the rest of us. Japan isn't changing.
> The West is changing.[73]

Another activist linked the migratory processes to a possible disappearance of the 'white race' planned in a New World Order plot in which the British government is supposed to participate, the Coudenhove-Kalergi conspiracy:[74]

---

[71] Interview with D. on 25 November 2020.
[72] Interview with D. on 25 November 2020.
[73] Interview with Anne Marie Waters on 27 November 2020.
[74] 'Exposed: For Britain and the "White Genocide" conspiracy theory' [Online: https://www.hopenoth ate.org.uk/2019/04/18/exposed-for-britain-and-white-genocide-conspiracy-theory/] Accessed 25 May 2021.

Coudenhove-Kalergi was an Austrian, I think, and he came out with this, it is literally called the Coudenhove-Kalergi plan … every single thing of this seems to be aimed at getting rid of the white man, and the thing is I didn't actually know until the other day, if you Google … it up whites only take up I think it is between 8 and 9 per cent of the global population? … Whites are the minority on earth. … I was really shocked. I had no idea, you know, the way all of this anti-white stuff is going on … We've got Muslim-only housing in London under Sadiq Khan. … This is blatant racism against whites in a predominantly white country, and our government are doing nothing about it. They want to depopulate the world, I mean you must have seen 'The Great Reset' … you must know about Bill Gates wanting to depopulate via a vaccine? … The invasion continues, they are trying to wipe out the white man. … Coudenhove's plan was to flood Europe with people from the Middle East and from Africa, so that they breed with the white race so that there is one race on earth, and the whites need to be gone and it's all in this plan … There is an anti-white agenda and the British government are very much playing their part.[75]

Most discourses on immigration, especially from actors situated at the intersection of the radical right and civic nationalism, present the same lines of argument. These start with the illegality of immigration, highlight its uncontrolled and potential criminogenic character, and connect it to economic pressure on the benefit system, Islam, sexual peril and, for some of them, to an existential civilisational threat.

Peculiarities of ethno-nationalist discourse

The discourse of actors situated in the field of ethno-nationalism is somewhat different. Thus, Mark Collett, member of the leadership of Patriotic Alternative, considers that the problem with migration is not cultural but above all 'demographic'. Referring to the work of David Coleman, founder of Migration Watch UK, he considered that, due to the higher birth rates of immigrant communities (South Asian, Black African, Black Caribbean), white British people, although constituting the overwhelming majority of the population today, would become a minority within 40 years, in 2066. Moreover, contrary to the work of Professor Coleman, who considers that stopping immigration is a variable that may prevent this change, he asserts that immigrants have a much higher birth rate than white Britons, and that unless something is done quickly, in view of the changes in age groups, the process will very quickly become irreversible. He argues that an 'electoral and non-violent' political upsurge is needed and sets a target of about 90 to 95 per cent white British of the population as desirable for national cohesion.

---

[75] Interview with E. on 20 December 2020.

He does not specify how this demographic change would be achieved, which raises the prospect of potential ethnic cleansing in the United Kingdom:[76]

> That's where [David Coleman's work] we took that from, that's where that's from. … white people are not still the majority when it comes to younger ages and the interesting thing about that is not only they're not the majority when it comes to younger generation but the younger you look at the younger age bracket you're analysing, the smaller of the majority they become to the point where in certain areas the majority of people being born, well, there is no majority but the fact that the white Britons are a minority in terms of birth, so that tells you that the problem is actually … it's not actually a problem that can easily be solved. It's a problem that is very much embedded and there is a trend taking place and that trend is that we are an ageing population. The white Britons are an ageing population and that they are going to face a massive change in the near future and that change won't take until 2066 to actually occur in a meaningful way. …

> … for a long time, it was all a conspiracy theory. Now, the way my detractors talk about … this is very different. You actually now have people on YouTube who are saying white people, they are gonna be a minority in Britain, that they are already a minority in London, but those people celebrate that fact. So, you can find videos on YouTube where content creators are actually saying 'Yep, white people, already a minority in London, gonna be a minority in 2066' but they believe that's a good thing, they're celebrating.[77]

J-L, video activist, also adhered to this ethno-nationalist vision of politics. He considered himself to be of 'mixed race' as he is the son of a Jamaican immigrant who came as part of the Windrush generation and was also committed to the left (this dimension will be further examined in the section devoted to trajectories). He explained why he adheres to ethno-nationalism:

> We've got this Black Lives Matter thing going on and they always talk about transatlantic slavery … Black Lives Matter is now all white people are bad, that's how they are talk and Diane Abbott, she talks like that, David Lammy he talks like … doesn't … they generalise, they don't pick specific but generalise on white people, and half my family are white so if anyone thinks that I should be supporting Black Lives Matter, then I would say to them 'but what about my white family? What about my 50 per cent white family, what about them, now how do I treat them? And I am not going to treat them any less'.

> Do you know what I mean? I won't say, it angers me because as a mixed-race person, in the past six weeks I have seen one of my friends racially abused, a white friend of mine, I have seen this with my own eyes, and then I went to a protest where a black

---

[76] In the 2011 Census, the ethnic group of white Britons stands at around 80% of the population, so the objective of a population of 95% of white Britons would imply an important change: [Online: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/articles/ethnicityandnationalidentityinenglandandwales/2012-12-11/] Accessed on 25 May 2021.
[77] Interview with Mark Collett on 11 May 2021.

woman was saying an anti-white speech. … the white man is the enemy in the world in general, that's how the left make the white man out to be and, again, I have got a half-white family, I could trace my family back in England on my Mum's side, 22 generations. Not just like 5 or 10, 22 generations going back to, I think it goes back to 1300s, if not earlier, and I am not going to forget my other side of the family. I understand my heritage, my Dad was a great Jamaican, I talk about him a lot and, you know, I understand that, I understand the different culture in Jamaica and I have ate Jamaican food all my life …

I like … 'Patriotic Alternative'. … Because one of the things they do, they talk about demographics, right and I believe … it is not so much I have got a problem with Islam, but our leaders, and demographics is crucial to me because I have talked about Eastern European immigration … Oldham has some of the highest Romanian immigration in the country … In the primary schools now, it has come in it is about 40 per cent, it is about, in the Primary Schools it is about 50 per cent or more Eastern European kids, secondary schools are down at between 30 and 40 per cent. I think.

So, there is a big change coming and I am not saying they are all bad, but because we've had the doors wide open, I keep saying this, we've had all … we have not checked people. We have had lots of rubbish and criminals, you know, I mean there is a load of evidence … there is certain kinds of crimes, sex crimes, all this people trafficking and all that lot, that's all linked to Eastern Europeans mainly. … Patriotic Alternative want a majority white England. Now me, as a mixed-race nationalist, English nationalist, whatever you want to say, then I would have to agree in whoever's country you are if you want a majority of your people there you can. … I would be happy with a 90 per cent majority white English in the country, and I can even give you that 90 per cent if we stopped all this mass immigration, remember I am talking in the span of 20 years, the past 20 years I said, yeah? I did a video and the net migration statistics that the government wanted to bring in has always been higher, and all the politicians know this, it has been in the news before, and instead of having immigration of tens of thousands, it has been hundreds of thousands, so if we could just take this past 20 years then my England would go back to how I would want … I would be happy with a 90 per cent white England.[78]

This ethno-nationalist discourse is rather marginal in the framing of most actors. It certainly constitutes a minority and distinct discourse in the framings of migration within anti-migrant mobilisation.

Conclusion

Each actor's framing of the migratory issue has been positioned in a bi-varied space. The first axis is positioned to the radical right/extreme right-wing distinction, in relation to the positioning towards democracy and its virulence in relation to the figure of the enemy. On the one hand the extreme right wing marks an

---

[78] Interview with J-L on 4 September 2020.

RADICAL RIGHT

Chris Johnson

Little Boats

Migration Watch UK

Stop Uk
Marriage Fraud

Protest Against
Penally Camp

South East
Coastal Defence

Darren Edmundson

Steve Laws

**For Britain
Movement**

Active Patriot

ETHNONATIONALISM

CIVIC NATIONALISM

John Lawrence

**Patriotic
Alternative**

Britain First

EXTREME RIGHT WING
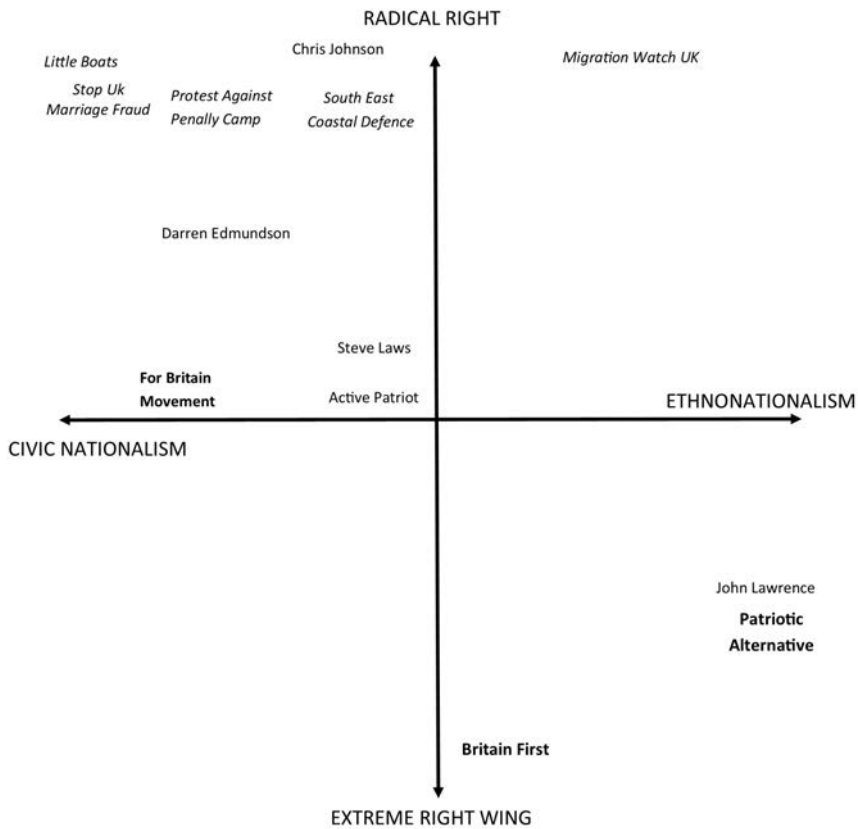
Table 6.2 Ideological positioning of social movement actors.

adhesion to a strongly authoritarian regime and on the other hand, the radical right accepts the framework of the parliamentary regime. The second axis relates to the civic nationalism/ethno-nationalism distinction.

As can be seen from this breakdown, several trends can be identified. Most social movement actors are part of the quadrant combining radical right and civic nationalism. They link immigration to Islam, terrrorism and women's and sexual minorities' rights, and present a relatively homogeneous political framing and discourse. This discourse presents a stronger intersubjectivity in the sense that Gerald Bronner gives to this term[79] vis-à-vis British public opinion, meaning the potential for exerting influence on public opinion is much stronger than from

[79] Bronner. Gerald. 2009. *La pensée extrême: Comment des hommes ordinaires deviennent des fanatiques*. Paris: Denoël.

other discourses. In addition, it will be seen further in the analysis of individual trajectories that a certain number of actors in this quadrant of social movement activity present similar trajectories starting with a Labour background, followed by involvement with UKIP.

The other pole, less important in numbers, is represented by Patriotic Alternative and video activist John Lawrence. They simultaneously combine an anchorage within the extreme right and a discourse centred on a racialised conception of the nation. It is also interesting to note that they both have a common point of origin, having been originally engaged in the BNP. This shows that actors that can be classified within the extreme right have been influenced by the legacy of radicalism embodied by the British National Party.[80]

Two actors appear isolated, however: Britain First and Migration Watch UK. Indeed, Migration Watch, which is a reference actor in the factual construction of the immigration framework, seems to fully accept the democratic game and to focus its communication solely on the migration issue without inserting it into a political discourse that could be related to the far right. It is only David Coleman's individual positioning in favour of eugenics and his work on demographic change that could position this organisation in the ethno-nationalist field. It should also be noted that Coleman's research is the main reference point for Mark Collett's claims concerning the demographic discourse of Patriotic Alternative, allowing it to be presented as 'scientific reality'.[81]

Britain First seems to be isolated from the other actors by its radical nature, its repertoire of action based mainly on performative vigilantism, but also its seemingly hostile relations with other actors. However, as we shall see, these distinctions which allow us to characterise groups are much less operative at the level of individual activist careers. Their commitment and proximities seem much more fluid than the ideological distinctions presented above.

Moreover, even though ethno-nationalist and civic nationalist conceptions of the nation may appear essentially different, they still present similar elements. According to these discourses, the national body would be threatened with cultural or biological dissolution by an enemy simultaneously external and internal. Facing this absolute peril, an authoritarian restoration, whether situated within the formal framework of a democratic state (radical right) or not (extreme right-wing), would be necessary. Without entering the debate as to whether any of these groups may be labelled as fascist or not, it is nevertheless worth remembering that the historian Robert Paxton, when asked about the possible return of the fascist phenomenon, remarked:

---

[80] Copsey, Nigel. 2007. 'Changing Course or Changing Clothes? Reflections on the Ideological Evolution of the British National Party 1999–2006', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 41(1): 61–82.
[81] 'We Were Never Asked' [Online: https://wewereneverasked.co.uk/home] Accessed 25 May 2021.

The most interesting current cases are not those where old shirts come out of the closet. We must remember with George Orwell that authentic fascisms come dressed in the patriotic symbols of their own country. Authentic fascism in the United States would be pious and anti-black; in Western Europe, secular and anti-Semitic, even anti-Muslim; and in Eastern Europe, religious and Slavophile. The setting depends on the local culture. It is better to pay attention to the functions performed by these new movements, and to the circumstances that might open up a space for them, rather than to look for traces of the rhetoric, programs, and aesthetic preferences of the early fascist movements of 1900. The right question is the one that is appropriate for the second and third stages of the development of fascisms: do these movements promise to restore unity, energy, and purity to a community that feels threatened by decadence and humiliation? Are they willing to do anything to fulfill this promise?[82]

[82] Paxton, Robert. 2004. *Le fascisme en action*. Paris: Le Seuil, p. 347.

7

Trajectories of Engagement

Understanding individual involvement in different types of collective action can be deepened by reflection on the trajectories of activist careers. This allows us to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the motivations of commitment, which can be usefully combined with analysis of practices (action repertoires) and the political framing of social movement issues (discourse analysis). Needless to say, the highlighting of certain elements of individual trajectories does not allow for generalisation: the fact that certain activists come from a Labour background is not a conclusion that can be generalised to the entire field of the British far right. However, these few trajectories do offer pause for thought. It is worth recalling that according to Eric Agrikoliansky, the analysis of trajectories adds above all a comprehensive dimension:

> To reason in terms of career implies, let us recall, a comprehensive aim whose ambition is to think of activism from the categories through which the actors reflect (in all senses of the term) their practices. Such a Weberian-inspired sociology does not, of course, imply the abdication of any desire for explanation (Max Weber speaks of 'comprehensive explanation').[1]

The first interesting element that emerges from our interviews is that many people (seven out of nine interviewees) did not become politicised through their participation in social movements against migration. On the contrary, this engagement comes after activist careers in other structures and a subsequent politicisation. Many interviewees have had long activist careers, and their actions against migration are best understood as linked to broader political commitments.

---

[1] Agrikoliansky, Eric. 2001. 'Carrières militantes et vocation à la morale: Les militants de la LDH dans les années 1980', *Revue française de science politique*, 51: pp. 45–54, at p. 46.

Reasons for engagement on migration issues

We begin with those with the least common profiles:

First of all, B., a member of Migration Watch UK, is employed by the think tank. For him, engagement is presented as a professional trajectory: after a PhD at the London School of Economics, he taught there and became a journalist. He was then hired by Migration Watch UK, where he has worked ever since. He presents his commitment as essentially professional and does not present any ideological or personal reasons for his engagement. Of course, the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, so this does not mean that there are no other reasons for his involvement, but in any case, these were not put forward in the presentation of his trajectory.

The second profile is that of M., who is responsible for what she calls the Stop UK Marriage Fraud campaign. Unlike B., whose trajectory is presented as a professional dynamic, it is her personal and emotional life, the end of her marriage, which was the driving force behind her commitment, the traumatic event being interpreted as a moral shock in the sense that Jasper gives to that term:[2]

> In December 2005 actually. I met an Egyptian National in Dubai. I was helping a friend. … I met Wahlid, who was Egyptian. …, to cut a long story short, I met him at work and I ended up marrying him and I brought him to the UK on a fiancé visa and I married him in the UK, and basically a month after his British passport, he left me. … He was coming back I thought. He used the excuse that he was going to be doing some diving and that because he was a commercial diver. … But he never came back. What his actual aim really was, he was basically going to marry somebody else, but he was still married to me. [..] That was obviously very devastating. You know, I tried to call the police and everything … I realised that marriage fraud wasn't recognised in the UK and very little was being done about it.[3]

The third profile is that of Mark Collett, member of the leadership of Patriotic Alternative. The trajectory of this college-educated activist is quite different. After being a member of the leadership of the British National Party, he stopped engaging in specific parties and focused on video activism for over a decade, before creating Patriotic Alternative, which he defines as a 'single-issue organisation' active on 'demographics':

> I got involved in politics actively when I was at the university around the year 2000. I got involved with a party that was then the biggest sort of anti-immigration voice at

---

[2] Jasper, James. 1998. 'The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions in and Around Social Movements', *Sociological Forum*, 13(3): pp. 397–424.
[3] Interview with M. on 10 December 2020.

the time in Britain, which is called the British National Party. I immediately became very active in that. I ran the youth wing and I went on to become the head of publicity in that organisation … I became a leading member at the British National Party and I was involved in their … the majority of the most high-profile victories around the country as the head of publicity.

Now, since the collapse of the British National Party, I left the British National Party in 2010 and after leaving the British National Party, I, then, spent a lot of time helping nationalist groups. Helping groups that I sort of knowingly agreed with on some levels, doing design work, helping them with fundraising, doing all the work to ensure that they did as well as possible …[4]

Labour background

Unlike the profile of Mark Collett, the matrix of the commitments of several activists is not located within the field of the far right. On the contrary, involvement in anti-migration social movement activism stems from longer trajectories of engagement. Surprisingly, several activists have been part of the Labour Party or at least originate from a family background aligned with this political party. The break with that alignment with Labour was caused by Labour's position on issues related to immigration or cultural practices. This is true for the case of E., who explains that she has voted for Labour all her life because she considered it to be the 'working man's party'.

I'm 57 … all my life I have voted Labour, …, I mean I was never into politics, … whenever I did vote, I voted Labour because my Dad told me a long time ago that they were the working man's party, and then it wasn't actually until the run up to the referendum in '16, that I started even getting into politics, but what I saw with Labour was that they're actually not the working man's party, they are racist, they hate whites, they hate Britain, they want open borders, you know.[5]

The break in this electoral alignment occurred during the Brexit referendum of 2016 when she started to view Labour as racist against 'whites' since it seemed in favour of open borders. This was also the case for J-L., who has a mixed-race background. His father is a Jamaican immigrant and a union activist, a member of the Labour Party. To begin with, J-L. voted Labour:

My Dad was a big inspiration to me because he was Jamaican, he came over on the Windrush, … My Dad came over here and he came over for a better life, and he just worked and he ended up being a union man and being a … voting for Labour. When I first voted for Labour my Dad took me to vote, and so I voted a couple of times.[6]

---

[4] Interview with Mark Collett on 11 May 2021.
[5] Interview with E. on 20 December 2020.
[6] Interview with J-L. on 4 September 2020.

J., an activist in a single-issue organisation, does not want to be defined in terms of left and right, and explains that he is a former member of the Labour Party:

> I can be right wing or left wing but I am basically, I was a member of the Labour Party, which is left wing, but the way I look at politics is it is strength but kindness.[7]

Finally, Anne Marie Waters, the leader of the For Britain Movement, a far-right political organisation, explains that she started her political career as a Labour Party activist:

> I was a Labour activist for nearly 10 years. … I used to be on the left. [But] It was Labour who did nothing about the rape gangs. It's Labour who's got behind all this illegal immigration. It's Labour that's behind all the censorship. It's Labour that's behind all the illegal immigration. It's Labour, it's Labour, it's Labour. It's rotten to the core. … It was becoming more extreme as I was in it. As I left, I left because of the hypocrisy on FGM – female genital mutilation. I was trying to get them to do something about it because I lived in an area with a high Somali population and we knew that FGM was happening on a regular basis, and I wanted to do something about it and I was silenced, I was shunned, I was. … I was told to stay quiet about it because we risked losing the Somali vote. … I could have been an MP by now. I could have if I had kept my mouth shut. I used to be in the Labour Party and I was told to shut up.[8]

She explained that she left the party because of the issue of female genital mutilation, an issue which she claims that the party refused to take a position on in order to preserve the Somali electorate. The engagement of former Labour supporters or members in far-right campaigns is consistent with Nigel Copsey's analysis that identified BNP electoral successes in the early 2000s in former Labour strongholds.[9]

UKIP as a common matrix

Beyond Labour, it is also UKIP that seems to be an important reference point in the activist trajectories. This is interesting because UKIP does not strictly fit within the field of the far right as it mobilised mainly around opposition to the European Union. It also played a very important role in the referendum campaign that saw the Brexit camp win, leading to the exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union in 2020. Fully in line with the political cleavage between communitarians and cosmopolitans,[10] UKIP has been less assertive on other issues even though

---

[7] Interview with J. on 18 October 2020.
[8] Interview with Anne Marie Waters on 27 November 2020.
[9] Copsey, Nigel. 2012. 'Sustaining a Mortal Blow? The British National Party and the 2010 General and Local Elections', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 46(1): 16–39.
[10] De Wilde, Pieter, Koopmans, Ruud, Merkel, Wolfgang, Strijbis Oliver, Zürn, Michael. 2019. *The Struggle Over Borders: Cosmopolitanism and Communitarianism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

it did adopt an increasingly anti Islam position under Pearson and increasingly became more radical right-wing populist.

It collapsed in 2018 amid leadership struggles and around the question of a potential shift to a full alignment to the positions of the far right. According to Evans and Mellon, the electoral support that UKIP has received in some elections, particularly European elections, was mainly due to the opposition of its voters to immigration.[11] These elements of UKIP's history are consistent with the positioning of activists for whom immigration is central. In addition, the commitment to this party has been a stage of their political journey, but it constitutes as much a point of convergence as it was a breaking point. This potentially explains the diversity of the modes of commitment and social movement activities they engage in currently. Indeed, several characterise their involvement in UKIP as marked by inner conflict, although the reasons for the ins and outs of these conflicts are not always explicit in the interviews. This is the case for E., who held responsibilities within the party before distancing herself from UKIP:

> I mean I was a member of UKIP, I was actually the Chairman of my local branch. Up until about a year and a half ago. But Nigel Farage, of course I was going to vote UKIP, and then a week or two before the election in 2017 this was, when Theresa May went into office, Farage withdrew a load of candidates and said, 'please only vote for the Tories this time', and so a lot of people voted Tory and so did I at that time. And then last year, before the actual General Election, he had the Brexit Party. The Brexit Party would have won by a massive majority, massive, and 2 weeks before the election until Farage pulled 120 candidates, why? Nigel Farage is a snake and a liar and he is anti-British. Even his children have German passports.[12]

For J-L., UKIP was also a point of passage, although he did not go directly from Labour to UKIP, as he also became close to the BNP after the 2001 Oldham riots, before joining UKIP in the wake of the referendum campaign. Here are some of the stages of his long political journey, also linked to his personal life and the tragedies he went through. It was moral shock that led to his engagement with the far right:

> I have seen a lot of change, political change. I have seen more immigration and I have seen crime come with immigration. I have seen the rise of drugs, particularly heroin … it affected my family. One of my sisters ended up taking drugs. She left three children with another sister …. I have seen more rise in alcoholism and drinking, especially in young people and I am a big disapprover. I disapprove of drinking when you are young. … A lot of the issues we have now, if the Labour Party would have dealt with them when they first come, so 30 years ago when the first … or 40 years when the first rape cases come, if they would have dealt with it

---

[11] Evans, Geoffrey, Mellon, Jonathan. 2019. 'Immigration, Euroscepticism, and the Rise and Fall of UKIP', *Party Politics*, 25(1): pp. 76–87.
[12] Interview with E. on 20 December 2020.

properly we wouldn't have the problems we are in now. I class myself as a nation-alist. … I was more in favour of the nationalist lads, there have been times when I have met them, met these nationalist lads and they were exactly the same as me. They just come from working-class backgrounds. They worked in jobs from like forklift truck driving to truck driving … I had some meetings with the BNP, it was street meetings and the first one was 19 years ago, some white lad had been killed in Oldham, and the BNP came to Oldham and I talked to some of the lads, and this is the first time I have met these guys. … I got more drawn to them, the nationalist side, … coming up to pre-referendum I moved … back to Oldham, … and got focused on the UKIP. United Kingdom Independence Party. So for the next like three years I worked until 2016, I worked with them, I knocked on people's doors, did a lot of canvassing and stuff like that … so there was more demonstrations and protests, and I was already then following the likes of Tommy Robinson, Anne Marie Waters.[13]

Two other activists revealed proximity to UKIP. One revealed that he is a UKIP supporter and relied on local UKIP elected officials to support his campaign against a migrant camp:

[I'm a] UKIP supporter. I'm not a member of UKIP. [I like] Neil Hamilton. He stood by us and Nigel Farage. Neil Hamilton is part of the UKIP. He's been down to Penally, he's interviewed me. He said he's standing for us, he had some good news on it and good points.[14]

This UKIP-aligned activist also participated in activities organised by the Voice of Wales media, which is run by two UKIP activists. This YouTube channel invites groups such as the American branch of the Proud Boys and Britain First to its broadcasts.[15] Another interviewee is a former member of UKIP, and considers his opinions to be of a 'patriotic foundation'. This is also the case of Anne Marie Walters leader of the For Britain Movement, who explained how she joined UKIP:

I did join UKIP. It was recommended to me by Lord Pearson who is a very good friend of mine. He suggested I stand for UKIP and I did, but my position on Islam got me into trouble in UKIP as well. Nigel Farage called me a racist and a Nazi and all the usual rubbish, so to hell with them…[16]

When asked for more information, in view of her political stature and her attempt to take over the leadership of the party, she quickly put an end to the interview because, according to her, the time for the interview was up, but the interview lasted for about ten more minutes after moving to another topic. Press articles describe a very divisive campaign for the leadership of UKIP, including verbal

---

[13] Interview with J-L. on 4 September 2020.
[14] Interview with D. on 25 November 2020.
[15] 'The woeful state of Ukip in Wales' [Online: https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/2021/05/05/woeful-ukip-wales/white] Accessed 25 May 2021.
[16] Interview with Anne Marie Waters on 27 November 2020.

confrontations with Nigel Farage, her positioning being perceived as extreme by a whole wing of the party, as well as her attempt to launch PEGIDA UK with Tommy Robinson. She nevertheless came in second with approximately 20 per cent of the vote.[17]

Current commitments

It is possible to identify a coherence in these activists' past commitments around the double matrix of Labour and UKIP. However, the current commitments of these activists are less coherent. Beyond their insertion within the field of social movements against immigration, their current political commitments are rather diverse. Moreover, the categories of civic nationalism as well as radical right and extreme right wing do not seem to be fully operational categories for understanding their present trajectories of engagement.

Thus, K., former UKIP member, calls himself a 'Brexit Party fan',[18] but feels strong sympathy for For Britain as well as Patriotic Alternative, because these organisations 'are challenging the mainstream'.[19] For her part, Anne Marie Walters left UKIP in 2017 after her failed attempt to take the leadership of UKIP. She then created the For Britain Movement.[20] E., organiser of a single-issue organisation, supports the Heritage Party led by David Kurten, a former member of UKIP, elected to the London Assembly. She considers that his skin colour (David Kurten is black) is an advantage for this political leader:

> David Kurten is a black man. So they can't play the race card. He has a lot of support, he has got something like 200,000 or more supporters or followers on Twitter, and he has support from Whites, Blacks, Hindus, Christians, Jews, Muslims, right across the board. Basically, Britain. They want British jobs going to the Brits first, they will stop the illegal immigration, they will stop it dead.[21]

Nevertheless, this support for one of the most moderate formations stemming from UKIP, and which would position her *a priori* in the field of the radical right, does not prevent her from adhering to the theory of white genocide (Coudenhove-Kalergi theory, see above). This fluidity between different ideological and political categories can also be found in the views of J-L., who appreciates very much the views of Anne Marie Waters, while endorsing Patriotic Alternative:

---

[17] 'Anne Marie Waters: Anti-Islam candidate to stand for UKIP leadership' [Online: https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-40902796] Accessed 25 May 2021.
[18] It has since changed its name to 'Reform UK'.
[19] Interview with K. on on 12 October 2020.
[20] 'Former UKIP leadership candidate to launch new far-right party' [Online: https://www.politico.eu/article/former-ukip-leadership-candidate-to-launch-new-far-right-party/] Accessed 25 May 2021.
[21] Interview with E. on 20 December 2020.

> the other group I like is 'Patriotic Alternative' … they talk about demographics, … They do a lot about demographics but they're the ethno-nationalists aren't they? Patriotic Alternative want a majority white England.[22]

J-L.'s comment is interesting, and similar to K.'s: both of them simultaneously appreciate Anne Marie Waters, who is more of a civic nationalist and who claims to oppose racism and frames her opposition to Islam as a Western civilisational threat. On the other hand, Patriotic Alternative presents an ethno-nationalist vision where British nationality is linked to racial ethnicity (not only whiteness, but specifically British ethnicity).

As we have seen, the initial politicisation of some of the activists does not come from their involvement in extreme right-wing families or traditionalist circles, as might have been hypothesised. On the contrary, several trajectories present the double matrix of a background within the Labour Party, followed by a break with that party on issues related to immigration and Islam. UKIP is then the focus for this commitment to the issue of borders – there is a certain logic to this, given that the migration issue in Dover overlaps with the issue of migration and the issue of national sovereignty.

If categorisations such as the radical right or the extreme right wing or the distinction between civic nationalism and ethno-nationalism are interesting interpretative tools, they do not exhaust the understanding of activist trajectories. It is debatable whether organisations such as the Heritage Party and UKIP belong to the far-right field. However, they have been the place of engagement for activists who are clearly in the discursive field of ethno-nationalism and the extreme right. Similarly, an organisation whose discourse seems ostensibly moderate (e.g. Migration Watch UK) appears to have been founded by an intellectual (David Coleman) whose commitments raise questions about his belonging to the field of ethno-nationalism. This overlaps with Pilkington's findings that individual ideologies are not necessarily in alignment with those of the party structures or social movement organisations they belong to.[23]

Indeed, investigating individual trajectories is also important in another respect. The field of the British far right is currently very fragmented: single-issue organisations field relatively small numbers, as do political organisations, and the figures of video activists, who address themselves individually to their community audience, seem to be of greater importance. To this extent the analysis of individual commitments seems more important as the meso-sociological level of social movement organisation seems to be weakening in the field of far-right

---

[22] Interview with J-L. on 4 September 2020.
[23] Pilkington, Hilary. 2019. ' "Field Observer: Simples." Finding a Place from Which to Do Close-up Research on the "Far-right"' in Toscano, Emanuele (ed.), *Researching Far-Right Movements, Ethics, Methodologies, and Qualitative Inquiries*, London: Routledge.

politics in the UK. This will be further discussed in our study of video activism (see below).

Practices of vigilantism

Without necessarily being the dominant type of social movement activism in Britain, practices of vigilantism have become an anchored part of their repertoire. This may provide confirmation of the hypothesis that vigilantism is essential to social movements against immigration because of its performative capacity. The staging of vigilantism – linked to the citizen action against 'criminal' activity – tends to offer an alternative framing on migration to that of the mainstream media, or at least parts of it. Refugees would not be vulnerable populations in need of protection but criminogenic populations whose very presence constitutes a criminal offence. In our opinion, it is this perspective that helps to explain the 'spectacularisation' of vigilantism by these movements.

Contrary to Calaisian groups, the vigilantism staged by groups in Britain has little potential to turn into violent confrontation with migrants on the ground. The 'traditional' definition of vigilantism provided by Les Johnston[24] divides functions of vigilantism into three categories: surveillance, intervention and administration of justice. These seem to allow for only a partial understanding of the phenomenon in Dover, contrary to Calais where the categories of intervention and surveillance perfectly characterise the action of *Sauvons Calais* and *Calaisiens en Colère*. In Dover, it is the public visibility of migration that seems to be the key consideration behind these actions rather than direct intervention. Usually the implementation of 'classic' vigilantism is geared towards asserting a form of power on a territory. This is not the objective here. On the contrary, it is the production of images of vigilantism that seems to be what is important. To take up Rasmussen's suggestion, the images produced are located at the heart of far-right politics as these images provide a 'framing of reality' to the audiences that consume the social media of these groups.[25]

Accordingly, these practices of vigilantism can be more easily understood through the concept of digital vigilantism, which mainly takes the form of unsolicited attention.[26] This dimension is to be found in the practice of 'exposure', which corresponds to the online revelation of illegal or supposedly illegal activities.

[24] Johnston, Les. 1996. 'What is Vigilantism?', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 36(2): pp. 220–36.

[25] Rasmussen, Michael. 2019. *La contre-révolution de Trump*. Paris: Divergences.

[26] Trottier, Daniel. 2017. "Digital Vigilantism as Weaponisation of Visibility", *Philosophy and Technology*, 30(1), pp. 52–64.

Patrolling

The first activity, the practice of patrolling, has been very important to anti-migrant groups in Calais. But this practice seems less central in Dover, as the flow of small boat arrivals is more tightly controlled by British authorities: boats are most often intercepted before reaching British shores and asylum seekers are then taken to hotels and camps where their applications are directly processed. This implies that the chances of encounters with migrants during patrols are relatively low. Nevertheless, a number of actors carry out patrols, although their dimension seems to be primarily performative rather than directed towards the implementation of direct action on the ground. For instance, Britain First uses social media to stage patrols on the beaches of Dover in the hope of alerting the public.

However, this activity appears to be primarily symbolic, directed more for the consumption of those following the group on social media. During the summer of 2020, the group broadcast videos featuring naval patrols trying to intercept small boats. It did not achieve any success in terms of interception, although it did invite attention from the local press.[27] These patrols were ridiculed by a person belonging to a single-issue social movement organisation, labelling their intention to patrol the seas as utterly unrealistic:

> Oh we did have a laugh about that, there was a video that Britain First put out of them launching their first channel patrol, they apparently announced that they owned a boat and they put a bee on the helm and there was one bloke on the boat, what they called the Captain, the Skipper? And then there was somebody else on the boat that was filming him, and this bloke was literally, he had got his hands on his forehead as if he is trying to hide the sun, and he is looking out over the English Channel and they are saying 'well, you know, clearly you can see that this is a really big stretch of water, so we haven't actually seen any illegals today, but when we do we will grab them and we will tow them back to French waters, call the Coast Guard and tell them they need to come and get them'. [laughs]. I mean really! Oh my God, apart from the fact that they broke the law anyway, because they changed the name of the boat, you are not allowed to do that, they didn't register the new name, no, I mean Paul Golding is a scumbag, he is a horrible bloke.[28]

Britain First is not the only organisation claiming to organise naval patrols. In the spring of 2021, the leader of Little Boats launched a fundraising campaign in order to buy a small boat that would allow his group to patrol the waters around Dover and thus challenge the actions of the Border Force and the French Navy, accused of encouraging illegal immigration.

---

[27] 'Royal Navy veteran captains Britain First "HMS" patrol boat deterring migrants in English Channel' [Online: https://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/news/uk-world-news/royal-navy-veteran-captains-britain-4412048] Accessed 21 August 2021.
[28] Interview with E. on 20 December 2020.

Figure 7.1 Britain First activist selfie taken while patrolling the coastline in Dover.

Figure 7.2 Images of Britain First activists on patrol in Dover.
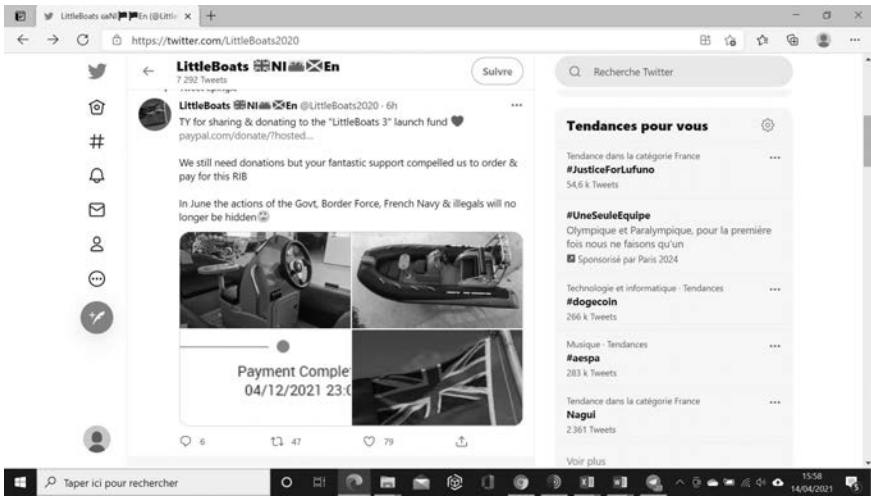
Figure 7.3 Little Boats Twitter publication announcing patrols for the summer of 2021.

Investigating

The group Little Boats' vigilante activity is quite particular in the sense that here it is not the migrants as a whole who are targeted but rather the networks organising illegal immigration. Another peculiarity is that the investigation is publicised and presented as a social movement activity. The stated objective is the exposure of criminal smuggling networks once enough evidence has been gathered:

> We had been planning something for quite some time, getting frustrated at what's happening with immigration. …. So, we go to Dover, we look for traffickers who are on our side of the Channel of the sea, in the early hours of the night … we go out at night, and we got along the little inlets, little beaches all around Dover and the South East coast, and we spend hours there and invariably we found, on 4 or 5 occasions so far, we have found people who are there for one reason, one reason only and that is to bring in specific boats in the middle of the night. … the other thing we are doing is we are travelling around the country meeting people who bravely are coming forward whistleblowers to tell us the inside story of what actually goes on. … there is about 20 people who are directly helping us, so they could be people who help us go on the boats, there were seven of us went out on the two occasions. Three of them were ex-military, and a couple were ex-Merchant Navy who know the channel very well. … in the long run 'Little Boats' is targeting the government and traffickers. We've been speaking to an Albanian who is going to put us in contact with a live trafficker, and what's going on here, we have to be careful what we say but we are gathering evidence that drugs are being brought in by Albanian gangs, using the migrant routes across the Channel … there is a massive criminal element underneath … I mean we have followed very expensive cars coming here, picking up people and taking them to London. Unfortunately, we

lost them so we couldn't find exactly where they were going, that one we didn't report to the police. We did afterwards, we gave them the registration numbers of the cars, but it is sophisticated and, of course, we have to be careful because these people are dangerous, and especially Albanians, they are very dangerous.[29]

Even though this activity is investigative and falls within the scope of surveillance, or even investigation, which according to most research falls within the scope of vigilantism,[30] members of the Little Boats group reject the term 'vigilantism', which they perceive as stigmatising:

> We've been called vigilantes, for instance, which is totally untrue but that's by left-wing newspapers who want us to be quiet, …, we don't hate people because of where they come from or their colour, but we care about our country and that's all we're interested in.[31]

Their investigative activity also seems to rely on the help of police and the security personnel they call 'whistleblowers'. These people, they claim, provide confidential insider information, including images of migrants celebrating the news of the Manchester bombings:

> We are very proud of them, and we have to guard their identity obviously, yes, I mean our whistleblowers they are incredible, incredible people and they are taking big risks. I mean the documentation I've seen, we've seen, because some of them could land up in Court and go to jail for some of the things they are telling us, … We have had footage from a security camera in a centre where migrants were, when the Manchester Arena bomb was being announced on the television, we have footage and I have seen it, of a few of these migrants, Muslim obviously, celebrating. Celebrating. And when I heard this, I didn't believe it. I said, 'there is no way that would happen', and don't get me wrong most Muslims would not celebrate.[32]

Community building

Instead of being used to construct the figure of the enemy, as most anti-migration actors do, the practice of vigilantism as carried out by Patriotic Alternative is presented as an act of 'community building' of the white majority. In this example below, following a complaint from an elderly victim of a burglary, Patriotic Alternative activists launched a call for reports, which according to the group's Telegram page, pushed the police into finding the perpetrators, and led to an arrest.

Here, the practice of monitoring and reporting is mobilised 'positively' rather than negatively – membership of the activist community provides support in

---

[29] Interview with J. on 18 October 2020.
[30] Johnston, *ibid*.
[31] Interview with J. on 18 October 2020.
[32] Interview with J. on 18 October 2020.

Handforth Police
@HandforthPol

We are happy to be able to report that we've arrested a male from the Greater Manchester area in relation to a robbery that took place in #Handforth on the 24th March. A local officer was able to ID the male who is currently being escorted to custody by #PcRowbotham &

As most of you will know, last week we met a lady in Handforth who had been mugged yards from her home. So We put a post out on Sunday evening calling for people to complain to the council about it. Yesterday I received an email from the Cheshire council explaining that the day after our post, Handforth Police had put out a picture of the mugger.

Today we went back to Handforth, to give the lady a bag of Grandma Towlers and to also show them the response from the council as well as making sure they knew that there's a whole community that cares about them.

When we got there today the lady's husband informed us that the mugger had been ARRESTED & was in Police Custody

They were delighted with the tea and of course the help.

👁 944 18:28

Figure 7.4 Patriotic Alternative Telegram post on how PA activists helped reporting of a robbery.

terms of security and ultimately is a reassuring element. The focus here is not on the threatening figure of 'otherness' but on the protection that the community may provide.

Exposure

A further practice of digital vigilantism, and mainly implemented by Britain First, is 'exposure', i.e. the giving of unwanted attention to 'deviant' and 'criminal'

Figure 7.5 Photogram of Britain First activist campaigning in an immigrant-populated neighbourhood in Birmingham.

practices. In addition to its patrol campaign entitled 'Operation White Cliffs', Britain First has organised video patrols to 'expose' hotels. On a dedicated website, a form allows Internet users to report a hotel that might be hosting migrants, asking for a certain amount of information on the number of migrants, but also to report 'any anti-social behaviour from illegal immigrants in the local area'.[33] On the basis of the information collected through this form, but also information gleaned from local activists, an activist team then goes on site to film a video.

The activists travel in the 'battle bus', which is a minibus equipped with megaphones. It displays a banner with the organisation's name and riot grates, which results in singular images that give a specific aesthetic to the videos. As visual sociology tells us, the produced image represents the situated gaze of the actor who produces them.[34] As such, the images produced by the activists who go to meet the migrants present the construction of this gaze, as we can see below. This image presents an activist chanting nationalist slogans into the battle bus's megaphone while driving through an immigrant-populated area of Birmingham. The riot protection of the bus is particularly symbolic because as a security device it builds similarity with the British police minibuses it mimics, and immediately hints at the idea that the area where immigrants live is a zone of potential danger.

---

[33] 'Report migrant hotels to Britain First' [Online: https://www.patriot-campaigns.uk/report-migrant-hotels] Accessed 25 May 2021.
[34] La Rocca, Fabio. 2007. 'Introduction à la sociologie visuelle', *Sociétés*, 95: pp. 33–40.

Figure 7.6 Photogram of the video is subtitled with the insult 'racist white motherfuckers'.

The tension is then highlighted as passers-by react to the activists' slogans by shouting 'racist white motherfucker'. The camera then turns to the area where the shouting seems to originate from and the slur is subtitled to make it more obvious: the activists label these insults 'bitter abuse by an Islamist'.[35]

The same type of activism is conducted in hotels that house asylum seekers. On the group's website there are dozens of videos of 'migrant hotel exposures' that follow a similar *modus operandi*. The activists (filmed throughout the action) arrive at the hotel and try to get inside with or without permission from the hotel staff. If they manage to enter the premises, they question the people present, explaining that these hotels are financed by taxpayers' money and that many British people sleep on the street. They then insert these conversations into the edited video in order to 'expose' the scandal that they consider the reception of asylum seekers to be. Some activists ask the men in the hotel why, if they are refugees, they are not accompanied by their families. For example, see the image on the photogram below:[36]

This exposure of hotel migrants was regularly linked to a third campaign, called 'Operation Downes'.[37] It was presented as a 'major campaign to suffocate the scourge of Islamist grooming gangs'. As part of the campaign, activists distributed leaflets about grooming gangs in Preston showing the faces of men who have been

---

[35] 'Video: Britain First battle bus receives racial abuse and missiles in Birmingham and Coventry!' [Online: https://www.patriot-campaigns.uk/video_britain_first_battle_bus_receives_racial_abuse_and_missiles_in_birmingham_and_coventry] Accessed 25 May 2021.

[36] 'Video: Huge hotel in Sheffield housing illegal immigrants!' [Online: https://www.patriot-campaigns.uk/video_huge_hotel_in_sheffield_housing_illegal_immigrants] Accessed 25 May 2021.

[37] Charlene Downes was murdered on 1 November 2003 in Blackpool by a grooming gang.

Figure 7.7 Photogram of an asylum seeker filmed while coming out of his hotel room during a Britain First 'migrant hotel exposure'.

convicted for being part of grooming gangs. They asked the public to email their findings to Britain First (rather than the police) if they witnessed any activity related to grooming gangs, such as seeing 'older men with younger girls'. The typical video begins when activists inform the police of the campaign that they will be running in the city: 'to raise awareness, because we feel that the police have not done enough'. The activists then distribute leaflets asking to report to Britain First any suspicious activity in mainly immigrant-owned businesses. In this video shot in Preston, when a taxi rank owner asks them angrily to leave his business, the activists seemed surprised by this refusal and wonder about the links between this business and grooming gangs: 'I would like to know what goes on inside this taxi rank'. The front of the business with its name and phone number is then displayed in the video:[38]

In my view, these various practices of Britain First belong to the repertoire of 'spectacular' social media vigilantism. The patrols and the exposure intend to construct a figure of the immigrant, of the Muslim, as potentially complicit in the activity of grooming gangs, in a word as a potentially criminal figure. It should be noted that the very militant emphasis of the discourse, the use of megaphones, military vocabulary and aggressive postures have a performative dimension: they seem aimed at provoking an aggressive reaction from immigrants and thus

[38] 'Video: Britain First takes action against grooming gangs in Preston!' [Online: https://www.patriot-campaigns.uk/video_britain_first_takes_action_against_grooming_gangs_in_preston] Accessed 25 May 2021.

Figure 7.8 Photogram of a Britain First patrol in Preston exposing a taxi rank whose owner refused to display their leaflet.

creating a situation of inter-community conflict corresponding to the group's reading of social reality, creating images (and therefore truths for the viewer) that 'validate' Britain First's world view.

   To conclude, the practices of vigilantism of these groups are above all symbolic. The 'supposed criminals' are never caught: to date, no smuggler has been brought to justice by the Little Boats, nor have Britain First's Channel patrols sent small boats back to French waters or dismantled any grooming gangs. In reality, the two groups do not seem too concerned about achieving the goals put forward in their vigilante action. Their priority is to highlight the need for vigilance and above all to produce images that are consistent with their vision of the world, thus rendering its 'reality' through imagery.

Video activism: an emerging trend in social movement activity

As a result of technological but also cultural changes, the possibility of producing images and films and immediately broadcasting them has become much

more accessible. This phenomenon started with the spread of digital cameras and camcorders, followed by their incorporation into smartphones. From a dissemination point of view, the advent of social media has considerably increased the possibility of broadcasting user-produced content.[39] Thus, certain platforms such as YouTube and TikTok or Twitch are dedicated almost exclusively to user-generated video content, while the algorithms of platforms such as Facebook and Instagram increasingly push video content.

As Hartmut Rosa phrases it, in a context of social acceleration,[40] the senses of the public are saturated by images, giving way to a situation where images have become more surluminal than subliminal, as the bombardment of images has increased with the rise of social media. As briefly mentioned before, Rasmussen considers that in this context, politics is no longer put into images, but rather has become an image in itself. This dimension, according to him, explains the relationship to the truth of the former American president Donald Trump: if the image is political content in itself, there is no longer any need to refer to other modes of knowledge such as factuality or the verification of information.[41]

In a communicative sphere where the visual sense prevails, it is the representation by photography or video that confers a social existence to a phenomenon.[42] In the US, it is the shocking video of the murder of George Floyd by the police officer Derek Chauvin that makes the violence of the police suffered by African Americans visible and real to the public.[43] It is interesting to note that this primacy of the image, particularly on social media platforms, takes up the main lines of crowd psychology as theorised by Gustave Le Bon: crowd communication consists of series of simple images capable of impressing and influencing minds as opposed to rational discourse,[44] far from the communicative action extolled by Jürgen Habermas.[45]

The sharp drop in the cost of producing images, the possibility of distributing them directly on various platforms and the growing importance of images in the political sphere are background factors that may help to understand the emergence of what we call video activism. That is, the more or less artisanal production

[39] Susca, Vincenzo. 2016. *Les affinités connectives*. Paris: Editions du Cerf.
[40] Rosa, Hartmut. 2010. 'Politique, histoire et vitesse du changement social: Vers une théorie critique de l'accélération sociale', *Le Genre humain*, 1(1): 105–13.
[41] Rasmussen, *ibid*.
[42] Cristante, Stefano. 2005. *Media Philosophy: Interpretare la comunicazione-mondo*. Naples: Liguori Editore.
[43] Evans, Fred. 2020. 'Whither? Black Lives Matter and the Shape of Democracy', *Sociétés*, 4(4): pp. 99–111.
[44] Le Bon, Gustave. 2013. *Psychologie des foules*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
[45] Habermas, Jürgen. 2015. 'Espace public et sphère publique politique: Les racines biographiques de deux thèmes de pensée', *Esprit*, 8(8–9): pp. 12–25.

of images in the context of social movement activity and campaigning. These images are then broadcast either immediately (live) or after summary editing. This activist-produced content can reach a mass audience, sometimes world-wide. In the case of the British far right, videos published by Tommy Robinson during the London Bridge attacks on the now defunct live-streaming Periscope platform have reached a million views, numbers that compete with mainstream media audiences.[46]

As a result, the production of images by social movement actors becomes a central issue. In the 1980s, Patrick Champagne described some French mobilisations as 'paper demonstrations' in the sense that some social movements seemed to orient their repertoire of action solely to the perspective of producing a certain image in newspapers and media. It can be hypothesised that the situation has somewhat changed since the 1980s. Nowadays, demonstrations are simultaneously events that take place both physically and online through different news coverage, Twitter threads and live videos on different platforms. For instance, while the researcher observed a demonstration against grooming gangs in Manchester just before the Covid-19 lockdown, this dimension was prevalent: there were only a few dozen participants, and more than half of them were filming and some speaking to their phones addressing their community of followers. The attention of participants was focused on the speeches of the organisers. The first rows of the (sparse) audience participants were holding their phones in front of them in order to film the speeches. Several video activists, some of them widely followed such as 'Little Veteran', displayed professional or semi-professional cameras printed with the name of their 'media'.

To this extent, it seems that video activism, i.e. the production of more or less amateurish images by actors who are part of social movements, renews the repertoire of these movements. Furthermore, this production of images also differs from the representations made of these movements by mainstream media. To this extent, video activism forms part of the repertoire of action of social movements against migration in Dover. It is possible to identify three different types of video formats that characterise the images produced by these activists: individual live broadcasting, social movement activities and images of migrants. This aspect will be developed further.

For these reasons the phenomenon of video activism seems central to this study. Thus, out of nine interviews conducted, four people produce videos on a very regular basis and two of them can be characterised as video activists in the sense that they engage in video production as their main activity, defining their commitment in this way. Leaving aside the leaders of political organisations, we

[46] 'Facebook supprime les comptes de Tommy Robinson, figure de l'extrême droite britannique' [Online: https://www.lemonde.fr/pixels/article/2019/02/26/facebook-supprime-les-comptes-de-tommy-robinson-figure-de-l-extreme-droite-britannique_5428589_4408996.html] Accessed 25 May 2021.

will first focus on video activists, i.e. people whose main social movement activity is the production of videos. John Lawrence's channel presents 274 videos uploaded from 2017 to 2021. These are viewed between several hundred times and several thousand times. Darren Edmundsons' 'Pembrokeshire Patriot-Voice of Wales' channel broadcast several hundred videos on a daily basis showing opposition to the Penally asylum seekers camp by a local campaign.

Similarly, the self-proclaimed 'migrant hunters' (Active Patriot, Steve Laws, Little Veteran and Tyrant Finder UK) broadcast their videos on several platforms (YouTube, Facebook, Telegram, Twitter). Their content is based on making small boat channel crossings visible. Their content can be divided between content produced by the activists themselves (messages, photos and videos) and content shared from other channels regarding migration or related issues (grooming gangs, Islam) or regarding the general political framing of the far right on current events (demonstrations against coronavirus restrictions, the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, US elections and Capitol riots).

Production can be divided into three types of original content. The first is based on oral content, most often live. In this format, activists are in front of their camera. The person is at home and he/she monologues and explains his/her point of view on different events in front of the camera while answering questions and comments live.[47]

Figure 7.9 Photogram from a live session by John Lawrence.

[47] 'Modern day slavery in the UK' [Online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9AqiItD3Yw] Accessed 25 May 2021.

Figure 7.10 Photogram of live footage of the 5 September 2020 demonstration in Dover by John Lawrence.

Figure 7.11 Photogram of migrant arrival by video broadcaster Steve Laws.

A variant sees several activists exchanging views with a basic set-up, replicating a TV set format, aggregating several video streams. There can be a host and people responding to each other. The purpose of the exercise is to show video activists discussing their points of view on a subject, for example the 'modern

slavery' of illegal immigrants, while answering the comments of the Internet users live, which allows an interactivity that seems appreciated by the public.

The second type of content is the live coverage of social movement events: rallies, demonstrations, but also trials. The positioning of video activists differs from classic media coverage: the live broadcasting of the event is subjective as it is covered by a participant. The person is in immersion in the sense that he or she is part of the demonstration and transmits above all his or her own viewpoint and sensitivity, with his or her own comments. These videos can reach a significant audience, as for example the live coverage of the demonstration against illegal immigration in Dover by John Lawrence.

Finally, there are images that represent and make visible a phenomenon that embodies the figure of the enemy or at least adversity: migrant arrivals, camps and hotels. The group of 'migrant hunters' specialises in this type of image, documenting various arrivals on an almost daily basis and in real time, contributing to the construction of an alternative discourse to that of the authorities.

These different types of images tend to construct a framing of current events, often with attempts at media-like coverage that goes beyond the single issue of migration, and sometimes with a desire for professionalism, as will be seen later, but at the same time with very strongly voiced opinion.

The actors producing these videos are not only endowed with an opinion, contrary to aspirations for neutrality expressed by certain media.[48] Their content emanates from authors who, beyond having an opinion, are above all involved in the social movements they cover. The materials published online can also be used as a platform to launch social movement activities, such as the 'Migrant Hunter' Little Veteran, who tried to set up a homeless veterans' camp. This occupied settlement was supposed to highlight the shortcomings of the British benefits system, which is supposed to be more concerned with foreign asylum seekers than British veterans.

Around Penally Camp

Darren Edmundson's 'Pembrokeshire Patriot-Voice of Wales' channel featured 220 videos between September 2020 and April 2020. Videos uploaded in the first four months of the channel's existence concern the social movement activities of the 'Protest against Penally Camp' campaign. Edmundson closely links his social movement activity to the audience reached on Facebook and YouTube, which for him is a way of measuring the impact of undertaken actions. The numbers figure in Charles Tilly's Worthiness – Unity Numbers and Commitment[49] is no longer

[48] Neveu, Eric. 2019. *Sociologie du journalisme.* Paris: La Découverte.
[49] Tilly, Charles, Wood, Lesley. 2009. *Social Movements, 1768–2008*. New York: Paradigm.
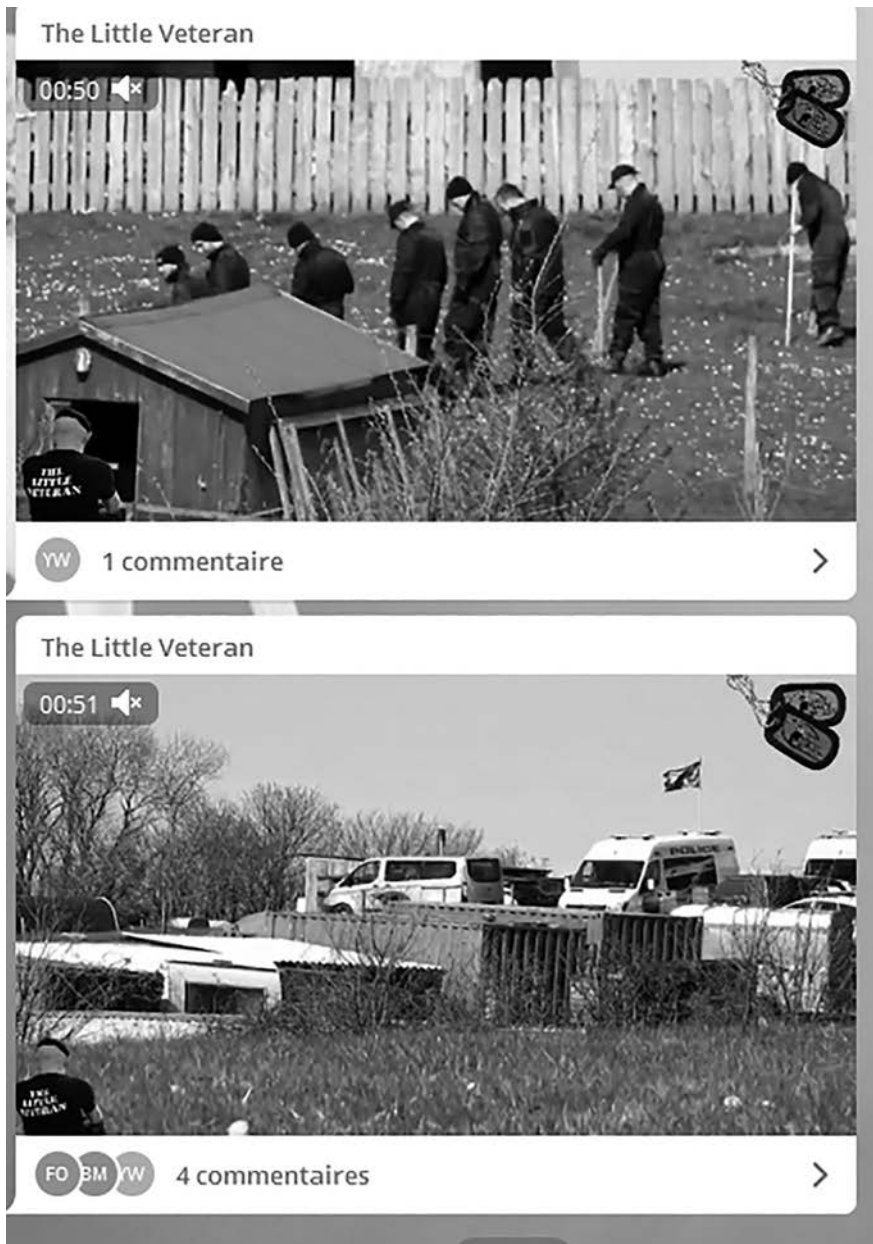
Figure 7.12 Photograms of videos posted on Telegram showing the camp organised by 'Little Veteran' for veterans suffering from PTSD.

the numbers of participants but the size the online audience that are the validation of the success of an activity:

> So I set up a Facebook to go and protest against Penally camp, but it was my group. I got a couple of publications become massive. We had 3,500 followers in two weeks but I was doing live feed on them and people were like, 'Bloody hell you show that on the YouTube channel, the way you're explaining it and coming across and what you're doing is really good'. So about two weeks ago/three weeks ago I set up a YouTube channel and put the videos on there and updating pictures on the migrant situation and yeah the response I'm getting back is amazing and, well, it's been absolutely brilliant, to be fair.[50]

Moreover, when he refers to each action carried out by the Penally local campaign, he refers to a specific video that captures and summarises the moment. Each video is an element of proof and truth that builds the social movement framing:

> I got a video footage of me confronting the police officer saying, 'Why are you letting this woman break Covid rules? No more… you know, she's… from different householders in the car from her', and the police officer just did his window up and just totally blanked me. So I've got a lot of evidence and a lot of footage of this.[51]

In the same way, when he narrates attempts by protesters to block the camp, the video presents the character of evidence:

> The police then decided to make a decision to charge against us. I can send you this video. They charged against … it was about 20 police officers charged against us and squished up all against the fence and we all retaliated and pushed the police back. The police couldn't handle us so the police withdrew.[52]

These videos are also seen in opposition to the framing of mainstream media. Producing their own videos is in line with the approach of the self-media that developed during anti-globalisation mobilisations.[53] There is also a link that can be made with the tradition of the far right to reject the media, from the concept of the *Lügenpresse* (lying press) in 1930s Germany[54] to the 'Fake News Media' of President Donald Trump.[55]

This conception of social movement activity contrasts sharply with the 'paper demonstration' described by Patrick Champagne,[56] where social movement activity is oriented towards producing a repertoire of actions and performances capable of eliciting press coverage that is both maximum in terms of its impact

---

[50] Interview with D. on 25 November 2020.
[51] Interview with D. on 25 November 2020.
[52] Interview with D. on 25 November 2020.
[53] Sommier, Isabelle, Fillieule, Olivier, Agrikoliansky, Éric. 2008. *Généalogie des mouvements altermondialistes en Europe: Une perspective comparée.* Paris: Karthala.
[54] Chapoutot, Johann. 2020. *Comprendre le nazisme.* Paris: Tallandier.
[55] Rasmussen, *ibid.*
[56] Champagne, Patrick. 2015. *Faire l'opinion: Le nouveau jeu politique.* Paris: Les Editions de Minuit.

and favourable to the movement's demands. Here, on the contrary, the press is considered as illegitimate and misleading and the objective is to produce a counter-discourse that would respond to the lies of the established press. Thus, D. considers that some of the media are fake news while others (rarer) would give a fair treatment:

> The media seem to be one-sided. … I had a few interviews with those but the BBC and ITV they're just a load of tosh anyway. It's fake news, they're all one-sided, to me. The local newspaper, *Tenby Observer* are fair, they're cracking, they're good at what they do and they put out good news.[57]

The videos uploaded on the page portray the social movement activities of the activists, but can also sometimes be the source of unwanted exposure for people perceived as opponents. For example, a pro-migrant activist who is labelled as 'antifa' is specifically shown in one video and an exchange is shown where the video activist proposes a 'charity boxing match' where the two activists would fight each other. This proposal is declined by the pro-migrant activist.[58]

Similarly, several videos focus on the private security company that guards the Penally camp, which has some tense interactions with the activists. For example, the security guards block the activist B. (nicknamed 'Based Basil') in his car and a heated verbal exchange ensues. D. describes the exchange as follows:

> The security firm there, AK Security, as you've probably seen, they assaulted an elderly gentleman that was taking photos … a local. Also if you watch the *Voice of Wales*, the show I was on, I can [give the] information that AK Security hasn't been paying its staff and when the staff approached him he said he could be a big man and that he'd bully them and stuff like that, you know. I've got all this information.[59]

On his YouTube channel, a video is posted. It shows the face of the manager and an audio recording where the manager says that he will not pay part of the overtime hours of this employee and, when the employee challenges the legality of not paying these hours, he is distinctly heard threatening him.[60] The act of filming the interactions with security guards is a weapon in the sense that it carries the threat of the diffusion of these images and of unsolicited attention, which materialises in the diffusion of a recording publicising the practices contrary to labour regulations of the firm AK Security. Here, the use of video is not limited to the visibility of social movement activities: the publicisation of unlawful practices of the security company AK Security is done through video. Image itself becomes a weapon in contentious

---

[57] Interview with D. on 25 November 2020.
[58] 'Antifa S.adam Vincent calls out local, so we offer a charity boxing match. 28.11.20' [Online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6LwZ30c6O0] Accessed 25 May 2021.
[59] Interview with D. on 25 November 2020.
[60] 'Penally camp, Ak security threatens his staff' [Online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAE43o5e_eg&feature=youtu.be] Accessed 25 May 2021.

Penally camp, Ak security threatens his staff.

Figure 7.13 Video with the face of a security guard at Penally Camp and leaked audio conversation.

mobilisations. This brings us back to 'digilantism' and the practice of exposure described in the previous chapter: naming and shaming being a form of vigilantism.

Video activism also raises the question of the professionalisation of social movements. In classical social movement theory, professional activists organised in social movement organisations gather resources and this allows payment of professional activists.[61] This tendency to capture resources can lead to the creation of a separate leadership group whose interests may be distinct from the organisation's membership. This phenomenon of professionalisation led the sociologist Roberto Michels, based on his study of German social democracy, to speak of the emergence of a professionalised leadership group within the framework of collective action as part of the 'iron law of oligarchy'.[62]

This question seems to arise in the case of video activists, whose sustained rhythm of publication on social networks and the more or less individual character of their action does raise the question of professionalisation. It is difficult to maintain such a rhythm of publication and to visit different locations without having a large amount of time and resources at your disposal. To this extent, fundraising to finance social media activity is therefore an issue for video activists. Graham Macklin explains that the funding of leaders and organisers has been a recurring

[61] McCarthy, John, Zald, Mayer. 1977. 'Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory', *American Journal of Sociology*, 82: pp. 1212–241.
[62] Michels, Roberto. 2015. *Sociologie du parti dans la démocratie moderne. Enquête sur les tendances oligarchiques de la vie des groupes*. Gallimard: Paris.

issue for the British far right. In the case of organisations whose members were ineligible or unable to reach elected office, activists such as John Tyndall, leader of the British National Party in the 1980s and 1990s, used party membership fees and paper sales to support themselves, often outside of any formal framework.[63]

The issue of professionalisation of video activists is posed in other terms. Video activists do not necessarily have an organisation at their disposal that can directly raise funds through membership fees or support events. Nor are they employed by media outlets with stable incomes that could employ them as journalists or freelancers. Their activity, at the crossroads of media activity and social movement activity, implies that they have to rely on other sources of income. These are based on their community of followers. They can be indirect through platforms such as YouTube that pay users or direct by incentivising viewers of the videos to contribute financially. The revenues that can be generated are far from anecdotal.

To give an idea (without presuming the income of video activists), on the Tipee platform some influencers can earn between 1,800 and 4,000 euros per month through direct support from subscribers.[64] According to sociologist Gareth Harris[65], media activists such as Paul Golding (Britain First) and Tommy Robinson were able to generate significant income before being banned and demonetised from mainstream platforms such as YouTube and Facebook. To give an idea of the sums involved, Britain First lost its status as a political party in 2017 because its leadership failed to declare more than £200,000 in donations.[66] Similarly, before being demonetised by the YouTube platform, Patriotic Alternative founder Mark Collett allegedly managed to collect thousands of pounds each month.[67]

Furthermore, Gareth Harris believes that the example of Tommy Robinson has created a vocation for this type of activism, which allows for immediate financial reward. He emphasises the importance of merchandising: T-shirts, key rings, and so on, that allow citizen journalists and political organisations to generate substantial income. For instance, the 'migrant' hunter Active Patriot asks his followers to support him through contributions to his travel expenses, but also offers T-shirts for sale.[68]

Similarly, Steve Laws, in addition to his explicitly political publications, has set up a website where he presented his activity as that of an independent media

---

[63] Macklin, Graham. 2019. *Failed Führers: A History of Britain's Extreme Right*. London: Routledge.
[64] For instance, nonpolitical YouTubers managed to get a revenue of around 4000€ a month through the Tipee platform: [Heu?reka – YouTube subscribers: 291k – Players: 4081 €/month – Tips: 1191. YouTube link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7sXGI8p8PvKosLWagkK9wQ Tipee link: https://en.tipeee.com/heu-reka] Accessed 25 May 2021.
[65] Interview on 21 December 2020.
[66] 'Britain First fined £44,000 over electoral law breaches' [Online: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/16/britain-first-fined-fined-electoral-law-breaches-electoral-commission] Accessed 25 May 2021.
[67] 'YouTube Cashes in on Neo-Nazi's Hate Videos' [Online: https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/youtube-cashes-in-on-neo-nazis-hate-videos-9gg0nbvd6] Accessed 25 May 2021.
[68] 'About Active Patriot' [Online: https://www.youtube.com/c/ActivePatriot/about] Accessed 25 May 2021.
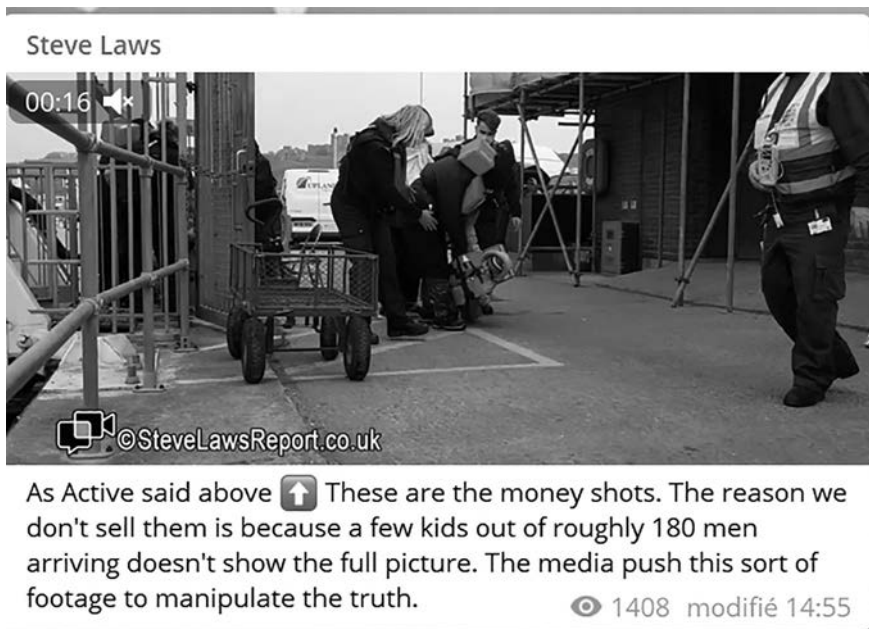
Figure 7.14 Telegram publication about which images may generate revenues.

and encouraged his viewers to make one-off donations, or to make a 'support sub-scription'.[69] Moreover, on his YouTube page, he specifies that the images put online are subject to copyright and provides a contact email address for any commercial exploitation of his images. This concern about monetisation of content also appears in the publications of Steve Laws' Telegram channel: he explains that he does not sell certain images of migrants with children to the 'mainstream' media, which he calls 'money shots', for political reasons: according to him, they would offer a false framing showing vulnerable children, as opposed to the figure of 'men of fighting age' who would constitute the majority of migrants making the crossing.

It is also this necessity to raise funds that may explain the individual nature of video activism. Once there is an economic activity and source of monetisation, the question of sharing income arises. From a business model perspective, it may be more profitable to run media outlets individually than to form a collective so as not to have to share potentially scarce economic resources.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that leaders of political organisations present a dual aspect in their use of social media – leaders are often also video activists with their own individual channels on social media. In the case of Britain First, this is the case of leaders such as Paul Golding and Ashlea Simon, and in the For Britain Movement, Anne Marie Waters also has a YouTube page. In the case of

---

[69] '#SponsorSteve' [Online: https://stevelawsreport.co.uk/sponsor-steve/] Accessed 25 May 2021.

Patriotic Alternative, several video activists are put forward: Mark Collett, leader, Laura Towler, deputy leader, and also James Goddard, regional organiser for the North-West of England.

Similarly, Mark Collett explains that he was able to create Patriotic Alternative using the notoriety gained through his online video activism, which enabled him to launch Patriotic Alternative:

> I started a YouTube channel. I started talking about my experiences, I started talking about my political takes on what was going on in the world, whether it was … what was going on with the conservative party, what was going on with UK, what was going on with mass immigration. I was starting about news item, I also started talking about what I think needed to be done with the sort of anti-immigration, the different anti-immigration groups, …

> Over time, after doing these shows, I started my own weekly show, which was at the time called 'This week on the Alt-Right'. I started with Tara McCarthy , it was a joint project between the two of us. She stayed around for about 30 weeks and then she falled pregnant and she, more or less, disappeared from the scene but I carried on the show. I've eventually rebranded it to 'Patriotic weekly review'. More and more people were asking me 'Look Mark, we need to do something, we want an organisation, we have to do something in the real world, so while I'm good at talking online endlessly about problems, we need to do something about problems or the problems are never gonna be solved'. At this point I said 'Okay, fair enough'. We set up Patriotic Alternative, which is an idea that I actually had a long time ago, it was something I've never really gotten off the ground. I talked about it with several people at several junctures. The time was right and in 2018 we started Patriotic Alternative, myself and Laura Towler … we do want to stand in elections, we believe in the democratic process, we believe in standing in elections that's what we would like to do and, as time has gone by, the organisation has grown very rapidly. It's quickly becoming a national organisation, we have quite well-attended meetings all over the country. Usually there is something going on every week somewhere in the country.[70]

Video activism also throws up questions around the relationship between individual commitments and the existence of social movement organisations and political parties. The recurrent failure of the British far right to form a major electoral party and the collapse of UKIP led to a fragmentation of the British far right. While the 'big parties' of the 2000s and 2010s, UKIP and the BNP, have become relatively insignificant, the organisational field of the British far right has become highly fragmented. On the one hand, there are structured organisations with leadership, an organisation and electoral aspirations. On the other hand, around different video activists, in the field of migratory issues, it is possible to witness the emergence of a non-organised far right in the sense that its activists are not members of organisations or political parties. There are 'loose networks of activists' centred around the charismatic figures of media activists.

---

[70] Interview with Mark Collett on 11 May 2021.

These actors have capacities to acquire online audiences and a potential to mobilise the public that may be superior to those of structured organisations. Video activism offers the possibility of reaching out to mass audiences, of monetising and professionalising activism without going through the support of an organisation and its membership fees. Furthermore, it presents itself in the form of the non-partisan citizen denouncing corruption, which corresponds to the liquid character of contemporary revolts. Video activism can also allow individuals to gather enough political capital to launch political organisations, as shown by the example of Mark Collett's Patriotic Alternative.

Moreover, it should be noted that the phenomenon of video activism is not limited to the far right. In France, video activists played a decisive role in the mobilisations of the 'Yellow Vests', creating the initial social media campaign leading to the occupation of roundabouts from 17 November 2018.[71] It was also the calls of a video activist Franck Buhler that led to the first major demonstrations on the Champs Elysees, giving rise to violent confrontations whose images gained global visibility.[72] It was also through the images shot by the video activists of the Yellow Vests that contributed to exposing police violence. For example, the video activist Jérôme Rodrigues was interrupted during a live session as he was shot in the head by a rubber bullet, which led to the loss of his eye.[73] In France, the very capacity of these activists to produce this type of image has become a political issue, leading to massive demonstrations in November to December 2020 against the 'global security law' that contained articles forbidding video activists and journalists from filming the French police. The scope of the demonstrations forced the government to partially back down.[74]

Conclusion

Social movement activists mobilise in relation to what they perceive as a danger – illegal immigration. They do not reject all immigrants but rather incoming migratory flows. This mobilisation in the face of the figure of 'they', to use the terms of

---

[71] 'Un an après, retour sur les dix jours qui ont vu émerger le mouvement des « gilets jaunes » sur Facebook' [Online: https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2019/10/22/un-an-apres-retour-sur-les-six-jours-qui-ont-vu-emerger-le-mouvement-des-gilets-jaunes-sur-facebook_6016485_4355770.html] Accessed 17 November 2020.
[72] *Ibid.*
[73] 'VIDÉO. Jérôme Rodrigues blessé: y a-t-il eu un tir de LBD?' [Online: https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/video-jerome-rodrigues-blesse-y-a-t-il-eu-un-tir-de-lbd_2059942.html] Accessed 25 May 2021.
[74] 'Nouvelles manifestations dans plusieurs villes de France contre la loi « sécurité globale »' [Online: https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2021/01/16/pour-le-droit-a-l-information-et-contre-la-surveillance-de-masse-manifestations-dans-plusieurs-villes-de-france-contre-la-loi-securite-globale_6066527_3224.html] Accessed 25 May 2021.

triangular social consciousness, also raises the question of 'we'. The common point for some of these activists is a passage through Labour or at least a Labour background, and on the other hand there is a passage through UKIP. The 'we' activated would be that of members of the British nation defined primarily culturally rather than racially (with the exception of John Lawrence and Patriotic Alternative).

This radical right/civic nationalism quadrant corresponds to a political space that has not been occupied by the historical fascist extreme right. This political space seems to emerge from a new cleavage: to the one opposing capital and labour is added a new cleavage concerning transnationalisation (European integration, migratory flows, economic globalisation) (French products, economic protectionism).[75] According to the author of the *Bourgeois Bloc*,[76] the intersection of the two cleavages, the communitarian/cosmopolitan cleavage and the left–right cleavage, creates a political space in most Western democracies that explains the revival of the far right. This space for sovereignty, nativism, but also for nationalised social measures in favour of the working classes is occupied in different ways in North America and Europe, expressed at the electoral level, but also in social movements.

In France, this space is occupied by the National Rally (former *Front National*), which was born out of the extreme right wing, but which has managed to adapt its political configuration. It is now positioned in the civic nationalism/radical right quadrant. In Northern Europe, 'populist' parties have positioned themselves in this niche (VVD, Thierry Baudet in the Netherlands, etc.). In the United States, Donald Trump, billionaire and reality TV presenter, managed to take over the Republican Party and win the 2016 presidential election campaigning on a similar political positioning.

In the UK, for the moment, no party has managed to occupy this space permanently: the National Front[77] and then the British National Party collapsed under the weight of their contradictions and internal struggles.[78] There seems to be difficulty in establishing a credible far-right party – as shown by the successive failures of the National Front and the BNP, which were clearly neo-fascist ethnonationalists. Similarly, UKIP and the Brexit Party, which were single-issue parties, have failed to expand despite very significant electoral successes – a stalemate probably partly due to the first-past-the-post system.

However, the political space corresponding to the radical right exists and corresponds to real movements of opinion – this was clearly shown during the Brexit vote but also by the existence of a very lively sector of social movement activism.

[75] De Wilde et al, *ibid*.
[76] Amable, Bruno, Palombarini, Stephane. 2017. *L'illusion du bloc bourgeois: Alliances sociales et avenir du modèle français*. Paris: Raisons d'agir.
[77] Macklin, *ibid*.
[78] Copsey, *ibid*.

First of all, the EDL mobilised widely at the beginning of the 2010s before grad-ually fading away in the second half of the 2010s.

The second half of the 2010s also saw demonstrations with impressive crowds: the Liberty March 2018, organised by the DFLA, and in July 2020 the 'Defend our Memorials' march also gathered an impressive public. In that regard, the investment in the issue of migration around the question of Dover and migra-tory crossings is to be understood in this perspective: most activists around migration are part of this space of the radical right rather than the neo-fascist extreme right.

It should also be noted that Rasmussen questions the distinction between the radical right and extreme right wing made by Cas Mudde. According to him, if the radical right is less virulent than hard fascism, whether in ideological terms, in its relationship to democracy, or in its relationship to violence, this difference is not a difference of nature but rather a difference of degree and could easily radicalise to the field of the extreme right wing according to political circumstances, as shown by the attempt to seize the Capitol by Donald Trump's supporters.[79]

---

[79] Rasmussen, *ibid.*

Conclusion

This monograph aimed to answer the following question: in Western Europe, in a context where the investment of the state in law and order seems to be growing, how can we understand different phenomena of vigilantism? Any explanation for the emergence of vigilantism that explains its manifestation through reference to a distant or weakened state does not seem to correspond to the situation of the countries in our study: France and the United Kingdom. If the social policies implemented by authorities seem to be in retreat, this is not the case for the sectors of the state that Bourdieu called the right hand of the state (police, army, justice). In France, for example, the budgets of the Ministries of the Interior and the Armed Forces have been growing over the period studied,[1] while the private security sector has been expanding rapidly.

This book examined the role of vigilantism in a context where it is neither a response to the weakening of the state nor a 'cheap form of law enforcement'.[2] To what extent do vigilante practices contribute to the different processes of securitisation? If they do not correspond to a policing deficit, should we understand these specific forms of vigilance as presenting, above all else, a political dimension?

In order to answer these questions, a twofold approach was chosen, developed in two distinct parts. The first part was a general one: it aimed to understand the return of vigilantism in the wider context of the development of securitisation. The first three chapters offered keys to a general understanding of the phenomenon. It started with two theoretical chapters and was followed by a chapter devoted to a case study on neighbourhood watches in France.

The first part began with a reflection on the phenomenon of autonomous participation in the exercise of policing, supposed to fall within the monopoly of the legitimate violence of the modern bureaucratic state. According to authors such as

---

[1] 'Le budget du ministère de l'Intérieur va augmenter de plus de 900 millions d'euros en 2022' [Online: https://www.lefigaro.fr/conjoncture/le-budget-du-ministere-de-l-interieur-va-augmenter-de-plus-de-900-millions-d-euros-en-2022-20210726] Accessed 21 August 2021.
[2] Comaroff, Jean, Comaroff, John. 2006. *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony.* Chicago: Chicago University Press, p. 5.

Ray Abrahams,[3] Les Johnston,[4] Gilles Favarel-Garrigues and Laurent Gayer,[5] vigilantism presents several characteristics: it is an organised attempt to act in place of the state in the field of policing, whether by organising the surveillance of a territory, intervening against acts perceived as criminal or even administering justice in place of the judicial system. The phenomenon carries a voluntary dimension in the sense that vigilantes act on a voluntary basis, without making it their profession (although forms of remuneration are possible). According to criminologist Les Johnston, it thus has the characteristics of a social movement whose objective is to change or redefine what the norm is, reinforcing or modifying the contours of social order.[6] For their part, the political scientists Rosenbaum and Sederberg characterise vigilantism through its objectives.[7] They distinguish crime control vigilantism, which aims to prevent and punish criminal acts, and social group vigilantism, which does not target individuals, but social groups as such, because they are considered as problematic or criminogenic in the eyes of vigilantes.

Historically, the United States has been the country where this phenomenon has acquired the most visibility. Crime control vigilantism was highly developed there during the conquest of the West, taking the form of secret societies associating small and large landowners who inflicted barbaric and spectacular punishments. In the South of the United States, after the defeat of the Confederates following the Civil War, vigilantism took another form, that of social group vigilantism. After the abolition of slavery, a series of vigilante movements, notably the Ku Klux Klan, used violence to keep the black population subjected, a movement completed by the practice of lynching. In Europe, vigilante phenomena gradually disappeared from the 19th century onwards, erased by the emergence of modern policing, with the notable exception of squadrism in the inter-war period. Fascist squads and the German *Freikorps* were forms of social group vigilantism that brought together hundreds of thousands of demobilised soldiers and foreshadowed the establishment of the Nazi and Fascist regimes.

Chapter 2 offered keys to understanding contemporary vigilantism, which in a context of neoliberal globalisation has found new life in recent years. In the Global South, vigilantism has become common as a form of community policing in a context of weakening states, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. The panorama drawn up by Amyarta Sen and David Pratten is particularly valuable:[8] in very different forms, community policing and justice have emerged globally, defending social order as best they can when the authorities are often unable to. In the Global North, vigilantism has also been making a comeback, but in a very

---

[3] Abrahams, Ray. 1998. *Vigilant Citizens: Vigilantism and the State*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
[4] Johnston, Les. 1996. 'What is Vigilantism?', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 36(2): pp. 220–36.
[5] Favarel-Garrigues, Gilles, Gayer, Laurent. 2016. 'Violer la loi pour maintenir l'ordre: Le vigilantisme en débat', *Politix*, 115: pp. 7–33.
[6] Johnston, *ibid*.
[7] Rosenbaum, Jon, Sederberg, Peter. 1976. *Vigilante Politics*. Pittsburg: University of Pennsylvania Press.
[8] Pratten, David, Sen, Atreyee. 2007. *Global Vigilantes*. London: Hurst.

different context. Indeed, the retreat of the social state linked to the neoliberal turn resulting from the restructuring of the 1970s has been coupled with a securitarian turn: the social problems and illegalisms of the working classes are no longer dealt with from the angle of social policies, but from a securitisation perspective. Thus Loïc Wacquant, based on his research on the United States, speaks of the shift from a social state to a penal state, with the development of mass incarceration.[9] David Garland believes that this shift has been accompanied by the diffusion of a 'Law and Order' ideology,[10] while Didier Fassin speaks of a 'penal populism' to describe the social demand for security and punishment.[11] This shift has been fuelled by a series of cause entrepreneurs (police unions, self-proclaimed security experts, politicians, far-right groups) as well as by the spectacular 'mediatisation' of criminal events.[12] In this context, the fear of insecurity and crime has created a social demand for security. That longing for protection cannot be satisfied within the framework of security policies framed by the rule of law and respect for fundamental freedoms: a demand for absolute protection requires an absolute, and therefore authoritarian, state.[13] It is in this perspective that the return of vigilantism in the Global North must be understood. Moreover, it is part of a broader context in which citizens are called upon to become watchful citizens. In this conception of security, also called 'society of vigilance' by the political scientist Vanessa Codaccioni,[14] policing is no longer be the prerogative of the police, but of the whole population. Civil servants and social workers become involved in police surveillance work, as well as ordinary citizens. Moreover, some of the policing tasks can be delegated to private or semi-public security companies. This is the context in which the various vigilantisms have emerged: between citizen participation encouraged by the public authorities and autonomous mobilisation aimed at redefining the contours of this new securitarian order.

Chapter 3 of the book provided an empirical illustration through a field study of a form of citizen participation in security: the *Voisins Vigilants* in France. In France, this phenomenon, inspired by the Neighbourhood Watch programme, has acquired a mass character, with several tens of thousands of circles and hundreds of thousands of members. Some members are organised within the framework of watches supervised by public authorities, while others are more autonomous

[9] Wacquant, Loic. 2004. *Punir les pauvres: Le nouveau gouvernement de l'insécurité sociale.* Marseille. Agone.
[10] Garland, David. 2001. *The Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society.* Chicago: University of Chicago.
[11] Fassin, Didier. 2017. *Punir: Une passion contemporaine.* Paris: Seuil.
[12] Spitzer, Stephen. 1987. 'Security and Control in Capitalist Societies: The Fetishism of Security and the Secret Thereof' in Lowman, John, Menzies Robert, Palys, Ted (eds), *Transcarceration: Essays in the Sociology of Social Control.*
[13] Castel, Robert. 1999. *Les métamorphoses de la question sociale.* Paris: Folio.
[14] Codaccioni Vanessa. 2020. *La société de vigilance: Autosurveillance, délation et haines sécuritaires.* Paris: Textuel.

and are organised through a private platform: *Voisins Vigilants et Solidaires*. The field study enabled us to meet members of a dozen communities in the North of France and around the Mediterranean. These communities are located in regions with high poverty rates where the *Rassemblement National* votes have been high. The activity of *Voisins Vigilants* remains supervised by public authorities and does not constitute a phenomenon of vigilantism in the strictest sense: neighbours very rarely intervene physically. Nevertheless, the phenomenon is halfway between voluntary participation in security policies and forms of autonomous citizenship closer to vigilantism. Indeed, it represents surveillance and control of people coming from outside the community that are perceived as potentially delinquent. In the course of fieldwork, it was found that these circles have organised in various ways. The first type of community was made up of retired men, former small business owners, former managers and members of the higher intellectual professions. In these communities, the immediate feeling of the existence of delinquency seemed to be weak, but the implementation of the *Voisins Vigilants* corresponds to an insurance logic aiming to guarantee the security of property in the face of the potential danger posed by strangers. The second type of community is made up of working men, belonging to the established parts of the working classes who have been able to buy small properties. In these less affluent suburban neighbourhoods, proximity to the precarious working classes is evident, in social terms, but also geographically (proximity to housing estates). The action of these groups consists in patrolling and even intervening when people perceived as potential delinquents (young people from housing estates, homeless people) have been identified. In the case of these communities, the social link is stronger, particularly around patrolling. In both cases, this voluntary organisation of surveillance and social control is accompanied by rewards for the most involved participants. Their participation in these networks has allowed them to accumulate social capital which they can mobilise to obtain advantages from local councils, or even to join them. Moreover, it can be noted that this politicisation of security crosses the entire political field: although some *Voisins Vigilants* have close ties with the far right and the RN, this is not the case for all: some are close to the left and the Socialist Party, which shows how the process of securitisation has crossed the entire French political field.

The second part of the book specifically examined vigilantism and citizen participation in securitisation processes within the field of migration. How do opponents to migration attempt to construct refugees as a danger? This part discussed the voluntary dimension of vigilantism: this phenomenon is first and foremost a social movement in the sense that it aims to modify or harden the contours of the existing order. In the case of anti-migrant vigilantism, it aims to push states to significantly tighten their migration policies. This section opened with a reflective chapter on vigilantism as a social reaction to migration.

As we have seen, migration has become a very important political issue in Europe and North America. The rejection of immigration is one of the most important factors in the adherence to far-right ideas.[15] It is in that context that the social reaction to migration must be understood. Since the 2000s, anti-migrant vigilantism has developed consistently and constitutes an important social movement activity, especially in the wake of the 'migrant crisis' of 2015. The aim of this social group vigilantism in Europe is not so much to repress migrants directly or to prevent migratory flows, which remains the prerogative of the authorities. The primary objective is to change the framing of the figure of the refugee and the asylum seeker. From being vulnerable persons in danger in their country of origin, anti-migrant vigilantism assimilates refugees to a criminogenic group that endangers nationals at the cultural, civilisational, but also economic levels. Indeed, the pressure of migrants is supposed to endanger the welfare state and restrict access to employment for nationals. To this extent, anti-migrant vigilantism is above all a social movement activity aimed at influencing public opinion. The spectacular action of the Defend Europe campaign, which chartered a boat to intercept migrant crossings in the Mediterranean, is perhaps the ideal type of such vigilantism.

The anti-migrant groups in Calais (*Sauvons Calais*, *Calaisiens en Colère*) are part of this trend. The city of Calais has been in a very particular situation because many migrants wishing to go to the United Kingdom have become stuck in Calais, sometimes for months on end in very difficult conditions. Anti-migrant groups in Calais denounced the presence of migrants and demanded their confinement in a camp and their expulsion from the country. The first of these groups was created at the call of the mayor of Calais, Natacha Bouchart, who asked the population to identify and denounce any occupation of premises by migrants. The result exceeded the mayor's expectations: a group, *Sauvons Calais*, was spontaneously formed. It was not content with denouncing migrants, but organised patrols and even anti-squat mobilisations, which were marred by violence. The members of this group presented themselves as apolitical. Very quickly, their membership of hard right-wing extremists was revealed: most members of the group were neo-Nazi skinheads. A year later, a second group of other far-right activists entered the arena: the *Calaisiens en Colère*. The repertoire of action of these two groups has been relatively similar. Their activity is hybrid, between squadrism and more classic social movement activity. The groups simultaneously organise demonstrations and patrol activities. Their vigilantism primarily has a performative dimension, i.e. to stage vigilantism for social media. However, it was not uncommon for violent actions to have taken place during mobilisations organised by these anti-migrant

---

[15] Arzheimer, Kai. 2018. 'Explaining Electoral Support for the Radical Right' in Rydgren, Jens (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.

groups: stone throwing, fights with migrants, firing of rubber bullet guns, etc. These outbursts damaged the image of these groups and led the public authorities to harden their repressive attitude, whereas earlier they had been generally tolerant of their actions. Nevertheless, these limits to the action of anti-migrant groups did not prevent their demands from being largely met with the dismantling of the Jules Ferry jungle in November 2016 and the sending of the occupants to reception and orientation centres (CAO), followed by the almost immediate expulsion of new dwellings in Calais. This treatment of migrant populations by public authorities does not prevent the presence of migrants in Calais but has greatly reduced their visibility.

Demonstrations calling for tighter border security have been mirrored across the Channel. The summer of 2020 saw a series of activist stunts and demonstrations. As small boat crossings became the main means of crossing between France and the United Kingdom, they gained increased visibility in the British media. A whole series of actors from the British far right mobilised around that issue: political organisations, single-issue movements centred around migration and, finally, a new figure in social movements, video activists, halfway between classical activism and journalism, and whose impact on social media has been significant. Rather than coordinated campaigns, each actor carried out activities in relative isolation.

The repertoire of action of these groups relied mainly on the practice of demonstration and performative vigilantism: activists staged foot and boat patrols. These practices were primarily symbolic and did not have the potentially violent character of those of the anti-migrant groups in Calais. Even the law and order investigation carried out by the Little Boats group against smuggling groups seems to be primarily staged for the group's community audience. The aim was not to fight migrants on the ground (the way the British authorities are handling the situation does not really allow for this), but to construct asylum seekers as an intrinsically criminal group that would threaten the national body, in connection with a whole series of issues dear to the far right such as Islam and the fear of the Great Replacement of the British population. Most of these groups fall into a space that overlaps with the radical right and civic nationalism. This space seems to be characterised above all by a very strong rejection of Islam and a radicalism that is less than that of groups that fall within the field of the hard right and the ethno-nationalist extreme, such as Patriotic Alternative. Nevertheless, analysis of certain individual trajectories can lead to a nuance in these distinctions, as the boundaries between ethno-nationalism and civic nationalism seem more blurred at the level of individual commitments than at the level of constituted groups.

The use of social media, as we have seen, is central to the mobilisation of these groups. These do not function as simple communication tools, but rather determine social movement activity. Banner drops, demonstrations and patrols are

broadcast live online and constitute a performance directly oriented towards their communitarian audience. To this extent, it would almost be possible to say that the medium is the movement. This fusion finds its most accomplished character in the figure of the video activist, who is both an activist and a journalist. The latter simultaneously films his or her daily activist actions while providing a form of activist journalism by filming the crossings in order to render them visible.

The groups on the French and British sides of the Channel present a relatively similar repertoire of action, bringing together small numbers of activists around actions that belong simultaneously to the classic repertoire of social movements as well as that of vigilantism, with a strong emphasis on the image projected on different social media. The main difference between France and Britain is the use of violence. In Britain, most actions (with the exception of a demonstration in January 2016), including acts of vigilantism, do not result in violence, whereas in France, although there is an official line of non-violence, a halo of violence persists around the actions of anti-migrant groups. This non-use of violence in Britain could be explained by a higher cost for the use of violence in the street, both in terms of police repression and of the risk of clashes with counter-protesters.

It is also possible to observe relatively different relationships with the police. Indeed, British anti-migrant groups claim to be very strongly opposed to the government and the police, which they accuse of 'two-tier policing'. According to them, law enforcement favours pro-refugee activists and migrants, while repressing severely anti-migrant groups: many activists have been arrested for blockades and for filming the crossings at Dover. It is also possible to see many social media publications criticising the supposed multiculturalism of the British police forces.

In Calais, the attitude towards the police is more ambivalent. The anti-migrants simultaneously position themselves in strong opposition to the government's migratory policies while supporting law enforcement in the daily policing of refugees, claiming that police work would be hindered by government policies. This ambivalence is also to be found on the side of law enforcement: political activities and demonstrations criticising the government's action bear little tolerance and are frequently banned. On the contrary, vigilante activity has been better tolerated by the police: the siege of the Coulogne squat did not cause police intervention, nor did the security patrols in the Jules Ferry jungle, during which activists clashed with migrants alongside the *Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité*.

Regarding the implementation of vigilantism, differences can be found. On both sides of the Channel, groups have staged vigilante actions, but it is only on the French side that actions went beyond spectacular actions with a series of violent acts. This presence of violence only in France may seem contradictory to definitions of vigilantism as a form of policing against the state. According to this view, it would make more sense for vigilantism to emerge in the British

configuration where anti-migrant groups appear to be most directly opposed to law enforcement. This is not the case. On the contrary, it would seem that it is the ambivalence of the way in which the French public authorities handle the situation in Calais that has created the space for the emergence of violent actions linked to vigilantism despite a very strong police presence. The fact that vigilante actions emerge within such a context may lead to a reconsideration of certain vigilante phenomena not as frontally opposed to the state but as positioned 'alongside' the state in the interstices and opportunities its policing leaves to vigilante groups.

Anti-migrant groups on both sides of the Channel should also be considered in terms of the numbers mobilised. Let's remember that traditionally social movements tend to use numbers to legitimise their cause, as Charles Tilly's WUNC (Worthiness, Unity, Numbers, Commitment) reminds us. In Calais and Dover, this is absolutely not the case. Demonstrations that bring together several hundreds of participants are the exception rather than the rule: between 400 and 500 activists gathered by *Sauvons Calais* in September 2014, around 800 at the call of the *Calaisiens en Colère* in September 2015 and around 300 at the PEGIDA demonstration in February 2016. The situation is similar in Dover: 200 in January 2016 and 600 in September 2020, each time as the result of national mobilisations bringing together mainly activist networks. The overwhelming majority of these groups' actions involve a handful of activists and most demonstrations have had at best a few dozen participants.

It would therefore be possible to hastily conclude that these movements have given up trying to mobilise numbers in order to legitimise themselves, or at least that these groups fail to mobilise in numbers. Nevertheless, it is not possible to reduce the summoning of numbers to physical participation. Indeed, what primarily serves as 'numbers' for these anti-migrant groups are online community audiences. The numbers of these groups are not to be counted in terms of participants on the ground but in 'likes', 'shares' and 'comments' on Facebook posts, video views and participants and commentators in various livestreams.

While we have discussed 'paper vigilantism', drawing on Patrick Champagne's concept of 'paper protest', it should be noted that differences remain regarding its broader context. Thus, a 'paper demonstration' is intended to stage numbers and unity in order to produce an image in the mainstream media that is favourable to the demonstrators' cause and to influence public opinion in order to build support. Here, the pattern is somewhat different: activists stage performances (patrols, demonstrations, banner drops) whose main purpose is to produce an image for their communitarian audience. It is therefore these performances that enable numbers to be generated. Moreover, if the numbers mobilised belong to the digital world and not to real sociability, this does not imply that they have no impact on social reality. Online interactions do belong to social life even if they do not involve physical encounters, and online mobilisation campaigns can have

effects on the social world that go beyond the sphere of social media, as has been shown by events as varied as the Brexit vote, the election of Donald Trump in 2016 or the birth of the 'Yellow Vest' movement in France in autumn 2018.

Finally, these groups present a relatively similar political framing that places them within the field of the far right. In England, most of the actors are positioned in the subfield of the radical right, with a conception of the nation that can be understood as civic nationalism, with a focus on the links between immigration and Islam, to the exception of a few groups and activists who follow an ethno-nationalist vision of politics. In all interviews, immigration in Dover is presented as articulated with other elements of far-right ideological discourse. In Calais, anti-migrant groups focus primarily on the immediate Calaisian situation. There is little reference to more general theories such as the 'Great Replacement', 'white genocide' or the danger supposedly posed by Islam. On the contrary, the framing is focused on local issues and on the immediate danger supposedly posed by migrants. The Calaisian groups see Calais as the scene of an immediate confrontation between migrants and the population, which does not require an advanced ideological explanation, and call for direct action or even participation in the confrontations, with a strong emphasis on immediate action and self-defence, as evidenced, for example, by the support for the Hungarian driver who tried to run over migrants, or the claim for the officialisation of vigilante groups by *Sauvons Calais*.

Finally, in economic terms, the discourses of the British and French groups are relatively similar. Immigrants are presented as in competition with nationals. Their expulsion would be a means that would mechanically raise the standard of living of the 'national' working classes. British groups focus this competition mainly on the welfare state, and the benefits to which migrants are entitled, by systematically opposing them to the figure of the 'homeless veteran', and many actions take place in the vicinity of hotels occupied by migrants in order to denounce the scandal of the 'free hotel rooms' they are supposed to be provided, as opposed to homeless veterans on the streets. In Calais, the discourse is not only focused on the welfare state, especially since migrants are not housed but on the contrary left to live in makeshift camps that are regularly evicted, but it is the access to employment that is perceived as the stage of competition between nationals and migrants, echoing the slogans of the *Front National* in the 1970s: '1 million unemployed = 1 million immigrants'.

The theoretical and empirical examination of these movements opens up several perspectives. First of all, the link between vigilantism and the far right needs to be questioned. Indeed, the revival of vigilantism in the countries of the North, through the wave of anti-migrant vigilantism in Europe and the militia movement in the United States, shows that the groups that engage in vigilantism often stem from the far right. If it is not possible to reduce vigilantism to the far right, a connection can be observed, allowing to speak of elective affinities. How can we

explain these connections? Let's not forget that Fascism and Nazism drew strength from their militia movements. One explanation for these affinities can be found in one of the characterisations of the far-right political perspective by Cas Mudde, who sees this current as 'pathological normality',[16] i.e. an abnormal amplification of pre-existing tendencies within liberal democracies. These tendencies are met with the project of an authoritarian defence based on the purification of the national body, through the fight against an internal enemy whose profile varies according to the circumstances and the national contexts. Thus, in Western European countries at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, antisemitism in its modern form pre-existed fascist movements. Similarly, law and order rhetoric and social reaction to migration were not among the main concerns of historical fascism. It was only after the Second World War that the far right seized upon these themes, making them the core of its rhetoric, updating its political software by addressing the fears of post-war Western societies. The historian Johann Chapoutot made a similar observation when he considered Nazism to be a monstrous combination of pre-existing tendencies within German society, such as militarism, authoritarianism, imperialism and antisemitism.[17] It is perhaps this pathological normality that could explain the elective affinities between vigilantism and the far right. We have seen that vigilantism presents a social movement character whose objective is to defend the existing order but also to redefine what is acceptable and what is not. To this extent, it becomes the means par excellence for the far right to act towards this 'pathological normality': a significant reconfiguration of Western societies through the exclusion of minorities without fundamentally challenging the contours of established order. This explanation of the affinities between the far right and vigilantism deserves to be explored in further research.

Another significant result seems to be that the classical definition of vigilantism only partially corresponds to field observations. While the dimensions of surveillance and voluntary and organised mobilisation against individuals and social groups perceived as criminogenic are present in the case of the *Voisins Vigilants* and anti-migrant groups, the use of physical violence seems to be more the exception than the norm. Thus, the *Voisins Vigilants* have very rarely resorted to physical coercion, preferring to use injunctions and the threat of calling the police to exercise their authority over those they consider to be potential delinquents. Similarly, the patrols and other acts of vigilantism by British anti-migrant groups are primarily symbolic performances that are not, at the time of writing, followed by violent action. Only the anti-migrant groups in Calais, despite their claim for pacifism, have seen significant violence emerge in the wake of their activity. This downplaying of the violent dimension of vigilantism is also noted by Bjørgo and

---

[16] Mudde, Cas. 2000. *The Ideology of the Extreme Right*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
[17] Chapoutot, Johann. 2014. *La loi du sang: Penser et agir en nazi*. Paris: Gallimard.

Mareš in their work on anti-migrant vigilantism.[18] One possible explanation for this low level of violence could be the high level of cultural inhibition of violence in European societies.[19] Another could be the strength of the authority of the French and British states, which manage to inhibit most violent manifestations of vigilantism. This low level of violence invites us to rethink the phenomenon: is the use of physical violence an essential characteristic of vigilantism or is it possible to imagine a vigilantism that can dispense with the use of force in favour of subtler mechanisms of coercion, such as public exposure and online stigmatisation?

The different fields also show similarities in terms of collective identity construction. The vigilantes want to defend an identity of an 'us' perceived as weak and threatened: for instance, Mark Collett states that 'the white British are the only ones who don't have a community life as such',[20] the *Voisins Vigilants* display solidarity by organising against strangers, as shown by the shared meals taken on the wall built to close off the neighbourhood in Hénin-Beaumont, in the face of a threatening 'they'. To take up the work of Olivier Schwartz on triangular social consciousness of the established working classes,[21] these define themselves both by the relationship with the 'them' that would be the ruling elites, but also with the 'they' of the most precarious elements of the working classes, very often of immigrant origin, perceived as dependent on assistance and criminogenic. This figure of 'they' can be found among the *Voisins Vigilants*, who fear the inhabitants of low-income housing estates. It is also present among the anti-migrant group, who view migrants as competitors for access to the welfare system, social housing and employment, as well as criminogenic populations. It is this figure of 'they' that the vigilantes want to keep at bay by their mobilisation in order to revalorise a collective identity perceived as non-existent or at least greatly threatened. It is also interesting to note that the theory of the 'Great Replacement' offers an explanation of the situation by a conspiracy associating the 'they' of the multicultural elites with the 'them' of the immigrants to make the 'we' of the 'national' working classes disappear.

Finally, the various chapters of this book raise the question of the relationship of these groups to the authorities. Indeed, historical vigilantism, such as that on the American border, or vigilantism in the Global South, takes place in contexts of weakness or distance from the state. This is not the case in the European countries that constitute the field of this research, and this seems corroborated by the low level of use of violence displayed by these groups. On the contrary, these

---

[18] Bjørgo, Tore, Mareš, Miroslav (eds). 2019. *Vigilantism against Migrants and Minorities*. London: Routledge.
[19] Elias, Norbert. 1973. *La civilisation des mœurs*. Paris: Pocket.
[20] Interview with Mark Collett on 11 May 2021.
[21] Collovald, Anne, Schwartz, Olivier. 2006. 'Haut, bas, fragile: Sociologies du populaire', *Vacarme*, 37: pp. 19–26.

mobilisations seem to be the expression of a social demand for security: faced with what they perceive as a danger, these groups demand a tightening of public security policies in order to keep individuals or groups perceived as criminogenic at bay. According to Spitzer, the social need for security is difficult to satisfy.[22] In the words of Robert Castel, an ever-increasing need for security and thus protection by the state is hardly compatible with a democratic state and the guarantees of fundamental freedoms that go with it: in the face of mortal perils, an absolute need for protection would necessitate a state that would resemble Hobbes' Leviathan rather than a liberal democracy as we know it.[23] In this perspective, vigilante movements may be actors in the construction of this demand for authoritarian protection on the part of the state. The elective affinity between vigilantism and the far right also makes sense in this perspective: for a political current opposed to principles of liberal democracy such as minority rights, vigilantism is also a means of influencing the political configuration in favour of increased authoritarianism.

---

[22] Spitzer, Stephen. 1987. 'Security and Control in Capitalist Societies: The Fetishism of Security and the Secret Thereof', in Lowman, John, Menzies, Robert, Palys, Ted (eds), *Transcarceration: Essays in the Sociology of Social Control*.
[23] Castel, Robert. 2003. *L'insécurité sociale: Qu'est-ce qu'être protégé*. Paris: Seuil.

Bibliography

Chapter 1: Practitioners of Vigilantism

Abrahams, Ray. 1998. *Vigilant Citizens: Vigilantism and the State*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Agamben, Giorgio. 2003. *Etat d'exception*. Paris: Le Seuil.

Audigier, François, Girard, Pascal (eds). 2012. *Se battre pour ses idées. La violence militante en France des années 1920 aux années 1970*. Paris: Riveneuve.

Bjørgo, Tore, Mareš, Miroslav (eds). 2019. *Vigilantism against Migrants and Minorities*. London: Routledge.

Bouchenot, Matthias. 2014. *Tenir la rue*. Paris: Libertalia.

Boucheron, Patrick. 2018. *Histoire mondiale de la France*. Paris: Points.

Brodeur, Jean-Pierre, Jobard, Fabien. 2005. *Citoyens et délateurs: La délation peut-elle être civique?* Paris: Autrement.

Chevalier, Louis. 2002. *Classes laborieuses et classes dangereuses*. Paris: Perrin.

Clark, Martin. 1988. 'Italian Squadrismo and Contemporary Vigilantism', *European History Quarterly*, 18: pp. 33–49.

Courrière, Yves. 2001. *La Guerre d'Algérie*. Paris: Fayard.

Dorlin, Elsa. 2017. *Se défendre: une philosophie de la violence*. Paris: Zones.

Durkheim, Emile. 2013 [1893]. *De la division du travail social*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Elias, Norbert. 1998. *La société des individus*. Paris. Pocket.

Elias, Norbert. 2003. *La dynamique de l'occident*. Paris: Pocket.

Favarel-Garrigues, Gilles, Gayer, Laurent. 2016. 'Violer la loi pour maintenir l'ordre: Le vigilantisme en débat', *Politix*, 115: pp. 7–33.

Foucault, Michel. 1975. *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*. Paris: Gallimard.

Fourchard, Laurent. 2008. 'A New Name for an Old Practice: Vigilante in South-western Nigeria', *Africa*, 78(1): pp. 34–56.

Gallandier, Mathieu, Ibo, Sebastien. 2017. *Temps obscurs, nationalisme et extrême droite en France et en Europe*. La Buissière: Acratie.

Gentile, Emilio. 2015. *Soudain, le fascisme: La marche sur Rome, l'autre révolution d'Octobre*. Paris: Gallimard.

Guérin, Daniel. 2010. *De l'oncle Tom aux Panthères Noires*. Paris: Bons Caractères.

Gurr, Ted. 1971. *Why Men Rebel*. Boston: Princeton University Press.

Jobard, Fabien, de Maillard, Jacques. 2015. *Sociologie de la police: Politiques, organisations, réformes*. Paris: Armand Colin.

Johnston, Les. 1996. 'What is Vigilantism?', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 36(2): pp. 220–36.

Johnston, Les. 1992. *The Rebirth of Private Policing*. London: Routledge.

Kauffer, Rémi. 2007. 'Les soldats perdus de l'OAS' in Faligot, Roger (ed.), *Histoire secrète de la Vᵉ République*. Paris: La Découverte.

Koehler, Daniel. 2019. 'Anti-immigration Militias and Vigilante Groups in Germany: An Overview', in Bjørgo, Tore, Mareš, Miroslav (eds), *Vigilantism against Migrants and Minorities*. London: Routledge.

Malochet, Virginie. 2017. *La participation des citoyens en matière de sécurité locale: Diversité des regards et des modes d'implication*, Report for l'IAU IDF.

Marples, David, Mills, Frederick. 2015. *Ukraine's Euromaidan: Analyses of a Civil Revolution*. London: Ibidem.

Millan, Matteo. 2013. 'The Institutionalisation of Squadrismo: Disciplining Paramilitary Violence in the Italian Fascist Dictatorship', *Contemporary European History*, 22(4): pp. 551–73.

Mumford, Lewis. 2011. *La cité à travers l'histoire*. Marseille: Agone.

Nelson, Alondra. 2016. '«Corps et âme». Le parti des Black Panthers et la lutte contre la discrimination médicale', *Agone*, 1(1): pp. 19–50.

Paxton, Robert. 2004. *Le fascisme en action.* Paris: Le Seuil.

Pratten, David, Sen, Atreyee. 2007. *Global Vigilantes*. London: Hurst.

Portis, Larry. 2011. *Le fascisme*. Paris: Ed Alternative Libertaire.

Rosenbaum, Jon, Sederberg, Peter. 1974. 'Vigilantism: An Analysis of Establishment Violence', *Comparative Politics*, 6(4): pp. 541–70.

Rosenbaum, Jon, Sederberg, Peter. 1976. *Vigilante Politics.* Pittsburg: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Rougerie, Jacques. 2018. *La commune et les communards*. Paris: Folio.

Rubenstein, Jérémy. 2014. 'La sédition militaire de Semana Santa de 1987: Le peuple au secours du régime démocratique argentin', Thesis completed on 10 June 2014, Annick Lempérière (dir), Université Paris – I.

Ruscio, Alain. 2015. *Nostalgérie: L'interminable histoire de l'OAS.* Paris: La Découverte.

Sen, Atreyee. 2007. 'Everyday and Extraordinary Justice: Woman Vigilantes and Raw Justice in the Bombay Slums' in Pratten, David, Sen, Atreyee (eds), *Global Vigilantes*. London: Hurst.

Schmitt, Carl. 2009. *La notion de politique: Théorie du partisan*. Paris: Editions Flammarion.

Soboul, Albert. 1968. *Les Sans-culottes parisiens en l'an II: Mouvement populaire et gouvernement révolutionnaire 1793–1794*. Paris: Seuil.

Thénault, Sylvie. 2008. 'L'OAS à Alger en 1962: Histoire d'une violence terroriste et de ses agents', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 63(5): pp. 977–1001.

Tocqueville (de), Alexis. 1985. *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*. Paris: Folio.

Weber, Max. 2003. *Economie et société, tome 1: Les catégories de la sociologie*. Paris: Pocket.

Press resources

'Affrontements et répression place Tahrir' [Online: https://www.lexpress.fr/actual ite/monde/afrique/affrontements-et-repression-place-tahrir_958124.html] Accessed 8 May 2020.

'Hong Kong: l'ombre des triades sur la répression des manifestants' [Online: https:// www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2019/07/24/hongkong-sous-le-choc-apres-les-attaques-des-triades_5492855_3210.html] Accessed 8 April 2020.

'Migrants: un message de Natacha Bouchart crée le buzz sur Facebook' [Online: http:// www.nordlittoral.fr/fait-divers-justice/migrants-un-message-de-natacha-bouchart-cree-le-buzz-sur-ia6b0n26840] Accessed 30 September 2017.

'Sivens: Les milices pro-barrage agissent dans l'impunité alors que l'expulsion de la Zad se dessine' [Online: https://reporterre.net/Sivens-les-milices-pro-barr age] Accessed 8 May 2020.

'Squat de Coulogne, jeunesse identitaire: Sauvons Calais dans la tourmente (VIDÉO)' [Online: http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/archive/recup/region/squat-de-coulogne-jeunesse-identitaire-sauvons-calais-ia33b48581n1947081] Accessed 3 September 2018.

Pontecorvo, Gilles. 1966. *La Bataille d'Alger*, Fiction, 2h01mn.

Chapter 2: Return to Vigilantism

Abrahams, Ray. 1998. *Vigilant Citizens: Vigilantism and the State*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2007. *Le Présent liquide: Peurs sociales et obsession sécuritaire*. Paris: Le Seuil.

Bihr, Alain. 2019. *Le premier âge du capitalisme (1415–1763): Tome 2, la marche de l'Europe Occidentale vers le capitalisme*. Paris: Syllepse.

Bjørgo, Tore, Mareš, Miroslav (eds). 2019. *Vigilantism against Migrants and Minorities*. London: Routledge.

Buzan, Barry, Waewer, Ole, De Wilde, Joao. 1998. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Castel, Robert. 2003. *L'insécurité sociale: Qu'est-ce qu'être protégé*. Paris: Seuil.

Chamayou, Grégoire. 2018. *La société ingouvernable: Une généalogie du libéralisme autoritaire*. Paris: La Fabrique.

Codaccioni, Vanessa. 2018. *La légitime défense: Homicides sécuritaires, crimes racistes et violences policières.* Paris: CNRS Editions.

Crouch, Colin. 2004. *Post-democracy.* London: Polity Press.

Elias, Norbert. 1973. *La civilisation des mœurs*. Paris: Pocket.

Fassin, Didier. 2017. *Punir: Une passion contemporaine*. Paris: Seuil.

Gardenier, Matthijs. 2018. 'Sauvons Calais, un groupe anti-migrants. Une perspective: rétablir l'ordre', *Revue Européenne des migrations internationales*, 34(1): pp. 235–57.

Gardenier, Matthijs. 2019. 'Penser la communication horizontale dans le cadre de mouvements sociaux', *Interrogations*, 28.

Garland, David. 2001. *The Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Girard, René. 2011. *La violence et le sacré*. Paris: Fayard.

Gurr, Ted. 1971. *Why Men Rebel*. Boston: Princeton University Press.

Jobard, Fabien, De Maillard, Jacques. 2015. *Sociologie de la police: Politiques, organisations, réformes*. Paris: Armand Colin.

Johnston, Les. 1992. *The Rebirth of Private Policing*. London. Routledge.

Johnston, Les. 1996. 'What is Vigilantism?', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 36(2): pp. 220–36.

Jourdain, Anne, Naulin, Sidonie. 2011. *La théorie de Pierre Bourdieu et ses usages sociologiques*. Paris: Armand Colin.

Lebourg, Nicolas, Sommier, Isabelle. *La violence des marges politiques en France des années 1980 à nos jours*. Paris: Riveneuve.

Lub, Vasco. 2017. *Neighbourhood Watch in a Digital Age: Between Crime Control and Culture of Control (Crime Prevention and Security Management)*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Malochet, Virginie. 2017. *La participation des citoyens en matière de sécurité locale: Diversité des regards et des modes d'implication*. Report to the IAU IDF.

Muchembled. Robert. 2012. *Une histoire de la violence: De la fin du Moyen Age à nos jours*. Paris: Points.

Mucchielli, Laurent, Spierenburg, Pieter. 2009. *Histoire de l'homicide en Europe: De la fin du Moyen Âge à nos jours*. Paris: La Découverte.

Paxton, Robert. 2004. *Le fascisme en action.* Paris: Le Seuil.

Polanyi, Karl. 2009. *La grande transformation: Aux origines politiques et économiques de notre temps*. Paris: Gallimard.

Pratten, David, Sen, Atreyee (eds.). 2007. *Global Vigilantes*. London: Hurst.

Pridmore, Jason, Mols, Anouk, Wang, Yijing, Holleman, Frank. 2019. 'Keeping an Eye on the Neighbours: Police, Citizens, and Communication Within Mobile Neighbourhood Crime Prevention Groups', *The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles*, 92(2): pp. 97–120.

Simonneau, Damien. 2018. 'Militer pour murer la frontière: Les acteurs pro-«barrière» d'Israël et d'Arizona (États-Unis)' in Dubet, François (ed.), *Politiques des frontières*. Paris: La Découverte.

Spitzer, Stephen. 1987. 'Security and Control in Capitalist Societies: The Fetishism of Security and the Secret Thereof', in Lowman, John, Menzies, Robert, Palys, Ted (eds), *Transcarceration: Essays in the Sociology of Social Control*.

Talpin, Julien. 2016. *Community organizing: De l'émeute à l'alliance des classes populaires aux Etats-Unis*. Paris: Raisons d'agir.

Wacquant, Loic. 2004. *Punir les pauvres: Le nouveau gouvernement de l'insécurité sociale*. Marseille: Agone.

Walsh, James. 2014. 'Watchful Citizens: Immigration Control, Surveillance and Societal Participation', *Social & Legal Studies*, 23(2): pp. 237–59.

Wood, Lesley. 2017. 'Anti-Immigrant Protests, Past and Present (1920–36 and 2000–16)', presented at the social movement conference, *For Alternative Futures*, Manchester, April 2017.

Press resources

'Evolution du budget de la police et de la gendarmerie nationales, en milliards d'euros' [Online: https://www.alternatives-economiques.fr/evolution-budget-de-police-de-gendarmerie-nationales-milliards-deuros-0110201662911.html] Accessed 8 April 2020.

'Migrants dans les Alpes: Opération «Defend Europe» par des militants d'extrême droite' [Online: https://www.lemonde.fr/immigration-et-diversite/article/2018/04/22/migrants-dans-les-alpes-francaises-renforts-importants-pour-controler-les-frontieres_5289094_1654200.html] Accessed 8 April 2020.

'«Patrouilles» d'extrême droite dans le métro' [Online: https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/patrouilles-d-extreme-droite-dans-le-metro_1542930.html] Accessed 8 April 2020.

'Trente ans de legislation antiterroriste' [Online: https://www.vie-publique.fr/eclairage/18530-trente-ans-de-legislation-antiterroriste] Accessed 8 April 2020.

'Viols collectifs l'affaire de Rochdale et son équation raciale' [Online: https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2012/11/19/viols-collectifs-l-affaire-de-rochdale_1792776_3210.html] Accessed 8 May 2020.

Chapter 3: The Social Organisation of Neighbourhood Surveillance

Agrikoliansky, Eric, Collovald, Anne. 2014. 'Mobilisations conservatrices: Comment les dominants contestent?', *Politix*, 106: pp. 7–29.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2007. *Le Présent liquide: Peurs sociales et obsession sécuritaire*. Paris: Le Seuil.

Beaud, Stéphane, Weber, Florence. 2003. *Guide de l'enquête de terrain: Produire et analyser des données ethnographiques*. Paris: La Découverte.

Bonelli, Laurent. 2010. *La France a peur: Une histoire sociale de « l'insécurité »*. Paris: La Découverte.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1980. 'Le capital social: Notes provisoires', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 31: pp. 2–13.

Brodeur, Jean-Pierre, Jobard, Fabien. 2005. *Citoyens et délateurs: La délation peut-elle être civique?* Paris: Autrement.

Brunton-Smith, Ian, Bullock, Karen. 2019. 'Patterns and Drivers of Co-production in Neighbourhood Watch in England and Wales: From Neo-liberalism to New Localism', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 59(1): pp. 85–106.

Buzan, Barry, Waewer, Ole, De Wilde, Joaso. 1998. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Clarke, Zoe. 2017. *What We Talk About When We Talk About Terrorism: The Definitions of Terrorism and the Consequences Thereof*. Master degree. Department of Politics, University of York.

Collovald, Anne, Schwartz, Olivier. 2006. 'Haut, bas, fragile: Sociologies du populaire', *Vacarme*, 37: pp. 19–26.

Comaroff, Jean, Comaroff, John. 2006. *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Durand, Gilbert. 1993. *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*. Paris: Dunod.

Durkheim, Emile. 2013 [1893]. *De la division du travail social*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Favarel-Garrigues, Gilles, Gayer, Laurent. 2016. 'Violer la loi pour maintenir l'ordre. Le vigilantisme en débat', *Politix*, 115: pp. 8–37.

Fleming, Jenny, O'Reilly, Juani. 2007. 'The "Small-scale Initiative": The Rhetoric and the Reality of Community Policing in Australia', *Policing*, 1: pp. 214–23.

Fourchard, Laurent. 2008. 'A New Name for an Old Practice: Vigilante in South-Western Nigeria', *Africa*, 78(1): pp. 34–56.

Girard, Violaine. 2013. 'Propriété et classes populaires: Des politiques aux trajectoires', *Politix*, 101: pp. 7–20.

Girard, Violaine. 2017. *Le vote FN au village: Trajectoires de ménages populaires du périurbain*. Paris: Editions du Croquant.

Holloway, Katie, Bennett, Trevor, Farrington, David, 2008. 'Does Neighbourhood Watch Reduce Crime?' *Crime Prevention Research Review*, 3: pp. 42–9.

Jasper, James. 1998. 'The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions in and Around Social Movements', *Sociological Forum*, 13(3): pp. 397–424.

Johnston, Les, 1992. *The Rebirth of Private Policing*. London: Routledge.

Johnston, Les. 1996. 'What is Vigilantism?', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 36(2): pp. 220–36.

Jourdain, Anne, Naulin, Sidonie. 2011. *La théorie de Pierre Bourdieu et ses usages sociologiques*. Paris: Armand Colin.

Lub, Vasco. 2017. *Neighbourhood Watch in a Digital Age: Between Crime Control and Culture of Control (Crime Prevention and Security Management)*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pridmore, Jason, Mols, Anouk, Wang, Yijing, Holleman, Frank. 2019. 'Keeping an Eye on the Neighbours: Police, Citizens, and Communication Within Mobile Neighbourhood Crime Prevention Groups', *The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles*, 92(2): pp. 97–120.

Malochet, Virginie. 2017. *La participation des citoyens en matière de sécurité locale: Diversité des regards et des modes d'implication.* Report to the IAU IDF.

Mardore, François. 2012. 'Ensembles résidentiels fermés en France et montée d'un ordre sécuritaire', *L'espace politique: Revue en ligne de géographie politique et de géopolitique* [Online: https://espacepolitique.revues.org/2338].

Mischi, Julien. 2003. 'Travail partisan et sociabilités populaires: Observations localisées de la politisation communiste', *Politix*, 63: pp. 91–119.

Newman, Oscar. 1973. *Defensible Space: People and Design in the Violent City.* Architectural Press: London.

Pieri, Elisa. 2014. 'Emergent Policing Practices: Operation Shop a Looter and Urban Space Securitisation in the Aftermath of the Manchester 2011 Riots', *Surveillance & Society*, 12(1): pp. 38–54.

Ritaine, Evelyne. 2009. 'La barrière et le checkpoint: mise en politique de l'asymétrie', *Cultures & Conflits*, 73: pp. 15–33.

Rogers, Everett, Kincaid, Lawrence. 1981. *Communication Networks: Toward a New Paradigm for Research.* New York: Free Press Collier Macmillan.

Rosenbaum, Jon, Sederberg, Peter.1976. *Vigilante Politics.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Schmitt, Carl. 2009. *La notion de politique: Théorie du partisan.* Paris. Flammarion.

Skogan, Wesley. 1986. 'Fear of Crime and Neighborhood Change', *Crime and Justice*, 8: pp. 203–29.

Steden, Ronald, Van Caem-Posch, Barbara, Boutellier, Hans. 2011. 'The "Hidden Strength" of Active Citizenship: The Involvement of Local Residents in Public Safety Projects', *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 11(5): pp. 433–50.

Van Der Land, Marco. 2014. *De buurtwacht: Naar een balans tussen instrumentalisering en autonomie van burgers in veiligheid.* Communication at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Wacquant, Loic. 2004. *Punir les pauvres: Le nouveau gouvernement de l'insécurité sociale.* Marseille: Agone.

Walsh, James. 2014. 'Watchful Citizens: Immigration Control, Surveillance and Societal Participation', *Social & Legal Studies*, 23(2): pp. 237–59.

Press resources

Andrzejewski, Cécile. 2017. « Les radicalisés », pas plus fous que la moyenne' [Online: https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/260817/les-radicalises-pas-plus-fous-que-la-moyenne] Accessed 10 October 2017.

'A Hénin-Beaumont, le mur anti-cambrioleurs de la mairie FN... divise' [Online:https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/politique/fn/a-henin-beaumont-le-mur-anti-cambrioleurs-de-la-mairie-fn-divise_1648343.html] Accessed 21 September 2018.

'Hénin-Beaumont des inquiétudes sur la sécurité' [Online: http://www.lavoi xdunord.fr/archive/recup%3A%252Fregion%252Fhenin-beaumont-des-inquietudes-sur-la-securite-mais-ia34b54038n2533005] Accessed 21 September 2018. 'Le dispositif de participation citoyenne' [Online: http:// circulaire.legifrance.gouv.fr/pdf/2011/06/cir_33332.pdf] Accessed 4 October 2017.

'Le voisin vigilant neutralise un voleur à la roulotte' [Online: https://e-metropolit ain.fr/2017/12/27/montpellier-voisin-vigilant-neutralise-voleur-a-roulotte] Accessed 21 September 2018.

'Panorama – Hauts-de-France', Insee' [Online: https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiq ues/2018919] Accessed 10 October 2017.

'Voisins Vigilants – Notre Histoire' [Online: https://www.voisinsvigilants.org/not re_histoire] Accessed 21 February 2018.

'Voisins Vigilants – Voisin vigilant' [Online: http://www.voisinsvigilants.org] Accessed 10 October 2017.

Chapter 4: Vigilantism as a Social Reaction to Migration

ACLED & Militia Watch. 2020. *Standing By: Right Wing Militia Groups & the US Election*, Joint Report.

Amable, Bruno, Palombarini, Stephane. 2017. *L'illusion du bloc bourgeois: Alliances sociales et avenir du modèle français*. Paris. Raisons d'agir.

Arendt, Hannah. 1951. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co.

Arzheimer, Kai. 2018. 'Explaining Electoral Support for the Radical Right' in Rydgren, Jens (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bancel, Nicolas, Blanchard, Pascal, Boubeker, Ahmed. 2015. 'Les réactionnaires médiatiques: De la théorie du déclin à celle du «grand remplacement»' in Bancel, Nicolas, Blanchard, Pascal, Boubeker, Ahmed (eds), *Le grand repli*. Paris: La Découverte.

Bjørgo, Tore, Mareš, Miroslav (eds). 2019. *Vigilantism against Migrants and Minorities*. London: Routledge.

Blee, Kathleen, Latif, Mehr. 2019. 'Ku Klux Klan: Vigilantism against Blacks, Immigrants and Other Minorities' in Bjørgo, Tore, Mareš, Miroslav (eds), *Vigilantism against Migrants and Minorities*. London: Routledge.

Bouron, Samuel. 2017. 'Des «fachos» dans les rues aux «héros» sur le web: La formation des militants identitaires', *Réseaux*, 202–203: pp. 187–211.

Buchanan, James. 1965. 'An Economic Theory of Clubs', *Economica*, 32(125): pp. 1–14.

Castel, Robert. 1999. *Les métamorphoses de la question sociale*. Paris: Folio.

Castelli Gattinara, Pietro, Froio, Caterina. 2018. 'Quand les identitaires font la une: Stratégies de mobilisation et visibilité médiatique du bloc identitaire', *Revue française de science politique*, 68: pp. 103–19.

Codaccioni, Vanessa. 2020. *La société de vigilance: Autosurveillance, délation et haines sécuritaires*. Paris: Textuel .

Coleman, David. 2010. 'Projections of the Ethnic Minority Populations of the United Kingdom 2006–2056', *Population and Development Review*, 36(3): pp. 441–86.

Cristante, Stefano. 2005. *Media Philosophy: Interpretare la comunicazione-mondo*. Naples: Liguori Editore.

De Wilde, Pieter, Koopmans, Ruud, Merkel, Wolfgang, Strijbis Oliver, Zürn, Michael. 2019. *The Struggle Over Borders: Cosmopolitanism and Communitarianism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Favarel-Guarrigues, Gilles. 2020. 'Digital Vigilantism and Anti-paedophile Activism in Russia: Between Civic Involvement in Law Enforcement, Moral Policing and Business Venture', *Global Crime*, 21(3–4): pp. 306–26.

Foucault, Michel. 1993. *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*. Paris: Gallimard.

Gastaut, Yves. 1993. La flambée raciste de 1973 en France. *Revue européenne des migrations internationales*, 9(2): pp. 61–75.

Gardenier, Matthijs, Monie, Aymeric. 2018. 'De l'utilisation de Facebook à des fins de mobilisation par le groupe Sauvons Calais', *Communication*, 35(1).

Gardenier, Matthijs. 2020. 'Calais: Le rapport ambigu à la violence des groupes anti-migrants' in Jacques, Walter, Fleury, Béatrice (eds), *Violences et radicalités militantes dans l'espace public en France des années 1980 à nos jours*. Paris: Editions Riveneuve.

Johnston, Les. 1996 'What is Vigilantism?', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 36(2): pp. 220–36.

Ignatiev, Noel. 2008. *How the Irish Became White*. New York: Routledge.

Koehler, Daniel. 2019. 'Anti-immigration Militias and Vigilante Groups in Germany: An Overview', in Bjørgo, Tore, Mareš, Miroslav (eds), *Vigilantism against Migrants and Minorities*. London: Routledge.

Le Gallo, Julie, L'Horty, Yannick, Du Parquet, Loic, Petit, Pascale. 2017 *Les discriminations dans l'acces au logement en France:Un testing de couverture nationale*. Report, no. 2017–11. Paris: TEPP.

Neveu, Eric. 2011. *Sociologie des mouvements sociaux.* Paris: La Découverte.

Macklin, Graham. 2019. *Failed Führers: A History of Britain's Extreme Right*. London: Routledge.

Mair, Peter. 2006. 'Cleavages' in Katz, Richard S., Crotty, William (eds), *Handbook of Party Politics*. London: SAGE Publications.

McCarthy, John, Zald, Mayer. 1977. 'Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory', *American Journal of Sociology*, 82: pp. 1212–241.

Mudde, Cas. 2000. *The Ideology of the Extreme Right*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Noiriel, Gérard. 2018. *Une histoire populaire de la France: De la guerre de Cent Ans à nos jours*. Marseille: Agone.

Obaidi, Milan, Kunst, Jonas, Ozer, Simon, Kimel, Sasha. 2021. 'The "Great Replacement" Conspiracy: How the Perceived Ousting of Whites Can Evoke Violent Extremism and Islamophobia', *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*. doi:10.1177/13684302211028293

Paxton, Robert. 2004. *Le fascisme en action.* Paris: Le Seuil.

Pilkington, Hilary. 2016. *Loud and Proud: Passion and Politics in the English Defence League*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Quent, Matthias. 2016 'Vigilantistischer Terrorismus', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 66: pp. 24–25.

Rasmussen, Michael. 2019. *La contre-révolution de Trump*. Paris: Divergences.

Rosenbaum, Jon, Sederberg, Peter. 1976. *Vigilante Politics.* Pittsburg: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Sen, Atreyee. 2007. *Shiv Sena Women: Violence and Communalism in a Bombay Slum*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Shapira, Harel. 2013. *Waiting for José: The Minutemen's Pursuit of America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Simonneau, Damien. 2018. 'Militer pour murer la frontière: Les acteurs pro « barrière » d'Israël et d'Arizona (États-Unis)' in Dubet, François (ed.), *Politiques des frontières*. Paris: La Découverte.

Simonneau, Damien, Castelli Gattinara, Pietro. 2019. 'Prendre part aux logiques d'exclusion: Les mobilisations anti-migrants en France, en Italie et aux États-Unis', *Critique internationale*, 3(3): pp. 105–24.

Sternhell, Zeev. 1978. *La droite révolutionnaire. 1885–1914: Les origines françaises du fascisme*. Paris: Le Seuil.

Tilly, Charles, Wood, Lesley. 2009. *Social Movements, 1768–2008*. New York: Paradigm.

Trottier, Daniel. 2017. 'Digital Vigilantism as Weaponisation of Visibility', *Philosophy and Technology*, 30(1): pp. 55–72.

Virchow, Fabian. 2007. ' "Capturing the Streets": Marches as a Political Instrument of the Extreme Right in Contemporary Germany' in Reiss, Matthias (ed.),

The Street as Stage: Protest Marches and Public Rallies since the Nineteenth Century. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Walsh, James. 2014. 'Watchful Citizens: Immigration Control, Surveillance and Societal Participation', *Social & Legal Studies*, 23(2): pp. 237–59.

Chapter 5: Anti-migrant Groups in Calais: the Spectacle of Vigilance

Alaux, Jean-Pierre. 2015. 'Calais vaut bien quelques requiem', *Plein droit*, 104: pp. 3–8.

Clark, Martin., 1988. 'Italian Squadrismo and Contemporary Vigilantism', *European History Quarterly*, 18: pp. 33–49.

Champagne, Patrick. 2015. *Faire l'opinion: Le nouveau jeu politique*. Paris: Les Editions de Minuit.

Crépon, Sylvain, Dézé, Alexandre, Mayer, Nonna. 2015. *Les faux-semblants du Front national*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po.

Cristante, Stefano. 2005 *Media Philosophy: Interpretare la comunicazione-mondo*. Naples: Liguori Editore.

Durand, Jean-Pierre, Sebag, Joyce. 2015. 'La sociologie filmique: Écrire la sociologie par le cinéma?'. *L'Année sociologique*, 65: pp. 71–96.

Favarel-Garrigues, Gilles, Gayer, Laurent. 2016. 'Violer la loi pour maintenir l'ordre. Le vigilantisme en débat', *Politix*, 115: pp. 7–33.

François, Stéphane. 2017. 'La violence skinhead dans l'Aisne' in Bugnon, Fanny, Lacroix, Isabelle (eds), *Territoires de la violence politique en France de la fin de la guerre d'Algérie à nos jours*. Paris: Riveneuve.

Johnston, Les. 1996. 'What is Vigilantism?', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 36(2): pp. 220–36.

McLuhan, Marshall. 1977 *Pour comprendre les média: Les prolongements technologiques de l'homme*. Paris: Seuil.

Mudde, Cas. 2007. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

No Border. 2015. 'Des No Border sans frontière', *Plein droit*, 104: pp. 3–8.

Pette, Mathilde. 2016. 'Venir en aide aux migrants dans le Calaisis: Entre action associative locale et crise migratoire internationale', *Savoir/Agir*, 36(2): pp. 47–52.

Pujol, Philippe. 2017. *Mon cousin le fasciste.* Paris: Le Seuil.

Reinert, Max. 1987. 'Un logiciel d'analyse lexicale (ALCESTE)', *Cahiers Analyse des Donnée*, 4: pp. 471–84.

Rigouste, Mathieu. 2011. *L'ennemi intérieur: La généalogie coloniale et militaire de l'ordre sécuritaire dans la France métropolitaine.* Paris: La Découverte.

Rosenbaum, Jon, Sederberg, Peter. 1974. 'Vigilantism: An Analysis of Establishment Violence', *Comparative Politics*, 6: pp. 541–70.

Schmitt, Carl. 2009. *La notion de politique: Théorie du partisan*. Paris: Éditions Flammarion.

Simmauneau, Damien. 2016 'Entre suprématie blanche et cybersécurité: Mutations contemporaines des pratiques de vigilantisme en Arizona', *Politix*, 115: pp. 79–102.

Tilly, Charles, Wood, Lesley. 2009. *Social Movements 1768–2008*. New York: Paradigm.

Wannesson, Philippe. 2015. 'Une Europe des jungles', *Plein droit*, 104: pp. 18–21.

Wood, Lesley. 2017. 'Anti-Immigrant Protests, Past and Present (1920–36 and 2000–16)', presented at the social movement conference, *For Alternative Futures*, Manchester, April 2017.

Press resources

'Calais: Des vidéos publiées par «Les Calaisiens en colère» sèment le trouble' [Online:https://www.20minutes.fr/lille/1758439-20160102-calais-videos-publiees-calaisiens-colere-sement-trouble] Accessed 3 September 2018.

'FN: Marine Le Pen en photo avec Kévin Reche, le porte parole de "Sauvons Calais" au tatouage nazi' [Online: http://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/hauts-de-france/2014/03/11/fn-marine-le-pen-en-photo-avec-kevin-reche-le-porte-parole-de-sauvons-calais-au-tatouage-nazi-430961.html] Accessed 24 August 2017.

'France: Les migrants et les demandeurs d'asile victimes de violence et démunis', Human Rights Watch [Online: https://www.hrw.org/fr/news/2015/01/20/france-les-migrants-et-les-demandeurs-dasile-victimes-de-violence-et-demunis] Accessed 29 July 2016.

'Histoire de l'extrême droite à Calais' [Online: http://www.psmigrants.org/site/histoire-de-lextreme-droite-a-calais/] Accessed 6 June 2019.

'La triste histoire du brave Général Piquemal' [Online: http://www.slate.fr/story/113757/calais-arrestation-piquemal] Accessed 12 January 2017.

'Le mur « anti-intrusions » de la rocade de Calais est achevé' [Online: https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2016/12/13/le-mur-anti-intrusions-de-la-rocade-de-calais-est-acheve_5047836_3224.html] Accessed 9 April 2020.

'Le nombre de migrants dans la « jungle » de Calais n'a jamais été aussi élevé' [Online: https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2016/08/19/le-nombre-de-migrants-dans-la-jungle-de-calais-n-a-jamais-ete-aussi-eleve_4985171_3224.html] Accessed 23 November 2018.

'Manifestation contre les migrants à Calais' [Online: http://fr.reuters.com/article/idFRKBN0H20LE20140907.] Accessed 12 January 2017.

'Migrants: Les Calaisiens en colère arrêtent provisoirement leurs rondes nocturnes' [Online: http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/archive/recup%3A%252 Fregion%252Fmigrants-les-calaisiens-en-colere-arretent-ia33b48581n3264 028] Accessed 4 September 2018.

'Migrants: un message de Natacha Bouchart crée le buzz sur Facebook' [Online:http://www.nordlittoral.fr/fait-divers-justice/migrants-un-message-de-natacha-bouchart-cree-le-buzz-sur-ia6b0n26840] Accessed 30 September 2017.

'Migrants: Un rapport d'Amnesty International accuse la police de harceler les bénévoles' [Online: https://www.lavoixdunord.fr/593710/article/2019-06-05/un-rapport-d-amnesty-international-accuse-la-police-d-intimider-les-benevoles] Accessed 6 June 2019.

'Squat de Coulogne, jeunesse identitaire: Sauvons Calais dans la tourmente (VIDÉO)' [Online: http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/archive/recup/region/squat-de-coulogne-jeunesse-identitaire-sauvons-calais-ia33b48581n1947081] Accessed 3 September 2018.

'Une affiche de Décathlon crée la polémique' [Online: http://www.bfmtv.com/societe/immigration-une-affiche-de-decathlon-cree-la-polemique-1047889.html] Accessed 12 January 2017.

Calais: Dérapages nazis lors d'un rassemblement anti-migrants' [Online: https://www.rtl.fr/actu/debats-societe/calais-derapages-nazis-lors-d-un-rassemblement-anti-migrants-7774167328] Accessed 4 September 2018.

Chapter 6: Contentious Migration in Dover and Chapter 7: Trajectories of Engagement

Agrikoliansky, Eric. 2001. 'Carrières militantes et vocation à la morale: Les militants de la LDH dans les années 1980', *Revue française de science politique*, 1(51): pp. 45–54.

Alaux, Jean-Pierre. 2015. 'Calais vaut bien quelques requiem', *Plein droit*, 104: pp. 3–8.

Amable, Bruno, Palombarini, Stephane. 2017. *L'illusion du bloc bourgeois: Alliances sociales et avenir du modèle français*. Paris. Raisons d'agir.

Arzheimer, Kai. 2018. 'Explaining Electoral Support for the Radical Right' in Rydgren, Jens (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ashe, Stephen, Busher, Joel, Macklin, Graham, Winter, Aaron. 2021. *Researching the Far Right: Theory, Method and Practice*. London: Routledge.

Bronner, Gerald. 2009. *La pensée extrême: Comment des hommes ordinaires deviennent des fanatiques*. Paris: Denoël.

Castel, Robert. 1999. *Les métamorphoses de la question sociale*. Paris: Folio.

Champagne, Patrick. 2015. *Faire l'opinion: Le nouveau jeu politique.* Paris: Les Editions de Minuit.

Chapoutot, Johann. 2020. *Comprendre le nazisme*. Paris: Tallandier.

Coleman, David. 2010. 'Projections of the Ethnic Minority Populations of the United Kingdom 2006–2056', *Population and Development Review*, 36(3): pp. 441–86.

Collovald, Anne, Schwartz, Olivier. 2006. 'Haut, bas, fragile: Sociologies du populaire', *Vacarme*, 37: pp. 19–26.

Copsey, Nigel. 2007. 'Changing Course or Changing Clothes? Reflections on the Ideological Evolution of the British National Party 1999–2006', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 41(1): 61–82.

Copsey, Nigel. 2012. 'Sustaining a Mortal Blow? The British National Party and the 2010 General and Local Elections', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 46(1): 16–39.

Counter Extremism Project. 2020. 'Violent Right-Wing Extremism and Terrorism – Transnational Connectivity, Definitions, Incidents, Structures and Countermeasures'. Report.

Cristante, Stefano. 2005. *Media Philosophy: Interpretare la comunicazione-mondo*. Naples: Liguori Editore.

De Wilde, Pieter, Koopmans, Ruud, Merkel, Wolfgang, Strijbis Oliver, Zürn, Michael. 2019. *The Struggle Over Borders: Cosmopolitanism and Communitarianism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Evans, Fred. 2020. 'Whither? Black Lives Matter and the Shape of Democracy', *Sociétés*, 4(4): pp. 99–111.

Evans, Geoffrey, Mellon, Jonathan. 2019. 'Immigration, Euroscepticism, and the Rise and Fall of UKIP', *Party Politics*, 25(1): pp. 76–87.

Fillieule, Olivier, Mathieu, Lilian, Péchu, Cécile. 2009. *Dictionnaire des mouvements sociaux*. Paris: Les Presses de Sciences Po.

Gurr, Ted. 1971. *Why Men Rebel*. Boston: Princeton University Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 2015. 'Espace public et sphère publique politique: Les racines biographiques de deux thèmes de pensée', *Esprit*, 8(8–9): pp. 12–25.

Hope not Hate. 2021. 'State of Hate 2021: Backlash, Conspiracies & Confrontation'. Report.

Jasper, James. 1998. 'The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions in and Around Social Movements', *Sociological Forum*, 13(3): pp. 397–424.

Johnston, Les. 1996. 'What is Vigilantism?', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 36(2): pp. 220–36.

La Rocca, Fabio. 2007. 'Introduction à la sociologie visuelle', *Sociétés*, 95: pp. 33–40.

Le Bon, Gustave. 2013. *Psychologie des foules*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Lebourg, Nicolas. 2019 *Les nazis ont-ils survécu?: Enquête sur les internationales fascistes et les croisés de la race blanche*. Paris: Seuil.

Loveluck, Benjamin. 2016. 'Le vigilantisme numérique, entre dénonciation et sanction: Auto-justice online et agencements de la visibilité', *Politix*, 115: pp. 82–94.

Macklin, Graham. 2019. *Failed Führers: A History of Britain's Extreme Right*. London: Routledge.

Mannheim, Karl. 1936. *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co.

McCarthy, John, Zald, Mayer. 1977. 'Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory', *American Journal of Sociology*, 82: pp. 1212–241.

Michels, Roberto. 2015. *Sociologie du parti dans la démocratie moderne. Enquête sur les tendances oligarchiques de la vie des groupes*. Gallimard: Paris.

Moscovici, Serge. 2015. 'Psychologie des minorites actives', *EcoRev'*, 42: pp. 5–14.

Mudde, Cas. 2000. *The Ideology of the Extreme Right*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Mudde, Cas. 2007. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mudde, Cas. 2019. *The Far Right Today*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Neveu, Eric. 2019. *Sociologie du journalisme*. Paris: La Découverte.

Paxton, Robert. 2004. *Le fascisme en action*. Paris: Le Seuil.

Pilkington, Hilary. 2016. *Loud and Proud: Passion and Politics in the English Defence League*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Pilkington, Hilary. 2019. ' "Field Observer: Simples." Finding a Place from Which to Do Close-up Research on the "Far-right" ' in Toscano, Emanuele (ed.), *Researching Far-Right Movements, Ethics, Methodologies, and Qualitative Inquiries*. London: Routledge.

Rasmussen, Michael. 2019. *La contre-révolution de Trump*. Paris: Divergences.

Renan, Ernest. 1882. 'What is a Nation?' cf. Chaim, Gans (ed.), *The Limits of Nationalism*, 2003. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rosa, Hartmut. 2010. 'Politique, histoire et vitesse du changement social: Vers une théorie critique de l'accélération sociale', *Le Genre humain*, 1(1): 105–13.

Schmitt, Carl. 2009. *La notion de politique: Théorie du partisan*. Paris: Flammarion.

Simonneau, Damien, Castelli Gattinara, Pietro. 2019. 'Prendre part aux logiques d'exclusion: Les mobilisations anti-migrants en France, en Italie et aux États-Unis'. *Critique internationale*, 3(3): pp. 105–24.

Sommier, Isabelle, Fillieule, Olivier, Agrikoliansky, Éric. 2008. *Généalogie des mouvements altermondialistes en Europe: Une perspective comparée*. Paris: Karthala.

Susca, Vincenzo. 2016. *Les affinités connectives*. Paris: Editions du Cerf.

Tilly, Charles, Wood, Lesley. 2009. *Social Movements, 1768–2008*. New York: Paradigm.

Trottier, Daniel. 2017. 'Digital Vigilantism as Weaponisation of Visibility', *Philosophy and Technology*, 30(1), pp. 52–64.

Virchow, Fabian. 2007. ' "Capturing the Streets": Marches as a Political Instrument of the Extreme Right in Contemporary Germany' in Reiss, Matthias (ed.), *The Street as Stage: Protest Marches and Public Rallies since the Nineteenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Press resources

'#SponsorSteve' [Online: https://stevelawsreport.co.uk/sponsor-steve/] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'About Active Patriot' [Online: https://www.youtube.com/c/ActivePatriot/about] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'About Steve Laws' [Online: https://www.youtube.com/c/SteveLaws_/about] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Angleterre: Heurts entre anti et pro-immigration à Douvres' [Online: https://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/hauts-de-france/angleterre-heurts-entre-anti-et-pro-immigration-douvres-917397.html] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Anne Marie Waters: Anti-Islam candidate to stand for UKIP leadership' [Online: https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-40902796] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Antifa S.adam Vincent calls out local, so we offer a charity boxing match. 28.11.20' [Online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6LwZ30c6O0] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Asylum and refugee resettlement in the UK' [Online: https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migration-to-the-uk-asylum/] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Britain First fined £44,000 over electoral law breaches' [Online: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/16/britain-first-fined-electoral-law-breaches-electoral-commission] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Channel migrants: More than 8,000 people make crossing in 2020' [Online: https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-kent-55501123] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'David Coleman' [Online: https://www.spi.ox.ac.uk/people/david-coleman] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Exposed: For Britain and the "White Genocide" conspiracy theory' [Online: https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/2019/04/18/exposed-for-britain-and-white-genocide-conspiracy-theory/] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Facebook supprime les comptes de Tommy Robinson, figure de l'extrême droite britannique' [Online: https://www.lemonde.fr/pixels/article/2019/02/26/facebook-supprime-les-comptes-de-tommy-robinson-figure-de-l-extreme-droite-britannique_5428589_4408996.html] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Far-right group North West Infidels gather in Liverpool' [Online: https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/far-right-group-north-west-10959063] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Former UKIP leadership candidate to launch new far-right party' [Online: https://www.politico.eu/article/former-ukip-leadership-candidate-to-launch-new-far-right-party/] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Modern day slavery in the UK' [Online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9AqiItD3Yw] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Neo-Nazi group National Action banned by UK home secretary' [Online: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/12/neo-nazi-group-national-action-banned-by-uk-home-secretary] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Nouvelles manifestations dans plusieurs villes de France contre la loi « sécurité globale »' [Online: https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2021/01/16/pour-le-droit-a-l-information-et-contre-la-surveillance-de-masse-manifestations-dans-plusieurs-villes-de-france-contre-la-loi-securite-globale_6066527_3224.html] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Penally asylum camp protest: Man and woman arrested' [Online: https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-54583888] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Penally camp, Ak security threatens his staff' [Online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAE43o5e_eg&feature=youtu.be] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Port of Dover is brought to a standstill by far-right groups' [Online: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/05/port-of-dover-is-brought-to-a-standstill-by-far-right-groups] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Report migrant hotels to Britain First' [Online: https://www.patriot-campaigns.uk/report-migrant-hotels] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'The woeful state of Ukip in Wales' [Online: https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/2021/05/05/woeful-ukip-wales/white] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Thousands march in "free speech" protest led by rightwing figures' [Online: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/06/thousands-of-far-right-protesters-march-in-london-in-support-of-free-speech] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Tommy Robinson's call for June 13 2020 demonstration' [Online: https://twitter.com/i/status/1269890787661303808] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Un an après, retour sur les dix jours qui ont vu émerger le mouvement des « gilets jaunes » sur Facebook' [Online: https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2019/10/22/un-an-apres-retour-sur-les-six-jours-qui-ont-vu-emerger-le-mouvement-des-gilets-jaunes-sur-facebook_6016485_4355770.html] Accessed 17 November 2020.

'VIDÉO. Jérôme Rodrigues blessé: y a-t-il eu un tir de LBD?' [Online: https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/video-jerome-rodrigues-blesse-y-a-t-il-eu-un-tir-de-lbd_2059942.html] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Video: Britain First battle bus receives racial abuse and missiles in Birmingham and Coventry!' [Online: https://www.patriot-campaigns.uk/video_britain_first_battle_bus_receives_racial_abuse_and_missiles_in_birmingham_and_coventry] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Video: Britain First takes action against grooming gangs in Preston!' [Online: https://www.patriot-campaigns.uk/video_britain_first_takes_action_against_grooming_gangs_in_preston] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Video: Huge hotel in Sheffield housing illegal immigrants!' [Online: https://www.patriot-campaigns.uk/video_huge_hotel_in_sheffield_housing_illegal_immigrants] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'We were never asked' [Online: https://wewereneverasked.co.uk/home] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Where the far right is meeting now' [Online: https://slate.com/podcasts/what-next-tbd/2021/01/deplatforming-far-right-facebook-twitter] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'Why I report on illegal immigration [Online: https://stevelawsreport.co.uk/why-i-report-on-illegal-immigration/] Accessed 25 May 2021.

'YouTube cashes in on neo-Nazi's hate videos' [Online: https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/youtube-cashes-in-on-neo-nazis-hate-videos-9gg0nbvd6] Accessed 25 May 2021.

Index