



KADIR HAS UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
PROGRAM OF NEW MEDIA

**AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT SHARED  
BY RIGHT-WING EXTREMIST GROUPS IN THE UNITED  
STATES, THE GREAT BRITAIN AND AUSTRALIA**

**ODAY MASALHA**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

**ISTANBUL, AUGUST, 2020**

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BY RIGHT-WING EXTREMIST GROUPS IN THE UNITED  
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**MASTER'S THESIS**

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Kadir Has University in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of Master's in the Program of New Media

**ISTANBUL, AUGUST, 2020**

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# AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT SHARED BY RIGHT-WING EXTREMIST GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES, THE GREAT BRITAIN AND AUSTRALIA

## ABSTRACT

Literature on extremism online is mostly focused on the activities of jihadist and extremist groups such as al-Qaeda and ISIS. There is also research related to extreme right activities on social media, however their focus is on the analysis of shared memes and examination of populism on the Internet. With the New Zealand attack, the El Paso incident, and Britain's exit from the European Union, extreme right movements have emerged strongly on the Internet, especially on Facebook and Twitter. This thesis attempts to understand how extreme right groups are using Facebook and Twitter platforms to advance their extremist ideologies. In order to do so, a qualitative content analysis of posts shared by public Facebook groups and Twitter accounts of extreme right groups in Britain, the United States and Australia has been conducted. The social media posts shared by extreme right groups in the US, Australia and the Great Britain on Facebook and Twitter between the dates of March 15, 2019 to February 5, 2020 were coded according to a coding instrument. The coding instrument consisted of categories and subcategories which were derived from existing studies in the field and examined the prevalence of the extremist ideologies present in the social media posts shared by these groups and accounts. Findings suggest that the most prevalent extremist ideologies present in the posts shared by extremist groups on Facebook and Twitter were anti-elitist populist and protection of western values. Also, extremist groups rely heavily on texts and photo combined to publish their ideologies, with the aim of reaching a wide audience through the getting high number of likes and comments.

**Keywords:** Facebook, Twitter, extreme right, ideologies, content analysis, extremism

# ABD, BÜYÜK BRİTANYA VE AVUSTRALYA'DAKİ AŞIRI SAĞCI GRUPLAR TARAFINDAN PAYLAŞILAN SOSYAL MEDYA İÇERİĞİNİN ANALİZİ

## ÖZET

Çevrimiçi aşırılıkçılık üzerine literatür çoğunlukla el-Kaide ve IŞİD gibi aşırılık yanlısı grupların faaliyetlerine odaklanmaktadır. Sosyal medyadaki aşırı sağcı faaliyetlerle ilgili araştırmalar da var, ancak odak noktaları paylaşılan memlerin analizi ve popülizmin internet üzerindeki incelenmesidir. Yeni Zelanda saldırısı, El Paso olayı ve İngiltere'nin Avrupa Birliği'nden çıkmasıyla, aşırı sağ hareketler internette, özellikle Facebook ve Twitter'da güçlü bir şekilde ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu tez aşırı sağ grupların aşırılık yanlı ideolojilerini ilerletmek için Facebook ve Twitter platformlarını nasıl kullandıklarını anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Bunu yapmak için, İngiltere, ABD ve Avustralya'daki aşırı sağ grupların Facebook ve Twitter hesaplarındaki kamu gruplarının nitel bir içerik analizi yapılmıştır. ABD, Avustralya ve İngiltere'deki aşırı sağ grupların 15 Mart 2019 - 5 Şubat 2020 tarihleri arasında Facebook ve Twitter'da paylaştığı sosyal medya paylaşımları bir kodlama aracına göre kodlanmıştır. Kodlama aracı, alandaki mevcut çalışmalardan türetilen ve bu gruplar ve hesaplar tarafından paylaşılan sosyal medya paylaşımlarında yer alan aşırılık yanlısı ideolojilerin yaygınlığını inceleyen kategorilerden ve alt kategorilerden oluşuyordu. Bulgular, Facebook ve Twitter'da aşırılık yanlısı grupların paylaştığı paylaşımlarda bulunan en yaygın aşırılıkçı ideolojilerin anti-elitist popülist ve Batı değerlerinin korunması olduğunu gösteriyor. Ayrıca, aşırılık yanlısı gruplar, çok sayıda beğeni ve yorum alarak geniş bir kitleye ulaşmak amacıyla ideolojilerini yayınlamak için büyük ölçüde birleştirilmiş metinlere ve fotoğrafları kullanırlar.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Facebook, Twitter, Aşırı sağ, ideoloji, içerik analizi, aşırılık.



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I want to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor Özen Baş and all of my teachers in new media department.



I dedicate this research

To

My father and mother

My brothers, sisters and their families

My friends



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Developments in social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and WhatsApp have facilitated communication between people all over the world and have allowed their users to create virtual communities combining their interests, affiliations and ideas, whether by sending messages, expressing their opinions or sharing personal profiles. Social media platforms have also become one of the most important tools in the hands of extremist groups to disseminate their ideas and beliefs, develop their plans, implement their objectives and recruit their members.

These social media platforms have had significant influence on concepts of freedom of publication, expression, democratic thought, human rights, political, social and commercial concepts that they publish, creating groups that exploit these sites, taking advantage of their global uses and projects without needing to produce material costs or technical expertise. Moreover, these sites have carried out an unlimited flow of information and data heavily used by right-wing extremist groups to spread their ideas and attract and recruit youth to carry out terrorist operations (Gamal 2019) (Correra 2019).

Extremist groups have fed violence, hatred, rumors, psychological warfare and misled public opinion through social media platforms using the unique nature of digital media. By doing that, they created groups and individuals working to produce and exchange information among a broad segment of the public. including mobilizing youth to carry out extremist ideas and encouraging them to commit terrorist acts and aggressive behaviors, which results in the loss of life and destruction of the infrastructure of secure and stable societies (Hassan 2019).

Recent incidents such as the extreme right attacks in New Zealand in 2019, Britain in 2017, France in 2015, the US in 2019, Norway in 2011 (Makhlouf 2019), can be shown as

evidence of the terrorism of extremist right ideologies, whether against immigrants, Muslims or ethnicities. The New Zealand terrorist attack has sparked a debate about the role of terrorists using social media to spread extremist content and about the mechanism that these platforms use to monitor content. This development in the use of the Internet, especially social media platforms, has provided a service to the terrorist organizations that have exploited them to complete their operations against the security and safety of civilized people and societies and their criminal acts. These networks provided an easy way to transfer ideas, data and information to the elements of terrorist groups in the absence of security services at the outset, which has achieved great growth and attracted young elements to fall into the clutches of terrorist groups to carry out terrorist practices.

The content posted on Facebook and Twitter has played an important role in spreading the ideology of the extreme right that glorifies its role in protecting the homeland from external terrorism and in improving the conditions of social, economic and political life to reach the largest segment of society, and pushing them to commit crimes leading them to so-called cyber terrorism, that is the use of computers and information technology to cause severe disruption or widespread fear in society (Paul 2017). Despite the eminent importance of the messages shared by extremists on social media, there is not enough research examining the content of these messages in an in-depth and holistic manner by taking both image and text components into account. In order to fill this gap, this study examines content of extremist groups published on Facebook and Twitter pages. Specifically, it identifies the extremist ideologies revealed in the posts shared by extreme right public Facebook groups and Twitter pages. While doing this, how the words, images and videos are being used in the shared social media content to enhance their ideologies is also examined. Therefore, two research question are posed:

- 1- What kind of user-generated content were shared by extremist groups on public Facebook groups and Twitter account, which would exemplify extremist ideology?
- 2- What are the types of content shared by extremist groups on public Facebook and Twitter accounts which got the highest level of interaction, i.e., likes, reshares, retweets?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The primary goal of the study reported here is the examination of the user-generated social media content created by extreme right groups. There are some studies that are partially related to components of the topic spreading hatred online, especially on social media, although they do not wholly encompass the subject matter of the study itself. This chapter, (a) defines the concept of right-wing extremism, (b) lays out the studies at the intersection of the digital communication technologies and extremist groups, (c) identifies the gaps these studies left in the literature and finally (d) explains how the reported study aims to fill in the gaps.

### 2.1 Definition of Right-Wing Extremism

Scholars of political science agree on the difficulty of defining the concept of the right-wing extremism, although some of them argue that these parties actually represent the nationalist ideologies defeated in World War II such as Nazism and fascism (Banafi 2017). The extreme right is often described as a movement or ideology, but the closest explanation is a "political block" that seeks to unify the activities of different extremist movements or ideologies.

Extreme right-wing issues are primarily based on race, culture, immigration, identity, or homophobia. These beliefs have created long-term concerns such as cultural and Islamic pluralism, these factors that the extreme right has worked on at the local and international levels. Revolution events that reached the international masses with the help of the Internet and social media (Mulhall 2018).

There are numerous terms for right-wing extremism such as; *extreme right*, *alt-right*, and *far right*. Right-wing extremism is a complex, incoherent and overlapping movement of

individuals and groups, but it adopts ideologies related to hatred and racism towards minorities (CTED 2020).

Bevenssee and Ross (2018) consider that the alt-right party is a fanatical fascist movement of white racists which is encouraging extremist violence and engaging in misleading campaigns on a large scale, through the use of huge social media data (2018). Fascism is compatible with extreme nationalism, racial and authoritarian superiority, anti-universality and anti-liberalism. Vandiver (2018) believes that the alt-right is part of the previous radical right movements that have appeared in the political milieu of late modernity, which are based on political and social ideologies, including white American nationalism and adapting to European cultural thought and its opposing movements, and excessive male politics.

Gordon (2017) considers the concept of the alt-right to be a broad term without being racist, the alt-right movement consists of principles and not merely bias. Gordon explains that the alt-right is "right", which means two things: the first, it is "right", because it emphasizes conservative values, and it is a new thing in American thinking that has made it self-adaptive. The second meaning is the celebration of crossing borders and this does not mean the existence of a magic formula to restore the balance between openness and limitations between self-liberation and traditions, but the alt-right shows at least the important contradictions (Gordon 2017).

The *far right* is a mysterious term, as it is a comprehensive term aimed at preserving society and culture. The far right is based on demonstrating the grievance of white nationalism and the belief in the beginning of the collapse of Western civilization and that liberalism has failed, all of this failure is due to cultural pluralism (Collins 2017).

The alt-right is part of the group of the far right that meets on united ideologies, such as: the protection of white identity and Western civilization (SPLC 2016). On the other hand, the far right and the extreme right are often considered synonymous terms, however the term



far right remains more ambiguous than other terms and therefore it is not preferred in use (ADL 2020).

### **2.1.1 Extreme right**

The study reported here employs the concept of *extreme right*. Richard Spence, who formulated the concept of the extreme right and is considered a supporter of Donald Trump, has called for the ethnic cleansing of the United States (Ford 2017). In a recorded interview with Spence on the NPR radio station, he affirmed that the extreme right is a white national movement based on hating women, ending immigration, hostility towards Muslims and awakening the policy of national identity (Mcevers 2016). The term, extreme right, refers in its vast majority to white nationalists who believe in its superiority over other races. Although the formations of the extreme right parties differ according to the specific circumstances of each country, they all share general characteristics and ideological underpinnings as one homogeneous political trend. Among these characteristics are excessive nationalism and rejecting all forms of regional integration under the pretext of protecting national sovereignty (Banafi 2017). It is a return to a past time in which there was no diversity and the culture, strength and control of the white man was the reality that no one doubts (Asmar 2019).

Berger defines the extreme right as a group of people and movements operating in the form of an umbrella for social movements around the world (2018). The researcher believes that the Internet is one of the most important factors that contributed to the emergence of extreme right movements, and on this basis the extremist right groups have appeared on the means of social media and have a great influence on it.

Lyons (2017) defines the extreme right as an extremist movement, and it is hostile to both multicultural liberalism and Semitic, as it has a symbiotic relationship in the campaign of Donald Trump, and it also combines white and Nazi nationalist movements, as it has a symbiotic relationship in the campaign of Donald Trump, and it also combines white and

Nazi nationalist movements. Lyons believes that the extreme right focuses not only on race, but also on ending the feminist movement and re-implementing the dominance of man over women. The extreme right has taken advantage of all of this by using the internet (Lyons 2017).

El-Gendy (2019) defined the extreme right as a political term that adopts an extreme tendency against Muslims and foreign immigrants, as it is concerned with the issues of immigration and the integration of Muslims in their societies. The extreme right views with an eye of fear and suspicion towards immigrants who compete with the indigenous people for jobs and positions, the extreme right also fear the spread of Muslims in their countries, since this ,many voices appeared to demand curbing immigration, restricting immigrants , expelling Muslims and fighting Islamization (El-Gendy 2019).

According to the Study Center ADL (Anti-Defamation League), the term extreme right is described as a term used to describe the social, religious and political movements of the right-wing radical movement, and the term also includes "single-issue" movements that represent the existence of the extreme wing of a widespread conservative movement (ADL 2020). Therefore, this study uses the term extreme right, as it is considered as a more comprehensive term for the ideologies of extremism.

## **2.2 The Use of the Internet and Social Media for Terrorist Organizations**

There is a large body of research on the use of the internet by terrorist organizations. This section summarizes some of the important studies conducted in this field.

Much research has argued that the Internet and social media platforms are influential for terrorist organizations and that they play a major role in terrorist planning and attacks. Weimann's (2014) research shows how terrorist organizations move from their presence on the internet to the social media. Is found that there are good reasons for terrorists to use social media, including the popularity of these channels among the general public, ease of

use, free and reliable, and it allows terrorists to communicate with the target audience at any time and place. It became the focus of attention of terrorist organizations, which in turn provided a free service to these organizations (Weimann 2014).

Mahdy's suggests that Facebook and Twitter play a major role in promoting the strategy of terrorism in general. "These organizations have become practicing terrorism anywhere in the world, at any moment" (Mahdy 2018). Mahdy's (2018) research focuses on the role played by social networking sites, namely Facebook and Twitter, as these extremist groups harnessed the digital network for their propaganda purposes. In 2013, the Internet gradually became the preferred field for spreading hate speeches, which is what we find most in social media posts especially on Facebook and Twitter (Mahdy 2018).

Weimann's (2010) research deals with the topic of chat rooms, forums and social networks in particular Facebook and Twitter. Terrorists began to use postmodernism to plan and coordinate their deadly campaigns. The researcher suggested that private websites act as a protection for the identity of the people involved; social networking sites pose a threat to military personnel by monitoring personal details of individuals and tracking their positions. Nevertheless, the research questions of the study reported here fill the gap of how extremist groups exploit texts, videos and images in spreading their ideologies on the Facebook and Twitter platforms.

Foqha (2016) conducted a survey on University of Jordan students in order to identify the role of social networks in promoting extremist thought. The results of his study showed that the most prevalent social networks in the world is Facebook (80.4%) and the most common method of using social networks is mobile (69.3%). This study aims to identify the role of social networks in promoting extremist thought in that it provides various audio-visual media related to the intellectual approach of extremists. The researcher also pointed out that there are two important elements that fuel the emotions of the young people, namely: enthusiastic rhetoric and the exploitation of international events and grievances that fall on

individuals and link them arbitrarily with some decisions taken by the state obliged according to its interests (Foqaha 2016).

Wu (2015) pointed out that the easy use of the internet and social networking services (SNS) led to the spread of terrorism in the international sphere. This is due to the difficulty of organizing the Internet collectively between countries and also the difficulty of identifying illegal spam content. Thus, Wu argues that terrorist content can only be regulated if there is cooperation between countries and the United Nations (Wu 2015).

Edwards and Gribbon (2013) focused on an important part of the process that is understanding and studying the Internet and extremism: their research focused on how terrorists use the content in the dissemination of radical thought rather than on terrorist content available on the Internet. The researchers relied on interviews with terrorists accused of terrorism in Britain. The researchers also added a good piece of information: "The Internet has provided a ready audience" and therefore emphasize the basic argument in this study, which is the focus on the individual experience on the internet, in the sense of exploring the ways in which individuals use the process of extremism on the Internet (Edwards and Gribbon 2013).

Brenton Tarrant, who is committing the massacre of Christchurch in New Zealand, was influenced by the ideas of the extreme right, as evidenced by his statement on Twitter, in which he mentioned the cultural invasion and the replacement of the white majority with blacks and Muslims through immigration (Bell 2019). If anything, it indicates that Tarrant is immersed in the ideologies of the extreme right that have been fueled by social media. Brenton Tarrant knew very well how to use communication sites to reach his goal, and he also know well the prevailing Internet culture in the era we live in (Bell 2019).

While the studies discussed above examine how terrorist organizations use the internet and social media platforms in to advance their agenda globally. The research question in this

thesis is specifically focuses on the examination of the type of content shared by extremist groups on Facebook and Twitter.

### **2.3 The Ideologies of the Extreme Right that Generate Racial Discrimination on Social Media**

After 1980, all the European countries passed laws prohibiting extremist right-wing propaganda and racial discrimination, but after the emergence of multicultural societies and the rapid development of the Internet, it became so difficult for the governments to monitor and combat racism and hatred (Fennema 2000). However, extremists are currently working to promote their ideologies, especially in cyberspace using the communication sites as platforms of racist scenes, which are represented in opposing immigration, anti-foreigners, national and religious fanaticism, and criticism of the ruling political class.

Chetty and Alathur (2018) found that hate speech is considered as a kind of terrorism. Hate speech is a mechanism of offensive communication that expresses the ideology of terrorist organizations. Hate speech harms victims either directly or indirectly and also motivates racism, so that hate speech is posted on social networks as a message (Chetty and Alathur 2018). The benefit of Chetty and Alathur research is that terrorist speeches of various kinds, using different languages and published on the Internet, lead to the existence of violence and the creation of militants with threats to life and property.

New waves of the extreme right have emerged, spreading constantly on the Internet, embracing hatred against Muslims. In the Hope Not Hate report, chat rooms and websites spread hate speech quickly and effectively due to the presence of hundreds of thousands of followers of these sites (Townsend 2019).

As hatred spreads like wildfire, fanatics exploit social media to spread their toxins. Terrorist movements and believers are growing in white race. The emotional discourse turns into a weapon for political gain (Guterres 2019). Wahlström and Törnberg (2019)

pointed out that the mass media discourse on social media and the internet aimed at immigrants has led to an increase in the spread of extreme right violence against refugees (2019). There is a causal relationship between anti-refugee sentiments on social media and increased hate crime (Schwarz and Müller 2019).

David and Fernández (2016) research is one of the most compatible with this thesis, in which they tried to prove the persistence of hatred and discrimination spreading through the Facebook platform. The researcher relied on an analysis of the data extracted from the Facebook pages of seven extreme right-wing parties in Spain (David and Fernández 2016). In this paper, the two authors point to the extreme right-wing political parties involved mainly in discrimination through the use of overt hate speech, in addition to the fact that the extreme right groups have been most involved in the links followed by pictures through their pages.

Knaus says that Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are fertile grounds for disseminating the views of the extreme right, and these websites are still facing the problem of conspiracy theories and extreme right propaganda that attract users to it, as proven by the algorithms of these sites (2019). The extreme right groups are taking advantage of their political participation via the Internet in America and Europe to organize and mobilize political campaigns, and this is why the extreme right attacks politicians opposed to the ideas of the extreme right party or Democrats (Caiani and Parenti 2013).

Awan (2017) analyzed the pages of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to see the impact of the hate content published by extremist groups on the audience. The researcher pointed out that the extremist groups is recruiting new members all over the world through hate messages, images and broadcasting violent viral videos which are professionally edited to emotionally target young people. The researcher created a classification of the seven characteristics of the offender's behavior, the researcher also used the content analysis methodology (2017). He confirmed that the dissemination of hatred content has an effective role in extremist groups propaganda and recruitment through the Internet, as it has been

shown that there are seven characteristics that appear to people who are likely to sympathize directly with extremist groups narration (Awan 2017).

Rothenberger's (2012) research considers that terrorists have a good strategic communication policy because they have the ability to manage communication between terrorist organizations and individuals. The researcher relied on the qualitative approach in collecting and analyzing data for the websites of terrorist groups. Therefore, the researcher analyzed the websites of terrorist groups. The researcher added a good characteristic of social media that it is "public relations" in the principle of its work (Rothenberger 2012).

Bertram's (2016) research reveals the prominent strategic aspects of social media in the way terrorist organizations work and the most important aspect is the process of communication through the effective use of Twitter and Facebook. In achieving their goals, terrorists rely on effective communication and feedback from the "public response". The main objective of terrorist organizations is to spread fear among the masses, given the widespread use of these platforms by individuals.

Alsaifi's (2017) research aims to track and analyze the research and theoretical treatment in the research and studies of violence and terrorism in the context of its relationship with the new media since the Internet has become a means of mass communication, the researcher relied on method qualitative and analysis tool from the second level Analysis-Meta. This research adds two important information: First, the strategies followed by terrorist organizations in developing the culture of terrorism by increasing the number of followers who are not affiliated with them through social media platforms, and the second information that there are other electronic media other than social media platforms for the dissemination of terrorism propaganda, which is "electronic books and magazines" (Alsaifi 2017, 17).

Today, the extreme right aims to create pages specific to content that shares their ideologies. Thus using social media to communicate with others and share beliefs is a

modern phenomenon (Allen 2019). On this basis, the ideologies of the extreme right are based on: racism based on (Islamophobia, xenophobia and anti-immigration), and the extremist nationalist ideology based on (ethnic origins, indigenous peoples, and cultural identity), in addition to the conspiracy theory which is based on (personal freedom, cultural pluralism, and white replacement). All these ideologies are fixed to the extreme right and that are shared via social media.

Therefore, when looking at the methods used by terrorists on social platforms, we have a clear indication of the usefulness of these platforms to terrorist organizations. In addition, this research shows that the emergence of indiscriminate terrorism is the product of the emergence of electronic media (Bertram 2016).

#### **2.4 The Extreme Right in Britain, the United States and Australia**

This study focuses on three geographical contexts: Britain, the United States, and Australia. In order to justify the necessity to study these context, the section below maps out the developments, recent terrorist attacks and incidents and the current state of extreme right in these three countries.

The bloody massacre in the city of Christ Church in New Zealand recently in 2019, during which extreme right terrorist killed 50 people in two mosques in the city during Friday prayers, opened the door to a wide debate, about the impact of the rise of the extreme right populist parties in the West, especially in Europe and the United States, and the danger that political speech poses of extreme right groups on social media, may fuel the tendency to commit violence by its followers.

There is no doubt that Donald Trump has extreme right-wing tendencies, Trump's authority has turned the extreme right movement into groups whose goal is to defend the president's interest at any cost (Breitbart) (Mudde 2018). They espouse views such as anti-



globalization, national sovereignty, and belief in the need to participate and support in countering threats from ethnic or religious groups (Freilich, et al. 2018).

Donald Trump's strategy of re-tweeting the extreme right groups made it one of the most successful groups on social media. According to an analysis conducted by trending that the percentage of admiration for the extreme right groups in Britain reached 44%, and the largest share of these likes was from the United States, Australia and Canada (Wendling 2019).

A report issued by Hope Not Hate in 2019 revealed that Britain includes five figures from the top right-wing extremists in the world. The reason for the popularity of right-wing figures is that “the United States and Britain are two countries that have great ability to penetrate social media, especially Twitter” (Bedingfield 2019). This is what the extremist groups seek and it is the global spread, which is facing the spread of Muslims in Europe and the United States.

The researchers Krzyzanska, Bonacchi and Altaweel (2018) dealt with the topic (Brexit), which is Britain's leave from the European Union, which has become the focus of attention of the British on Facebook, where the extreme right began focusing on the importance of building civilization and the nation, the importance of indigenous people, the formation of political identity and national origins, and the elimination of cultural and linguistic diversity (2018). All this is done through the support of extensive publications on the media, especially Facebook.

In her report, Sara Khan, the United Kingdom Commission for Countering Extremism, after visiting cities and towns in the United Kingdom, she pointed to the escalation of extremist right-wing activity based on intolerance and polarization with the support of hidden extremist material via the Internet (Townsend 2019). Moreover, the extremist right groups are seeking to expand their range of their appeal by raising concerns about

immigration and that it harms the interests of indigenous people and mixing of cultures (Walker, Grierson and Barr 2018).

The British Generation of Identity group, which espouses the views and ideas of the extreme right, and works to share racist expressions (against Muslim women and anti-Semitism). This group is not aiming to reach power, but rather to form a public debate about ethnic national ideas and ethnic cleansing (Townsend 2019). It is through these groups that extreme right groups broadcast their toxins in the United Kingdom.

Basu, the head chief of counter-terrorism organization in the United Kingdom in an interview, said that 80% of the terrorists who attacked Britain are originally British, and extremist right-wing terrorism has also escalated with the vote to leave Britain from the European Union (Dodd 2019). Statistics indicate that there was a recorded 10% rise in hate crimes in England and Wales from 2017 to 2018 (Flatley 2019). Hate crimes are represented in the following table 2.1:

**Table 2.1: Number of hate crimes in Britain between 2017 - 2019**

<b>Hate crime strand</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>% change 2017/18 to 2018/19</b>
<b>Race</b>	71,264	78,991	11
<b>Religion</b>	8,339	8,566	3
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	11,592	14,491	25
<b>Disability</b>	7,221	8,256	14
<b>Transgender</b>	1,703	2,333	37
<b>Total number of offences</b>	94,121	103,379	10

The Hope Not Hate report confirmed a rise in the followers of anti-Muslim activists in the United States and the United Kingdom on social media, especially Twitter. This also allowed false news on social media accounts, which increased dramatically in the aftermath of the 2016 US presidential election (Square 2017). Accordingly, social media platforms

are a strategic location for the extreme right in communicating and disseminating information, which made it a continuous movement between Europe and the United States.

The election of Barack Obama and the economic malaise that struck the United States led to the rise of extremist hatred movements, where the election of an African American president, demographic change, and non-white immigration has fueled the rage of the American extreme right on a wide range.(Beirich and Potok 2009). All of these factors sparked violent reactions among the extreme right groups and made them view the establishment of a country based on race. Moreover, the rate of hate crimes increased from 2000 to 2007, an increase of 48% (Beirich and Potok 2009).

In the United States, most hate groups espouse the ideology of white supremacy, including extremist movements in America (neo-Nazis, the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Confederates and white nationalists) (Stack 2019). Moreover, hate groups were largely inactive before the 2016 presidential election. According to the statistics of the ADL Center for extreme right-related killings of 2018 in the United States, there is a 35% increase from 2017, as there are at least 50 murders that occurred in 2018 (ADL 2019). This makes the year 2018 the highest rate of homicide since 2012 at the hands of extremists (ADL 2019).

Fanatic Christians and the majority of pro-Trump voters are in favor of their President's anti-immigrant policy, especially towards foreigners and Muslims. This was evidenced by the presidential decisions taken by Trump since his arrival in the presidency of America against this group, most of which were Muslim countries, to prevent them from entering the United States of America. In addition, Trump is a supporter of a number of ideas held by right-wing movements (Hefzy 2019).

Britain is one of the European Union countries most affected by terrorist attacks, as it ranks 28th in the world and the United States of America 22nd in terms of vulnerability to terrorist attacks (Hymas 2019). As for the United States of America, it was subjected to prominent terrorist attacks in 2019, where twenty-two people died in August from a

shooting at a Wal-Mart store. In the same year in December, three people died in a grocery store by extremist terrorists (CNN 2019).

A study revealed that there is a great activity in Australia for a Yemeni radical group on Face book, which is "Restoring Australia", where researchers found that the policy of manipulating public fear is based on discourse against immigration and Islam (Marshall 2016). The extreme right movements emerged successfully in Australia, which demonstrated by their success in the political sphere, which opened the way for hate speech and political violence to spread.

In addition, between 2014 and 2017, Prime Minister Tony Abbott's government sought to weaken laws prohibiting hatred and racism and to spread the concept that freedom of expression was also based on hate speech (Soutphommasane 2019). This has helped Australia's extreme right movement's increase and become more organized.

The annual Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) which gathered the political conservatives, pressure groups, and public figures was held in Australia in 2019. This conference brought together the founders and supporters of the extreme right from all countries. This conference raised many concerns of extremists in Australian society (anti-immigrant, anti-Islam, anti-Muslim, anti-feminist, and issues of national values for the Australian white population) (Ross 2019). The aim of this conference was to raise social issues to achieve liberal cultural and economic goals.

Australia's extreme right movements focus on Islam, most of them the leader of the One Nation "Pauline Hanson". This hostility is demonstrated by his campaign "Stop the mosques" that have spread on Face book pages, and Islam is seen as a despotic force whose goal is to control the world through the migration of Muslims to the West. Hence the hostility towards emigration also appears, as people supporting the extreme right consider that the country has taken it with economic decline, national diversity and culture (Markus 2018). All these elements emphasize the concept of Islam phobia among Aborigines.

According to the annual report issued by the Australian Security and Intelligence Organization (ASIO), the threat of extreme right terrorism is increasing, and that extreme right groups have become more coherent and organized than before (Markp 2019). This was attributed to the 2019 Christchurch mosque shooting attack by extreme right Brenton Tarrant that killed 49 people.

However, it is difficult to understand the nature and size of the extreme right in Australia due to the lack of information and empirical research dealing with the ideology of the extreme right. Moreover, there is no program or system for monitoring the registration of violent extremist crimes in Australia, such as "hate crime statistics" (Harris 2017). Unfortunately, there is no systematic way to obtain reliable data on the extreme right in Australia.

According to the Global Terrorism report, the number of extremist right-wing attacks increased globally, as this report indicated that Western Europe, America, and Australia witnessed an increase in the number of deaths by 320%, on the basis of which there was an increase in the number of deaths between January and September 2019 over 2018 by 52% (Khan 2019).

#### **2.4.1 The view of extreme right about western culture and political elites in the United States, Britain and Australia**

Klein and Muis found that the extreme right groups in some European countries, including Britain, often focus on political and national elites more than on Islam and immigration. Moreover, extreme right groups support a leader or a certain party of politicians who align with the ideas of the extreme right, such as the (Britain First) Group, where they believe that the political elites play the main role in implementing a just order for their society and their ideas (Klein and Muis 2018).

As for multiculturalism and protecting society from cultural invasion, Tony Blair Institute for Global Change reports on hate stories of the extreme right in Britain. The extreme right groups in Britain, including Generation Identity England, Britain First, and BNP claim to represent the British people and thus these groups try to dominate social issues including Brexit, immigration and the existence of Islam. In addition to this, right-wing groups in Britain urge people to defend and fight for their culture and religion by force. This is why extremist groups see immigrants, especially Muslims, as a growing and violent threat to British culture (Smith 2019).

In the United States, the extreme right tends towards conservative religious traditions, defending their bias against minorities and building an ethnic society based on white race politics. Nevertheless, hate activities in the United States are linked to the variables of ethnic, cultural, religious and national diversity, in addition to the fact that the extreme right deliberately uses the term globalism instead of globalization, as this term is synonymous with immigration and multiculturalism (Gallaher 2020). In short, the extreme right focuses on building a United States national and cultural identity by focusing on the unifying theme of race (Gallaher 2020).

The extreme right is interested in United States politics, especially in its elected officials. The extreme right distinguishes itself by gaining legitimacy from the people by showing that they care about the people's interests and are against corrupt elites, greedy corporations and government institutions. This is why the extreme right is trying to play on a comprehensive dichotomy, which is the people versus the elites, just as the extreme right exploits feelings of dissatisfaction and presence with the people in order to achieve political gains (Haynes 2020).

The concept of social cohesion is considered one of the foundations of the extreme right discourse in Australia, which is based on the modern nation-state that is not multicultural. On the other hand, the extreme right opposes international agreements signed by Australia, which allow for more diversity, such as: immigration policies, economic cooperation, and

ideological culture for national development and human rights, all of which are policies that the extreme right considers as interference in the internal affairs of the state. In addition, the Australian extreme right raises the slogan of increasing population growth through increased immigration and because of its implications for the life of the original citizen and economic growth (Lewis, et al. 2019).

Cathcart, Sawyer, and Hindess (2005) show that there is a new concept used by neoliberals from the Australian extreme right which is "the new class". By using the theory of elites, this concept attacks the opposing voices of the elites and the left. The extreme right sees the left elites as a group of haters. Traitors to Australia and to the modern cultural values of the country, where the left-wingers are considered supporters of ancient traditions that reflect the cultural diversity of the existence of gays, Muslims and immigrants. Likewise, the favorite accusation of the extreme right against the elites is that they only care to advance their self-interest, which as a human ego aims to create an unbalanced environment (Cathcart, Sawyer and Hindess 2005).

## **2.5 Objective and Scope of the Study**

To summarize, the expansion of the use of the new media technologies, especially social media, has caused the extreme right to spread globally. Extreme right organizations have been using social media platforms to promote their ideologies around the world. Studies confirmed that extremist right-wing groups use the Internet to spread propaganda to incite violence (Caiani and Parenti 2012).

The scope of this study lies in the two most popular social media platforms in use and spread, namely, Facebook and Twitter, in countries considered as "the most democratic", United States, Britain and Australia, according to the Economic Information Unit report (Ma 2018). Moreover, extreme right organizations in the United States and the United Kingdom are among the most skilled organizations in using new technology (Caiani and Parenti 2013).

The study reported here analyzes the content shared on public Facebook pages and Twitter accounts of the extreme right groups, in reference to the continued spread of racist speeches even the deletion of Facebook and Twitter accounts of personalities on the extreme right such as Jacob Wohl, Tommy Robinson and Alex Jones, following the terrorist incident in New Zealand on March 15, 2019. Because, there remains fake and non-fake accounts of political figures who continue to spread hate speech and false news (Al-Heeti 2019).

The extremist groups' use of cyberspace to plan and execute their terrorist operations in various countries of the world lead to the existence of cyber terrorism. The study reported here analyzes the publicly shared content by these extremist organizations on posts on the Facebook and Twitter, which lead to an outbreak of racism and hatred and thus an increase in violent crime.



### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This thesis examines the incitement of the extreme right, which is based on racial discrimination in all its forms, on two main platforms: Facebook and Twitter. Three countries have been identified that have suffered and are still suffering from extreme right crimes: Britain, Australia, and United States. The reason for choosing these countries to be included in the study is the language: the social media posts made from users living in these countries are in English and thus it is easy to deal with them in the research and analysis process. Another important reason for selecting these three countries to be examined in this research is that in the recent years, Britain, Australia, and United States have seen many accidents involving people who belong to the extreme right, especially in 2019, there were many killings for foreigners and immigrants, on the basis of extremist ideology.

It should be noted that after the events of September 11, 2001, ethnic minorities, especially Muslims, witnessed various forms of racial discrimination, such as security threats, hatred, mistreatment, and defamation of them as terrorist groups. Operations of ethnic targeting have intensified in the English-speaking countries such as Britain and Australia, especially after the invasion of the United States of America in Iraq and Afghanistan under the name of combating terrorism "war on terror" (Mason and Poynting 2006).

Qualitative content analysis conducted in this study. Marek (2015) defines qualitative content analysis as the process of interpreting textual data through coding and identifying topics or patterns, which also depend on examining the underlying context of the text. In addition, the goal of content analysis is to link the results to the context to reach valid conclusions from written, verbal or visual data to measure specific phenomena (Bengtsson 2016).

Qualitative content analysis is considered the appropriate methodology to study this research. The content analysis methodology regularly shows correct conclusions from data. This approach is relied upon by researchers for accurate and systematic observation of (Einspänner, Dang-Anh and Thimm 2014). It is the actual way to social media content communicate on social media. The process of qualitative analysis delves into an understanding of complex social phenomena, so that it depends on the collection of audio, visual and written data for the study community, as this is the first step in data analysis (Bailey 2008).

The idea of content analysis is based on the development of interpretive analytical steps. Therefore, the process of qualitative content analysis does not depend on the analysis of the apparent content of the material, but rather reaches different levels of content "themes, main ideas and text information" (Mayring 2000, 2). The rationale for this thesis is based on the content analysis of the accounts of the extreme right on the most famous social networking sites (Facebook and Twitter).

### **3.1 Sample**

Initially, the public Facebook groups and Twitter accounts that were analyzed in this study were identified, in addition to the fact that the private groups were ignored due to procedures related to the study ethics. Consequently, the names of these Facebook groups belonging to the extreme right were obtained from some studies that have previously analyzed some of these groups like (Klein and Muis 2019), (Peucker, Smith and Iqbal 2019). The other source in obtaining the names of Facebook groups and the Twitter accounts of the extreme right are news websites, especially The Guardian News and BBC News.

As for Twitter accounts, these accounts were accessed from some studies that dealt with the topic of the extreme right on Twitter, such as (Gallaher 2020), (Crosset and Tanner 2018). In addition, some of the names of the extreme right groups on Facebook that appeared in

some studies are ineffective, these same names were examined on Twitter and approved in this study and from this research (Klein and Muis 2019), (Peucker, Smith and Iqbal 2019).

According to the researches that covered the names and topics of the extreme right on the Facebook and Twitter platforms for three countries: United States, Britain and Australia, the sample was chosen by a non-probability sampling method, namely purposive sampling. Three Facebook groups and three Twitter accounts were identified for each country. The groups and accounts selected in this study belong to the extreme right, as they were identified on the basis of articles and news websites that specifically dealt with the topic of the extreme right in these countries. although, the existence of groups and accounts famous for the extreme right were not approved in this study, because some of them are ineffective or the account has been suspended or contains all of the links that are not included in this study.

In this study, Facepager, an automated data retrieval application was used to collect data from the identified extreme right groups on Facebook, which depends on the ID number of each account to collect data. As for collecting data from the extreme right Twitter accounts that's via tweet collection services twDocs, which relies on screen name or URL to collect data. Facepager and twDocs were used. Data was retrieved in the format of spreadsheet for both Twitter accounts and Facebook groups, based on the time period specified in this study March 15, 2019 to February 5, 2020.

Within the specified time period of March 15, 2019 to February 5, 2020, the size of the population posts of the extreme right groups (N) on Facebook was 3426 posts. The population size of tweets of the extreme right accounts on Twitter (N), consisted of 8589 tweets. Taking 5% to 10% of the original research population as the sample have been used as a sampling strategy in qualitative content analysis (Johnston, et al. 2019). Therefore, the same sampling strategy for selecting the sample out of the population of Facebook posts and tweets was followed.

Once the data was gathered in the form of spreadsheet, the selection of the sample was randomly done by a systematic manual selection. However, the percentage of the sample size to be included in the analysis of Facebook groups differs from that of Twitter accounts (see Table 3.1). The sample of Facebook posts constituted (n) 5% of the population, which totals to:  $0.05 \times 3426 = 171$  posts. Due to the large population size of tweets, 2% of the population of tweets (n) was selected by a systematic manual selection, which totaled to:  $0.02 \times 8589 = 172$  tweets.

In the systematic manual selection of posts, all posts are counted for each account, then each post is given a serial number, then the original number of posts is divided by the number of sample size required, so a specific number is produced that separates each post, then a random number is chosen within the serial numbers That was set in the previous step, so that the chosen posts are the owners of the serial numbers that separate the chosen random number and the order that follows it. For example: In the Info Wars Media account there are 701 posts and the sample size required of them is 14 that is  $701/14 = 50$  which is the separator number, and therefore the start of the second post of the account was chosen so that it is 2, 52, 104, 154 ..... This method has been applied to other accounts.

**Table 3.1: Number of posts and sample size for Facebook and Twitter**

<b>Platform</b>	<b>N. of posts</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
Facebook	3426	171
Twitter	8589	172

To fill the required portions of non- probability sampling, quota sampling are used from specific groups of the population (Black 2010). After collecting data from Facebook groups and Twitter accounts and determining the size of the community, the sample size was divided in quotas in proportion to the volume of data available for each Facebook group and Twitter account in which the weight of each group and account in the sample was known. Table 3.2 and Table 3.3 summarize the sample size for each group on Facebook

and for each Twitter account. Excel files were created to include the posts of public Facebook groups and Twitter accounts, as well as the links to the posts to facilitate the coding process.

**Table 3.2. Sample size for each account on Twitter**

Country	Account of name	N. of tweet	Sample size
<b>United States</b>	Info Wars Media	701	14
	Richard Spencer	3077	62
	Lana Lokteff	2114	42
<b>Britain</b>	London BNP	252	5
	British National Party	56	1
	English National Party	2029	41
<b>Australia</b>	Fraser Anning Official	102	2
	Aussie League	57	1
	Kim Vuga	201	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>8589</b>	<b>172</b>

**Table 3.3. Sample size for each group on Facebook**

Country	Page name	N. of post	Sample size
<b>United States</b>	Oath Keepers	503	25
	Tomi Lahren	112	6
	Tea Party Patriots	568	28
<b>Britain</b>	British Unionist Party	151	8
	UK Independence Party (UKIP)	734	36
	I am Proud to Be British	102	5
<b>Australia</b>	Nationalist Alternative Australia	107	5
	Reclaim Australia Rally 2	692	35
	Love Australia or Leave Political Party	457	23
<b>Total</b>		<b>3426</b>	<b>171</b>

### **3.1.1 Period of study**

This study analyzes the content of right-wing extremes public pages on Facebook and Twitter from March 15, 2019 to February 5, 2020. One of the most important reasons for choosing this time period is the Christchurch mosque shootings in New Zealand, March 15, 2019. Brenton Tarrant broadcasted a live video on Facebook of the incident, which was also preceded by a statement he posted on Twitter carrying extreme right-wing ideas. In August of the same year, the El Paso accident occurred in Texas, United States of America, where a twenty-year-old man was shot at a Wal-Mart station.

Patrick Crusius, the perpetrator of the El Paso massacre, published a document on the 8chan website, and then was Pass it on by users on various social media platforms, as this statement was described as racist, as its author described as extremist (BBC 2019). During this period of time March - August 2019, the New Zealand and El Paso incident documents were circulated on social media, which carry all kinds of racism and extremism.

In the midst of these events, the British newspaper, the Guardian published an investigation of what it described as the secret conspiracy in which a group of the largest right-wing organizations and pages managed to control Facebook, in exchange for Facebook achieving profits. The investigation contained what the report described as the management of a set of obscure accounts based in Israel, United states of America, Australia, Britain, Canada, Austria and Nigeria based to manage hundreds of pages of extreme right thinking that millions follow, in order to spread messages of hatred against Muslims, immigrants and Muslims of European and the Western countries (Knaus, McGowan and Evershed 2019).

The Guardian investigation conducted in December 2019 also revealed that the pages of the extreme right are reaping anti-Islam hatred around the world. These pages also had a great impact on politics in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, by praising the extreme right parties, for example the Party (One Nation) in Australia, as these

pages have attacked and insulted Muslim political participants such as (Han Omar), a member of the US Congress (Knaus, McGowan and Evershed 2019).

On January 31, 2020 the most important event for Britain took place: Britain's exit from the European Union. Ehsan pointed out that the right-wing organizations are the ones that incite and encourage the Brexit, by mobilizing the youth and the working classes (Ehsan 2019). Moreover, right-wing extremist movements involved in the pro-Brix speeches through the Internet and by focusing on the economic and social situation of low and increasing migration with the existence of cultural and linguistic diversity (Poulter 2019).

Given the key incidents above, this study focuses at before and after each incident that occurred during the specified time period March 15, 2019 to February 5, 2020. For example, after the New Zealand incident, whether the extremists and supporters of the incident interaction on the social media increase or decrease, as well as with the El Paso incident, Britain's exit from the European Union before and after January 31, 2020 is also linked by examining the posts of extremist groups before the decision and what it was calling for and whether it continued in the same approach after the exit decision.

This interval has also been chosen to be long enough to capture popular topics on the extreme right on Facebook and Twitter by analyzing the sample. Moreover, this time period is appropriate for collecting and analyzing data for a period of time close to this study in light of the challenges of big data processing.

### **3.2 Process of Analysis**

Content analysis is an unobtrusive choice for the research as "the researcher does not interfere with what is being studied and therefore does not affect the research results" (Edman 2010). In this research, the registration units used are categories and variables, which are based on the context units, which are Facebook and Twitter posts.

In the process of analyzing the qualitative content of this study, the categories and variables that correspond to the research questions and which help in answering them with sufficient confidence will be identified. The process of creating symbols facilitates the identification of concepts in which data can be collected around it, for this the researcher created a coding instrument to reduce cognitive change during the analysis process (Bajar 2017).

In this context, this study uses deductive content analysis to test the concepts, categories, and symbols developed by the coder. The deductive analysis methodology is based on the use of a classification matrix to construct concepts and encode data according to categories, in which case it is possible to rely on the existing research literature, theories or models to develop the classification matrix (Helvi and Satu 2008). In content analysis, this document looking at latent content in the analysis process. In latent analysis, the researcher goes to dive deeper into the basic meaning of the text in order to define the hidden meanings in the text: What is the text talking about? Thus, the latent approach allows the study of abstract and contextual data (Snider and Cash 2014).

Based on the existing studies in this research area such as: Klein and Muis 2018, Guenther, et al. 2020, David and Fernández 2016 and Peucker, Smith and Iqbal 2019, categories and codes were inferred for the process of analyzing Facebook posts and tweets. Through previous studies, the main ideologies from which the extremist right-wing replicate to propagate their ideas have been identified. It was also concluded from some literature review such as Moltzau 2019 and Fernández 2017 that the extent to which social media posts of extremist groups has a major impact on the behavior of individuals and changing their beliefs.

The unit of analysis for this study is the single of Facebook post or tweet shared by extremist right groups on Facebook and Twitter accounts. These posts include textual messages, video, and images. All parts of the posts are coded Image, text and video combined processing are similar to each other in the analysis process (Azati 2018). Since the language represents the process of communication in humans, one can use the same



coding systems and categories to analyze textual and visual messages. The textual part of the post (caption) describes its visual counterpart (Steinert and Joo 2018). Therefore, all three parts of the posts were coded separately.

In the sample that will be analyzed in this study, Facebook posts and tweets include links to web pages, text, images and videos. These links will not be coded. The object of this study is the Facebook posts and tweets themselves. The posts and tweets were being analyzed based on the coding categories that have been created for the analysis of the original posts and tweets included in the sample.

In the analysis of posts containing links will be dealt with as in the analysis of descriptive aspects of the publication, in terms of the number of likes, comments and share. But in analyzing the content of the post, the existing caption and the image or video, if any, will be looked at, then dealt with as in the analysis of the content allocated in this study.

The process of content analyzing of Facebook posts and tweets differs. So that in analyzing descriptive aspects of the Facebook post you are based on the number of emoji likes (happy, angry, sad, love, like), number of comments, and number of share. As for analyzing descriptive aspects of tweets, it is based on the number of likes, the Retweet Count, and the number of comments. The caption on the photo or video also helps to make it easier to understand visual content.

### **3.2.1 Coding procedures for qualitative content analysis**

In general, the first steps in qualitative analysis begin with the identification of the unit of analysis, which is the basic data that will be coded and analyzed (Elo and Kynga's 2008). The unit of analysis may serve as full text documents, paragraphs, sentences, or corresponding protocols (Graneheim and Lundman 2004).

In the second step, the relevant literature is reviewed in order to determine the coding categories that have been addressed, these literatures may be incomplete in the identification of the categories, but they are used in the analysis process ( Hsieh and Shannon 2005). Accordingly, the categories related to the subject of the study were identified through studying some of the literature, where a table for the analysis of content was developed. In addition, subcategories have been identified that measure the basic meaning that are circulated by posts of extremist on Facebook groups and Twitter accounts.

Moreover, new categories can be observed during the analysis process that are documented and dealt with; in addition to that, the initial coding categories may be reduced if no in-depth coding of these categories is found. After that, the popularity of posts and tweets is evaluated through likes and comments, followed by an evaluation of how frequently posts are shared and retweet by users.

In the last step, the encodings that were previously extracted from the sample of identified posts are examined ( Hsieh and Shannon 2005). In this step, a qualitative analysis approach is followed to include an analysis of the latent content, which refers to the interpretation of the content by focusing on discovering the basic meanings of the content and looking at the depth of the meaning, and what is the intended meaning in the publication, which is either in the form of Direct or indirect.

### **3.3 Coding Instrument and Operational Definitions**

A coding instrument based on the existing studies was created in this study for the analysis process for all Facebook posts and tweets. These categories were formed based on the articles Klein and Muis 2018, Guenther, et al. 2020, David and Fernández 2016 and Peucker, Smith and Iqbal 2019, that dealt with the topic of extreme right. It addressed the following variables and categories used in coding: Protection of western values, Anti-LGBT activism, Anti- feminism, Anti-Islam, Anti-immigrant, Fostering white race, Anti-elitist populism. In contrast, the coding instrument also analyzed how the extremist groups

communicated their message to other people in social media through using textual and visual modalities.

The first research question examines the extremist ideology shared within the user-generated content shared on Facebook and Twitter by extremist groups. This analysis focused on posts that contain discrimination and hatred toward: LGBT, feminist movements, Islam, immigrants and political elites. Additionally, racist content toward protecting of western values and fostering white race, which focuses on white groups and indigenous people (see Table 3.4).

**Table 3.4. Categories and subcategories of extreme right ideologies on Facebook and Twitter**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Subcategories</b>
<b>Protection of western values</b>	protecting the national identity, multiculturalism, independence and sovereignty of the state
<b>Anti-LGBT activism</b>	destroys traditional social values, homosexuality as a sin against human nature
<b>Anti-feminism</b>	men possessing women, hostility for modern liberal feminism
<b>Anti-Islam</b>	criticism of Islam, anti-Islamization, counter-jihad, Muslims by occupation
<b>Anti-immigrant</b>	xenophobia, the scarcity of welfare, illegal immigration, economic impact of immigration
<b>Fostering white race</b>	white pride, white supremacy, white race is persecuted
<b>Anti-elitist populism</b>	claims against the political elite, the elites took care of themselves and reception of immigrants, they appear unsuccessful in political administration

### **3.3.1 Protection of western values**

The extreme right is based on justifying its position on cultural diversity on common descent, belief and blood and on sharing democratic liberal values, which allows extreme right parties to mobilize on issues such as terrorism (Halikiopoulou 2018). This explains that some religions and cultures contradict the cultures and democracy of the host country, which constitutes a burden on the issues of freedom and independence.

### **a) Protecting the national identity**

In the new millennium, the world witnessed the rise of new nationalities in America, Western Europe, that was calling for unity of culture and belonging and dealt with hot topics such as national identity, national values, the national canon, citizenship exams for newcomers. In those contexts, the terminology of nationalism was based on (identity, National, canon, native, homeland, home, citizen, citizenship, traditional, patriotism, belonging, security) (Duyvendak 2011). Nationalism considers that the preservation of language is an essential center in cultural development and existence as an independent country, as it is the service of communication and interconnection between people at the political, material and economic levels (Li, Brugha and Gallagher 2017).

### **b) Multiculturalism**

In an analytical study of hate speeches of the extreme right associated with cultural and historical context, researchers found that the most frequently used words are (multiculturalism, cultural diversity), in which advocates see the necessity of stopping migration and maintaining cultural identity (Nortio, et al. 2020). Racist discourse has become more popular on social media with regard to ethnic, cultural and national mixing. On this basis, the extreme right is based on two terms (language and translation) (Weber 2015).

The extreme right's vision is to find an alternative system for the capitalist world system by directing political discourse across the Atlantic states, and it also calls for the replacement of cultures with the new Marxist culture (Stewart 2020). The extreme right-wing ideology promoted neoliberalism by building international cross-border institutions, opposing globalization, rejecting socialism, restoring authority, and calling for new cultures.

### **c) Independence and sovereignty of the state**

In preserving Western national values, the extreme right relies on foundational dimensions: stopping migration, protecting core values, indigenous rights, and unity of culture and belonging (Dâmaso 2018). As the indigenous people are the true nation, cultural pluralism and religious diversity are rejected by the extreme right. Nevertheless, the extreme right views the state's independence away from global governance and the principle of dependency, and the best evidence for this is Britain's exit from the European Union, in which the extreme right focused on the issue of sovereignty (Dâmaso 2018).

### **3.3.2 Anti-LGBT activism**

"Fear of homosexuals" or people who are identified or considered as, or transgender (LGBT) (Adams and Bell 2007). It has been defined as contempt, prejudice, hatred or hate, and can be based on irrational fear, and is often associated with religious beliefs Clash (Newport 2015). According to 2010 hate crime statistics from the FBI's National Press Office, 19.3 % of hate crimes across the United States "were driven by a bias in sexual orientation (Washington 2011).

#### **a) Destroys traditional social values**

The extreme right considers that same-sex marriage destroys traditional social values, and that the governmental laws of gay protection push for the presence of gay immigrants and thus the existence of cultural and social diversity. The anti-gay movement spreads discrimination that includes various areas such as marriage, inheritance, education, child adoption, health care, employment, and violation of equal rights before the law (Afshar 2006).

#### **b) Homosexuality as a sin against human nature**

In terms of immorality of homosexuality, Christian right-wing groups view homosexuality as a sin against human nature and that God created Adam and Eve and did not create Adam for three men, not even Eve for other women. For such an argument, homosexuals are condemned for their erroneous choice to be heterosexual. As for homosexuality, it poses a threat to children. From the Christian right's point of view, sexual abuse of children is closely related to homosexuality, where children are considered weak and easy targets are subject to persuasion by corrupt gay people.

Another belief that anti-gay movements use is that AIDS came from homosexuals and that even the spread of the AIDS epidemic in the world is due to the fact that homosexuals traveled on global sexual tours. Where the extreme right sees that transsexual distorted the rights of gender equality (men and women). Moreover, those transsexual created multiculturalism and violated the rights of men (Pilkington 2017).

### **3.3.3 Anti-feminism**

The masculine identity of racist ideology is the reason why people join right-wing extremist groups. In addition, the idea of the extreme right is based on the fact that women destroy western civilization, that the role of women is to reproduce and be under the rule of men, and that the resident women marry immigrants, which leads to cultural diversity (Lewis 2019). This anti-feminist rhetoric is the gateway to extreme right nationalism.

#### **a) Men possessing women**

The extreme right tends to the concept of Men Possessing Women by considering women at the lowest level, and society must be based on masculinity such as courage, audacity and originality (Durham 2003). Moreover, the extreme right-wing messages about men's control upon women are based on several forms, namely: that men possess physical strength, power, money, and gender power, in addition to the fact that civilization is escalating through the control upon women (Dworkin 1981).

Regarding the protection of men and children against male sexual violence, the messages of the extreme right speak about the harm that young people feel by ignoring gentlemen, it also says women exist for sex and this is men's rights, in addition to focusing on false rape cases and supporting men's health (Shaw 2018). Moreover, extremist right-wing messages continued about the weakness of the white male and the male crisis, which have become fertile ground in an attempt to protect the rights of men and the rights of the father with the aim of mobilizing the extreme right in recruiting disaffected white men in racist societies (Greig 2019).

#### **b) Hostility for modern liberal feminism**

The extreme right targets modern liberal feminism, which is seen as being linked to cultural and political pluralism and opposing freedom of expression, which extremists consider to be more fearful than the economic crisis (Shaw 2018). In addition, modern feminist liberalism infringes on the rights of men and supports the interests of capitalism. On this basis, the language and messages of the extreme right has been linked to a common vocabulary, namely, "neoliberal feminism" (Shaw 2018).

#### **3.3.4 Anti-Islam**

The West has faced the rise of extremist nationalism that has led to increased hostility to Islam in its societies. The western world has experienced a tremendous increase in Islamophobia over the past several decades. The correct use of this concept is anti-Islam rather than Islamophobia (Barlaas 2017). Right-wing extremist groups consider Islam a political, holistic, and destructive force that threatens Western civilization

#### **a) Criticism of Islam**

The extreme right considers Islam as a threat to the life of the host country, so it is not surprising that we see right-wing groups strongly criticizing Islam without seeing it directly criticizing members of Islam (Muslims) (Goodman and Johnson 2013). Islamic hostility increased after the events of September 11, 2001. Islam's criticisms relate to aspects of human rights in the Islamic world in terms of: the treatment of women, gay groups, and the adoption of cultural pluralism. Criticism of the Christian Right has also focused on the Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an (Warraq 2003).

#### **b) Anti-Islamization**

The extremist groups are not convinced of the idea of integrating Islamic communities in western countries, and they are pushing towards opposing what they see as a "rise in the rate of immigrants" and increasing Islamic influence in some countries (Malkawi 2015). In their campaigns against Muslims, extremist groups have displayed slogans such as "against the Islamization of the West, united against Islam", as well as their concerns about Muslims in spreading Islam among citizens (Matthes and Schmuck 2018).

#### **c) Counter-jihad**

Extremist groups are campaigning with a shared belief that the Western world is vulnerable to Muslim takeover, and they have given many considerations to fight jihad against crimes committed by Muslims (Lee 2017). The anti-jihad discourse confuses the right concerns about jihad-inspired terrorism with more complex political issues related to immigration to Europe from Muslim-majority countries (Hitchens and Brun 2013).

#### **d) Muslims by occupation**

The narratives of extremist groups across the Internet push around the threats posed by Islam and Muslims by considering the culture and lives of Muslims incompatible with other cultures, while the primary purpose is incitement against Muslims (Mario Peucker, Debra



Smith and Muhammad Iqbal 2019). The rhetoric of extremists on Facebook pages is often linked to criticism of Islam, by emphasizing the criteria and values of Islam that are distinct from Western values (Muis and Klein 2019).

Extremist groups deliberately unleash some terminology against Islam via the Internet and its right (Muslim extremists, Islamic fanaticism, Islamic terrorism), in order to stir up prejudices against Muslims and their faith in the minds of Europeans (Mohideen and Mohideen 2008). Right-wing parties promote that Islam does not represent a heavenly religion, but rather considers it a political ideology, just as it seeks to tighten the screws on Muslim communities and they are considered them as invaders who came to settle in western countries (Haber 2015).

### **3.3.5 Anti-immigration**

For a very long time, the extreme right has been referring to the term fighting illegal immigration, which calls for the necessity of defending the basic rights and freedoms of citizens (Ziada 2019). Moreover, the number of extremist anti-immigrant groups continued to rise after Donald Trump's success in the US elections, as terrorist attacks against immigrants increased, most recently the El Paso incident (Cobian 2019).

#### **a) Xenophobia**

Xenophobic is a form of hatred towards minorities, especially Islamic and African minorities, and the xenophobic method is based on fear of losing national or ethnic identity (Kende and Krekó 2019). In fact, extremist groups mobilize against minorities on the grounds of fears of the disappearance of the national sovereignty, disappearance of the nation's history, all arguments used against the reception of refugees. Where extremists believe that anti-minority rhetoric aims to defend national identity and build the nation and the existence of such minorities affects the social and health services available to the original citizen.

### **b) The scarcity of welfare**

The Concerns about the influx and welfare of refugees come at the expense of the population of the host country, where extremist groups consider that the deterioration of social welfare in the industrialized western world comes with the rise of illegal immigration (Rai 2004). There is a relationship to the change in social welfare of indigenous citizens in favor of immigrants, and that the majority of government social services are directed to support the migrants and their children, therefore indigenous citizens are less able to access these services ( Haider, et al. 2004).

### **c) Illegal immigration**

For illegal immigration, it is an argument relied upon by extremist groups to stem the flow of unreliable and unauthorized immigrants to enter the country. The arguments of extremists in fighting immigration are based on: reforming and monitoring immigration laws, illegal foreign labor, crossing borders illegally, and imposing sanctions on employers who employ illegal immigrants.

The extreme right seeks to protect the cultural, demographic and cultural identity of the nation by focusing on the issue of cultural migration or multiculturalism. Extremists describe their culture as an ethnic heritage and a conservative tradition that must be preserved, just as the extreme right believes that a multicultural and racial society becomes fragmented and unable to maintain a coherent state (Lopez 2017). In addition to the presence of black and foreign groups and their marriage with white women leads to the presence of different races, which also leads to a mixing of the language and thus the loss of the original language.

### **d) Economic impact of immigration**

The extreme right considers the deterioration of the economic situation due to immigrants, which is why people elect extremist parties and excel in the elections. Nevertheless, extremists link the economic downturn to the scarcity of well-being, unemployment and the low indigenous labor market (Rooduijn 2020).

### **3.3.6 Fostering white race**

This term refers to the societal privileges that the white race in the Western countries overtakes the non-white race under the same social, political and economic conditions. According to McIntosh, the white race in a society that is culturally part of the Western world has advantages in which non-whites do not (McIntosh 1989).

#### **a) White pride**

Extremists boast of white race, which distinguishes them from other races, especially black race, as it has recently appeared that extremists distinguish their identity with United States or British instead of white. As the word white is the second most common word, this description provides a clear representation of the white extremist, which is expressed through words such as (white male, white nationalist, okay white, white guilt, white child, existence white, straight white, future white) (Ganesh 2020). There are also some slogans associated with white pride such as white lives matter and it's OK to be white.

#### **b) White supremacy**

White nationalists defend the white identity that they believe should be the basic principle in the formation of Western civilization. White supremacy is a belief promoted by the extreme right, that white people are the masters of all people of other races. Extremists support the idea of white supremacy via the Internet by highlighting the intellectual superiority and cultural achievement of whites and that white sex is more intelligent, and for this they support the idea of separation of races (ADL 2020).

#### **c) White race is persecuted**

The ideologies of white extremists are based on showing that the white race are persecuted through the use of memes, images, retweets and optical medium, to show the image that loss of racial equality, white genocide and replacement of white race (Ganesh 2020). In this sense, the image represents reality; it links the user to the aspirations of white groups, so that they seek to stir passion and white anger by publishing evidence that shows fear of losing a white identity.

### **3.3.7 Anti-elitist populism**

Populist discourse often consists of anti-elitist views, opposition to the ruling establishment, and public address. Right-wing populism objects to the perceived elites' control of liberal democracies, support for strict immigration controls and the fight against corrupt elites (Akkerman 2003). Extremist groups have often impeded independent institutions such as the media or the judiciary, which they see as hostile to the will of the people (Hamed 2019).

#### **a) Claims against the political elite**

When the populist right directs its political message, it directs it to the people, and its political discourse often links corrupt political elites, and the populist right often blames the political elites for economic and political failures, especially failure to deal with immigrants (Heiss and Matthes 2019). As for interest in media content, many citizens are interested in following political positions on social media, and as a result of this extremist groups are trying to show the negative nature of the political elite, by showing the elites that they only want money, that they betrayed the voters, and that corrupt elites exploit immigration in order to achieve political and financial gains.

#### **b) The elites took care of themselves and reception of immigrants**

The rhetoric and claims of the extreme right towards political elites are reduced: the privileges of politicians, the costs of politics, and the number of parliamentarians (Schwörer

2018). Moreover, the extreme right attributes negative future scenarios to the elite, so that populist right-wing communication increases in political participation by dividing society into ordinary people who are good people and failed elites who have concealed the representation of their people and that they took care of themselves and reception of immigrants. As the elite was referred to terms published by Yemenis such as (evil and corrupt) (Hameleers, et al. 2018).

### **c) Elites appear unsuccessful in political administration**

In terms of supporting the right-wing radical parties, Right-wing populists play the role of defender of homogeneous people, and thus the populist right shows society as weak and dissatisfied with political institutions and elites (Hartleb 2013). On the other hand, the populist right is biased towards a charismatic leader who shows it as the leader's role, instead of other political elites who appear to be losers in political administration (Hartleb 2013).

With regard to the second research question, what are the types of content shared by extremist groups on public Facebook and Twitter accounts which got the highest level of interaction, i.e., likes, reshares, retweets? In which the extent of user interaction with extremist content is measured. So that the data is analyzed based on the number of likes, comments, re-posts, and retweets.

A coding scheme is developed for the content analysis, Coding scheme categorized data into subcategories and descriptive aspects of the post and tweet. Most researchers have shifted content analysis from traditional (paper) encryption models to electronic coding models such as an Excel file, which helps in greater ease and speed of encryption than is done on paper (Skalski, Neuendorf and Cajigas 2017). In the data analysis, the table has been developed on an Excel file, to facilitate the process of sample analysis, and thus come up with the final results and conclusions by the research.

Since the Facebook interface differs from Twitter in terms of emoji likes, reposts, retweets and the nature of the Tweet. Two tables were created on Excel for analysis, one for analyzing Facebook posts and the other for analyzing tweets. So that the two tables depend on the same subcategories that were previously drawn for the analysis.

The data obtained from Facebook and Twitter (examples of posts and tweets) is documented in an attachment on Word. The appendix contains screenshots of previously encoded posts and tweets. Each selected post has been numbered to facilitate identification of the posts in the event of reference, and this supplement cannot be included with the thesis due to space constraints, but it will be available upon request.

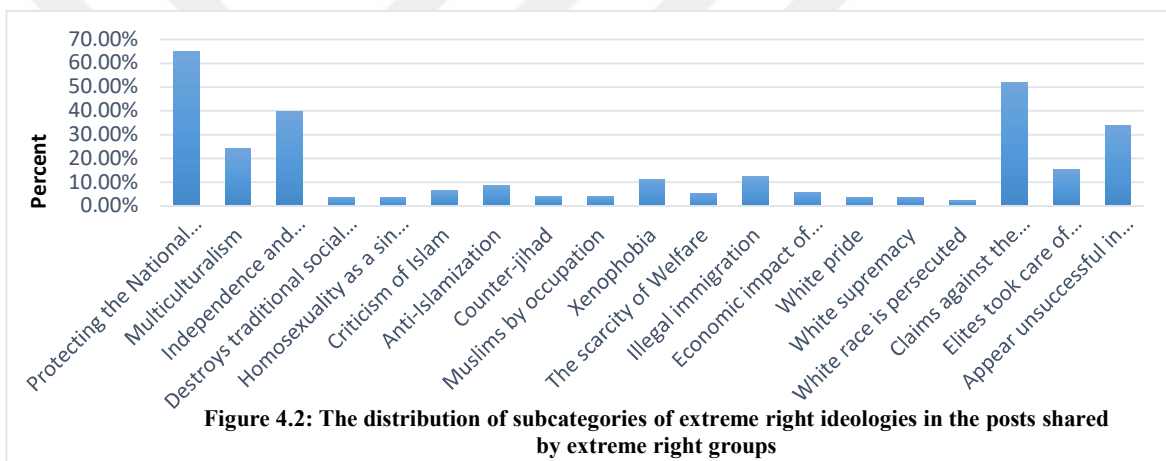
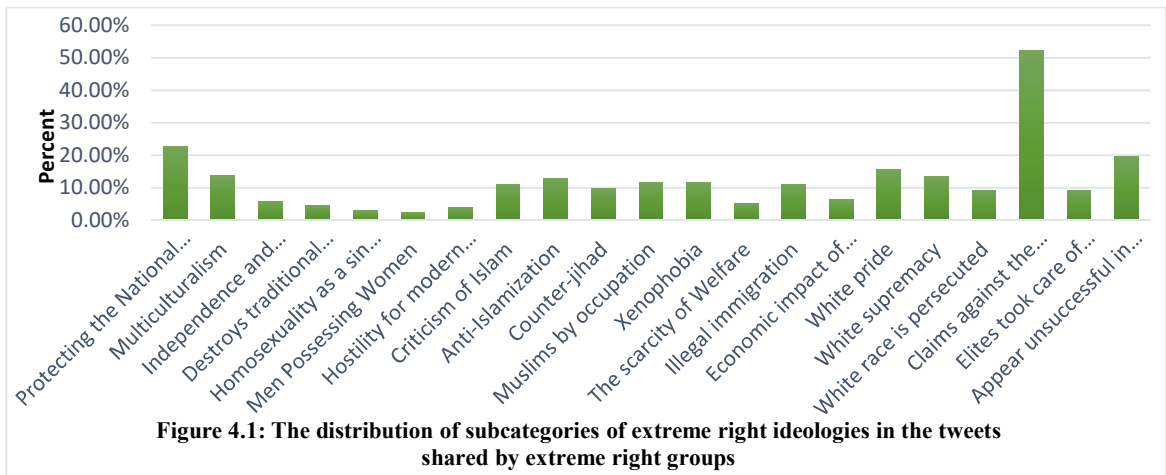
## **4. RESULTS**

A total of 343 posts were compiled and coded on the Facebook and Twitter platforms, in which the analysis was performed on the basis of 23 subcategories in seven different categories. Results were analyzed based on research questions looking at the topic of extreme right propaganda on Facebook and Twitter.

There were some subcategories on Facebook and Twitter that were not included in the reporting the results because no results were found for these deleted subcategories. Omitted subcategories on Facebook which are: spread of the AIDS epidemic, Men Possessing Women, women exist for sex, protection rights men and boys and against male sexual violence, hostility for modern liberal feminism. Omitted subcategories on Twitter which are: spread of the AIDS epidemic, women exist for sex, protection rights men and boys and against male sexual violence.

### **4.1 Analysis of the Content of Posts of Extremist Groups' Accounts**

The first research question focused on the examination of different types of ideologies that the extreme right groups share on Facebook and Twitter. In answering this research question, right-wing extremist groups public Facebook groups and Twitter accounts were analyzed. Posts were analyzed based on the sub-categories that fall under the main categories, and identify the percentages for each sub-category for each social media platform separately (see Figure 4.1 and 4.2).



#### 4.1.1 Ideology of protection of western values

This framework focused on the issues of the so-called cultural identity, cultural pluralism, independence and freedom of the laws of the state advocacy by the extreme right. So that extremist groups harness their accounts and groups on the Facebook and Twitter platforms to broadcast their ideas about Western culture, which are different from other cultures, especially Islamic ones. It also calls for the importance of conserving culture from other cultures through the presence of laws and regulations that help preserve the environment and culture of Western countries.



In analyzing the ideology of *protecting the national identity*, which was 64.91% on Facebook, and on Twitter, which was 22.67%. As the posts of extremist groups reinforced the culture of carrying arms, which is the right of every citizen to freedom to possess arms, as it also strengthened national development and service to the country, some posts addressed the army, the protector of the country, and provided assistance to the displaced who previously served in the army.

The posts also called for nationalism and the capitalist system, and its importance is to maintain its continuity and not collapse. In addition to the rights of indigenous people to reduce taxes, help farmers, the right to own weapons, provide health services and even protection. The extremist groups are also concerned with the national economic administration, which also called for there to be intensification to stop socialism.

*Multiculturalism* has reached 23.98% of Facebook posts and 13.95% of tweets. The extremist groups were warning that there is a difference in cultures by increasing immigration and opening borders, and that the presence of different races leads to the disappearance of the identity and original culture of the host country. That is why the majority of posts were important to protect the borders, close them and stop illegal immigration, because of the danger of cultural diversity, and this is what the original citizen rejects.

Moreover, most posts promoted the idea that foreigners marry resident women, leading to cultures different from the original culture. Some posts also indicate that the influx of refugees to the host country will make the indigenous population a minority, and thus the dominance of other cultures over the original culture.

*Independence and sovereignty* of the country obtained 39.77% of Facebook posts and 5.81% of tweets. In light of the demands of Britain's exit from the European Union, the extremist groups promoted the idea of state sovereignty away from collective decisions and the interference of other countries in internal decisions. Moreover, extremist groups

consider that Britain's presence in the European Union means allowing refugees or foreigners to enter and thus constitutes a threat the identity and culture of the country.

Likewise, in Australia, where extremist groups demand withdrawal from the United Nations, under the pretext that the agreements signed with the United Nations allow refugees to enter and receive and the United Nations interfere in Australian decisions and affairs. This reinforces the idea of independence and state sovereignty. As for economic matters, the extremist groups consider that Britain pays money to the European Union as well as providing financial aid to the European Union countries, as well as with Australia, which must provide financial assistance to the countries of the United Nations. This money collected from taxes and farmers and paid to other countries is stressing the country's economy, and hence the importance of withdrawal and independence in disbursing this money inside the country, which is also the right of the resident citizens.

#### **4.1.2 Ideology of anti-LGBT activism**

The main topics related to combating activity were that they were destroying social and traditional values, and just as homosexuals are not like humans, they are against human nature, and the AIDS epidemic is also spreading because of them. In the analysis of these sub-categories, no results were obtained from the Facebook posts and even the tweets for the sub-category (the spread of the AIDS epidemic), and therefore it was not included in this analysis.

Extremist groups consider that transgender and *homosexuals destroy social and traditional values* with 3.51% of Facebook posts, and 4.65% of tweets. Where some tweets show that converts teach children a culture different from the culture of society, among which the biological sex makes no sense. Moreover, drag queen and gay groups participate in festivals held by Democrats to empower converts in society, so that these converts get paid from taxpayer money.

Extremist groups consider *transgender a sin against human nature*, accounting for 3.51% of Facebook posts and 2.91% of tweets. So that some tweets ridicule the forms of transgender people and do not have a correct view as human nature, so that their sexual culture contradicts the original culture, which began to be taught to children in schools, which is contrary to the principles of natural life.

#### **4.1.3 Ideology of anti-feminism**

Topics in this category includes: Men possessing women, women exist for sex, protection rights men and boys and against male sexual violence, hostility for modern liberal feminism. In the analysis of these categories, no result was obtained for them on Facebook. In addition, there were no result for the two subcategories, women exist for sex, protection rights of men and boys and against male sexual violence, in the tweets. So they were not included in report of the results.

The subcategory *men possessing women* was coded in the 2.33% of the of tweets. Some tweets showed that women cannot be equated with men even in education, and just as women are under the rule of men even if they do not support them in voting for elections.

As for the *hostility for modern liberal feminism* which was 4.07% of the tweets. Some of the tweets reinforce that political women support immigrants and that they are traitors to the homeland, and that feminism supports the communists and that is against conservatives and capitalism. Some tweets also show that feminists destroy family and family life, and that only feminists make noise.

#### **4.1.4 Ideology of anti-Islam**

This framework focused on issues such as, criticizing Islam, opposing the spread of Islam and Islam, stopping and combating jihadists, and that Muslims migrate to impose control and even that they were still in their early days in occupying lands and spreading the

Islamic call. Most posts relied on reinforcing the idea that Muslim immigration should be stopped because of its danger to the culture and security of society.

In *criticism of Islam*, it accounted for 6.43% of the analysis of Facebook posts and 11.05% of the analysis of tweets. Some posts showed some videos of veiled Muslim women and others without a hijab (veil), and then criticized Islam for how he controlled women's clothing. Muslims also take advantage of the days of official celebrations in the country by collecting money to build mosques, in addition to criticizing the Qur'an, which incites the killing of non-Muslims and which they do not recognize as a divine book.

As for the *Anti-Islamization*, the percentage reached 8.77% of Facebook posts and 12.79% of tweets. She was promoting some posts that the presence of Muslims in the country and building mosques is in itself a posts of Islamic religion and cultural mixing. Moreover, Muslims have come to the countries of the West in order to wreak havoc and corruption in the land, and spread ideas and teachings of the Islamic religion and even legal attire that are inconsistent with the life and culture of Western society.

In *Counter-jihad*, which extremist groups see as a threat to the life and safety of people, in analyzing Facebook posts, this subcategory reached 4.09% and 9.88% of the tweets. Extremist groups consider that Muslims are rapists, suicide bombers and terrorists and kill people based on the teachings of their religion and the Qur'an, so that Muslims from ancient times kill people to gain a foothold. The jihadists also spread fear and terror by committing massacres and beheadings, in addition to considering ISIS as jihadists and must be stopped and combated.

The extremist groups consider that *Muslims are invaders and occupiers* and they aspire to rule the world. This subgroup reached in its analysis 4.09% of Facebook posts, while in Twitter it was 11.63%. Some posts make it clear that Muslims come to the country under the pretext of democracy and settle in it, and that they even reach power like Ilhan Omar and control internal politics. In addition, extremist groups are demanding an end to the

Islamic advance to the West and the spread of their Islamic culture, which extremist groups consider to be a mental illness that destroys the minds of millions of people.

#### **4.1.5 Ideology of anti-immigration**

This framework brought together several topics that are addressed by extremist groups on the Facebook and Twitter platforms: xenophobia, the scarcity of welfare, illegal immigration, the economic impact of migration. Where extremist groups consider that illegal immigration destroys the national, cultural and even language of the host country, as they affect the demographic and economic balance of the country. For this reason, the extremist groups have focused on the necessity of stopping migration, protecting borders, deporting refugees, and building the border wall.

When analyzing the subject of *xenophobia*, it was found that 11.11% of posts on Facebook and 11.63% of tweets. So that the refugees are considered as monsters and rapists, they enter the country illegally, raping white women and creating cases of theft and murder. However, refugees from gangs that spread drugs, diseases and terror among the indigenous population, and the presence of foreigner's leads to cultural and religious diversity and different races in society. On the other hand, extremist groups accuse blacks of committing many crimes, persecuting whites and spreading hatred against the whites.

In terms of the *scarcity of Welfare*, immigrants affect the lives of the indigenous people in the host country. In the analysis process, it was found that this topic accounted for 5.26% of Facebook posts and 5.23% of tweets. From the extremists 'point of view, the influx of refugees into the country and the search for work reduces job opportunities for the resident, which creates unemployment cases, in addition to the fact that the assistance provided to refugees oppresses the displaced residents who have served their countries in the past and became shelter and no food, but the refugees are received and housing and food are provided and even work for them.

*Illegal immigration* is the main topic of extremist groups, as its percentage from the analysis of posts reached 12.28%, and from the analysis of tweets it reached 11.05%. The entry of illegal immigrants means that there are different cultures and ethnicities and thus an increase in hate crimes against them, so they must leave and return to their homeland, from the point of view of extremists.

Most posts of extremists reinforce the need to build a border wall, withdraw from international agreements that allow entry to refugees and protect borders from illegal smugglers. Moreover, their posts reinforce the idea that the country is full of immigrants and there is a crowded population that affects the economic and living conditions, and therefore illegal immigration must be stopped.

Extremists justify that *immigration has economic implications* that undermine life in the host country. The analysis of this issue on Facebook reached 5.85%, while on Twitter it reached 6.40%. Also, the presence of illegal workers and even aid to refugees is collected from taxes paid by the resident citizen, all of which have an impact on economic life. Moreover, some posts by extremists show that immigrants come to the country to take our food and work, which is rejected by Western society, and that host countries such as Australia are experiencing a severe population crisis and the reason for this is migrants who burden the government debt and expenses.

#### **4.1.6 Ideology of fostering the white race**

The extreme right aims to create a white culture that is different from other cultures. This framework included several different topics: pride of white, white supremacy, and persecuted white race. Extremist groups believe in the supremacy of white race and white nationalism and the protection of white race from oppression and the destruction of their European culture, as white nationalists strive to ensure the survival of the white race and white national identity. That is why the extremists reject multiculturalism, immigration for

non-whites, white marriage for non-whites, and also consider that low birth rates among whites are a threat to white race.

Extremist groups foster *white pride* to preserve white pride and white race rights. An analysis of this topic found 3.51% of Facebook posts and 15.70% of tweets. Some of the posts showed their incompatibility with blacks. They talked about blacks and Africans as villains and dirty, while others from politicians opposed politicians because of the non-discrimination between whites and blacks. The extremist groups are also calling for the deportation of blacks to their countries, and the banning of white girls from marrying blacks, and that whites are only for whites.

In addition, some of Richard Spencer's tweets found the importance of being white, referring to it's OK to be white. That is why some extremists emphasize the importance of white culture not mixing with other cultures, and even they were opposed to government policies or elites that violated white culture.

The idea of *white supremacy* is based on the belief that individuals of white race or white origin are masters of all races in the social, political and industrial aspects of their societies. In analyzing this sub-topic, it was found that 3.51% of posts and on Twitter accounted for 13.37%. Some extremists refuse to accuse whites of being racists, to deny white culture and to consider that Western countries are not whites. On the basis of that, the extremists consider that the white culture still exists and continues with its activities and that it is only the white identity and culture of the white race, and the white race cannot be intellectually and culturally mixed with any other culture.

Moreover, the posts promote white culture and dominance by supporting white, even if it is from bad political elites and as it appears that whites are not aggressive, since it is white if it is educated and fun. Some tweets also mock the black American race that they are unable to pass even the reading tests and that they are politically unsuccessful, while it appears that

blacks should walk behind the white because the white party is the dominant and the majority and blacks are the minority.

The posts of extremist groups on Facebook and Twitter show that *whites are persecuted and subjected to cultural genocide*, because of the migrants who come and rape women and share the whites' lives and culture. Analysis of the subject matter of this sub-category of Facebook posts showed 2.34% and on Twitter 9.30%, and on that basis some tweets appeared to reinforce the idea that Democrats and immigrants are white enemies and against white culture. On the other hand, extremists aim to show that whites may become a minority in European countries, by showing some studies that talk about the size of immigrants who entered the country.

#### **4.1.7 Ideology of anti-elitist populism**

Exploiting the mistakes and pitfalls in which officials fall into the political elites are among the most important things to fight their owners, especially in presenting these mistakes to the public opinion, which works to influence their minds and ideas and think negatively against these classes and this is what the right uses against opponents from the political elite. This clause includes talking about prosecution against the political elite through three sub-topics: claiming against the political elite, their use of power to look after themselves and migrants, as well as their failure to manage political power.

The right uses social media to criticize and *claim against this political elite* and to show them as people who harm their country more than it benefits them, in addition to pushing public opinion to not trust these political elites. It can be said that the aim of the right, through these allegations against the political elite, is to sharpen public opinion against them and against their policies and ideas on the one hand, and on the other hand, it is to gain the support and support of public opinion for the right's ideas and policies.



Analysis of Facebook posts and tweets on the topic of the prosecution of political elites showed 52.33% on Twitter and 52.05% on Facebook. Moreover, the extremist groups' claims against political elites in many aspects, including: they betrayed the voters by including socialism projects and imposing laws to receive and protect refugees, legislating laws that limit the culture and freedom of the people, such as enacting arms attendance laws, and opposing withdrawal from the international agreement.

The extreme right and its supporters claim, through their publications, that the political elite, especially those who contradict their ideas and policies, and *use power to implement their own interests and look after themselves at the expense of others*, especially those of the general public, in analyzing this issue found 9.30% on Twitter and 15.20% on FB. posts that incite against parties and people from the political elite also appear as corrupt elites who exploit immigration in order to achieve political and financial gains, and they also grant work and freedom rights to those outside their country (immigrants) without taking into account their own people who need help as well.

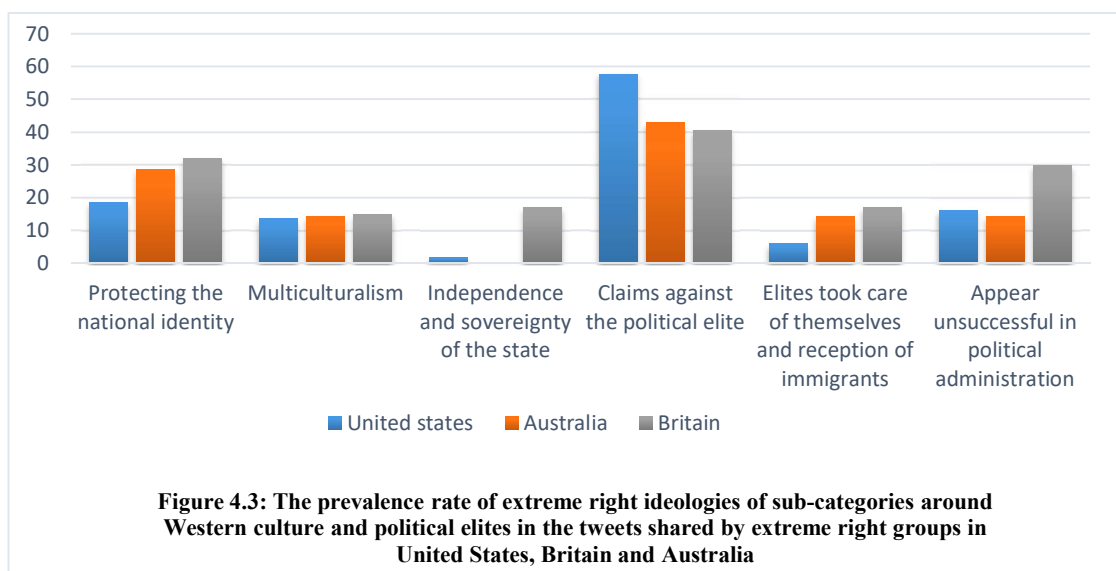
The right, through its posts and tweets, appears against the politicians who contradict the right's policies, as people *who are unable to manage power on the right track*. In addition, they are not eligible to receive positions and are unable to make the correct decision that is in the interest of their country, such as the opposition politicians appearing as allowing immigrants to enter the country, which is contrary to the culture and life of the host country. When analyzing this topic from Facebook posts and tweets, he found 19.77% on Twitter and 33.92% on Facebook.

They call on the right, through its posts, to replace this elite, which it describes as failing, directly and indirectly, by displaying and commenting on pictures of candidates from opposition parties. In addition, the right-wing parties are calling on public opinion to vote for their candidates, as they are able to advance the country, in a sign that the right is more able than others to manage power and this is shown through their posts.

## 4.2 The Most Prevalent Extreme Right Sub-Categories Across the United States, Britain and Australia

In light of the analysis of the posts of extremist groups on Facebook and Twitter in the United States, Britain and Australia, the thesis focused on describing the ideologies of the extreme right, which may differ from one country to another. This section analyzes country-based differences and similarities of the subcategories of extreme right ideologies as manifested in Facebook and Twitter accounts. Specifically, the most prevalent extreme right ideologies, the protection of Western values and populist anti-elitism, are analyzed on a country basis.

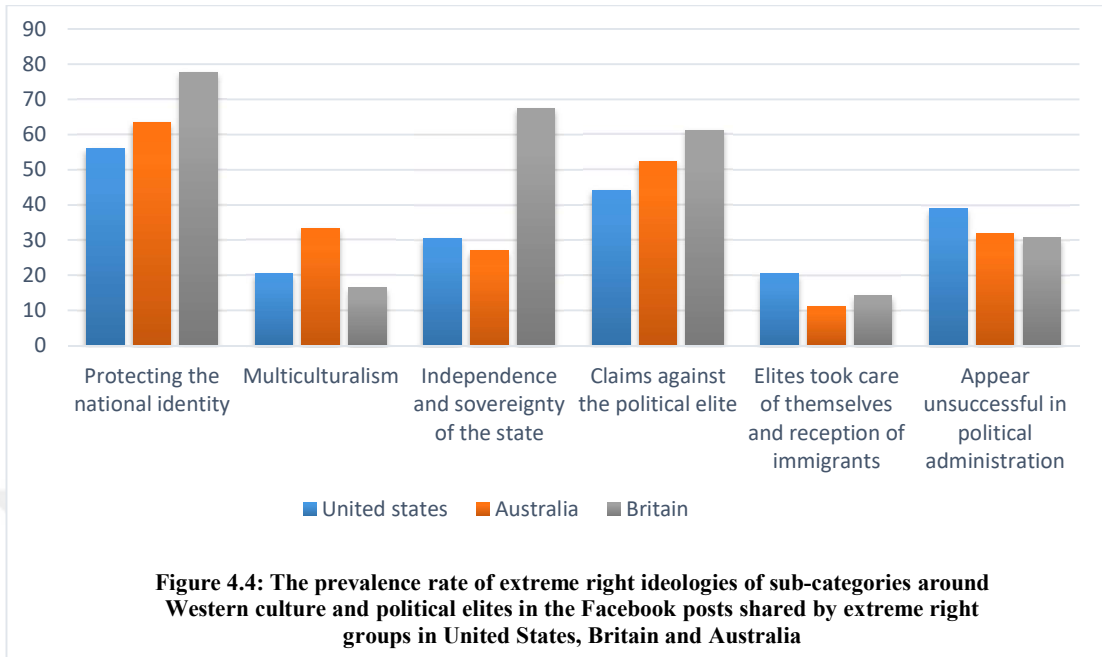
On Twitter, the extreme right-wing movements in Britain showed a higher interaction around categories: protection of Western values and populist anti-elitism. In the protection of Western values, for example, the sub-category of the ideology of protecting national identity appeared at 31.91%, which shows the highest percentage among other ideologies, while the sub-category of the ideology of independence and sovereignty of the state got a very small percentage in the United States, which is 1.69%, in Australia there was no mention rate of 0.0% (see Figure 4.3).



On the other hand, in the anti-elitist populist category on Twitter, the interaction of extremist groups in Britain was more on the ideology of elites who took care of themselves and reception of immigrants which got 17.02%, and so did the ideology that appeared unsuccessful in political administration. It is 29.79%. While the ideology of claims against the political elite, which was more active in the United States, reached 57.63%.

It is noted that extremist groups in Britain have a high prevalence on Twitter in spreading extremist ideologies. The reason for this is the extreme right view that is based on the importance of the country's independence and its liberation from the restrictions and laws of the European Union, especially in light of the vote to leave Britain from the European Union and even get rid of the politically failed elites and the opposition to the Brexit project. Whereas, extremist groups in the United States and Australia show a high interest in claiming against the political elites that they are corrupt and failed in the political and economic fields.

In the analysis of the extreme right ideologies on Facebook of the United States, Britain and Australia, there is a difference between the proportions of these extremist ideologies in each country as shown in Figure 4.4. In the category of protection of Western values, extremist groups in Britain get the highest percentage in the sub-category of the ideology of protecting national identity, at a rate of 77.55%. On the other hand, the extremist groups in Australia had the highest percentage in the sub-category of the ideology of multiculturalism, which was at a rate of 33.33% (see Figure 4.4).



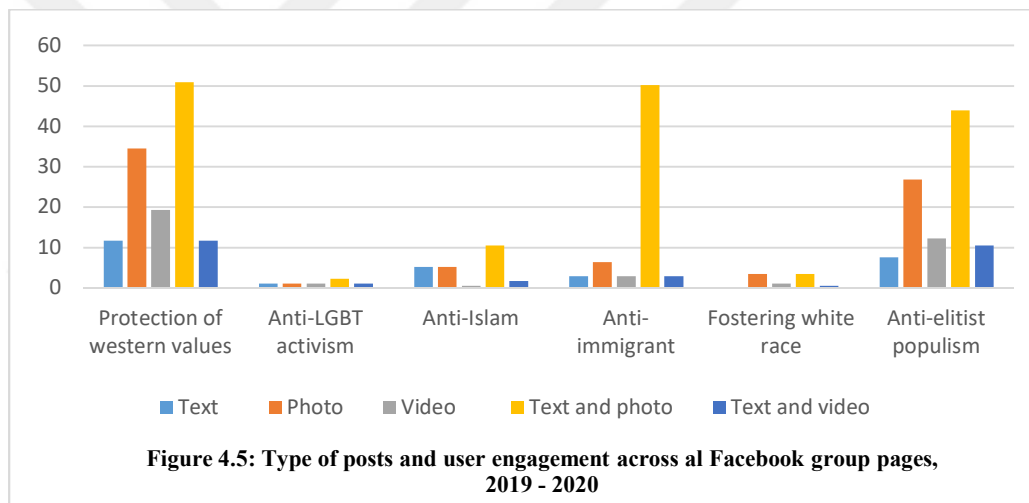
In the analysis of the anti-elitist populist category of the extreme right Facebook posts, Figure 4.4 shows that the sub-category of the ideology of claims against the political elite was high in Britain, which constitutes about 61.22%. In the United States, which is the highest percentage in the sub-category of the ideology that the elites took care of themselves and reception of immigrants, which was formed by 20.34%, as well as with the sub-category of the ideology that the elites appear unsuccessful in political administration, as it was formed by 38.98% in the United States.

### 4.3 Analysis of the Type of Posts

The types of posts were encoded on Excel and the percentage of using the image, text, video, text and video combined, text and image combined for each sub-category was determined and then these sub-categories were combined under the original category specified in this study. In the evaluation of the categories at the level of the types of posts on Facebook and Twitter, the analysis process was done separately, due to the fact that

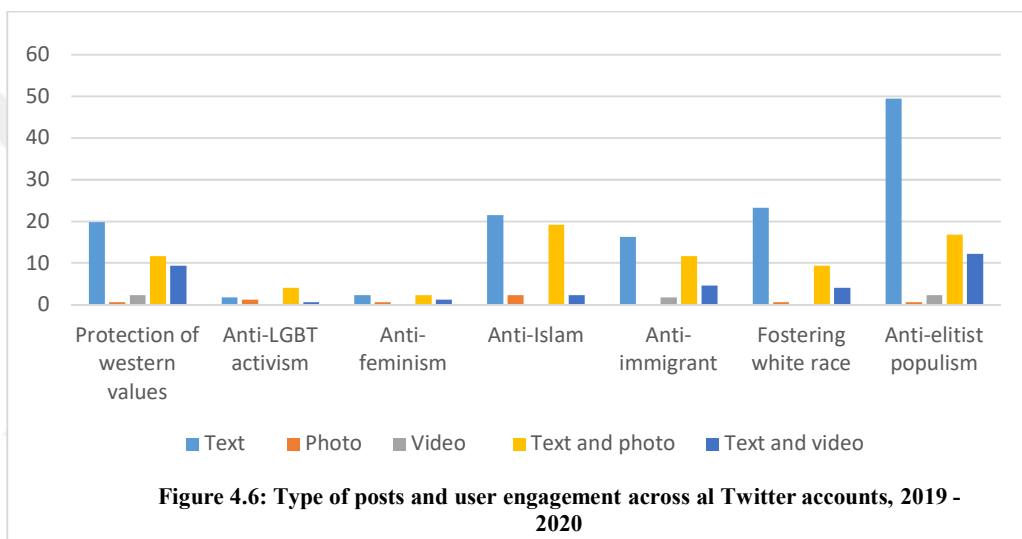
some categories were not included on Facebook, such as anti-feminist, and this category was included on Twitter.

Figure 4.5 in Facebook analysis shows that the highest percentage in the use of text and image combined in the category Protection of Western culture, which was 50.88%, followed by that use in the category of fighting immigrants, which was 50.19%, and then in the anti-elitist populist category, which was also 43.86%. The use of the image shows the second largest percentage in terms of use in all categories, but its percentage is equal to the text in the anti-Islam category, which is 5.26%. The text, video, image, text and video combined are also equal in the LGBT category of 1.16%. (See Figure 4.5).



The use of video constituted the third highest rate of use for groups, but it was equal to use with the text in two categories: fighting immigrants, which accounted for 2.92%, but the video was of little use in combating Islam, which was 0.58%. As for the use of text and video combined, the percentage of its use was higher than the text in the categories, but was equal to the text in the category of Western values protection, which was 11.69%. In the category of promoting white race, extremist groups did not focus on using the text, which was 0.00%.

In the analysis of tweets, Figure 4.6 shows that the percentage of using the text is the highest in the categories, as it reached 49.42% in the anti-elitist populist category and 23.26% in the white race promotion class, while the use of text is equal to the text and image combined in the anti-feminism category, which reached 2.32%. It comes in second place in terms of using the type of participation in all categories of text and image combined, which was the highest percentage in the anti-elitist populist category with a percentage of 16.86% (see Figure 4.6).

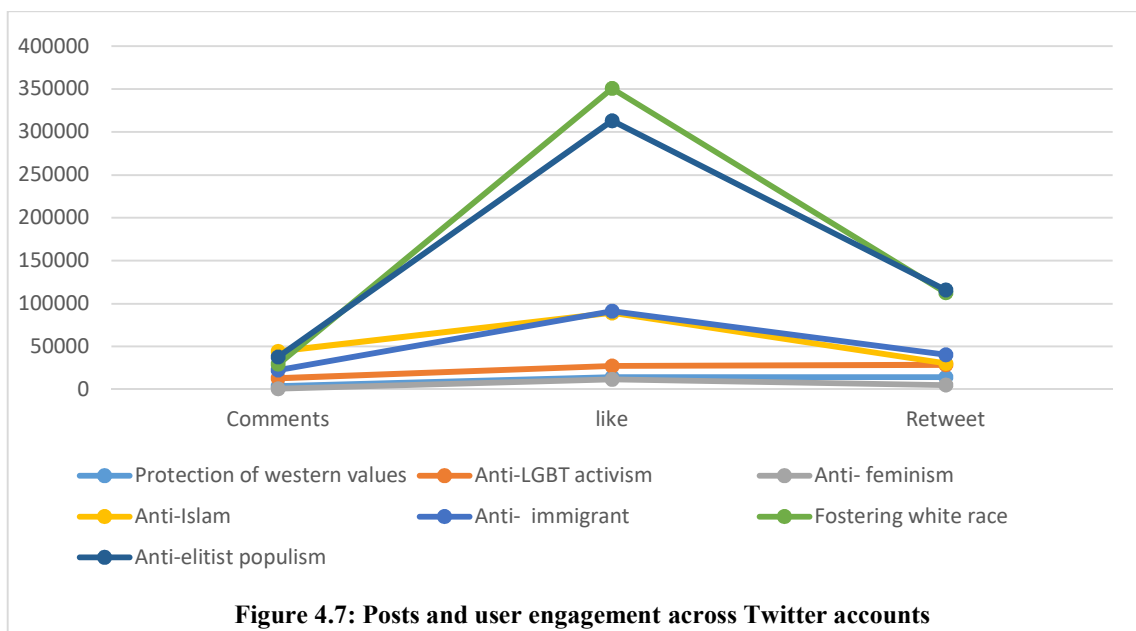


Extremist groups have used text and video combined on Twitter, which is ranked third in terms of use, but most of its uses are in the anti-populist elite category, which is 49.42%, while text and video combined use is equal to the use of images in the anti-Islam category, which is 2.32%. Figure 6 shows that the use of the image is more than the video in some categories, but the focus was not on using the image how to fight immigrants, which accounted for 0.00%. As for the use of video in tweets, it was not widely used in the anti-feminism, anti-LGBT, and anti-Islam categories, and in the white race promotion category, which was 0.00%.

#### 4.4 Interactions of the Content Received

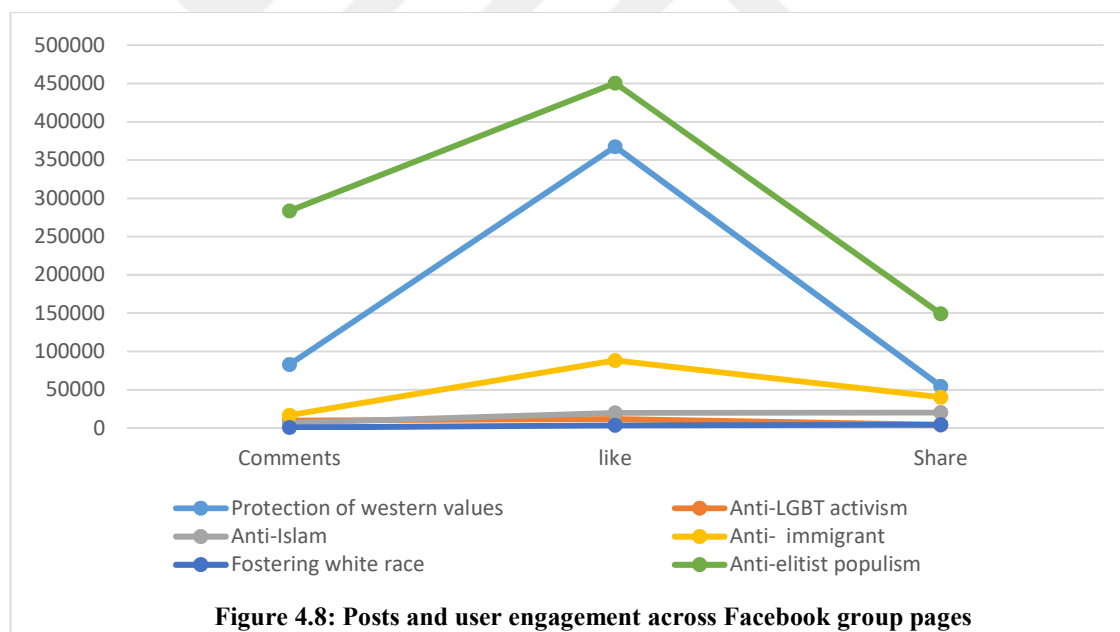
An assessment of the extent to which users interact on the Facebook posts and tweets of extremist groups showed that it generated an uproar over every ideology that extremists are trying to foster on Facebook and Twitter. This evaluation included the number of likes, the number of comments, the number of posts, and the number of retweeting of the data collected and analyzed. Although the Twitter interface differs from the Facebook interface, the analyzes were collected based on the topics of the categories identified in this study, because the aim of this study is to identify the importance of the topics suggested by extremist groups on Facebook and Twitter for users.

The number of likes on the topic of promoting white race in Twitter shows that it is one of the topics that the users are most interested in. As for the topic of combating feminism, it is one of the least interactive topics as shown in Figure 4.7. As for the anti-elite populist issue, it appears that it is one of the second most interactive topics on Twitter that are against the elite and parties hostile to the extreme right, while on the topics of anti-Islam and anti-immigration they show a similarity in interaction in terms of the number of likes, but they differ in terms of the number of retweeting and comments. (See Figure 4.7)



As shown in Figure 4.7, the topic of the LGBT fight represents moderate to low levels of user interactions on Twitter, as it has emerged more in the Twitter retweeting of transgender activities in public libraries and participation in Democrat celebrations. As for the issue of protecting Western values, which comes in its penultimate place in terms of total interactions on Twitter, but it has emerged in retweeting issues of cultural diversity and independence from international agreements.

The anti-elitist populist topic got the most number of user interaction on Facebook posts, as it shows the highest level of interactions that exceeded the 450 thousand, as shown in Figure 4.8. While the issue of protecting Western values comes at the second level in terms of users' interest in this issue, as for the issue of anti-immigrants, which comes at the third level in terms of the number of users' interactions to this topic (see Figure 4.8).



At looking to the topic anti-Islam, which is at the fourth level in terms of user interest and interactions on this topic. While the topic of Anti-LGBT activism activity comes at the penultimate level in terms of user responses to transsexual activities, while the topic of fostering white race comes at the last level by users' interest in this topic on Facebook.



## 5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The extremist groups exploit social media to enhance their ideologies for all groups of society, and the posts of these groups carry various meanings, either implicitly or explicitly. This thesis examined the existence of the ideologies of extreme right in the posts of public Facebook groups and Twitter accounts within the contexts of the United States, Britain and Australia.

In particular, the qualitative content analysis employed here assessed the prevalence of the different categories of extremist ideologies shared by extremist groups on Facebook and Twitter. In addition, the forms of posts shared by the extremist groups and the level of user interaction they generated were coded. After that, the posts were analyzed at the macro level based on the research questions proposed in this thesis, where an in-depth look was taken to understand the intended meaning of the publications, and the topics that generated the most noise among the users were evaluated based on the reaction, the number of likes, the number of comments and the number of retweeting.

The data on the encoding tool was categorized and coded into seven major categories proposed in this thesis. These categories were divided into subcategories and analysis is based on them, and then the final results for each research question are presented. In the first research question, the results of analyzing the sub-topics of the posts showed the extent of the interest of the extremist groups in promoting and posting the topics of the sub-categories on Facebook and Twitter, where the results were percentages for each sub-category.

The sub-ideologies of extremism most commonly shared by extremist groups on Facebook are the protection of Western values and anti-elitist populism. The subcategories of the category of protection of Western values, were mentioned at the rates of 64,91% + 23,98%

+ 39,77% of all Facebook posts. This is the highest category of extremist ideology which occurred on Facebook posts compared to others. Similarly, the subcategories of the category of anti-elitist populism were coded at the rates of 52.05% +15.20% +33.92% of all Facebook posts.

The extreme right groups' interest in the topic of anti-immigration on Facebook was average, as migration was more related to the issue of cultural diversity and to failed political elites that deal with immigrants more than the indigenous population. Moreover, the subject of illegal immigration and xenophobia was one of the most focused aspects on the issue of anti-immigrants. As for the issue of promoting the white race and opposing LGBT activities, it was of varying degrees of interest, but it is one of the few topics that the extreme right has focused on Facebook.

The interest of extremist groups on Twitter differs from that of Facebook in terms of publishing ideologies. Where the results showed that most of the extremist groups' focus on Twitter on the anti-elite populist issue in their tweets, most of which were addressed to politicians who are not indigenous people came to the country and got government positions such as, Ilhan Omar and Sadiq Khan. As for the issue of anti-Islam and the protection of Western values, they come in close proportions in the degree of interest, but they remain with less focus and attention than anti-elites.

Extremist groups tend to reinforce the white race in their tweets, but this topic has less attention than anti-Islam issues and the protection of Western values. As for the issue of anti-immigrants, the results show that it is spreading less than the topic of promoting white race on Twitter. Given the issues of anti-LGBT and anti-feminist activities, they come at the last level in terms of posting tweets, which indicates the lack of interest of extremist groups in these two topics.

Besides, in analyzing the ideologies of the sub-groups of the populist and anti-elitist groups and the protection of Western values on Facebook and Twitter, which differ from country

to country, according to the aspirations of the extreme right in each country. The analysis on Twitter showed that the extreme right groups in Britain work largely on all extremist ideologies, for example: the extremist groups call for the importance of the sovereignty and independence of the state, as Britain got the highest percentage, which is 17.02%, following the vote to leave the European Union, On the other hand, there was no mention of this ideology in Australia or even the United States.

In the analysis of Facebook posts of the ideologies of sub-groups based on the two categories of protecting Western and anti-elitist values of extremist groups for each country separately. It was noted that there is a discrepancy between the percentages of these ideologies for each country, for example, in the ideology of protecting national identity it was higher in Britain, which is 77.55%, in contrast the ideology of multiculturalism was the highest in Australia, which is 33.33%. Successful political administration The United States got the highest rate of 38.98%. This indicates something, as it indicates that extremist groups have different ideologies and beliefs in each country that they are working to spread through the Facebook platform.

The second research question relates to assessing the forms of post The second research question concerns the evaluation of the type of publication and the extent of the interaction of users on the extreme right topics on Facebook and Twitter. The results showed that extremist groups tend to publish the largest number of text and image combined on Facebook Which is 39.18%, either in the use of the image, which comes at the second level in terms of publishing in the extreme right groups in the rate of 27.49%. As for the use of the video, which constitutes the third level in terms of publishing, while the use of text and video combined comes in the penultimate level, which means that the text is of little use on Facebook.

In Twitter, the text is one of the most popular types of posts used to spread the ideologies of the extreme right in the rate of 56.98%, while the use of text and image combined comes at the second level in terms of use which in rate 25.58%. The results also showed that the extremist groups' use of text and video combined comes at the third level in promoting their

ideologies on Twitter, but in the use of images and video Which comes at the lowest levels of use in terms of the percentage of posting on Twitter.

It should be noted that user interactions create a buzz on the topics posted by the extreme right on Facebook and Twitter. As a result, the results showed on Twitter that users are increasingly interacting with topics related to white race and political elites as shown in figure 5. With the New Zealand attack, the El Paso incident, and their association with Muslim and foreign immigrants, it has made users interact closely on immigration issues and it's the cause of terrorist incidents and even criticism of Muslim immigration and their religious beliefs.

The interaction of users on extreme right Facebook topics differs from Twitter in terms of the number of likes and comments. Based on the results of this study, it becomes apparent that the topics of political elites, multiculturalism and the sovereignty of the country come at the highest interactions on Facebook as shown in figure 6. In addition to the issue of immigration and refugees, it tops interactions of anti-Islam, anti-LGBT activities and white race issues.

It is clear from the results summarized above that extremist right-wing ideologies still exist on Facebook and Twitter, and retweeting and reposting are generating greater interaction and increasing interest from the users. Moreover, the analysis on the form of social media content revealed that extremist groups make use of images and videos illustrated in addition to text with the aim of reaching out to a wide global audience. Hence, it can be concluded that social media remains as vibrant platforms full of content which fuels racism and hatred.

### **5.1 Limitation of the Study**

Not all studies are without shortcomings, and this study is no exception. Although there are programs that analyze the text automated, they were not used due to the difficulty of their

use and the time needed to train to use them. Therefore, qualitative analysis was performed manually in this study. The downside of this method is that it takes a lot of time in the analysis process, in addition to that sometimes there may be a misunderstanding of the intended meaning of a post when analyzing it.

Finally, due to privacy restrictions on some pages, only public pages are analyzed and closed groups are ignored. Moreover, the sample in this study for the extreme right groups may not represent the viewpoint and opinion of all supporters of the extreme right, this may not represent a weakness, but the opinions and statements of the extreme right groups on Facebook and Twitter remain interesting, especially at the present time when the means of communication are forming Social center for communication and expression of opinions of people.

## **5.2 Future Research**

The mobilization methods for extreme right groups differ between online platforms, due to the legal regulations that each platform imposes on harmful speech. Future research could expand a comparative study of cross-border extremist groups to other platforms, such as: 8chan, Instagram, and TikTok. Moreover, future research could focus on how terrorists use social media content to spread extremist ideology, meaning focusing on the individual experience on the Internet. With regard to defining the framework of the study, future studies could combine analysis of post content with analysis of user comments on posts by extremist groups.

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