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Transnational cooperation within the European Identitarian movement

A case-study of the Dutch Identitair Verzet

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Abstract

In Europe, several groups of far right, action-oriented, young identitarian activists have been active for several years. They identify as the Generation Identity ‘family’ and share the same ideology, symbolism, terminology, and protest action tactics. Some of these organizations have been under investigation by the authorities in their respective countries, and their ideology has been used as a motive by multiple right wing terrorists in the recent past. Because organizations are more likely to use contentious tactics when they cooperate with other organizations, this study investigates cooperation within the identitarian movement, and does so by way of a case study into the Dutch Identitair Verzet. The constructed research question reads: In what way does the Dutch Identitair Verzet cooperate with the European identitarian organizations in France, Germany, Austria, Denmark and Italy? It seeks to fill the gap of research on cooperation between identitarian movement organizations and add to the body of research on cooperation between far right non-party organizations in general. It does so by building on literature on the far right, social movements and (transnational) cooperation between social movement organizations. The data for this study is collected through Twitter, the organizations’ websites, newspaper articles and government reports, and is coded according to a set of categories based on Hall (1995) and Ackerman & Bale (2012). It is found that the most occurring form of cooperation is rhetorical cooperation and that cooperation efforts are predominantly initiated by Identitair Verzet. The results are explained by use of collective action, resource mobilization, and political opportunity theory, after which it is argued that cooperation between Identitair Verzet and the other organizations is mainly of rhetorical nature, occurs through Twitter, is initiated by Identitair Verzet and is dependent on other organizations’ activity because of Identitair Verzet’s small scale and slightly divergent identity.

Abbreviations

GI – Generation Identity/Génération Identitaire/Generation Identitaer/Generazione Identitaria

GID – Generation Identity Denmark (i.e. Generation Identitaer)

GIF – Generation Identity France (i.e. Génération Identitaire)

GII – Generation Identity Italy (i.e. Generazione Identitaria)

IBD – Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland

IBÖ – Identitäre Bewegung Österreich

IDV – Identitair Verzet

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1. Introduction

In the fall of 2012 a video titled 'Déclaration de guerre' appeared on YouTube. In this video – which translates to 'Declaration of war' – multiple young people spoke up about what they think are the biggest problems of their generation. The video is filmed in a militant fashion and the problems that are addressed mainly regard liberalism, globalism, multiculturalism and Islamism. The video ends with a phrase that sounds like a warning; "Don't deceive yourselves: this is not a mere manifesto, it's a declaration of war!" (Zúquete, 2018, pp. 27-28).

The video was made by the French organization 'Génération Identitaire' (GI), an organization that was founded just months before the uploading of the video. The group mainly consists of young adults and it emerges from former French organizations like Les Jeunes Identitaire and Bloc Identitaire. It builds on the ideology of the Nouvelle Droite and seeks to preserve the French and European culture and identity, and to fight influences that they perceive as harmful to that identity. Shortly after the publication of the declaration de guerre, identitarian movements in Germany and Austria were founded almost simultaneously. These movements, called Die Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland (IBD) and Die Identitäre Bewegung Österreich (IBÖ), although separate organizations, are intertwined and jointly published a YouTube video of their own called Zukunft für Europa (Future for Europe) (Zúquete, 2018, pp. 74-75). This video can be seen as a Germanic equivalent of the declaration de guerre and claims the group is ready for a new 'Reconquista'. The Reconquista – Spanish for reconquering – refers to the extrusion of Muslims by Christian kingdoms on the Iberian peninsula starting in the 8th century A.D., which brings a violent component to the movement's ideas (Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland, 2019c).

After the founding of the identitarian movements in Germany and Austria, other European countries soon followed. Currently there are identitarian organizations in at least France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Denmark, Ireland, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Switzerland, Belgium, Poland, Serbia and the Netherlands (Hope not Hate, 2019). All these groups appear unified by using similar names, which contain a conjugation of the word 'identity' and are translated into the language of the country of origin, and by using the same logo, namely their organization's name and an encircled Greek Lambda in black and yellow. The encircled Lambda is a reference to the Spartan army, of which the soldiers painted the Lambda on their shields. The Spartans are seen as heroes by the identitarian movements because they fought off the Persians when they tried to invade Europe.

The only group that deviates from the others as regards the use of the Lambda is the Dutch Identitair Verzet (IDV). They use the Greek Omega (in black and yellow) as their main logo, but do depict the Lambda during protests and other manifestations. IDV was already founded in October of 2012,

shortly after the founding of Génération Identitaire and almost simultaneously with the German and Austrian organizations. They mostly direct their protest actions at mosques and Islamic schools, in the same fashion the other (prominent) identitarian movements do. IDV has been seen attending large identitarian protests in for example Berlin, Paris and London, but it's not clear to what extent it really interacts and cooperates with the other identitarian movements.

The aim of this study is to indicate what forms of interaction and/or cooperation exist between the Dutch Identitair Verzet and the largest organizations from the Generation Identity network. To this end the following research question has been constructed:

In what way does the Dutch Identitair Verzet cooperates with the European identitarian organizations in France, Germany, Austria, Denmark and Italy?

The ideology that drives the identitarian movement has proven to be dangerous in the past. One of their ideological cornerstones for instance is the great replacement theory. This theory, that was popularized by the French author Renaud Camus in his book 'Le Grand Remplacement' (2011), states that the white race is being replaced through immigration and race mixing, and that the elites are facilitating and favouring this replacement. The Great Replacement is also the title of the 74 page manifesto in which Brenton Tarrant explained his motives and which he published right before he attacked two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand and killed over 50 people (Tarrant, 2019). The theory also was the main ideological driver behind the terrorist attacks in El Paso, Texas and Poway, California which had a combined death toll of 23 (New York Times, 2019).

The identitarian movement as well as Identitair Verzet have refrained from using violence to spread their ideas up to this moment. Nevertheless, the organizations in Germany and Austria have been under investigation for respectively being an extremist organization and a criminal organization (Al Jazeera, 2018; NOS, 2019). Furthermore, researching the interaction and cooperation between these organizations is important because organizations that cooperate or regularly interact with other organizations are more likely to use contentious tactics (Hall, 1995). This is relevant to security professionals as to predict the (potential) future threat of certain organizations.

Research on social movements, social movement organizations and cooperation within and between these is plentiful in academic literature. Collaborative efforts of engaging in joint planning and actions by protest groups and organizations within a movement have been documented extensively (Beamish & Luebbers, 2009). Such literature exists on for instance the nuclear disarmament movement (Barkan 1979, Benford 1993), environmentalist groups (Schaffer, 2000), feminists (Ferree & Hess, 1994), and labor movements (Fantasia & Voss, 2004). Despite the fact the far right can be seen as a social movement as well (Gattinara & Pirro, 2019; Caiani & della Porta, 2018), there's

relatively little literature on (transnational) cooperation on the far right. Despite the body of literature expanding in recent years, most of the research within this field is on (transnational) cooperation between radical right political parties or between these parties and far right (extremist) organizations (Caiani, 2018; Mares, 2006; Macklin, 2013). Little is on (transnational) intergroup cooperation of far right (extremist) organizations (but see Caiani & Kröll, 2015 and Veilleux-Lepage & Archambault, 2019 for examples), and within this small body of literature there's hardly any work on Dutch right wing (extremist) organizations nor on the identitarian movement. Building on literature on the far right, (transnational) social movements and (transnational) cooperation by activist and extremist groups, this study seeks to fill this gap.

In order to do so, data on Identitair Verzet's interaction and cooperation with the other identitarian organizations is collected through Twitter, LexisNexis and government reports. All moments of interaction and/or cooperation between Identitair Verzet and other identitarian movements are recorded and categorized based on social movement research by Hall (1995) and Ackerman & Bale (2012). The overall findings are explained by using collective identity, resource mobilization and political opportunity theory.

To give insight into the context of this study, the origin, development and current state of the identitarian movement are outlined in the following chapter two. The ideological development from the French 'Nouvelle Droite' to identitarianism is described, followed by a description of the different groups that are within the scope of this study and in what ways they are alike or different. Subsequently, in the third chapter, first the existing literature on social movements, (transnational) cooperation, and the far right will be reviewed. It is explained how this study adds to the body of literature on these topics and how it fills a research gap. Based on the reviewed literature on cooperation, the three social movement theories of collective identity, resource mobilization, and political opportunity are highlighted. In chapter four the methodology of this study is outlined. It clarifies why case study as a strategy, Identitair Verzet as case, and context analysis as a method were selected and how they were conducted. Furthermore, it addresses the limitations and describes how the validity and reliability of this study are ensured. In the fifth chapter the results are presented and analysed. First, this is done by way of categorization based on the findings. Subsequently, the social movement theories are applied to the results, whereby it is argued that the collective identity and resource mobilization theories are most capable of explaining cooperation between Identitair Verzet and the other groups. In the sixth and final chapter the findings of this study are concluded and discussed, and the added value of this study to the existing body of literature and the possibilities for future research are addressed.

2. The Identitarian Movement

The identitarian movement is a European network of organizations which at this point in time already encompasses at least 13 countries. The organizations are predominantly composed of internet-savvy, militant young men and women, and possess the marketing skills to acquire a large amount of attention with relatively simple actions. They became recognizable through their street- and media-based repertoire of street protests, flash mobs, occupations, high quality banners, media campaigns, vlogs, livestreams, meme's, and their unified appearance by use of the Greek Lambda in black and yellow (Zúquete, 2018). Their ethnocultural pluralist ideology is controversial and was conceptualized by Bjørge & Ravndal as ethnic nationalism, which is placed in a somewhat grey area between the democratic radical right and the violent extreme right (Bjørge & Ravndal, 2019). In this chapter it is outlined how the identitarian ideology developed from the French 'New Right' and how this eventually led to the founding of the first European Lambda group, Génération Identitaire. Subsequently, the formation and magnitude of the German, Austrian, Italian and Danish groups, as well as the international Defend Europe campaigns are portrayed. Finally, Identitair Verzet's characteristics and how they compare to the other groups are described.

2.1. The 'New Right'

The international Generation Identity network de facto started with the founding of the French Génération Identitaire, but the movement was not born in a vacuum. The large foundation of the movement started being built in the 1960s with the emergence of the Nouvelle Droite ('New Right') in France. This meta-political movement is a counter-revolutionary school of thought and originated from a synthesis of the ideological currents of the Conservative Revolution and the New Left (Bar-On, Transnationalism and the French Nouvelle Droite, 2011). Influential individuals regarding the foundation of this movement are Alain de Benoist and Dominique Venner, both ultranationalist thinkers who sympathised with Nazi collaborators, the Vichy-regime and the preservation of French-Algeria. In 1968, Benoist and Venner, together with Pierre Vial, Jean-Claude Valla and about forty other ultra-nationalists founded the Groupement de recherche et d'études pour la civilisation européenne (GRECE, Research and Study Group for European Civilization), the ND's principal think-tank (Bar-On, 2011). The aim of this first de facto embodiment of the Nouvelle Droite was four-fold:

first, to reorient the ultra-nationalist French political milieu, which was pro-French Algeria and had lingering sympathies for the pro-Nazi Vichy regime, towards greater doctrinal sophistication and the transcendence of internecine conflicts between various ultra-nationalist tendencies; second, to reject the right's dominant parliamentary and extraparliamentary methods of seizing power; third, to regain cultural power from the liberal-left by seizing the 'laboratories of thought' throughout Europe in a right-wing Gramscian spirit, and to restore the credibility of a revolutionary right-wing milieu battered by the excesses of fascist race laws and the Holocaust; and, finally, to rethink the dominant

ideological legacy of the ultra-nationalist right, which tended to be based on ethnic, biological or racist conceptions of the nation, and to be associated with militaristic expansionism (Bar-On, 2011, pp. 203-204).

With respect to the ethnoculturalist concept, the ND is thus distinct from identitarianism, since ethnoculturalism is the driving force of identitarianism, while the ND has largely abandoned this concept. Nevertheless, the ND exercised great influence on the identitarian “preference for cultural combat, rejection of universalism, embrace of differentialism, and overall critique of a system captured by a disintegrating liberal capitalism” and thereby laid the theoretical ground for identitarianism (Zúquete, 2018, p. 11).

An identitarian strain developed in the late 1980s when a group of intellectuals, as a dissident current of GRECE, split from the ND by developing parallel interpretations of response to the sorrowful state of Europe by refocusing the discourse on the ethnic dimension (Idem, p. 12-13). Pioneer and advocate of this identitarian strain was the writer and political scientist Guillaume Faye, who had spent years as an important figure in the ND. In 2001 he materialized his restraint from the ND when his book ‘Why We Fight: Manifesto of the European Renaissance’ was published. In this work he advocates ethnocentrism and addresses “the necessity to defend the biological and cultural identity of one’s people” (Faye, 2001, p. 134), leading to it being considered the key work for the twenty-first century identitarians.

2.2. Jeunesses Identitaires, Bloc Identitaire and Les Identitaires

The restraint from the Nouvelle Droite was not limited to the intellectual and theoretical aspect, but eventually led to the emergence of the young, practical and action-oriented groups who represent the direct-action arm of identitarianism and of which the French Génération Identitaire is the most famous example and the pioneering organization. This latter group, that was founded in 2012, was the newest actor in a political network that emerged in 2002 with the forming of the Jeunesses Identitaires (Identitarian Youths) (Zúquete, 2018). The Jeunesses Identitaires was founded as an identitarian youth movement by former Unité Radicale member Philipp Vardon and in 2013 was consolidated by and incorporated in the Bloc Identitaire, which also consisted of former members of the Unité Radicale (Radical Union), like Fabrice Robert. The Unité Radicale was an overtly racist and anti-semitic political group that was founded in 1998 and disbanded by the French government on the 6th of august, 2002 after one of their members made a failed attempt to assassinate the French president Jacques Chirac (Reuters, 2002). Furthermore, both Roberts and Vardon had been members of the neo-Nazi punk band Fraction Hexagone (Southern Poverty Law Centre, 2018). With their founding in 2003 Bloc Identitaire announced their mission was to save their regional, national and European identity, with which they became the centre of an activist network that was already

referred to as the identitarian movement back then. Pursuing this mission, they transformed themselves into a political party but remodelled as an association in August of 2016 again, renaming themselves 'Les Identitaires'. During their time as a political party, new youth wings were established as successors of the Jeunesses Identitaires. First there was Une Autre Jeunesse (Another Youth) and in 2012 they were replaced by Génération Identitaire (Generation Identity). The success of the latter was one of the reasons for the Bloc Identitaire to remodel as an association. As a renewed association Les Identitaires aims to be "a centre for agitation and training" and "the launch pad of the main identity offensives" (Les Identitaires, 2016).

2.3. *Génération Identitaire*

As Bloc Identitaire's newest youth wing, Génération Identitaire first became widely known when they published their video 'déclaration de guerre' on YouTube on the 4th of October, 2012. This high quality video shows an array of young faces who are denouncing the legacy of the French leftists of 1968. They speak out against modern society, multiculturalism and globalism. They state that they are ready for any battle, see themselves as modern day Spartans, and end the video with a declaration of war. See below for some examples of 'left-wing social engineering' that the Génération Identitaire members in the video believe have undermined the foundations of French Society:

We are the generation of ethnic fracture, total failure of coexistence, and forced mixing of the races.

We are the generation doubly punished: Condemned to pay into a social system so generous with strangers it becomes unsustainable for our own people. Our generation are the victims of the May '68'ers who wanted to liberate themselves from tradition, from knowledge and authority in education.

But they only accomplished to liberate themselves from their responsibilities.

We are sick and tired of your cowardice.

You are from the years of post-war prosperity, retirement benefits, S.O.S Racism and "diversity," sexual liberation and a bag of rice from Bernard Kouchner.

We are 25 percent unemployment, social debt, multicultural collapse and an explosion of anti-white racism.

We are broken families, and young French soldiers dying in Afghanistan.

You won't buy us with a condescending look,
a state-paid job of misery and a pat on the shoulder.

We don't need your youth-policies. Youth IS our policy.

Don't think this is simply a manifesto. It is a declaration of war.

You are of yesterday, we are of tomorrow. (Bloc Identitaire, 2013)

Shortly after publishing this video, on the 20th of October, at least 60 of Génération Identitaire's members occupied a mosque in the city of Poitiers, France. They climbed the roof of the building and dropped down large banners saying "732, Génération Identitaire" and "Construction de mosque, immigration: referendum!", while waving Lambda flags, igniting fireworks, and singing

songs/statements in a hooligan like fashion (France 3 Poitou-Charentes, 2012). The protest and chosen target were very symbolic because the mosque is near to the site where a famous historical European battle took place. On the 10th of October 732 A.D. Charles Martel defended France from a Muslim invasion by the hand of Abdul Rahman Al Ghafiqi near the cities of Poitiers and Tours in the Battle of Tours. This victory by Martel over the Sacareens “gave a decisive check to the career of Arab conquest in Western Europe, saved Christendom from Islam, preserved the relics of ancient, and the germs of civilization; and re-established the old superiority of the Indo-European over the Semitic family of mankind” (Creasy, 1848, p. 524). With these historical facts in mind, the occupation by Génération Identitaire was intended to remind the French people of the sacrifices that were made in the past to prevent the Islamization of the country/continent.

Such unconventional and spectacular protests are characteristic for the current identitarian movement. Its members “see the streets as their headquarters, the Internet as a galvanizing weapon, and they rely on the hermeneutic power of shock to awaken the lethargic consciences of Europe’s people” (Zúquete, 2018, p. 38). Besides these street protests, Génération Identitaire started organizing annual training camps, which they call ‘Summer university’, from their founding in 2012 onwards. These camps exist of physical and combat training, ideological and literary enrichment, and networking activities. Over the past years these camps have attracted more and more international identitarians, among who are f.i. the Dutch, German, Austrian, Italian and Danish (Defend Europa, 2018; NRC, 2019).

In the seven years since their founding Génération Identitaire has maintained to be the largest identitarian youth movement of Europe, with a current (self-claimed) member base of over 2.000, and has become an example and inspiration for identitarians in a variety of European countries. In late 2018 the organization was the subject of controversy when Al-Jazeera published a documentary in which one of their (undercover) journalists joined the Lille chapter of Génération Identitaire. Through this documentary some of their members became apparent racists, denigrating black people and Muslims through jokes and sharing their intentions of attacking people of Arab descent (Al Jazeera English, 2018). In August of 2019 three of Génération Identitaire’s members were sentenced to six months in prison for their role in the Defend Europe campaign in the French Alps (on which is elaborated on further on in this chapter). The prosecutors alleged that their actions in this campaign could have been mistaken for a police manoeuvre and charged the members with ‘exercising activities in conditions that could create confusion with a public function’ (France 24, 2019). They were of the opinion that their actions of stopping migrants at the border passage, and refusing them access to the country, could hardly be distinguished from official police measures by the migrants. The final sentences matched the charges of the prosecutors (Idem).

2.4. Die Identitäre Bewegung

Shortly after Génération Identitaire's exposure to the world, similar organizations emerged in Germanic central Europe. On December 12th of 2012 three Austrian students named Martin Sellner, Alexander Markovics and Patrick Lenart created the Identitäre Bewegung Österreich (Identitarian Movement of Austria, IBÖ). A few months prior to the founding of the IBÖ a group of university students in Vienna had already founded the Wiens Identitäre Richtung (Vienna's Identitarian Direction, WIR), of which Sellner was also a member. In November 2012, Markovics and Sellner, as representatives of WIR, visited a Génération Identitaire convention in France, which provided the opportunity of networking and inspired Sellner and Markovics to establish an Austrian counterpart to GI. Almost simultaneously in Germany the Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland (Identitarian Movement Germany, IBD) was created by lead of Nils Altmieks (Zúquete, 2018). Just like their French counterparts both the German and Austrian organizations have founders with questionable history. Martin Sellner of the IBÖ for example has in the past been forced to 100 hours of social work at a Jewish cemetery for putting stickers containing swastikas and 'Arische Jugend' (Aryan Youth) on a synagogue in Baden bei Wien (Heute, 2019). Sellner is also known to have had close relations with Austrian neo-Nazi groups, helping them disrupt liberal gatherings and attending Wehrmacht memorials (Huffington Post, 2016). On IBD's side the initial leader Nils Altmieks has been a member of the Heimattreuen Deutschen Jugend (Homeland loyal German Youth, HDJ) in his youth. The HDJ was a German neo-Nazi youth group, that was banned because of similarities with the Hitler Jugend (Die Zeit, 2017).

The Austrian and German identitarian organizations are separate but intertwined groups and they jointly released the video 'Zukunft für Europa' (Future for Europe) in 2014. This video can be seen as the German equivalent of the French declaration of war and is very much alike, since the appearing members address the same societal issues (mainly globalism and multi-culturalism) as the defects of current day Europe (Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland, 2016b). The IBÖ and IBD repeatedly use the term 'Reconquista' to frame their battle against multi-culturalism. This term refers to the extrusion of Muslims by Christian kingdoms on the Iberian peninsula starting in the 8th century A.D., as part of which the Battle of Tours can also be seen. This period in history lasted for over 700 years and was accompanied by large bloodsheds, which gives the use of the term a violent component to the ideas of the identitarian movement.

Also similar to the French identitarians, both the IBD and the IBÖ attract a lot of media attention through spectacular and cutting-edge protest actions. For their first large exemplary action in

February 2013 nine members of the IBÖ entered the Votive Church in Vienna, which at the time was occupied by asylum seekers. The refugees were dissatisfied with the Austrian policy towards refugees and announced not to leave the church until their demands, which consisted of free housing, free education and the right to free movement, were met. The Austrian identitarians entered the church in order to “occupy the occupation” and stated not to leave until the asylum seekers left, because they would not tolerate the abuse of asylum. After a few hours the identitarians were persuaded to leave by the church’s Father, after the police had informed them approximately 30 leftist counter activists were on their way (Die Presse, 2013). Likewise, but not until August 2016, the IBD carried out an eye-catching protest for their first action when they occupied the famous Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. Using professional equipment, fifteen members climbed the monumental gate and dropped banners stating “Sichere Grenzen – Sichere Zukunft” (Secured borders – secured future) and “Grenzen Schützen, Leben Retten” (Close the borders, save lives) (Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland, 2016a).

Both the IBÖ and IBD have been constantly growing in the last 7 years. The Austrian organisation currently has seven regional factions besides their national organization, have over 600 supporters and around 300 active members, according to their own website (Identitäre Bewegung Österreich, 2019). Their German companions have a total of 16 regional factions besides their national organization and an estimated 600 active members (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, 2019). Both the IBD and the IBÖ have been under investigation by the national government in their home country for respectively being an extremist organization and being a criminal organization (Al Jazeera, 2018; NOS, 2019).

2.5. Generazione Identitaria

Although the intertwined German-Austrian Identitäre Bewegung is the largest European identitarian Lambda group, apart from its French originators, there is also a relatively larger presence in Italy. The country’s Generazione Identitaria has a member count that is estimated at several hundreds and the organization has factions in Milan, Rome, Turin, Bergamo, Venice and Sardinia. Besides these current existing factions, at least four new factions are under construction, among which one in Sicily (L'Espresso, 2018; Generazione Identitaria, 2019). The founding dates from 2012, shortly after the publishing of the French ‘declaration of war’, which was what inspired the five Italian founders (Zúquete, 2018). The first of their actions that provided a large amount of media attention was putting a large burqa over a statue in Bergamo. By this action they wanted to show the public what they fear for the future of their daughters and wives if Italy doesn’t act upon the growing influence of Islam (Hope not Hate, 2019).

The French, German, Austrian and Italian members of the European identitarian movement seem more interconnected than the other groups. These four organizations actively mention each other as the members of the Generation Identity/European identitarian 'family' and link to each other's webpages and social media accounts on that of their own. Furthermore they actively cooperated in two large operations of the campaign named 'Defend Europe'.

2.6. Defend Europe

The Defend Europe campaign started in the summer of 2017 and is fully aimed at stopping immigrants from entering Europe. In May of 2017 GI/IB members blocked a Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) ship called the Aquarius, that was ported in the Sicilian port of Catania, Italy (The Washington Post, 2017). The Aquarius is a vessel that has been used by MSF and SOS Méditerranée to conduct search-and-rescue missions on the Mediterranean sea from 2016 to 2018. During these missions they actively searched for migrants that started the crossing from Libya to Italy and were in need of help (BBC, 2018). The identitarians were opposed to these missions and after their first nautical blockade, the Austrian, German, French and Italian groups jointly started a fundraiser under the name of 'Defend Europe'. The fundraiser was aimed at acquiring a large vessel in order to more effectively stop what they call "the criminal smuggler madness in the Mediterranean" (Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland, 2019b). Despite the measures that were taken by banks and by Paypal, under pressure of left-wing activists and NGO's, to stop the fundraiser from being successful, the campaign managed to collect over 220.000 USD and chartered a ship called the C-star (Zúquete, 2018). They used this ship on the Mediterranean to hinder the search-and-rescue missions of the Aquarius by trying to block their passage over the Mediterranean from Libya to Italy for a short period, which eventually contributed to the halting of these missions. Although the campaign was a failure from various points of view, f.i. because they were denied access to ports by several governments, it was deemed a great success by the identitarians, mainly because it generated a massive amount of media attention (Froio, 2018).

Because of the perceived success of the campaign it was followed up by second mission called Defend Europe Alps Mission, which focused on the French-Italian border crossing at Nevache. This border crossing is known to be a popular crossing point among illegal immigrants and it was the aim of the identitarians to stop this. The mission was planned by the French and Italian groups, but invited and present were also activists from the German, Austrian, Hungarian and Danish groups. The group of over 100 activists had four wheel drive vehicles with Defend Europe stickers and helicopters at their disposal (Southern, 2018). Eventually, three French identitarians were sentenced to six months in jail for erecting a blockade on the border to keep migrants out, as part of this campaign (France 24, 2019).

2.7. Generation Identitær

Founded in the fall of 2017 the Danish Identitarian Lambda group is relatively young. They started as just a Facebook-page but currently are an active group, both offline and online, consisting of up to 100 active members and branches in Copenhagen and Aarhus (CPH Post, 2019). For one of their first actions they hung a cardboard on the statue of the Danish poet Adam Oehlenschläger, containing a message from one of his poems that reads: “Storm-- winds bellow, blackens heaven! Comes the hour of melancholy”, followed by “Defend Europe” (Zúquete, 2018). Their current action repertoire also consists of banner drops, flyer actions, flash mobs and other remarkable actions.

2.8. Identitair Verzet

Identitair Verzet (Identitarian Resistance, IDV) is a Dutch identitarian organization that was founded in September of 2012, a few months after the founding of the French originators. In comparison with the other identitarian groups IDV is quite small. They are expected to have an active members base of only 15 to 25 people, but they claim to have active local factions spread out over the Netherlands (Anne Frank Stichting, 2019). In 2015 and 2016 they were able to recruit groups of young new members for a short period of time as a result of the large protests against the housing of refugees in the Netherlands. After these protests diminished, most of the new members parted from the movement again (Anne Frank Stichting, 2019). Identitair Verzet’s first highly noticed action was locking the Islamic Ibn Ghaldoun school in Rotterdam on the day of the final exams. IDV didn’t want the students to take the exams because there had been a large scale fraud regarding exams on that school (Verwey-Jonker Instituut, 2014). Identitair Verzet’s modus operandi is similar to that of the other identitarian Lambda groups and consists of banner drops, occupations, flyer and poster actions, and street protests. Additionally, IDV has shown some examples of provocative actions towards, and in close proximity of, far left activists and/or extremists.

Nevertheless, Identitair Verzet differs from the other identitarian organizations in some respects. First, the group was founded by a small group of people that split from the established Dutch/Belgian far right organization Voorpost. This is an identitarian organization from Belgium and the Netherlands that has been around since the seventies and strives after the unification of the Netherlands, Belgium and northern France. Voorpost is not regarded as an extremist organization, but some of its members have been involved in violent clashes (Anne Frank Stichting, 2019). By being founded by former members of another far right organization, IDV was created in the same fashion as Génération Identitaire, but not in its image, like the other European Lambda groups are. Secondly, Identitair Verzet’s name is not in line with the recognizable names of the other groups within the movement. Around 2014 they occasionally used the name/term ‘Identitaire Generatie’ (Identitarian Generation) during protests and in social media clips, but they never adopted this as the group’s

official name (Identitair Verzet, 2014). And finally, IDV uses a different logo, namely the Greek Omega, as their main logo beside the Lambda. Because the Greek Omega is the symbol for resistance IDV deems this symbol more fit, but nonetheless they also consistently use the Lambda in black and yellow during protests and other actions. Moreover, the Omega and the group's name are also presented in the recognizable colours of the movement.

2.9. Subconclusion

After the French counter-revolutionary school of thought called the Nouvelle Droite emerged in the 1960s, an identitarian strain developed in the late 1980s. In France these identitarian ideas over the years materialized in the form of (political) organizations like Les Jeunesses Identitaires and Bloc Identitaire. In 2012 the young, practical, and action-oriented Génération Identitaire was formed and was followed by identitarian groups in the Netherlands, Austria, Germany, and Italy within months. Even though Identitair Verzet, the Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland, the Identitäre Bewegung Österreich, and Generazione Identitaria were all founded shortly after the formation of Génération Identitaire, and followed by Generation Identitaer in 2018, there is one substantial difference between Identitair Verzet and the other groups. While the other groups were created after the likeness of Génération Identitaire after having been in contact with the French activists, Identitair Verzet was created out of their own idea, and in that way in isolation. Furthermore, and perhaps because of this isolated formation, IDV diverges from the other groups in some other respects, like member's characteristics, magnitude, and main logo. Nevertheless, IDV also uses the GI family's main Lambda logo and employs a protest action repertoire that is similar to the other groups.

3. Literature Review

3.1. *Introduction and outline*

The identitarian movement in Europe is widely seen as a network of far right activist organizations. Nevertheless, some, like for example anti-racist organizations like Hope not Hate, besides anti-racist and left-wing activists, have argued these organizations should be considered extremist organizations, mainly because their ethnopluralist beliefs are considered to be inconsistent with Western democratic values (Murdoch & Mulhall, 2019). As mentioned before, the German domestic intelligence agency BfV investigated and initially regarded the IBD as being an extremist organization. Shortly thereafter though, the German court of Cologne ruled that the organization doesn't hold any beliefs that could be classified as extremist and therefore this classification by the BfV was reversed. Being legally disregarded as (an) extremist organization(s), it can be argued that the European identitarian movement can be regarded as a social movement. This chapter is therefore started by setting out the literature on (transnational) social movement(s) (organizations) and linking it to the identitarian movement. Subsequently, the body of literature on far right organizations is reviewed, and the lack of research on cooperation between far right non-party organizations, and more specifically identitarian organizations is addressed. Next, the literature on (transnational) cooperation is reviewed, in which the focus is on enabling factors of such cooperation. Finally, the theories that are deemed the most relevant for explaining the forms and quantity of interaction and cooperation between Identitair Verzet and the other European identitarian Lambda groups are elaborated on. These are collective identity, resource mobilization and political opportunity theory.

3.2. *Social movements*

There are a number of aspects that, taken together, define social movements. Firstly, they consist of a number of people that collectively and purposively attempt to change societal institutions and/or structures (Zald & Ash, 1966; Jenkins & Form, 2005). Furthermore, they actively pursue this societal change by employing protest (Jenkins & Form, 2005). Protest activity in turn can be defined as "a mode of political action oriented toward objection to one or more policies or conditions, characterized by showmanship or display of an unconventional nature, and undertaken to obtain rewards from political or economic systems while working within the systems" (Lipsky, 1968, p. 1145). Thirdly, social movements engage in this pursue of societal change over a longer period of time, rather than being single or small batches of events (Tarrow, 1998b). Finally, the members of a social movement don't just work together, but also share a collective identity which shows through the set of opinions and beliefs that represents their preferences for societal change (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Social movements can either operate within a single country or spread out over multiple. The latter transnational variant can be defined as social movements that "involve conscious efforts to

build transnational cooperation around shared goals that include social change” (Smith, Chatfield, & Pagnucco, 1998, pp. 59-60). To construct a more elaborate definition, Byrd & Jasny drew on Della Porta & Diani (1999) and Tarrow (2001) to define transnational social movements as “ ‘networks of interaction between different actors which may either include formal organizations or not, depending on shifting circumstance’ (Della Porta & Diani 1999, p. 16) that are ‘mobilized with constituents in at least two states, engaged in sustained contentious interactions with power-holders in at least one state other than their own, or against an international institution or a multinational economic actor’ (Tarrow, 2001, p. 11)” (Byrd & Jasny, 2010, p. 356).

Traditionally the literature on social movements has mainly focused on movements and organizations that could be considered left wing, like environmentalism (Dunlap & Mertig, 1992), the anti-nuclear movement (Kitschelt, 1986) and black insurgency (McAdam, 1982). However, more recently literature on the far right has increased and although right wing (extremist) movements have mainly been examined within studies of political violence and terrorism (Della Porta, 2013), researchers have argued the far right is to be considered and studied as a social movement as well (Caiani & della Porta, 2018; Gattinara & Pirro, 2019). In line with this reasoning and according to the definitions set out above, the European identitarian movement can also be regarded as a social movement, one that has transnational components.

The identitarian movement is a network of collectives of youths who are formally organized and for several years pursue to alter demographic trends and alter and/or promote cultural beliefs by regularly employing several forms of street protest. They are convinced of a shared culture and identity, for which they fight to protect. The movement is mobilized out of over ten states and members engage in protests in states other than their own, in which they act against either the states’ national government or (an) international European institution(s). These characteristics thus demonstrate that the identitarian movement can be considered a (transnational) social movement. Furthermore, this shows (why) social movement theory like collective identity and resource mobilization is useful and applicable to explain the findings of this study.

3.3. *The far right*

In recent years the literature on the far right has been increasing. A lot of this literature has focused on far right (and) populist political parties (see for instance Georgiadou, Rori, & Roumanias, 2018, Mudde, 2018 and Muis & Immerzeel, 2017). In comparison with the academic attention to these topics, the study of radical right wing movements is a topic often neglected in literature (Caiani, 2017). One explanation for the discrepancy between the amount of literature on the far right and other social movements is a certain difficulty concerning the analysis of right wing movements that

originates from the terminological variety and the lack of a shared definition among scholars (Mudde, 2007). Manuela Caiani has adequately outlined this problem, stating:

Terms such as extreme right (Arzheimer, 2009; Caiani et al., 2012), radical right (Ellinas, 2010), right-wing populism (Mudde, 2007), anti-immigration movements and far right (Blee, 2003) are employed on the basis of a range of different interpretations of the phenomenon and depending on geographical area. Some scholars (for example Carter, 2005) define rightwing extremism (and 'extreme right') using two criteria: anticonstitutionalism and antidemocratic values (it is for this reason it is called 'extremist'), and a rejection of the principle of fundamental human equality (hence the label 'right-wing'). Others (for example Norris, 2005) prefer the label 'radical right' in denoting those political parties and non-party organizations located towards one pole on the standard ideological left-right spectrum. However, all these different labels are used by scholars to refer to the same organizations: this political family is identified in the literature by some common ideological attributes, such as nationalism, exclusionism, xenophobia, the quest for a strong state, welfare chauvinism, revisionism and traditional ethics (Mudde, 2007: 21)... (Caiani, 2017, p. 2).

Despite these terminological difficulties, the European identitarian lambda movements, through their focus on 'the European identity' and their aspiration for the geographical separation of differing ethnicities, can unmistakably be classified as radical or extreme right, especially since they emerged from the 'New Right'. In Moors (2009), van Donselaar defines extreme/radical right formations as groups of which its ideology focuses on 'what is their own', averts what is perceived as alien, and prefers authoritarian leadership. The Identitarian movement sees the European identity as its own and averts different ethnicities by arguing they should be geographically separated. The preference for authoritarian leadership shows through the support for authoritarian political parties, like the AfD, PVV, FPÖ and RN, by the various national Identitarian groups. Within the definition of van Donselaar, The Anne Frank Association (2019) distinguishes three sorts of extreme/radical right formations. One of those are identitarian formations, which by them are defined in the Dutch context as formations that strive after a homogenous Dutch nation within the geographical borders that by history define the Dutch territory. The distinction between what is 'their own' and what is alien mainly regards the Dutch-speaking people and their cultural-ethnic authenticity and property. They avert external factors that influence or threaten the Dutch nation (Idem. p.20). By this definition they also regard Identitair Verzet an extreme/radical right formation.

The subjects of the studies on far right movements that have been published in recent years vary with regard to several aspects. Some focus on the ideology or the geography of the movements, others focus on the role of the internet in for example mobilization processes, and others again focus on the relationships of certain movements with parliamentary parties (Mudde, 2000; Mares, 2006; Chermak, Freilich, & Suttmoeller, 2013; Caiani & Kröll, 2015; Georgiadou, Rori, & Roumanias, 2018; Campion, 2019). Within this variety of far right research subjects there has been relatively little

material on the identitarian movement. Most of the available literature is mainly descriptive, as for example the current most elaborate piece of work ‘The Identitarians: The Movement Against Globalism and Islam in Europe’ by José Zúquete (Zúquete, 2018). Admittedly, the movement is fairly young and there is a broader body of literature on the Nouvelle Droite, which laid the foundation for the European identitarian movement. However, as described in the previous chapter, the two differ both in ideology as in ways of professing it. Because of the Nouvelle Droite’s focus on European cultures and identities (one that unmistakably also applies to the identitarian movement), some of the studies on the topic investigate the ND’s ability to transnationalize far right movements or ideology (Bar-On, 2011; Copsey, 2013; Portelli, 2002). It could be argued that to some extent the ND has achieved this by means of the contemporary European identitarian movement, but research on the transnationalism of the latter is scarce. This, however, fits in the overall picture of the small body of research on transnational cooperation between far right non-party organizations. On the contrary, research on (transnational) cooperation between social movement organizations in general is ample. These subjects are discussed below.

3.4. *(Transnational) Cooperation*

Just like research on social movements in itself, research on cooperation within and between social movements is plentiful in academic literature. Collaborative efforts of engaging in joint planning and actions by protest groups and organizations within a movement have been documented extensively (Beamish & Luebbers, 2009). Such literature exists on for instance nuclear disarmament groups (Barkan 1979, Benford 1993), environmentalist groups (Schaffer, 2000), feminists (Ferree & Hess, 1994), and labor movements (Fantasia & Voss, 2004). Unfortunately, there’s relatively few literature on (transnational) cooperation on the far right. Within the existing body of literature on this topic most of the research is on (transnational) cooperation between radical right political parties or between these parties and far right (extremist) organizations (Caiani, 2018; Mares, 2006; Macklin, 2013). Relatively little is on (transnational) intergroup cooperation of far right non-party organizations (but see Caiani & Kröll, 2015 and Veilleux-Lepage & Archambault, 2019 for examples).

Throughout the literature many factors that influence cooperation or competition between social movement organizations are described. In 1979, renowned social movement researchers Zald & McCarthy published an insightful study on social movement cooperation and competition in which they stated that social movement cooperation is likely to occur when 1. organizations share similar goals and allowable tactics 2. organizations are faced with social control efforts 3. organizations have overlapping (board) members, and 4. organizations are encouraged to cooperate by authorities or elite institutions (Zald & McCarthy, 1979). Noticeably these factors mainly relate to social and organizational relations and structures.

In 'Coalitions Across Borders: Transnational Protest and the Neoliberal Order', a list of social conditions that enable *transnational* networking is presented (Bandy & Smith, 2005). In short these consist of the presence of facilitating international NGO's or governmental organizations, the presence of well-organized movements both national and abroad, pre-existing similarities among the different international movements, the capacity for regular communication between these movements, movement's economic conditions conducive to resource building, political opportunities in the various states, large support among the public, and finally the absence of international political conflict. The majority of all of these factors can be related back to collective identity, resource mobilization and political process theory. Specifying, collective identity theory touches upon the mentioned factors of pre-existing similarities, sharing similar goals and having overlapping members. Aspects of resource mobilization can be found in the encouragement by authorities or institutions, the capacity for regular communication, and the economic conditions conducive to resource building. The factors on social control efforts, political opportunities and support of the public can be gathered under political opportunity theory.

In earlier work on transnational activism the globalization thesis is used to explain transnational cooperation between, for example, environmental social movement organizations (Rohrschneider & Dalton, 2002). This thesis is twofold and firstly argues that transnational activism within the environmental movement is partly due to the global effects of pollution and other environmental problems, that don't stop at national borders. Secondly it argues that through globalization a sophisticated communications and transportation infrastructure has been established, that allows for the more readily sharing of information, technology and resources between international organizations (Idem). Both of these elements to some extent apply to the European identitarian movement as well, may it be on a more regional (read: European) level. Firstly, the phenomena they abhor, like globalization, immigration and Islamization, are not bound by national borders either, but affect large parts of Europe. Secondly, although they oppose globalization, the identitarian organizations operate in nations that are integrated in the global (or at least European) economic and political systems, which means they can communicate and exchange information and resources between each other relatively easy. These indicators could predict transnational cooperation within the identitarian movement. This has already materialized at least twice, through the two Defend Europe campaigns. These campaigns were aimed at stopping migrants from entering a specific country or crossing a certain border crossing, because the members involved claim they feel the effects of these phenomena in their distinct home countries (Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland, 2019b). Because the effects of these phenomena are noticeable in the Netherlands as well, and

because the Netherlands/Identitair Verzet operates in the same systems, these indicators could possibly be predictive of transnational cooperation by Identitair Verzet as well.

On the other hand, others, like Tarrow (1998a) have argued that group characteristics are a more important precursor for international activity. He suggests that the factors that encourage groups to be active in local and national politics very likely carry over to international activity. This is especially true for groups with substantial resources, since such groups are better able to conduct a variety of activities (Zald & McCarthy, 1987).

3.5. *Resource mobilization*

The resource mobilization theory aims to explain collective action within and between social movement organizations by focusing on the resources that are available and/or can potentially be acquired, and how these resources are managed. Resources are essential to the survival of an organization and in this way are at least as important to an organization as the achievement of goals. Collective action can not be taken without the required resources (either money or labor) and thus “resources must be controlled or mobilized before action is possible” (McCarthy & Zald, 1977, p. 1221). This also applies to cooperative action between social movement organizations, but this kind of cooperation can also be a way of mobilizing resources. McCarthy & Zald (1977) argue that cooperation beyond the local environment may take place through federated or isolated structures. In an isolated structure the organization mobilizes resources directly from its constituents, but in a federated structure this happens through some extent of chapter development. The organization either develops chapters out of isolated constituents or it relies on pre-existing local groups (group mobilization). The latter method requires more time and resources, but empirically social movement organizations combine elements of both the isolated and federative form (McCarthy & Zald, 1977, p. 1228). On an international level this also applies to the identitarian movement. In the Austrian case the pre-existing WIR transformed into the IBÖ. In the German and Italian case (groups of) isolated adherents erected the national ‘chapter’ organizations in the image of the French.

3.6. *Political process/political opportunity*

The political process theory is also known as ‘political opportunity theory’ and offers an alternative explanation for mobilization and collective action in social movements. The theory outlines five key components that determine the success or failure of a social movement: political opportunities, mobilizing structures, framing processes, protest cycles, and contentious repertoires (Caren, 2007). Of these five the political opportunity component has received the most attention by other scholars. The political opportunity refers to a chance to make a political impact and results from “any event or broad social process that serves to undermine the calculations and assumptions on which the

political establishment is structured” (McAdam, 1982, p. 41). Examples to this definition include wars, international political realignments, industrialization, demographic changes and prolonged unemployment. As noted above, deduced from Bandy & Smith (2005) political opportunities can be a factor in establishing transnational cooperation as well. These opportunities can occur subsequently in the various states or on the international level.

3.7. *Collective identity*

Another alternative explanation to social movement mobilization and collective action is collective identity. This concept has for instance been used by sociologists to search for an answer to gaps in resource mobilization and political process models (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). In short, collective identity argues that people choose to participate in social movements because doing so accords with who they are. More comprehensively it can be defined as “an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution. It is a perception of a shared status or relation, which may be imagined rather than experienced directly, and it is distinct from personal identities, although it may form part of a personal identity” (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 285). This theory differs from the rationalist resource mobilization and political opportunity theories in that sense that it focuses on feelings of belonging and emotional incentives. These feelings can play a role in the emergence of social movements, in recruiting people into movements, in strategic and tactical decision making, and in the success of a movement, as can it be a successful outcome of a movement in itself. As Zald & McCarthy (1979) have stated, collective identity can also be an influential factor in establishing cooperation between social movement organizations.

3.8. *Subconclusion*

As addressed in this chapter, there's ample research on social movements and cooperation within and between these in academic literature. Despite the fact that the far right can be seen as a social movement as well, there's relatively little literature on (transnational) cooperation on the far right. The body of literature on this topic has expanded in recent years, but most of the research within this field is on (transnational) cooperation between radical right political parties or between these parties and far right (extremist) organizations. Little is on (transnational) intergroup cooperation of far right (extremist) organizations, and within this small body of literature there's hardly any work on Dutch right wing organizations nor on the identitarian movement. Building on literature on the far right, social movements, and (transnational) cooperation between and within these, this study seeks to fill this gap.

4. Methodology

4.1. *Research strategy*

This thesis examines to what extent and in what way(s) the Dutch Identitair Verzet cooperates with its European counterparts in the identitarian movement. To this cause an holistic single case study on Identitair Verzet was conducted. Due to the lack of preliminary research on cooperation within the European identitarian movement, and specifically Identitair Verzet, this case study is partially exploratory, because it explores the ways in which Identitair Verzet cooperates with selected other European Lambda groups. For the other part this research is explanatory because it uses theory on social movement cooperation in an attempt to explain Identitair Verzet's cooperation with its European counterparts.

4.2. *Case selection*

Identitair Verzet was selected as a case because, together with Pegida, they are the far right organization that has drawn the most attention in the Netherlands over the past seven years. Just like some of their European counterparts, they have executed an array of remarkable and mediagenic protest actions, like locking up an Islamic secondary school, occupying an Islamic primary school and posting/dropping big banners at mosques and refugee centres. Their members appeared in footage of international demonstrations and have been reported on by several national governmental agencies (Anne Frank Stichting, 2019; NTR, 2017). Furthermore the organization was selected because of the interest and nationality of the researcher.

To maintain the feasibility of this study the scope of with which European identitarian organizations Identitair Verzet cooperates is limited to the five largest organizations that identify themselves with the European Generation Identity 'family'. Identification with this movement is judged by either specific statements of support on the website of the organizations or by the use of collective symbolism, like the Greek Lambda (mostly in black and yellow), which is the symbol of the 'family'. Because this research is conducted based mainly on digital methods, only organisations that are active online i.e. have their own website and an account on Twitter are within its scope. By these criteria the following organisations (and their local subdivisions) are within the scope of this study:

- Génération Identitaire (France: ±2.000 members)
- Identitäre Bewegung (Germany: ±600 members)
- Identitäre Bewegung Österreich (Austria: ±300 members)
- Generazione Identitaria (Italy: several hundred members)
- Generation Identitaer (Denmark: ±100 members)

4.3. Data collection

As stated by Yin (1994), the six sources of evidence for data collection in the case study protocol are documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation, and physical artefacts. Furthermore he stated that a “case study inquiry (..) relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in triangulating fashion” (Yin, 2003, p. 14). The current research was conducted exclusively by means of document study. The remaining sources of evidence were deemed not applicable due to limitations with regard to accessibility and time available. Therefore triangulation has not taken place between the various sources of evidence for data collection. However, *within* the data collection method of document study triangulation *has* taken place. Specifically, the data was collected through Twitter, the organisations’ websites, newspaper articles and government reports. These types of documents were selected because they were deemed the most relevant open source type of documents through which forms of cooperation between Identitair Verzet and the other organizations could be detected. Twitter was chosen as social media source because Identitair Verzet as well as all other five organizations within the scope of this research are active on this platform. Despite Identitair Verzet being active on other social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube as well, these platforms were excluded from the data collection process because most of the foreign organisations are not active on Facebook after being banned from the platform in 2018 (Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland, 2019a), Identitair Verzet’s posts on Facebook and Twitter are very similar, and YouTube as a platform is not fit for structural research.

To collect the data from Twitter, first the Twitterfeed of Identitair Verzet (@Identitair) was examined. All posts from the tab ‘Tweets & replies’ were examined separately and manually to collect data on Identitair Verzet’s tweets, retweets, replies, shares and mentions. Despite IDV being active on Twitter since late 2011, the data from this tab only goes back as far as February 2016. Older Tweets by IDV can be retrieved by use of another query (from:Identitair until:2016-04-01 since:2012-10-01), but the results of that do not include retweets, limiting the research period to the period from 01-02-2016 to 31-12-2019. Secondly a custom query was used to retrieve data on mentions of and replies to Identitair Verzet by other users. To secure the retrieval of data on mentions of and replies to Identitair Verzet by the five organizations within the scope of this research (or related accounts) that were posted in their national language, the following queries were used:

(to:Identitair) OR (@Identitair) lang:en

(to:Identitair) OR (@Identitair) lang:de

(to:Identitair) OR (@Identitair) lang:fr

(to:Identitair) OR (@Identitair) lang:it

(to:Identitair) OR (@Identitair) lang:da

Because the results of these queries do not include retweets either, the accounts of the five organizations (and related accounts) were manually checked for retweets of Identitair Verzet. This step, however, was only taken for accounts that actually follow Identitair Verzet (@Identitair) on Twitter. These accounts belong to two outspoken members of the IBD, one prominent member of GI France, several regional factions of the IBD, one regional faction of GI Italy, the national organizations of IBD, GI Italy, GI Denmark, and the campaign Defend Europe¹.

Retweets were included in the dataset because they indicate “not only interest in a message, but also trust in the message and the originator, and agreement with the message contents.” (Metaxas, et al., 2015, p. 658). Twitter users that (strongly) disagree with this conclusion tend to add “RT ≠ E” to their Twitter’s biography – which means retweets do not equal endorsement –, by which they state their retweet actions do not indicate the things stated above. None of the examined Twitter users had this statement added to their biography.

Furthermore, data was collected from the websites of all organizations, being Identitair Verzet (idverzet.org), Génération Identitaire (generationidentitaire.org), Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland (identitaere-bewegung.de), Identitäre Bewegung Österreich (identitaere-bewegung.at), Generazione Identitaria (generazione-identitaria.com), and Generation Identitaer (identitaer.dk). The data from the websites was collected from that sections that are called either ‘news’, ‘blog’, ‘current events’, or ‘articles’.

Because, the researcher can read Dutch, German and English text, the sites of IDV, IBD and IBÖ could be read in their original form. The site by the French Génération Identitaire provides the option to show the site in English. The Danish and Italian sites were translated using Google translate.

Thirdly, data was collected from international newspaper articles. These articles were collected from Lexis Nexis (advance.lexis.com) using a custom query. The search was temporally limited to 01-02-2016 – 31-12-2019 as well. There were no limits set with regard to language and sources. The used query is the following:

((“Identitair Verzet” OR “ID Verzet” OR (Dutch near/5 identita*)) AND (samenwerking OR gezamenlijk OR samen OR buitenland* OR “identitaire bewegung” OR “generation identitaire” OR

¹ The usernames of these accounts are @MarcoLo78132445, @majoloco3, @A_Verhassel, @IBAugsburg, @IB_Berg, @IB_Bonn, @IB_Aachen, @IBBautzen, @IB_Hamburg_, @IB_Bergischland, @GidVeneto, @IBDeutschland, @GenerazioneID, @IdentitaerDK, and @DefendEuropeID

“generation identity” OR “Generazione Identitaria” OR Identitaer OR Frankrijk OR Duitsland OR Oostenrijk OR Denemarken OR Italie)) OR ((“Identitair Verzet” OR “ID Verzet” OR (Dutch near/5 identita*)) AND (cooperation OR joint OR together OR foreign OR abroad OR “generation identitaire” OR “generation identity” OR “identitare bewegung” OR “Generazione Identitaria” OR Identitaer OR France OR Germany OR Austria OR Denmark OR Italy))

Finally, data was collected from government reports over the years 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 (when existent) from the various countries. For the Dutch context this regards the ministry of Social Affairs & Anne Frank Stichting’s ‘Factsheet extreemrechts in Nederlandse gemeenten’, the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism’s ‘Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland’, and annual reports by the national domestic intelligence and security agency AIVD. For the German context these are the annual ‘Jahresberichten’ by the national security service BfV and by all of the 16 regional LfV security services. With regard to the Austrian context the annual ‘Verfassungschutzberichten’ by the national security service BVT were used. The concerned Italian government reports are the annual ‘Relazione sull’la Politica dell’informazione per la sicurezza’ by the national intelligence agency AISI. Unfortunately relevant government reports on the French context were not available. The French domestic intelligence agency DGSI does not publish their annual reports to the public.

4.4. Coding process

After collecting the data it was coded using the coding scheme that can be found as *Annex 1*. The different codes are based on the various forms of cooperation that were examined. These categories were derived from theory by Hall (1995) and Ackerman & Bale (2012). The categories by Hall were applied in his book on poor people’s social movements to research interorganizational networking. These categories are the following: “attend each other’s meetings, have joint meetings, attend areawide rallies, support other organization’s public demonstrations, attend other organization’s public demonstrations, lobby jointly, write joint letters, plan strategy together, and other forms of cooperation” (Hall, 1995, p. 36). These categories were first deductively applied, but during the coding process were found not to be sufficient. Secondly, the categories by Ackerman & Bale were deducted and applied in the coding process. These categories derive from Ackerman & Bale’s research on collaboration between ideologically divergent movements (Islamist and left-wing extremists). These categories consist of rhetorical collaboration, joint political mobilization, logistical collaboration, and tangible operational collaboration (Ackerman & Bale, 2012). These were not found sufficient during the coding process either, presumably because of the slightly different scope of the research. Subsequently, the two sets of categories were combined and complemented by inducted categories to establish an exhaustive set of categories which is stated below.

1. Rethorical cooperation – Expressions of support for the (actions of) other groups
2. Ideological cooperation – Coordinating strategies with respect to ideology
3. Joint political mobilization – Coordinating strategies with respect to political activity
4. Logistical cooperation – The provision or exchange of vital materials
5. Operational cooperation – Coordinating strategies on activity beyond political demonstrations
6. Other forms of cooperation

See *Annex 1* for the extensive definitions, indicators and coding rules to these categories.

Throughout the coding process the results were recorded in a coding sheet. This sheet is added to this study as *Annex 2*. The variables that this sheet contains and their descriptions are listed in *Table 1*.

Several times an event was coded doubly, because it was detected through multiple sources (f.i. Twitter and a government report). In this cases it was chosen to maintain the coded event from Twitter, because the event date from that source is more likely to be accurate.

Table 1. List of variables

Variable name	Description
Code	A unique number to identify the specific event. This number starts at 001 and is added up by 1 with every subsequent event.
Initiating actor	Name/abbreviation of the actor that initiated the form of cooperation. IDV = Identitair Verzet GIF = Génération Identitaire GII = Generazione Identitaria GID = Generation Identitaer IBD = Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland IBÖ = Identitäre Bewegung Österreich Various = multiple of the above actors, either on their own behalf or via Defend Europe ² .

² Defend Europe is an official campaign by several European identitarian organizations and has its own social media accounts. It is therefore included in the coding process. There are other campaigns, like the 120db campaign, that also have their own social media account and are promoted by the identitarian organizations. Those are not official GI/IBD campaigns however and are therefore excluded from the coding process.

Subject actor	Name/abbreviation of the actor(s) that was/were subject to the form of cooperation that was initiated by the previous mentioned actor. See the previous variable for a list of abbreviations.
Date	The date on which the document/post containing the data was published/posted.
Category of cooperation	The kind of cooperation that took place between the initiating actor and the subject actor(s) as proven by the unit of analysis. 1 = Rethorical cooperation 2 = Ideological cooperation 3 = Joint political mobilization 4 = Logistical cooperation 5 = Operational cooperation 6 = Other forms of cooperation
Source type	The type of source in which the data was found, ranging from 1 to 5. 1 = Twitter 2 = Identitarian website 3 = Newspaper 4 = Government report
Source	The specific source in which the data was found f.i. URL of a website article. The units of analysis per source type are 1. Tweets 2. & 3. Articles 4. reports
Description	A description of the coded content and form of cooperation.

4.5. *Data analysis*

For this thesis the methods of analysing the data were triangulated. Apart from quantifying the instances of cooperation, the data was also analysed qualitatively using content analysis. According to Kohlbacher “classical content analysis is essentially a quantitative method with the core and central tool being its system of categories” (2006, [37]). One type of evaluation by content analysis “consequently consists of counting the numbers of occurrences per category” (Ibid.). This comprises the first part of the analysis. Others however have called this application of content analysis “a superficial analysis without respecting latent contents and contexts, working with simplifying and distorting quantification.” (Mayring, 2000, [6]). As Ritsert (1972) has criticised quantative content analysis for not taking into account i.a. the context of text components, latent structures of sense, and things that do not appear in the text, the qualitative part of the analysis has focused on these

aspects. Inferences were made to aspects of the communicator (Tweets and website articles), and to the situation of text production (newspaper articles and government reports). Finally the analysis was guided and substantiated by the theories of resource mobilization, collective identity and political opportunity.

4.6. *Presentation*

The results are presented by use of mixed methods and according to several categories. Firstly, the various forms of cooperation are quantified and presented. Secondly, the actors with which Identitair Verzet cooperated and the amount of instances of cooperation are presented. Thirdly, the initiation of the instances of cooperation is presented and discussed and finally, the findings are presented by focussing on date of occurrence. Subsequently the results are linked to and explained by use of theory triangulation, as mentioned in the previous paragraph.

4.7. *Validity and reliability*

Validity and reliability in qualitative (social science) research are points of discussion because it is argued they are not as applicable to qualitative research as they are to quantitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Johnson, 1999). The main argument is that the creativity that is associated with qualitative research is not compatible with the rigor and subjectivity of validity and reliability as measures for certainty (Johnson, 1999). Guba & Lincoln (1994) have translated the terms validity and reliability as to be applicable in qualitative research and their translation has become the gold standard (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001, p. 527). They translated internal validity to credibility, external validity to transferability, and reliability to dependability.

Because of the mixed design of this thesis the rigorous terms validity and reliability are hard to apply. Therefore these terms are translated according to Guba & Lincoln (1994) to address the certainty of this thesis. The credibility is guaranteed through the transparency of the data. All the collected data is OSINT, and is freely and easy accessible on the internet. The data collection process is described elaborately and all coded data is attached by way of *Annex 2*. The transferability is guaranteed by way of a detailed methodology section in which both the coding and analysis processes are described elaborately as well. The coding rules are included in the coding scheme, which is attached as *Annex 1*. The dependability is guaranteed by elaborating on the context of the study. In the second chapter the context of the European identitarian movement and the separate national organizations is described extensively. When inferences are made based context, this context is explained in detail in the analysis section.

4.8. *Limitations*

Unfortunately, there are several limitations to this research. Most of these concern the sources that were used to collect the data in this study. During the collection of the Twitter data some technical limitations were stumbled upon. One of these has already been addressed in the data collection paragraph of this chapter, namely the inability to retrieve retweets from before February of 2016. The second limitation regarding Twitter is that the French Génération Identitaire's account is either inactive or most secretive. In order to observe their Twitter activity it is required to be accepted by them as a follower. The researcher submitted a request to follow their account but did not receive any response³. For this reason it was impossible to track their Twitter activity and include it in the dataset. Further investigation however showed that Identitair Verzet doesn't follow their account either nor are they followed by them themselves. This makes it unlikely that any form of cooperation between these two actors would have been detectable through Twitter, even if the researcher would have been accepted as a follower. A third limitation regarding the used sources concerns the type of sources that were used to collect the data. They are all open sources and thus easily accessible to all users of the internet. This presumably affects the information that is shared by the Twitter accounts, and the authors of the website articles and government reports. The identitarian organizations can be expected to be hesitant to share sensitive, operational or other information regarding cooperation with other organizations on Twitter or their websites out of fear for government repression. A study based on open sources may therefore not show the complete picture of cooperation between these movements. Communication about cooperation between these movements might for example only take place in real life or on closed or anonymous media.

³ The request at the time was carried out by use of a fake account, without stopping to think about possible ethical objections. In hindsight the request not having been accepted is seen as a positive result because of the ethical questionability of using fake accounts to obtain otherwise shielded data.

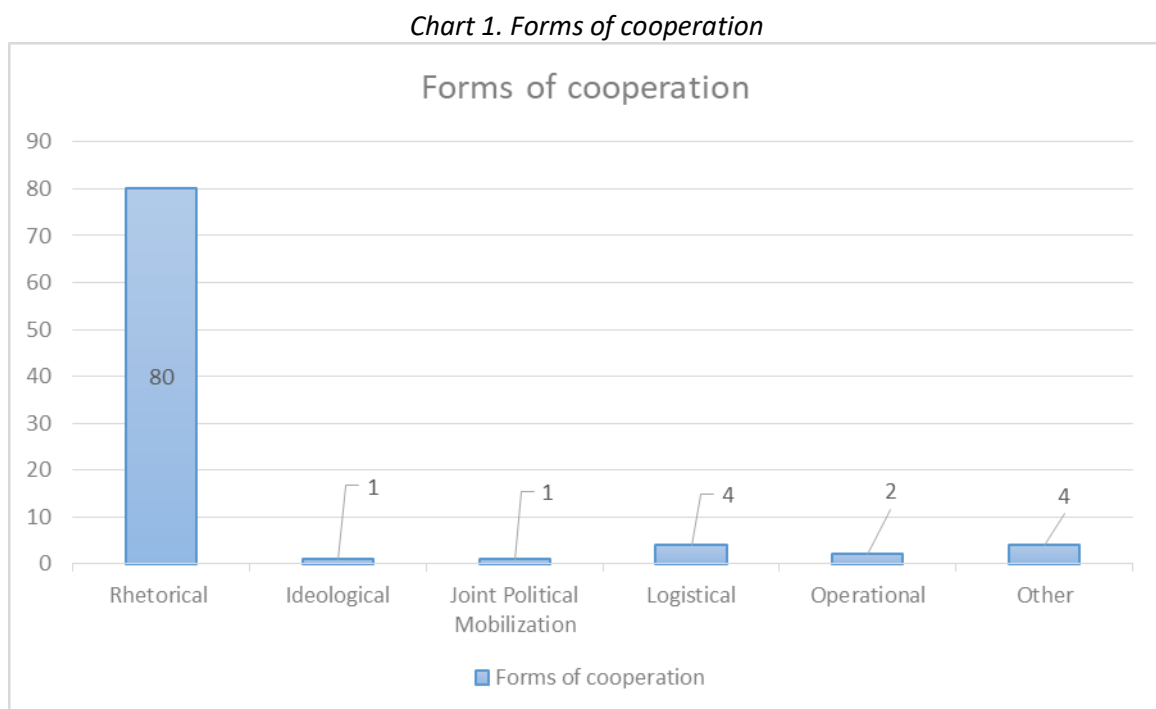
5. Analysis

5.1. Results

For this thesis over 13.000 Tweets, over 250 newspaper articles, over 70 government reports, and articles from 6 websites from between February 2016 and December 2019 were reviewed. In this content 92 instances of cooperation between Identitair Verzet and one or multiple of the five other identitarian organizations were detected. These results will be presented by focussing on 1. forms of cooperation, to demonstrate which forms occurred most often, 2. initiating actors of the cooperation instances, to show which groups pursue cooperation most, 3. Subject actors, to show which groups were most ‘targeted’ during cooperation initiatives, and 4. date of occurrence, to show the temporal distribution of the coded events. After the presentation of the results, these findings are related to the social movement theories of collective identity, resource mobilization, and political opportunity.

5.1.1. Forms of cooperation

For this thesis the forms of cooperation were divided in 6 categories, namely rhetorical cooperation, ideological cooperation, joint political mobilization, logistical cooperation, operational cooperation, and other forms of cooperation. The collected data was coded by use of specific indicators and coding rules for each category. The results as classified by these forms of cooperation are displayed in *Chart 1*.



As can be seen in the chart, the vast majority of the data was coded as example of *rhetorical cooperation*. Eighty of the total 92 instances of cooperation that were detected were coded as such,

whereas the two second largest categories, *logistical cooperation* and *other forms of cooperation*, were only detected four times each. These eighty instances of rhetorical cooperation took place in various ways. The most of them (31) occurred through (re)tweets reporting the protest actions of other organizations. Thirty of these 31 were retweets of tweets by the original actor reporting on their own performed action. Only one was a tweet that was not posted by the actor that executed the action that was reported on in the tweet (Génération Identitaire) but by another organization⁴ (Identitair Verzet). Furthermore, 22 of the 80 instances of rhetorical cooperation were (re)tweets of news/information concerning another organization. Examples are a retweet by Identitair Verzet about the members of Identitäre Bewegung Österreich being investigated as members of a criminal organization, a retweet of the Augsburg faction of IBD announcing they have joined Twitter, and a retweet that mentions that one of their members had his car windows smashed by a member of the antifa movement. Fifteen other cases of rhetorical cooperation were related to sharing the opinions of or commentary by other organizations or their members on certain topics. Among these are a retweet of a tweet by IBÖ leader Martin Sellner in which he analyses the position of the FPÖ in contemporary Austrian politics, and a retweet of a tweet by the IBD in which they criticize the German police because they started an investigation after they found a policeman in possession of a Identitäre Bewegung sticker. Additionally, seven examples concerned expressions of support or solidarity for other groups (other than support for another group's specific protest actions) during one group's own protest actions or online activity. The best example of this is a protest by Identitair Verzet in front of the German and Austrian embassies in the Netherlands. The goal of this protest was to show solidarity with the IBD and IBÖ and to protest against the position of the German and Austrian governments towards those organizations.

The second most coded specifically clustered form of cooperation is logistical cooperation, with four occurrences. This category is defined as 'the provision or exchange of vital materials or services from Identitair Verzet to another group or from another group to Identitair Verzet'. The four coded events concern members of Identitair Verzet being trained in self-defence on a Génération Identitaire camping weekend, Identitair Verzet calling their members to join a protest by the Nordrhein-Westfalen faction of the IBD, IDV members attending a political protest by the IBD in Berlin, and IDV having helped collect resources for the Defend Europe campaign. The latter event, however, is contestable. This specific data was derived from Dutch national newspaper NRC Next, and Identitair Verzet themselves at that time also said that they were taking part in Defend Europe, but the Italian leader of the campaign has denied that IDV was involved.

⁴ In this tweet, that Identitair Verzet posted on 12-03-2016, they report on an action by French GI activists in which they blocked roads in Calais so migrants couldn't get through.

Occurrences of operational cooperation were detected twice in the dataset. This form of cooperation regards coordinating strategies between Identitair Verzet and the other groups with respect to activities beyond political demonstrations. This data, however, is as contestable as the event mentioned above. The two coded instances of operational cooperation are derived from two separate IDV sources stating they are taking part in the Defend Europe campaign. It is highly doubtful that IDV actually took part in this campaign, since the leader of the Italian organization, who was the organizer of the first Defend Europe campaign, around which time these statements were made, has denied Dutch involvement in the campaign.

Only one case of both ideological cooperation and joint political mobilization was found. The case of ideological cooperation, which is defined as coordinating strategies between Identitair Verzet and (one of) the other groups with respect to ideology, concerns Génération Identitaire convincing Identitair Verzet to not act against immigrants from Eastern European countries. IDV previously perceived them as a threat to the Dutch economy and culture but were corrected by GIF for this divergent belief. The detected case of joint political mobilization is the only case of jointly organized and performed action by Identitair Verzet and another European identitarian movement that was detected throughout this research. It concerns a joint banner drop by Identitair Verzet and the Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland at the train station in Cologne in December of 2016.

The four remaining instances of cooperation are categorized as *other forms of cooperation* and include two cases of Identitair Verzet explicitly identifying themselves as the Dutch branch of the European identitarian movement⁵, one case of an undefined link between IDV and the IBÖ⁶, and one case of IDV informing the IBD about a case of 'white discrimination' in Germany.

5.1.2. Initiating actors

When classifying the results by order of initiating actors, the result is a predominantly homogenous overview. Viz. all instances of cooperation are initiated by Identitair Verzet, except for eight of them. Among those eight is one case of initiation by Generazione Identitaria, in which their leader shows his appreciation for Identitair Verzet's support for the Defend Europe campaign (rhetorical cooperation). Two instance of cooperation were initiated by the Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland and they both are examples of rhetorical cooperation as well. One of them concerns the reply of the Augsburg faction to a tweet by IDV in which they announce the Augsburg faction has joined twitter and advice their members to follow this account. The Augsburg faction greets IDV and thanks them

⁵ On the 5th of July, 2018, for example, Identitair Verzet responded to a question about their organization with "We are the Dutch branch of the European identitarian family"

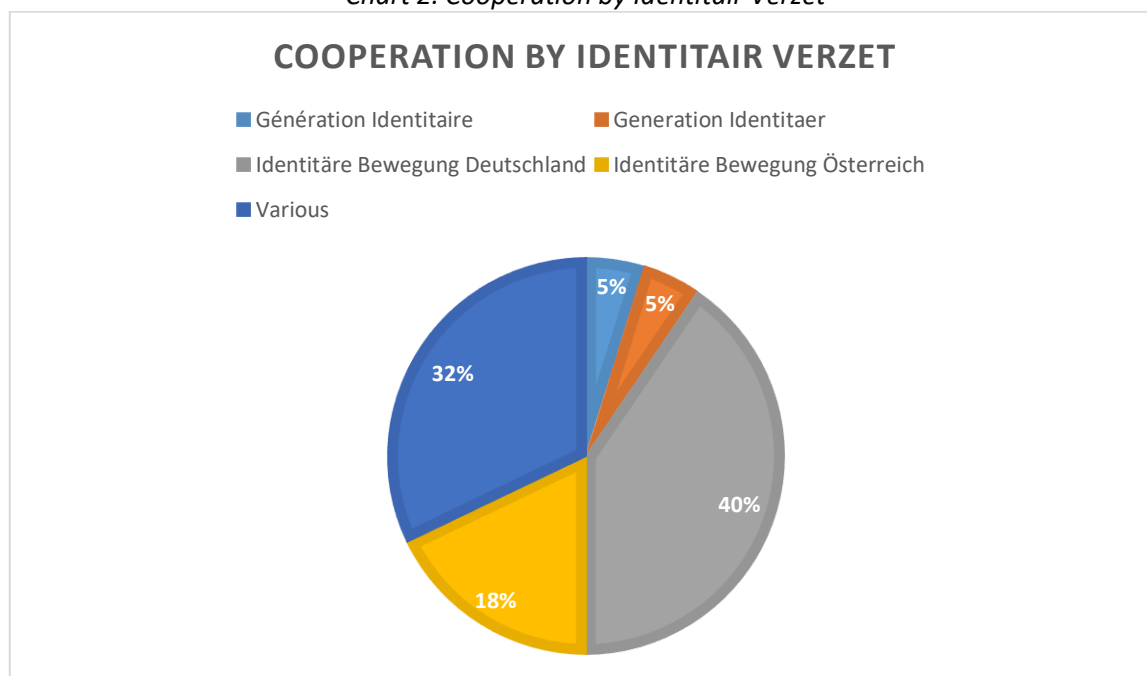
⁶ In an NRC Next article on cooperation between the Dutch and Austrian intelligence services from April 11th, 2019, the reporter states that one of the reasons for this cooperation is a link between IDV and IBÖ. This data was not found elsewhere.

for their move. The second case concerns the retweet of an IDV tweet by the Hamburg faction of the IBD. The tweet by IDV showed a picture from one of their protests in the Netherlands during which they carried a banner that stated “solidarity with the Identitarian Movement” in German. Two cases were initiated by the French GI. They were both already mentioned in previous paragraphs and concern the ideological influence by GI, and the provision of self-defence training by GI. The remaining three cases concern two cases of operational cooperation and one case of joint political mobilization. These are coded as initiated by various actors because they are not specifically initiated by a single organization. As mentioned earlier, however, the operational cooperation instances are contestable.

5.1.3. Subject actors

Because of the largely homogenous results on the part of initiating actors, it is more interesting to review the actors that were subject to the 84 initiations by Identitair Verzet. Filtering the dataset on cases initiated by Identitair Verzet results in a list of cases of which four (4) were directed towards GIF, four (4) towards GID, fifteen (15) towards the IBÖ, 27 towards various organizations, and 34 towards the IBD. These result are displayed in terms of percentages in *Chart 2*.

Chart 2. Cooperation by Identitair Verzet



With regard to the ‘various’ classification of the subject actor, 22 out of the 27 instances of cooperation initiated by Identitair Verzet concern the European identitarian ‘Defend Europe’ campaign. All but one of these 22 are cases of rhetorical cooperation in which Identitair Verzet (re)tweets on the progression and/or successes of the campaign, or in which they the don the logo of

Defend Europe during protests or other offline activity. The one divergent case is that of the claim that IDV has donated money to the Defend Europe campaign.

With regard to the cooperation directed at GIF (4) and GID (4), all eight cases were cases of rhetorical cooperation. This was also the case for all but one instances directed at the IBÖ and all but three of those directed at the IBD. The remaining case with regard to the IBÖ, however, concerns an undefined link between IDV and the IBÖ. This was coded as initiated by IDV because the source phrased it to appear that way. The three remaining cases of cooperation directed at the IBD concern two cases of logistical collaboration (in one of which IDV members took part in a protest in Berlin and in the other they called upon their members to join a forthcoming protest) and one other form of cooperation⁷.

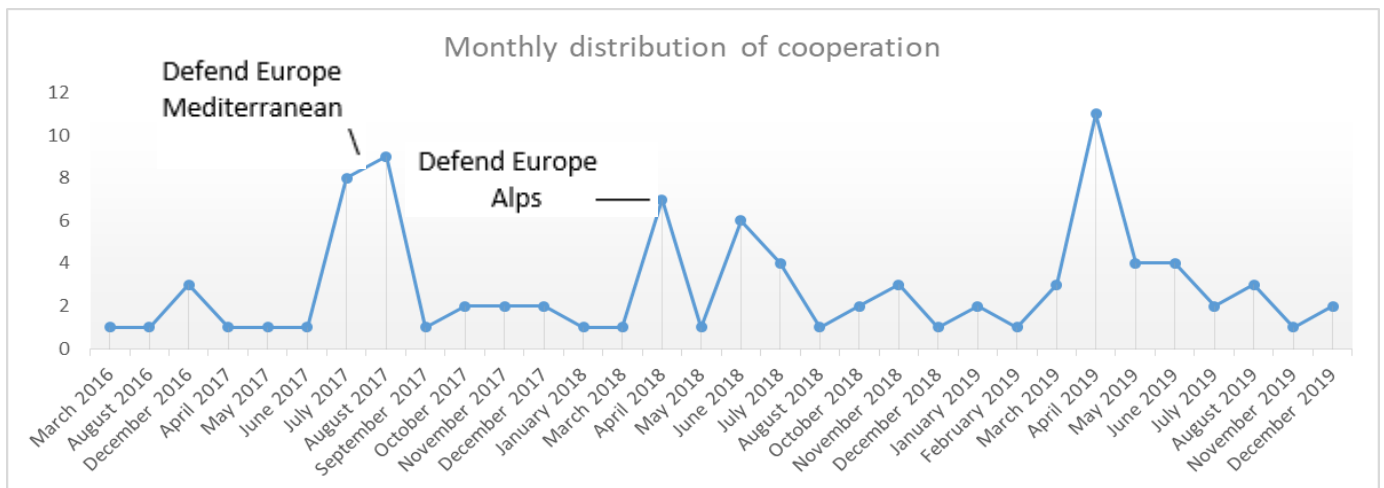
5.1.4. Dates

Apart from 2016, the instances of cooperation were more or less equally distributed over the years of the data collection period. In 2019, 33 instances of cooperation were detected and in both 2018 and 2017, 27 were detected. 2016 deviates from this pattern, since only 5 cases were detected in that year. This low amount of cooperation events in 2016 could possibly be explained by European migrations crisis, which peaked in 2015 and the first half of 2016. During this time Identitair Verzet managed to recruit a group of young new members (Anne Frank Stichting, 2019), which possibly made them less oriented at transnational cooperation. Towards the end of 2016 most of the new members had left again, which could explain why the cooperation efforts rose in the next year. Further noticeable affairs concern the temporal clustering of events within the investigated years. In 2017, for example, the majority (17) of the cases took place in July (8) and August (9). This is exactly the period the first Defend Europe campaign took place in the Mediterranean. Therefore, fourteen of these seventeen cases are unsurprisingly related to this campaign.

In 2018 the months with the densest clusters of events were April (7) and June (6). April of 2018 was the month in which the second campaign of Defend Europe took place in the Alps, and thus, unsurprisingly again, most events in this month were related to this campaign. All but one of the events in June of 2018 were (re)tweets about protest action by either the IBÖ, the IBD, IDV or Defend Europe. A relatively high number of offline protest actions by various actors thus causes a relatively high number of (online, rhetorical) cooperation between Identitair Verzet and the other groups.

⁷ The remaining other form of cooperation regards to Identitair Verzet mentioning @IBDeutschland in a reply to a post sharing a video of a man that is being halted by the German police because he is carrying the German flag during a protest demonstration. Police says he can't carry the flag because it can offend other people.

Chart 3. Monthly distribution of cooperation⁸



In 2019 the events were more or less equally distributed over the year, except for April, in which eleven instances of cooperation were coded. Two of these coded events derived from newspapers which reported about them in these months, but the cases did not take place in that month themselves. Of the remaining nine cases, three concerned retweets of protests by other organizations, four concerned retweets of commentary by Martin Sellner on contemporary politics and news items, and 2 concerned a new faction of the IBD having joined Twitter. This is another example of a high number of activity by other organizations leading to high number of cooperation events in a certain month.

5.2. Application of theory

Above, the results and findings are presented and analysed through a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. In the section below, these findings are related to the social movement theories that were outlined in chapter 3 (paragraph 3.5 – 3.7). The relevant findings are first related to the collective identity theory, followed by the resource mobilization theory, and finally to the political opportunity theory.

5.2.1. Collective identity

The ideology of the European identitarian movement is based on ethnopluralist beliefs and is committed to the preservation of the European identity as well as the national and regional identities of Europe. A logical result of this ideology is that all organizations associated with the movement identify themselves as Europeans and thereby share at least one collective identity, which is the European identity. As i.a. Zald & McCarthy (1979) have argued, this can be of influence in establishing cooperation between social movement organizations. Besides this European identity, however, the

⁸ The months not displayed in this chart did not contain any events

European identitarian organizations possibly share a collective identity on another, arguably deeper level when they identify themselves and acknowledge each other as part of the European identitarian social movement as such, i.e. the 'Generation Identity family'.

The results show multiple cases of Identitair Verzet explicitly identifying themselves with this 'family'. On 2018's Dutch liberation day, for example, they tweeted a picture of a German and a French WWII soldier sharing a cigarette with the captions "no more brother wars" and "next time we fight it's side by side" accompanied by the logos of Génération Identitaire, the Identitäre Bewegung and Identitair Verzet. This suggests that Identitair Verzet see themselves and these other organisations as brothers within the same family. In another evidential tweet Identitair Verzet literally stated "we are the Dutch branch of the European identitarian family".

Despite these tweets showing a strong identification with the Generation Identity 'family' by Identitair Verzet, they on the other hand diverge from this family in some aspects as well. They for one don't use a symbol as their main logo that is different from the other organizations. Where the universal logo of the European movement is the Greek Lambda, Identitair Verzet uses the Greek Omega. Since symbols play a crucial role in the formation of unity (Kolstø, 2006), Identitair Verzet already drives a symbolic wedge between them and the other movements by this use of a different main logo. By only using the Lambda as their secondary logo they show they don't regard being part of the Generation Identity 'family' as their primary identity, may it be intentionally or not. Moreover, Identitair Verzet differs from the other organizations with respect to their member's characteristics. Where the other organizations predominantly consist of young adults without a history in activism, a share of Identitair Verzet's members is in their thirties or older and have been members of multiple far right organizations before. Furthermore, Identitair Verzet carries a name that has a different structure than most other European identitarian organizations. Most other organizations, with the exception of the German and Austrian movements, are named after their national translation of Generation Identity, but that of Identitair Verzet isn't. This is due to the fact that they are the only one of the investigated organizations that was not created in the image of the French Génération Identitaire. Even though Identitair Verzet (Identitarian Resistance in Dutch) have used the name Identitaire Generatie (Identitarian Generation) on occasions, this has never been their official name.

Although Identitair Verzet identify themselves as member of the Generation Identity 'family', they are not explicitly acknowledged as such by the other organizations. On no occasion do the other organizations mention Identitair Verzet when they speak about the Generation Identity family or other European identitarian groups in general. This is true for their websites, Twitter accounts, interviews etc. The only time Identitair Verzet was implicitly acknowledged by another organization

was when a Dutch reporter for NRC Next asked the leader of the Italian *Generazione Identitaria* about *Identitair Verzet*'s involvement in the Defend Europe campaign. He answered that they are not involved but that they do support it. The lack of acknowledgement, furthermore, shows through the remarkable small number of rhetorical cooperation with *Identitair Verzet* by other organizations, for instance through Twitter. Only two cases of this were detected, one where a regional faction of the IBD replied to an IDV tweet by thanking and saluting them, and one where another regional faction of the IBD retweeted an IDV tweet in which they showed footage of a protest at the German and Austrian embassies in the Netherlands, in solidarity with the *Identitäre Bewegung*. Both cases, however, were preceded by IDV reaching out to the other actor by way of mentions. Other organizations do not (re)tweet (about) *Identitair Verzet* or their actions purely on their own initiative, albeit IDV creates a reasonable amount of content.

5.2.2. Resource mobilization

In order for social movement organizations to take collective action, resources must be controlled or mobilized (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Both McCarthy & Zald (1979) and Bandy & Smith (2005) have argued that resource building or provision of resources enables (transnational) cooperation between social movement(s) (organizations). This is a factor that partially explains the cooperation by and with *Identitair Verzet*. In comparison with the other organizations *Identitair Verzet* is only a small player. They have an active members base of 15 to 25, whereas those of the other organizations range from up to 100 (GI Denmark) to about 2.000 (GI France). Moreover, apart from the relatively small amount of members, *Identitair Verzet* also struggles to maintain a healthy financial balance. On multiple occasions on their website and social media accounts⁹ they have stated to be in need of money to pay fines, debts and replace material (*Identitair Verzet*, 2017). These conditions can make other organizations have little interest in cooperation with *Identitair Verzet*, because for the wider movement there's little potential to mobilize resources from them, apart from a small amount of members. These conditions, on the other hand, certainly explain why the vast majority of cooperation instances by IDV are of rhetorical nature and occur through Twitter. Twitter in this way serves as a nearly free resource and vehicle to establish cooperation between IDV and the other organizations. Because over 2/3 of this rhetorical cooperation instances through Twitter are expressions of support for (protest) activities or opinions and commentary by other organizations, *Identitair Verzet* highly relies on the activeness of other organizations for their cooperative actions.

⁹ Besides the cited cry for financial help on their website, *Identitair* has posted similar calls on Twitter. On June 30, 2018 they f.i. tweeted "want to support *Identitair Verzet* once for €12.00?" accompanied by a direct universal link to €12,- donation via bank transfer. Only recently, on the 2nd of January, they tweeted "On to 2020! Support us morally or financially..." accompanied by a link to a Facebook post, which includes a link to their bank account.

The data didn't show this to be the case vice versa, except when the other organizations were explicitly mentioned by IDV. This behaviour by IDV can also be explained by the political process model in that way that high levels of activity by other organizations are seen as an opportunity to promote the movement and the ideology in their own country by means of rhetorical cooperation, and in that way (attempt to) mobilize fresh resources.

5.2.3. Political opportunity

The political opportunity refers to a chance to make a political impact and results from "any event or broad social process that serves to undermine the calculations and assumptions on which the political establishment is structured" (McAdam, 1982, p. 41). As argued by Bandy & Smith (2005) such opportunities are enabling factors for (transnational) cooperation between social movement organizations. Even though theoretically this could be a plausible explanation for the levels of cooperation between Identitair Verzet and the other European identitarian organizations, little evidence for this theory being applicable was found in the data collected for this research, with exception of the example mentioned in the previous paragraph, which states that high levels of activity by other organizations are possibly seen by IDV as an opportunity to promote the movement and the ideology in their own country by means of rhetorical cooperation, and in that way (attempt to) mobilize fresh resources. At the same time, evidence for this theory is found in the cooperation between the other organizations. In his 2018 book, Zuquete addresses the help of experienced European (mainly French) identitarians in establishing new and professionalising small national factions abroad in the Czech republic, Hungary, Belgium, and the United Kingdom (Zúquete, 2018, pp. 87-91). In this way the emergence of new identitarian activists serves as an opportunity for the French/wider movement to spread their ideology and expand their network. By incorporating these new organizations into the Generation Identity 'family', they serve as chapters from which resources can more easily be mobilized than from isolated (potential) constituents (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). The latter remains to apply to Identitair Verzet. A decisive factor in this respect as well is possibly the fact that Identitair Verzet was established in isolation around the same time of founding of the first (French) European identitarian movement organization, and was not created in their image. The contemporary absence of emerging activists in the Netherlands, thereby, is an indicator for the absence of a political opportunity in the eyes of the GI 'family'.

5.3. *Subconclusion*

The results presented in this chapter show that real life cooperation and coordinating strategies with respect to offline activities rarely takes place between Identitair Verzet and the other organizations. Only one case of joint political mobilization and two cases of operational cooperation were found and the latter two are even contestable. Hereby, these two are the least occurring forms of

cooperation, together with ideological cooperation. Out of the six different forms of cooperation that were investigated, rhetorical cooperation occurred the most with 80 out of 92 instances. Out of these 80 instances, 31 concerned (re)tweets reporting the protest actions of other organizations, 22 concerned (re)tweets of news/information concerning another organization, and fifteen concerned retweets of opinions/commentary by other organizations. These 68 instances, and eight more, were all examples of rhetorical cooperation that took place through Twitter. These findings are related to the functionality of Twitter. This medium allows users to easily share content with their followers through tweets, and to easily share each other's content through retweets. Because these actions, under the right circumstances, apply as instances as rhetorical cooperation, it is no surprise this is the most occurring category.

All but eight instances of cooperation were initiated by Identitair Verzet, and of those the majority was directed at the IBD or at various organizations at once. The IBD being the organization with which cooperation is sought for most by IDV, can be explained by their online activity. The IBD has multiple regional factions that are active online and most of these are also followed by IDV. Moreover, IDV is dependent on the activity of other organizations for initiating forms of (rhetorical) cooperation in general. With regard to temporal distribution, most instances of cooperation therefore occurred in months of high activity by other organizations, like July and August of 2017, in which the Defend Europe Mediterranean campaign took place, and April of 2018, in which the Defend Europe Alps mission took place.

The results are best explained by the theories of collective identity and resource mobilization. Although IDV and the other organizations share a European identity, IDV doesn't share the GI-identity with the other groups as much as the other groups do with each other. Despite IDV identifying themselves with the GI 'family' in words, they also show acts of division by maintaining a different logo and having older and more experienced members, which are likely due to the fact that IDV wasn't created in the image of Génération Identitaire. The other organizations, furthermore, do not show any acknowledgement of IDV as part of the GI 'family' on any occasion. Possibly because IDV is only a small player in comparison with the other organizations, one that moreover struggles to maintain a healthy financial balance. Therefore Identitair Verzet provides little potential of resource mobilization to the wider movement.

6. Conclusion

In this study the transnational cooperation within the European identitarian movement was researched by means of a case study into the Dutch Identitair Verzet. It sought to explicate in what way Identitair Verzet cooperates with the European identitarian movement organizations in France, Germany, Austria, Italy, and Denmark. To this end data was collected from Twitter, newspaper articles, the organizations' websites, and government reports from the organizations' countries of origin. Subsequently this data was coded according to six categories deducted from theory by Hall and Ackerman & Bale and complemented inductively. The collected data was then analysed through mixed methods of content analysis. As a result 92 cases of cooperation between Identitair Verzet and one or multiple of the other organizations were detected. Of these cases a rounded 80% were examples of rhetorical cooperation, initiated by Identitair Verzet, and performed through Twitter.

These results can mainly be explained by aspects of the resource mobilization and collective identity theories. Existing of only 15 to 25 members, Identitair Verzet is a small organization in comparison with the other organization, that moreover struggles to maintain a healthy financial balance. This for one thing means they have to be creative in managing and mobilizing resources, which results in them seizing Twitter as a relatively cheap resource to cooperate with the other organizations. Secondly, this partly explains most instances of cooperation being initiated by Identitair Verzet as well, because due to their small scale they are not seen as a (potential) source of resource mobilization by the other organization and/or the wider movement. Vice versa, the other organizations and the wider movement are a big potential source of resource mobilization for Identitair Verzet, which is why they do initiate forms of cooperation on a regular basis.

Moreover, a number of Identitair Verzet's characteristics diverge from that of the other organizations. As it was founded in isolation, e.g. not in the image of the French Génération Identitaire like the other organizations were, they i.a. sport a different symbol as their main logo. These divergences result in them not explicitly being recognized as part of the 'Generation Identity family' and thereby rarely being cooperated with on initiative of the other organizations. Nonetheless, Identitair Verzet itself does explicitly identify with this 'family' and therefore regularly initiates cooperation.

In this research only little evidence for the political opportunity structure theory as explanation for the cooperation between Identitair Verzet and the other organizations was found. The relative success of the Generation Identity 'family' in terms of member numbers can be addressed as a political opportunity that is seized by Identitair Verzet in an attempt to mobilize fresh resources, as can the emergence of new activists abroad, which is seized by the movement to establish new

international chapters. However, these factors are also, and in that respect more strongly, evidence of respectively the resource mobilization theory and the collective identity theory as explanation for the cooperation between Identitair Verzet and the other organizations.

Taking into account all of the above I argue that, because of Identitair Verzet's small scale and slightly divergent identity, cooperation between them and the other organizations is mainly of rhetorical nature, occurs through Twitter, is initiated by Identitair Verzet and is dependent on other organizations' activity.

Even though the validity of this study was addressed through the assurance of credibility, transferability, and dependability, which are the qualitative translations to validity and reliability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), a number of remarks can be made with regard to the conclusions.

First of all, for reasons of feasibility the scope of this research was limited to five organizations, other than Identitair Verzet. Even though these are the 'common suspects' because of their proximity and/or activity, the results of this study do not rule out more intense or reciprocal cooperation between Identitair Verzet and other European identitarian organizations. For instance, during the data collection process cases of cooperation between Identitair Verzet and Generation Identity UK/Identitarian Movement of England were also detected. Because this organization is not within the scope of this research these results were not included. Nonetheless, a replication of this study in which this organization *is* within the scope, could result in different conclusions. However, during the data collection process the cases of cooperation between Identitair Verzet and this organization, on first sight, did not appear to differ from what was concluded in this study.

Furthermore, this study had to cope with several difficulties regarding the data sources. Firstly, a technical limitation was encountered that made it impossible to retrieve retweets from before February 2016, causing the scope of this study to start at that month. It's possible that cooperation between Identitair Verzet and the other organizations was different from what was concluded in this study prior to that date, with the peak of the European migration crisis in 2015 as possible political opportunity for cooperation. However, regular tweets, newspaper articles, website articles and government reports from before 2016 were also reviewed (but excluded from this thesis), in which no evidence for major deviations from the conclusions in this study with respect to cooperation between Identitair Verzet and the other organizations prior to February 2016 was found. Secondly, this research was solely based on open sources that are easily accessible to all internet users. It is not unlikely that identitarian movement organizations are reluctant to publish specific information on cooperation with other organizations on the internet or that they try to conceal such information from reporters and governments out of fear for state repression. It is therefore not unthinkable that

the actual cooperation between Identitair Verzet and the other organizations differs from what is concluded in this study and occurs through secretive meetings and/or encrypted applications. One such example was detected in a coded newspaper article for which the reporter went to a secretive Identitair Verzet meeting as an undercover. During this meeting one of the Identitair Verzet members described how the organization was corrected by the French Génération Identitaire for being opposed to Polish migrant workers. This was the only instance of this kind of cooperation (ideological) that was detected and thus may occur more often through media or forums that are hard to detect.

Finally, the conclusions show little evidence for the political process theory as explanation for the cooperation between Identitair Verzet and the other organizations. Not all indicators for this theory can however be easily detected through the sources that were used for this study. If this study was to be replicated based on different source types, the conclusions with regard to this theory might come out differently as well.

Concluding, this study added to the body of literature on cooperation between European identitarian organizations, and between far right non-party organizations in general, by investigating the cooperation between Identitair Verzet and five other European identitarian organizations. Even though the results of this study can't be projected onto other identitarian organizations because of Identitair Verzet's divergences, the research design can be used to research cooperation between other identitarian organizations as well. However, as explained above, the conclusions of this study do not necessarily present the undisputed truth. To verify the legitimacy of this study or that of any future uses of the design, they should be complemented by a similar research design based on in-depth interviews with organizations' members, and/or (participant) observations.

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