



Centre for Documentation  
and Counter Extremism

# Active Clubs

## Current Trends and Early Prevention

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# Introduction

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This report by the Centre for Documentation and Counter Extremism (CDE) provides insight into a current far-right movement and its implications for the field of prevention. The aim of the report is to provide concrete and applicable knowledge that can be incorporated, in various ways, into local prevention work and the efforts of other relevant public authorities.

Active Clubs is a transnational far-right network organised locally into groups that operate Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) clubs. According to The Danish National Security and Intelligence Service's (PET) Assessment of the Terrorist Threat to Denmark 2024, Active Clubs represents an example of a far-right group, in which physical training is combined with online activities and ideological indoctrination.<sup>1</sup> In Denmark, the group is currently present in several major cities, under the name Active Club Denmark/Active Club Danmark. The Danish Active Club forms part of a broader, trans-national, and Scandinavian network.<sup>2</sup>

This report is one of CDE's publications on preventing extremism in Denmark. It is based on both international and Danish research in the field. It is intended for practitioners working to prevent extremism, and its analysis is consistently situated within this context.

CDE is a governmental centre that documents and works to prevent extremism in Denmark at the national, regional, and local levels. As part of its documentation and prevention work, the centre monitors extremist groups in Denmark, including their public online communication channels. CDE provides specialised advice on the topics covered in this report. This includes guidance on addressing local challenges involving extremist groups and advice on creating contingency and action plans to prevent extremism more broadly. CDE can be contacted by email at [ekstremisme@us.dk](mailto:ekstremisme@us.dk) or by telephone on +45 72 14 27 00.<sup>3</sup>

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1 CTA/PET, *Vurdering af terrortruslen mod Danmark*, 2024, [url](#).

2 Information, *Racehad, hypermaskulinitet og 'fight clubs': En ny type højreekstremisme har ramt Sverige*, 14 August 2024, [url](#).

3 Read more about the Centre for Documentation and Counter Extremism at [stopekstremisme.dk](http://stopekstremisme.dk) and [us.dk](http://us.dk).

This report focuses on far-right extremism. In this context, 'extremism' refers to groups, organisations, and/or more loosely organised networks that commit, or seek to justify, violence or other unlawful acts in response to societal conditions that they are dissatisfied with.<sup>4</sup> CDE defines far-right extremism as a political ideology with roots in ultranationalist political doctrines, typically inspired by authoritarian, anti-liberal, and anti-democratic currents, including variants of fascism and National Socialism. Individual groups are typically connected to like-minded actors beyond national borders.<sup>5</sup>

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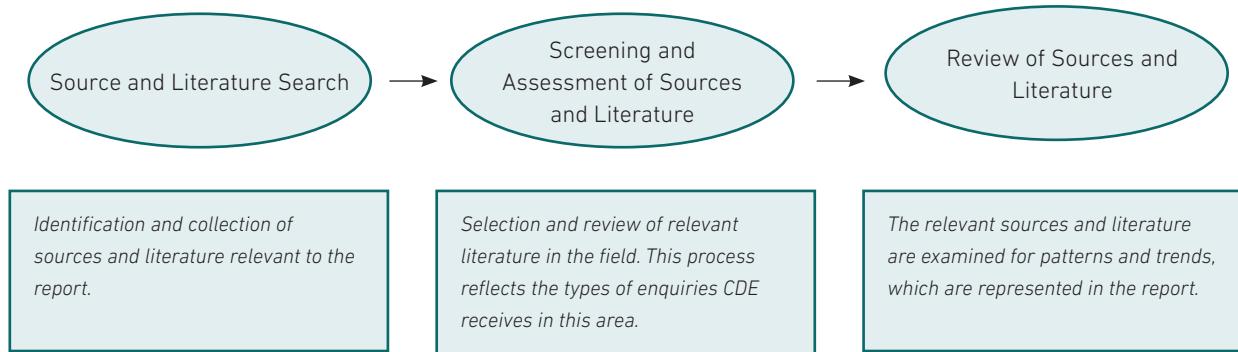
<sup>4</sup> *Extremism* is defined according to the national action plan "Forebyggelse og bekæmpelse af ekstremisme og radikalisering", 2016, [url](#). See the national action plan for further clarification of concepts.

<sup>5</sup> For more information in Danish on far-right extremism, see CDE's website: <https://www.stopekstremisme.dk/viden/find-viden-om-højreekstremisme-1>.

## Methodology

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This report is based on openly accessible sources and recent research in the field. The literature and sources used have been identified and collected through a literature search and a snowball approach, in which additional relevant literature and sources were identified from the references found in the initial material. The methodological approach is illustrated in the model below:



This report has been subject to both internal and external quality assurance. The analyses and conclusions have been reviewed and validated by the Centre for Digital Youth Care.

## List of Abbreviations

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<b>Alt-right</b>	Alternative Right
<b>CeMAS</b>	Center for Monitoring, Analysis and Strategy
<b>MMA</b>	Mixed Martial Arts
<b>NRM</b>	Nordic Resistance Movement
<b>RAM</b>	Rise Above Movement
<b>RWE</b>	Right-wing extremist

## Background

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### **Active Clubs is a transnational network with origins in the far-right movement in the United States:**

More specifically, the Active Clubs network emerged from the far-right group Rise Above Movement (RAM), which has its roots in the violent Californian skinhead scene.<sup>6</sup> RAM developed in the latter half of the 2010s as part of a broader transformation of the American far-right, commonly referred to under the umbrella term Alt-right.<sup>7</sup> From its inception, and like the preceding skinhead scene, RAM was a street-fighting movement in which physical training and martial arts, grounded in a far-right ideological framework, were channelled into violent attacks on political opponents and ethnic minorities. The criminal extremism of RAM members came to the attention of US security authorities in the wake of the deadly unrest in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017. The group played a central role in the far-right violence that occurred during those events. Several of its leading members were subsequently convicted for their involvement in the unrest, as well as for a long series of violent assaults and riots in California.<sup>8</sup> One of these members was Robert Rundo, the founder and leader of RAM, who fled to Europe to avoid a lengthy prison sentence. Over the following years, he built a new platform as a prominent far-right influencer while operating from various Eastern European countries. Rundo was arrested in Romania in 2023 and extradited to the United States, where he was sentenced to two years' imprisonment in December 2024.<sup>9</sup> Over the years, Rundo reflected on the reasons for RAM's downfall. He concluded that a new group was needed that would be more resilient to scrutiny from the authorities and the public.<sup>10</sup> In December 2020, he published a manifesto calling for the formation of a new movement under the banner of "White Nationalism 3.0" – a third iteration of the far-right, comprising smaller groups with less centralised control, and granting greater autonomy to individual chapters and members.

### **Active Clubs presents itself as an ordinary martial arts club rather than a far-right group:**

The intention is to make the movement less visible and therefore less vulnerable to prosecution, by avoiding the overt use of traditional far-right symbols and references.<sup>11</sup> This strategy is built around a façade that gives the false impression of a non-political sporting brotherhood of young men who are brought together by their shared interest in martial arts, fitness, and group solidarity. This is all underpinned by a hyper-masculine worldview. In January 2021, Rundo and German-Rus-

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6 ADL, Rise Above Movement (RAM), [url](#).

7 SPLC, Alt-Right, [url](#); SPLC, Rise Above Movement (RAM), [url](#).

8 United States Attorney's Office, Western District of Virginia, *Press Release*, [url](#); ADL, Rise Above Movement (R.A.M.), [url](#).

9 The Guardian, *US founder of neo-Nazi network sentenced to two years of time served*, 13 December 2024, [url](#).

10 Wired, *As the Mastermind of Far-Right 'Active Clubs' Goes to Prison, His Violent Movement Goes Global*, [url](#).

11 ADL, *Active Club Network*, 1 October 2023, [url](#).

sian neo-Nazi Denis Kapuskin (also known as Denis Nikitin<sup>12</sup>), launched the *Active Club Podcast*. They encouraged followers to establish local chapters with the aim of 'rekindling the warrior spirit' and 'saving European heritage' through targeted martial arts training.<sup>13</sup> According to German far-right extremism researcher and expert Alexander Ritzmann<sup>14</sup>, by 2024 Active Clubs had spread rapidly—first in the United States, and subsequently to 15 other countries. The movement is particularly active in Australia, Canada, and several European countries. By September 2023, 15 Active Clubs had been recorded in France alone.<sup>15</sup> According to CeMAS, an organisation that monitors far-right groups online, there were 126 Active Clubs worldwide by June 2024, of which 89 were active on the encrypted app Telegram.<sup>16</sup>

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12 ADL, *Denis Kapustin*, [url](#).

13 ADL, *Active Club Network*, 1 October 2023, [url](#).

14 Alexander Ritzmann is, among other roles, a Senior Advisor at the think tank *Counter Extremism Project*, an expert and adviser to the European Commission, and a former adviser to RAN, which has since been replaced by the EU's so-called Knowledge Hub: <https://www.counterextremism.com/people/alexander-ritzmann>

15 CEP, Alexander Ritzmann, 24 September 2023, [url](#).

16 CeMAS, *Fraternity, Fitness, and Fascism: Active Clubs in Germany*, 19 June 2024, [url](#).

## Ideology and Strategy

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**Active Clubs is not narrowly aligned with a single far-right ideological worldview:** As is typical of contemporary far-right networks, the group draws its ideological inspiration and positioning from a wide variety of far-right doctrines and ideas, combined with references to, and influences from, popular culture. According to Alexander Ritzmann, Active Clubs represents a third wave or relaunch of the far-right project, which he describes as a variant of 'White Nationalism 3.0'.<sup>17</sup> Despite its diverse ideological, religious, and esoteric sources of inspiration, the movement's self-perception is heavily defined by neo-fascist and accelerationist ideas and ideologies, which it seeks to disseminate via digital platforms and social media.<sup>18</sup>

**In brief, accelerationism is a violent, far-right strategy aimed at hastening the collapse of liberal democratic society:** This is to be achieved through destabilising actions, including violence and terrorism. The ultimate goal is to establish a far-right social order from the resulting chaos.<sup>19</sup> The term is widely used within the violence-oriented segment of the far-right movement and appears both on mainstream digital platforms and in encrypted chatrooms. Far-right terrorist attacks and mass shootings are often influenced by accelerationist ideas, which can be found in the manifestos of far-right terrorists, such as Brenton Tarrant's.<sup>20</sup> This is often combined with other conspiracy theories, such as the 'Great Replacement'—the idea that the survival of the white race and culture is under acute threat from other races, cultures, and from immigration. This conspiracy theory often incorporates an antisemitic conspiratorial element.<sup>21</sup>

**Active Clubs seeks to avoid the public use of traditional far-right symbols and references:** In this way, the group operates covertly behind a less alarming façade, which draws less public attention and disguises its underlying far-right objectives.<sup>22</sup> Charles Rundo has set out a series of strategic guidelines, including the advice to avoid placing ideological positions at the forefront of propaganda materials. He emphasises avoiding the alienating of potential members by starting recruitment with more general politics, establishing common ground with potential recruits, or simply inviting them to fitness training sessions.<sup>23</sup> Ideology should only be introduced gradually afterwards. These recruitment tactics, both online and offline, are designed to conceal the group's overtly far-right position from new members, who are then slowly indoctrinated and radicalised.

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17 Alexander Ritzmann, *White Supremacy 3.0*, webinar, AGI, 11 May 2023, [url](#).

18 GNET, *Accelerationism: The Active Club Network*, 25 July 2024, [url](#).

19 GNET, *Behind the Skull Mask: An Overview of Militant Accelerationism*, March 2024, [url](#).

20 GNET, *Behind the Skull Mask: An Overview of Militant Accelerationism*, March 2024, [url](#).

21 ADL, *White Supremacists Embrace "Accelerationism"*, 16 April 2019, [url](#).

22 GNET, *Accelerationism: The Active Club Network*, 25 July 2024, [url](#).

23 CeMAS, *Fraternity, Fitness, and Fascism: Active Clubs in Germany*, 19 June 2024, [url](#).

While some members use far-right extremist symbols in their logos, the group primarily uses images of club members, often engaged in martial arts training, to promote Active Club as a fun space for white masculinity and fraternal camaraderie. In their own words, they aim "to make fascism fun again."<sup>24</sup> However, not all members and chapters adhere to Rundo's instructions. Far-right extremist symbols and rhetoric frequently appear on members' social media accounts and digital platforms.<sup>25</sup> In this respect, Active Clubs is quite openly ideologically driven by a far-right world-view, as are related emerging far-right networks such as *Feuerkrieg Division*.

In relation to Rundo's strategy for 'White Supremacy 3.0', the end goal, according to Alexander Ritzmann, is:

*"The overall objective of the White Supremacy 3.0 strategy appears to be the creation of a shadow or stand-by army of trained and capable RWE individuals that can be activated when the need for coordinated violent action on a larger scale arises."*<sup>26</sup>

**The group's strategy is to "hide in plain sight":** In other words, they aim to appear as an entirely ordinary group of white men who meet in a sports community and operate within the boundaries of the law. This is intended to prevent the police from taking an interest in their underlying far-right activities.<sup>27</sup> Ritzmann also notes that, although the connection between far-right extremism and combat sports is not new, the association to 'White Supremacy 3.0' is new in the sense that it incorporates strong cultural references. Here, martial arts and the idealisation of "the white warrior" are combined with references to mainstream popular culture, such as the 1999 film classic *Fight Club*, directed by David Fincher.<sup>28</sup> The aim appears to be an aesthetic staging of far-right violence and the law of the strongest—a form of 'beautification' intended to make far-right messages and violence more appealing to a broader audience, thereby increasing the potential for recruitment to Active Clubs.<sup>29</sup>

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24 CeMAS, *Fraternity, Fitness, and Fascism: Active Clubs in Germany*, 19 June 2024, [url](#).

25 CeMAS, *Fraternity, Fitness, and Fascism: Active Clubs in Germany*, 19 June 2024, [url](#).

26 Alexander Ritzmann, *New Strategies of Transnational European-U.S. Right-Wing Extremist Combat Sports Network*, AGI, 8 August 2023, [url](#).

27 Alexander Ritzmann, *Research Warns White Supremacists Are Building a Shadow Militia*, 14 August 2024, [url](#).

28 Information: *Racehad, hypermaskulinitet og 'fight clubs': En ny type højreekstremisme har ramt Sverige*. 6 October 2023, [url](#).

29 Alexander Ritzmann, *White Supremacy 3.0*, AGI, 11 May 2023, [url](#).

# Recruitment, Enemy Images, and Propaganda

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**Active Clubs is ideologically centred on a racist or ethnocentric worldview:** However, the group's outlook is also a composite patchwork of far-right, esoteric, and ultra-conservative philosophies, ideologies, and visual styles.<sup>30</sup> Its messages are disseminated through digital platforms and formats such as memes, videos, and social media. The group therefore particularly appeals to younger men who are attracted to far-right values, such as racism and hostility towards gender equality, and LGBTQ+ minorities. Active Clubs also appeals to online youth communities where coarse and transgressive humour thrive, such as scepticism towards feminism or so-called wokeism.<sup>31</sup>

**A central component of the worldview and enemy images of the Active Clubs is the fight against the 'Great Replacement':** —A widespread conspiracy theory in far-right circles.<sup>32</sup> At its core, this conspiracy theory claims that the white and Christian population is being systematically replaced by non-white and non-Christian minorities to undermine and reduce the white population to a minority "in their own country".<sup>33</sup> The conspiracy theory exists in various forms, in which immigrants, Muslims, or Jews are identified as the primary enemy, and purported covert elites, such as politicians, the media, or elements of the cultural sphere, are portrayed as the masterminds behind the 'replacement'. Several researchers have identified these narratives as a factor that can act as an accelerator for individual radicalisation towards far-right violence and terrorism.<sup>34</sup>

**Another key component of Active Clubs' self-image and propaganda is the promotion of hyper-masculine ideals:** This entails the idealisation of the warrior's strength and the normalisation of political violence. Gender roles are viewed ultra-conservatively with men portrayed as the natural providers and protectors of the family.<sup>35</sup> In line with traditional far-right gender roles, women's roles are reduced to the racially defined reproduction of the next generation of warriors, as well as domestic duties. In practice, however, gender roles within Active Clubs are more nuanced and adapted to a younger generation of far-right extremists, in which women also typically play an important political role, albeit often less visibly. There are examples of women associated with Active Clubs appearing in MMA or combat-like situations for propaganda purposes, sometimes armed, as well as in sexualised digital propaganda material. This material is likely intended to attract new male and female members to Active Clubs, presenting it as a natural forum where "real" white

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30 CTEC, *Dangerous Organizations and Bad Actors: The Active Club Network*, 15 March 2023, [url](#).

31 CfDP, *Det vrede internet: En trussel mod ligestilling, trivsel og demokrati*, November 2020, [url](#).

32 The Guardian, *A deadly ideology: how the 'great replacement theory' went mainstream*, 8 June 2022, [url](#).

33 GNET, *Understanding Accelerationist Narratives: The Great Replacement Theory*, 30 May 2022, [url](#).

34 Information, *Ny forskning: Konspirationsteori om muslimsk befolkningsudskiftning kan føre til vold og had*, 8 July 2021, [url](#).

35 Information, *Racehad, hypermaskulinitet og 'fight clubs': En ny type højreekstremisme har ramt Sverige*, 14 August 2024, [url](#).

men and women meet.<sup>36</sup> However, it is still unclear whether this increased visibility of women is primarily a propaganda tool, or whether it also reflects that gender roles within Active Clubs are more nuanced than those within traditional far-right groups, where women are limited to social functions. Although the group's propaganda is primarily directed at young men interested in, and attracted to, communities centred on fitness, martial arts, and masculine values, women are also recruited.<sup>37</sup>

**Young men and boys are obvious at-risk groups susceptible to Active Clubs' propaganda:** The group deliberately targets individuals already drawn to misogynistic and ultra-masculine online communities, such as the grey zone surrounding influencer Andrew Tate. Extremism researcher Milo Comerford has noted that these communities, which have natural ideological overlaps with far-right milieus and narratives, serve as meeting points for the recruitment and radicalisation of young men by misogynistic, far-right, and other violent networks and groups.<sup>38</sup> This appeal also touches on broader gender-related themes, such as young men seeking community and identity. This can make them vulnerable to recruitment into Active Clubs.

**Active Clubs cultivates enemy images similar to those found across many contemporary far-right networks and groups:** Firstly, the use of hateful far-right rhetoric is often based on enemy images rooted in racist, antisemitic, or gender-based stereotypes.<sup>39</sup> Secondly, these are largely communicated through various digital platforms and social media, embedded in formats such as memes, videos, and symbols.<sup>40</sup> More specifically, a close look at the American network reveals that Active Clubs is particularly driven by antisemitic conspiracy theories and hostility towards the LGBTQ+ community.<sup>41</sup>

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36 Robin O'Luanagh, *The Right Fit: How Active Club Propaganda Attracts Women to the Far-Right*. GNET, 5 December 2023, [url](#).

37 Robin O'Luanagh, *The Right Fit: How Active Club Propaganda Attracts Women to the Far-Right*. GNET, 5 December 2023, [url](#).

38 The New Statesman, "There are thousands of Andrew Tates out there": The battle against online extremism, 21 June 2023, [url](#).

39 Ciarán O'Connor, *Active Clubs: The Growing Threat of 'White Nationalism 3.0' Across the United States*, ISD, 24 October 2023, [url](#).

40 NISOS, *White Nationalist "Active Club" Maintain an Active Online Presence*, March 2024, [url](#).

41 Ciarán O'Connor, *Active Clubs: The Growing Threat of 'White Nationalism 3.0' Across the United States*, ISD, 24 October 2023, [url](#).

## Online – Social Media and Encrypted Apps

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**Active Clubs is highly active on digital platforms, using them to spread propaganda and recruit new members:** Outwardly, Active Clubs presents itself as a community centered around MMA, with in-person training and fights forming its main activities.<sup>42</sup> However, these activities also serve another purpose, namely that images and videos of well-trained MMA fighters, combined with far-right messages and symbols shared for instance through memes, act as an effective lure aimed at younger men and boys, who are generally fascinated by and attracted to martial arts, fitness, and physical appearance.<sup>43</sup> The propaganda also appeals to the broader far-right milieu, for whom the law of the strongest, readiness for violence, and the glorification of strong white men are celebrated.<sup>44</sup>

**Several studies show that Active Clubs has been, and remains, present on a range of mainstream digital platforms and social media:** One study from 14 October 2023 found that there had been 4.5 million clicks on the two hashtags #aktivklubb and #activeclub on TikTok, a platform that is particularly popular among children and young people.<sup>45</sup> Both hashtags lead to videos and images of MMA fights and fighters, combined with far-right messages and symbols. These images and videos also feature hate propaganda targeting immigrants, for example. TikTok has reportedly, following complaints, removed some of the far-right material associated with these hashtags.<sup>46</sup> However, the hashtags have not been deactivated and still contain far-right propaganda, including a promotional video for Active Club Denmark.<sup>47</sup> The study also shows that far-right propaganda related to Active Club can also be found on Facebook and Instagram, albeit to a lesser extent than on TikTok. The study does not clarify whether this is due to more effective moderation, different algorithms, or reflects a strategic prioritisation made by Active Club.<sup>48</sup>

**Active Clubs is particularly active on the encrypted messaging app Telegram:** In November 2024, Telegram had around 950 million users. This provides far-right networks and groups such as Active Club with access to a very large global audience through links to YouTube videos, far-right clothing brands, and podcasts.<sup>49</sup> In addition, Active Club operates its own far-right media outlet under the name Media2Rise. Via its website the group provides open access to the group's prop-

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42 CeMAS, *Fraternity, Fitness, and Fascism: Active Clubs in Germany*, 19 June 2024, [url](#).

43 HS Today, *Inside the Shadowy Digital Realm of Active Clubs*, 24 June 2024, [url](#).

44 CeMAS, *Fraternity, Fitness, and Fascism: Active Clubs in Germany*, 19 June 2024, [url](#).

45 Forbes, *On TikTok, White Supremacist 'Active Club' Recruitment Videos May Have Reached Millions*, 17 October 2023, [url](#).

46 Forbes, *On TikTok, White Supremacist 'Active Club' Recruitment Videos May Have Reached Millions*, 17 October 2023, [url](#).

47 Tiktok, #activeclubs, [url](#), (accessed 6 February 2025)

48 Forbes, *On TikTok, White Supremacist 'Active Club' Recruitment Videos May Have Reached Millions*, 17 October 2023, [url](#).

49 Bloomberg, *Extremists on Telegram Pose as Fight Clubs, Raising Alarms in the US*, 21 November 2024, [url](#).

agenda materials along with links to a wide range of social media platforms and communication channels.<sup>50</sup>

**Active Clubs' use of social media and communication apps is characterised by a robust multi-platform strategy:** This means that Active Club users and forums frequently link to one another in order to maximise the visibility and dissemination of their content. These forums represent a wide range of geographical locations and operate commercially by selling merchandise and clothing brands associated with Active Club and other far-right networks and groups.<sup>51</sup> In addition to the previously mentioned Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, the group is also present on a number of other mainstream media platforms, including X (formerly Twitter). This presence is supplemented by activity on the video-sharing platforms BitChute and Odysee, and on the communication platform Gab, as well as Telegram.<sup>52</sup> The most mainstream social media platforms are also deliberately utilised by the group's members to spread far-right propaganda to a larger and more diverse audience. However, according to this research report, the most central platform is Telegram, where members of the network communicate, coordinate, and share propaganda with each other in encrypted forums.<sup>53</sup>

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50 CTEC: *Dangerous Organizations and Bad Actors: The Active Club Network*, 15 March 2023, [url](#); See also: Media2Rise, [url](#).

51 Bellingcat, *The Small Bulgarian Streetwear Shop Designing Clothes for the Far-Right 'Active Club' Movement*, 9 October 2024, [url](#); Rolling Stone: *This Activewear Brand Wants to Be Lululemon for Fascists*, 24 September 2023, [url](#).

52 HS Today, *Inside the Shadowy Digital Realm of Active Clubs*, 24 June 2024, [url](#).

53 GNET, *Accelerationism: The Active Club Network*, 25 July 2024, [url](#).

# Transnational Network – From the United States to Europe and Scandinavia

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**According to researcher Alexander Ritzmann, the international Active Club network currently has the following characteristics:**

- Active Clubs is currently the largest international far-right network, with over 100 chapters primarily in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe.
- The Active Clubs network “hides in plain sight”, concealing its underlying far-right agenda by presenting itself as an MMA club.
- In the United States, Active Clubs operates as a shadow militia, deliberately training for violence in anticipation of a perceived far-right societal upheaval.
- Active Clubs maintains a lower profile than other far-right groups, with the aim of avoiding prosecution by state authorities and unwanted attention from the media, for example.
- In Sweden, Active Clubs is working to expand, particularly beyond existing far-right networks.<sup>54</sup>

Swedish researcher Morgan Finnsiö, affiliated with the independent magazine EXPO, which focuses on far-right extremism, has specifically studied the network's spread in Sweden, where Active Clubs has its largest presence in Scandinavia. Local chapters have been established there since 2020, with numbers accelerating particularly since 2023. Following the Swedish example, local chapters have also been established in Norway and Denmark during the same period.<sup>55</sup>

**The study further shows that Aktivklubb Sverige (hereafter Active Clubs Sweden) has the following characteristics:**

- The network's core consists of around 100 members. However, the group's efforts to increase its online visibility have made Active Clubs appealing to a broader segment of young Swedes.
- Approximately half of the Swedish members have a background in the Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM).
- Membership of Active Clubs Sweden is fluid, meaning that many members are also part of other Swedish far-right groups and networks such as GYM XIV, Tvåsaxe, Vigridsvallen, and Granskogsfolket.
- Members are aged between 19 and 26, with an average age of 22.
- There is some overlap with existing MMA and football hooligan gangs.
- Of the 31 core activists examined, all are men.
- Of these individuals, more than 70 per cent have a background in other far-right groups.

<sup>54</sup> CEP, Alexander Ritzmann: *(Mis)Understanding the Transnational Violent Extreme-Right Active Club Strategy*, 17 May 2024, [url](#).

<sup>55</sup> CEP/EXPO, Morgan Finnsiö: *Active Clubs: The Case of Sweden 2020-2024*, 21 May 2024, [url](#).

- More than 40 per cent have a criminal record, and just under 25 per cent have been convicted after joining Active Clubs Sweden.<sup>56</sup>

**Within the Swedish far-right milieu, Active Clubs Sweden has succeeded in attracting a new generation of men:** This means that Active Clubs also draws in individuals who have not previously been part of the far-right scene but who are drawn to far-right narratives and the glorification of violence for various reasons. According to Morgan Finnsjö, this is partly because the group is presented as a healthy and active alternative to passive online activism.<sup>57</sup> Hypermasculinity and the glorification of violence and racist ideology are combined with physical training, a healthy lifestyle, and personal development, while the network places greater emphasis on social relationships than on traditional hierarchies. All of this appeals to a younger generation of boys and men who have been radicalised online to a greater extent than in the past, rather than through traditional groups.<sup>58</sup>

**The Swedish Active Club scene is characterised by a revolutionary far-right ideology combined with significant violent capacity:** This is also driven by hate propaganda directed against political opponents, minorities, and LGBTQ+ communities. The report further assesses that the group has connections to criminal milieus, football hooligans, and so-called 'Pedo hunters'—vigilante groups that target and assault men they suspect of paedophilia.<sup>59</sup>

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56 CEP/EXPO, Morgan Finnsjö: *Active Clubs: The Case of Sweden 2020-2024*, 21 May 2024, [url](#).

57 CEP/EXPO, Morgan Finnsjö: *Active Clubs: The Case of Sweden 2020-2024*, 21 May 2024, [url](#).

58 Information, *Racehad, hypermaskulinitet og 'fight clubs': En ny type højreekstremisme har ramt Sverige*, 14 August 2024, [url](#).

59 CCOA/EXPO, My Vingren: *The Active Club Milieu in Sweden. How Secret Fight Clubs Became the New Recruitment Tool of the Extreme Right*, July 2024, [url](#).

## Implications for Prevention: A Summary

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This report consolidates knowledge about the new far-right group and transnational network Active Clubs/Active Club. Active Clubs presents itself outwardly as an ordinary martial arts club focused on Mixed Martial Arts (MMA). This is a deliberately constructed façade that conceals a far-right group that combines martial arts with far-right narratives and ideologies. Active Clubs exploits digital platforms and social media to disseminate far-right propaganda and recruit new members. Its glorification of violence stems from a far-right and racist worldview that portrays ethnic minorities and LGBTQ+ communities as the enemy. Active Clubs currently has more than 100 international chapters and, in the Nordic region, is particularly strong in Sweden, but also has chapters in Norway and Denmark.

In terms of prevention, particular attention should be given to young men and boys who are drawn to ultra-masculine online communities and combat sports. Active Clubs' propaganda and recruitment efforts are especially targeted at this demographic. The network operates in both the digital and physical domains – in the digital domain, it is particularly active on communications platforms such as TikTok and Telegram, and in the physical domain, it promotes in-person social interaction through MMA training sessions at its facilities.

Therefore, local prevention efforts against Active Club and far-right extremism in Denmark should be integrated and multi-dimensional, addressing both offline and online prevention.

## Glossary of Terms

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**Accelerationism** – A far-right political theory and practice based on the idea that the development of democracy follows a predetermined trajectory towards total collapse. The goal of far-right accelerationism is therefore to provoke and escalate society's inherent conflicts through political violence and terrorism until the point at which democracy collapses and a new far-right social order emerges from the ruins.<sup>60</sup>

**Alt-right** – Short for *Alternative Right*. An American far-right protest movement that emerged in the 2000s and spread to Europe in the 2010s. The movement also encompasses a broad spectrum of anti-system, anti-liberal, populist, and related movements united by an extreme right-wing ideological worldview. It is particularly characterised by opposition to liberal democracy and gender equality, and by enemy images primarily directed against, for example, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ communities, immigrants, and so-called wokeism.

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