

**CANADA FIRST IS INEVITABLE : ANALYZING YOUTH-ORIENTED FAR-RIGHT
PROPAGANDA ON TIKTOK**

ÉTIENNE QUINTAL

Thèse soumise à l'Université d'Ottawa
dans le cadre des exigences du programme
de science politique

[École d'études politiques]
[Faculté des sciences sociales]
Université d'Ottawa

© Étienne Quintal, Ottawa, Canada, 2022

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	p.iii
Acknowledgements.....	p.iv
Introduction.....	p.1
Theoretical Foundations and Hypotheses.....	p.5
Methods and Data.....	p.15
Literature Review.....	p.20
Chapter 1: Mainstreaming Hate: Denial of Racism and the Overton Window.....	p.23
Chapter 2: Nostalgia and Paternalism: A New Generation of Fascist Leaders.....	p.40
Chapter 3: Counterhegemony and the Right-Wing Revolution.....	p.55
Conclusion.....	p.74
Bibliography.....	p.77

Abstract

The gradual disappearance of the so-called ‘alt-right’, caused in part by the gradual deplatforming of its figureheads has created somewhat of a power vacuum, allowing for a new generation of far-right influencers to take over. The Groyper movement, led by 23-year-old Nicholas J. Fuentes, could in this sense be described as one of the successors of the alt-right. The Groypers are youth-led and youth-oriented, insofar as their primary aim is to radicalize – or ‘red pill’ – Generation Z, a strategy outlined both in their speech and their use of social media platforms primarily used by young people, with TikTok being the most notable example. Despite the movement’s relative infancy, it could easily be described as one of the fastest growing far-right group in the modern era – in large part due to the perfect storm created by the COVID-19 lockdowns and the Black Lives Matter protests – and has recently begun to spawn culturally distinct offshoots outside of the United States into countries like Canada. This thesis will therefore examine the discursive practices of the Canadian ‘branch’ of the Groyper movement on TikTok in order to identify some of the tactics it uses to facilitate the radicalization of teenagers and young adults by drawing on Ruth Wodak’s Discourse-Historical framework. The findings of this project add to a growing body of research regarding youth-oriented far-right movements, the use of TikTok for propaganda purposes, and the broader literature of discourse analysis.

Acknowledgements:

There is no lack of people to whom I owe thanks for supporting me over the course of this project. In no particular order, thank you to my lovely partner and Ronan the dog for keeping me sane through all this work (and the global health event we are still living through); Billy and Hartley (and other folk) for tolerating my endless rants; papa & maman for giving me the stability to get this far; Olivier for all the random but somehow informative memes sent at 2am; Donkey for being an adorable menace; Pete, Liz, Hazel, Sébastien and Evan for their invaluable insights; my thesis supervisors, Prof V and W; Neven Leddy, Jon Waind, Irimi Tsakiri and Candice Steenbergen for broadening my horizons; the band Anti-Flag for providing a soundtrack to my writing sessions; and antifascist activists across the world fighting the good fight.

Introduction

In the wake of the disastrous Charlottesville rally in the summer of 2017, the white nationalist ‘alt-right’¹ movement, which sought to capitalize on the election of President Donald Trump to mainstream their extremist, racist politics, faced a crisis. In the span of a weekend, the façade they had struggled to put up – that of a respectable movement to preserve so-called ‘European identity’ – faltered, as violence unfolded in the streets of historic Virginian town, culminating in the death of antifascist activist Heather Hayer. As if Americans had now realized their true intentions, its leaders were gradually deplatformed², and the movement ultimately dissipated, almost as quickly as its first appeared in public consciousness. However, from the ashes of the alt-right rose a number of new groups, movements and hate-peddling individuals. Among them, Nicholas J. Fuentes, a young firebrand who borrowed the alt-right’s ideology and repackaged it into the youth-oriented ‘Groyper’ movement, sometimes referred to as ‘America First’. Though he himself attended the Charlottesville rally, and despite his overt denial and minimization of the Holocaust³, Fuentes has been more successful than his predecessors at attracting mainstream support. On February 26, 2021, sitting Congressman Paul Gosar and past Congressman Steve King appeared as featured speakers at AFPAC (America First Political Action Conference), an event organized by Fuentes, in what was described in the New York Times as a sign of the Republican Party’s ‘growing acceptance of extremism’⁴.

¹ Though the term has wrongfully been used as a stand-in for ‘far-right’, ‘alt-right’ refers to a specific, if broad, white nationalist movement, primarily active online and associated to meme culture.

² In antifascist activist circles, deplatforming means successfully causing one to lose access to platforms where they can openly spread their hateful ideas.

³ Anti-Defamation League. 2021.

⁴ Edmondson. “Far-Right Extremist Finds an Ally in an Arizona Congressman.”

Despite being only 23 at the time this thesis was written, Fuentes has succeeded in breeding a new generation of white nationalists, in large part due to his savvy use of new social media platforms. He first became popular by streaming his online show *America First* on platforms like Youtube, Twitch, DLive and Trovo, used primarily by teenage videogame enthusiasts⁵, and was an early adopter of TikTok, a popular app used primarily by young members of Generation Z. He has since been banned from each of these platforms, though this did not stop him from maintaining a high following. His Twitter profile – a ‘verified’⁶ account on the site – had almost 140,000 followers by the time it was taken down on July 9, 2021⁷. By meeting his public in the online spaces where they dwell, Fuentes has done more than anyone to radicalize and mobilize young, white men of high school and university age. His is not the first movement to actively target youth for recruitment, as there is a rich history in that regard, from the Hitlerjugend in Nazi Germany to contemporary skinhead groups. However, unlike other post-WWII right-wing youth movements, the Groyperers have largely succeeded in appearing relatively ‘normal’ to outsiders. Their discourse, though extremely crude, often passes as edgy humor to an uneducated public. Fuentes’ own image is carefully curated; the suits he wears, the green screen background he uses when airing his show, and his personal branding as a ‘paleo-conservative’ pundit are all different facets of a strategy to depict himself as young, respectable conservative activist.

Most interestingly, Fuentes’ successes have encouraged a number of imitators across the world to parrot his approach, rhetoric and aesthetic, including in Canada. Tyler L. Russell, a 24 year-old young man from south-western Ontario, who has used his American counterpart’s

⁵ Gais & Haiden. ‘Extremists Are Cashing in on a Youth-Targeted Gaming Website.’

⁶ Per Twitter, having a verified account ‘lets people know that an account of public interest is authentic. To receive the blue badge, your account must be authentic, notable, and active.’

⁷ Blake. ‘Twitter Bans Nick Fuentes, ‘Groyper’ Leader and ‘America First’ Podcaster.’.

popularity to launch his own group, *Canada First*. This Canadian offshoot of the Groypers has grown especially active over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. On October 1st, 2020, the ‘uOttawa Right Wing Politics’ club, as well as a student club then-affiliated to the People’s Party of Canada, announced an event featuring Russell. This marked my first run-in with the group. Upon learning of the event, I put out a call for action on social media, messaged the uOttawa student union, and contacted the university’s security services in order to warn them. Citing concerns regarding public health, Russell’s appearance was ultimately cancelled, but not before my information – my pictures, my social media profiles, and most concerningly a list of classes for which I was a teacher’s assistant – were shared by members of the group, leading to a flurry of threats which lasted for months. Despite the event’s failure, Russell continued his activities, and his group remains active to this day, harassing those who disagree with them, and using social media to spew the same racism, antisemitism, anti-LGBTQ2+ hatred and misogyny popularized by Nicholas J. Fuentes. During the last federal elections, a supporter of the Groyper movement working for a People’s Party of Canada local campaign, alongside Tyler L. Russell, went as far as to pelt Prime Minister Justin Trudeau with gravel⁸, granting the group its first ‘15-minutes-of-fame’ moment outside of the United States.

In Canada like elsewhere, the Groyper movement is largely fueled by anonymous content creators, who have capitalized on the COVID-19 pandemic and the uproar that followed the murder of George Floyd at the hands of law enforcement to sneak their way into the social media feeds of millions. As such, the purpose of this thesis will be to examine the messages conveyed in the content produced by Canadian members of the Groyper movement on TikTok, in order to

⁸ Canadian Anti-Hate Network, 2021.

understand how this movement attempts to sell white nationalism⁹ to them. In answering this question, I am seeking to create new knowledge regarding the ways the broader far-right movement is adapting itself to contemporary circumstances and making their appeal to Generation Z.

⁹ In the context of this thesis, the term white nationalist refers to an ideology which, first and foremost, seeks to protect the ‘white’ or ‘European’ identity of Western nations. Though racial considerations form the main pillar of white nationalism, a strict interpretation of gender roles which justifies misogyny, homophobia and transphobia is also a primordial aspect of it.

Theoretical Foundations

Perhaps more than any other far-right group, the Groyper movement relies heavily on popular culture as a vehicle for their political messages. This allows them to employ what communication scholar Tony Schwartz called the ‘resonance principle’, which empowers a message sender to convey an intentional and specific meaning to the audience by ‘tapping into the shared experiences of the receivers¹⁰’. These shared experiences, he argued, stem from the mass media environment that surrounds the public, as it allows millions of individuals to consume the same content simultaneously¹¹. Though Schwartz wrote primarily about television and radio as media which could induce shared experiences on a large scale, a modern understanding of his theories would likely add social media to this list. Using easily-recognizable popular culture items such as images, footage and memes – many of which refer to ubiquitous news events like the COVID-19 pandemic or the Black Lives Matter protests – Groyper contents creators make use of the resonance principle to disseminate messages which evoke the memories of these events all the while disseminating within them talking points which, together, form a white nationalist body of discourse. The success of their project to ‘sell’ white nationalism to Generation Z youth, then, depends on their ability to create content which ‘resonates’ with them. As such, in understanding how their messages are constructed to create resonances, three theories which find their basis in the academic study of right-wing movement will come into use through this thesis, namely; the Overton Window, right-wing Gramscianism, and the politics of nostalgia.

¹⁰ Kaid & Holtz-Bacha 2008, 714.

¹¹ Ibid.

The discourse employed by Groyper content creators, though ideologically coherent, tends to focus more on ‘cultural’ issues rather than specific policy demands. This is consistent with the discursive practices of the broader contemporary far-right movement, which is diverse both in thought and in strategies. In fact, referring to the contemporary far-right as a single ‘movement’ is somewhat – though not entirely – inexact. Its different subsets are often found to conflict with one another, be it due to disagreements with regards to their methods, or due to ideological differences that are difficult to reconcile. Despite this, the different parts of the movement remain largely united as what author Philippe-Joseph Salazar describes as a ‘community of discourse’ which rallies around ‘prohibited’ speech¹². In other words, they are unified by a shared understanding that their ideas are deemed offensive or unacceptable in the current cultural context, and that voicing their opinions in the public sphere could leave them vulnerable to censorship or ‘cancellation’, a term used to refer to the widespread shunning of an individual due to claims of wrongful speech or action¹³. The struggle against censorship or public condemnation is therefore one that is shared by all adherents of the movement. In this sense, many have argued that the main objectives of today’s far-right are not merely linked to any given policy demands, but rather to overhaul cultural institutions and mores, by weaponizing sacrosanct elements of the current culture, such as the principle of free speech, to their advantage. That is not to say that specific political matters do not play an important role in shaping the movement, but it is widely understood that, without a change in culture, enacting long-term reforms will be impossible. The battlefield has thus shifted towards normalizing far-right ideas and to ensure that a broader public be receptive to such messages. For this reason, expanding the ‘Overton Window’ – the scope of what is deemed ‘acceptable’ speech – has

¹² Salazar 2018, 137.

¹³ Societal fears regarding the supposedly prevalent risk of being ‘cancelled’ is also referred to as ‘cancel culture’.

gradually become the primary aim of the far-right^{14 15}. This is an objective which the Groypers take seriously. In an episode of his morning show ‘Good Morning Groyper, Fuentes explains why he believes his tactic of antagonizing ‘mainstream conservatives, who he believes are his movement’s primary adversary, has successfully forced them to adopt some of his ideas: ‘Now, their messaging has entirely changed. The people that I described (mainstream conservatives), they’re talking about white genocide, they’re talking about replacement migration, they’re talking about this broader definition of nationalism (...) Can the Groypers be assimilated into the mainstream? (...) It seems a dialogue has opened up.’ Their movement’s emphasis on ‘optics’, or one’s ability to forego explicitly extremist rhetoric and reframe core beliefs in a way that makes them more palatable to mainstream audiences, can be seen as a tactic that promotes an expanded Overton window. As Fuentes himself states it, the point of ‘optics’ is to ensure that when the Groyper’s message reaches ‘normal’ people, it is presented in a way that ‘people feel comfortable buying in’¹⁶, or, in other words, to present radical opinions in a manner that does not arouse public criticism. Understanding the importance of optics and of expanding the Overton Window can offer some insights into some of the discursive tactics the Canadian ‘faction’ of the Groyper movement display in the content they produce. Their intention is to obfuscate the line between radical and mainstream speech, for example by using ‘denial of racism’ tactics such as those outlined in the work of Teun A. van Dijk to introduce themselves in a positive light¹⁷ to potential new supporters in order to more easily draw them in, in a sort of foot-in-the-door fashion. This objective to expand to Overton Window provides the fuel for the so-called ‘culture wars’ waged by groups like the Groypers, on and off-line. In episode 638 of his online show

¹⁴ Stern 2019, 45.

¹⁵ Kelly 2017, 71.

¹⁶ Liberum Arbitrium, 2020.

¹⁷ Van Dijk 1992, 91.

‘America First’, Nicholas Fuentes states that ‘ideas don’t matter without power’ and that white people ought to seize power back from the media and academia, who ‘hate civilization’¹⁸. What is interesting about these remarks is the context in which they were uttered. One could imagine similar discourse coming from right-wing pundits during the Obama Presidency, when the Republican Party did not have access to executive power. However, Fuentes’ musings on the importance of powers were made in July 2020, over three years into President Trump’s mandate, in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests in the United States. In this specific instance, Fuentes is not referring to political or legislative power; even under a Republican, far-right President supported by a Republican Congress and a conservative-majority on the country’s Supreme Court, Fuentes is deploring the fact that his white nationalist agenda has not been implemented, in spite of all these things. Rather, he is urging his supporters to seek *cultural* power instead.

Perhaps surprisingly, Fuentes’ rhetoric can be likened to the views of Antonio Gramsci on culture, power, and the formation of counter-hegemonic groups, despite the Italian thinker’s professed Marxism. Like Gramsci, the Groyppers – and other far-right groups – believe that the revolutionary change they seek to create will not occur through the traditional avenue democratic debate and electoral politics, but rather through what Abrahmsen et al. call a ‘war of position’, or a ‘protracted, deeper process of constructing a new ideology that resonates with, but modifies ‘common sense’¹⁹. In his Prison Notebooks, Antonio Gramsci wrote of two means of ruling over a society: domination, and hegemony. Whereas ruling through domination involves the monopolizing of the means of coercion by the state, hegemony involves the gradual seizing of

¹⁸ Liberium Arbitrium, 2020.

¹⁹ Abrahmsen, Drolet, Gheciu, Narita, Vucetic & Williams 2020, 96.

‘moral authority’²⁰. Though he fell short of explicitly offering a definition for hegemony, contemporary Gramscian scholars like T.J Jackson Lears have defined it as ‘the spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group’²¹. Ruling elites, in this sense, do not always govern through coercion, but rather through acquiring and maintaining the consent of their subjects. This ‘general direction on social life’ is shaped by the ideology of the ruling class, which encompasses the language, ‘common sense’, empirical knowledge, beliefs, superstitions and opinions expressed by many citizens²². This ability to designate which ideas are deemed to be ‘common sense – and conversely which ideas are deemed problematic, dangerous or reprehensible’, is of particular interest to groups like the Groypers who occupy the fringes of political discourse. Because the mores of the majority are held up as the norm, fringe beliefs and expression are met with criticism and anger, therefore discouraging dissenters from criticizing the regime in place, and allowing ruling elites to use the coercive powers they wield through their access to the state apparatus and reinforced by non-state cultural institutions like social media companies, who can censor content online, as well as news media. Though only one group can achieve hegemony at a given time, Gramsci argued that other social groups, built around cultural and economic links of solidarity, can congregate as ‘historical blocs’²³ in opposition to the ruling class. These historical blocs can attempt to increase their cultural power in order to supplant the established hegemony, allowing them to form a new elite which would replace the previous one. Per Jackson Lears, historical blocs seeking to increase to the leaders of these historical blocs must ‘develop a worldview that appeals to a wide range of other groups within

²⁰ Jackson Lears 1995, 570.

²¹ Ibid, p.568.

²² Ibid, p.570.

²³ Ibid, 571.

(...) society'²⁴. To form hegemony, therefore, historical blocs need to develop an approach to culture of their own which is accessible and welcoming to the broader public. It is important to note, however, that hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forces interact with the same civil society, and exist within the same culture – as such, the objective of either is not to create a ‘new’ culture, but to manipulate the current one as a means of gaining legitimacy. The parallels between the Gramscian understanding of hegemony and the Groyper’s approach are evident. Fuentes and his ilk see themselves and other white men as the victims of the so-called globalist elites. This ruling class, according to them, holds control of the institutions that shape the culture – academia, the news media, entertainment – and impose, through them, the values that the Groypers denounce. Per Fuentes, these elites are by no means benevolent; they want white people dead, and their children ‘dead or brainwashed’²⁵. Because the Groyper’s ‘America First’ beliefs fall outside of the norms set by these elites, they are widely shunned by polite society: they are labeled as ‘racists’ or ‘trolls’²⁶, they are compared to neo-Nazis, and their social media accounts are censored or even taken down by large platforms like Facebook. The public condemnation of their movement, to them, serves as evidence that they live within a culture that is conditioned by the ruling elites to quash dissent and to impose conformity, allowing the State to forego the use of coercive measures. To survive and grow their movement in these hostile conditions, the Groypers have had to develop a culture of their own. Per Fuentes’ own words, his movement seeks to include ‘the incels’²⁷, the gamers²⁸, and the irony bros²⁹. (...) The great

²⁴ Ibid, 572.

²⁵ Liberium Arbitrium, 2020.

²⁶ Refers to someone who engages in online ‘trolling’, who deliberately seeks to offend others by posting inflammatory content.

²⁷ Short for ‘involuntary celibate’, a primordial online misogynistic community. Incels believe societal and biological factors prohibit them from attracting the romantic and sexual attention of women.

²⁸ Term refers to people who play video games and engage in video game culture.

²⁹ Per Urban Dictionary, Irony Bros are people who ‘pretend to enjoy something ironically, but actually cares about it deeply.

factions of the Internet'³⁰. In other words, they are attempting to build a solidarity bloc by reaching out first and foremost to individuals – typically young men – who feel alienated from contemporary society, which will form the base of cultural revolution they seek to bring about. This is similar to the process of forming a counter-hegemony as described in Gramsci's Prison Notebooks³¹, though in this case, it is one's ethnicity and participation in online cultures, not class, that serves as the basis for the building of a solidarity coalition. To this end, one could argue the Groyperers view themselves as a counter-hegemonic group, and operate in a manner that is consistent with his contemporaries' theories on how such groups can attain societal power.

Gramscian and neo-Gramscian perspectives on culture provide important insights in the context of this research, especially when considering the different strategies employed by the Groyperers to 'sell' white nationalism to younger audiences. Firstly, they allow us to understand the centrality of victimhood to the ideology and recruitments tactics of the Groyperers. Fuentes' decision to position his movement as a counter-hegemonic force implies that they are in a position of weakness with regards to a more dominant globalist faction. This implication serves two purposes which are relevant to the scope to this thesis. Firstly, this victimizing self-positioning as societal underdogs can facilitate the recruitment and radicalization of young men who personally feel as though modernity and the changes brought by progressive politics have made life harder for white men. As such, we can infer that Canadian Groyperers will seek to create content that young men with these inclinations can relate to. Such content could, for example, address perceived societal inequalities which they believe put white men at a disadvantage. Secondly, the Groyperers' decision to position themselves as victims of the modern world suggests

³⁰ Liberium Arbitrium, 2020.

³¹ Jackson Lears 1985, 569.

an element of rebellion and resistance, insofar as they are fighting back against the ruling elites. This is perhaps best exemplified by a declaration made by Paul Joseph-Watson, a British far-right vlogger who has been open about his support for the Groypers, that ‘conservatism is the new punk-rock’³². A sense of solidarity between marginalized individuals might be attractive to some, but for others, an opportunity to resist is a better option. We can therefore expect some of the content produced by the Canadian Groyper community to provide viewers with a sense of excitement through different calls for action.

The Groypers’ emphasis on their own victimhood also leans heavily on nostalgia as a political tool. If a grossly summarized understanding of intersectional theory argues that power is unevenly distributed in Western societies in the favour of a ‘white supremacist capitalist patriarchy’ which privileges white and wealthy men³³, the Groypers believe that this is no longer the case. Contemporary western culture, in their view, has been overtaken by Jewish actors who promote left-wing social movements like Black Lives Matter that create an atmosphere in which whiteness and manhood are shameful identities for which one should have to apologize. Cultural events, like the destruction of statues celebrating the lives of Confederate generals – or in the Canadian context, of founding figures like Sir John. A. Macdonald – in this sense, are emblems of cultural shift which renounces the history to which they cling. As Fuentes states, white Americans have essentially ‘handed off their heritage’ to people like ‘Stacey Abrams and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez’ – two high-profile American female politicians of colour – who want to ‘undermine deliberately (the) historic American nation’³⁴. This reference to ‘historic’ America is particularly interesting in the context of the increasing role played by nostalgia in right-wing

³² Paul Joseph Watson (@PrisonPlanet) 2020.

³³ hooks 2000, 118.

³⁴ Liberium Arbitrium, 2020.

movements, as evidenced by the use of slogans like ‘Make America Great Again’ by the Trump campaign, ‘We Want our Country Back’ during the Brexit referendum³⁵, or even ‘Take Back Canada’ by the Erin O’Toole Conservative leadership campaign, all of which refer to a past where their given country was ‘great’, or at least ‘ours’. There is certainly a feeling within right-wing movements that progress has gone too far, and that masculine identities are being held to too high a standard. This belief has fueled the rise of paternalistic figureheads like Jordan Peterson, who in turn have fueled this narrative of nostalgia and victimization through an uncritical depiction of the ‘past’ as an idealized reality which emphasizes positives and does not acknowledge negatives³⁶. The use of nostalgia as a political tool is by no means a new phenomenon, nor is it exclusively wielded by right-wing and far-right elements. But if conservative politics of nostalgia revolve around an idealized past of which they ignore the oftentimes racist and oppressive flaws, white nationalist nostalgia simply embraces them. The Groyper’s worldview, much like that of other paleoconservative groups, is fundamentally nostalgic of an undefined era in human history where white men could enjoy a comfortable, dominant place in the social hierarchy of their society³⁷. As such, while the Groypers and other white nationalist makes use of a conservative politic of nostalgia, their strategy goes beyond a conservative desire to look towards the past for guidance and order, and instead calls for a hegemonic change to return to the ‘common sense’ values which secured white supremacy³⁸. However, the theoretical framework of the politics of nostalgia allows for the application of a critical lens upon certain rhetorical themes that tend to be used by fascist and authoritarian right-wing movements. In keeping with their fascination with optics, it is safe to assume that Canadian

³⁵ Mudde 2015, 108.

³⁶ Nilges 2020, 22.

³⁷ Mudde 2015, 109.

³⁸ Defined here as the supremacy of whiteness in society as maintained by systemic racism.

Groyper content creators occupy a space between both conservative and white nationalist nostalgia politics. Such content could take the form of videos which focus on an idealized view of the past and clamor for a return to traditional values, all the while retaining discrete allusions to the movement's more radical views.

This thesis will be separated into three separate chapters, each one focusing on one of the three aforementioned theories and how they can help understand the online discursive practices of youth-oriented right-wing hate groups. In the first chapter, the 'Overton window' theory will be used to understand how the Groypers create content that resonates with viewers by making their beliefs appear less radical to uneducated audiences. In the second chapter, the politics of nostalgia will be used as a framework to understand the Groyper's framing of an idealized past to depict young, disaffected white men as the victims of modernity. In the third and last chapter, a right-wing Gramscian lens will be deployed to demonstrate how the Groypers frame themselves as a counter-hegemonic and rebellious faction, and frame the so-called 'globalists' as a global hegemon imposing their will on the world.

Methods and Data

As this thesis aims to create new knowledge regarding the discursive tactics used by far-right groups and movements, the content analyzed in its context ought to have been created for the specific purpose of resonating with young people. In this sense, using Groyper content published on TikTok is logically sound. Use of the now-famous social media platform skyrocketed in 2020, as millions of primarily young users downloaded it on their phone amidst global lockdowns. TikTok offers users the ability to view videos produced by accounts that they already follow, as well as content that the app's algorithms have determined they might be interested in, by factoring in both active (likes, comments and shares) as well as passive (length of time spent watching a given video) interactions with similar pieces of content³⁹. This is not dissimilar to Youtube, which has faced extensive criticism in the past for creating so-called 'echo chambers' which favour user radicalization by flooding their feeds with ever more extreme content⁴⁰.

In order to produce a similar effect, I created a 'Groyper' TikTok account – without producing or promoting content of my own – and followed a number of accounts I identified as affiliating to the movement, focusing primarily on finding Canadian accounts. Through this process, I came across '@rightwingismtiktok', which immediately stood out due to its bio: 'We are a Canadian based Right Wing Community'. Its profile picture, a portrait of Nicholas J. Fuentes with his eyes replaced by lasers, made its affiliation with the Groyper movement explicit. The page's impressive body of work – no less than 181 videos, with over 100,000 total views throughout the account at the time I ended the data collection phase of this thesis in

³⁹ Guinaudeau, Votta, Munger 2021, 6.

⁴⁰ Ribeiro, Ottoni, West, Almeida, Meira 2020, 137.

September 2020 – made it an interesting subject for analysis. The page was ultimately taken down some time in October 2020, after nearly a year of activity.

TikTok gives content creators a large array of tools to customize their videos: they can choose to include text, audio, external videos as well as captions with their posts. These tools allow for more complex messages to be passed through a given video; one user, for example, can use a given audio to alter – or add commentary – on a piece of footage. For a period of about a month, I took extensive notes on each of these features as they appeared in different videos, and tabulated them in a spreadsheet. In order to analyze the 181 pieces of content that make up my database, I have divided them per their relevance into three different categories corresponding to the three theories outlined in the previous section, as well as the three chapters of this thesis. I then employed Ruth Wodak’s ‘Discourse-Historical Analysis’ method (DHA), and to a lesser, complementary extent, Teun van Dijk’s ‘Denial of Racism’ (DoR) framework. The Discourse-Historical Analysis method is especially relevant in the context of this thesis due to its reliance on the context that surrounds a piece of discourse, regardless of the medium used to transmit it. It outlines four levels of context which can provide additional insights into a message⁴¹:

- socio-political, or ‘historical developments of the respective political party⁴², (or in this case, movement),
- current, or the ‘discussions that dominated a specific debate/event/political issue⁴³,
- text-internal co-text, or a specific text being referenced⁴⁴, and

⁴¹ Wodak 2015, 5.

⁴² Ibid, 55

⁴³ Ibid, 55.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 55.

- inter-discursive, or ‘events, utterances, discourses, and texts which have influenced the specific discursive practice⁴⁵’.

Wodak’s method recognizes that political discourse, especially that produced by far-right actors, does not come into being in a vacuum. Rather, it builds on past and current grievances, leaving its full meaning to be discerned only through a fulsome understanding of all that surrounds it. Throughout my research, the content I came across made extensive references to the political context of the day, with topics like the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter protests coming back frequently, as well as more obscure conspiracy theories which find their roots in thousands of years of antisemitic discourse. To understand the full meaning of the videos in the database, this full context must be captured in the analysis. The DHA also draws on ‘topoi’, define by Wodak as ‘search formulas which tell you how and where to look for arguments’⁴⁶ in discourse. These rhetorical devices, in practice, help the analysis of argumentative schemes by helping identify how they are introduced in the text, making it easier to discern the overall argument of a given discourse. Though Wodak’s method has primarily been used for textual analysis, topoi are also helpful in isolating argumentative themes in other forms of discourse. Past use of this method in the context of right-wing studies significantly eases the analysis of content produced through a new medium which has yet to receive significant attention on behalf of academics, especially in the study of political science.

Van Dijk’s ‘Denial of Racism’ framework, on the other hand, outlines a number of discursive tactics employed by far-right actors to deny, mitigate or diminish allegations of racism levelled towards them. This is an especially useful tool in studying groups like the Groypers, whose

⁴⁵ Ibid, 55.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 56.

‘optical’ approach to white nationalism requires for them to only implicitly endorse racist politics and to dissimulate unpalatable opinions within seemingly more sensible – or approachable – talking points. Among the tactics listed by van Dijk are:

- ‘Act-Denial’, or denying any ties to a given racist discourse⁴⁷,
- ‘Control-Denial’, or claiming that racist discourse was uttered by accident⁴⁸,
- ‘Intention-Denial’, or claiming that the intent of a racist discourse was misinterpreted⁴⁹,
- ‘Goal-denial’, or denying responsibility for the negative consequences of racist discourse⁵⁰,
- Mitigation, or the minimizing of one’s racist discourse⁵¹,
- justification, or justifying one’s racist discourse⁵²,
- Excusing, or making excuses for one’s racist discourse⁵³,
- claiming provocation, or blaming others for provoking racist discourse⁵⁴,
- blaming the victim, or blaming the victims of racism for racist discourse⁵⁵, and
- reversal, or turning accusations of racism towards those levelling them⁵⁶.

Throughout this thesis, pieces of content will be analyzed per the theoretical themes of the different chapters, and analyzed through thorough research into the different levels of context which contribute to their full meaning, per Wodak’s method. In some – but not all – cases, van

⁴⁷ Van Dijk 1992, 92.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 92.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 92.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 92.

⁵¹ Ibid, 92.

⁵² Ibid, 93.

⁵³ Ibid, 94.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 94.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 94.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 94.

Dijk's framework will be used in a complementary fashion, particularly with regards to content which aims to whitewash or dissimulate racist themes under less radical talking points. This will contribute to forming a more fulsome background for more cryptic or disingenuous content. Though more and more academics have begun to pay attention to TikTok's potential as a medium for political discourse, its novelty implies a number of challenges in studying it in a fulsome manner. As such, in using Wodak and van Dijk's methodologies as an analytical tool for TikTok videos, my intent is to remain as close as possible to the way they have previously been used by these authors and their students. Pieces of content will be introduced, with relevant components – date of publication, text, audio, captions – described; in some cases, components absent from the videos or deemed irrelevant will be left out. For instance, if a video has no audio, or if the video's caption only includes a number of unrelated hashtags meant to increase its viewership, these details will not be mentioned. The different levels of context identified by Wodak will then be considered per their relevance in analyzing the content. In most cases, only one or two of the different levels will be relevant, and as such, only context that ultimately affects the meaning of a video will be discussed. This first analysis will then be supplemented using van Dijk's methodology, though only in cases where there is indeed an attempt to deny the hateful nature of a given speech, in particular in the context of the discussion surrounding the Overton Window. Again resorting to Wodak's methodology, though this time informed by a fuller understanding of the context surrounding the different videos, the overall argument of the video will then be identified, typically through the identification of rhetorical topoi, though in some cases these might be absent.

Literature Review

This thesis approaches the topic of far-right politics – itself the subject of a growing body of literature – from a novel perspective, looking at the way today’s white nationalists use new, youth-oriented social media platforms to reach young people. This complicates the process of locating it within one given literature. Nonetheless, this thesis builds on the work of both past and contemporary scholars who have sought to make sense not only of the ways far-right movements operate and grow, but also how novel technologies can be used as propaganda tools. The latter literature is especially recent, though the far-right’s ability to weaponize the Internet has been documented by authors like Jessie Daniels, who likened the rise of the alt-right to the creation of the first-ever Nazi forum, Stormfront, in the 1990s⁵⁷. Among the first to study it as a medium, Guineadeau, Votta and Munger, have ventured to identify how TikTok’s features, have contributed to making the app a ‘formidable force’ in American politics⁵⁸, notably finding that the app has essentially ‘democratized’ abilities previously limited to ‘established propagandists⁵⁹’. This focus on the use of the platform for political purposes has also sparked some analysis of its use by the far-right. Weimann and Masri, for instance, documented the presence of content produced by far-right actors on TikTok theorizing that the platform’s popularity with youth makes its user base more vulnerable to such propaganda⁶⁰.

The understanding that the far-right is fighting on multiple fronts and that culture itself is a major battlefield in their quest for power is particularly important in the context of this thesis.

In *Proud Boys and the Ethnostate*, author Alexandre Minna Stern writes about metapolitics,

⁵⁷ Daniels 2018, 63.

⁵⁸ Guineadeau Votta and Munger 2020, 2.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 22.

⁶⁰ Weimann & Masri 2020, 11.

which she defines as the ‘privileging of cultural intervention over institutional political change⁶¹’. This is not dissimilar to the so-called ‘Breitbart Doctrine’, named after the American right-wing commentator, which asserts that ‘politics is downstream from culture’. In other words, students of metapolitics – both in academia and in political movements – believe that it is a better strategy to reshape culture in order to seize political power, than to seize political power in order to reshape culture. This culture-first approach empowers far-right groups and movements to target specific groups and subcultures, reaching individuals in the cultural spaces they occupy in order to facilitate the process of radicalization. In *Against The Fascist Creep*, author Alexander Reid Ross notably studies this strategy by looking at the far-right’s use of language typically associated to leftism as well as their encroachment in the environmentalist movement⁶². Other researchers and academics have examined how this strategy is used to target women⁶³ and specific music scenes⁶⁴. Youth, particularly young men, are often the focus of such studies. However, the literature on this topic is often dated and tends to look at youth extremism through organized hate groups like criminal skinhead gangs, which ignores the prominent role of Internet influencers and the increasingly individual nature of the radicalization process. This is notably the case for Cas Mudde’s 2014 anthology *Youth and the Extreme Right*⁶⁵, though this gap is being addressed in more recent works. In *Right-Wing Culture in Contemporary Capitalism* for instance, Mathias Nilges examines appeals made by right-wing influencers like Jordan Peterson to young men, particularly through the use of victimhood narratives⁶⁶.

⁶¹ Stern 2019, 22.

⁶² Ross 2017.

⁶³ Mattheis 2018.

⁶⁴ Dyck, 2016.

⁶⁵ Mudde 2014.

⁶⁶ Nilges 2020, 62.

This thesis also builds on the existing body of work on the analysis of the discourses held by far-right actors, including Ruth Wodak⁶⁷ and Teun van Dijk⁶⁸, by using their methodologies in a context in which they have not been utilized before – TikTok.

⁶⁷ Wodak, 2015.

⁶⁸ Van Dijk, 1992.

Chapter 1:

Mainstreaming Hate: Denial of Racism and the Overton Window

As a white nationalist and ‘paleoconservative’ movement, the Groypers advocate for a number of policies that, per most estimates, are ill-suited for the taste modern publics. Though their deeply racist, misogynistic and otherwise hateful politics relegate them to the fringes of political discourse, their stated aspiration is to grow into a mainstream force. In order to address this apparent contradiction, the Groypers rely on the ‘Overton Window’ theory, developed by libertarian thinker Joseph P. Overton, who used it as a means to gauge public support for specific policy proposals. Per his theory, different proposals to address a given issue stand on a spectrum. Ideas on either extremes of this spectrum are typically deemed too radical or even offensive by the general population, whereas ideas closer to the center are viewed as sensible, or common sense⁶⁹. This ‘center’, however, is not static, and can be moved, primarily through grassroots advocacy⁷⁰. As the ‘window’ of acceptable policy ideas shifts, ideas once deemed radical become mainstream, and mainstream ideas become radical. As such, fringe groups like the Groypers who wish to popularize their ideas must convey that they represent the ‘true center’, and conversely that the positions of their adversaries are extreme. This is a tactic that is widely used throughout the content found on Rightwingismtiktok, oftentimes by referencing controversial political issues and capitalizing on prevalent misinformation/disinformation, which helps them create messages that resonate with their public. One particularly good example of this

⁶⁹ Mackinac Center, 2021.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

is found in a video published on January 31, 2020, which begins with a picture of an anthropomorphous ball-shaped character adorned with the colours of the transgender pride flag and wearing sunglasses. While the character is on screen, the following text appears:

‘When someone calling you by the wrong name causes you to have a breakdown and seeing yourself in the mirror causes unending mental anguish but you definitely don’t have a mental illness so the solution is to cause irreparable harm to your body through mutilating surgeries and hormone injections.’

After the image disappears, it is then replaced by images of different news publication headlines critical of transgender identity, several of which refer to the high suicide rates that affect the community.

In order to capture the full meaning of this video, which primarily seeks to depict transgender and gender non-confirming individuals as mentally unstable, we must first look at the different ‘levels’ of context used in Wodak’s Discourse Historical Analysis Framework. On the socio-political level, we can ground this discourse in the broader debates on transgender rights which surrounded both Bill C-279 – a private member’s bill presented by NDP MP Randall Garrison in 2013 – and Bill C-16, a piece of government legislation which became law in 2016. Both bills essentially shared the same objective to add gender identity to the list of protected identities in the Canadian Criminal Code and in the Human Rights Act. In both cases, MPs who opposed the bill did so largely on two grounds. Firstly, they argued, as did Calgary West MP Rob Anders, that the proposed legislation put women at risk of sexual abuse at the hands of men who would pretend to be transgender in order to access female-only washrooms⁷¹. Others choose to root their criticism of those bills in the idea that they amounted to a form of

⁷¹ CBC News, 2012.

‘compelled’ speech which would expose individuals to legal issues if they were to use the wrong pronouns when referring to a transgender person⁷². Though neither bills included such provisions, these critiques are telling of a certain level of anxiety with which transgender issues are received by at least a segment of Canada’s population which skews conservative. On the inter-discursive level, it is also likely that this discourse is in part inspired by the broader talking points of the alt-right regarding the issues facing transgender individuals. In ‘Proud Boys and the Ethnostate’, a book studying the metapolitics of the alt-right, Michigan University professor Alexandra Minna Stern argues that transgender individuals are viewed by the alt-right as the ‘categorical destabilizers of the gender binary⁷³’, insofar as their very existence calls into question the relevance of the strict gender roles and of the biological essentialism in favour of which they advocate.

Like many memes, the tone of the text in the January 31 video is ironic. As such, its intended meaning is opposite of what could be understood through a literal reading of it. Rather, the text asserts that transgender individuals are mentally ill – an argument supported by a reference to the issue of misgendering causing ‘mental anguish’ – and that gender-affirming procedures (referred to as ‘mutilating surgeries and hormone injections’) are an extreme solution to what is ultimately an issue stemming from the aforementioned mental illness. This argument is introduced through a topos of usefulness, according to which if one can anticipate that the predicted consequences of a decision or an action will not occur, then the decision or action should be rejected⁷⁴ – in this case, the ‘predicted consequence’ is the improvement of one’s mental health, and the ‘action’ is gender-affirming procedures. This argument amounts to a

⁷² Chiose, 2017.

⁷³ Stern 2019, 77.

⁷⁴ Wodak 2015, 9.

Denial of Racism tactic called ‘blaming the victim’, in which someone turns allegations of bigotry towards those they victimize. In this case, the owners of the page Rightwingismtiktok are arguing that the hardships faced by transgender individuals stem not from the violence and social stigma directed towards them, but because of their inability to properly address their own mental health challenges. The objective of such discourse is therefore to capitalize on a contentious, anxiety-inducing issue which few properly understand by depicting opposing viewpoints – in this case, the idea that transgender identities are real and valid – as radical, and in so doing, absolve their ideological camp from any allegations of bigotry. This is an explicit attempt at shifting the Overton Window to include the movement’s beliefs, all the while promoting the exclusion of progressive points of view on gender.

Similar reversal tactics are used in other pieces of content shared by the page, including in videos featuring the Groyper movement’s leader, Nicholas Fuentes. In a video published on Rightwingismtiktok on May 13, 2020, Fuentes directly addresses the viewer, and says:

Do not google dancing Israelis! Do not google Jonathan Pollard incident! Do not google the Lavon affair. Those are antisemitic tropes, you see? You google the Lavon affair, pretty soon you'll be walking down the street, you know what that is? Anybody remember what that is? Ya, a little thing called Nazi Germany, okay? That's how you get there. So, you google what they call the Lavon affair, you type in L-A-V-O-N affair, you type in Apollo affair, Jonathan Pollard, pretty soon, uh-oh, is that a stahlhelm? Uh-oh, are those Roman salutes? I think I hear; I think I know what's coming next, you guessed it, the Holocaust. So, no questions about Israel, positives only. We wanna hear questions like 'why is Israel so epic?' 'Why are the Jews God's chosen people?'. Never mind, never mind. They're God's chosen people, they have ownership of the land! God bless Israel, that's the only way we have to hear it!

Contextually, on the inter-discursive level, this monologue alludes to a number of controversies linked to alleged foreign policy misgivings by the State of Israel which have long fueled antisemitic conspiracy theories. Some of these events have, in fact, been corroborated: the Lavon Affairs, for example, refers to an incident in which an Israeli cabinet minister was forced to resign after the failure of a ‘false flag’ operation meant to incriminate the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. ‘Dancing Israelis’, however, refers to a unproven conspiracy theory which asserts that Israeli spies were involved in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack. On the socio-political level, the events mentioned by Fuentes have also been referenced in a number of stunts organized by adherents of the Groyper movement, usually in an attempt to embarrass conservative speakers who have taken pro-Israel stances⁷⁵. To the Groypers, the idea of a politician or a pundit identifying themselves as being ‘pro-Israel’ is directly at odds with their ‘America First’ doctrine, insofar as it could imply the existence of a conflict of interest, were the two nations to clash. This view is akin to the antisemitic trope of ‘dual loyalties’, which asserts that non-Israeli Jews who are Zionists cannot be trusted to be loyal to their home countries. This theory has long been central to the ideology of far-right movements. Mentions of it can be found in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a fraudulent antisemitic text published in 1903 which ‘scapegoats Jews as a shifty class of international conspirators plotting (...) for world domination⁷⁶’, and which continues to inspire conspiracy theories and violence against Jews to this day⁷⁷. Allegations of dual loyalties usually serve as the basis for other antisemitic conspiracy theories used by far-right groups. One such example of this can be found within the platform of the Canadian Nationalist Party (CNP), a federally registered political party which presented

⁷⁵ Coaston, 2019.

⁷⁶ Cockburn and Clair 2003, 15.

⁷⁷ Coaston, 2018.

candidates in three ridings in the 2019 federal election. In a flyer meant to advertise the party's policy inclinations, the CNP referred to Jews as a 'parasitic tribe' which 'infiltrates' and 'infects' the countries in which they settle⁷⁸. Here, the concept of dual loyalties is transformed into a view in which Jews, who cannot be loyal to anyone outside of their tribe, are immigrating to non-Jewish countries in order to pillage their resources. In the current context, similar conspiracy theories were also popularized over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, as antisemitic groups attempted to capitalize on widespread fears in order to 'redpill' – or radicalize – new recruits⁷⁹.

Once again, the tone of this discourse is evidently ironic. For instance, when Fuentes tells the viewer not to research these different conspiracy theories, he is actually encouraging them to. In order to do so, Fuentes assumes the voice of an undefined party who, in essence, is stating that researching 'dancing Israelis', the 'Jonathan Pollard incident', and the 'Lavon affair' will push one towards the violent antisemitism which fueled the ideology of the Nazi Party. Rather than researching these things, the undefined party insists people should look up things like 'why is Israel so epic' or 'why are the Jews God's chosen people'. In so doing, Fuentes is implicitly identifying the interlocutor he was impersonating as either the Jewish people writ-large, or politicians who maintain ties to the Jewish community and to pro-Israel advocacy. Knowing Fuentes and his followers' disdain for both, it is obvious that his depiction is not meant to be flattering, but rather accusatory. This context gives greater insight into the central argument of the video, which is identified by the repeated use of a *topos of people*. Arguments which begin with *topos* follow the logic that if a person or a group is in favour or against a specific action, then it should be performed, or not⁸⁰. As such, we can understand that Fuentes is saying that

⁷⁸ Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies 2020.

⁷⁹ Cassen 2020.

⁸⁰ Wodak, Ruth 2015, 9.

because Jews and their allies are trying to censor those researching the topics outlined in the monologue, those watching the video should look them up for himself. This strategy allows the Groypers to peddle antisemitic conspiracy theories under the cover of individual research, and redirects the criticism explicit antisemitism would bring them towards the Jewish community, who is made out to be a boogeyman in this context. Much like in the anti-transgender video discussed earlier in this chapter, we can once again see the negative portrayal of the Groypers' 'opponents' being used as a tactic to expand the Overton Window and make spread hateful ideas without the criticism it would typically attract. The references to both real events and false conspiracy theories – as is the case with the 9/11 'dancing Israelis' – further adds to the resonance of the monologue. For many in the age group targeted by Fuentes – namely young adults and teenagers of Generation Z – the September 11, 2001 attack is an early political memory which continues to hold significant meaning. Associating this memory within the context of conspiracy theories makes it a potent discourse with the potential to radicalize.

Though framing their opponents in negative terms is a preferred tactic for the Groypers, they also oftentimes employ what Van Dijk calls 'positive self-presentation'⁸¹, which entails painting oneself in a sympathetic light in order to dispel suspicions of bigotry. This tactic is intrinsically linked to the concept of 'optics', which is central to the Groypers' 'political solution', as they believe that polishing their image, reframing their beliefs in a palatable manner, and avoiding directly incriminating speech will allow them to reach a broader audience. This desire to achieve 'good' optics – to pass their politics as mainstream' – leads to the creation of content made for different audiences; content for the in-group is overtly bigoted, whereas content destined for the out-group is typically tamer, and sometimes directly contradicts the

⁸¹ Van Dijk 1992, 91.

opinions professed by the Groyperers behind closed doors. One such example is a piece of content shared on March 7, 2020 on the Rightwingism page in which Nick Fuentes discusses the use of violence against women:

Maybe I need to remind you guys, that striking a woman with an open hand or a closed fist right across the face, that is not hilarious, that is actually very wrong.'

In a different context, this video would be rather innocuous. However, Fuentes himself is no stranger to violent misogynistic statements, and Rightwingism has published dozens of videos making light of violence against women. By sharing this video, the page is not actually stating its opposition to hitting women, but rather giving itself probable deniability – something Teun van Dijk refers to as a pre-emptive denial⁸². Probable deniability, however, goes beyond explicit denial tactics; humor, for example, is often used to produce a similar effect. The ‘humoristic’ content found on Groyper pages almost unavoidably contains overtly political undertones which are in line with the group’s stated beliefs. Yet, by presenting it as ‘satire’ rather than political speech, they give themselves the ability to shift the blame for the negative response such content faces from themselves to offended viewers, who simply ‘did not get the joke’. Like other denial tactics, the use of humor by the Groyperers is a direct attempt at expanding the Overton Window, by making controversial political speech into more acceptable humoristic content. In a video published by Rightwingism on February 7, 2020, a clip from Fuentes’ livestreamed show *America First* in which he ponders about the amount of time it would take to bake 6 million cookies – a thinly veiled metaphor for the death of 6 million Jews during the Holocaust – is shown:

If I take one hour to cook a batch of cookies, and Cookie Monster has 15 ovens working 24 hours a day everyday for five years, how long does it take cookie monster to make six million batches of cookies? I don't know, that's a good question! It doesn't really sound correct to...

...me, wait a second. Takes one hour to cook a batch of cookies, and you have 15 ovens, probably in four different kitchens, right? Doing 24 hours a day every day for five years, how long would it take for you to make six million? Hm, I don't know, it certainly wouldn't be five years, right? The math doesn't quite seem to add up there.

This is only a snippet of a longer clip that is oftentimes shared or referenced by Fuentes' followers online, known as the 'cookie monster question'⁸³, in reference to the 'Jewish Question' – an antisemitic trope which portrays the very existence of Jews as a problem that must be addressed. In the full video, he goes into significant detail about why he believes it is impossible to 'bake six million cookies' in five years. First, he says that 200,000 to 300,000 cookies might be a more realistic figure – a clear reference to the figures presented by revisionists seeking to downplay the horrors of the Holocaust. This veiled denialist argument is introduced through the use of a topos of numbers, according to which If the numbers prove/don't prove a specific standpoint, a specific action should be performed or not – in this case, the prescribed action is left undefined, though other pieces of content suggest the goal might be to encourage those viewing the video to doubt information coming from Jewish sources, as is the case with the May 13, 2020 video. Fuentes goes on to say there are no pictures of the 'smokestacks' that would have been produced by the 'cookie ovens', that the soil near the ovens did not allow for 'mass cookie storage' underground, and that the ovens in place in the kitchens did not seem like they were made to bake cookies. Fuentes ends his monologue by saying that he is being ironic, that he loves and respects everyone, and that 'everything that the government says is true'; this last note of irony gives credence to the idea that his denial of holding any antisemitic intentions is not

⁸³ Anti-Defamation League 2021.

truthful. Though these additional details are not included in the video posted on Rightwingismtiktok, they provide important context on the text-internal co-text level, particularly given the popularity of the full clip within the Groyper movement.

Fuentes has since described the monologue as merely a ‘lampoon’⁸⁴. By swapping the word ‘Jews’ for cookies, mentioning the Sesame Street character Cookie Monster, and simply saying he was joking, Fuentes is giving himself the leeway to deny the Holocaust publicly, while also giving himself the cover to deny any wrongful intentions. Similarly, by clipping his monologue into a short, shareable video on a platform popular with young people, Canadian Groypers are able to spread antisemitic propaganda by passing it off as an edgy TikTok video. This potentially helps move the needle on the Overton Window, as it allows for Holocaust denialism to be presented in a way that shields its spreader, as well as viewers who might share the video, from the accountability usually associated to the rehashing of fringe and hateful talking points.

What was included in this short, made-for-TikTok clip, and what was left out, is noteworthy. The shorter video includes very little detail, and primarily focuses on the ‘humoristic’ cookie mathematics. The longer video, however, goes into much more explicit details about different denialist conspiracy theories making it less attractive to individuals who, for example, appreciate edgy offensive humor, but are not necessarily interested in Holocaust denialism or far-right politics. References to ‘baking’, the use of the ‘six million’ figure, the mention of a ‘five year’ period and the rehashing of Holocaust denialist arguments make it especially clear that he is indeed – if indirectly – talking about the Holocaust. This does not necessarily indicate the existence of a nefarious political agenda, as many of those who dabble in offensive humor – for better or worse – use mentions of the Holocaust for shock value. However,

⁸⁴ Anderson 2019.

grounding this discourse – especially the more suspicious mentions of the ‘200,000 to 300,000 cookies’ figure, the lack of ‘cookie storage space’ and of doubts regarding the nature of the ovens – within the historical context of Holocaust denial in antisemitic thought helps shed light on the true meaning of Fuentes’ monologue. To this end, the concept of secondary antisemitism, the ‘refusal or rejection of remembrance of the unprecedented crimes which Germans committed during the Second World War⁸⁵’ is especially useful. Secondary antisemitism distinguishes between two forms of ‘post-Auschwitz’ antisemitism; hardcore – or the overt denial of the events of the Shoah – and soft-core – a more insidious but equally harmful form of denial which includes ‘distortion’, ‘universalization’, and ‘relativization/trivialization/projection of guilt’⁸⁶. Distortion, specifically, refers to the misrepresentation of Holocaust-related facts in order to normalize it or to mitigate accountability towards the actors responsible for it⁸⁷. Several parts of Fuentes’ monologue are strikingly similar to many of the arguments used by Holocaust deniers in order to distort the facts – especially those that cast aspersions on the very possibility of such a large mass-murdering endeavour. In conjunction with Fuentes’ clear tendency to promote antisemitic conspiracy theories intending to portray Jews as evil actors, the concept of secondary antisemitism makes the true intent of this video quite clear.

The cover provided by the plausible deniability humoristic political speech offers can allow those wielding it to spread hateful politics to remain ‘optical’ – that is, to spread certain ideas without necessarily arousing the suspicion of everyday people. Another technique used to that end is to attach certain ideas professed by the Groyper movement to popular culture figures. This can be done by co-opting non-political speech, such song lyrics. A video published by

⁸⁵ Heni 2008, 73.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

Rightwingism on September 4th, 2020, displays different visuals related to the British Empire, including maps of its growth through the colonization of North America, Ireland, and Africa. Accompanying the video is a snippet from the song ‘Praise the Lord’ by the popular rappers A\$AP Rocky and Skepta, in which the latter says:

‘I came, I saw. I came, I saw. I praise the Lord, then break the law. I take what’s mine, then take some more. It rain, it pours. It rain, it pours. I came, I saw. I came, I saw.’

These lyrics have little to do with politics. Rather, they are a boastful assessment of both rappers’ lifestyle. But, when heard in the context of the images to which they are attached, they become an endorsement of colonization. Rather than dissimulating the meaning of the video, the intent here is to present British imperialism in a way that makes it palatable to younger audiences. It is perhaps odd to see the Groypers – a movement originating from the United States – tacitly support the British Empire. This highlights the Groypers’ ability to adapt itself to different national context in order to attract Canadian supporters, much like other movements, notably Qanon, have done as well⁸⁸.

In another video featuring a famous rapper, a woman is seen dancing to a song by the controversial rapper XXXTentacion, who is referred as ‘based and red-pilled’ – terms used by far-right actors to positively appraise one’s politics – in the video’s description. The woman then gradually disappears and is replaced by an image of the rapper, who is dancing as well. A message then appears:

STOP WATCHING E-GIRLS DANCE. Our families are in decline while our men thirst after degenerate e-girls online instead of saving our country from harmful demographic changes...

⁸⁸ Mezzofiore, Polglase, Lister, Pleitgen, Croker & Hernandez, 2020.

...There is a reason the founding fathers didn't give women rights & now they weep every time you thirst over some bimbo's picture. Real men disrespect & harass these degenerate thots offline.

Here, the posters are attaching their own negative beliefs towards women (referred to as 'e-girls', a pejorative term used to describe women who are active in online spaces, and as 'degenerate thots, a term akin to the word 'whore') to a celebrated musician. The overarching argument of the text is introduced through a topos of burden, according to which if a country is burdened by specific problem, one should do something about them⁸⁹. In this case, the problem burdening an unnamed country is 'harmful demographic change' – a term emanating from the discourse surrounding the Great Replacement and White Genocide theories. Though the text does not explicitly state this, it is also heavily implied that the solution to this problem is for 'real men' to 'disrespect and harass' women offline. However, the video takes on an even more aggressive meaning when looking at the current-day context that surrounds it. In 2016, the rapper, whose real name is Jahseh Onfroy, was arrested on charges of false imprisonment, witness tampering, and aggravated battery of his pregnant girlfriend⁹⁰. These accusations led to much controversy, which both helped make him notorious as well as infamous. In a voice recording published by large outlets and widely circulated after his death, Onfroy confessed to abusing his partner, though this did little to affect his posthumous popularity. The inclusion of XXXTentacion – a musician whose persona inexorably associated with gendered violence – in a video peddling explicit misogyny and calling for the removal of women's rights shows the

⁸⁹ Wodak 2015, 9.

⁹⁰ Burford, 2018.

movement's propensity to co-opt the likeness of popular celebrities in order to help their political resonate with their audience.

This tactic also extends to Canadian celebrities, particularly Don Cherry, who unlike the rappers mentioned in the previous two videos has been noted for his conservative and nationalist views throughout his career. In a video published on May 4, 2020, Cherry explains his political views:

'The people that drink the beer agree with me. They're ticked off at the foreigners coming over here earning the dough. That's what I hear from them. You can say it's bigotry if you want. I don't think it is. I'm pro Canadian. More so that I'm anti-Soviet or anti-Sweden. Imagine me going down to Newfoundland. I'd go down there and I'll say look, vote me in, , and I guarantee you as I stand here, no foreign trawler would come in and touch one fish. And foreign aid, if you wanna get into that. Here we got people dying, here we got people dying for want of beds, and we're giving money to foreigners? No way, it'd be Canada First, and Canada only. That's what I am, a nationalist. I wanna start a new party, the Nationalists.

In this monologue, Cherry expresses talking points which eerily mimic the Canadian Groyper's own talking points, particularly with his use of the term 'Canada First', though the interview from which this snippet was taken originally aired in 1990. This monologue is built around age-old talking points against foreign aid. Introducing his argumentation using a topos of finance, according to which if a specific situation costs too much money, then one should perform actions that diminish that cost⁹¹, Cherry argues the Canadian government spends too

⁹¹ Wodak 2015, 9.

much money helping foreigners and should prioritize Canadians who are struggling. However, current context explains the reasoning behind the use of Cherry's monologue in Rightwingismtiktok's content. Cherry's dismissal from *Hockey Night in Canada* in 2019 for referring to immigrants to Canada as 'you people'⁹² and implying they are less patriotic than Canadians born in Canada, in many ways contributed to ignition of a debate surrounding so-called 'cancel culture' into Canada⁹³. The term cancel culture implies the existence of an atmosphere in which committing any sort of wrongdoing, from sexual misconduct to the expression of beliefs deemed problematic, will lead one to be ostracized by the broader community. Many notable conservative politicians, including Conservative Party leader Erin O'Toole⁹⁴ and People's Party Leader Maxime Bernier⁹⁵, have spoken out against cancel culture in recent years, with the latter arguing that it primarily seeks to restrict the freedom of speech of those on the political right. Since leaving the air, Cherry has become a symbol of sorts for Canadian Groyper, who relate to his anti-immigrant views and his 'cancellation'. The use of his monologues in Groyper content is particularly interesting due to the fact that he was, for a long time, a very well-known and well-liked cultural icon in Canada. Despite the criticism he has faced over the course of his career, Cherry can hardly be described as a fringe figure, having remained at the helm of Canada's most popular sports broadcast for decades. His longtime support of the Conservative Party of Canada and close personal ties with Prime Minister Stephen Harper during the latter's time in office furthermore indicate that his politics, though controversial, were well within the mainstream. Despite his falling out of the public's graces since the anti-immigration remarks he made on air, many Canadians continue to view him as an

⁹² DeClerq & Davidson 2019.

⁹³ Joyce, 2019.

⁹⁴ Boswell 2021.

⁹⁵ People's Party of Canada, 2021.

iconic figure, and in some cases, as one that was unjustly ‘cancelled’ for holding conservative views. In co-opting the speeches of a popular figure like Don Cherry, Canadian Groyperers are attaching their own beliefs to him, giving them a more approachable face, as well as relating their own struggle to his, making them more relatable in the eyes of conservative Canadians who worry about being ‘cancelled’ themselves. This added context informs an understanding of the discourse that goes beyond what meets the eye. Rather than to simply argue for specific foreign policy points, the owners of Rightwingismtiktok are telling their viewer that Don Cherry, a fallen Canadian icon, was ‘cancelled’ because he shared the politics of their movement. This is a potent argument that likely resonates with the viewer’s memories of watching Cherry on television – where he had a platform to share his controversial views – in their youth.

In each of videos analyzed in this section, we see explicit attempts by the owners of Rightwingismtiktok, a page associated to the Canadian branch of the Groyper movement, to dissimulate the true nature of their politics, using humour and irony as accountability shields, by co-opting the likeness of celebrities that might – or might not – agree with their beliefs, or rhetorically through the use of denial tactics and of topoi uselessness, which help ‘de-normalize’ the positions of their opponents. These different tactics outline a strategy to shift the Overton Window, by downplaying the harms of their political positions and by making their movement appear more moderate than it truly is. Whether one believes there exists an ‘Overton Window’ which determines whether a given belief is deemed proper or not, this theory plays an integral role in framing the worldview and tactics used by the Groyper movement in their quest for normalization. TikTok content, even more so than memes found on other social media platforms, rely heavily on context and implicit meanings rooted in popular culture to frame different messages, thus creating a space where coded messages can be shared with ease. This creates

conditions ripe for nefarious actors to engage with the app's typically young users, as have the Groypers. In a context where fears and anxieties regarding the future are shared by many members of Generation Z, these videos – many of which reference pop-culture, current events or impactful memories for maximal resonance – truly have an opportunity to capture the attention of a public which has time and time again demonstrated its willingness to mobilize for political causes.

Chapter 2:

Nostalgia and Paternalism: A New Generation of Fascist Leaders

If their predecessors in the alt-right did not necessarily unite under a single ideological banner, the Groypers claim paleoconservatism, the ideology professed by their leader Nicholas Fuentes, as the basis for their political worldview. As a fundamentally populist ideology, paleoconservatism primarily aims to challenge the current liberal order, associated to modernity, which they believe is slowly erasing longstanding traditions and gradually supplanting the sacrosanct concept of the nation-state and of national sovereignty⁹⁶. This objective puts paleoconservatives at odds with traditional elements of both the political right and the political left, who they believe form a ‘new managerial class’ of so-called ‘globalist’ elites⁹⁷. In spite of this, paleoconservatives borrow extensively from the Left and the Right alike, melding together materialist class-struggle analysis to the ‘reactionary nostalgia’ associated with social conservative positions⁹⁸. Unlike other strains of conservatism, paleoconservatism does not seek to ‘preserve’, but rather to return to the ‘cultural, political and socioeconomic conditions’ once defended by the mainstream right⁹⁹. It is, in this sense, a dissident worldview based on a deep-seated feeling of nostalgia, though focused on future outcomes. It is perhaps ironic that a movement consisting almost exclusively of teenagers and young adults would subscribe to an ideology broadly built on restoring a past order under which they have never lived. This apparent

⁹⁶ Drolet & Williams 2020, 35.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

contradiction, however, is explained by the Groyper's belief that the group they claim to represent – young, white men – live in an increasingly hostile world where left-wing social justice movements actively fight against their best interests. In their view, the pursuit for a more just and equal world is in itself a great injustice being perpetrated against their group.

Nostalgia is a potent political tool that is often used by actors on all sides of the ideological spectrum, but particularly by conservatives. Though the inherently radical nature of the Groyper's white nationalist worldview is likely to turn off potential new supporters, their usage of nostalgic themes – which often only imply, downplay, or ignore racial considerations – can make their content more appealing to a broader audience. As such, content intended to 'sell' the Groyper's beliefs often attempts to weaponize a sense of nostalgia for an era where the cultural power associated to whiteness and maleness was largely left unchallenged. This perspective, more often than not, relies heavily on an 'uncritical depiction of the past as an idealized reality'¹⁰⁰, insofar as positive elements in the culture are overstated in order to dissimulate the widespread, virulent racism of the times. The objective, however, is not to negate or disavow past racism. This framing seeks to create a sense of nostalgia not for a racist past, but for a racialized one, as racial inequalities are only implicitly present in political messaging¹⁰¹. This explains, to some extent, the movement's partial embrace of Donald Trump and his 'Make America Great Again' ethos, as it 'implies the restoration of an idealized past, left undetermined and therefore up for different ideologues to envision'¹⁰².

In order to whitewash national history, Groypers will oftentimes create content mixing both politically charged images and apolitical symbols, effectively inserting even controversial

¹⁰⁰ Mudde 2015, 108.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Stern 2019, 46.

figures and events into the narrative of an idyllic, simpler past. In one such video, published on June 27, 2020, easily recognizable ‘Canadiana’ images are displayed to the tune of a pop rock song. Turn by turn, footage of Wayne Gretzky on the ice in Edmonton, Chris Hadfield in space, Bobby Orr’s famous 1970 goal celebration, and Terry Fox’s Marathon of Hope is shown, intermixed with images of the great Canadian landmarks, but also pictures of Sir John A. Macdonald and the Red Ensign – Canada’s original flag. Throughout the video, the words ‘The Old Canada’ and ‘The Old Dominion’ are displayed above and below the images, respectively.

Here, the socio-political, current, and inter-discursive levels of context prove particularly insightful in analyzing this video. On the socio-political level, references to historically significant and easily recognizable ‘Canadiana’ moments are used to remind viewers of iconic – and uncontroversial moments – in Canada’s history. Though both Gretzky and Orr have taken political stances that earned them some criticism – Gretzky was a steadfast supporter of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and Orr endorsed President Trump in the 2020 US Presidential election – they are both widely considered as Canadian icons for their contribution to the game of hockey and the impact they had in the many victories of Canada’s national team. Terry Fox’s Marathon of Hope, on the other hand, has been described as a uniting moment for Canada. All three men have additionally been designated as members of the CBC’s top 50 ‘Greatest Canadians’. Their presence in the video, in this sense, is likely to resonate strongly with young Canadians who grew up idolizing these figures. On the current context level, the inclusion of John A. Macdonald in the video proves to be much more political than the previous choices due to significant debates surrounding memorials to figures deemed problematic, starting in 2018 when the city of Victoria, in British Columbia, removed a statue of Canada’s first Prime Minister from the premises of city hall. These debates would receive renewed attention in June 2020 and onwards,

after the killing of George Floyd in the United States sparked global calls for the dismantlement of systemic racism. Acts of vandalism against statues honoring Macdonald's memory across Canada became increasingly frequent as antiracist protesters mobilized in the summer, attracting criticism from both Erin O'Toole, leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, as well as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau¹⁰³. Far-right activists, similarly, seized upon the issue; Canadian Groyper Tyler L. Russell, for instance, participated in a failed stunt to remove a tarp placed to cover a statue honouring Macdonald in Hamilton¹⁰⁴. The Red Ensign, also shown in the video, also adds to its political meaning, given its extensive use by Canadian far-right actors, including well-known neo-Nazi Paul Fromm, who described it as 'the true flag of Canada'¹⁰⁵. The inclusion of both politically-charged and apolitical symbols in the context of this video is no accident, and highlights the Groypers' use of nostalgia and desire to return to an idealized past, which is represented by the achievements of beloved Canadian icons, but also by symbols of Canada's colonial past – the flaws of which are entirely ignored – all presented together as if they were inseparable. Despite the lack of text to accompany the video, the overarching argument is made clear by the socio-political context that surrounds it; it could be assumed that the reliance on symbols which have been called into question is in itself a topos of threat, which entails that if a specific threat exists – in this case the removal of certain symbols – it ought to be addressed¹⁰⁶. The exact time period to which this video refers is unclear: the caption mentions the 'Old Dominion', a term which alludes to pre-World War II-Canada, though few of the images shown date back to that time. The most recent piece of footage, which shows Chris Hadfield floating in the International Space Station, dates back to 2013. It is most likely, in any

¹⁰³ CBC 2020.

¹⁰⁴ Smith & Roback 2021.

¹⁰⁵ Hamilton 2017.

¹⁰⁶ Wodak 2015, 9.

case, that the video is not referring to a specific time in Canadian history, but rather simply expresses a broad belief that Canada used to be a better place to live. It is worth noting, additionally, that all the figures included in the video are white, anglophone Canadians, a detail which provides some insights into the aspects of Canada's past the Groyperers are nostalgic about, but can easily be overlooked by an audience that largely ignores the poster's ties to the white nationalist movement.

While negative aspects of colonialism are largely ignored throughout the content posted by Rightwingism over the course of its existence, several videos taken from the account embrace an idealized view of it. One piece of content, published on September 11, 2020, shows a man sitting in his car, wearing sunglasses. The caption reads: '*Me when bitches call me a 'colonizer' for defending the British Empire*'. As the video plays, the man says:

'I mean, what, I'm supposed to be upset by that?'

The argument of this video is akin to the oft-repeated ethos of the Proud Boys, a far-right group designated by the Canadian government as a terrorist outfit in 2020: 'I am a Western chauvinist, and I refuse to apologize for creating the modern world'¹⁰⁷. The Proud Boys status as one of the most well-known group on the far-right of the political spectrum, as well as the significant ties the Groyperers entertain with them – Gavin McInnes, their founder, was a keynote speaker at an event organized by Nicholas Fuentes in 2020 – make this inter-discursive context all the more relevant. Both the Proud Boys' ethos and the text of this video are built around similar topos of threat, represented in the first case by the refusal to apologize – which implies a demand to do so – and by the mention of women (referred to with a misogynistic slur)

¹⁰⁷ Southern Poverty Law Centre, 2021.

pejoratively calling the maker of the video a colonizer. 'Defending the British Empire', here, carries a similar meaning as 'creating the modern world', as both intend to present colonization as a positive process which its proponents should feel proud of. This reclaiming of the term 'colonizer', furthermore, serves to promote a sense of nostalgia for British imperialism, which is presented in an idealized form which does not address its inherent violence.

Only one video found on Rightwingism directly addresses slavery as a feature of colonialism. Published on June 21st, 2020, in response to the increased public awareness of the Juneteenth holiday due to the Black Lives Matter protests, the post largely seeks to downplay the European powers' role in the slave trade. Set to the tune of 'Rule Britannia' and featuring the caption 'Retake America and the West', the video consists of a series of informational slides, which read:

"Slavery and Juneteenth: Slavery has existed in almost every society since the beginning of time. The Atlantic Trade, the Arab Slave Trade, or even serfdom are all examples of some kind of slavery. It was a truly global and enduring institution. One that was used by and against many kinds of people, including people of colour. For example, the slave trade within Africa was about 9x the size of the Atlantic slave trade. Meaning black people would have been slaves in Africa, under other black people, even without the Atlantic trade. Arabs & Slaves: More black slaves were sent to the Arab world than the Americas, but the Arabs castrated all of their black slaves. If it was so widespread in Africa, how did it end? When Europeans went into Africa, they forcibly ended slavery in every country. Even when there was strong opposition to ending it. In the US, over 365,000 Union soldiers (sic) died fighting to end slavery. Don't let them tell you that your ancestors are nothing. Don't allow them to tell you everything bad in society was caused by whites."

Here, the makers of this video are referencing a number of arguments articulated by far-right actors to downplay the horrors of chattel slavery in North America, making inter-discursive context all the more significant. A first argument, which entails that because ‘slavery has existed (...) since the beginning of times’, there is no reason to view the Atlantic slave trade as any worse than another slavery regime, uses a topos of reality, which entails that ‘because reality is as it is, specific actions/decisions should/should not be taken’¹⁰⁸. In this case, the ‘reality’ is that slavery has consistently been present over the course of human history, which serves as an argument to support the opinion that society should devote less attention to the Atlantic slave trade. The mention of the Arab slave trade, then, is used to deflect criticism levelled against the societies that benefited from European slavery towards Muslim Arabs, a common scapegoat for Western far-right ideologues, whereas description of ‘serfdom’ as a form of slavery depicts European and European-descending peoples as victims of slavery themselves. This second point is supported, as well, by the mention that ‘many kinds of people, including people of colour’ have been affected by the slave trade, a frame which diminishes the impact of slavery on Africa by equating it with other forms of forced labour. Later, the posters employed a topos of hypocrisy, which entails that ‘if a standard is applied upon one party, it must be applied to another’¹⁰⁹. Here, the argument that ‘more Black slaves were sent to the Arab world than the Americas’ is used to reiterate the idea that the ‘West’ does not deserve the criticism levelled against it for its role in the slave trade, as non-Western countries have also engaged in the practice. Lastly, the video makers also credit ‘Europeans’ and the United States for fighting to end slavery, thus exonerating them from any responsibility in the establishment and the spread of the slave trade. Many of these arguments are akin to those levelled by figures like past Klu Klux

¹⁰⁸ Ruth Wodak 2015, 9.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

Klan Grand Wizard David Duke, who on an episode of his radio show aired on June 15, 2020 – days before this particular video was published – described slavery as an endemic issue of a ‘poor, nasty, brutish’ past, and that American Blacks should thank European people for creating a modern civilization in which these issues do not exist anymore¹¹⁰. In both this snippet of Duke’s radio show and the video published on Rightwingism, reversal tactics akin to those described by Teun Van Dijk are used in order to diminish the role of whites in the slave trade, transfer blame on other ethnic groups, and present white, European colonizers as the morally just crusaders who ended slavery altogether. In so doing, they are presenting an idealized view of the past, which once again downplays wrongdoings in order to inculcate a sense of nostalgia and pride towards the achievement of white Europeans for their audience.

Though such pieces of content weaponizing nostalgia are inherently focused towards the past, many include calls for action, sometimes by urging young men to get organized and join right-wing groups. In one video, published on March 5, 2020, a woman is seen performing a popular dance among TikTok users. A few seconds in, the footage changes to show footage shows black and white footage of soldiers fighting, as the music transitions to nostalgic-sounding traditional Spanish music. A piece of text then appears atop the screen:

*‘Stop simping. Leave that b*tch in the kitchen, we have to liberate Barcelona.’*

Here, inter-discursive context is key in understanding the meaning of the video. Referencing the Catalonia Offensive conducted by Francisco Franco’s army during the Spanish Civil, the text of the video places the viewer as the protagonist of the video. After being caught

¹¹⁰ Johnb14, 2020.

‘simpling’ – a neologism which pejoratively refers to the act of expressing infatuation – the viewer is essentially told to stop looking at skimpily-dressed women online in order to liberate Barcelona. A key victory for the Nationalist camp which all but ensured their victory, the conquest of Barcelona from the Republican government has been hailed as a major turning point in history by the far-right, as have the Crusades and the taking of Jerusalem. Like the Crusades, the Spanish Civil War saw the involvement of thousands of non-Spanish soldiers on all sides of the conflict, making it a symbol for both left-wing and right-wing groups across the world. It ought to be noted that Barcelona had not previously been taken by the Republican forces with whom the Nationalists clashed - the use of the word ‘liberate’, therefore, implies these use of a topos of threat, depicting the Nationalist faction in Spain as the victims of oppression, in spite of the fact that they effectively captured the city in order to impose fascist rule upon its citizenry. With this added context, the signification of the call to ‘liberate’ Barcelona takes broader meaning, and symbolically refers to the global struggle of a contemporary far-right in supplanting the liberal world order it views as a tyrannical force, and represents an argument in favour of popular – and international – mobilization for the cause. This argument can be located through the identification of a topos of history, which calls specific actions to be performed if comparable historical contexts teach that these actions will bring about a specific consequence¹¹¹. In this case, popular mobilization – exemplified through the footage and the call to give up distractions – such as ‘simpling’ on women online – and join like-minded people ‘in battle’ is argued to be the way to achieve a global right-wing hegemony, symbolized through the Nationalists’ victory and Franco’s accession to power. The mention of leaving women ‘in the

¹¹¹ Wodak 2015, 10.

kitchen', similarly, can be interpreted as a nostalgic call for a return to traditional gender roles, a feature of Franco's own traditionalist political ideology.

This is perhaps one of the most explicit examples of nostalgia being wielded as a tool to promote mobilization found in the videos published by Rightwingism on TikTok. It also stands out in its focus on popular mobilization rather than on the central role of authoritarian leaders – another central theme found in many videos on the account. If Franco's role in the Conquest of Catalonia is implied, he is not explicitly named, unlike right-wing dictators like Augusto Pinochet, whose regime is mentioned in several pieces of content. In one such video, footage from the popular video game Grand Theft Auto 5, in which a man falls out of a helicopter, is shown. As he falls, he screams in agony, but his cries are gradually replaced by a loud, electronic beat, as an image of Pinochet begins to fade in, as if he were ominously overlooking the character's demise. Contextually, this video explicitly references extra-judicial killings – dubbed 'death flights' – by the Pinochet regime in Chile, during which regime opponents and left-wing dissidents would be thrown from helicopters over the Andes or the ocean. The death flights are a popular reference within the far-right; members violent groups like the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers, as well as of accelerationist movements like the Boogaloo Boys have been seen wearing shirts offering 'free helicopter rides'¹¹², and Pinochet himself is often hailed as a figure of reverence due to his regime's brutality. There are no perceivable arguments in the video, and no argumentative topos to be identified. However, the Groypers' own relationship with the concepts of political and state violence provides insights into its true meaning. Since the initial rise of the Groyper movement, its leaders have consistently disavowed the use of political violence, instead stating a preference for a non-violent 'political solution'. However, many of

¹¹² Ketcham, 2021.

these same leaders have expressed their desire to use state violence against their perceived enemies, should they ever gain access to power. For instance, on several episodes of his livestreamed show *Canada First*, Canadian Groyper influencer Tyler L. Russell has stated he would jail or ‘get rid of’ his ‘opponents’ – at times, supporters of the NDP, its leader Jagmeet Singh, ‘globalists’, as well as myself – when he becomes Prime Minister of Canada. This added inter-discursive outlines a distinction made between violence as a means and violence as an end, with the former being disavowed as a tool to gain power, but the latter being put on a pedestal as an attainable goal. As such, this video uses nostalgia for an era where the far-right held political power they could wield against their opponents without explicitly calling for a return to that era, though this meaning could be extrapolated in relations with pieces of content previously analyzed. In spite of the more extreme theme of the video, its ultimate meaning is ultimately covered by its overall humorous and unserious tone, with the video game footage and out-of-place music giving the video makers some plausible deniability over its implicit violence. Praise for Pinochet and other right-wing dictators falls well in-line within the fascist tradition of glorifying paternalistic authority figures who are ultimately viewed as guides within a ‘present (...) perceived as chaotic and unstable’¹¹³. While the content found on Rightwingism shows several examples of past leaders being hailed as such, notable figures of the Groyper movement – most notably its leader Nick Fuentes – feature quite prominently. These videos, which display the same nostalgic quality as the ones previously mentioned, depict the leadership of the Groyper movement as the next generation of great men fighting for the preservation of ‘Western civilization’ and traditional, Christian fundamentalist values. In a two-part video published on

¹¹³ Nilges, 2020, 63.

July 18, 2020, Fuentes explains his feelings of dismay towards the state of Western civilization, and calls for a resurgence of traditionalism:

Traditionalism comes from recognizing that your family isn't just your parents but your parents' parents and so on. You see Western Civilization not as something you're born into but as an inheritance that people fought for and died for. Something beautiful and special which we beautiful, we have to preserve for our children. When people tell me it's our... ..obligation to bring in people who hate it, who bring in their culture, I want my grandchildren to look like me. I grew up and I have all the benefits and all the beautiful things that my ancestors created for me. And you look at Italy, you look at Italy today and I don't think anyone would agree with the trajectory that Italy's on that in 100 years Italy

The footage, which alternates between showing Fuentes speaking on the set of his livestreamed show ‘America First’ and images contrasting Europe from the 1950s to today, is meant to elicit a nostalgic response, which is strengthened by the melancholic soundings of a string arrangement. Throughout the video, the terms ‘Western civilization’ and ‘European’ are used interchangeably, and ultimately act as a more palatable stand-in for the word ‘white’, impressing the need for white solidarity, without raising discussions of race which would turn off some viewers. Contextually, Fuentes seems to be indirectly referring to the ‘Great Replacement’ theory, a white nationalist conspiracy theory according to which the white population of Western countries is being replaced through mass immigration from non-white countries¹¹⁴. Though implicit, this reference to one of the world’s most deadly conspiracy theories can be identified through the mention of Italy and other European countries seeing their heritage – and peoples –

¹¹⁴ Counter Extremism Project, 2021.

being erased. The argumentative scheme of the monologue is once again identifiable through the use of topoi of threat, as are many other videos analyzed in this section. A first topos of threat is found within the mention of an ‘obligation to bring in people who hate’ Western culture – implying ‘Westerners’ are being coerced into accepting immigration, and the mention that European countries are being ‘erased’. This ‘obligation to bring in people’ could also be interpreted as a topos of people, which entails that if people favour or refuse a specific action, this action should or should not be performed¹¹⁵. In this context, the mention of an ‘obligation’ implies the majority of Westerners are actually opposed to immigration, and as such, that their governments should refrain from allowing immigrants to settle in their countries. These different topoi are all used to support the argument that immigration is detrimental to white, European, western civilization, and therefore that immigration must be stopped in order to save it. In the case of this video, nostalgia for an idealized, past is used to inculcate the need for today’s white youth to oppose immigration in order to ‘preserve’ the traditions of their ancestors and create a better future for their own children.

Much of the monologue featured in the focuses on Fuentes’ own experiences, alternating between the use of personal and collective pronouns, using the former to lay out his vision, and the latter to convince watchers that they too share this worldview by using broad and relatable terms likely to resonate with his audience. He appears to be presented by those who clipped and published the video as a visionary figure, whose respectable appearance and charisma empower him to lead a new generation of nationalists, on par with figures like Franco or Pinochet. This is reflected throughout the content the content found on Rightwingism. First and foremost, Fuentes’ likeness, edited to show his eyes turning into lasers, is used as the profile picture for the page,

¹¹⁵ Wodak 2015, 9.

showing the importance bestowed upon him by the owners of the page. Almost fifty different posts feature Fuentes' name as 'hashtag' in their description, which facilitates the search for more Groyper content, both for current and new supporters. He also appears in more than a dozen individual videos – more than any other right-wing figure, historical or current. These videos, which typically show him delivering monologues or confronting political opponents in the streets, heavily rely on nostalgic themes: the burden of modernity, the disappearance of traditions, and the need to return to the 'normalcy' of the past. In the content found throughout the Rightwingismtiktok account, this is done through the heavy use of topoi of threat, which create the impression of danger, and the use of topoi of reality and hypocrisy, which are used to whitewash the past through the Groyper's idealized lens. This depiction of the modern world as a bleak, disorder dystopia where white men are increasingly at risk of persecution is in line with what World War II-era German and Jewish philosopher Ernsnt Bloch called the logic of fascism¹¹⁶. Bloch believed that a reliance on 'masculinist persecution' myths and on conspiracies about a supposed left-wing plan to take over the culture were part and parcel of the logic used in the rhetoric of fascist leaders¹¹⁷. Above all, however, fascist leaders emphasize the existence of disorder and chaos, both to create contrast with the idealized view of the past they promote, and as a means of ensuring the resonance of their sales pitch to that they are paternalistic figures of authority who can bring back social order¹¹⁸. In spite of his youth, Fuentes is revered by his supporters, who value his insights and strategizing to such an extent that they are willing to purchase access to his shows, make hefty donations while he streams, and even buy the clothes he sells on his merch store. In their view, Fuentes is a man beyond reproach. In fact, a chat room

¹¹⁶ Nilges 2020, 71.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 71.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 72.

owned and managed by his Canadian counterpart Tyler L. Russell reportedly gave new members a warning upon entering: those who disrespect Nick Fuentes and his America First brand will be ‘prosecuted’¹¹⁹. For all intents and purposes, and though he is an American citizen who might never have actually stepped foot in Canada, Nick Fuentes is revered as a dictator-like figure of leadership, by Canadian Groypers.

¹¹⁹ Roback, 2021.

CHAPTER 3:

COUNTERHEGEMONY AND THE RIGHT-WING REVOLUTION

The Groypers' worldview paints the portrait of a modern world in which the white, Christian and male populations of Western countries face increasing marginalization, if not a 'Great Replacement' or complete eradication, due to changing demographics and a leftward shift in political discussions. This perspective stands in direct contrast to an intersectional analysis like that of bell hooks, which would place this same group at the top of the social pyramid of a 'white supremacist patriarchal society'¹²⁰. The weaponization of nostalgia for an idealized past in which white supremacy¹²¹ remained largely unchallenged plays a large role in this framing insofar as it supports a whitewashed narrative of white victimhood as a result of a gradual loss of cultural power which ignores past injustices and the persistence of systemic racism. However, this frame only tells half the story, as whites are still broadly over-represented in political and cultural institutions throughout the West – a fact that the Groypers seemingly acknowledge. This acknowledgement, however, has little effect over their victimhood 'underdog' narrative, as they view themselves as inherently separate from white men in positions of power, on the basis they form an international elite from which most whites, especially those with conservative and nationalist leanings, are excluded. The Groypers believe this group of elites – referred to as 'the globalists' – form a small cabal composed of international financiers, mainstream politicians, and cultural gatekeepers, whose decisions impact the evolution of humanity. Far from being well-

¹²⁰ hooks 2000, 118.

¹²¹ Defined here as the supremacy of whiteness in society as maintained by systemic racism.

intentioned, these globalists allegedly manufacture global incidents – wars, economic crises, pandemics – to assert their domination, while using popular culture to impose their beliefs on society. This view is widely shared in far-right spaces, especially by conspiratorial movements like Qanon, but in some ways is also reminiscent of Marxist theories, particularly those of Gramsci. Implicitly, the Groyppers view themselves as one such counter-hegemonic group, and hope to be able to manipulate the current culture in order to gain political power. This section will therefore examine how the Groyppers have attempted to weaponize Gramsci's theories by, in turn, identifying specific social groups as holding hegemonic power, presenting that ruling class as morally corrupt, convincing those viewing the content they create that they are the victims of hegemonic domination, and identifying themselves as the most efficient opposition to the current hegemony.

The term 'globalist', used by the Groyppers to identify the Western ruling class, is one that is loaded with primarily negative connotations. At times, it is used to describe the ideals of international democracy envisioned by small-l liberals; other times, it is used as a blanket term to refer to the CEOs and investors of large companies which operate regardless of borders. More often than not, however, 'globalist' is used as a thinly veiled dog-whistle to refer to Jews. This labelling of Jews as 'globalists' is akin to the 'wandering Jew' trope, according to which Jews are only loyal to other Jews – or Israel – and wander the world in the hopes of corrupting other nations to further their tribe's power. Similar tropes are found in many of the major antisemitic publications which continue to influence far-right movements today, such as the fraudulent *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* and *The International Jew*, a set of novels published and distributed by Henry Ford in the early 1920s¹²². In keeping with their 'optics-friendly' strain of

¹²² Cockburn & Clair 2003, 15.

white nationalist thoughts, the Groypers view Jews as being the dominant force behind the so-called ‘globalist’ elite ruling the West through hegemony, while remaining careful to only state this belief implicitly by relying primarily on dog-whistle terms. This is reflected throughout the content found on Rightwingism.

In a video published on April 17, 2020, two characters from the 2004 animated movie *The Incredibles* are seen engaging in a re-dubbed dialogue in an office. One is a short, Jewish-coded man named Mr. Shapiro, and the other is a tall and muscular blonde, white man named Bob:

Mr. Shapiro: *‘Out of the way goyim’.*

Muscular man: *‘Listen Mr. Shapiro. This economic strain is lowering the white birth rate.’*

Mr. Shapiro: *‘That’s exactly the point, we want goyim working as much as possible! Souls don’t matter, GDP per capita does. When will you learn?’*

The scene skips to a later moment.

Mr. Shapiro: *‘Sit down Goyim. The propaganda’s too weak Bob. Too. Weak. We must be funneling more money to the Middle East, and other regions!’*

Muscular man: *‘We’re supposed to be helping America!’*

Mr. Shapiro: *‘We’re supposed to be helping Israeli people Bob! It’s an incredibly heavy weight on our shoulders, Bob, being God’s chosen people! Now, Goyim, what are we supposed to do?’*

Muscular man: *‘We’re supposed to be enacting globalist policies.’*

Mr. Shapiro: *‘Yes, that’s right! And we undercut actual citizens with illegals, creating the ultimate global economic empire that can race mix together. Now, Listen, I have a few other ideas for economic expansion, we can hopefully funnel enough propaganda to...’*

As the muscular character looks away and notices altercation in a nearby alley, the Jewish-coded one grabs his face to redirect his attention.

Mr. Shapiro: *‘Are you listening to me?’*

Muscular man: *'That woman is getting raped...'*

Mr. Shapiro: *'I don't care about the rape Bob, I just care about...'*

Muscular man: *'Your Somalians are creating mass rape!'*

Mr. Shapiro: *'In the name of multiculturalism, it is fine.'*

The muscular man begins walking out.

Mr. Shapiro: *'Wait, you come back here right now! Bob, you come back here!'*

The muscular man walks back.

Mr. Shapiro: *'Ah, yes, that's a good goy.'*

The screen then switches to the muscular man strangling the Jewish-coded man while wearing a skull-mask – a piece of attire associated to right-wing accelerationist extremist groups like Atomwaffen Division¹²³ – as electronic music begins to play.

On the inter-discursive level, this dialogue features a number of tropes frequently employed in far-right discourse, which are crucial to understanding the overall meaning of the discourse. The words Goyim and Goy, for example, have a tremendous effect in shaping the viewer's perception of the unbalanced power relationship between the Jewish-coded man and the muscular, blonde character. Stemming from the modern Hebrew and Yiddish lexicons, they translate into English as *'nation'* and are used in the Torah to refer to non-Israelite nations, though in modern settings they typically broadly refer to all non-Jews. Debates exist regarding the connotation of the terms¹²⁴, though they are widely understood as pejorative and are often used as a slur¹²⁵. Outside of its use in Jewish discourse, the words Goy and Goyim are also used ironically by white supremacists, who lean into its pejorative connotations to frame Jews as

¹²³ Southern Poverty Law Centre 2017.

¹²⁴ Friedman 2017.

¹²⁵ Silow-Carrol, Kalman, Lapin, Hartman, Abusch-Magder, Kallman, Rofeberg and Wolfson 2019.

viewing non-Jews under a disdainful and haughty perspective¹²⁶. Not only is the Jewish-coded character presented as the direct superior of the muscular man in the clip, but their relationship is therefore understood as all the more unequal due to the former's expressed feeling of superiority over the latter. 'Undercutting actual citizens with illegals', on the other hand, refers to a specifically antisemitic understanding of the Great Replacement conspiracy theory according to which Jews are actively sponsoring non-white immigration to Western countries and promoting race mixing with the objective of weakening their gene pool to facilitate their planned takeover. This same conspiracy fueled the 'Jews will not replace us' chants at the Charlottesville rally in 2017¹²⁷. The mention of Somali rapists being excused in the name of multiculturalism also stem from the Great Replacement theory and furthermore implies the control of Jews over policymaking in Western countries. The reliance of the discourse on grand, all-encompassing conspiracy theories for this otherwise mundane scene indicates that the power dynamics involved in the scene are meant to be understood as widespread. As such, the intent of the video is to portray Jews as a dominating faction in society which forces the working class – represented by the Aryan archetype of muscular blonde man – to work against its own interests by promoting policies that will bring about their own downfall. The argument carried through the discourse, additionally, is introduced through the use of a topos of people, which entails that if a given people either favour or refuse a specific action, then this action should, or should not be performed¹²⁸. In this context, because Jews are portrayed as supporting globalism, multiculturalism, race mixing and immigration, then white Westerners should oppose them. Furthermore, the choice to use footage from a popular animation film many in the Groyper's

¹²⁶ Anti-Defamation League, 2021.

¹²⁷ Bromley, Roger 2018, 16.

¹²⁸ Wodak 2015, 9.

target group would have seen growing up is not accidental, and speaks to the Groyper's tactic of using content their viewers can relate to – in this case, by appealing to childhood memories – in order to create a strong resonance effect which helps convey the group's message in spite of its extreme nature.

Causing a 'Great Replacement' is not the only ill which is blamed on the 'Jewish elite' they believe controls Western societies. Set to the sound of ominous electronic drumbeats, a video published on May 23, 2020 all but names Jews as the nefarious actors behind the of transgender rights in the West:

Transgenderism did not exist prior to 2015. It has only become a part of the international debate because of the Vanity Fair Caitlyn Jenner cover on June 1st 2015 and the immediate media-led normalization campaign. Google who the photographer was for the Caitlyn Jenner photoshoot for Vanity Fair. Cases of gender dysphoria in the children of several Western nations has increased over 1000% in less than 10 years. A UK government endorsed charity, Mermaids, encourages the use of hormones and puberty blockers for children. Transgenderism is the most astroturfed faux-struggle that has been enforced and encouraged despite huge public outcry. The roots of this less than 5 years old phenomenon are found in the Institut für (sic) Sexualwissenschaft and Weimar Germany. The institute was founded by Magnus and Arthur Hirschfeld, which led to the first transgender surgeries. Fortunately, the literature of the institute was almost entirely burned. Interestingly enough most of the books that were burned under Hitler's regime were from this institute. Also, the guy that invented the separation between sex and gender tortured a boy mutilated at birth by a botched circumcision by trying to raise him as a girl. The boy would eventually commit suicide along with his brother.

Once again, context is of particular importance in understanding the argumentation laid out in this discourse in full. On the inter-discursive level, much of it is based on verifiably false assertion that ‘transgenderism did not exist prior to 2015’ and that it only became an international debate due to Caitlyn Jenner’s public transition. This assertion serves to fuel the narrative that transgender identity is a new phenomenon which broadly exists due to a wide-ranging conspiracy – this narrative discounts the large body of anthropological, sociological, and historical literature which demonstrates that alternative gender identities have been recognized in different cultures throughout world history. Most interesting, however, are the number of coy references to Judaism or Jewish identity throughout the text. The photographer for Jenner’s Vanity Fair cover photo is named Annie Leibovitz and is a Jewish woman. The ‘Institut für Sexualwissenschaft, similarly, was a sexology research institute operational from 1919 until 1933. It played a defining role in modernizing society’s understanding of non-heterosexual sexualities, first proposed the idea that gender exists on a spectrum¹²⁹, and even offered some of the first gender-affirming surgeries in human history. Its founders, Magnus Hirschfeld, and Arthur Kronfeld (their last names are erroneously stated as being the same in the text) were both Jewish, and Hirschfeld himself was openly homosexual. These identities, as well as the institute’s engagement in queer rights advocacy, made them a ‘cause célèbre’ for the Nazis, who held protests in front of the institute until members of the Sturmabteilung – otherwise known as the Brownshirts – attacked and destroyed the facility on May 6, 1933¹³⁰. In the context of this video, it is once again alleged that Hirschfeld and Kronfeld promoted ‘sexual deviancy’ as part of a Jewish plot for world domination. The last claim made in the text, which entails that ‘the guy that invented the separation between sex and gender tortured a botched circumcision by

¹²⁹ Dose 2014, 68.

¹³⁰ Dose 2014, 64.

trying to raise him as a girl’ conflates a number of facts in order to fuel the ‘Jewish domination’ narrative, but also the narrative that transition surgery is inherently harmful – an angle which had only been implied up until now in the text. John Money, the man in question, was not Jewish himself, and did not perform a ‘botched circumcision’ in order to change the gender of a child. Rather, a child who had suffered a botched circumcision was brought to Money – a reputable psychologist at the time – who suggested gender transition surgery and hormone replacement therapy as a solution. These measures caused significant harm to the child, who would later seek to reverse the procedures, and died of suicide in 2004 as the result of a lifelong struggle with depression¹³¹. This specific case of malpractice tarnished Money’s legacy, and 2SLGBTQ+ groups have been at the forefront of the movement to condemn him¹³². The accusation that Money himself performed a botched circumcision, however, almost undeniably hints at the video’s poster’s belief that Money was himself a Jewish man, given the important role of circumcision in the covenant between Jews and G-d in the Jewish tradition. These thinly veiled references to Judaism make it clear that the video is once again identifying Jews as a global elite exercising hegemonic control over the cultural and political mores of society, this time through a focus on sex and gender norms. This understanding helps identify the broader argument on the text, which is carried through the use of a topos of people, much like the Incredibles parody video. In this case, viewers are told that they should be opposed to the existence of transgender people, on the basis that Jews have been at the forefront of the cultural shift towards their acceptance. This argument is vehiculated along with a reference to a well-remembered moment in popular culture – Caitlyn Jenner’s transition – and capitalizes on common misconceptions

¹³¹ Walker 2004.

¹³² “Intersex Society of North America, 2021.

regarding a transgender identities, creating a piece of content likely to resonate with a young audience.

Both of the pieces of content previously analyzed aim to expose the nefarious intentions of a hegemonic, globalist ‘Jewish elite’ in promoting ‘transgenderism’, multiculturalism, and immigration. These different concepts are presented as some of the hallmarks of a morally decadent modern liberal democratic order, and Jews are portrayed as responsible for this decadence. However, while these different measures are framed as harmful to ‘actual citizens’ of Western nations, they stop short of painting the picture of a civilization so morally corrupt that it is beyond repair, a belief expressed particularly explicitly throughout the content found on Rightwingism. While these videos do not explicitly blame Jews for the issues they raise, they implicitly do so, and rely on age-old antisemitic tropes. One video, for example, refers to a conspiracy theory popularized by the Qanon movement according to which the online furniture store Wayfair sells children into sexual slavery through their website¹³³. Posted on July 24, 2020, the video shows screenshots of drastically overpriced items, matching their names on the Wayfair website to those of missing children, and features a text caption:

Real Evil exists in this world and there is absolutely NOTHING you can do about it.

‘We’ll show them, we’ll fight back.’

They do this in the open because they know we will not stop them!

Don’t kid yourself anymore. Go back to scrolling.

¹³³ Spring 2020.

Once again, inter-discursive context is of particular importance in understanding the argument vehiculated in this video. While the video does not explicitly point to Jews as a scapegoat, it does so implicitly, by relying on an age-old antisemitic trope. Allegations that powerful elites are ‘abducting children’ have long been a staple in far-right discourse, and originate from the accusations of ‘blood libel’ that have historically been levelled against Jews, according to which Jews require the blood of non-Jews, especially that of non-Jewish children, for their religious rituals¹³⁴. These allegations have served as fuel for antisemitic violence, banishment, pogroms, and the Holocaust. Today, blood libel tropes are often stripped of their explicitly antisemitic bent, as is the case with the Wayfair conspiracy theory, though their proximity to antisemitic discourse means they can easily be redirected towards their original victim, as has been observed through the rhetoric of the Qanon movement¹³⁵. The video is, in some regard, a departure from some of the more solution-oriented content found on the account. In alt-right parlance, this post could be considered a ‘blackpill’, a concept stemming from incel discourse according to which men who are unable to find sexual partners should resign themselves to the idea that their status as involuntary celibates is predetermined and almost impossible to change in the current societal context¹³⁶. Because of this, ‘blackpills’ are seen as offering two options to their recipient; they can give up and accept that under current conditions, change is impossible, or they can fight to radically change society. The caption of the video seemingly pushes viewers towards the former option by saying that there is ‘nothing’ the viewer can do to fight back against this evil child trafficking conspiracy, at least on an individual basis. However, the caption’s snarky tone, evidenced by the sarcastic ‘quoting’ of the viewer’s

¹³⁴ Johnson 2012, 8.

¹³⁵ Lavin, 2021.

¹³⁶ New America, 2021.

reaction, the statement that ‘they’ do this in the open because ‘they’ know no one will stop them, and the invitation to simply ‘go back to scrolling’ instead seem to challenge viewers into recognizing that such blatant injustice would not be possible in a different society. In that sense, the makers of the video are once again employing a topos of threat, presented in the form of a dare, rather than directly stated. This perspective effectively reconnects the feelings of hopelessness conveyed in the video to the Groyper’s objective of topple the current hegemony.

Similar sentiments are echoed in another video found on the account, this time featuring Groyper leader Nick Fuentes delivering a short monologue, as well as a screen capture of the original Netflix synopsis for the controversial French movie ‘Cuties’, released in 2020, which reads: ‘*Amy, 11, become fascinated with a twerking dance crew. Hoping to join them, she starts to explore her femininity, defying her family's traditions*’. In his monologue, Fuentes says:

If this were happening in a normal sensible town, people would get pitchforks and torches, and they would find these fucking people and they would murder them, they would fucking murder them. That's what would happen in a normal country.

This snippet of an episode of America First sought to add to the discourse surrounding the release of Cuties. Though its director stated the movie was written as a denunciation of the hyper-sexualization of pre-pubescent girls¹³⁷, the film was quickly seized as a ‘culture war’ issue by many on the right-end of the political spectrum, including mainstream figures like Conservative Party of Canada leader Erin O’Toole, who called it ‘exploitative and disturbing’¹³⁸. This inter-discursive contexts highlights the potential resonance of this piece of content, and its

¹³⁷ Welk, 2020.

¹³⁸ Hertz 2020.

potential in drawing in more moderate viewers. Fuentes' monologue, which did not originally address the controversy surrounding the movie, is nonetheless paired with the movie's description. Here, we see the posters, through Fuentes, explicitly seizing the concept of common sense – or 'normality' – in their favour and using it to carry their argument that Western society has gone off the rails and is so far gone that undeniable evils have become normalized. Interestingly, the argumentative scheme of the video follows a similar structure as the *topoi* in Right-Wing studies identified by Wodak, though it does not entirely correspond to any of them. As such, argumentations carried through similar schemes – if society was normal, then a specific action would/would not be performed – could be referred to as their own 'topos of normality'. It is implied, in the context of this video, that the view that Cuties makes the promotion of pedophilia is the 'normal' or commonly held view, and that the punishment for the promotion of pedophilia ought to be death. This second point makes the overarching argument more approachable to non-radicalized audiences, insofar as pedophilia is broadly recognized as one of the worst crimes one can commit, especially in the eyes of parents. The perceived normalization of a crime as odious as pedophilia is therefore used as a means of inducing a sense of despair in the viewer, and to create a sense of disconnect between viewers and a society portrayed as irredeemably immoral. This could also be understood as an inciting violent act, though Fuentes and other leading figures of the Groyper movement have consistently advocated for a 'political solution', which would see conservatives and nationalists 're-taking' the West through non-violent, political means, rather than through violent revolution¹³⁹.

This feeling of disconnect is wielded in other pieces of content in order to promote the political positions of the Groyper movement. In another monologue of his published on

¹³⁹ Lorber 2021.

Rightwingism, Nick Fuentes justifies the anger felt by white men in the face of perceived injustices resulting from living in multicultural countries:

Are you as angry as I am about it? You know they make fun of us for being angry. They're like, the right wing, they're angry - by the way, they're angry too. But they're like, the right wing, they're these angry white males. Yeah, it kind of makes us mad when people take a steaming hot dump on the glory of our civilization. It kinda irks people a little bit. You call a black person the wrong thing, they're entitled to burn the entire city. You call them a coloured person instead of a person of colour so they burn the entire city and they're like, well, you did call them a coloured person. You have people coming over to Italy and they burn the flag, they step on the flag, they say F- this, this is ours now, they rape the women, they kill the people. They do these

Here, Fuentes is melding together a number of far-right talking points in order to build a broader argument, rather than referencing a specific event. For instance, because the video was published in January 2020, the mention of cities being burnt by offended Black persons is not a reference to the protests organized in the wake of the murder of George Floyd at the hands of law enforcement. It is more than likely, however, that he is referencing protests that arose as a result of other police killing of an unarmed Black man, something he downplays through a comparison with the use of the wrong terminology. The mention of ‘people coming over to Italy’ who ‘burn the flag’, ‘rape the women’, ‘kill the people’ and ‘do (...) terror attacks’, on the other hand, conflates a number of tropes oftentimes directed towards refugees by far-right actors, particularly in Europe. References to migrants sexually assaulting women, for example, find their origins in the ‘rapefugee trope¹⁴⁰’, which was used to mobilize both feminist and Islamophobic sentiments

¹⁴⁰ Dafaure, 2020, 3.

in order to dehumanize refugees during the Syrian migrant crisis. This adds to the resonance of the video, which taps into potentially traumatic memories of the viewers in order to weaponize it against migrants. The comparison of Black people to migrants in Italy is significant, insofar as it is meant to portray Black Americans as foreigners in their own land – as such, Fuentes is both stripping them from their humanity by depicting them as violent criminals and predators, as well as stripping them from their national belonging. The objective of the monologue, in this sense, is to make white, male viewers feel alienated from their own countries, which are portrayed as being taken over by foreign threats. Its core argument that white men should be opposed to multiculturalism is pushed through the use of a topos of burden, which entails that if a country is burdened by specific problems, then one should act to diminish those burdens¹⁴¹. In this case, if white-majority countries are burdened by such issues as rape, murder and terrorism, then they should reverse their multiculturalist policies, and white men should be at the forefront of the fight against them.

Several pieces of content found on Rightwingism also highlight the potential repercussions of what being at the forefront of the white nationalist ‘fight against multiculturalism’ the Groypers are mobilizing for might entail. In each of these videos, taking the suggested stances is depicted as a dangerous move that will get one ‘cancelled’ or denounced by their communities. This perceived threat is further weaponized as a means of both emphasizing the victimhood of white men in Western countries and promoting a sense of solidarity between them that will lead to real-life mobilization. One video published on the account features Andrew Breitbart, the founder of an outlet named after him which has been

¹⁴¹ Wodak 2015, 9.

dubbed the ‘premier website of the alt-right’ by the Anti-Defamation League, delivering a short monologue.

'People have gone out, they're against the mainstream media, you're gonna call us racist, you're gonna call us potential Timothy McVeighs. Fuck. You. War.'

As Breitbart delivers the final line, the song ‘War’ by AWOLNATION – an ominous and darker electronic rock song – comes on.

In the clip, Breitbart – an influential figure of right-wing alternative media in his time – is speaking as a representative of those who are ‘against the mainstream media’, and alleges that people like him have been unfairly depicted as holding racist beliefs or as potential domestic terrorists through a comparison to Timothy McVeigh, possibly as a means of silencing them. He then calls for a war to be waged on the unnamed enemy fielding those allegations, though it is likely that Breitbart himself was referring to mainstream media figures, given their mention in the monologue. In this case, however, the added inter-discursive context from other pieces of content produced or reposted by Rightwingism would indicate that Breitbart’s words have been recycled and given a broader meaning, as other videos on the account repeatedly identify mainstream media as merely one facet of the globalist and Jewish hegemonic group which they believe controls both the policymaking process and the cultural mores of Western countries. As such, the call for a war to be waged ought to be interpreted through that broader meaning, and understood yet another denunciation of this group of elites, though with a more pro-active bent. Like other similar videos found on the account, the argumentation is carried through a topos of threat; in this case, the ‘threat’ is being denounced as a racist – and therefore silence – and the action that is suggested to address the issue is a war. The call for ‘war’ in the video, however, is

likely not an attempting at stirring up violent conflict, but rather an invitation for ‘anti-mainstream’ forces to band together and fight back by countering the mainstream media’s narrative. Breitbart, famously, believed politics was ‘downstream from culture’, and that creating political change requires cultural change. This so-called ‘Breitbart doctrine’ has remained popular in right-wing circles, and largely forms the basis for the Groypers’ ‘political solution’.

Though calls for war to be waged against mainstream culture ought not to be understood as promoting the use of political violence as a means of achieving power, other videos found on Rightwingism show it is rather the end Groypers wish for. Throughout the account’s feed, videos glorifying State violence against communists, extrajudicial killings of pedophiles, and the criminalization of political dissent are repeatedly found. One particularly explicit video, published on June 1st 2020, shows what is likely to be footage from the 2020 George Floyd protests in the United States, with a handful of law enforcement officers dressed in riot gear charging a large crowd a protesters, roughing up and arresting several of them. As the video unfolds, the protesters can be heard screaming for help and telling each other to run away. Above and below the video, a caption reads, in all-capital letters:

RESTORE ORDER. VOTE RIGHT WING.

Though the video, its text and its caption do not explicitly refer to the Black Lives Matter protests, the timing of publication and the easily recognizable footage make it clear it is referring to the current political context at the time. Despite its diminutive length, the caption makes the clear – and almost mathematical – argument that a vote for right-wing politicians is a vote for order, which is moved forward by a topos of advantage, according to which if under a specific relevant point of view will be useful, then one should perform it. Expanding upon the logic of the argument, it is understood that ‘disorder’ is what happens when those who are not right-wing –

identified in other pieces of content produced by the account as the Jewish globalist elite – are in power. The video footage, which supplements the caption, shows a real-life example of the ‘chaos’ the Groypers believe has been brought upon the West by globalism, but also shows followers what could be done if right-wing nationalist forces are able to seize political power.

The content found on Rightwingismtiktok seems to paint the portrait of two, broader societal actors. The first one, the so-called ‘globalists’, is depicted as an out-of-touch, woefully immoral and restrictive group of elites, who seemingly control every aspect of social life in Canada, if not across the globe – simply put, they hold the same powers Gramsci assigned to capitalist hegemons in his Prison Notebooks. Standing in opposition to them are patriots, nationalists, or right-wingers; though they are referred to through a number of different labels, they are united by a common understanding that their countries are in a state of decay, that the aforementioned ‘globalists’ are responsible for it, and that a conflict – not necessarily a violent one – must take place in order for nationalists to gain power. This second faction – within which the Groypers believe they stand – is akin to a counter-hegemonic group, which creates links of solidarity, not between members of a given social class, but along ethnic lines, in order to supplant the established order. In order to ‘sell’ this right-wing Gramscian view to Canadian youth, the owners of Rightwingism make liberal use of topoi of threat, creating the impression that danger – the danger of being labelled a racist, of losing one’s culture, the danger of pedophilia, the danger of gender fluidity, and so on – is everywhere. Topoi of people, in the same vein, are used to embody these dangers, which facilitates the assignment of blame. More than simply denouncing an obscure group of conspirators, topoi of people are used to name them, and as is often the case with far-right scapegoating, it is Jews who are depicted as the perpetrators of all of society’s ills. Lastly, topoi of advantage and normality are used to show

those coming across Rightwingismtiktok's content what the world under a right-wing hegemony could look like, emphasizing upon the theme of law, order, and of swift and aggressive justice wielded against those who are deemed the opponents of a far-right societal takeover. Perhaps surprisingly, few, if any, of the videos featuring Gramscian themes were primarily focused on domestic Canadian issues, or even mentioned Canada. This discrepancy speaks to the international aims of the Groypers – and more broadly of the far-right. They are, at their core, a transnational movement, which first gained prominence in the United States, only to spread across borders, into Canada, of course, but also across Europe, where a number of Fuentes imitators continue to adapt the latter's rhetoric and aesthetic for their own national audiences. It does appear contradictory, at first glance, that a movement promoting 'my-country-first', isolationist politics could become a worldwide brand, though this should not be surprising. The identitarian criteria – whiteness and maleness, certainly – that the group promotes are themselves not bound by borders or geographical constraints. Like other paleoconservative groups, the Groypers also claim to stand up for another group which exists across borders: the so-called 'left-behinds', this oft-discussed class of people who are 'still tied to locality, experience migration or cultural cosmopolitanism as a threat (...) hold on to tradition, to their inherited communities and prejudices'¹⁴². This semi-mythical group, which is equally fetishized and derided in political discourse and in the media, is present in every country. So too, the Groypers believe, are the globalists, the Deep State, or even the 'Illuminati' – all blanket terms which, ultimately, describe the same 'global elites' who have 'abandoned civic loyalty' in the name of the liberal world order¹⁴³, the United Nations, the European Union, or any and all international organization. As such, while it is clear that the right-wing revolution sought by Canadian

¹⁴² Abrahmsen, Drolet, Gheciu, Narita, Vucetic & Williams 2020, 98.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 98.

Groyers places much emphasis on the importance of a political takeover of Canada, its aims are equally domestic and international, as their struggle is ultimately connected to a broader, globalized fight for hegemony.

Conclusion

Like many from my generation, I spent a significant part of my formative years on the Internet, sharing memes and playing video games with complete strangers who quickly became some of my closest friends. This is how I was first exposed to the *fascist creep* – that is, the gradual encroachment of fascism within a sub-culture – as the online communities I was a part of were gradually taken over by fascist ideologues. Their message was of little interest to me, given my preference for the left-wing politics of the punk rock scene. Unfortunately, several of my friends fell down the far-right rabbit hole, thanks to the incredible ease with which extremist materials can be found on popular social media platforms like Youtube and Facebook. While some of them have since made it out, most have not. At the time, white nationalist influencers like Faith Goldy, Stefan Molyneux and Milo Yiannopoulos were nearing the peak of their popularity, and all played a major role in the radicalization of those I called my friends. Since then, they have all but disappeared; Goldy unsuccessfully ran for Mayor of Toronto, and deactivated her social media accounts shortly after, whereas Molyneux and Yiannopoulos remain active, but have faced significant financial woes and struggled to attract public attention the way they previously did, thanks to the unrelenting pressure of antifascist activists.

However, while their individual platforms might have disappeared, their ideas live on through those that filled the gap they left. In many respects, Nick Fuentes, Tyler L. Russell, as well as the person or group behind the Rightwingismtiktok account, are the students of the generation of white nationalists that came before them. The alt-right, the movement Goldy, Molyneux, Yiannopoulos and of course Richard Spencer helped create and promote has likewise gradually folded, though not without scoring major victories in the election of US President Donald Trump and the organization of the Charlottesville Unite the Right rally – the largest far-

right mobilization in recent memory. Like their predecessors, the Groypers have contributed to the continued mainstreaming of far-right politics across the globe. Recent headlines paint a bleak, but clear picture in that regard. On the very same day as my supervisors and I agreed that this thesis was strong enough to be presented, Kyle Rittenhouse, who at the ripe age of 17 drove 20 miles from his hometown to the city of Kenosha where he killed two racial justice protesters and injured a third, was cleared of all the charges laid against him, and is now being hailed as a champion of the mainstream American conservative movement. In fact, Tucker Carlson, who hosts the single highest-rated cable news show in the United States, interviewed Rittenhouse on air only one day after his acquittal. In France, Marine Le Pen, who for all intents and purposes still leads the party her father, a convicted Holocaust denier, founded in 1972, is facing a tough challenge in her bid to oppose Emmanuel Macron in the second round of the upcoming presidential election. Her rival, Éric Zemmour, is a far-right firebrand who played an instrumental role in popularizing the infamous ‘Great Replacement’ theory, foundational to the ideology of white nationalism, according to which the white population of European and Euro-descending countries are being replaced through ‘mass immigration’. Zemmour’s popularity shows that Le Pen’s once controversial views have come to be viewed as too moderate for a significant portion of the electorate. While legendary French punks Bérurier Noir once famously pleaded French voters never to let the far-right receive more than 20% of ballots cast in the first round in 1989 (*Plus jamais de 20%!*), current polls show that both Le Pen and Zemmour could receive more than 40% in a hypothetical second round. In Canada – a country that has long prided itself for its progressive politics, particularly in comparison to their southern neighbors – Maxime Bernier’s far-right ‘People’s Party’ managed to triple its share of the vote from 2019 to 2021, in spite of multiple allegations of ties with political extremists, some of which pertaining

to Tyler L. Russell and the Groyper movement. These individuals all claim different ideological backgrounds, but each has contributed to the global, rightward push political discourse has taken in recent years. Therein lies a lot of the power of the far-right. The ideological differences between the factions that make it up do little to stop it from operating as a concise movement, because the fear-addled tropes, conspiracies, and narratives they peddle ultimately amount to the same end: the Other, whoever they are, poses an existential threat to you and those you love.

Seemingly in all Western countries, the far-right has managed to make unprecedented gains, in no small part due to the work of the current generation of white nationalist influencers who have succeeded in marketing – and selling – their politics to young people. Like their predecessors, however, it is almost unavoidable that Fuentes, Russell, and their fellow travelers will eventually fade out of relevance. This statement might come as a bit of a surprise, given the fact that this thesis is uniquely interested in analyzing the discursive practices of a group I have all but admitted might not exist in a few years. But in the same way that today's white nationalists have emulated yesterday's, building on their successes, and learning from their mistakes, the white nationalists of tomorrow are poised to be even more successful in popularizing the politics of hate to wide audiences. Certainly, the COVID-19 pandemic has proved to be a unique opportunity for the far-right to make gains, by leading the charge against any and all measures to curb the spread of the disease, by taking advantage of global increase in the use of social media, and by presenting the world with an ever-changing series of boogymen to blame. Simply put, the events of the last two years have given the next generation of white nationalists more than enough successes to learn from, and while the specific individuals and groups who embody the movement will all eventually fade away, the former will go on, as it has for hundreds of years, because there simply is no lack of people eager to push it forward.

Yet, despite the novelty of our current situation, the pieces of content analyzed throughout often discussed themes and issues which reflect longstanding anxieties held by those on the far right, but also non-radicalized people across so-called ‘Western’ countries; loss of tradition, loss of culture, loss of national sovereignty, moral decay, and perhaps above all, the fear that individuals are losing their societal agency to the whims of national and global elites. In effect, COVID-19 has given a new platform for these anxieties to be projected onto. As the disease which once governed our lives becomes endemic and gradually begins to take up less of our collective brain space, these themes will continue to be peddled by far-right agents and groups. Surely, when the next ‘once-in-a-century’ global crisis hits – and there certainly is no lack of opportunities for such a crisis to unfold, particularly when considering the possible impact of climate change – there will already be a new generation of haters begging for a chance to peddle them once more, in their own way. In this sense, this thesis is merely a snapshot into the ways in which the far-right made its appeal to young people at this given point in time, which I can only hope proves useful in guiding the work of future researchers seeking to combat it.

Bibliography

- Abrahamsen, Jean-François Drolet, Alexandra Gheciu, Karin Narita, Srdjan Vucetic and Michael Williams. 2020. "Confronting the International Political Sociology of the New Right," *International Political Sociology* 14: 1, 94–107.
- Anderson, Nick. 2019. "Far-Right Agitators Roil the Conservative Movement on College Campuses in Battle to Define Trumpism." *The Washington Post*, November 28, 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/far-right-agitators-roil-the-conservative-movement-on-college-campuses-in-battle-to-define-trumpism/2019/11/16/a757d88a-0723-11ea-b17d-8b867891d39d_story.html.
- Blake, Andrew. 2021. "Twitter Bans Nick Fuentes, 'Groyper' Leader and 'America First' Podcaster." *The Washington Times*, July 10, 2021. <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/jul/10/twitter-bans-nick-fuentes-groyper-leader-and-ameri/>.
- Boswell, Randy. 2021 "O'Toole's Anti-Cancel-Culture Campaign Is Really a Defence of Commemorative Status Quo." *iPolitics*, January 27, 2021. <https://ipolitics.ca/2021/01/27/otooles-anti-cancel-culture-campaign-is-really-a-defence-of-commemorative-status-quo/>.
- Bromley, Roger. 2018. 'The Politics of Displacement: the Far Right Narrative of Europe and Its Others.' *From the European South*, 13-26.
- Buisson, Marine. 2021. "Comment Zemmour a Popularisé La Théorie Raciste Du 'Grand Remplacement.'" *Le Soir*, October 6, 2021. <https://www.lesoir.be/399038/article/2021-10-06/comment-zemmour-popularise-la-theorie-raciste-du-grand-remplacement>.
- Burford, Corinna. 2018. "The Complete History of Xxxtentacion's Controversial Career." *Vulture*, June 19, 2018. <https://www.vulture.com/2018/06/a-complete-timeline-xxxtentacions-controversial-career.html>.
- "Canadian Nationalist Party Flyer Refers to Jews as 'Liars and Deceivers' and a 'Tribe of Parasites'." *Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies*. Accessed October 8, 2021. <https://www.friendsofsimonwiesenthalcenter.com/news/canadian-nationalist-party-flyer-refers-to-jews-as-liars-and-deceivers-and-a-tribe-of-parasites>.
- Cassen, Flora. 2020. "'Jews Control Chinese Labs That Created Coronavirus': White Supremacists' Dangerous New Conspiracy Theory: Opinion." *Haaretz*, May 3, 2020. <https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/.premium-the-jews-control-the-chinese-labs-that-created-coronavirus-1.8809635>.
- Chiose, Simona. 2017. "U Of T Professor Opposes Transgender Bill at Senate Committee Hearing." *The Globe and Mail*, May 18, 2017.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/education/u-of-t-professor-opposes-transgender-bill-at-senate-committee-hearing/article35035768/>.

Coaston, Jane. 2018. "How the Rise of Conspiracy Theory Politics Emboldens Anti-Semitism." *Vox*, October 31, 2018. <https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/10/31/18034256/anti-semitism-pittsburgh-synagogue-shooting-prejudice-right>.

Coaston, Jane. 2019. "Why Alt-Right Trolls Shouted down Donald Trump Jr." *Vox*, November 11, 2019. <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/11/11/20948317/alt-right-donald-trump-jr-conservative-tpusa-yaf-racism-antisemitism>.

Cockburn, Alexander, and Jeffrey St Clair. *The Politics of Anti-Semitism*. Edinburgh: AK Press, 2003.

Dafaure, Maxime. 2020. "The 'Great Meme War:' the Alt-Right and Its Multifarious Enemies." *Angles* 10, no. 10.

Daniels, Jessie. 2018. "The Algorithmic Rise of the 'Alt-Right.'" *Contexts* 17, no. 1: 60–65.

DeClerq, Katherine, and Sean Davidson. 2019. "Fired Host Don Cherry Not Apologizing for 'You People' Rant on Hockey Night in Canada." *CTV News*, November 12, 2019. <https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/fired-host-don-cherry-not-apologizing-for-you-people-rant-on-hockey-night-in-canada-1.4679550>.

"Donning the Mask: Presenting 'The Face of 21st Century Fascism'." Southern Poverty Law Center, June 20, 2017. <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2017/06/20/donning-mask-presenting-face-21st-century-fascism>.

Dose, Ralf. 2014. *Magnus Hirschfeld: The Origins of the Gay Liberation Movement*. Monthly Review Press, New York.

Drolet, Jean-François, and Michael C Williams. 2020. "America First: Paleoconservatism and the Ideological Struggle for the American Right." *Journal of political ideologies* 25, no. 1: 28–50.

Dyck, Kirsten. 2016. *Reichsrock: The International Web of White Power and Neo-Nazi Hate Music*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Edmondson, Catie. 2019. "Far-Right Extremist Finds an Ally in an Arizona Congressman." *The New York Times*, July 5, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/05/us/politics/paul-gosar-republicans-congress-extremism.html>.

Friedman, Dan. 2017. "What 'Goy' Means, and Why I Keep Using It." *The Forward*, August 25, 2017. <https://forward.com/life/381035/why-i-wont-stop-using-the-term-goy/>.

- Guinaudeau, Benjamin, Votta, Fabio, and Kevin Munger. 2021. 'Fifteen Seconds of Fame: TikTok and the Supply Side of Social Video.' *Computational Communication Research*, 1-25.
- "Great Replacement Theory." *Counter Extremism Project*. Accessed October 8, 2021. <https://www.counterextremism.com/content/great-replacement-theory>.
- Hamilton, Graeme. 2017. "Former Canadian Flag, the Red Ensign, Gets New, Darker Life as Far-Right Symbol." *National Post*, July 10, 2017. <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/former-canadian-flag-the-red-ensign-gets-new-darker-life-as-far-right-symbol>.
- Hannah Gais and Michael Edison Hayden. 2020. "Extremists Are Cashing in on a Youth-Targeted Gaming Website." *Southern Poverty Law Center*, November 17, 2020. <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2020/11/17/extremists-are-cashing-youth-targeted-gaming-website>.
- Heni, Clemens. 2008. "Secondary Antisemitism: From Hardcore to Softcore Denial of the Shoah." *Jewish Political Studies Review* 20, no. 3/4: 73-92.
- Hertz, Barry. 2020. "What Erin O'Toole Gets Wrong about the Faux-Controversy over Netflix's Cuties." *The Globe and Mail*, September 14, 2020. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/film/article-what-erin-otoole-gets-wrong-about-the-faux-controversy-over-netflixs/?cmpid=rss&click=dlvr.it>.
- hooks, b. 2000. *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. London, England: Pluto Press.
- Jackson Lears, T.J. 1985. 'The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities.' *The American Historical Review*, 90(3), 567-593.
- Johnb14. 2020. 'David Duke: Attacks on Confederate Memorials and the Truth About Slavery.' *Bitchute* video, June 16, 2020, <https://www.bitchute.com/video/cm1oVJm8UhiM/>.
- Johnson, Hannah. *Blood Libel: The Ritual Murder Accusation at the Limit of Jewish History*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012.
- Joseph-Watson, Paul. 2020. *Twitter* post, February 3, 2020, 2:42PM. <https://twitter.com/prisonplanet/status/827603151394050049?lang=en..>
- Joyce, Tom. 2019. "Don Cherry Is the Latest Casualty of Overzealous Cancel Culture." *Washington Examiner*, November 12, 2019. <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/don-cherry-is-the-latest-casualty-of-overzealous-cancel-culture>.
- Kaid, L. L., & Holtz-Bacha, C. 2008. *Resonance theory*. In *Encyclopedia of political communication* (Vol. 1, pp. 714-714).

- Ketcham, Christopher. 2021. "What the Far-Right Fascination with Pinochet's Death Squads Should Tell Us." *The Intercept*, February 4, 2021. <https://theintercept.com/2021/02/04/pinochet-far-right-hoppean-snake/>.
- Kelly, Annie. 2017. "The alt-right: reactionary rehabilitation for white masculinity: US alt-right extremism is a logical consequence of mainstream neo-conservatism." *Soundings*, no. 66, p.71.
- Lavin, Tal. 2021. "Qanon, Blood Libel, and the Satanic Panic." *The New Republic*, October 8, 2021. <https://newrepublic.com/article/159529/qanon-blood-libel-satanic-panic>.
- Liberium Arbitrium. 2020. 'Nick Fuentes: Misconceptions About 'Optics'.' *Bitchute* video. March 17, 2020. <https://www.bitchute.com/video/rT4bIvSbOexg/>.
- Liberium Arbitrium. 2020. 'Nick Fuentes on the Future of American Demographics and the Stacey Abrams Proposal.' *Bitchute* video, April 28, 2020. <https://www.bitchute.com/video/qaNtUtOg5K1t/>.
- Liberium Arbitrium. 2020. 'Nick Fuentes: America First Ep. 228 Gamers Rise Up.' *Bitchute* video, June 14, 2020, <https://www.bitchute.com/video/dV68jAAZcCZR/>.
- Liberium Arbitrium. 2020. 'Nick Fuentes: America First Ep. 638 Amnesty Don? Trump Mistakenly Announces Daca Amnesty W/ Chat.' *Bitchute* video, July 11, 2020. <https://www.bitchute.com/video/t8lYLu7N8SmB/>.
- Liberium Arbitrium. 2020. 'Nick Fuentes on How Harmful Our Society is to Children.' *Bitchute* video, August 17, 2020. <https://www.bitchute.com/video/0kdHbL2QsLij/>.
- Lorber, Ben. 2021. "'America First Is Inevitable.'" *Political Research Associates*. Accessed October 8, 2021. <https://www.politicalresearch.org/2021/01/15/america-first-inevitable>.
- Ashley Mattheis. 2018. "Shieldmaidens of Whiteness: (Alt) Maternalism and Women Recruiting for the Far/Alt-Right." *Journal for Deradicalization* Winter, no. 17, 128–162.
- Maad, Asmaa. 2019. "Je Ne Connais Pas Cette Théorie Du 'Grand Remplacement' " : L'amnésie De Marine Le Pen." *Le Monde*, March 18, 2019. https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2019/03/18/je-ne-connais-pas-cette-theorie-du-grand-remplacement-l-amnesie-de-marine-le-pen_5437907_4355770.html.
- Mezzofiore, Gianluca, Katie Polglase, Tim Lister, Frederik Pleitgen, Natalie Croker, and Sergio Hernandez. 2020. "How the 'Parasite' Qanon Conspiracy Cult Went Global." *CNN*, October 7, 2020. <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/10/07/tech/qanon-europe-cult-intl/index.html>.
- "MP Rob Anders Criticized over 'Bathroom Bill' Comments. 2021. *CBC News*, October 5, 2012. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/mp-rob-anders-criticized-over-bathroom-bill-comments-1.1133556>.

- “Misogynist Incels and Male Supremacism.” 2021. *New America*. Accessed October 8, 2021. <https://www.newamerica.org/political-reform/reports/misogynist-incels-and-male-supremacism/red-pill-to-black-pill/>.
- Mudde, Cas. 2015. *The Far-Right in America*. New York: Routledge.
- Mudde, Cas. 2014. *Youth and the Extreme Right*. New York: IDEBATE Press.
- “Nicholas J. Fuentes: Five Things to Know.” 2021. *Anti-Defamation League*, July 8, 2021. <https://www.adl.org/blog/nicholas-j-fuentes-five-things-to-know>.
- Nilges, Mathias. 2020. *Right-Wing Culture in Contemporary Capitalism: Regression and Future*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- . “Known White Nationalists Spotted At Violent Anti-Trudeau Demonstration.” 2021. *Canadian Anti-Hate Network*, October 14, 2021. https://www.antihate.ca/white_nationalists_violent_anti_trudeau_demonstration.
- “Proud Boys.” 2021. *Southern Poverty Law Center*. Accessed October 8, 2021. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/proud-boys>.
- Ribeiro, Manoel, Raphael Ottoni, Robert West, Virgílio Almeida, and Jr Meira. 2020. “Auditing Radicalization Pathways on YouTube.” In *Proceedings of the 2020 Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency*, 131–41.
- Ross, Alexander Reid. 2017. *Against the Fascist Creep*. Chico: AK Press.
- Salazar Philippe-Joseph (2018). “The Alt-Right as a Community of Discourse.” *Javnost - The Public*, 25:1-2, p.137.
- Silow-Carroll, Andrew, David Zvi Kalman, Andrew Lapin, Rachel Hartman, Rabbi Ruth Abusch-Magder, Sen. Meghan Kallman, Rabbi Lex Rofeberg, and Joe Wolfson. “Is 'Goy' a Slur?” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, April 22, 2019. <https://www.jta.org/2019/04/22/culture/is-goy-a-slur>.
- Smith, Peter, and Sébastien Roback. 2021. “White Nationalists Stage Failed Demo at John A. Macdonald Statue in Downtown Hamilton.” *Canadian Anti-Hate Network*, October 7, 2021. https://www.antihate.ca/white_nationalists_stage_failed_demo_john_a_macdonald_statue_downtown_hamilton.
- Spring, Marianna. 2020. “Wayfair: The False Conspiracy about a Furniture Firm and Child Trafficking.” *BBC News*, July 15, 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-53416247>.
- Stern, Alexandra. 2019. *Proud Boys and the White Ethnostate : How the Alt-Right Is Warping the American Imagination*. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 2019.

- Suro, Roberto. 1991. "The 1991 Election: Louisiana; Bush Denounces Duke as Racist and Charlatan." *The New York Times*, November 7, 1991.
<https://www.nytimes.com/1991/11/07/us/the-1991-election-louisiana-bush-denounces-duke-as-racist-and-charlatan.html>.
- "The Goyim Know/Shut It Down." 2021. *Anti-Defamation League*. Accessed October 8, 2021.
<https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/the-goyim-knowshut-it-down>.
- "The Overton Window." 2021. *Mackinac Center*. Accessed October 8, 2021.
<https://www.mackinac.org/OvertonWindow>.
- "Trudeau Condemns Destruction of Sir John A. Macdonald Statue in Montreal. 2020. *CBC News*, August 31, 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/trudeau-statue-sir-john-a-macdonald-1.5706247>.
- Van Dijk, Teun A. 1992. "Discourse and the Denial of Racism." *Discourse & Society* 3, no. 1: 87-118.
- Walker, Jesse. 2004. "The Death of David Reimer." *Reason*, May 24, 2004.
<https://reason.com/2004/05/24/the-death-of-david-reimer/>.
- Gabriel Weimann & Natalie Masri. 2020. Research Note: Spreading Hate on TikTok, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*.
- Welk, Brian. 2020. "'Cuties' Director Says Film Is Critical of Hyper-Sexualization of Children: 'We Have the Same Fight'." *TheWrap*, September 14, 2020.
<https://www.thewrap.com/cuties-director-says-film-is-critical-of-hyper-sexualization-of-children-we-have-the-same-fight/>.
- "Who Was David Reimer (Also, Sadly, Known as John/Joan)?" 2021. *Intersex Society of North America*. Accessed October 8, 2021. <https://isna.org/faq/reimer/>.