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The Politics of White Violence

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

by

Sean David Long

June 2023

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Politics of White Violence

by

Sean David Long

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Political Science
University of California, Riverside, June 2023
Dr. Farah Godrej, Chairperson

This dissertation attempts to understand the contemporary phenomenon of White political violence in the United States. Specifically, I challenge the notion that such violence can be considered merely a deviant or criminal aberration by showing how the fluctuating relationship between White violence and either support for or condemnation of State institutions reveals how fundamentally intertwined such violence is to Whiteness and American democracy more broadly. From within a theoretical perspective that emphasizes the historical relationship between White violence and democracy in the United States, this dissertation presents a mixed-methods approach that explores the commonalities between mainstream Whites who have high levels of attachment to their White identity and members of extremist hate groups who engage in overt racist language and violent activity. The main difference between these subsections of the population appears to rest on whether they see mainstream institutions as sufficiently enforcing White hierarchy and privilege, or whether violent action is needed to supplement or replace official avenues. This is shown through analyses of survey data, machine learning performed on hate crimes and extremist blog text, and my own field work within online pro-White and extremist groups.

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Chapter One: Introduction and Contemporary Context

1   Introduction

Between the summer of 2020 and January 2021, the United States saw a series of high-profile forms of White political violence, including Kyle Rittenhouse's vigilantism, marches and melees involving the Proud Boys, and, of course, the disastrous storming of the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. Not only have these incidents set a national dialogue over White extremism and political violence, but they also reveal pervasive trends among American Whites more broadly. Specifically, they indicate both the astonishingly mainstream presence of support for political violence by many Whites but also a complicated relationship between American Whites and State violence, such as law enforcement apparatuses. For instance, when Kyle Rittenhouse shot three anti-racist protesters in Kenosha, Wisconsin in August 2020, many mainstream observers expressed shock and outrage, but such condemnation was far from universal. President Trump described it as a case of self-defense, which would eventually get judicial affirmation, while other conservative commentators praised Rittenhouse for "maintain[ing] order when no one else would" [1] or even suggested that he ought to be president.[2] Many readers of the prominent conservative *Breitbart News* praised the shooter, describing him as "an amazing young man" who "could inspire American People"[3]. Fringe White extremists evinced a strikingly similar reaction, calling Rittenhouse a "HERO" who "did a public service."[4] Rittenhouse was not legally empowered to use State violence, but his case became, in many ways, a symbol for whether private White citizens are empowered to use force when faced with challenges to White supremacy or whether the State was even able to handle those challenges.

This notion that Rittenhouse was performing a "public service" and was somehow compensating for the failures of the State to ensure order was repeatedly affirmed both by Rittenhouse and by other commentators. Following his acquittal, Rittenhouse told far-right commentator Tucker Carlson that he was called on to protect a friend's property given the absence of the police, although he

expressed understanding for that absence, stating "they have a hard job.... I didn't really think they got the support they needed."[5] This situation must be seen within the context of the upsurge in police mobilization during the summer of 2020 to suppress anti-racist protests in response to the killing of George Floyd. Kenosha, in particular, was a hotbed of such protests, seeing widespread conflicts between protesters and police after the shooting of Jacob Blake in August.[6] Not only did Rittenhouse support the police, but many officers appeared relatively friendly towards him, telling the armed teenager "we appreciate you guys, we really do," just minutes before the shooting[7] and donating heavily to his defense fund afterwards.[8] Rittenhouse, moreover, was not the only armed vigilante on the scene, with members of the so-called "Kenosha Guard" also in attendance, potentially in coordination with law enforcement personnel.[9]

This was not the only instance of recent racial violence that is situated in a somewhat nebulous grey zone of supporting law enforcement while still engage in criminal activity. For several years the city of Portland, Oregon has been a consistent battleground between anti-fascist activists and the hate group known as the Proud Boys. The Proud Boys, a "Western chauvinist" organization which is designated as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC),[10] made numerous visits to Portland leading to well publicized melees including an overt attack on an anti-fascist bar known as Cider Riot.[11] Despite engaging in criminal violence, the Proud Boys have regularly affirmed their support for law enforcement, often bringing "Thin Blue Line" flags to these marches, and leaked text messages indicate a certain cozy relationship between Proud Boys and the Portland Police Bureau.[12] However, their relationship with law enforcement is often complicated. One prominent Proud Boy accused police of failing to protect Proud Boy protesters, and increasing numbers of Proud Boys are facing criminal prosecution for assault or hate crimes.[13] Trump, for his part, consistently refrained from criticizing the Proud Boys, urging them to "stand by" and maintaining that "somebody has to do something about Antifa" during a 2020 presidential debate.[14]

Yet, the Capitol riot on January 6, 2021 seemingly stands in stark contrast to any friendly relationship with government entities. That day, thousands of protesters gathered in Washington, D.C. to contest the results of the 2020 election, arguing that Joe Biden and his party had "stolen" the presidency. Several thousand of these individuals, including members of organized extremist groups like the Proud Boys and Oathkeepers, eventually stormed the Capitol building, killing one police officer and wounding over a hundred more.[15] Yet, despite a clear attack on the heart of the American State, this protest cannot be characterized as simply anti-State or anti-establishment.

Many of these protesters held pro-police banners while some of the protesters were, themselves, law enforcement personnel. Moreover, the entire premise of the attack was in defense of Donald Trump's administration with Trump specifically under investigation for active collusion with the protesters.[16]

As with Rittenhouse, neither the Capitol Riot nor the Proud Boys-related melees have suffered condemnation from all corners. Some polls indicate that majorities of Republicans still believe that the 2020 election was stolen,[17] and Trump himself has perpetuated this allegation and defended rioters.[18] Relevantly, Tucker Carlson devoted a Fox News special in March 2023 to "debunking lies" about the Capitol riot, arguing that extremists were just "spectators" and denying any violence took place.[19] Similarly, the January 6 protest was just one in a series of "Stop the Steal" marches in D.C. following the 2020 election. These protests were marked by far-right violence[20] but also by the seeming convergence of "mainstream" and "fringe" individuals. There were certainly far-right groups in attendance but many of the people attending these events do not appear to have formal affiliations with these hate groups[21] but still gathered to listen to far-right speakers such as Alex Jones and Nick Fuentes.[22]

How can we make sense of these phenomena? Why do so many Whites appear to tolerate or even support vigilante violence and extremist viewpoints? Why would Whites who claim to support the police attack police or engage in criminal violence, and can protesters who attacked the Capitol in defense of Trump be seen as anti-government? This dissertation takes up these questions, attempting to understand the complicated relationship between White support for violence and State institutions. Ultimately, I argue that this support for violence stems from the historically violent and exclusionary character of Whiteness which continues to see Whites deploying violence to maintain the color line. Whites who support the use of political violence are not deviating from the central norms of American Whiteness but are instead disagreeing about whether the State can fully uphold those norms. This argument necessitates a shift in focus for discussions concerning contemporary White violence and extremism in the United States. Many mainstream figures have sought to frame such violence as deviant or, most importantly, fundamentally at odds with American values. President Joe Biden, for instance, has been a prominent proponent of this discourse, declaring that "forms of hate fueled by violence have no place in America"[23] and asserting that the Capitol riot represented a "dagger at the throat of this democracy."[24] If such violence is, instead, integral to Whiteness, then rather than being external to American democracy, it must be seen as intertwined with democracy in this country, thus requiring new critiques and solutions the to problem of White violence.

2   Research Focus

This dissertation seeks to understand the politics surrounding White political violence in American politics, specifically addressing the increasingly friendly, albeit tenuous, relationship between violent extremism and mainstream institutions during the contemporary period. Essentially, I ask how American Whites evaluate the use of political violence and determine whether they can rely on State actors and/or support unofficial uses of violence. This will be explored through an analysis of two subsets of the White population: White identitarians, i.e. Whites who report high levels of White identification on national surveys or engage in pro-White online discourse and White extremists, i.e. members of hate groups, supremacist forums, and perpetrators of White violence. While I will utilize this dichotomy throughout the dissertation, it will also be crucially deconstructed in many ways, instead serving a heuristic rather than factual purpose. I argue that support for White violence is central to White identity, as an identity rooted in racial hierarchy, and seek to situate White violence as a product of Whiteness as such. This results in a sense of White identity motivating Whites to support political violence, including state violence seen as pro-White. This entails both that Whites will support interpersonal violence on behalf of collective White interests and that Whites will cooperate with State actors seen as operating on behalf of Whites. Crucially, I argue that the centrality of violence to White identity would make such violence persist, regardless of whether the State is opposed to it during any given period.

To explain this phenomenon, I utilize a theory of White social identity that is fundamentally exclusionary and violent. While White identity serves as a distinctive in-group phenomenon, it must be situated at the apex of a racial hierarchy that depends on violence for its maintenance. As Jardina (2019) shows, the notion of White identity is becoming increasingly relevant to White decision-making. While this was not historically true, with Whiteness sufficiently dominant to serve as a "default" American identity, perceived threats to Whiteness have made Whites more aware of their identity and more cognizant of the need to organize politically to defend it. As Jardina also points out, this orientation must be seen from within the context of the American racial hierarchy which, as Masuoka and Junn (2013) demonstrate, situates Whites at the apex of a system of racial domination. This racial hierarchy then shapes White attitudes to political events, as they see threats to their group as threats to their dominant status. Importantly, Masuoka and Junn's framework draws on Sidanius and Pratto (1999)'s work conceptualizing how social hierarchies maintain power.

Their approach emphasizes the central use of violence in upholding hierarchies, either informally or via the State. Thus, my theoretical framework sees Whites as making decisions about what sort of violence to use, and whether to rely only on State violence, as a form of political decision-making embedded in a racial hierarchy.

This dissertation attempts to develop this theory by turning to the contemporary period of White violence, exploring the factors that lead Whites, either extremist or identitarian, to support various forms of State or interpersonal violence against racial minorities and perceived anti-White threats. Specifically, I contend that the contemporary era represents a distinctive period in which traditional divisions between mainstream/extreme and State/criminal violence are collapsing. With the increased salience of threats against White hierarchy and the use of threat-based rhetoric by mainstream politicians, White extremists have begun to re-evaluate their anti-electoral positions, seeing utility in supporting and potentially influencing politicians, especially former President Donald Trump. At the same time, mainstream Whites express skepticism as to the viability of liberal institutions to defend Whiteness, growing more sympathetic to extremist tactics and violence as an alternative. This context enables a view into the ways that Whites perceive political violence and electoral politics as potentially complementary tool.

Ultimately, I find that White consciousness, as a mobilized, political form of in-group identity, leads Whites to support political violence and that Whites oriented to their racial interests evaluate contemporary candidates based on their perceived compatibility with racial interests. This make important contributions to ongoing discussions of American democracy, building on Achen and Bartels (2016)'s "group-centric" view of American politics. Their account, for instance, shifts from an understanding of voters as individual and rational towards one that sees how voters "identify with ethnic, racial, occupational, religious, or other sorts of groups" (299). It is these group attachments that motivate political behavior, issue evaluation, and vote choice, rather than any of those being driven by an underlying set of beliefs. Instead of rational explanations, "the reasoned explanations [voters] provide for their own beliefs and behavior are often just post hoc justifications of their social or partisan loyalties" (310). While this dissertation does not attempt to generalize such an ambitious model to all group attachments, and actively emphasizes these phenomenon only in the context of American Whites, it seeks to show that White support of violence is motivated through these group loyalties to Whiteness as a racial grouping.

However, I suggest that understanding White attitudes towards violence also expands on Achen and Bartels' account by taking seriously the role of White racial motivations and the significance of racial hierarchy in group-based politics. While there has been a growing emphasis in political science on the importance of understanding how racial minorities become involved in politics (Lee, 2002; Dawson, 1994) and how politicians can or should mobilize racial minorities on racial grounds (Barreto, 2010; Stout, 2020; Collingwood, 2020), the focus of Whites as a racial category of political importance is considerably less developed, especially before Ashley Jardina's 2019 *White Identity Politics*. That text established the empirical importance of how Whites operate out of perceived racial attachment and collective racial interests, an argument that demands further investigation and elaboration.

Yet, it is not enough to include Whites as a racial group alongside African-Americans or Latinos, as Whites represent a particular racial group that rests at the apex of a racial hierarchy (Masuoka and Junn, 2013). I argue that centering the use of violence is critical to understanding White racial politics in the context of this hierarchical position. While African-American and Latino politics may well be best understood by situating struggles over descriptive representation, voting rights, and discrimination, Whites do not generally suffer discrimination or voting disenfranchisement, unless based on other non-racial criterion such as gender, class, or sexual orientation, and there is little question that Whites have significant descriptive representation within major political bodies. Instead, understanding White politics must center White efforts to maintain their hierarchical position, either by weaponizing law enforcement or enacting violence outside of state institutions.

Finally, while a great deal of attention is paid to the partisan associations present between right-wing Trump supporters, the extremist alt-right, and the complicity of the Republican Party in this sort of partisan conflict, this dissertation attempts to foreground the racial, rather than partisan, motivations at play. Rather than seeing Whites committing violence out of partisan loyalty, I instead argue that many violent Whites embrace partisan figures, like Trump, in order to advance White interests, while many violent Whites do not see such individuals as working in accordance with White interests. Thus, the right-wing associations with contemporary violence do not reflect the partisan motivations of violence as much as the instrumentalization of partisan institutions for violent racial ends. This position contrasts sharply with reigning explanatory theories, such as (Kalmoe and Mason, 2022), which assumes a partisan character for contemporary violence at odds with both the historical record and the empirical evidence provided in this dissertation. While the two inevitably intersect in

complicated ways, seeing contemporary violence as divorced from Whiteness inevitably downplays and even trivializes the historical and political significant of White violence in the United States.

3   Political Landscape

In the following section, I will draw from empirical literature to provide context for Whites' increasingly threatened perception of contemporary events and increased opportunities to participate in White-centric political action. While Whiteness has often been perceived as something invisible to White Americans, i.e. an identity that lacks salience as a more "default" American identity than something like Blackness, ongoing research is finding that large numbers of Whites are identifying strongly with the fact that they are White and beginning to perceive the need to act collectively on behalf of White interests. According to the 2016 American National Election Survey (ANES), approximately thirty percent of White Americans report their race as either "very" or "extremely" important (Jardina, 2019). This reflects an understanding of their race as something important to their sense of self, something of which they do not ashamed, and even something that should structure their political motivations.

While White social identity has long been seen as generally lacking in public consciousness, with ethnocentrism and symbolic racism accounting for White out-group attitudes, emerging research is finding that a sense of whites as a political entity is on the rise and shaping preferences for political outcomes. The neglected position of White identity research was explored well in Knowles and Peng (2005) who find that, despite there being little research on the subject, the cognitive precedents to a politicized white social identity certainly existed. This research was expanded on by Hutchings et al. (2010) which found that, under experimental conditions, White participants primed with threats to their group hierarchy would exhibit responses exemplifying White social identity. Finally, Schildkraut (2014), after noting that previous research on white identity has found few results, finds broad support for measures of social identity, including linked fate. Schildkraut argues that contemporary White attitudes towards political candidates and in-group descriptive representation closely mimic those that have previously been found for respondents of color.

This leads to contemporary scholarship on a sense of White identity that can now be described as prevalent and impactful in a number of politically relevant arenas. For instance, Jardina (2020) shows how White identity, and a resultant sense of White political consciousness, consistently predicts

support for candidates in different and distinct ways from more traditionally studied racial attitudes, including racial resentment. Similarly, Weller and Junn (2018) find that White group identity can shape strategic political decisions in cases where whites make decisions based on group interests. In addition to candidate evaluations, Jardina (2019) shows how White identity can lead to support for policies like foreign policy/trade isolationism and Social Security in distinct ways from conservatism.

In addition to the rise in White identity politics, contemporary American politics has also seen an upsurge in the salience of racial animus. The election of Barack Obama in 2008 primed racial attitudes for many Americans, making racial considerations increasing central to political decision-making. Analyses of the 2008 election found that the presence of a Black candidate saw the increased relevance of racial resentment (Tesler and Sears, 2014), the saliency of anti-Black stereotypes Piston (2015), and a corresponding reduction in White Democratic turnout Krupnikov and Piston (2015). The role of racial attitudes has also extended beyond the 2008 election, as anti-Black prejudice has been linked to opposition to the Affordable Care Act (Tesler, 2012), and racial animus has begun to impact other attitudes such as support for Biden, evaluations of the economy, and even Obama's dogs (Tesler, 2016). Notably, while symbolic racism, or racial resentment, has been most relevant to understanding modern racial attitudes, Tesler (2013) found that old-fashioned racism has begun to predict vote choice and partisan identity during this period.

Immigration is also proving to be a major factor in contemporary White attitudes. Kinder and Kam (2010) help show how prominent racial attitudes are in shaping American attitudes on immigration. That text focuses on the notion of ethnocentrism, i.e. the difference between racial in-group and out-group evaluations, in consistently predicting attitudes on immigration policy. There is also a role for strong feelings of American identity that prime symbolic or cultural concerns over immigration as shown in Citrin and Sides (2008). That piece found Americans tend to overestimate the amount of immigrants present in society and that opposition is largely driven by reluctance over cultural diversity. Valentino et al. (2018) helps show that this is not just general ethnocentrism but specific out-group attitudes towards Latinos among white Americans. Moreover, that piece also emphasizes the relevance of media coverage and actual trends in immigration, fusing both perceived and actual perceptions of immigration into external stimuli for white Americans to process through their racial attitudes.

In the 2015 White Backlash, Marisa Abrajano and Zoltan Hajnal track how the steadily increasing immigrant population has been accompanied by consistently threatening narratives from

politicians and the media. This has resulted in xenophobic White Americans increasingly voting Republican and demanding more extreme anti-immigration measures from their party. Abrajano and Hajnal (2015) situate these findings in the notion of contact theory which examines the role of interpersonal contact with immigrant populations but, rather than the optimistic hopes that such contact would promote welcoming attitudes, finds the opposite. The threat that many White Americans feel about rising immigration is notably tied to concerns that they are losing demographic majorities, according to Craig and Richeson (2014). That piece found that the salience of demographic shifts led White respondents to evince more conservative views and support for the Republican Party. This general framework has seen additional support. For instance, Enos (2014) used a field experiment design to prime exposure to Latinos and found that respondents that were consistently exposed to Latino confederates on their daily commute saw significant increases in exclusionary immigration attitudes. Enos (2015) helps extend these findings to exposure to African-Americans, showing that Whites who lived in closer contact to Black neighbors were more likely to vote for racially conservative candidates. Notably, while Hopkins (2010) finds support for these same conclusions, he only does so during times where immigration or race are particularly salient. This helps underscore that, during a period where race is salient via Obama, the effect of hostile intergroup contact would intensify. While much of this research focuses entirely on out-group attitudes, the relationship between perceived threat and politicized group consciousness has been well studied Huddy (2013), so it stands to reason that the salience of out-group animus and related perceptions of threat are a crucial part of the context for contemporary White consciousness.

Amidst these signs of racialization, the contemporary landscape has been marked by large populist mobilization among conservatives. The power and spread of the Tea Party served as an important vehicle by which White feelings of resentment or anger became increasingly central to political action. Parker (2016), for example, sees the Tea Party and the later pro-Trump movement as the newest incarnation of a reactionary backlash that was historically manifest in the Klan and the John Birch Society, just as McVeigh and Estep (2019) show the parallels between the pro-establishment 1920s Klan and the Trump movement. The emergence of the Tea Party does seem to reflect a broader cultural sense of White Americans feeling increasingly alienated from ongoing cultural changes, as well as resentment towards allegedly undeserving racial minorities (Hochschild, 2016). However, Jardina (2019) finds no connection between White identity and sympathy for the Tea Party, suggesting that the relationship between Tea Party support and White violence is indirect.

Regardless, the Tea Party and the Trump campaign appear to have provided a vehicle for extremist groups to operate within more mainstream contexts, enabling them to organize with other resentful White Americans outside of the fringe context relegated to explicit extremists (Fording and Schram, 2020). This observation, combined with Parker (2016)'s connection between the Klan and the Tea Party, raises the question of how distinct extremist groups are from the Tea Party. This is increasingly salient given Skocpol and Williamson (2016)'s account of the use of violence, albeit condemned, by Tea Party sympathizers and the involvement of militia groups, and racist politicians in that movement (Lowndes, 2021). If the Tea Party provided opportunities for extremists to organize politically, the two are likely intertwined to some degree, but the evidence suggests that the Tea Party is comprised of primarily electorally minded, albeit racially resentful, conservatives while extremists have less faith in electoral institutions, despite making pragmatic use of them to elect certain people like Donald Trump. Thus, White extremists and the Tea Party, while both elements of the reactionary right that Parker (2016) discusses, are divided based on the extent to which they primarily seek remedy through traditional institutions. Just as the White Citizens Councils worked through traditional institutions while the Klan engaged in terror, the Tea Party works through traditional institutions, while the alt-right engages in terror as well as political avenues available in the Tea Party, although in both cases the boundary is porous.

Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign emerged against this backdrop, situated among particularly racial discourse and deriving support from those with sexist and racist attitudes. As Trump pursued his candidacy through 2015 and 2016, he embraced a series of previously taboo racial policies, including a ban on Muslims entering the United States, surveillance of mosques, and aggressively racialized language. He set this trend early, describing Mexican immigrants as "drug dealers" and "rapists" in his announcement of candidacy in June. Such rhetoric proved a lasting aspect of the Trump phenomenon, as he went on to urge supporters to "take back the heart of our country" from immigrant "invaders"[25] and later promoted conspiracy theories about alleged threats to Whites.[26]

Research consistently finds that support for Trump was predicted by out-group animus, such as perceptions of demographic threat (Mutz, 2018) and negative attitudes towards women and people of color (Schaffner, 2011), as well as in-group White consciousness (Jardina, 2019). The impact of White consciousness on Trump support was particularly pronounced in the primary contest, with political conservatism correlating with support for his primary rivals and White consciousness

uniquely correlating with Trump support (Long, 2022) That phenomenon extended beyond just Republicans, as many Democratic voters with racist or anti-immigrant attitudes crossed party lines to support Trump (Reny et al., 2019).This is importantly connected to Trump's racist discourse, as (Newman et al., 2018) finds a relationship between increasing Latino populations and White support of Trump, though only after Trump made anti-immigrant remarks. This fits, moreover, with Valentino et al. (2018)'s findings that explicitly racist cues are becoming more acceptable to White respondents than they once were, reversing long-term findings about the primacy of implicitly racial cues (Mendelberg, 2001), and these changing standards are further reflected in increased acceptance of appeals to White in-group sentiment, even explicit appeals (Long and Crabtree, 2022).

Notably, political science research has observed correspondingly empirical manifestations of the theoretical shift identified in Valentino et al. (2018). McIlwain and Caliendo (2011) tracks, at length, the history of implicit racial cues during elections involving candidates of color during the 1990s and early 2000s, yet they note the presence, in McIlwain and Caliendo (2012), of both implicit and explicit appeals during the Obama presidency and the 2008/2012 election. The presence of explicitly racist appeals also increased with the emergence of Donald Trump during the 2016 election season. Trump, as Sides et al. (2018), openly employed explicit appeals, such as those discussed during his announcement of candidacy. This helps show that, through the Obama presidency and culminating with Donald Trump, the use of explicit appeals rose during the same time that Valentino et al. (2018) find that they have lost much of their stigma.

This context helps details the theoretical process under investigation in this dissertation. With factors such as rising immigration and overtly racialized politics also came a widespread sense that White hierarchy was under threat in the United States. This perception has been coupled with an equally widespread sense that the mainstream political establishment has been unable to prevent these threats, with lax border security, a Black president, and a myriad of perceived cultural threats. This led many Whites to cast around for other, less traditional, solutions. One of those solutions was the election of Donald Trump whose non-conventional and explicitly racial style defied political norms and convinced many Whites that while Whiteness was under threat, he could take on the political establishment and protect it. Another solution was support for grassroots "patriots" like the Proud Boys, vigilantes, and extremist militias like the Oathkeepers who would use violence to defend against threats to Whiteness, although these approaches are not incompatible with each other, as was on display when extremist groups assaulted the U.S. Capitol in order to secure Trump's presidency.

4   Modern Extremism

Indeed, amid this new political environment, extremists also began casting around for new tactics to promote White interests, rallying and marching in increasingly prominent ways, and emerging from the margins with an eye towards influencing mainstream politics. There has been a recent trend on the extremist fringes to sanitize their rhetoric. In 2008, Stromfront dropped the use of swastika and other explicit symbolism, as well as particularly extreme slurs, such as the n-word. [27] This rebranding was consistent with efforts by Stormfront and its founder Don Black to embrace themes of perceived White threat (Saslow, 2018). This process has led to the creation of a "reasonable racism" that emphasizes the in-group cohesion of Whites as victimized and threatened, rather than simply racial slurs for their own sake (Meddaugh and Kay, 2009).

Similarly activists worked to create more "acceptable" chapters of the extremist movement, with initiatives such as Matthew Heimbach's White Student Unions, for example, in an attempt to rebrand the far-right to become more acceptable to the mainstream (Tenold, 2018). Heimbach later sought to unite various groups such as the Klan, Hammerskins, and the National Socialist Movement behind less offensive symbolism and without the overt racism that characterized older extremist discourse. Through these sorts of efforts, many extremists sought to tie their rhetoric to increasingly sanitized discourses surrounding alleged White victimhood. Berbrier (2000), for instance, describes the rise of extremist discourse that alleges the need for White civil rights to be protected, just like those of any other racial group. Such narratives tie explicitly pro-White aims with more subtle and mainstream forms of White supremacy, including "reverse discrimination" (Gutiérrez, 2021) and the alleged non-white "population crisis" (Chavez, 2021).

Many of these trends became especially salient as Trump rose to prominence in 2015/2016. White extremists supported Trump early and vocally. Andrew Anglin, editor of the prominent Daily Stormer, endorsed Trump immediately, citing his racial rhetoric and urging readers to "do whatever they can to make Donald Trump President." Other prominent extremists also channeled support for "the great White hope" [28] and warned that "voting against Donald Trump... is really treason to your heritage."[29] Clearly, something about Trump stood out to many White extremists, despite their skepticism of the Republican Party establishment and their lack of support for previous candidates like Mitt Romney. In fact, this support for Trump represents a break from a decades long hostility between White extremists and the mainstream political establishment (Blee et al., 2017).

Trump, in turn, appeared to consistently reciprocate their support and refused to condemn violent extremists. During his presidential campaign, when asked about this support by White extremists, Turmp equivocated, denying knowledge of people like "David Duke" and downplaying the existence of White extremists in America.[30] Yet, at the same time, he was retweeting extremist content, including a Mussolini quote[31] and posts about "White genocide,[32] and he refused to condemn anti-Semitic harassment of an anti-Trump journalist.[33] Such extremist activity was particularly overt following Trump's victory when Richard Spencer, who worked closely with both Heimbach and the Black family, as well as having extensive ties with the broader at-right, staged a pro-Trump rally in D.C. At that rally, Spencer warned that "it was conquer or die" and, along with traditional Nazi salutes, led calls of "Hail Trump, Hail Victory."[34] Importantly, Trump made no comments denouncing this rally.[35] Spencer proceeded to launch a speaking tour throughout 2017 promoting "Free Speech Rallies" alongside other alt-right figures like Heimbach and Milo Yiannopoulos. Finally, after a violent extremist march in Charlottesville, where a counter-protester was murdered along with numerous injuries in a car attack, Trump described protesters as "very fine people", expressing strong support for their efforts to preserve Confederate monuments[36].

This trend only intensified. While the controversy over the 2017 Charlottesville march had long-reaching impacts on the alt-right, destroying some groups and bolstering other ones, its aftermath also saw the rise of several extremist groups which moved even further towards an allegedly non-racist and mainstream image. One such group, Identity Evropa, after gaining prominence after Trump's election, changed leadership following Charlottesville and rebranded itself as the American Identity Movement with the explicit aim of "advocat[ing] for their respective people's interests without being completely barred from polite society."[37] Perhaps more prominently for mainstream Americans, 2019 and 2020 saw the Proud Boys become almost synonymous with the far-right, in large part due to a series of violent rallies in Portland, Oregon and elsewhere which saw Proud Boys members marching in favor of Rittenhouse, a desire to defend "Western Civilization," and vows to attack anti-fascist groups. While some of these marches had an eye to mainstream politics, such as an effort to support Joey Gibson's run for Senate in 2018 or to dispute Biden's victory in the 2020 election, their marches were also characterized by firearm-related threats,[38] beatings,[39] and of course their involvement in the 2021 Capitol riot.[40]

This increasingly extremist discourse was not limited to the Trump campaign, however, as other leading conservative and Republican voices have also spent the last half decade spreading concerns

over White displacement, immigrant "invasion", and other far-right talking points. Trump's rise to fame also saw a pivot by long-time columnist Ann Coulter towards a particularly extreme effort to attack immigration. Among her many attacks on immigrant "invaders," Coulter has also repeated the notion of White genocide, contending that "If this sort of drastic change were legally imposed on any group other than white Americans, it would be called genocide."[41] Coulter was not alone in this promotion of alleged anti-Whiteness. Another prominent media personality, Tucker Carlson, who as of 2020 was the highest watched commentator on Fox News, has sparked repeated controversy over his far-right views, including crediting White men for "creating civilization"[42], saying White supremacy is "not a real problem in America",[43] and alleging that immigrants make America "poorer and dirtier."[44] Carlson later unleashed a fervor of condemnation in the spring of 2021 by explicitly promoting the idea of White replacement. In an April 8 interview, he accused the Democratic Party of "trying to replace the current electorate… with new people, more obedient voters from the Third World," repeating that this was a "replacement."[45] This narrative received particularly intense criticism when the extremist who murdered 10 people in a grocery store in Buffalo, NY in May 2022 promoted almost identical rhetoric concerning the idea of "replacement theory," building of course on both Carlson's rhetoric and a long history of extremist concerns over this concept.[46]

Importantly, these are just two high profile conservative actors, but the increasingly extreme rhetoric has pervaded the American right in recent years. The prominent Breitbart News, which serves as one of the highest-trafficked right-wing news sites, described itself as a "platform for the alt-right" in 2016 after sympathetically portraying major alt-right figures[47] and continues to publish favorable stories about Tucker Carlson,[48] the Proud Boys,[49] and Kyle Rittenhouse [50] to the enthusiastic praise of readers in its comments sections. Other major media personalities have similarly repeated extremist talking points. Michelle Malkin, for example, has taken a strong stand in favor of the alt-right "groyper" movement which alleges that Trump is insufficiently extreme and has described the replacement theory as "conspiracy truth." [51] Similarly, Laura Ingraham has defended extremist activists, including the Trump-endorsed congressional candidate, Paul Nehlen, who was previously banned from even Breitbart for praising the mass shooter Robert Bowers and warning that "Jews" were trying to "wipe us off the face of the earth."[52]

Historically, perpetrators of racial violence, either in groups as or individuals, have alternating seen White violence as in service of the political establishment or as acts in defiance of the U.S. government. The coordination between White interpersonal violence and State violence was particularly

salient following the Civil War, during the 1920s, and again during the Civil Rights Movement, i.e. in times where the boundaries of Whiteness were under particular revision. The use of extremist violence to re-affirm these new phases of White racial control has been widely documented (Alexander, 2012; Bonilla-Silva, 2003). While this refers largely to the changing racial status quo due to changes to African-American status, the role of interpersonal racial violence was also salient during major periods of European immigration as will be discussed in the following chapter. Relevantly, McVeigh and Estep (2019) explore in detail how the Ku Klux Klan, in this case during the 1920s, worked closely with mainstream politics to advance its agenda. The Klan, motivated at this time by perceived threats to Whiteness, sought to use racial violence to compensate for the perceived inability of the State to do it on their own. Yet, rather than just use violence, the 1920s Klan paired violent action with efforts to channel votes, push for public policy, and create a large, robust social movement. This is not dissimilar from cooperation between the Klan and more mainstream pro-segregationists during the 1960s (Cunningham, 2012).

Such cooperation has not been constant. Instead, following Civil Rights, a newly colorblind, albeit still White dominated, society saw White extremists pushed to the fringes of political life. The following years saw extremists, including the Klan, neo-Nazis, and affiliated militia groups, increasingly turning against the mainstream political establishment (Belew, 2018). These groups engaged in widespread conflicts with law enforcement, including efforts by the State to outlaw extremist organizing. Instead, extremists generally began organizing in secret, transitioning to so-called "lone wolf" attacks, although such a term conceals the way such attacks are embedded in a larger White power movement (Belew, 2021). Many observers see this period as culminating in the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing where White extremist Timothy McVeigh attacked a federal building in direct confrontation with the federal government. McVeigh was, importantly, heavily influenced by the extremist text, The Turner Diaries, which discusses a fictionalized scenario involving extremist violence against a corrupt, occupied federal government.

During this time, extremists continued to flourish in "Aryan free spaces," nourishing the movement while largely constraining organizing activities to private spaces (Simi and Futrell, 2010). This can take the form of overtly respectable living where extremist rituals are performed behind closed doors, or through involvement in explicit but non-political skinhead gangs. The main narrative of Simi and Futrell's argument is that that phase of White extremism focused on hiding from mainstream attention while still surviving as a movement. They also track the rise of organizing

online, seeing this as the new frontier of Aryan free spaces. Many extremists have very little engagement in person but continue to invest time and energy following issues online or maintaining virtual networks. Others use these online spaces to facilitate in-person activity, such as major events and recruitment opportunities.

The contemporary period is a return to periods of history where White extremists see themselves as acting in coordination with mainstream parties and political institutions. One of the notable features of Trump's 2016 presidential election was the proliferation of White extremists explicitly endorsing his candidacy, as discussed earlier. This represented a turning point in the recent history of the movement (Blee et al., 2017). The surprising support of Trump fits with extant research that predicted increased re-engagement, and accompanied violence, by extremist groups. Simi (2010) has contended that perceived threats, such as demographic changes, economic distress, and the salience of race after Obama's victory have had in motivating increased extremist organizing. These factors primed a sense of threat, and Trump's implicit promise to defend Whiteness brought extremists out of the fringes to engage with mainstream politics. This embrace of partisan politics is consistent with Hajnal and Lee (2011)'s explanation that many radicals do not join mainstream parties, because they see them as failing to pay attention to the issues about which they are particularly radical. Under this framework, it then makes sense that extremists will begin to work with the party if they perceive that its candidate is beginning to pay attention to perceived threats against Whites.

The emergence of the so-called alt-right can be seen as deeply tied to a long history of violent Whiteness, with White racial identity central to their messaging (Stern, 2019), and as a sort of extension of a longer history of White extremist beliefs and discourses (Futrell and Simi, 2017). As Stern points out, however, the alt-right is actively attempting to co-opt State machinery for these goals, as opposed to the militia movement that Belew (2018) describes as acting against the State. As discussed, the history of White extremism in the United States is consistently marked by such fluctuating cooperation and hostility towards state institutions, and this dissertation attempts to understand the contemporary period both as an extension and as a development from this history.

5   Methods

This project is a fundamentally multi-method and multi-disciplinary project and seeks to unite several different approaches to understanding these questions concerning White violence, bringing

quantitative analysis, qualitative participant observation, and political theory together to situate and understand this phenomenon. Because I attempt to put the primarily quantitative research on racial public opinion into dialogue with qualitative research on extremist groups, I seek to treat the object of inquiry as one that similarly necessitates the combination of both forms of empirical analysis, prioritizing the object of inquiry over the method. Similarly, these question of White violence in the United States stand within a long history of such violence and a robust theoretical tradition of racial formation and oppression in modern society. This dissertation attempts to take those theoretical questions seriously and situate the aforementioned empirical investigations within broader questions about the implications of the contemporary moment of racial violence on American democratic governance as such. As Blee (2017) argues, studying White violence is itself an action with normative and ethical dimensions. Therefore, I hope to make the ethical implications of this work clear. By synthesizing my empirical findings into broader theoretical questions, I hope to build towards a conclusion that yields clear suggestions on how best to engage with these violent trends and how Whites can come to terms with the violence interwoven into our racial identity.

The quantitative component will involve survey data, an analysis of federal hate crimes data, and finally, text data from an extremist website. While each will be discussed at the beginning of their relevant chapter, it is helpful for now to situate the goal of each of these sources of data. This project will attempt to study White identitarians, or more "mainstream" Whites who express varying levels of White identity and White consciousness by drawing on survey data that asks a series of questions about racial attitudes. Most of these questions will be familiar for quantitative public opinion scholars, although I pair them with dependent variables that ask about support for violence and political candidates in order to demonstrate new relationships that have not yet been explored in the work on White consciousness or racial attitudes more generally.

While I believe this quantitative analysis provides an important and generalizable picture of White attitudes on violence, it is difficult to fully unpack the more subjective experiences of Whites and their support of violence with quantitative measures. This is part of the primary value of the qualitative component. By drawing on an approach similar to Lerman and Weaver (2017), I hope to pair my experiences participating in pro-White online communities with my survey findings to show how the quantitative relationships can be understood in greater depth. In order to do this, I engage in participant-observation in a broad cross-section of online sub-communities which ranged from largely colorblind but implicitly pro-White, more fringe groups with an eye to engaging in

contemporary politics, to extremists with overtly supremacist and anti-government sentiment. By drawing on those conversations, as well as archival discussions in many of these groups' histories, I attempt to unpack the conversations surrounding my survey analyses in Chapter Three.

However, the latter half of the dissertation attempts to focus on extremists in particular. It continues by leveraging data on hate groups and hate crime to take a more behaviorist analysis of the local and national factors that lead to larger rates of hate crimes, as well as increases over time. By performing both spatial and longitudinal analysis on this data in Chapter Four, I hope to provide further analysis of the behavior of extremists and patterns of violence nationally. Moreover, Chapter Five attempts to unpack the dominant rhetoric among extremist groups by focusing on blog text collected from the prominent Daily Stormer. By utilizing unsupervised machine learning on this text to develop a series of topics, I hope to utilize quantitative measures to better understand the impacts, specifically during the 2016 election, of the changing political environment on extremist discourse. It concludes with a return to my own participant-observation, tying the empirical findings of Chapter Four to a more ethnographic account of my covert involvement in a particular hate group in Chapter Six.

6 Organization of Dissertation

Chapter Two will continue the theoretical discussion provided in this chapter by exploring literature surrounding both the historical development and political function of Whiteness as a way of conceptualizing and distinguishing the American population. By drawing from racial formation literature and putting it in dialogue with theorists of racial biopower, such as Michel Foucault and Achille Mbembe, I hope to trace the process wherein Whiteness serves as a fundamentally exclusionary and hostile category that is undergirded by violence. At the same time, looking at the contemporary period of racial politics through this lens, I further explore how the same separation that is inherent in White racial production has become weakened, leading to the proliferation of White violence outside of and within State institutions. Importantly, this chapter helps provide a model for understanding White violence that situates it, not as an aberration to American democracy, but as central to the violence that underlies Whiteness in the United States.

Chapter Three transitions to an empirical study of American Whites, looking at White consciousness as an exclusionary form of social identity and one closely connected to out-group

animus. Crucially, this chapter argues that White consciousness, or in-group sentiment, consistently predicts support for political violence. The role of White consciousness in support for violence transcends both partisan and gender-based differences, grounding the fundamentally White nature of contemporary political violence. To complement these findings, this chapter also draws on my participant observation with pro-White online communities to demonstrate the exclusionary nature of many participants' White identity, as well as how it results in their support for political violence.

Chapter Four transitions from this focus on individuals high in White consciousness to analyze the behavior of extremist groups during the contemporary period and especially the 2016 election. In Chapter Four, I look at data on American hate crimes which, exploring how they are connected to very few local covariates, besides the importance of hate groups. However, I argue that this spatial distribution needs to be complemented by over time trends in hate crime instances which show a remarkable level of responsiveness to mainstream political events, such as Trump's 2015/2016 campaign.

Chapter Five takes up some of the conclusions of Chapter Four, looking specifically at how Trump's campaign mobilized extremists to engage in violence. I draw on blog text from the prominent *Daily Stormer* to show how White extremists perceived Trump's 2016 campaign as a mobilizing force and began to shift their rhetoric to promote support for Trump. Through an analysis of survey data and a survey experiment, this chapter connects such mobilization to Trump's pro-White and explicitly racial rhetoric.

Chapter Six continues this investigation into extremist groups by devoting itself to a discussion of my own participant observation within extremist groups. Building on Chapter Four's finding about the importance of hate groups, this investigation helps show how violence serves as a central feature of community-building and even personal discipline within extremist discourse. While previous discussions in Chapters Three, Four, and Five have primarily drawn from more public sources, this chapter will shift focus to my efforts to covertly gain access to a series of extremist online communities, breaking somewhat with a detached narrative and focusing on what the process of access tells us about extremist groups, as well as the interactions with and observations of extremist behavior when no researcher is thought to be present.

Finally, I conclude this dissertation with a return to the theories discussed in Chapter Two. If attachment to Whiteness is deeply tied to support for violence, then how can American democracy hope to overcome these challenges? I argue that an understanding of contemporary violence as

an outgrowth of psychological attachments to Whiteness necessitates a growing interrogation by Whites of their own sense of racial attachment and interests. Not only does this call on Americans to recognize the violent tendencies that emerge from Whiteness, but it also calls on Whites to explore their own relationship with White violence and racial animus.

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Chapter Two: Whiteness, Violence, and Democracy

1   Introduction

Before turning to empirically examine the questions set forth in the last chapter, I will provide a historical and theoretical context for the notion that Whiteness is central to the contemporary phenomenon of political violence, as well as political violence more broadly. This chapter will both connect subsequent analyses of contemporary White violence into historical processes but will also help situate this project in dialogue with theories of the relationship between American democracy and violence. By exploring the linkages between Whiteness and violence, as well as the ways that racial violence stands in a complicated relationship with State structures, I provide a nuanced context for understanding contemporary political violence that allows it to be seen as the outgrowth of historical and political processes interwoven with American democracy, rather than relegating it as some anti-democratic or incidental aberration.

In this chapter, I argue that studying White support for political violence necessitates an understanding of the fundamentally hostile nature of Whiteness, i.e. a racial construct oriented towards exclusion and adversity with racial out-groups. White violence thus serves as an outgrowth of Whiteness as a racial project and one that is intertwined with but not limited to State institutions. I make this argument first by reviewing the racial formation literature and how it consistently demonstrates that Whiteness arises out of the designation or exclusion of specific populations in opposition to those considered White. This same examination also reveals how this racial project is an ongoing and complex one, where violence is routinely deployed to enforce certain visions of White inclusion or exclusion. I then situate this understanding of Whiteness within larger questions of racial governance, drawing on Achille Mbembe. According to Mbembe, the development of democracy in the West has frequently been accompanied by an undercurrent of violence, and this violence enables social cohesion and other benefits necessary for domestic order within democracy.

By incorporating Mbembe's reading of history along with the racial formation literature, I hope to build on his framework in order to understand the relationship between White political violence, Whiteness, and American democracy. White violence, far from an aberration in American democracy, arises out of the fundamental use of separation and violence in constituting American democracy in the first place. Whiteness, as a category that is fundamentally constituted through the exclusion of racial out-groups, serves as a method of separation that enables and necessitates the use of violence against those excluded from the "community of fellows" that constitutes American democracy while simultaneously reserving it for Whites. This is important for understanding the contemporary moment of White extremist violence. Instead of seeing extremist violence as emerging from the fringes as a deviant and criminal element, it needs to be seen within the context of the many "mainstream" Whites who condone, support, or even encourage such violence. In order to understand the nature of extremist violence, this chapter attempts to situate it within Whiteness as such, thus allowing us to understand how extremist violence, just as police brutality and the carceral state, emerges from central racial constructs in American political development.

Before proceeding, however, some clarifications are in order. Both the previous and subsequent chapters discuss the notion of White identity at length, while this chapter makes a slight departure to discussing Whiteness as such. The goal of this pivot is to clearly distinguish between the historical phenomenon of racial classification that is known as Whiteness and to demonstrate the function of this process as a historical one tied to the development of American democracy. This chapter argues that the notion of democracy that evolved in the United States was one that assumed a certain commonality amongst its constituent population, which became codified as "Whiteness" in opposition to non-White slavery and indigenous society. When I transition to studying White identity in subsequent chapters, the transition hopes to capture a specific empirical phenomenon of explicit attachment to Whiteness as a political and social construct, and this attachment serves to uphold certain norms and forms of governance that constitute Whiteness. This relationship, then, is necessary in order to provide a proper theoretical framework for the nuanced series of State-based and public opinion support for extremist violence that will be discussed throughout this dissertation.

This approach has two advantages. First, it allows for a plurality of relationships to Whiteness and refuses to foreclose the myriad of ways that Whiteness motivates behavior. The empirical construct of White identity is simply one way that individuals relate to Whiteness, namely one that involves an explicit identification with this racial grouping and one that sees this identification

as one under threat and one that demands political action. Yet, Whites relate to Whiteness in a variety of ways that are far beyond the scope of this dissertation, such as the accumulation of privileges and socio-economic advantages through White privilege. Further research must look at how White privilege and similar attachments also derive from the violence inherent in Whiteness, but this chapter intends first to demonstrate the violence inherent in Whiteness while later chapters explore the specific way many Whites relate to Whiteness through social identity and how this leads to their more explicit support of forms of violence

Second, by focusing specifically on Whiteness as a social construct, I hope to ground any subsequent discussion of White identity as a different conversation about the effects of participating in or identifying with such a construct. If Whiteness serves as a form of social grouping built on violence, then what does it mean for an individual to identify with it? This formulation of the question helps give subsequent discussions of White identity a historical depth that allows scholars to see how those high in White identity are not just attached to a social identity like any other but are instead expressing solidarity with a social construct that has been inextricably connected to violence. This helps better understand why such an identification will uniquely lead to support for political violence, and how it fundamentally differs from other forms of group attachment, especially those evinced by many racial minorities and other marginalized groups.

2   Racial Formation

First, I turn to an account of racial formation in the United States to explore how Whiteness has emerged both as a fundamentally adversarial and hostile category and as one whose creation and maintenance have relied consistently on the use of violence. Whiteness serves as, rather than some essentialized phenotype or biological category, a tenuous norm around which populations can be categorized and one capable of excluding both racial Others, i.e. those deemed as non-White, but also "deviant" or "degenerate" Whites who fail to conform to this norm. Thus, Whiteness acts as a social construct that categorizes individuals and populations according to this norm. Importantly, this exclusion and in-group construction involve both forms of psychological attachment and community but also methods of economic exploitation and exclusion. Before focusing on the nature of that exploitation, it is helpful to review some of the major contributions to studying Whiteness that help show how it serves as a political designation that orders and shapes the population.

Before beginning, it is important to emphasize a way of understanding Whiteness as social principle that combines psychological identification with a population and its intersections with institutions. Whiteness serves as a way through which society can categorize sub-populations and individuals and as a way that it can assign values, resources, and social standing accordingly. Inclusion in this category confers belonging and access to jobs or resources, while exclusion from the category deems groups as exploitable or disposable. As will be seen, institutions can act to further these distinctions through structural discrimination or state-sponsored violence, but individuals can as well through interpersonal hatred, prejudice, or, conversely, through acceptance and the promotion of common norms of behavior.

This is consistent with many contemporary accounts of race and Whiteness. For instance, Bonilla-Silva (2003) argues that racial ideology serves as "regime of truth" which structures "how the world is organized" (8) and thus functions in an important way for people to categorize themselves. Bonila-Silva goes to great lengths to show how this form of racial ideology not only allows individual actors to "explain and justify" a racial order that they benefit from but also how it results in their complicity with a series of racialized institutions, such as de facto segregation and systematic discrimination. In investigating how actors perpetuate both their own preferences for fellow Whites and their desire to uphold such racialized, albeit overtly colorblind, institutions, Bonila-Silva helps show how the category of Whiteness is also something that structures the outlooks and lives of those who benefit from Whiteness. Thus, Whiteness is not merely a form of psychological attachment but one that confers a series of privileges which Whites can benefit from, similar to how Ignatiev (2009) sees it: "the white race consists of those who partake of the privileges of white skin in this society" (2). It serves as a categorization of people that spans both institutions and psychology, serving as a categorization encompassing of both.

Similarly, Whiteness can be seen as a "racial project" in the sense provided by Omi and Winant (2009). For them, race both serves the ideological or psychological function described by Bonila-Silva but also works as "an effort to organize and distribute resources (economic, political, cultural) across racial lines" (125). Such racial projects are activities taken throughout society, whether by political institutions, social movements, and individuals, that can reproduce and develop the larger racialized structures in society. White relationships to violence will be seen as aspects of just these sorts of racial projects, either with Whites driving support to institutions or politicians that work on behalf of Whites or by extremists engaged in violence. As Omi and Winant point out, acts of White violence are

often dismissed as "crimes of passion" but can instead be seen as ways of "creat[ing] and reproduce[ing] structures of domination." (128). With this framework, we will be able to see how the everyday actions of Whites, as well as their support for both political policies and hate-related violence, can serve as part of a broader project surrounding the creation and maintenance of Whiteness. This also helps show how Whiteness transcends individuals and institutions, instead serving as something which either can perpetuate or participate in. Whiteness works within institutions through the maintenance and perpetuation of privileges, but we can also see how it can be taken up by individuals and informal groups to promote those same privileges and exclusions. Whiteness is not a construct limited to either but is itself a process of inclusion and exclusion which can be taken up by a myriad of stakeholders.

The historical formation of Whiteness further shows how it functions as this exclusionary designator. The creation of the White in-group has historically been constructed through the process of excluding out-groups, such as African-Americans, indigenous peoples, or various European ethnic group at different times, although the last of these has been subject to a great deal of change. Whiteness was long used to designate whether European immigrant groups belong, first excluding Irish and German immigrants and later excluding Eastern Europeans. As Painter (2010) argues, it was the very need to exclude poor immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe that allowed Whiteness to become enlarged and include Irish and Germans (Painter, 210). This example is important in showing that Whiteness is fundamentally a category that is used to arbitrarily designate who is included and excluded, and that this category weaponizes not just the color of skin but also a certain social status, first excluding poor "white" immigrants and then, when they had achieved a certain privilege, granting them access while simultaneously excluding another wave of poor "white" immigrants.

Amidst the many changing definitions of Whiteness, namely the inclusion of Irish, Italians, and Eastern Europeans, Painter explores how the category continues to exist as a form of opposition with non-White racial groups, emphasizing that Whiteness is itself a "category," noting that it is more precise to describe it as a "category of nonblackness" (Painter, 396). Whiteness does not concretely describe anything tangible within it, as even white skin has not consistently been a designator of Whiteness. Instead, Whiteness most reliably seeks to distinguish an in-group from racial Others, such as via the centrality of slavery in United States history, to distinguish Whites from Black people, although other groups such as indigenous people can be seen within a similar framework.

Even as Whiteness has expanded to include many Southern and Eastern European groups, it still functions to exclude African-Americans, indigenous Americans, and many other racial groups who are systematically excluded from this category. It is also necessary to emphasize the role of violence in defining this category of Whiteness. This is well stated through an anecdote provided by Painter surrounding an Italian immigrant describing their participation in anti-Black race riots. Painter relates his assertion that "being a real American often meant joining antiblack racism and seeing onself as white against the blacks" (Painter, 363). While this is certainly reflective of the idea of Whiteness as an oppositional category to Blackness and other forms of racial Others, it also centers how the tenuous nature of Whiteness consistently demanded the use of violence to settle disputes and maintain the underlying separation at play.

Importantly, many accounts of White racial formation emphasize how the oppositional nature of Whiteness was also used to transcend class and distinguish White laborers from enslaved laborers of color. Roediger (2007), for instance, emphasizes the ways that members of the 19th century White working class embraced their status as "free Whites" to distinguish themselves from non-White slaves, rejecting Marxian terms such as "wage slavery" as a result. Moreover, he outlines how discussions of temperance and festivities were shaped by the need by members of the White working class to exclude and distinguish themselves from the more "slothful" non-White slaves. Blackface emerges, for instance, as a way for Whites to play-act these less disciplined non-Whites. Similarly, Ignatiev's account of the Irish deals heavily with the ways that racial formation was intertwined with capitalism and labor. Despite being frequently categorized alongside African-American laborers in their early days in the United States, the process of White inclusion for the Irish revolved heavily on Irish efforts to exclude African-Americans from free labor markets, engaging in violence and intimidation to force employers to not hire free Blacks, for instance.

The Irish serve as a notable case study as an example of a population seeking to affirm Whiteness through State violence. As Ignatiev (2009) contends, the Irish were initially seen as racially inferior, in fact portrayed as quite similar to African-Americans, yet they employed violence to "earn" (70) membership as Whites. Ignatiev tracks the evolution of Irish-Americans from subjects of rampant racism and exclusion from Whiteness to their role in participating in this category; a participation that is non-negotiable in the present time. For Ignatiev, this often played out in the labor force, where the Irish used violence to exclude African-Americans from the workplace. This was seen necessary in order to distinguish themselves from Blackness by sharply segregating labor, preventing

African-Americans from being associated with the same labor markets as the Irish (130). This was a crucial way of ensuring a clear differentiation and thus Irish participation in the category of non-blackness. A central tactic by which the Irish suppressed Black labor was the use of interpersonal violence. For instance, Ignatiev recounts an incident in August 1862 where Irish workers attacked Black factory workers and burning the factor until the employer agreed to dismiss all Black workers (Ignatiev, 138). This is just one incident in a series of riots and acts of mob violence aimed at the suppression of the Black workforce.

The Irish are not just notable for their use of violence but also for being targets of violence by White nativists who sought to suppress Irish inclusion. Ignatiev and Painter both catalogue numerous interpersonal attacks on the pre-White Irish, such as the torching of Irish buildings and Catholic churches, as well as mob attacks on Irish civilians. These, along with the rise of anti-Catholic nativism, can themselves be seen as acts of interpersonal violence intended to enforce the racial color line, just with Irish on the non-White side of the category. However, another important development in understanding the role of State violence was the emergence of Irish law enforcement. Ignatiev describes the "Irish cop" as a sign that the Irish were "officially empowered (armed) to defend themselves from the nativist mobs, and at the same time to carry out their own agenda against black people" (189). Thus, in a sense, the transition of Irish from racist mobs to empowered police officers follows the transition of Irish from racial Others to their inclusion into Whiteness. It was through their use of racist violence, even when they had no access to State violence, that they "earned" their inclusion within Whiteness and the privilege of inclusion within White-participating institutions like law enforcement and eventually higher political office. The Irish took it upon themselves to begin promoting and affirming Whiteness, even when they were not included within it, leading to their eventual inclusion in the social category.

In addition to showing the adversarial and violent nature of Whiteness, these examples also show how Whiteness was consistently under revision and served as only a tenuous boundary. While African-Americans and indigenous people were clearly excluded from Whiteness, Irish, other "white" immigrant groups, and working class Whites, were not unconditionally included in this in-group. Instead, the category widened or hardened to include some groups at the expense of others. This allows insight into the many ways that violence, including non-State violence, has been used to police or define this boundary. Nativist anti-Irish Whites used violence to prevent Irish inclusion in that category, just as the Irish used violence against African-Americans to prove that they

belonged as Whites rather than non-Whites. Much of this activity was non-State sanctioned, at least officially, providing a series of historical examples of White attachment in practice, without the role of institutional violence to settle these tenuous racial lines. However, by turning to focus on the line between Black and White, it can be seen that that boundary of Whiteness was equally disputed, nuanced, and violent.

As discussed in Hartman (1997), the Black color line was similarly tenuous and often depended on State based clarification and enforcement in order to preserve the social structures that oppressed and exploited African Americans. While discussing the Supreme Court's decision to affirm "separate but equal" segregation in Plessy v. Ferguson (1896), Hartman emphasizes the importance of the Court decision in upholding the "exclusivity of whiteness." The Court could easily have struggled with the nuances of what it means to be White, given that Plessy was initially misperceived as such, but instead it denied the nuances and sought to fix the category as self-evident in order to "ensure its stability." This process of using State institutions to fix Whiteness in place and maintain the color line runs parallel in many ways to the use of interpersonal violence to do so when necessary, as the line is unclear and demands consistent intervention, interpretation, and enforcement.

Du Bois (1935) shows a similar history in *Black Reconstruction* by focusing on the role of "orchestrated and spontaneous violence" in fixing Black subordination post-slavery. Orchestrated political and State-based efforts worked alongside spontaneous and interpersonal violence to police and maintain a line that was un-fixed. It thus demanded a multiplicity of tactics for its maintenance, with a common interest in Whiteness and its preservation motivated poor White lynch mobs and wealthy White aristocrats alike. Du Bois grounds the importance of such violence as a way of maintaining Whiteness in society. For Du Bois, violence served to control and manage the Black population, holding them in slavery but also maintaining a fundamental separation. While it might be easy to paint these efforts as simply efforts to maintain economic relationships or concrete control of a population, Du Bois emphasizes a conceptual need to maintain separation in order to preserve a certain sense of White community and in-group membership. For instance, he describes the problem of the "free Negro" as a fundamental threat to the White order, rather than simply a problem to be solved: "a free Negro was a contradiction, a threat and a menace... he more than threatened slavery. He contracted and undermined it. He must not be" (7). Rather than seeing the problem of free Blacks as a missed economic opportunity or a political issue that must be managed, White slave-owners saw it as a fundamental symbol that would undermine their social order. Thus, the

figure of the "free Negro" served as a contradiction and existential threat of the separation underlining Whiteness.

This notion is also particularly evident in Du Bois' account of how racial hatred was utilized in order to unite poor Whites with slaveholders to maintain the color line. Violence and hatred did not just function to maintain separation but also to forge a united White community. He contends that "Slavery bred in the poor white a dislike of Negro toil of all sorts... to these Negroes he transferred all the dislike and hatred which he had for the whole slave system" (12). Whiteness and White community involved taking on this hatred against racial Others, rather than accepting the class divisions that slavery perpetuated. Du Bois explains how poor Whites often benefited from slavery, by being employed as a slave catcher or overseer, as well as how poor Whites often dreamed of becoming slave-owners themselves. By becoming both invested in maintaining slavery and the concomitant non-enslaved community of Whites, poor Whites became united with other Whites in their hatred for Blacks and their use of violence to maintain the color line. This resulted in a sense of general violence throughout the White community which "became an armed and commissioned camp to keep Negroes in slavery and to kill the black rebel" (12). In order to maintain a community of Whites as separate from Blacks, violence became generalized, not just in the hands of State officials, but throughout the entirety of the "White South."

Similarly, Du Bois sees this racial violence at play during the South's response to emancipation after the Civil War. Violence persisted to maintain the color line, even when the federal government sought to reshape it. Despite the federal government's efforts to enforce reconstruction, Whites responded both through explicit violence in the form of the Klan and lynchings but also through the cultivation of increased enmity against Blacks. As Du Bois put it, "the white laborer joined the white landholder and capitalist and beat the black laborer into subjection through secret organizations and the rise of a new doctrine of race hatred" (670). Again, this violence and racial enmity preserved Whites as a cohesive group that could unite through the use of racial violence and hatred. It both managed to bind together poor and wealthy Whites but also to separate them from racial Others even to the point of criminal action.

Importantly, White violence during this period stood in a tenuous position with regard to State institutions. As the federal government, or at least factions of it, sought to emancipate and even provide political power to former slaves, Whites in the South continued to fight, using either state-level legal codes or mob/lynch violence. This helps situate violence as emerging out of Whites

as a racialized population, something that exists independently and potentially in contrast to the government, especially in a cases where the State sought to promote racial equality or at least challenge Southern White hegemony. In Du Bois' account, the federal government was comprised both of true believers in full abolition but also White capitalists, so it is not completely accurate to say that the federal government at that time sought to overturn White hegemony as such but rather to challenge one form of it. Yet, it is also clear that a clash between governmental bodies over varying interpretations of White hegemony further shows these nuanced relationships. State-level governments and former planters often embraced mob violence in opposition to White capitalists and the federal government who instead sought to degrade the power of the planter class to promote industrial capitalism.

This clash makes it important to emphasize that Whiteness need not lead to a form of political governance that embraces non-state violence. This is explored well in Sequin and Rigby (2019)'s analysis of lynching. That piece found that lynching declined in the Western United States as the government became more central in enforcing law and order, while it similarly declined in areas of the South as law enforcement became mobilized against it and where Southern regions became more integrated within the national economy. Certainly, the case of the Western United States is not a case where violence was eliminated, as the expansion of the State also came alongside anti-indigenous violence, and in each case law enforcement was itself mobilized to use violence against African-Americans, Latinos, and immigrant groups. Instead, it represents the substitution of State violence for mob violence as the State became more centralized. This process is certainly reminiscent of Whitman (2017)'s observation that many German Nazis were disapproving of lynching in the United States, seeing it as a sign of the failures of the central government to ensure order while also perceiving lynching as a "natural resistance of the Volk to an alien race" (65). Yet, at the same time, German Nazis were particularly focused on the use of State-sponsored violence, so these examples are definitely not intended to carve out instances where White hegemony was not associated with violence but to explicate the tension between interpersonal and state-sponsored violence.

Du Bois explores the ways in which mob violence and lynchings defied even state-level governmental attempts to enforce order, representing a deeper sense in which the White populace are committed to the color line. He writes "If it represents public opinion, even passing, passionate public opinion; [the mob] cannot be permanently put down by a police which public opinion appoints and pays" (678). This passionate public opinion and the formation of the violent mob cannot be

suppressed through a State that emerges out of and is sustained by that same public opinion. Instead, the public opinion referred to here, i.e. the racial passions of Whites, is something that exists prior to the State, that grounds the State, and thus cannot be suppressed by it. This resistance then by violent Whites, Du Bois claims, became the underlying law of the land as the racial line was threatened after the Civil War. During this period, he claims, Whites practiced a general disregard to laws, perpetuating a "spirit of lawlessness" and resulting in "White men [becoming] a law unto themselves" (700). Their use of violence became a fundamental form of governmentality in and of itself, emerging out of Whites rather than out of their State, as the State was failing to uphold the principles underlying White group cohesion. Thus, Whites collectively, uniting rich and poor, employed violence to maintain the color line.

This sentiment is quite reminiscent of Joshua Lynn's account of Whiteness and the antebellum Democratic Party. Lynn (2022) argues that the transition from the Democratic Party as one of populist Jacksonians to aristocratic slaveholders throughout the antebellum period was simply a redefinition of a party that was founded on notions of White supremacy and White individualism. The Jacksonian vision, he contends, was always a White-centric vision, as the individual landholder and democratic citizen was a White citizen, in opposition to women or non-Whites who could not be trusted to practice democracy in that sense. Rather than enlarge the State as the Whigs demanded, the Jacksonians could instead trust the natural faculties of the allegedly superior White race to govern themselves as individuals in a laissez-faire context. This is quite similar to how Du Bois would eventually portray Antebellum South Carolina, for instance, as a territory ruled by a series of White plantation owners, rather than one managed by a central State. Governance would emerge from Whites as a people, rather than from a government as such.

3   Violent Governance and the Massacre

Having outlined a conceptualization of Whiteness tied into its formation, we can turn to Achille Mbembe's specific account of the use of racial violence to maintain a domestic order necessary for democracy. Mbembe contends that the use of violence has long been central to modern Western society but that this process has been concealed through racial separation and the externalization of violence to "non-places" such as prisons, slave plantations, and colonies, as well as to humans deemed disposable. This section will explicate his arguments and incorporate them within the context of

American Whitness, showing how his understanding of violence and governmentality exemplify the racial project of Whiteness as presented here. After presenting Mbembe's account of democracy's hidden violence, I show how this is related to the racial project of Whiteness by revisiting both Du Bois' account of Reconstruction and Omi and Winant's description of racial formation.

Importantly, Mbembe (2019) makes a sweeping argument about the nature of violence in Western democracies, including the United States in with much of Europe, and the scope of his argument goes much beyond the scope of this dissertation. Still, Mbembe provides a valuable account of how the many discussions of racial formation and American history discussed throughout this chapter can be seen within a broader framework of Western governance and colonialism. The commonalities between forms of White violence, including lynch mobs, Irish race rioters, and anti-Black police officers make much more sense when seen within the context of Whiteness as a violent social construct, and that historical process makes further sense within the larger relationship between racial governance and American democracy that Mbembe provides.

In Mbembe's understanding, violence is not something antithetical to the historical development of democracy but is something that frequently develops alongside it. Mbembe argues that despite efforts to conceal their use of violence, "modern democracies have always evinced their tolerance for a certain political violence, including illegal forms of it" (16-17). He tends to see this violence in the form of the various incarnations of racial violence that have undergirded Western democracies since their inception in modern times. Each of these democracies, he argues, have relied on a colonial system or a form of slavery/segregation, which "represent democracy's bitter sediment" (20). This concept will be explicated further over the next few paragraphs but, in the context of the United States, focuses on the relationship between the "civil democracy" emerging and its foundation of slavery and anti-Black violence. This relationship is not an aberration but is necessary for democracy as a way of maintaining a fundamentally common character within the democracy, i.e. a White Republic, and as a way of exploiting racial Others for concrete luxuries and the resultant economic and civil stability they engender.

In part, the centrality of violence and exclusion stem from the need to enforce separation within the population. For Mbembe, a democracy based on slavery and racial segregation, like the United States, is fundamentally constituted by an equal community of "fellow creatures" juxtaposed with "a category of nonfellows" (17). This contrast ingrains the notion of separation into the character of the Western democracy, where a community is created in contrast to those considered Other and distinct.

This recalls the discussion of racial formation earlier in the chapter, where the White in-group, whom U.S. founding documents included, was actively contrasted and defined by its opposition to various out-groups, such as African-Americans, indigenous people, and various European ethnic groups, like the Irish. Similarly, the notion of a racial project suggests that Whiteness designates the population who will receive priority in resource distribution and power allocation, and this notion helps explain Mbembe's notion of the "community of fellows." Whiteness designates a community and, at the same time, helps determine who is to be prioritized as the population within a democratic system. This notion will be further explained by an appeal to biopolitics.

This separation is then necessary to democratic practice as it serves as the foundation for the luxuries and even civil norms that constitute and enable democratic procedures. Mbembe sees such civil norms as central to the development of democracy which saw "the force of forms" replacing the authoritarian violence that characterized monarchic and medieval societies. Rather than the threat of the sovereign, social stability and order depended now on "society's self-disciplining" and the acceptance of common forms of behavior and conduct. In order for such a "self-disciplining" society, where norms of conduct and behavior are held to, there needs to be a clear universal set of norms or a demarcation between acceptability and deviancy. Whiteness again serves this function in American democracy. Painter (2010) and Lynn (2022) both extensively detail how concerns over non-White voting have been tied with allegations that non-Whites are incapable of acting properly as voters. Du Bois (1935) also connects these ideas to concerns over Black voting during Reconstruction, recounting numerous statements by Whites that claimed that Black political representatives were deviant, incompetent, or corrupt, despite clear evidence to the contrary. Thus, Whiteness also serves to designate a certain norm; an idea which is also consistent with Bonila-Silva's connection of race-based "regimes of truth," and accordance with this norm is seen as a necessary norm for democracy to function.

Mbembe credits these norms and the stability they engender in Western society on the fruits of colonial and slave-based exploitation, contending that these norms were only "made possible thanks to the new forms of wealth accumulation and consumption inaugurated by the colonial adventure" (Mbembe, 19). He points to the rise of cultural enterprise during the colonial period where financing was provided to salons, art galleries, and other public cultural functions. These developed a sense of civility and "mores" that grounded a democratic society, creating the community and norms necessary for democratic society. These depended on underlying profits that financed such cultural enterprises

and provided the luxuries, like coffee and spices, which formed the centerpieces of many of these public activities. Mbembe writes: "Civility and the consumption of luxury items went hand in hand, as coffee, sugar, and spices became lifetime necessities for the civilized human being" (19). These products, including cotton and tobacco in the American context facilitated the cultural thriving and leisure of the community of fellows, providing economic luxury which enabled the leisure time needed to write political tracts, engage in informal meetings, and generally devote one's life to cultural and political pursuits rather than economic toil. This creation of a "civilization of mores" was critical to the democratic project in creating a cohesive community with common norms that could act with civility and democratic inclinations.

Yet, at the same time, that same order required the use of violence, with Mbembe writing that "Civil peace in the West thus depends in large part on inflicting violence far away" such as "through the fiefdom wars and other massacres that accompany the establishment of strongholds and trading posts" (19). None of these luxuries came without a corresponding use of violence and exploitation to secure them. The coffee and tea served at intellectual salons, for instance, were secured through colonial violence imposed in South Asia or the Caribbean, while the cotton and tobacco which formed the backbone of the early American economy depended on both the elimination of indigenous people from the land and on the exploitation of slaves. Thus, in many ways, the emergence of cultural and economic conditions amenable to Western democracy then demanded the exploitation of racial Others and the application of violence to those excluded from Whiteness.

However, the use of such violence was not just an instrumental way of securing these luxuries, and this is not just an argument about the economic basis in democracy. Instead, this is primarily an argument that ties such economic basis to the creation of a common culture and to the creation of norms that would bind together a "community of fellows": the same community that could unite to resist State-sponsored efforts at full abolition during Reconstruction, for example. Because this community cohesion required a form of stark separation with those upon whom the violence would be inflicted, the use of violence was also a critical part of forming that separation. In order to juxtapose a community of fellows with one of nonfellows, Western society had to take the form of a society of separation, both spatially relegating nonfellows to "non-places" such as the colony or the plantation, but also denying their personhood.

Citing Tocqueville, Mbembe points to the implicit and explicit forms of violence that excluded even free Blacks from the polls, including those in the North, and he points to the systematic use

of lynchings as a way to strengthen this separation. Lynchings, as public forms of execution" were aimed to "sow terror in the minds of its victims and revive the lethal passions underpinning white supremacy" (18). Lynchings were both aimed at creating fear amongst racial Others, promoting separation by suppressing their personhood, but also at strengthening the hatred of racial Others and a sense of community among Whites. This observation is reminiscent of Amy Louise Wood's account of lynching as spectacle. For Wood (2009), lynchings were an opportunity not just to sow fear but to develop a sense of White community. Often, lynchings took place amongst a festival environment, with food, drink, and general socializing key to the proceedings. Whites often took photographs with the victims, with some of these even circulating as souvenirs and keepsakes. This helps show how the use of violence that created a "civilization of mores", while interconnected with the profits that enabled domestic order, could also serve as a key form of the creation of community and cohesion among some Whites.

Such an account helps show how White racial formation, as described during the first half of this chapter, is a clear example of the "nocturnal face" of democracy, by which Mbembe refers to the tradition of violence hidden beneath and excluded from the democratic community. Whiteness, as we saw, is itself a project of violent exclusion, building a form of community and cohesion by disallowing racial Others, depending on that exclusion and differentiation for its creation of an in-group. This process both excludes and de-legitimizes the rights of such racial Others but also polices this boundary and affirms itself through violence. Violence serves both as a way of maintaining the separation but also as a way of affirming White identity and one's inclusion in the category. Whiteness continues by serving as a component to the "civilization of mores" by crafting a form of commonality and mutual identification, establishing common "regimes of truth" and norms around which American society can be governed. Mbembe's framework does not situate Whiteness as the only instance of this nocturnal face, but instead Whiteness serves as one of potentially other examples of this phenomenon.

The next few paragraphs situate Mbembe's notions, as tied to Whiteness, within the context of the United States more specifically, showing how White communities in the U.S. regularly depended on the infliction of violence to racial Others. There is plenty of precedent for this notion in accounts of racial history in the United States. For instance, Du Bois foregrounds his study of slavery with the striking assertion that Western industry depends, during slavery and during his writing, on the exploitation of racialized laborers throughout the world and, especially the Global South. He refers to "That dark and vast sea of human labor... that great majority of mankind, on whose bent and

broken backs rest today the founding stones of modern industry" (15). The picture he describes is remarkably similar to that presented by Mbembe, where Du Bois points to this oppressed mass as providing the basis for modern society, not just industry, but society and power in general. He continues by pointing to the cheap prices paid for such luxuries, due to exploitation, and how the "resultant wealth is distributed and displayed and made the basis of world power" (16). The wealth translated in turn to the projection of power and to a certain "armed arrogance" in Western nations.

However, this is again not to paint the racial project of Whiteness as a fundamentally economic process. Instead, as Omi and Winant discuss in their history of Western racial formation, racial politics are integrated within larger forms of social control which pervade modern societies. One of the key elements of the American racial project is the use of the racial body, i.e. the actual human body of the racial Other. They write that racism "render[s] up the human body into the burning heart of the state as material for the social control" (145). Through this argument they seek to tie the racial project to this more general process of biopolitics, where modern governance seeks to manage populations by investing in the concrete bodies and biological processes within the population. This process is necessarily violent, as such racial politics have "their origins in the ravaging of the globe, in the consolidation of European rule, and in the classification of all humanity along racial lines" (147). However, it is also central to the creation of modern American democracy as a way of maintaining social order and stability, allowing for the democratic processes that depend on that stability to flourish. In order to fully explicate the connection between this form of social management and the violence and separation underlying it, some attention needs to be focused to Michel Foucault's theories of biopower and race, after which the racial project of Whiteness can be better understood within a theory of biopower.

For Foucault, modern politics grounds the "population" as a fundamental target of political activity, investing in it, optimizing its productivity and health, and assessing the strength of a society based on population-centered metrics. However, for biopolitics to function, Foucault contends that racism is necessary, as a way of categorizing populations, determining who should be invested in and who should be excluded or eliminated. After a brief overview of Foucault's account, I will revisit some of the prior accounts of racial formation to see how central biopolitical considerations are to American discussions over reproduction, immigration, and demographic change.

In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault discusses the role of biopolitics as a form of governmentality that "deals with the population... as political problem" (245). In other words, biopolitics treat

the population of a society, i.e. the mass of people within it, as a target of political management, regulating "processes characteristic of birth, death, production, illness, and so on" (242). Foucault contends that while previous forms of governance focused on the territory of a nation or on the individual bodies of the subjects, as is consistent with his famous discussions of discipline, modern societies also must regulate the population which, itself, becomes seen as a source of the nation's strength and its core essence. Thus, biopolitics functions with attention to questions such as "the birth rate, the mortality rate, longevity, and so on—together with a whole series of related economic and political problems" (243).

While this alone appears as a significant departure from discussions of race, Foucault sees race as central to this form of biopower. Foucault discusses the use of racial binaries to distinguish categories within that population, describing this as a "binary structure [which] runs through society" and constructs "categories of individuals, or two armies, and they are opposed to each other" (51). Race enters the equation because, as biopower is concerned with the strength of the population, the limits of that population must be determined. Society must direct itself towards how to maximize and strengthen a population, and thus it must determine who is to be invested in and who is a threat to the overall strength of the population. This leads to a focus on the regulation of sexual practices, such as mixed race marriages, but also to policing disabilities and illnesses that may not have a traditionally racial dimension.

Foucault can be seen as utilizing the same conceptualization of Whiteness that I have introduced, describing it as having not "a stable biological meaning" but as comprising a caesura, or break, within a society. Such a categorization is, importantly, rooted in a hierarchy, where "The race that holds power and is entitled to define the norm, and against those who deviate from that norm" (61). The notion of race as a caesura is extremely important, moreover, in demonstrating how race serves chiefly as a form of categorizing populations in such a way as to "allow power to treat that population as a mixture of races, or to be more accurate, to treat the species, to subdivide the species it controls.... To fragment, to create caesuras within the biological continuum." This helps integrate the aforementioned discussions of racial formation into an understanding of race as category and specifically as a category that manages populations.

Moreover, Foucault's understanding of race extends further to explicating the violence inherent in such a categorization. In confronting the problem of how to manage populations in modern societies, Foucault sees race as creating an essential divide between those whose lives are important

and those whose lives are unimportant. He describes this as "the break between what must live and what must die" (254). This allows a society to sort its population between those whose lives are to be maximized, via increased birthrate, medicine, hygiene, etc. and those who are left to die through exclusion and neglect. Such a distinction provides an apt description of the concept derived from the racial formation literature, as it captures both efforts to allow "degenerates" to be eliminated, such as those with mental or physical disabilities, as well as providing a divide across which racial Others are excluded from society. Thus, Foucault's notion of race helps synthesize the idea of Whiteness as a categorization based around a certain ideal that excludes both less ideal Whites and fundamentally non-White racial Others.

Foucault's account can be integrated more explicitly into the racial project of Whiteness in the United States by looking both at how it accounts for practices such as eugenics and the management of borders and immigration in the United States. One of the critical elements of biopolitics, as Foucault discusses in the *History of Sexuality, Volume One*, is the attention to sexuality and marriage, or the "long series of permanent interventions at the level of the body, conduct, health, and everyday life" (141). This can immediately be seen to connect to the American eugenics project, especially when Foucault emphasizes the justification of such a project as "protecting the purity of the blood and ensuring the triumph of the race" (144). This was of course much of the emphasis of the eugenics project.

As Whiteness became increasingly flexible in the United States, with growing numbers of poor European immigrants during the early 20th century being included in its borders, many race scholars became concerned about the overall health of the White population. These scholars warned that trends in mental illness, below average intelligence, and physical disabilities would weaken the strength of the White population as an aggregate. This resulted in clear policies that sought to prevent such "inferior Whites" from reproducing, through a process of "negative eugenics," while also encouraging increasing reproduction and population growth among more desirable members of the White race, through a process of "positive eugenics." (Painter, 259). This was not just about strengthening the White race but also about preventing its displacement by racial Others. As non-White immigrants arrived in the United States, and the U.S. began acquiring territories populated by non-White subjects, many prominent Whites, such as President Theodore Roosevelt, began warning of "race suicide" or the "warfare of the cradle" which alleged that, not only were non-Whites increasing relative to Whites, but also that the White race was itself falling into degeneracy. This helps show

how Whiteness as a category is not just about differentiating racial Others but about constructing a certain in-group ideal.

It seems relevant at this point to compare the idea of "warfare of the cradle" with the more contemporary notion of The Great Replacement or White genocide. This notion, popular among extremists, generally focuses on the idea that the White race is being demographically replaced by racial Others, specifically through immigration and channels extremist rhetoric towards notions of White civil rights and other allegations that Whiteness is under threat. This discourse is highly influential within far-right and White extremist circles, with the idea of White genocide frequently being invoked on major sites such as *Stormfront* and *The Daily Stormer*, in addition to manifestos by White motivated mass shooters in Europe and the United States. While the idea of White genocide is unlikely to be mentioned by the politically mainstream likes of Theodore Roosevelt now, President Donald Trump repeated allegations of anti-White violence in South Africa, a common talking point used to allege White genocide, and American conservatives, especially Tucker Carlson, regularly warn of the demographic impact of immigration from Mexico and Central America.

While the account helps tie in the idea of biopower to the racial formation of Whiteness, one of the critical elements of racial formation is its exclusionary and violent nature. This has been discussed through the notion of "allowing" populations to die and choosing not to maximize them, but for Foucault, as for Mbembe, the role of eliminating these undesirable populations is crucial to biopolitics as well. As Foucault argues, one of the critical elements of biopolitics is that the society becomes associated with the population, rather than the sovereign for instance. This leads to wars being "waged on behalf of the existence of everyone" and "entire populations [become] mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity" (History of Sexuality, 137). If the undesirable population becomes an existential threat to the health and survival of the desirable population, they become seen as a fundamental enemy that must be eliminated. This leads to the use of the "massacre" as Foucault describes and to broader forms of genocide.

This justification of extreme violence is itself embedded within the governmentality that sees populations as the target of government power. Mbembe contends that modern warfare is not about the conflict between states but about the conflicts "between armed groups", with one or both of those groups acting "behind the mask of the state" (Mbembe, 87). This is similar to Du Bois' comment about post-Civil War Whites' public opinion becoming sovereign, and it presents a re-orientation from thinking about warfare as the sovereign sending troops to defend the nation or the territory and

towards an understanding of populations, divided via race, in violent conflict against one another. This new form of violence and warfare is tied to biopower or to "the emergence of an unprecedented form of governmentality that consists in managing the multitudes" (Mbembe, 86) where populations become central to the acting of political governance.

4   Contemporary White Violence

This chapter must conclude by connecting these theoretical arguments again to the question of contemporary White violence. For Mbembe, as for the conceptions of Whiteness we have discussed, separation is crucial to the racial project, with Whiteness in many ways constituting a force of separation through violent exclusion. Under that framework, when that separation begins to collapse, it leads to the "inversion of democracy" where fundamental enmity and the violent suspension of the law become the norm, rather than the exception. He warns that this represents the current situation, where hate and the need to destroy the enemy become commonplace, and I argue that such a diagnosis is consistent with the contemporary situation of White violence.

The concluding section of the chapter will therefore lay out this framework, contending that the current situation of White violence needs to be seen in the context of the emerging enmity that has arisen out of the blurring of the color line in modern times. First, this will briefly look at the role that separation plays in containing violence for Mbembe, before exploring how major upsurges in White extremism in U.S. history have also arisen when the color line has been challenged. Then, I will end by discussing how the literature presented in the previous chapter helps show a similar context for the contemporary situation before laying out how this will guide my findings over the remainder of the dissertation.

In Mbembe (2019), democratic violence is applied outside of those considered included in and constitutive of democratic society and towards those who have been excluded. It is against these people that we can see the extreme use of such forms of violence as the massacre or the lynch mob. In order to exercise extreme violence in the colonies or other "non-places" like the plantation, Mbembe tracks how the idea of the "exception" was weaponized within liberal democracies. These "non-places" are areas beyond the limits of civil society and beyond the protections of Western-style rights, and it is only by deeming them "exceptional" or outside of the law that overt violence can be seen as compatible with the human rights reserved for Whites and other more essential members of

society. This is where the flexibility of racial formation becomes critical for understanding Mbembe's argument. Because the lines separating races, or separating White from non-White, are flexible, the racial signifier as Mbembe calls it, also becomes flexible. The pervasiveness of this threat, he argues is leading to an expansion of the need for exception. If potential enemies exist throughout the society and are no longer contained to these non-places, then the exception and its corresponding violence begins to expand.

This leads to a broader notion of enmity and hatred throughout society, where the enemy is unfixed and begins to exist in other ways, untethered by the conceptual categories that relied on a fixed racial caesura. He contends that the contemporary period is seeing the figure of the racial other being increasingly generalized and applicable to a wider spectrum of potential racial enemies: "Today, Negroes and Jews are known by other names: Islam, the Muslim, the Arab, the foreigner, the immigrant, the refugee, the intruder, to mention only a few" (43). The increasing tenuous racial line must be stretched to incorporate the multitude of enemies that have now arisen beyond simply the discrete racial enemies present traditionally in the West. Notably, many of these designations lack any clear substance, with some such as "intruder" or "invader" simply describing the enemy in a tautological fashion, as is the case of many of the epithets present in the modern extremist movement such as "groomer" or "antifa." This raises the question for Mbembe of "who is this enemy really?" (53). Not only is the enemy unclear, but it has become an empty signifier that can refer to anything or anyone perceived as hostile to the in-group. This both shatters any unity created amongst Whites' collective opposition to, say, Blackness, but it also enables the intensification of that hatred, layering on extreme epithets that simply relegate the racial enemy to an amalgamation of everything considered evil, as is present in the current extremist obsession with "pedophiles" and "groomers". This leads to a characterization of contemporary society as one dedicated to "separation, hate movements, hostility, and, above all, struggle against an enemy" (Mbembe, 42).

Another consequence of the collapse in separation is also the decentering of the State, as these antagonisms arise against and outside of State institutions. As the race line becomes increasingly nebulous, Whites begin to take violence upon themselves or begin to explicitly instrumentalize the State and its institutions to advance racial aims, weaponizing its violence to bolster a racial separation that is under threat. Mbembe sees this period as one where "the traditional field of antagonisms has exploded" leading to "new forms of association" (56). Importantly, these forms of association are critically tied to race and nationality, driven by a conflict between those "linked through blood or

origin" and those "considered to be a different blood" (56). The result of this process is the centering of race in the minds of many, where the antagonisms are not perceived as class-based or economic but as a struggle to defend the democratic community that Whites have created. The State loses its mystique and uniqueness, becoming simply one more power with the right to kill (84), leading to the state of affairs that Du Bois discussed where the violence stems not from institutions but from the underlying White populace who channel that violence either through institutions or their own use of lynching and interpersonal violence. This leads to the creation of what Mbembe calls "war machines" which serve as transversal consolidations of violence, using whichever institution or tactic will further the fight against the enemy, "depending on the tasks to be carried out and the circumstances involved" (85).

Such a description must be integrated into the empirical literature discussed in the last chapter. One of the central forms of separation that existed within Whiteness was the chronic exclusion of racial Others from political representation and power. Perhaps the most salient examples of that exclusion's failure was the election of Barack Obama in 2008 which, as discussed, led to a major form of racial backlash, with White out-group animus increasingly impacting their attitudes to a variety of policy attitudes and candidate evaluations (Tesler, 2016). Similarly, the exclusion of immigrants serves as a perennial focus of racial exclusion yet the rise of immigration into the United States and the corresponding backlash discussed in Chapter One further represents both the collapse of racial separation and the rise of hate and animus that comes along with it, along with the instrumentalization of political parties as discussed by Abrajano and Hajnal (2015). We have also already seen evidence of populist Whites in the United States forming new social movements and associations, as well as the rise of hate movements around the election of Donald Trump which will further be discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

Similarly, the brief history of White extremism presented in Chapter One helps show how the blurring of the race line has traditionally also led to the blurring of distinctions between State and non-State violence. Throughout U.S. history, extremist groups have alternatively cooperated with and undermined State-sponsored institutions, although the story is even more complicated than that. After Reconstruction, Du Bois describes how White violence began to reject and undermine the State, with groups like the Klan opposed to federal intervention and working to enforce state-based Black Codes. As discussed, this period helps show how nuanced this relationship can be, with lynch mobs promoting state-level policies but rejecting federal intervention. Sequin and Rigby (2019)'s piece

shows how similar practices of lynching declined when state law enforcement sought to eliminate them, while Jaspin (2008)'s history of ethnic cleansings in the United States describes a myriad of times where lynch mobs acted against even state law enforcement by breaking into jails. Thus, at times, interpersonal White violence could serve to affirm or degrade State-institutions at various levels.

McVeigh and Estep (2019)'s account of the 1920s Klan and Cunningham (2012) analysis of the 1960s Klan both show a similar process during subsequent periods of mainstream Klan activity. Both accounts describe Klan groups operating alongside official structures, pushing for legal measures to enforce the race line while also engaging in lynchings and other extremist violence. Such cooperation stands in contrast to periods like those studied by Simi and Futrell (2010) and Belew (2018), which saw a post-Civil Rights extremist movement avoiding a mainstream that had been deemed as unsympathetic and instead pursuing a covert and fringe strategy of terrorism, bombings, and criminal violence. Importantly, this situates White violence as something that emerges from Whites who may use the State to enforce this violence but, for various reasons such as the inability of the State to enforce the race line, may instead take it upon themselves to inflict such violence.

Thus, the contemporary situation can already be seen to resemble Mbembe's account. With the election of a Black president and increased immigration, the separations underlying the race line have been degraded. Moreover, with a movement such as Black Lives Matter, the violence previously inflicted on non-persons in non-places is being denounced in mainstream discourse and media. Such a process not only leads to White efforts to reinforce and strengthen the race line but also to the intensification of enmity and the increasingly hyperbolic labels used to denounce the enemy. The contemporary period has seen the emergence of a series of pro-White social movements and the mobilization of overt extremist elements both offline and on. However, these same extremist movements have shown an equally complex relationship to State institutions as many of their predecessors. While many march in favor of Trump and law enforcement, waving American flags and shouting "America First," others have committed criminal acts, assaulted police officers, and stormed the U.S. Capitol.

Similarly, the State becomes decentered, as its ability or willingness to enforce Whiteness has been degraded or at least called into question. Many extremists that I have studied and spoken with, as will be discussed especially in Chapters Four and Seven, have very little faith in the government as such to maintain the race line, but they often see opportunities to use aspects of the government

to affirm their interests. This is particularly true of their support of Trump, but it also results in a selective analysis of law enforcement based on their perceived friendliness to White interest. The State thus cannot serve as a bulwark in defense of Whiteness, but extremists often still look to it as a potential tool that has the potential to advance their interests. On the other hand, more "mainstream" Whites seem to have more faith in the government's pro-White inclinations and are resultantly more likely to affirm State-based institutions, although the many Whites that are anxious about the preservation of Whiteness are similarly prone to cast around for other non-State tactics.

Importantly, this situation does not have to be seen as an aberration but as the process wherein the "nocturnal" face of democracy has become its overt face, with the violence underpinning the racial line coming into the open and standing at the forefront of the political efforts of many White Americans. The contemporary moment is not entirely dissimilar to previous periods in U.S. history where the regime of separation or the race line has been threatened. Following Reconstruction, the Klan mobilized to resist the unprecedented economic and political enfranchisement of African-Americans, and it similarly fought alongside government institutions when both the Great Migration and the Civil Rights Movement challenged White hegemony. Even during times where the color line was not as overtly threatened, this chapter has already discussed how racial violence, whether it be lynchings or race riots, have consistently functioned to define Whiteness and to provide a source of community and belonging to many Whites.

This framework helps clarify how the subsequent chapters will help demonstrate the politics of White violence from within this context. The following chapter treats Whites as a cohesive political group, seeing how their sense of in-group is tied to out-group opposition, and also demonstrating what leads Whites from both "mainstream" and "extreme" cross sections of the public to come to support political violence, showing how this is rooted in defenses of White interests. In turning to extremist behavior in the latter half of the dissertation, I hope to explore how extremists, distinguished from "mainstream" Whites through their marginal and anti-establishment status, come to support State actors and become emboldened to commit violence as a result before exploring how such violent behavior fosters a sense of community within extremist groups, just as Mbembe argues Whiteness does for Whites as such.

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Chapter Three: White Identity and Violence

1 Introduction

Whiteness has often served as a sort of "default" racial identity, but contemporary politics are seeing an upsurge in explicit identifications with Whiteness. As this chapter discusses, significant numbers of Whites express that their race is important to their identity and that this identity shapes their political attitudes. Similarly, acceptable discourse is changing with claims about White victimhood and White pride proliferating in online chatrooms, prominent blogs, and even conservative elites. This context has been more thoroughly explicated in Chapter One but sets the framework for this chapter as one that focuses on the implications of explicit identification with being White.

Given the exclusive nature of Whiteness historically, and the historical relationship between Whiteness and violence, I look more closely at psychological attachments to Whiteness, asking how attachment to this racial construct shapes attitudes towards violence. I draw on political science and social psychology research into social identity and the notion of White consciousness to look at how individuals come to see themselves as White, with political interests linked to the collective interests of Whites. This White identification translates to a sense of White group action and the need to engage politically to defend and affirm White interests. However, because Whites stand at the apex of a racial hierarchy in the United States, we will see that such group action either involves participation in or support of political violence.

After reviewing the concept of White consciousness, this chapter continues by exploring the idea of racial hierarchy and social dominance. Then, I turn to a series of empirical questions which analyze the relationship between White consciousness and political violence. This process makes use of empirical hypotheses tested with data from the American National Election Survey (ANES) as well as an additional survey fielded by Dartmouth College, but I expand on and develop those findings by presenting results from my fieldwork within online pro-White communities. Overall, I find

that White consciousness is consistently associated wtih support for political violence and extremism. This relationship is rooted both in the adversarial character of White consciousness as such and the underlying view, although sometimes implicit, that violence is necessary to enforce White hegemony.

2 White Identity and Racial Hierarchy

Jardina (2019)'s account of White identity spends a great deal of effort distinguishing in-group White identity from out-group animus, such as racial prejudice and ethnocentrism. Jardina demonstrates that many Whites actively see themselves as White, deriving pride and self-understanding from this label. More than just supporting policies that help Whites, Jardina helps show that White group ties can lead Whites to see the world through the lens of their in-group, experiencing a sense of linked fate with other Whites and expressing pride in White ancestry and White political accomplishments. Often, this sense of identification leads to a sense of group consciousness. While in-group identification rests more in a feeling of attachment to the group, group consciousness emerges as a sense of political cohesion begins developing. Huddy (2013), in summarizing a body of literature that goes back as far as Gurin (1985), outline how group consciousness serves as a more politicized form of group identity, where collective perceptions of group threats lead to a "collective orientation" where members of the group act politically on behalf of their group interests.

Jardina's account clearly distinguishes in-group concepts like White identity and White consciousness from out-group attitudes. This is important both because it helps develop a further understanding of how Whites internalize racial attitudes and act in concert with each other, but also in furthering our understanding of identifications with Whiteness. Yet amid all of these contours of White in-group attitudes, a sense of threat appears omnipresent in Jardina's account. White identifiers often express anger at the way that Whiteness is denigrated as racism and at the feeling that they cannot take pride in their race. Many of her respondents expressed a concern that their sense of pride will be seen as racist or hateful. Instead, many sought to equate White pride with the pride many racial minorities feel about their race. At the same time, many White identifiers also expressed more exclusionary sentiments about who belongs in American democracy. Those high in White identity are significantly more likely to say that being a citizen is part of being an American than low identifiers. Such high identifiers are also more likely to equate being an American to speaking English, being born in America, and living in the United States. In fact, a sense of threat

and desire for exclusion is interwoven throughout Jardina's account. She finds that White identifiers are particularly concerned with the prospect of Whites becoming a minority racial group. Similarly, such high identifiers are more likely than other Whites to think Whites are discriminated against and to feel alienated from society. It is also not surprising, given these findings, that Jardina consistently finds a relationship between White consciousness and opposition to immigration.

My approach builds on this same framework, emphasizing the notion of threat and out-group hostility interwoven within Jardina's account of in-group identification. In seeing White identity as resting self-consciously at the top of a racial hierarchy, we can also see how this leads to a persistent association between White identification and support for violence. In this section, I explore the implications of situating White identity within a racial hierarchy. Whereas White identity draws from social identity theories that apply to other racial minorities, or non-racial groups such as women and political partisans, White identity is distinctive in that it is a dominant form of identity. Namely, there is a difference between identifying with Blackness, a racial construct created to designate subjugation, and identifying with Whiteness, which we have seen is tied to violence and domination. Unlike forms of social identity that are not ascendant, White identification is integrated within a particularly privileged location of racial hierarchy.

This account of a threatened and hostile White consciousness builds on the basic insights of Jardina's work, namely using social identity as a basis for understanding White identification and expanding from there to see how that relates to racial resentment and out-group stereotypes. In fact, this is situated within a long history of the ways in which social identity, while rooted in the in-group, is oriented towards distinction from the out-group. Some of the earliest findings in the social identity literature developed the idea of a minimal group paradigm (ex: Tajfel and Turner (1979)), which while rooted in in-group preferences, emerges from competitive and zero-sum games with an out-group. Similarly, a great deal of later social identity literature emphasizes the role of perceived threat in accentuating or mobilizing in-group identity. As Huddy (2013)'s analysis establishes, the translation of in-group identity to politically mobilized group consciousness often occurs when faced with perceived threats. Group members often perceive threats to either their material interests or their symbolic, such as cultural, status which then leads to a broader political orientation and group consciousness. Huddy sees this as a key component in a broader orientation towards group-centered policy making and, at the individual level, as a pathway that leads more people to develop similar in-group identification and political consciousness. Huddy is not alone here, as Miller et al. (1981),

provides a classic formulation of this relationship between out-group animus, perceived threat, and group consciousness.

Whiteness, as a dominant paradigm, has traditionally been seen as invisible to White Americans, but as Jardina argues, the rise of threats and challenges to White hierarchy has made it more visible and salient, and this very salience contributes to the transition to group consciousness and the sort of political cohesion that Huddy describes. White consciousness is thus "reactive" in this fashion, due to it being the "default" or dominant identity. The nature of the racial hierarchy and Whites' dominant status in that hierarchy produce a particularly reactive and threat-prone form of identity, and it is that particularly reactive feature that orients White identifiers towards exclusion and violence in a way that needn't be the case for other racial identifications. In order to take further understand the implications of situating White identity in the racial hierarchy, it is helpful to turn to Masuoka and Junn (2013)'s theory of racial hierarchy. In order to best understand political attitudes, we need to see them from the perspective of racial groups' placement in that hierarchy. This placement within the racial hierarchy, is an important part of how group loyalties and group consciousness are formed, where their placement heavily shapes the nature of that racial group's group consciousness and in-group identity, helping to explain the hostility interwoven within White identity.

White opinions need to be understood from this particular position at the apex, but this doesn't tell us much about the hierarchy as such and how it is supported. For this, we can engage with the social dominance theory provided by Sidanius and Pratto (1999) into which Masuoka and Junn situate themselves. Sidanius and Pratto construct a sweeping vision of social hierarchy that attempts to posit a universally valid framework for understanding the intersection between institutional hierarchy and individual attachments to them. Their model emphasizes the foundational role of overarching legitimizing myths, such as nationalism or racism, in grounding social dominance. These myths then proliferate through society and shape the behavior of both dominant and subordinate groups, who enforce or internalize them respectively. This is explicitly connected to the role of anti-Black racism in the United States. White identity and Whiteness generally also fit this category, as White interests serve to promote policies that benefit Whites, such as support for law enforcement, while opposing policies that may challenge the hierarchy, like increased immigration (Sidanius and Pratto 1999, 105).

These myths then justify both structural or "aggregate" forms of discrimination, as well as repeated individual acts, such as job rejection, vote choice, and other interpersonal acts. This dissertation will not engage with their entire framework but hopes to focus on Sidanius and Pratto's

treatment of violence which while helpful also leaves out a crucial part of the story. Sidanius and Pratto almost exclusively emphasize the way that the State uses violence for this purpose. This violence, they contend, is used as a way of maintaining terror against minority groups to prevent the organization of hierarchy-threatening movements or activities. However, amid a focus almost entirely on State violence, Sidanius and Pratto create a framework for non-State violence as part of social dominance. They examine "semi-official" violence which includes State actors engaging in extrajudicial or abusive activity against minority groups, such as when police act in explicitly illegal or criminal ways, but they also discuss the possible role of "unoffical terror." This form of violence is that in which members of the dominant group take it upon themselves to use violence against subordinate group members. This includes traditional American forms of violence, such as Klan attacks and lynchings, as well as other forms of vigilantism without explicit State support. The breadth of these categories helps create room for the myriad of acts of White violence, situating both official law enforcement violence, police criminality, and hate group activity into a broad understanding of hierarchy–enhancing violence. State violence is simply one method of enforcing hierarchy, although it is certainly a very important one.

Despite including this larger framework in their theory, Sidanius and Pratto neglect to focus on such acts of unofficial terror. While such an oversight is certainly understandable given the sweeping nature of the text, it is unfortunate given what such an understanding can reveal within their framework. A theory that takes interpersonal violence seriously helps de-center the State from having a monopoly of establishing these forms of social hierarchy. As much of this dissertation hopes to argue, Whiteness stands behind both state-sponsored and extremist violence, so delving into the ways that racial interests are not coextensive with State institutions helps enrich our understanding of social dominance. This chapter further pursues such a focus on unofficial terror.
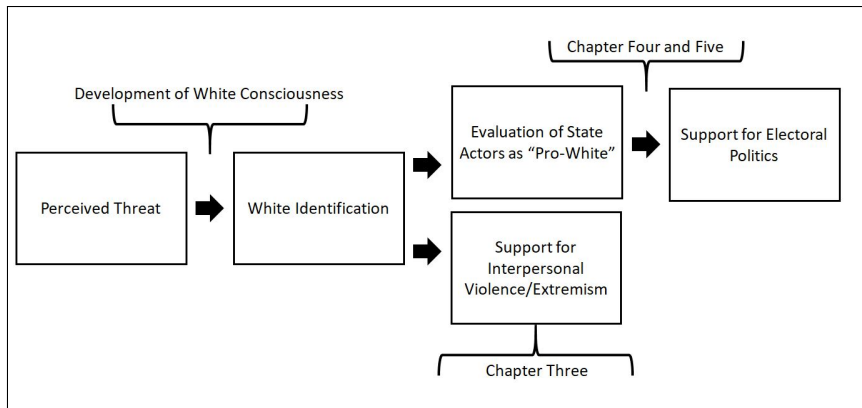
Figure 3.1: Concept Map

An understanding of unofficial violence ties together the two major strands of social dominance theory. Instead of focusing on forms of institutional violence as well as psychological predispositions, it helps us see how Whites with a certain psychological attachment to racial hierarchy can themselves systematically use violence to enforce it. Sidanius and Pratto discuss at length how hierarchy-enhancing myths serve to motivate both group behavior and institutional violence. Yet, they distinguish between aggregated individual actions, which do not explicitly include violence, and systemic violence, which includes interpersonal violence, but interpersonal violence does have its hierarchy-enhancing effects because of aggregated individual actions or the large scale mobilization of non-institutional groups. Thus, this form of violence is revealing as to the connections between these aspects of the theory.

In order to begin seeing this theory in practice, the rest of the chapter will explore three different empirical questions, pairing quantitative analyses performed on national surveys with my own qualitative investigation within pro-White online sub-communities. While the quantitative findings demonstrate a robust connection between White consciousness and various forms of political violence, they aren't able to get at the nuance required by trying to unpack each of these questions with sufficient nuance. Thus, each analysis will be juxtaposed with evidence derived from my own qualitative work, providing insight into the justifications and arguments provided. The goal of this chapter is to better establish how White identifiers perceive out-groups as particularly hostile and violent, connecting this to their own support of interpersonal violence, which I will show holds both for "mainstream" Whites as well as extremists.

3   Quantitative Methods: Hypotheses

Each of my primary hypotheses involves examining the relationship between White consciousness and the idea of violence against the out-group. The first of these takes a step back and examines the relationship between White consciousness and out-group animus. I theorize that much of the relationship between Whiteness and violence stems from something about White consciousness that is adversarial and oriented against a racial Other. No causal direction is hypothesized here, as I am trying to simply understand the extent to which out-group and in-group attitudes are associated with each other. Moreover, as will be discussed, larger discussions of Whiteness often situate it within anti-feminism, Christianity, or American identity, which I hypothesize will be less strongly associated with White consciousness than will out-group animus.

- $H0_1$ White consciousness is not associated with out-group animus or it is associated with other factors more.

- Ha_1 White consciousness is associated with out-group animus more than other relevant factors.

After this first hypothesis is examined, I will turn to the central claim of this chapter which is the relationship between White consciousness and political violence. This takes the form of a relatively simple hypothesis that expects a significant relationship to exist between White consciousness and support for interpersonal political violence. Still, I expect that the relationship will be a relatively strong one and will be more impactful than other measures such as conservatism and racial resentment. This would be consistent with my theory that political violence stems specifically from one's attachment to being White, as opposed to a partisan motivation or simply out-group animus alone. This is not to say that racial resentment and conservatism are not expected to have interesting impacts but that White consciousness proves to be the most relevant association.

- $H0_2$ White consciousness does not correlate with support for political violence, or is less associated than other factors.

- Ha_2 White consciousness is associated with support for political violence more than other factors.

Finally, many prominent acts of political violence in recent years have been carried out by men, including men with domestic violence records or an expressed hatred for women. Some targets, such

as yoga studios, massage parlors, or sorority houses, appear to be specifically gender-related. While it appears clear the perpetrators of mass violence tend to be men, it is less clear what role gender places in support for said violence. However, because Whiteness incorporates men and women, I still expect that incorporating gender will not obscure the role of White consciousness, with the next hypothesis holding that White identity will have a similar impact for men as for women.

- $H0_3$ White consciousness is no not associated with support for political violence when including gender as an interaction term.

- Ha_3 White consciousness is still associated with political violence when including gender as an interaction term.

Importantly, these hypotheses have a limited role in this overall analysis. Each quantitative analysis seeks to confirm certain empirical relationships between White consciousness and violence, for instance. However, my qualitative analysis seeks to build on such hypothesis testing by exploring the nuances of the relationships confirmed quantitatively. The hypothesis testing shows that these relationships exist and are generalizable, while my qualitative work explores the relationships themselves, drawing out nuance and complexity. I will discuss this relationship further in discussing my qualitative methodology, but it is necessary to distinguish my quantitative hypotheses from my qualitative and interpretative methods.

4 Quantitative Methods: Data and Analysis

The primary quantitative work in this chapter will revolve around a series of regression analyses on items from the 2018 American National Election Survey (ANES) pilot as well as on identical questions fielded through Lucid on a larger sample size. The 2018 ANES pilot relied on a sample size of 2500 respondents, including 1854 Whites, while the Lucid survey used a sample size of 3761 respondents, including 2818 Whites, although the Lucid analyses excluded "speeders", i.e. those who completed it in less than one third of the median completion time, resulting in a total sample of 2746 Whites. By replicating key questions onto the Lucid survey, I hope to provide more validation to these findings, showing how the same relationships are seen with both instruments. Importantly, the political violence question I use, which asks respondents "How much do you feel it is justified for people to use violence to pursue their political aims?", is only available on the 2018 ANES pilot

and the 2020 ANES. However, the responses on the 2020 ANES showed very poor variance with less than one percent selecting "A great deal" and 90 percent of respondents selecting "Not at all", as opposed to two percent and eighty percent respectively in the 2018 survey.[1] The Dartmouth Survey, however, found 10 percent of respondents selecting "A great deal" and 47 percent selecting "Not at all." Moreover, the 2020 ANES provides relatively nonsensical results for regressions predicting violence, including the notion that liberals are more likely to do so which conflicts with the 2018 survey, Dartmouth survey, and the clear right-wing associations with contemporary political violence. However, when looking at the relationship between White consciousness and out-group animus based on Hypothesis One, I look primarily at data from the 2016 and 2020 ANES, as each has multiple measures of stereotype ascription not present in the 2018 pilot. These measures are discussed further when testing that hypothesis.

Each analysis contains a standard battery of controls, incorporating age, income, education level, gender, and the extent to which they follow politics. Similarly, either ideology or party is included in each, although all results simply show ideology. Importantly, including both ideology and party, or just including party, show comparable results as those discussed. While not strictly a control, racial resentment is also included in each analysis, although its role is often interesting and will be discussed alongside political ideology.

The key variable in these analyses will be the White consciousness scale, a three question scale that was discussed at length in Jardina (2019). This measure attempts to capture the dynamics of group consciousness discussed in works like Gurin (1985) and Huddy (2013), including a sense of subjective membership in the group, collective orientation, and perceived group threat. The central question in White identity is simply one asking respondents how important being White is to their identity. This is largely identical to questions targeted towards minority groups and other non-dominant forms of group identity. However, the scale becomes more specific when including additional questions that capture, not just in-group identification, but the shift to White group consciousness. Jardina introduced measures for both perceived threat and for orientation to collective action. The measure of collective orientation asks respondents "How important is it that Whites work together to change laws that are unfair to whites?" while the measure of perceived threat instead asks "How likely is it that many whites are unable to find a job because employers are hiring minorities instead?" These questions were each combined into a White consciousness scale for the ANES 2016 (alpha = 0.85), ANES 2018 (alpha = 0.6), and the Dartmouth survey (alpha = 0.72).

5   Qualitative Methods

This chapter will make use of my own participant observation within a range of pro-White online sub-communities. Importantly, these communities did not end up being relegated to fringe websites, as many pro-White communities are extremely popular sub-Reddits or large public Facebook groups. Thus, while the idea of a pro-White group may seem to signify extremist or White supremacist groups, this is not the case. As we know from work like Jardina's, being pro-White is a relatively common attitude among American Whites and is not relegated to fringe sites. However, given the goals here, I did not rigorously search out "representative" communities. There are likely differences between active participants in these communities and other pro-White individuals that do not engage online, and these differences are distinct from any sort of contrast between mainstream and extremist groups. There are also many nuanced differences among attitudes between pro-White groups, with some being explicitly Christian or particularly male-centric. Instead of seeking out a representative sample to confirm my hypotheses, this qualitative work is intended to expand on the relationships that I establish quantitatively using representative surveys. For instance, statistical evidence that White consciousness is associated with political violence helps show that this is a generalizable phenomenon, while my qualitative discussion of the relationship between White consciousness and political violence helps show how certain individuals make sense of that relationship.

In order to conduct this research, I searched through various online platforms to locate forums that appeared to be consistently pro-White in their leanings and rhetoric. Selecting groups involved some level of guesswork at first, in joining a broad range of communities and monitoring their rhetoric. Essentially, I selected a series of platforms, including Reddit, Gab, Telegram, and Facebook, as well as a few independent websites that have come up in my research, and joined every relatively active (defined as having at least daily posts) group that may have a connection to pro-White sentiment. This included anti-social justice pages, men's rights activism, right-wing discussion groups, and alt-right affiliates. Some groups, including several pro-Confederate history groups, were initially joined but deemed insufficiently pro-White, although this may have been due to heavy content moderation. While each of these sub-communities were selected based on their prominent discussion of racial issues and political violence, they also range dramatically in terms of their "mainstream" acceptability, i.e. how extreme and overtly racial their rhetoric was. I visited regularly to engage in ongoing discussions, attempting to read content every two or three days.

In terms of methodology, I have chosen to extract general discourses, rather than coding the presence or absence of themes. There is a great deal of general chatter in many of these groups, following more closely with Walsh's (2004) understanding of political discourse than with norms of formal political discussion. Therefore, even in the channels that I identified as relevant, a general majority of discussion is still essentially irrelevant chatter of ongoing events such as Roe vs. Wade, Ukraine, the pandemic, or even just discussions of personal interests, memes, and life events. Such discussions often involves rhetoric and narratives that are embedded in larger pro-White worldviews, but those sort of subtleties would be lost if I were to strictly code threads according to topic. Moreover, given that many of these groups are as beholden to the daily news cycle as any sort of political conversation, a coding process would largely just reflect what is prominent in the news that day.

I created public pages and interacted with other participants under the guise of being a "racially conscious" White American. While I did not heavily participate in many of these forums, given the desire to avoid disrupting the natural patterns of discourse, some required frequent interaction, sometimes with informants, without researcher disclosure. To my knowledge, I was never discovered as a researcher, although my lack of in-person participation did alienate me from some channels. Given the lack of researcher disclosure, I employ significant procedures in coordination with my university's Internal Review Board (IRB) to avoid participants potentially recognizing themselves in my research, and by extension my own identity. Therefore, usernames and forum names will be withheld and represented through composite characterizations.

Unsurprisingly, selecting potential communities was an overwhelming task given the massive amount of online discussion of right-wing racial politics. Therefore, I initially cast a quite large net and joined a series of Reddit pages, Gab groups, and Telegram channels, as well as one overtly White supremacist forum independent of the aforementioned pages. Some of the initial pages and groups were not particularly relevant or active, so they were eventually abandoned. The situation with Gab is slightly different, as that site serves as a sort of alternative Twitter, so my involvement combined participation in a few groups with following increasing numbers of individuals, both drawn from those groups and from follower lists of prominent personalities. At this point, my Gab account follows approximately 150 people and is involved in five groups. Similarly, I participate in 8 subreddits and 12 public Telegram channels, as well as the non-affiliated White supremacist forum mentioned earlier.

I eventually settled on groups using similar criterion that guided which threads I would engage in. I began with a large net exploration of available groups, drawing on the advice of colleagues,

public information from hate group monitors, and my own judgment from long-term immersion in the subject. These potential groups were then examined for the prevalence of posts discussing racial issues or political violence. Some seemed fully devoted to issues such as the pandemic and later the conflict in Ukraine and were generally avoided for my purposes. Instead, I focused on discussions of racial issues, political violence in the form of non-state shootings or hate crimes. These discussions of racial issues often highlight the threatened perceptions that Whites have of their status, as well as the adversarial character of Whiteness, while these discussions of political violence help inform the relationships described in this chapter about White consciousness and political violence.

These channels can be roughly divided into three ideological categories. I will largely attribute quotes and sentiment to channels, rather than individuals, while also noting the debates and differences present within those channels where appropriate. The first of these categories covers relatively "mainstream" actors. Some groups, even on alternative sites like Gab, were relatively close in ideology to Tea Party or pro-Trump Republicans, rarely straying from the norms of discourse common in right-wing political discussion. Despite this fact, their discussions were often clearly oriented from a "pro-White" perspective, with respondents quick to racialize political issues, defend against alleged incidents of "reverse discrimination", and justify high profile incidents like Ahmaud Arbery's murder or the Capitol Riot. For simplicity, I will refer to these as "mainstream" discussions

In slightly less prominent groups, I noticed an escalation in the racialized character of the rhetoric and began to see more explicitly racist and pro-White posts. These sorts of groups went further than implicit racism and were more overt about their tolerance and support of political violence. While "mainstream" discussions often denied the role of race, these groups embraced it and openly leveled accusations of "anti-Whiteness" and aggressively denigrated political and racial opponents. Often these pages tapped into alt-right tropes or Qanon rhetoric but refrained from embracing some of the more extreme anti-Semitic rhetoric that will characterize the final category. Regardless, these groups were much more overtly offensive and explicitly racialized in ways that would go far beyond the comfort level of many readers. I will generally refer to these as "bridge" groups.

Finally, I engaged in more extreme groups that included overtly racist Gab pages, Telegram channels, and a traditional online White supremacist page. While it is hard to evaluate racist groups according to "how racist" they are, this final selection of pages was consistently explicit about pro-White interests and often used incredibly offensive slurs, including the n-word. This classification of pages were often virulently anti-Semitic, breaking from the "bridge" groups which seldom crossed

the line to overt anti-Semitism, although dog whistles with regard to "globalists" and George Soros were common. Moreover, this final category also frequently employed overt Nazi rhetoric, using usernames related to the Third Reich, posting about Hitler, and employing common tropes such as "1488" and the related fourteen words.[2] Some of these pages, namely the more traditional White nationalist forum, attempted to police explicit racial epithets (with mixed success), but many groups within this category were overtly virulent about such terminology. I will generally refer to these as "extreme" groups.

6   Out-Group Animus and White Consciousness

My initial findings support the notion that White consciousness is closely connected to out-group animus. I operationalize out-group animus both through the ascription of violent stereotypes to racial out-groups and through the racial resentment measure. Consistently, I find that White consciousness is closely associated with each of these measures. While Jardina (2019) does show that the two constructs are distinct and that some respondents are low in out-group animus but high in White consciousness, it is also necessary to emphasize the ways in which these constructs are consistently connected, and how White consciousness is more closely related to out-group measures or racial animus than other related concepts.

Initially, I looked at which measures significantly predicted levels of White consciousness using a regression analysis with both 2016 and 2020 ANES data. I examined the relationship between ascriptions of violence to racial out-groups and White consciousness, along with the other factors discussed: racial resentment, conservatism, American identity, feminism, and religiosity. The stereotype ascriptions ask respondents to what extent the word "violent" applies to various groups, and I include the difference between this ascription and a similar question applied to Whites. I choose the stereotype ascription for violence, specifically, because it helps paint a picture of out-group animus related to perceptions of violence, rather than laziness, which are more theoretically relevant to the discussion at hand. For the 2016 ANES, I included stereotypes for Muslims, African-Americans, and Latinos, while for 2020 the only available data was for Latinos and African-Americans. All values were scaled from 0 to 1.

Table 3.1 Distribution of Variables, ANES 2016

Variable	Min	Q1	Median	Mean	Q3	Max
Latino Violence	0.00	0.50	0.50	0.52	0.58	1.0
Muslim Violence	0.00	0.50	0.62	0.62	0.76	1.0
Black Violence	0.00	0.50	0.58	0.59	0.67	1.0
White Consciousness	0.00	0.25	0.41	0.43	0.58	1.0
Racial Resentment	0.00	0.38	0.63	0.58	0.81	1.0
Ideology	0.00	0.17	0.50	0.54	0.83	1.0

Table 3.2 Distribution of Variables, ANES 2020

Variable	Min	Q1	Median	Mean	Q3	Max
Latino Violence	0.00	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	1.0
Black Violence	0.00	0.50	0.50	0.55	0.58	1.0
White Consciousness	0.00	0.25	0.41	0.43	0.58	1.0
Racial Resentment	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.48	0.75	1.0
Ideology	0.00	0.33	0.50	0.53	0.83	1.0

This analysis situates White consciousness within a series of plausible correlates, establishing that White consciousness is more closely related to out-group animus than other historically connected concepts. This is necessary in order to better clarify what sort of construct White consciousness is. I am suggesting that White consciousness is a politicized form of in-group identity that is fundamentally linked to out-group racial animus, so it would then be entailed that White consciousness is more closely related to out-group racial animus than other possible correlates such as ideology, feminism, religion, and national identity, even though each of these have been tied to White racial formation or contemporary White politics in some way. I have also included controls, including age, gender, party, income, how closely they follow politics, and education.

As many accounts of Whiteness emphasize, there are close links between the idea of pro-American sentiment which reflects the "default" character of Whiteness as a racial grouping. American identity and White consciousness serve as compatible in-group identities; moreover, so it would be revealing to see that White consciousness and American identity are closely related, suggesting a link that

heavily incorporates nationality and nationalism. Similarly, patriarchy and Christianity are generally associated with Whiteness in the United States, and both certainly seem common within discussions on pro-White forums, so the model hopes to include both feminism and religiosity measures in order to test whether White consciousness is most tied to Christianity or anti-feminism, for instance. Finally, much of the discussion over contemporary racial attitudes has revolved around their relationship to partisanship. This is not much of a test of that relationship, but it serves as a first attempt to clarify how closely related White consciousness and eventually White political violence are with conservative partisanship.
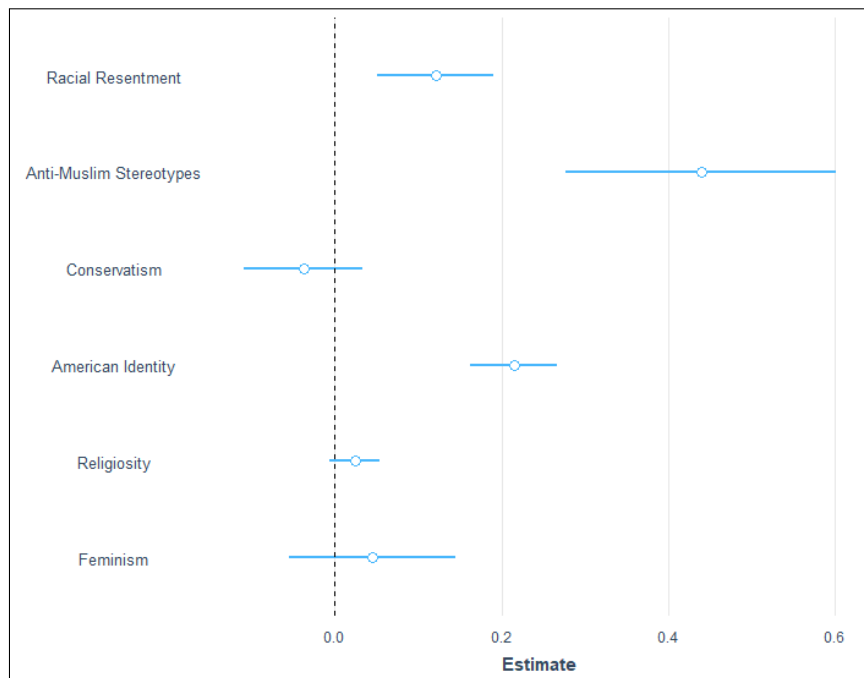
Figure 3.2: Predictors of White Consciousness

Overall, the most significant predictor in 2016 is this attribution of violence to Muslims, while racial resentment and American identity were also notably correlated. Interestingly, feminism, religiosity, and ideology were not significant, suggesting that these are not central predictors to White consciousness. When including all stereotype ascriptions, Muslim attitudes appear to be the most important, but the impact of this variable also overrides the impact of other stereotype ascriptions, as they are significant when included one at a time and all heavily correlated. This background makes sense in the broader context described at the beginning of this chapter. While out-group animus and White consciousness are distinctive, they are also closely related, as increases in one are

systematically related to increases in the other. This does not attempt to make a causal claim but instead works to show that the two constructs are intertwined.

6.1   Qualitative

This same understanding of White consciousness as oppositional is clear in many of the qualitative discussions that I participated in. While many posters defended their White identity in a consistent way with Jardina's account, i.e. simply taking pride in the in-group, many other discussions tied this notion of pride with the presence of threat. Therefore, the following paragraphs will review some of the common themes related to discussions of Whiteness, reviewing how varying levels of perceived threat and out-group animus correspond to the level of White consciousness evinced in their online remarks. Essentially, more mainstream posters simply expressed pride in their race or noted the perceived acceptability of that, while more extreme posters who saw more coordinated threats against Whites expressed not only pride but a desire to take action to defend their race.

The former group contained individuals who asserted that "it is only natural" to take pride in one's race, regardless of whether one is White or African-American and those who claimed that "Everyone is proud of themselves." Interestingly, many of these comments arose during a discussion of whether one should take pride in race at all, rather than nationality or religion, yet none of that discussion challenged the alleged equivalence between White pride and Black pride. Other posts seemed to anticipate the idea that they would be called racist, declaring that "it isn't racist to be pro-White, duh!" It also bears mention that the idea of White pride is consistently framed in a defensive way, attacking the idea that White pride should be taboo or justifying why antagonists are wrong-headed in their criticisms. While many of these posts were on more "mainstream" conservative forums, some posters clearly had ties or sympathies to more extreme corners of the internet, with one individual posting "White Pride World Wide, Absolutely, preach it" in a clear reference to Stormfront.

Yet, amidst these posts were many presentations of Whiteness as under threat. Some of these posts saw attacks on Whiteness as a broader method of social control. These were often made by individuals who saw attacks on Whiteness as a tool which political enemies can use to demonize anyone that opposes them and undermine the United States and Western Civilization. Some posters alleged that "woke" antagonists were "pushing guilt and submission". Others portrayed attacks on Whiteness as a slow process towards widespread social control. This was particularly prevalent during criticism of the idea that racism is a particularly White phenomenon, a discourse which was

often portrayed as a crass and partisan political strategy. Posters frequently saw such "anti-White" agendas as blatant efforts to enforce Marxist, fascist, or generally Orwellian methods of social control. In an indicative response, one individual argued that this agenda was part of a long-term goal: to "First you villainize whiteness, then you villainize freedom, then you seize power."

Finally, another prominent discourse in online discussions of Whiteness was the way that attacks on Whiteness were larger attacks of Western values and civilization. In criticism of a post equating notions of individual liberty with White Western values, which received much derision from forum participants who dismissed the argument entirely, one poster accepted this equation at face value, contending that "Freedom was invented in the West. That certainly doesn't mean we should let them destroy it." This sentiment, while only implicit in many of the other posts, is a particularly prominent one in larger discourses about the value of Western Civilization and the way that it is tied to Whiteness. This has been repeated both by prominent conservatives like Tucker Carlson and Rep. Steve King (R-IA), as well as extremist groups like Identity Evropa.

Other posts, however, saw attacks on Whiteness as part of a larger effort to erase and attack Whites as such, framing discussions of racial conflict as existential and biological struggles. This sort of rhetoric was particularly common on more extreme forums, although they were not relegated to explicitly supremacist sites by any means. One poster, in attacking the idea of affirmative action, asserted the prevalence of discrimination against Whites and warned that "Anyone who thinks this will get better when they are a majority is lying to themselves." Such claims clearly invoke the specter of alleged "White genocide", although integrated into seemingly mainstream debates over affirmative action. Other assertions grew more explicit, with descriptions of alleged "anti-White rhetoric" as leading "towards full-blown genocide," or even blatant assertions such as "Diversity is death. Break Free. Be White." The point of such anecdotes is not simply to reveal the extreme rhetoric marshaled in defense of Whiteness but to demonstrate how such rhetoric exemplifies the concomitance of pro-White sentiment with a perception of threat and the need for defense. White pride is juxtaposed with White genocide, and diversity/death contrasted with Whiteness/life. Thus, attacks on Whiteness can either be a tool to advance a totalitarian agenda or a tool to exterminate Whites altogether, although proponents of the latter usually would fuse the two.

When presenting my qualitative work, I initially divided the forums I engaged in in a scale from "mainstream" to "bridge" to "extreme" communities. As will be seen, this scale is often useful, but in this case, it was less helpful. As the following table helps explicate, the discourses focusing on

how White pride ought to be acceptable were common across all three forms of communities, as were notions that anti-White rhetoric and policies were a clear form of threat, although generally mainstream communities saw such threat as rooted in Communism rather than racial threat or anti-Semitism. However, the step from vague notions of political or cultural threat to the actual destruction of White people as a race was also a distinction between mainstream and more extreme communities. This is particularly revealing as one common feature of all of these discussions was that increasingly extreme groups generally saw the threat as more salient, so while mainstream communities discussed the problem of anti-Whiteness as social control, extreme communities saw it as a dire existential threat, shifting not in broad themes but in intensity.

Table 3.3: Discussions of White Identity

	Pride in Race	**Anti-Whiteness**	**White Genocide**
Type of Forum	**All Three**	**All Three**	**Bridge and Extreme**
Example 1	"Everyone is proud of themselves"	"They are pushing guilt and submission"	"Anyone who thinks this will get better when they are a majority is lying to themselves."
Example 2	"It isn't racist to be pro-White, duh!"	"Freedom was invented in the West. That certainly doesn't mean we should let them destroy it"	"Diversity is death. Break Free. Be White"
Example 3	"White Pride World Wide. Preach it"	"First you villainize whiteness, then you villainize freedom, then you seize power"	"The West is being flooded by non-Whites, and birthrates aren't replacing us!"

7 Political Violence

White consciousness is not just associated with these negative out-group stereotypes or racial animus in general. White consciousness further predicts support by Whites for interpersonal violence and the extremist alt-right. This is consistent with my theoretical assumptions as White's racial orientations predispose them towards the use of violence to enforce racial hierarchy, and this translates to support for movements that practice and encourage such violence. While the following regression analyses cannot establish a causal relationship between the variables in question, it seems theoretically sound to treat White consciousness as emerging first, given the role that racial identity, including White identity, plays as a basic predisposition that itself predicts support for policies, political activities, and social movements (Lee, 2002; Zaller, 1992; Jardina, 2019).[3]

Despite debates over the frequency of political violence, it is notable that some respondents still openly supported the use of political violence, which as hypothesized in Hypothesis Two, I expect to be associated with higher levels of White consciousness. Therefore, I performed another regression only with White consciousness as an independent variable and support for political violence as a dependent variable. Controls included racial resentment, political ideology, party, age, education, gender, income, and how closely the person followed politics.

Table 3.4: Distribution of Variables, ANES 2018

Variable	Min	Q1	Median	Mean	Q3	Max
Support for Violence	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.00	1.0
Support for Alt-Right	0.00	0.10	0.11	0.26	0.50	1.0
White Consciousness	0.00	0.17	0.33	0.36	0.50	1.0
Racial Resentment	0.00	0.31	0.56	0.55	0.81	1.0
Ideology	0.00	0.01	0.11	0.26	0.50	1.0

Table 3.5: Distribution of Variables, Dartmouth Survey

Variable	Min	Q1	Median	Mean	Q3	Max
Support for Violence	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.31	0.50	1.0
Support for Alt-Right	0.00	0.28	0.56	0.55	0.83	1.0
White Consciousness	0.00	0.33	0.50	0.52	0.75	1.0
Racial Resentment	0.00	0.38	0.50	0.52	0.63	1.0
Ideology	0.00	0.17	0.50	0.48	0.83	1.0

These results demonstrate a consistent and strong connection between White identity and support for political violence. Based on the ANES analysis, those high in White consciousness support political violence 15 percentage points more than those low in White consciousness, while the Dartmouth data showed an even higher increase of 50 percentage points. This is significant in both cases but also demonstrates a higher impact than any other covariate. Even when including factors like party, political ideology, and out-group animus, White consciousness proves to be the crucial predictor for support of political violence.

While party has a slight predictive impact, neither racial resentment nor political ideology predict support for violence with racial resentment even having a slight negative impact. However, this does not mean that out-group animus necessarily predicts negative support for political violence, as the racial resentment findings indicate. Other measures of out-group animus prove significant when included into the model. While neither the ANES 2018 pilot nor the Lucid survey contain measures of stereotype ascription, measures of negative Muslim sentiment ($\beta = 0.08$) and disgust towards immigrants ($\beta = 0.10$) prove positively predictive.
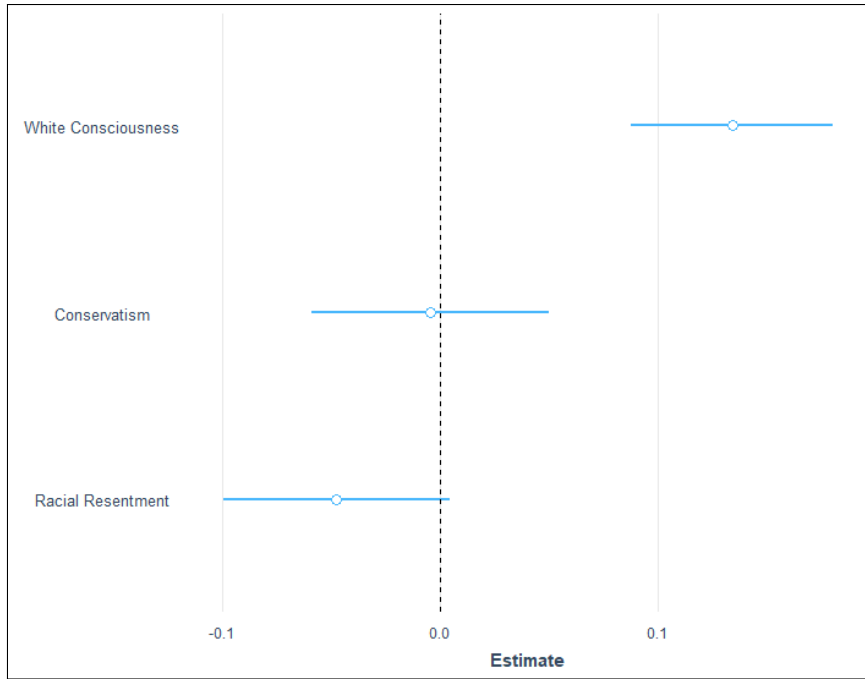
Figure 3.3: Predictors of Political Violence, ANES 2018
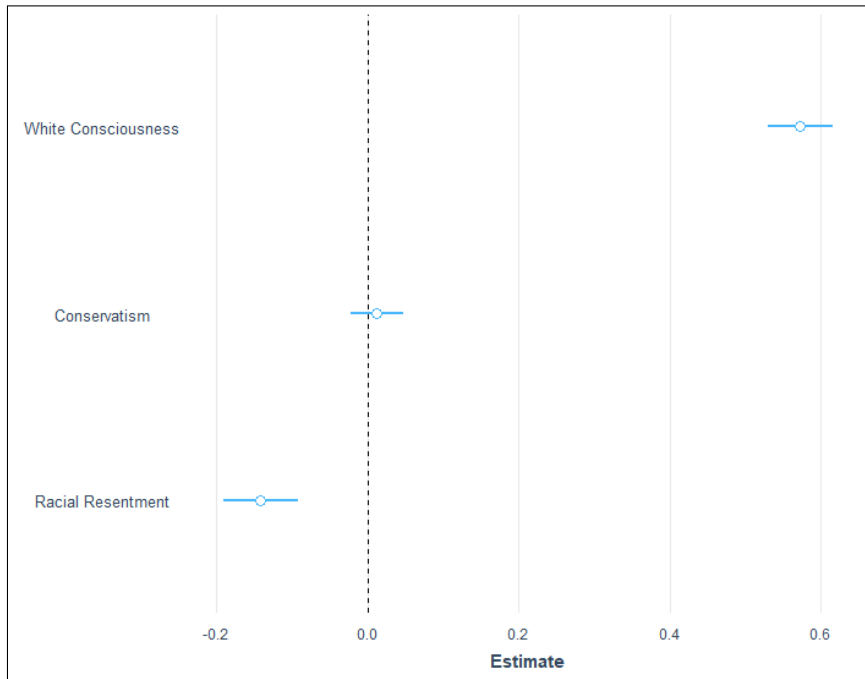
Figure 3.4: Predictors of Political Violence, Dartmouth Survey

It is quite surprising to see racial resentment having a potentially negative impact on support for political violence. When removing White consciousness from the analysis, racial resentment actually has a very small positive impact when using Dartmouth data ($\beta = 0.07$) and no apparent impact when using the ANES ($\beta = 0.00$). In order to further disentangle this relationship, I replicated both analyses with an interaction between White consciousness and racial resentment. Even at high levels of racial resentment, White consciousness continues to be associated with political violence, but this relationship seems dramatically weakened, especially in the ANES results. Moreover, those high in White consciousness and also racial resentment appear to support political violence at lower rates than their low racial resentment counterparts. These finds are very unintuitive, at least initially, but similar findings surrounding the role of conservatism help establish the moderating role of attitudes towards institutions. Those high in racial resentment, just as those high in conservatism, evince attitudes that are generally supportive of the status quo, so it makes sense that they would also be less likely to support interpersonal violence.
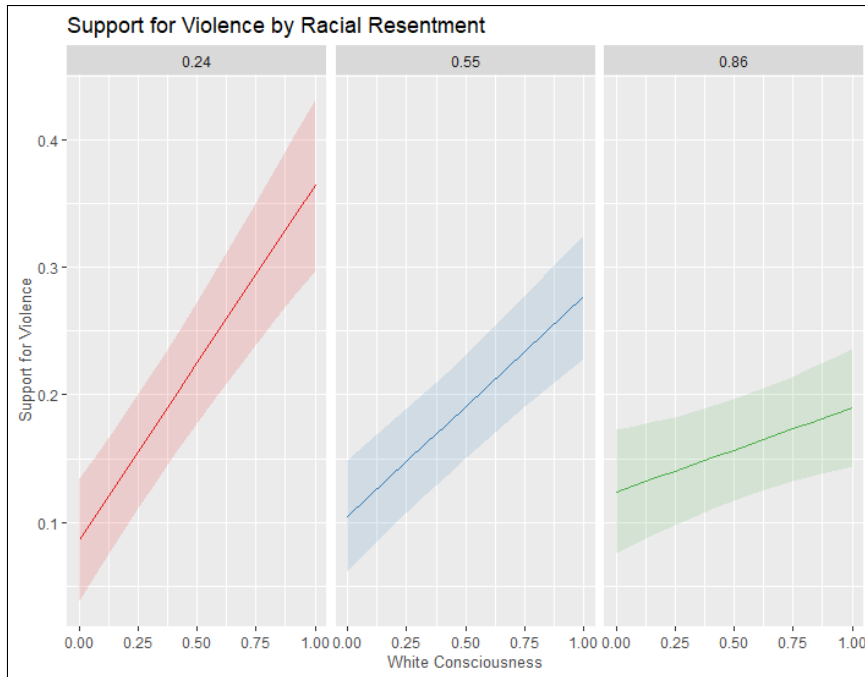
Figure 3.5: White Consciousness Interacted with Racial Resentment, ANES 2018
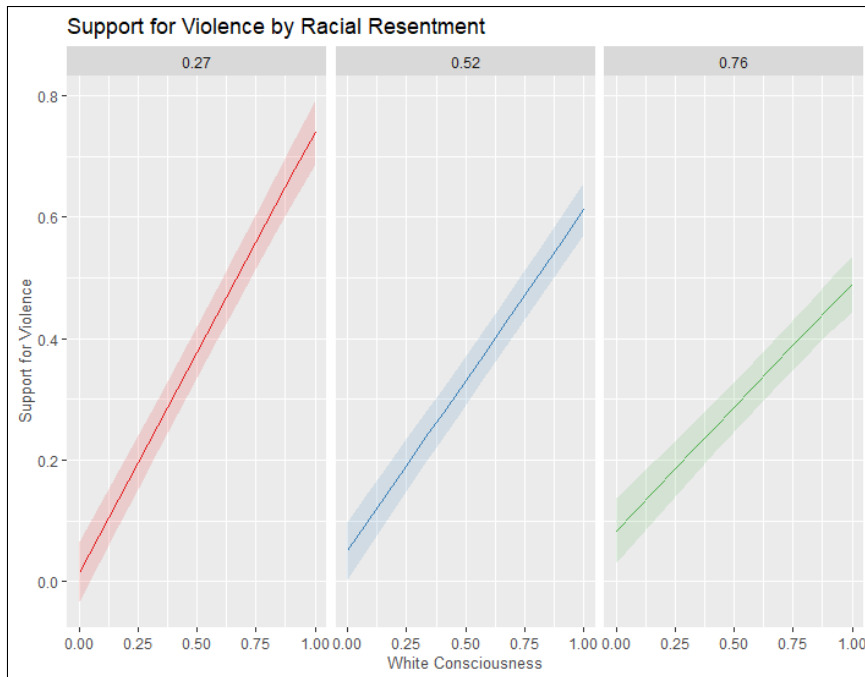
Figure 3.6: White Consciousness Interacted with Racial Resentment, Dartmouth Survey

In order to further explore how White consciousness predicts support for violence, I looked at the relationship between White consciousness and support for the extremist alt-right. The alt-right serves as a major contemporary example of White extremist activity, as a social movement that has managed to both bridge divides between factions of White extremism but also between extremists and many more mainstream Republicans. While the alt-right as such has declined in prominence, they are deeply tied to the now more salient "Proud Boys" as well as a great deal of prominent political violence, such as the notorious Charlottesville march. Thus, looking at attitudes towards this movement help extend the theory about political violence to attitudes towards a specific movement that advocates for violence in defense of Whiteness.

Both the Dartmouth College survey and the 2018 ANES asked respondents a feeling thermometer for the alt-right, seeking to measure how favorably respondents saw this movement. Therefore, I sought to replicate the previous regressions, i.e. using the same covariates, to look at the impact of White consciousness on support for the alt-right. It would be quite strange if White consciousness predicted support for political violence but not for this actual group committing political violence, however, but this is an important way to expand on and develop that finding. These results also demonstrate a strong connection between the two variables. Just as with support for political violence,

this helps us see that white group consciousness predicts support not just for violence as a vague notion but for a specific social movement that has been known to engage in and practice violence. However, as violence becomes exemplified through a concrete movement, this support takes on a different dimension. Whereas conservatism and racial resentment do not predict support for political violence, they both clearly predict support for the alt-right. In fact, the effect size is similar, based on the relationships in the ANES.
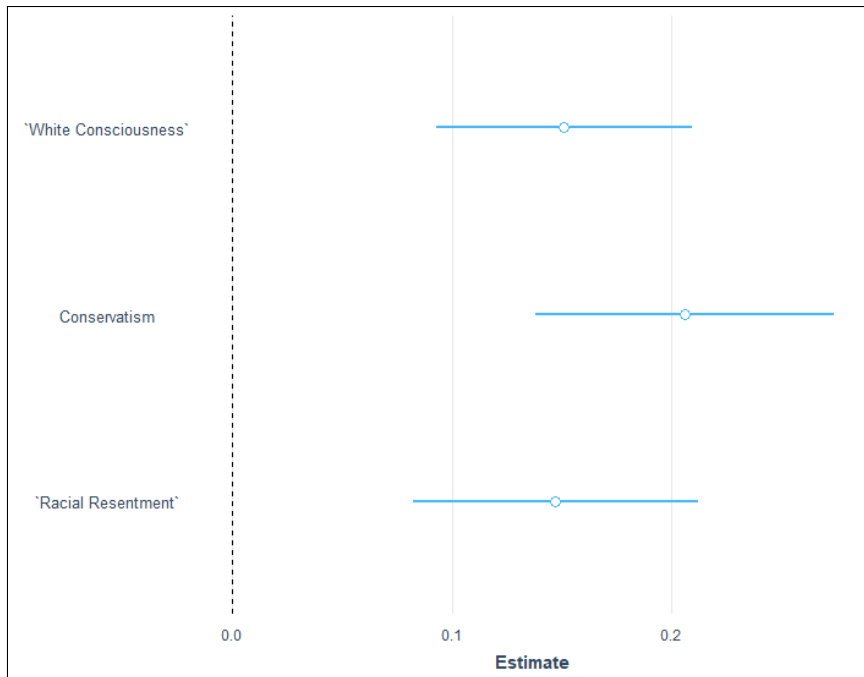
Figure 3.7: Predictors of Alt-Right Support, ANES 2018

7.1   Qualitative

While these results help demonstrate how White consciousness is correlated with support for political violence, alongside out-group animus, they are lacking in telling very much about the content of that support, i.e. what rationale is offered to justify potential acts of violence. My qualitative work helps show how support for violence consistently builds on the notions of threat discussed above. Building on the earlier discussions of self-defense, proponents of violence often described this as something that was forced on perpetrators by the ongoing provocation and alleged "anti-White agenda" of the political left. Others painted attacks as actions forced upon Whites by the hostility of their racial enemies, blaming these mass shootings on increased feelings of White alienation and group

threat. It is quite frequent, moreover, for mass shooters themselves to justify such violence through claims of threats against Whites, such as invocations of "White Genocide" or "Great Replacement Theory." Moreover, many promotions of violence juxtaposed White activity with non-White violent action. Long discussions of Black criminality, for instance, often argued that African-Americans would commit murder with little repercussions, while Whites would be punished extensively for such violence, despite the need for such violence as a defense of these same non-White criminal activities. Finally, when online posters do explicitly call for violence, they consistently did so via a critique of existing State institutions, which they alleged to be coopted or repurposed to advance hostile agendas.

This initial overview provides three broad arguments for how Whites perceive the motivation for political violence: provocation by non-Whites, a reaction to violence inflicted against Whites, and desirable political action. Each of these broad themes will be discussed before situating them into the aforementioned topology of online communities. Importantly, two of these themes deal with the justifications of violence, i.e. when individuals may justifiably use interpersonal violence, but they do not necessarily entail that violence is something that it is desirable to take action on. While many mainstream posters talk about the need for anti-BLM or anti-antifa violence, for example, they often treat it as something regrettable or out of their hands, rather than making explicit claims about the need to bomb targets. This may simply be a distinction in rhetoric, as it is sometimes inconsistently stated, but may also be rooted in the fact that many forums heavily self-police to avoid explicit calls for violence.

In the first of these examples, many Whites saw discussions of political violence as necessarily juxtaposed with discussions of Black criminality. For them, it was nonsensical to talk about violence against racial Others without emphasizing the frequency of violence by non-Whites against Whites. For instance, in a thread criticizing celebrations of the late Ahmaud Arbery's life, commenters dismissed it with suggestions such as "how about celebrating all the victims of black crime", while others saw this as part of a broad agenda of anti-White aggression, responding with "if they keep it up, these people are going to get what they deserve." These sorts of claims were particularly common across all three types of communities, with the previous discussion happening in a "mainstream" community, although the rhetoric became much more overtly racist on "bridge" and "extreme" communities. Some memes featured Arbery's face with the caption "We have a race control problem. Keep em loaded," while discussions of news articles discussing non-White violent crime described

them as "legalized and promoted terrorism" which had to be "confronted and destroyed." Sometimes these same discussions situated Black criminality within alleged anti-White politics. In one "bridge" group, a poster dismissed protests over a slain Black teenager by asserting that "nobody pretends to care about blacks until some n****r gets shot for doing n****r shit," while another predicted that this killing would lead to "anti-White legislation called 'the dey dindu nuthin crackah Bill'" Similar discussions on more "extreme" groups were most associated with explicit calls for violence, although those were certainly present throughout, as mentioned. One extremist poster who was somewhat explicitly calling for organized violence attempted to contend that "the fighting has already started" before asking "How many people do free n****rs murder each year?" Importantly, while such rhetoric was relatively widespread, it does not connect directly to the quantitative survey question about "political violence," as these descriptions of "self-defense" are not portrayed as political. This suggests that the sort of violence asked about in the ANES is not the only sort of violence that Whites support.

The last comment connecting the need for violence to ongoing anti-White violence was itself part of a common narrative across 'bridge" and "extreme" groups. Importantly, discussions within this category did not necessarily call for violence but instead made statements about how "it will be inevitable" or provided justifications for other acts of violence based on the presence of "systemic violence against Whites". Explicit calls to violence, while present, were largely confined to the most "extreme" groups and will be discussed later. These "inevitability" arguments never quite advocated for violence but took the self-defense discourse to its more macro-level proportions. Rather than pointing to a specific situation where a White allegedly used violence in self-defense, this discourse leveraged the idea of White collective self-defense against population-wide or systemic anti-White violence.

This discourse was particularly evident when the idea of "race war" came up. Many of the recent White extremist mass shootings have explicitly called for the need for race war, where Whites would engage in open warfare to eliminate their political opponents. After these shootings, many conspiratorial Whites often describe them as "false flag" attacks or hoaxes, as will discussed, with the goal being to promote race war in general. Yet a common rebuttal to that claim is the idea that race war would turn out as a victory for Whites, instead much of the current system is intended to "slowly degrade whites until we are outbred, disorganized, and weak," whereas "whites would clearly win the race war." It is this sort of state of affairs that will allegedly lead to violence, according to this

discourse. This is of course intertwined with the ideas of the last discourse, as one of these systemic forms of violence is the criminal violence of minority groups, but importantly "war takes many forms and isn't just about shooting and killing people" and instead includes "the systematic destruction of the white family, indoctrination of white babies, and an incompetent and corrupt government."

It was this systematic anti-Whiteness that makes collective defense a necessary outcome. After January 6, many people in more "bridge" communities seemed to come to the realization that the State was not going to help them and thus, "there was never a peaceful solution." Others commented to the effect of "regardless of the outcome, we will have to defend ourselves" and "eventually war will come, and war means killing." Certainly many extremists glorify such a future, as we will see, but others seemed to express regret or a more somber outlook. One prominent extremist blogger exemplified this reaction well declaring "we don't want to use violence, but we'll have to," before continuing "we need to be ready for really bad violence. We shouldn't want it, but when they come for us, we will have to kill every last one of them." [4]

In the more extreme communities that I participated with violence was more overtly praised and glorified. It was often seen as a desirable political outcome and presented alongside the glorification of said violence or strategic outlines for how it would best be executed. While these sorts of discourses appeared only in the more extreme groups that I participated in, they share much in common with the previous discourse, building on the idea of systemic threat but focusing more on the nature of the necessarily violent remedy. Some of these posts were actually quite similar to those in the last paragraph such as: "Victory can only come from dialogue or violence, and they're removing dialogue so we need to remember how to use violence." The shift in focus from the previous discourse is subtle but rests on the way such statements clearly call on others to use violence, saying it is not just inevitable but something that needs to become the goal of active and ongoing organization. Other statements took on an even more strident tone, making declarations like "You cannot negotiate with evil, but you can kill it!" The two quotes provided in this paragraph are essentially equivalent in content, but this latter one helps show how such a call for inevitable violence becomes glorified within moralistic themes. Similarly, such statements were often juxtaposed with the "Deus Vult" meme.[5] This meme, who's format actually became quite popular in more mainstream communities during 2016, presented the image of a crusader knight with pro-violence or anti-Islamic rhetoric and the term deus vult. The juxtaposition of pro-violence sentiment with this meme helps showcase the idea of such violence as a holy crusade that is both laudable and glorious.

Other calls for violence focused explicitly on the tactical or logistic considerations at play. Sometimes this involved praise of previous acts of domestic terrorism, such as "McVeigh was right" and "the hero Breivik" but more often pointed to these previous acts as possible blueprints for future action. For instance, in the post mentioned praising McVeigh, the individual goes on to call for "organized violence, such as the regular bombing of federal buildings and the assassination of politicians." Yet, they further emphasize that this is not enough, as such violence must be combined with "mass political organization and the creation of a powerful leadership." While this was a particularly long-term argument and one that was articulated throughout a long online discussion, other posts focused more on short-term actions that could be taken. One particularly extreme individual predicted that "soon, the Jews will initiate a massive blackout. Use that window to eliminate as many of them as possible. Don't just sit on your ass!" Between these posts, we can see the broad argument emerging, where violence, in the sense of the organized elimination of political enemies, is not just justified but actively theorized as an imminent political strategy.

Table 3.6: Justifying Violence

	Non-White Provocation	Inevitable Reaction to Systemic Violence	Desirable Political Action
Type of Forum	**All Three**	**Bridge and Extreme**	**Extreme**
Example 1	"if they keep it up, these people are going to get what they deserve."	"slowly degrade whites until we are outbred, disorganized, and weak"... "whites would clearly win the race war"	"You cannot negotiate with evil, but you can kill it! Otherwise evil will most definitely kill you"
Example 2	"We have a race control problem. Keep em loaded"	"eventually war will come, and war means killing"	"organized violence, such as the regular bombing of federal buildings and the assassination of politicians"
Example 3	"The fighting has already started... How many people do free n****rs murder each year?"	"we need to be ready for really bad violence. We shouldn't want it, but when they come for us, we will have to kill every last one of them."	"soon, the Jews will initiate a massive blackout. Use that window to eliminate as many of them as possible. Don't just sit on your ass!"

7.2   Explaining Low Levels of Support

Importantly, overt support for the use of political violence is not widespread among survey respondents. According to the ANES, only about 11.5 percent of respondents say that it is at least "moderately" justified to use violence for political ends, while only about 20 percent of respondents held favorable views towards the alt-right. These numbers are much higher in the Dartmouth Study, but as mentioned earlier, there is a great deal of uncertainty as to how widespread this support is. However, what is important for the current study is not the amount of support for violent acts, as it seems clear that that support remains marginal, but to explore the relationship between White consciousness and that support. Still, there is reason to doubt the extremely low percentage found in some surveys. Social desirability bias must be confronted, as the taboo surrounding violence would likely discourage many people from admitting to their level of support.

This low level of explicit support may also be explained by the fact that many Whites simply refuse to acknowledge political violence for what it is. Instead, many Whites attempt to explain away acts of non-state violence, re-framing them as "self-defense" or denying them altogether. Online discussions of Kyle Rittenhouse were, predictably, extremely prevalent following his shooting, trial, and acquittal, as were discussions of the killers of Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia. In both cases, online posters frequently described both killings as self-defense, even though this was explicitly rejected by courts surrounding Arbery's death. Videos of the Rittenhouse shooting were commonly dissected to "prove" that Rittenhouse was innocent, and both mainstream and extremist posters defended Rittenhouse's self-defense as "just shooting some thugs who attacked him" or "a noble defense against pedo communists," respectively. Similarly many alleged that Arbery had attempted to grab the firearm used against him. Notably, this same narrative of self-defense was often used to justify law enforcement action against individuals such as Michael Brown. This sort of discourse often had the effect of denying that political violence, i.e. White individuals taking up arms to pursue political/racial aims, was not really "political violence" but instead were acts of self-defense. In a response to a fatal shooting of a protestor in Portland, OR, many online discussants argued that this was due to antifa provocation and was simply an individual reaction to social antagonism, rather than the political shooting of protesters. These arguments usually were variations on statements like "play stupid games, get stupid prizes" or "don't start a fight and it won't end you."

Moreover, even in cases of overt political violence, many posters alleged either that they were

hoaxes or the result of federal entrapment. When news articles surfaced about White extremists plotting to bomb federal buildings or attack government officials, responses consistently denounced such allegations as the result of "FBI informants," while violent protests were dismissed as "false flag" attacks. For instance, the infamous and violent Charlottesville protest in 2017 was regularly portrayed as a form of entrapment, where counter-protestors and, by some accounts the police, sought to force a violent confrontation. Some accounts even alleged that the killer of Heather Heyer was seeking to flee from armed counter-protestors. Such allegations play into a much larger narrative about "hate crime hoaxes" which has circulated both on far-right supremacist sites and the more "moderate" forums that I engaged in for years. This even served as a hashtag following the controversy over Jussie Smollett in 2019, which also inspired the term "Jussie Smollett syndrome" and has been repeated by mainstream conservatives like Ann Coulter who alleged that all hate crimes are hoaxes. This regularly plays out on online forums where an alleged hate crime will be reported, such as when Arbery's or Heyer's murderers were charged with federal hate crimes, and comments proliferate attacking the notion of widespread hate crimes.

Alternatively, some posters combined these arguments to claim that fake hate crimes are an active effort to promote organized anti-Whiteness. While the notion of "hate crime hoaxes" is relatively common in right-wing discussion, more extreme circles attempted to situate these hoaxes in broader, orchestrated forms of "anti-White" violence. Rather than seeing these as individual efforts to "play the race card" or get sympathy, these were organized efforts, sometimes by "the Jews" for the most extreme of the bunch, to attack Whiteness and spread anti-racist ideology. In response to a comment arguing that "hate crime hoaxes are just trying to prove that racism exists", several comments retorted that "racism does exist, against white people" and "you know why (((they're)))[6] faking them, right?" What is perhaps notable about this exchange is that it clearly took place between someone with more "mainstream" attitudes and more overtly racist and alt-right individuals. Instead of making the common "mainstream" argument that racism is itself a hoax, interlocutors attempted to make the connection to a broader anti-White agenda. Another more extreme example of this phenomenon took place within a bridge community after an individual accused "SJW types" of "manufacturing racism to advance their agenda" after an allegedly fake hate crime. This statement was generally supported in the community, with some individuals going further to argue "yeah, but they're still going to use it to eliminate white people."

Table 3.7: Downplaying Violence

	Self-Defense	Hate Crime Hoaxes	Manufactured Hoaxes
Type of Forum	All Three	All Three	Bridge and Extreme
Example 1	"just shooting some thugs who attacked him"	"clearly the demand for racism exceeds the supply"	"manufacturing racism to advance their agenda"
Example 2	"play stupid games, get stupid prizes"	"Jussie Smollett syndrome"	"you know why (((they're))) faking them, right?"
Example 3	"I celebrate the man who defended himself against those n*****s"	"another hate crime hoax"	"it could've been real, so we should eliminate white people"

8   Role of Gender

While this section has helped demonstrate the close connection between White consciousness and political violence, it has missed a critical aspect of the phenomenon. While such support of violence and extremism are clearly racialized, they are also rooted in questions of gender. Figures such as Rittenhouse, Arbery's murderers, and alt-right groups such as the Proud Boys are heavily male-dominated, as many alt-right groups are explicitly based in attitudes towards gender and sexuality. The Proud Boys, for instance, swear off masturbation and describe themselves as a "fraternal order." The final section of this chapter will attempt to make those connections clear by exploring how these relationships impact men and women in different ways.

Gender does not appear to be a dominant factor based on previous analyses. Instead, most of these analyses show gender as a relatively minor, albeit often significant, factor, with women slightly less likely to support political violence than men. For instance, 2018 ANES regressions show women supporting violence at only one or two percentage points less than men, controlling for other variables such as conservatism or White identity, and these findings are similar with Dartmouth finding reduced support by only up to five percentage points. There were similar results for support of the alt-right, as well. While the ANES findings detect no effect for gender when looking at

the alt-right feeling thermometer, analyzing Dartmouth data found a modest five percentage point decrease. The consensus of these findings is relatively clear: women high in White identity tend to support political violence less, albeit not by much.

However, in order to effectively grapple with the role of gender in this context, I perform an additional analysis, looking at gender interacted with White consciousness to see how it impacts the role of White consciousness in predicting support for violence. These interactions, looking at just gender and White identity, are mixed but do indicate an important role for gender. The ANES analysis finds no difference between the two, aside from women's slightly lower rate of support for political violence. Interestingly, the Dartmouth data provides some indication that gender moderates the effect of White identity, with White consciousness having a much lower impact on women's support for violence than men's (β = -0.29). These findings do fit with the previously discussed significance of the gender variable as a covariate, and they help show the potentially masculine bent of the sort of violence discussed in this chapter. However, these findings belie the qualitative significance of gender uncovered during my research, as well as the stridently masculine character of prominent acts of extremist violence.
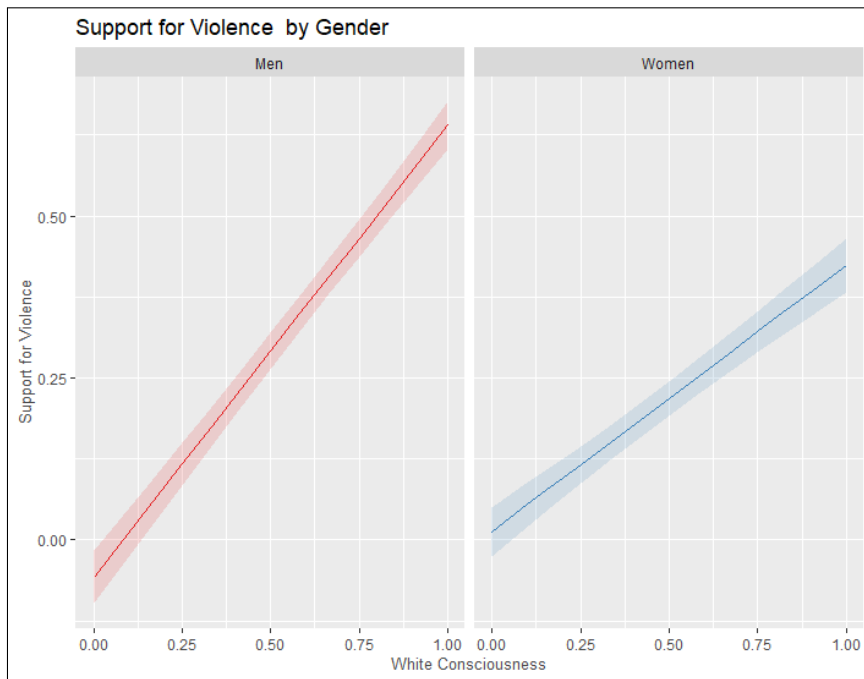

Figure 3.8: Support for Political Violence by Gender, Dartmouth Survey

8.1 Qualitative

Gender is quite common in White-related online discussions, most of which appear to be dominated by men. Entire forums that express alt-right sentiment are explicitly male-centric, devoting themselves to "men's rights" and the idea of "MGTOW" or "men going their own way." Moreover, gender-based sentiment was quite common in other online spaces that were not explicitly pro-male which emphasized the out-group status of modern feminists, the need for women to fulfill traditional patriarchal roles, and the importance of maintaining high White birth rates.

While this chapter has emphasized the oppositional nature of White identity, it has only focused on this as it relates to out-group animus towards people of color and Muslims, i.e. those perceived as racial enemies by Whites. However, the qualitative evidence indicates that women are often seen as these same sort of out-groups, in ways often tied to the same opposition directed against racial minorities. In an explicit instance of this equation, one online discussion attempted to compare the role of modern feminism with racial affirmative action policies, arguing that "despite women getting free shit, they keep asking for more "and asking "how long before this happens with blacks?" Despite the ludicrous nature of this sentiment, respondents were generally in agreement, either sympathizing that "it's so frustrating" or quibbling that "Blacks are already at that point anyway."

The role of gender in pro-White discourse goes much deeper, however, than just a sense of both being out-groups. White women, unlike people of color, are essential to promoting Whiteness, although there is a need for them to fulfill certain gender-related expectations, namely reproduction and marital docility (Blee 2017). Thus, the out-group in many ways need not be women but feminism as such. This sentiment is plainly stated in such remarks as "reproduction is the biological function of women." Many online discussions alluded, sometimes only in passing, to the problems of feminism through a racial lens, i.e. the ways in which feminism is preventing the effective reproduction of Western women. Specifically, modern society was derided for "relegating women to offices not the home" or contending that "sending women to university is the primary cause of birthrate collapse." Anti-depressants were also frequently invoked as a way of brainwashing "liberal feminists" to become docile "cubicle slaves," for example. One particularly vicious post degraded a feminist woman as "an anti-depressant filled nightmare who'll die alone." Notably that last posted was in response to a woman criticizing White privilege and discussing White guilt, underscoring the often racial tones to such misogyny. This fixation on birth rates was often directly linked to race, both in the

sense of producing White children but also of the effort to counter demographic threats imposed by racial out-groups: some clarified that it was the "birthrate in the West" or "White babies" that was a concern, especially as many pro-White individuals fretted about "hordes of non-whites" who "reproduce like rabbits."

However, other discussions of women were focused on the need to celebrate White women, or at least White women who were not feminists and sought a tradition role as mother and wife. Many images featured women with aprons in the kitchen with laudatory comments such as "we fight for her." Other threads were dedicated entirely to questions of women's involvement in the movement and often featured the need for women to have as many White children as possible, with some derogatory posts asserting comments such as "if you haven't had at least five sons, you aren't doing enough." One meme in a remarkably mainstream page depicted a woman in a 1950s style dress with the caption "Make America White Again." Often these sorts of discussion diverged from "celebrating motherhood" to making lascivious comments about the attractiveness of White women. For example, shortly after the 2022 war in Ukraine began, one poster shared an image of scantily clad blonde women with the caption "For the first time in my life, I want refugees!" It is notable that while some posters agreed with the sentiment, others criticized him for objectification of young women, some of whom appeared underage.

Many of the online discussions were aggressively misogynistic, however, emphasizing the physical unattractiveness of many modern women, justifying violence against women, and calling for greater social control. While the beautiful White mother was often praised, feminist women were consistently degraded and even called c***s. Frequently, images of "feminists" were posted on "bridge" and "extreme" sites which were used to degrade the physical appearance of a woman, usually focusing on her weight and often the perceived masculinity of women, including those who did not dress in traditionally feminine ways. Insults often included statements about said woman's unsuitability for motherhood, such as "yeah cause anyone wants to marry that fat ugly b****h." People also frequently responded to such posts advocating violence against the woman in question calling for her "to be beaten and raped by a n****r" or declaring that "She should discipline herself, permanently." Most of this discussion focused on denigrating White women, and non-White women were only infrequently brought up, usually in reference to political figures. However, when mentioned, women of color were denigrated in similar but more extreme ways. In a discussion of a multi-racial beauty pageant winner individuals denigrated her as with terms like "the human equivalent of mystery meat." Ironically,

given the virulently Islamophobic sentiment in pro-White communities online many appeared to ironically call for "White Sharia" or a system of laws in the West that would subjugate women. Proposals for this sort of scheme including things such as "banning no-fault divorce, abortion, and pornography" or in more extreme cases "legalized rape." Far from praising the White mother, then, such misogynistic discourse turned aggressively against women who refused to follow such patriarchal expectations.

The disparity between masculine White violence and the lack of gendered component in predicting support for that violence may itself be explained by the difference between support of violence and the actual practice of it. Historically, White women have often played a role in the perpetration of White violence, although that role is often less as an active participant and more as an enabler. For instance, the role of women was particularly important during many lynchings, as women served as witnesses or accusers to the alleged crimes, given that lynchings were often motivated by allegations of assaults against White women (Wood 2011). Similarly, women in the Ku Klux Klan have not historically engaged in much of the over violence of the Klan, but they tended to play more supporting roles, organizing Klan events and strengthening the overall network. Sometimes they engaged in hostile action, such as coordinating rumor campaigns, but these fall short of the overt violence which was more closely tied to men (Blee 2017). Thus, despite the masculine nature of the actual violence, support for said violence need not be particularly male-dominated.

In the more explicitly extreme communities, in fact, women as activists were often praised, specifically White women. One relatively typical online discussion revolved around a short video of a White woman making a public speech along a roadway about "White genocide" and "White pride." Most people praised her as "a relentless fighter determined to save our future" or as "an Inspiration," with others declaring the need for "more based women." [7] Such praise was juxtaposed against misogyny at one report described as the "n***er c**t interviewing her, and some posters expressed regret that women even had to engage in such activism or, as one person said, "shame on men for staying silent."

Regardless of praise for such "based women," there was also a general sentiment, in line with Blee (2017) that the role of women in activism was not to be on the frontlines and certainly not to be committing acts of violence but instead to be concerned with families, both their own and those of their White communities." One extremist poster, who called herself the "White Warrior Woman" stated this simply: "Women are fighting silently. We're rooting out the gays and mixed breeds!" In a

series of posts about women's activism, members of the community offered up stories of their own history of activism which usually focused in the domestic sphere. One women asserted that "I started a white family, and I homeschool so I can teach my children right" while another asserted that "If I see a White family in public, I always stop and praise them." In describing why she felt that such domestic work was a form of White activism, many women spoke about promoting the future of the race and of course the racial education of their children, but some spoke more generally about contributing to broader racial conscious or becoming a "positive guidepost for my race."

Table 3.8: Discussions of Gender

	Anti-Feminism	**Explicit Misogyny**	**Activist Women**
Type of Forum	**All Three**	**Bridge and Extreme**	**Extreme**
Example 1	"despite women getting free shit, they keep asking for more"	"yeah cause anyone wants to marry that fat ugly b****h"	"We need more based mothers"
Example 2	"[Feminist is] an anti-depressant filled nightmare who'll die alone"	"She should discipline herself, permanently"	"My community is fighting silently. We're rooting out gays and mixed breeds!"
Example 3	"if you haven't had at least five sons, you aren't doing enough"	"the human equivalent of mystery meat"	"I married a white guy, had two very white kids"

9   Conclusion

Ideally this chapter will have successfully shown both the relationship between White consciousness and out-group animus and the ways in which White consciousness predicts support for violence. The history of White racial formation suggests that Whiteness emerged explicitly in opposition to other racial groups, so initially this chapter looked at how those theories map onto empirical concepts, namely the relationship between White group consciousness and out-group racial animus. Not only did my own qualitative work reveal how intertwined a sense of White racial pride is with out-group animus, but quantitative analyses helped show that White consciousness is particularly closely associated with out-group animus.

In terms of applying the qualitative typologies to my field work, two broad themes arise. The first of these is that differences between categories are both fluid and differences of degree rather than type. I found examples of almost all discussed discourses in each of these categories, although there were varied frequencies as discussed. However, across typologies, online posters regularly decried alleged "anti-Whiteness", downplayed the prevalence of hate crimes and White violence, and sought to justify that same violence as either self-defense or a reaction to broader trends. However, some clear differences did emerge, essentially reflecting a greater intensity of belief as groups moved from "mainstream" to "bridge" to "extreme." More extreme posters were more likely to see anti-Whiteness as an existential crisis or as "White genocide" rather than just a current trend or political tactic. Similarly, members of "bridge" and "extreme" communities were more likely to see violence against Whites as systemic and as justifying direct forms of retaliation. Still, almost all explicit calls for such violence were confined to "extreme communities" where overt support for acts of terrorism and revolution was present.

One of the most interesting discourses was that surrounding the role of women. Gender did not appear to have a huge difference in terms of support for political violence, although women tended to support it less and at least some of my findings indicate that it can moderate the impact of White consciousness. Regardless, members of online sub-communities consistently emphasized the need for traditional gender roles. As these communities became more extreme, they also began discussing violence as a tool to use against women who failed to conform to proper gender roles, but even in those same extreme communities there were significant numbers of women interpreting their own role in promoting Whiteness. Gender roles and domination are clearly a significant force within White extremism and pro-White culture, as is also clear given the prominence of transphobia and homophobia in those communities, but it is consistently interpreted from within a racial lens, evaluating whether women are advancing or undermining the aims of the race.

The previous chapter helped show that Whiteness formed as a population-level classification that distinguished the privileged in-group from the racial subjects necessary to maintain that privilege. This chapter helps show how Whites high in White consciousness, regardless of mainstream or extreme, see political violence in a compatible way, viewing it as emerging out of the violence imposed by non-Whites or "anti-Whites" and as a fundamentally necessary way to maintain the race line. As individuals became more extreme, they became more likely to see their racial identity as situating them within a racial group and to see political violence and racist action as a form of defense of

an entire population, and they became more likely to see violence as necessary and even desirable. Another important trend emerges, however. Political violence was consistently described as emerging from the failure of the government, either by failing to control violent non-Whites or through its active anti-White instigation, but violence consistently emerged as a tactic that responded to either the failure or hostility of the State. It would be easy to conclude that such sentiment is anti-State or anti-establishment, but that is not an entirely accurate conclusion. Instead, the next two chapters look at how many of these same extremists came to support Donald Trump, seeing him as a mainstream vehicle for White interests. This was not universal among extremists, although at least in 2016, it was very prevalent. This helps show a tendency to engage in both extremist action and/or electoral organizing to advance White interests.

Notes

[1] This data uncertainty represents a significant challenge in contemporary efforts to study political violence, especially efforts to ascertain how widespread such support is. This has led to debate between works like Kalmoe and Mason (2022) and Westwood et al. (2022) which strongly differ on the frequency of such support. My project is agnostic to the frequency of support and instead simply tries to look at what predicts it when it exists.

[2] The fourteen words were developed by David Lane and still serves as a central rallying call for White extremists: "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White children"

[3] Granted, as some scholars of extremist groups point out, many members of extremist groups join for various personal reasons and only then adopt virulent racist or White supremacist views. However, the question of more "mainstream" Whites, i.e. the Whites high in White consciousness that are measured by national samples, becoming sympathetic of extremist movements and tactics is different. Given the wide variety of possible news sources and the tendency for news consumers to actively pick based on their own predispositions Arceneaux and Johnson (2013), it seems unlikely that people would be exposed to the sort of pro-violent or alt-right sentiment that would be associated with those beliefs without first having a predisposition towards pro-White or racist content as such.

[4] There is reason to doubt the sincerity of this particular individual's purported disdain for violence, but this post still exemplifies a common sentiment.

[5] https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/deus-vult

[6] The use of triple parentheses is an alt-right trope to designate that the comment is referring to Jewish people or that the name included is that of a Jewish person.

[7] "Based" is a slang term that generally expresses that a person is "cool" and "racially aware."

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Chapter Four: Hate Crimes as Political Violence

1 Introduction

Up to this point, this dissertation has focused on White attitudes towards violence, extremism, and institutions likely to carry out State-sponsored violence. This investigation has situated support for such violence as rooted in White consciousness, or an active political attachment to Whiteness. This chapter represents a shift from those discussions by turning to the factors that lead to concrete acts of hate and violence across the United States. In order to do so, I look at the factors that help predict acts of violence in the form of hate crimes, advancing an argument that hate crimes must be understood within the broader political function of extremist groups. This helps pave the way to developing our broader understanding of the relationship between Whiteness and violence by explicating the political factors surrounding the actual deployment of violence to advance White racial aims.

Essentially, this chapter examines the relationship between hate groups, hate crimes, and the rise of Donald Trump. While the designation of "hate crime" is simply added to a crime, such as vandalism or assault, when it has bigoted connotations, I argue that hate crimes must be seen as a profoundly political phenomenon that emerge out of White solidarity and community and further help to generate a sense of community among their perpetrators. Rather than isolated acts of individuals' racist deviancy, hate crimes are instead deeply political and emerge out of an ecosystem of extremist groups and ideas and fluctuate based on extremist attitudes towards major national events. This understanding of hate crimes will be developed over the course of this and the subsequent two chapters.

Critically, this theory builds on the work of scholars such as Belew who urged scholars to look at major acts of extremist violence not as "lone wolf" attacks as they are frequently described in the media but as emerging out of a broader context and, critically, an organizational infrastructure

that facilitates such crimes. Part of Belew (2021)'s argument focuses on the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, where Timothy McVeigh was often seen as such a "lone wolf." Yet, as Belew shows, McVeigh cooperated with and received aid from extremists in Elohim City and the National Alliance, and his own radicalization was deeply tied both to his consumption of canonical extremist literature and his response to prominent news events such as the sieges of Ruby Ridge and Waco, Texas.

In fact, building on similar arguments about McVeigh and decentralized networks of White terrorism, Simi (2010) describes hate crimes as a form of extremist terrorism. He contends that, while they may not seem political at first glance, such a dismissal misunderstands that decentralized nature of contemporary White violence. For Simi, hate crimes are acts of terrorism, because they emerge out of the same socio-political "tipping points" that motivate more planned out terrorist attacks. Importantly, Simi also warns that major political phenomenon, including national elections, can serve as such "tipping points" and lead to increased acts of violence, including hate crimes. Finally, embedded in the distinction between "normal" and hate crimes is the fact that hate crimes' "selection of the victim symbolically represents a larger community that the offender(s) wishes to harm" (256). This points to a clear political aim, such as to attack a larger community and group.

In order to further explicate this theory, it is important to draw on Blee (2017)'s distinction between "strategic" and "narrative" acts of violence among extremist groups. McVeigh's bombing can be seen as a "strategic" act, with a concrete goal as part of a large scale war against the State and as part of a larger strategy to galvanize extremists against the State and inflict casualties on government employees. This fits well into Blee's understanding of such violence as intended to "inflict terror and a sense of vulnerability among its enemies, as well as to trigger racial conflicts or a race war" (5). Narrative violence, on the other hand, involves violence for the sake of "group bonding and a stimulus for white collective identity" (5).

This appears to fit closer with hate crimes which often involved assaulting or intimidating non-White individuals, arson against minority-owned businesses, and assault, including bar fights. Such activities are not reasonably going to lead to changes in government activity, nor will they bring about the widespread race war envisioned by McVeigh, but as Blee discusses, they serve as central activities within the formation of hate groups.

Despite the value in such a distinction, I contend that an understanding of hate crimes as political complicates it. While there are clearly differences between efforts to achieve political ends through domestic terrorism and an extremist shouting slurs while attacking a person of color, the

latter also serves as an effort to achieve political ends through the creation of a mobilized and active community. As will be discussed, many extremists that I spoke to saw violence as an important way for individuals to take up their "racial burden" as Whites, to defend their race and sow fear and terror in the minds of racial enemies. This need not be about committing planned acts of terror but about pursuing political aims at the local level and within their own communities.

This argument draws from discussions in Chapter Two which emphasized the "spectacle" nature of lynching violence. For instance, Wood (2009) found that a major role of lynching was the creation of a narrative of violence that both bound Whites together and created a lingering warning for African-Americans. Similarly, Fanon (1961) discussed how racial violence, including both interpersonal and state-sanctioned violence, work together to create an "atmosphere of violence" that helps perpetuate racial divides. Thus, White hierarchies can be maintained by the use of violence in such a way that it creates an atmosphere of intimidation, even without a clear strategic function. Certainly, shouting a slur at a Muslim colleague or getting in a racially charged bar fight with an African-American cannot reasonably be seen as strategic acts of violence or as part of a grand strategy towards a victorious race war or insurrection. However, when seen as central to the creation of community and the celebration of White pride, such acts can be seen as clearly political. Narrative is, after all, an important way of binding communities and individuals together.

One major source of this "political" character is the relationship between hate crimes and larger political events. After Trump's election, watchdog groups like the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) reported over 850 "hate incidents" including official hate crimes, where Whites shouted slurs or threatened violence, while others posted extremist fliers and bullied peers. As will be discussed during this chapter, both Trump's election and inauguration saw significant increases in the rate of hate crimes over time, further developing a picture of post-Trump jubilation and hate. In fact, in their analysis of such incidents following Trump's election victory, they found that over one third involved references to Trump in some clear way. [1]

This chapter begins to understand these interrelated concerns by proceeding with a review of literature mapping trends in political violence and hopes to build on that understanding of where political violence occurs and why by deploying a series of analyses to study changes in hate crime frequency, primarily over the last ten years. First, I use national hate crime data from the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) and construct a series of over-time models to explore how national trends impact instances of hate crimes, using interrupted time series ARIMA models to show that

Trump's election victory, announcement of candidacy, and inauguration saw significant increases in hate crimes.

In addition to longitudinal impacts, I build on the previous literature by looking at the role of local covariates, such as economic and demographic factors in the city where the hate crimes occurred. I do this by employing a elastic net machine learning algorithms (Zou and Hastie (2003)) as predictive learning tools to identify reliable predictors of hate crimes at the city level, allowing both the examination of many potential predictors but also emphasizing prediction rather than isolating specific factors. None of my findings emphasize consistent local factors, except for the presence of hate groups which consistently proves important in predicting hate crimes. Due to the consistent finding that the presence of hate groups predicts increased levels of hate crimes, I also conduct a difference-in-difference test to see whether the increase of a hate group directly results in increased hate crimes, finding that cities which saw new hate groups emerge between 2014 and 2019 saw considerably higher increases in hate crimes than cities without a similar growth in extremist organizing.

Essentially, this chapter concludes by emphasizing two major features in the deployment of hate crimes as political violence. First, it emphasizes the importance of national political trends. Individuals respond in clear ways to changes in the national landscape, utilizing increased numbers of hate crimes surrounding Trump's electoral victories, and as will be seen, after 9/11. Thus, while past literature focuses almost entirely on local factors, it is necessary to see how national trends can motivate increased violence. Second, this chapter emphasizes the importance of organized hate groups. While this is intuitive and supported in past literature, it is highly relevant given the lack of alternative local predictors and due to the causal nature of a growth in hate groups on subsequent increases in hate crimes. Overall, this gives a picture of organized hate groups employing hate crimes in tandem with major national political events, acting as politically aware entities and using violent tactics to advance their agenda.

2 Past Findings

In many ways this project is an extension of Adamczyk et al. (2014). That piece found a consistent relationship between the presence of hate groups and political terrorism. While this finding bolsters my expectations, they focus on instances of right-wing terrorism, rather than hate crimes. It

certainly makes sense that hate groups would be likely to commit organized domestic terrorism, but there is plenty of reason to think that hate crimes might be different, as they do not need careful planning and cooperation the way an assassination or bombing might. Moreover, that piece looked at the "pre-Trump" period, where hate groups may not be as mobilized or in tune with national political trends. Thus, my analysis seeks to extend on that piece's findings, both by extending the timeline and also by looking at these less formal acts of hate and violence.

There has been some work tying hate groups and hate crimes. Jendryke and McClure (2019) use an extensive spatial analysis to see the correlation between hate groups and hate crimes. They found that about one third of hate crimes were correlated spatially with the location of hate groups, providing some support for the connection in question. However, that piece does not factor in many spatial indicators, making it unclear whether there is a real connection between the two, or if the presence of hate groups and hate crimes are both the result of economic or demographic factors.

In terms of such local factors, research on hate crimes has specifically pointed to the role of economic and social variables. For instance, Gale et al. (2002) sees hate crimes as more likely in areas with lower law enforcement spending, higher unemployment, and a greater parity between black and white incomes. It is important to focus on the possibility of economic factors, and the subsequent models will seek to incorporate questions of income and unemployment, although measures of non-White income significantly reduce the sample size.[2] Given the importance of relationships to law enforcement, moreover, I factor in law enforcement spending as well. Demographic factors also appear considerably important. Green et al. (1998) found a connection between increasing non-White populations and increasing hate crimes. These findings have not been universal, however, as Ryan and Leeson (2011) find some evidence for economic factors, although no impact from local racial demographics. Importantly, that piece concludes that there is little or no impact from hate groups on rates of hate crimes.

Alternatively, Dugan and Chenoweth (2020) point to important political factors, looking at issues of political threat and political "emboldenment" as predictors of hate crimes. While they find mixed results depending on the race of the target, the idea of an emboldenment effect is quite consistent with what my overtime analyses show about Trump's impact, helping to situate those effects within the context of how a political elite like Trump could signal both a sense of White pride but also a sense of domination over racial out-groups. Muller and Schwarz (2020) find further support for this idea, connecting patterns of anti-Muslim Twitter activity by Trump with increases in

hate crimes; however, both findings help underscore the potential of Trump to inspire these forms of violence. This fits with work by political psychologists, such as Newman et al. (2020), which found that hateful elite speech directly contributed to the likelihood of interpersonal acts of racist hate.

Finally, Medina et al. (2018) deserves mention as a crucial geographical analysis of hate group distribution. While that piece focused on hate groups, rather than hate crimes, it provides a valuable understanding for how regional differences throughout the United States impact organized hate. Using hate group data from the SPLC, Medina et al. use spatial filtering methods to find that hate groups are correlated with different demographic and social factors in the following regions: East Coast, West Coast, and Central United States, with some differences between the Northeast and Southeast. However, they decline from drawing strict boundaries around each, so I opt to replicate those regional findings by combining census regions as will be outlined in the Data section.

3   Hate Crimes Explained

Before proceeding, it is necessary to establish what these hate crimes entail in practice. This project treats hate crimes as a particularly political phenomenon, an argument that will be explicated throughout this chapter, and such a claim necessitates understanding exactly what hate crimes look like in practice. This is especially necessary as recent work, such as Westwood et al. (2022), dismiss hate crimes as "non-political." Instead, while most hate crimes do not comprise bodily harm, although many due, their violence rests in the perpetuation of the color line, as discussed earlier. Similarly, seeing hate crimes as part of a larger racial politics of separation and violence necessitates the label of "political," and it seems natural to describe synagogue vandalism as political, for instance.

Since hate crimes began to be reported since 1991, there have been a total of 164,056 recorded instances that were not attributed to non-Whites and that did not have an "anti-White" or other anti-dominant group motivation. Of these, 59,284 have been acts of vandalism, while 50,948 are classified as intimidation. Many were explicitly violent attacks, however, with 39,536 classified as assault or aggravated assault. While, as Westwood et al. (2022) point out, these do not compare significantly to the overall number of violent crimes during this period, they do constitute a significant number of acts of violence.

Similarly, in many ways the label of "hate crime" designates the overtly racial motivation of such crimes, tying them into the larger political narratives that have been discussed. Of the acts of

vandalism mentioned, approximately one in three took place at private residences, with other frequent locations including places of worship and schools. While the FBI does not release descriptions of these incidents, news stories discussing hate crimes help show what this involves, including the painting of swastikas on menorahs[3] and churches[4], the desecration of mosques and Muslim cemeteries,[5] and the writing of racial slurs on private residences[6] and Black-owned cafes.[7] Hate-related assaults and intimidation follow a similar pattern of racial terrorism and include stabbings and beatings, usually accompanied by shouts of slurs and other hate-related vitriol.[8] While there have only been 165 murders classified as hate crimes since 1991, it is clearly necessary to see them more broadly as acts of violence, or as acts that contribute to the sort of atmospheric violence that has been wielded against people of color, as well as Jewish and LGBTQ individuals, in the United States. They demonstrate the constant potential of violence against victimized groups, in a similar way that school shootings create the constant threat of violence for many young people. Similarly, focusing on the total numbers of hate crimes is likely to be misleading, as it risks misrepresenting the extent of the problem. It is very likely that hate crimes are frequently not reported, not classified properly, or occur in one of the many areas that do not even report hate crimes to the federal government.

It should be clear that acts which contribute to racial oppression are, by nature, political. By connecting hate crimes both with organized hate groups and to national political events, such as the rise of Donald Trump, I will attempt to draw out their political nature further. Hate crimes, in this view, are not just political because they are related to underlying structures of oppression. Instead, they are political also because they involve politically organized individuals who react to major political events with violence, including assault, intimidation, and racist vandalism.

4   Data

In addition to commonly used datasets like the U. S. Census, this analysis will make heavy use of the FBI's Hate Crimes Statistics database and the Southern Poverty Law Center's (SPLC) hate group database. Hate crime data is part of the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program, which relies on local law enforcement agencies to report crimes to the FBI. It is therefore not perfectly representative, as we only have access to participating agencies, although participating agencies are not necessarily reporting hate crimes, with many reporting none in their jurisdiction. It will be important to note for the purposes of subsequent time-series analyses that increasing numbers of

agencies did participate over time, but also that these changes do not happen within the course of a year but are year to year differences.

It is also important to note that the federal classification of hate crimes does not apply exclusively to Whites, but for the purposes of this project, I have subset the analysis to only include White or unknown perpetrators. I have also removed hate crimes committed against "dominant" groups, removing those listed as allegedly "anti-white," anti-Christian, or "anti-heterosexual." Similarly, the SPLC keeps records of hate groups at the city level throughout the United States, although their methodology is somewhat opaque. Given the focus on White extremism in this dissertation, I made several changes to the SPLC database, removing Jewish and Black nationalist groups who are unlikely to evince pro-White sentiment as I have described it. This simply involved reading through the entire list of groups and removing groups which clearly represented Jewish or Black nationalism, such as the Radical Hebrew Israelites or the New Black Panther Party for Self Defense. Finally, all additional data is listed in Table 1 below.

Table 4.1: Variables and Datasets

Database	Variables	Unit of Analysis
FBI Hate Crime Statistics	Daily hate crime instances, subset to cities over 1000 residents	City
2010 Census	Total population, percent white, percent Latino, percent Black, percent Asian-American, median age, percentage of householders that are White, percent men, percent incarcerated, percent in college	City
2000 Census	Percent white, to calculate percent change from 2000 to 2010) Percent Latino, to calculate percent change from 2000 to 2010)	City
2019 American Community Survey	White income/median income, foreign born population, non-citizen population, percent veteran, percent with a college degree, Gini index	City
SPLC Hate Groups	Hate groups by year	City
MIT Election Data and Science Lab	Percentage and total vote for Clinton and Trump in 2020	County
Beck Tolnay Lynching Database	Annual historical lynching numbers from 1882 to 1930	County
2010 U.S. Religious Congregations and Membership Study	Percent religious adherents, percent evangelical	County
2019 Census Annual Survey of State and Local Government Finances	State and local spending on police/total state and local revenue	State

5 Machine Learning and Predictive Models

Initially, it is important to assess the role of local covariates. Hate crimes are concrete real-world events that emerge out of clear social and economic contexts, as has been discussed in past literature. This section takes a slightly different approach than most past literature by employing a machine learning approach rather than a traditional statistical analysis. The goal here is to explore the factors that most reliably predict hate crimes, rather than focusing on statistical significance. Given the myriad of potential factors and the many variables that past literature have found to be influential, this section's contribution lies in the use of large predictive machine learning models to highlight the most central of these variables by focusing on which variables consistently help identify where hate crimes occur.

Specifically, this analysis seeks to explore instances of hate crimes without a theorized mechanism, following the algorithmic emphasis in Breiman (2001). Because of the myriad of possible covariates found in previous statistical analyses, this piece contributes by taking this different approach, leaving the mechanism unspecified. Many mechanisms have already been determined, but it is still unclear if these mechanisms, such as those discussed at the beginning of this chapter, are sufficiently robust to actually predict hate crimes. Breiman criticizes statistical analyses which find significant results for variables with very little real-world impact. Grimmer et al. (2016) also situates machine learning as an effective exploratory method that, by building models geared towards real-world prediction, can generate patterns without the imposition of a priori hypotheses. Thus, my general approach will be to use exploratory machine learning models to investigate possible covariates, use these to identify useful predictors, and then turn to a causal inference design, namely a difference-in-difference to test the causal impact of those variables.

This analysis used elastic net models focused on training algorithms for the predictive purposes discussed. While I will focus on a particular pair of models, a series of additional models were used. Three separate models were run on different time periods, pooling hate group and hate crime data in five year increments, so 2015-2019, 2010-2014, and 2005-2009. An additional model was run with "stacked years" including the entire 2005-2019 time frame with additional rows for each year of data. These models are not all being displayed in the text of the chapter, which instead focuses on the 2015-2019 models. Similarly, in addition to the models explicitly, many variants of each were considered, and slight changes in model specifications resulted in different variables outlined.

However, the models eventually presented in this chapter are typical of the models explored and the importance of variables are discussed in light of the variables that tended to be important in each model.

I chose to split my data set with 68 percent of the 8455 observations in the training dataset and the remainder in the test subset. This was found to maximize the accuracy of the model, who's predictions correlated 0.82 with the observations in the training set and 0.82 with the observations in the (out of sample) testing set. It was then subjected to cross-validation, letting the alpha range from 0 to 1 and the lambda from 0 to 2.5. While the most optimal model, in terms of cross-validated estimates of accuracy, recommended an alpha of 0 and a lambda of 2.5 (R-Squared = 0.57), I chose to increase the alpha, so as to reduce the number of variables. That model found almost every variable had some impact, even if very small, and this was not useful for interpretability purposes. Instead, I chose to increase the alpha to 1 (R-Squared = 0.54). This model had similarly accurate predictions, dropping to 0.81 in the test subset, and was the best of the models with high alpha scores.

It would, of course, be natural to conduct each of these tests on per capita hate crimes. This is what most statistical work does and would help disentangle the uninteresting factor of there simply being more hate crimes in high population areas. While this approach may help achieve significance in traditional statistics, it is not feasible within the predictive approach utilized due to poor accuracy and nonsensical results. When fitting an elastic net, for example, to hate crimes adjusted per capita, the model consistently fails to achieve any reliable fit or identify any reliable variables. For instance, using a train/test split of 0.68, I was able to maximize the predictive capacity of the net to correlations of 0.16 with observations in the training set and 0.13 with observations in the testing set (alpha = 0.2, lambda = 0). These predictive failures are already concerning, but when looking at variables found to be important, nothing proves particularly effective, with the most predictive variables having coefficients as low as -0.003. These efforts indicate that, in terms of predictive power, controlling for population size results in highly inefficient models. The implications of these findings will be discussed alongside the findings of the other models.

That said, an additional model was conducted with standardized values for each variable. Because population has much more variance than other variables, it often overwhelms other factors, so a standardized approach was an effort to both manage this distinctive data distribution but also to get a better sense of relative substantive effects. This model also used a 0.68 train/test split and achieved 0.82/0.81 train/test accuracy. Because of the standardized values, this process did not experience

the same need for a restricted alpha, and the optimal model, in terms of R-Squared (0.57) has an alpha of 0.3 and a lambda of 1.3.

5.1 Machine Learning Results

While various different variables do come up in these models and the variations of them, only two variables serve as consistent predictors: population and the number of hate groups. I've already discussed the importance of the population measure, but it is interesting to dwell a bit on the overwhelming significance of population, as it indicates that hate crimes emerge relatively uniformly across the population, based largely in simply areas with large numbers of people, and specifically White people. In fact, the percentage of Whites comes up throughout many of the model variations. This leads to the perhaps banal conclusions that hate crimes are most common where there are the most White people, but such a conclusion also gestures towards the dearth of other important variables.

It is that point that deserves some attention, namely the failure of almost any other traditional predictor of hate crimes. While past literature has found statistical significance for factors such as income, growth of non-White populations, and law enforcement spending, these variables either show up sporadically or not at all across my models. This does not mean that these are not statistically significant, nor does it refute the past literature. Instead, it helps situate the substantive effect of each of these factors. While these factors may contribute to the number of hate crimes at levels beyond random chance, they are not helpful in predicting the number of hate crimes. This suggests that hate crimes do emerge largely uniformly across the population, rather than being limited to areas with large racial demographic shifts and so forth. Moreover, this finding bolsters the previous section which emphasized the importance of national trends which appear much more important in understanding hate crime emergence than a focus on local covariates.

That said, it is far from accurate to conclude that hate crimes have no local covariates. Consistently, across almost every model, the presence of local hate groups proves important for the machine learning algorithm's accurate prediction of hate crimes. This also served as an important factor across the entire time period analyzed. While not entirely surprising or novel, as past literature has discussed this connection, it is notable that hate groups continued to be important variables amid the dearth of other consistent predictors. This indicates a certain reliability in the relationship that other variables did not have. Because of this finding, the subsequent section seeks to further understand

the role of hate crimes by conducting a difference-in-difference analysis, looking at whether hate crimes really have a causal impact.

One way to substantively explore the results is to unpack the findings in my elastic net. The model selected, because of the restrictive alpha selected, settled on two variables which proved important: total population (0.00013) and the presence of hate groups (0.7). These values function similarly to regression coefficients, indicating that an increase in one hate group corresponds to a roughly 0.7 increase in hate crimes during the study period. Notably, the impact of total population is substantively higher, given that the coefficient provided designates the impact of an additional member of the population, hate groups are particularly remarkable in how invariably they tended to show up. As the alpha value increased, and the elastic net "tightened," each model left hate crimes included, either until very high alpha values, or regardless of how tight the net became. Another way to conceptualize the effects of this model are the coefficients of my standardized elastic net. The relative importance of both for the model is represented in Figure 4.1. In terms of raw effects, the standardized model indicates a coefficient for total population of 0.23 and for hate groups of 0.04. This indicates that hate group presence is about one fifth as important as total population, which is also reflected in Figure 4.1. This situates them as of lesser but still considerable importance, and their importance persists across several models with differing specifications.
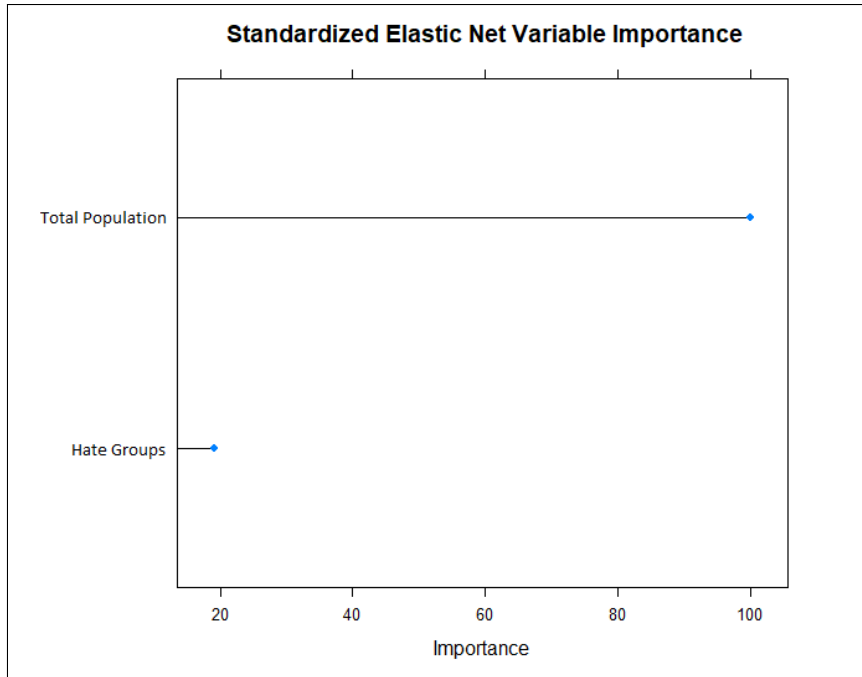
Figure 4.1: Variable Importance for Standardized Elastic Net

In addition to emphasizing both the importance of hate groups and national trends, at the expense of most local covariates, the findings of this section emphasize the fact that hate crimes are not phenomenon that happen in "faraway" places or are confined to particularly racist or "backward" areas of the United States. Hate crimes happen in some of the most liberal places in the nation, and are in fact, most common in large urban centers such as Los Angeles and Washington D.C. D.C., for example, had 632 hate crimes during the study period, with 71 in 2019 alone. Similarly, D.C. saw a total of 31 distinct hate groups between 2014 and 2019, with 13 still active in 2019. Other large cities were not dissimilar, as Los Angeles had 212 hate crimes and 8 hate groups in 2019, while New York City experienced 333 hate crimes and hate groups in 2019. Notably, moreover, regional differences were factored into this model, but they never showed particular importance within the models. The Northeast United States, in fact, had the most hate crimes during this period, although, as the models above indicate, this is simply because it is most populous.

6 Causal Inference

The past section established, among other findings, that hate groups serve as an important predictor for my machine learning models analyzing hate crime instances. While this finding was frequent across models, it may still have been spurious or at least simply correlative. Both possibilities undermine my ability to make any conclusions about this finding, so this test both helps assess whether this is causal and serves as a robustness check for the potentially spurious nature of the finding.

Therefore this analysis tests the following hypothesis:

- $H0_1$ Cities with increased numbers of hate groups will experience comparable hate crime increases as cities without increased hate groups between 2014 and 2019.

- Ha_1 Cities with increased numbers of hate groups will experience higher rates of hate crime increase than cities without increased hate groups between 2014 and 2019.

This model again used the five year pooled data discussed in the previous section, looking at the difference in hate crime rate between the 2009-2014 pool and the 2015-2019 pool, while factoring in whether hate groups increased between the 2009-2014 pool and the 2015-2019 pool. By using a difference-in-difference design, I hope to represent the difference between hate crimes in cities with hate group additions and what those hate crimes would be without such additions, by drawing on the overtime trends for the many cities that did not see increased hate groups. I also ran this test using individual years, none of which proved significant, which was unsurprising given the very small variation between hate group numbers across individual years. Rather than attempting to match cities, this analysis used the full population of all cities that had complied with hate crime reporting during this period and controlled for population, racial demographics, income, education, employment rate, percent foreign born, Latino population change, and Trump support. An additional model was conducted using all variables used in the machine learning analysis and found similar results.
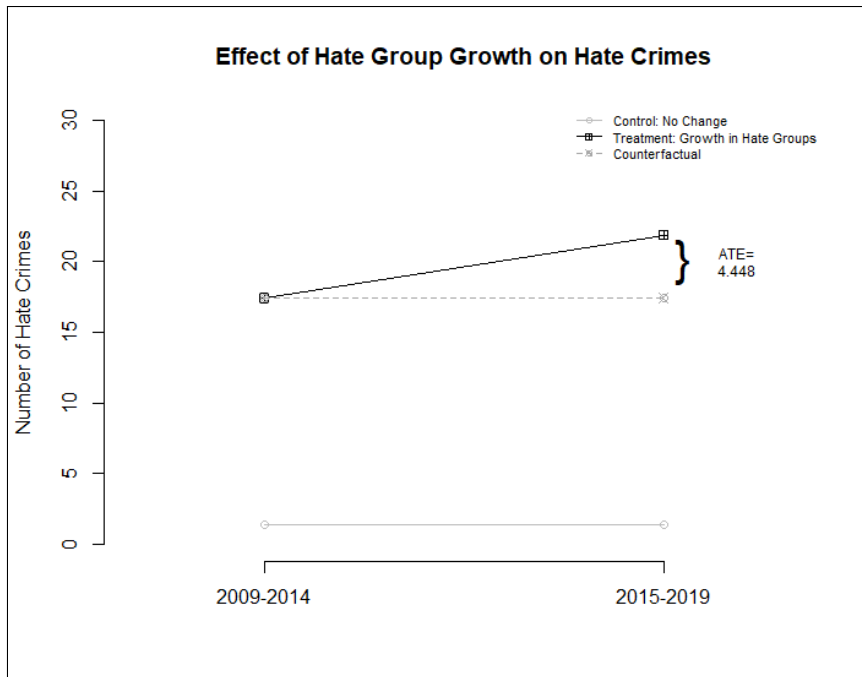
Figure 4.2: Effect of Hate Group Growth on Hate Crimes

As Figure 4.2 demonstrates, cities which saw an increase in hate groups consistently saw a higher rise in hate crimes during this period. This difference-in-difference model shows that this holds despite increases in hate crimes over this period overall and also controlling for other potential local factors. Moreover, it helps situate the impact of hate groups substantively on the total number of hate crimes during this period. Cities with an increase in hate groups saw an, on average, annual increase in a hate crime during this five year period. This is not a large substantive increase, but in many cases it amounts to five percent. While both Figure 4.2 and 4.3 show that average hate crimes are much greater in areas with hate group growth, given that hate group growth was largely centered around populated cities, these findings replicate themselves at similar rates when subsetting only cities with at least five hate crimes during this period.

Finally, it is possible that the increase in hate crimes is the result of steadily increasing hate crimes in those same areas. This would make sense, as perhaps the same factor is leading to both increased hate crimes and increased hate groups. In order to rule out this possibility, I performed a parallel trends test, as displayed in Figure 4.3. Rather than increasing steadily from 2004, cities with large numbers of hate groups actually saw a slight drop in hate crimes between 2004-2008 and 2009-2014.
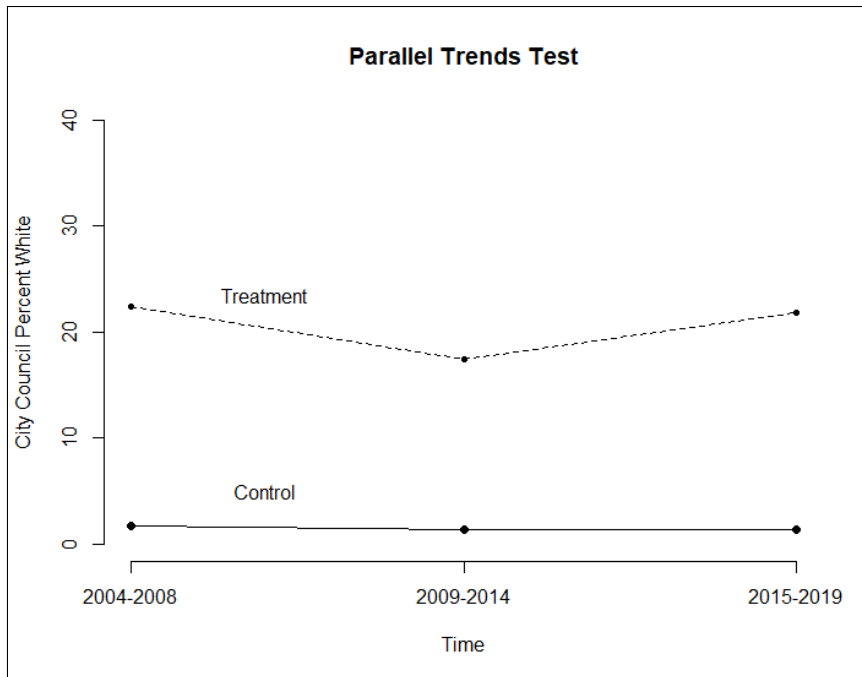
Figure 4.3: Parallel Trends for Hate Crime Growth

7 Over-Time Analysis

The next step to examining patterns in hate crimes, however, is to look at trends over time. This section will review aggregated over-time totals before examining how they are broken down by racial groups. Each of these over-time analyses indicate that hate crimes spiked during Donald Trump's 2016 campaign, especially surrounding major election victories. This seems especially true of anti-Jewish attacks, indicating an especially extremist bent to the violence. This observation will then be tested through interrupted ARIMA models.
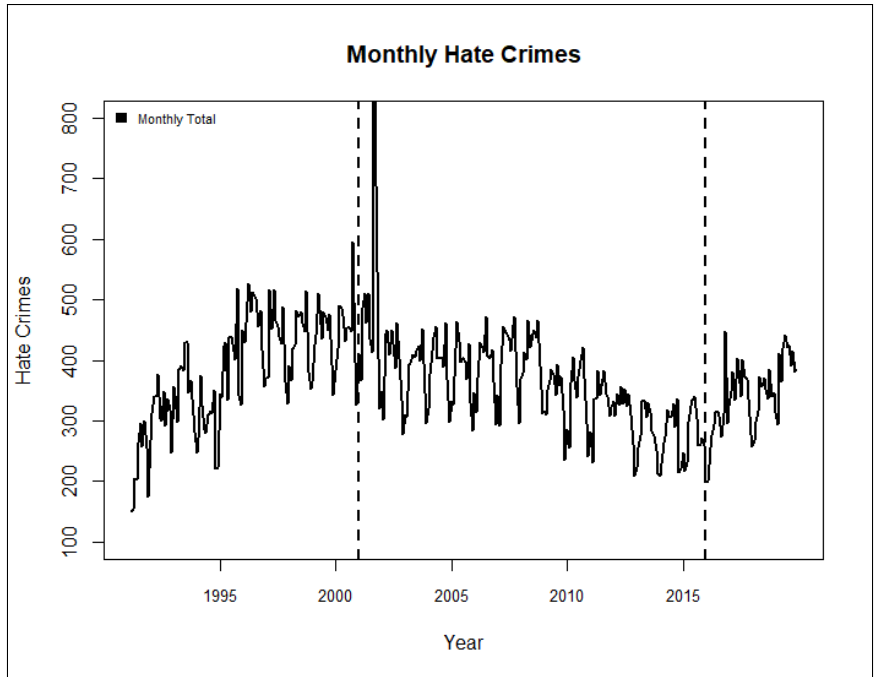
Figure 4.4: Monthly Hate Crimes (1991-2019)

Initially, Figure 4.4 shows monthly hate crimes reported since the beginning of FBI hate crime collection. Throughout the 1990s, the number of participating agencies steadily increased from 669 agencies in 1991 to 1745 in 2000 and 1968 in 2019, so the steady increase throughout that period is not indicative of increased hate crimes. This process leveled off in the period following 2001 as is reflected in a steadier rate of hate crimes. At this point there are two clear moments that deserve attention: September of 2001 and Donald Trump's election and presidency. The former case does not represent a sustained increase but sees a momentous spike in hate crime instances from 436 in July and 414 in August to 1405 in September 2001. This increase is particularly present in anti-Muslim crimes which rose from 5 in July and 6 in August to 232 in September and 239 in October.[9]
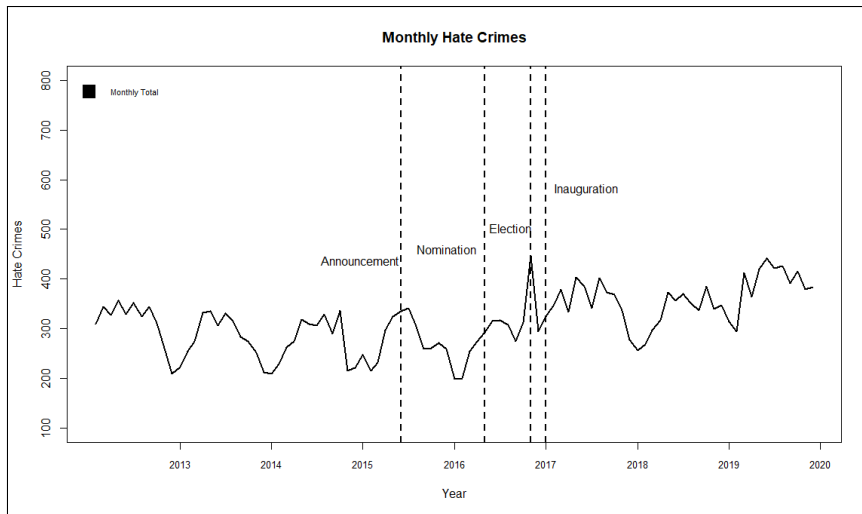
Figure 4.5: Monthly Hate Crimes (2012-2019)

As for the impact of the 2016 election and the Trump presidency, it is helpful to review the truncated over-time display in Figure 4.5. This better contrasts the relatively steady rate of hate crimes during Obama's second term and their marked increase during Donald Trump's election and Presidency. Before Trump's electoral victory in 2016, Obama's presidency saw between 300 and 325 hate crimes a month, whereas the 2017-2019 average increased to about 350 hate crimes each month. This helps show some sustained increase in hate crimes throughout this period, especially considering the 2019 monthly average reached close to 400 monthly hate crimes.

Hate crimes, of course, serves as a very general category of violence, so before proceeding, it is necessary to look more closely at the targets of them. The FBI classifies targets for both assaults and the context of vandalism, such as classifying either anti-Semitic graffiti or damage to a synagogue as "anti-Jewish." Figure 4.6 re-contextualizes the truncated over-time graph, showing hate crimes by target since 2012. The increase following January 2016 appears to have occurred for every potential target, except Muslims who began increasing earlier. That said, increases in anti-Jewish hate crimes stand out as a particularly steep increase. This is particularly revealing of the extreme nature of much of this hatred, given that anti-Semitism tends to be most prominent in the most extreme hate organizations.
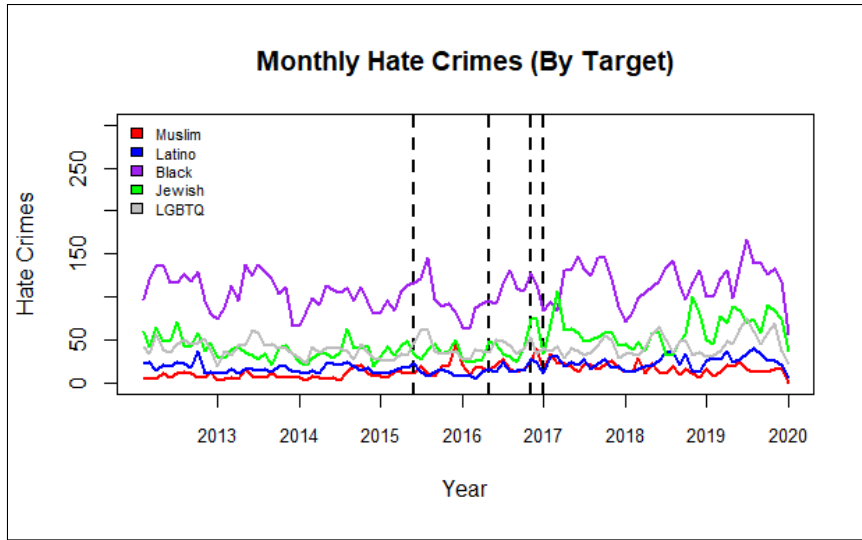
Figure 4.6: Monthly Hate Crimes by Target (2012-2019)

7.1 Interrupted Time Series ARIMA

Based on these observations of the over-time trends, this section attempts to test the role of Trump's election more rigorously. While it seems clear that there were increasing numbers of hate crimes during the Trump years, it cannot be assumed that these are directly linked to Trump. Growths in hate crimes may be due to larger over-time factors or simply to an increase in reporting agencies. Therefore, I will perform a series of interrupted ARIMA models, modeling the over-time trend of hate crimes through ARIMA models and incorporating intervention variables for major moments in the Trump election, namely his announcement of candidacy, his general election victory, and his inauguration. This will test day to day changes, helping to both rule out issues of increasing numbers of participating agencies but also to hone in on Trump, specifically. If a major moment of Trump's campaign is linked to a significant day to day increase, then it helps identify that it is a response to that victory, especially very salient moments like the general election victory.

These analyses, while controlling for over time changes and fluctuations in hate crimes, seeks to test whether these major moments saw an immediate increase in daily hate crimes during the following days. This reflects the emboldenment effect discussed by Dugan and Chenoweth (2019). However, while past literature on this effect has emphasized political threat, I expect this to occur after major victories for Trump, with racists feeling encouraged, and political mobilized. The implication and theoretical underpinning of this relationship will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Thus, I attempt to validate the following hypotheses, derived from the exploratory analysis provided in the previous section:

- $H0_2$ Daily hate crimes do not significantly increase after major moments in Trump's 2016 presidential campaign.

- Ha_2 Daily hate crimes increase significantly after major moments in Trump's 2016 presidential campaign.

    - $Ha_2(a)$ This includes his announcement of candidacy on June 16, 2015.
    - $Ha_2(b)$ This includes his general election victory on November 8, 2016.
    - $Ha_2(c)$ This includes his inauguration for President on January 20, 2017.

Each ARIMA model was fit slightly differently, given the different results when factoring in distinct intervention points. For each, several models were created, selecting eventual models based on the best fit and the lack of significant Box-Ljung tests. Moreover, each was tested with a subset of data starting in 2014. While I will discuss some of the basic specifications, full ARIMA models and Box -Ljung tests are provided in Appendix A.

The first model, looking at Trump's announcement of candidacy, controlled autocorrelation to AR-2 and factored in a moving average. This would prove the specification for each model, although all were modeled independently of each other. This first intervention analysis found a small, but significant, increase of approximately two daily hate crimes. This is not particularly substantive, given 13 daily hate crimes, but it does indicate the sensitivity of violent racists to moments in Trump's campaign. The second model, testing the effect of Trump's general election victory, again controlled autocorrelation to AR-2 and factored in a moving average. Here, the intervention saw a significant increase in daily hate crimes of approximately 4. This effect, when compared to a daily average of 13, demonstrates a considerable increase. Finally, the model looking at Trump's inauguration used the same specifications as the last model, namely controlling for AR-2 and MA-1. This saw a slightly smaller, but still statistically significant, impact of 3.5 daily hate crimes. This of course heralds the high levels of hate crimes throughout 2017.

Thus, each test appears to confirm my hypothesis. The rise of hate crimes throughout 2016 and 2017 is not coincidental with Trump's rise to power but is, instead, directly linked to it. Clearly, further discussion is necessary to understand why, as the following chapter seeks to do. However,

it is important to recall specifically how this period played out historically, as discussed in some detail in Chapter 1. Following Trump's inauguration, extremist groups engaged in a series of national speaking tours, events, and rallies. These culminated, of course, in the Charlottesville riot in August which saw several deaths and one of the largest public gatherings of extremists in years. Thus, the steady rise of hate crimes, directly related to Trump, fits within this larger context of an emboldened and violent extremist movement.

This section then concludes by emphasizing the importance of national trends on incidents of hate crimes. The September 11, 2001 attacks provide an obvious and incredibly salient example of this trend, but so does Trump's electoral campaign. These effects are not minor, moreover, with Trump's election victory leading to a thirty percent increase in daily hate crimes. Thus, in lieu of the local covariates that will be explore in the following section, it seems clear that national trends, including Trump's election, serve as major drivers for increased hate crimes.

8   Discussion and Conclusion

We can now see that hate crimes increased significantly following Trump-related victories and are at least in part driven by presence of hate groups. While the presence of hate groups is a relatively obvious point, as those are clearly going to be the individuals committing hate crimes, I do not believe the explanation is quite so banal. Instead, based on my own experiencing doing hands on research within a hate group, I argue that the addition of a hate group into a city, i.e. the factor that I have found increases hate crimes in that city is itself born out of Whites in that city seeking a form of pro-White community. Rather than seeing the addition of a hate group as signifying a cohesive group of pro-White activists moving to town, they should instead be seen as the outgrowth of political mobilized Whites' attempts to find commonality and community with fellow Whites. This fits with the overwhelming substantive impact of national trends which helped reveal a type of emboldenment effect, where Trump's victories led to increased violence, either out of celebration or a feeling of entitlement.

These findings fit within some of the larger theoretical arguments of this dissertation. White violence is something that emerges out of Whiteness as the population-ordering principle discussed in Chapter Two. Thus, the tendency to use violence against non-Whites or perceived racial enemies is one spread throughout the White population of this country, rather than one relegated to Republicans,

the working class, or rural Whites. This observation comes alongside an almost contrasting finding that emphasized the importance of hate groups, although their importance is dwarfed by national factors. Still the role of hate groups in promoting violence helps demonstrate the clear consequence of these organizations. As discussed in Chapters Three and Four, members of extremist groups are most likely among Whites who endorse criminal violence and reject law enforcement intervention. It is these same Whites that tend to organize within hate groups that have been shown to actively engage in and promote hate crimes. Yet, the strong online networks of extremists that I encountered in my field work, combined with the relatively small impact of local hate groups, indicate that much of this extremism is thriving in non-organizational settings or in ways that have not been observed by groups like the SPLC.

However, this chapter has only established the surface levels phenomena, showing that national factors like Trump's election and the presence of hate groups serve to increase the number of hate crimes. The subsequent chapters take this task further, turning to a closer and more specific analysis of hate group discourse and activity. The following chapter attempts to understand the impact of Trump's election in more detail, combining analyses of extremist discourse with surveys to better understand how it was feelings of White consciousness that helped drive extremist reactions to Trump. This chapter looks at how Trump's election inspired White extremists to mobilize politically, both in support of Trump's candidacy but also as part of a broader pan-White extremist movement, i.e. the alt-right.

Chapter Six will then address the second observation, focusing on the role of hate groups, by drawing on my own covert fieldwork within an extremist group. This chapter attempts to explore how the notion of an exclusive community undergirds pro-White discourse within that group. My understanding of community within that group indicates that Whites feel attraction to these groups both out of the idea of finding like-minded people but also out of the hope that they, themselves, will become a better person through the result. However, this process of self-improvement is intimately tied with preparation for the use of violence, helping to show how the development of such communities leads to the real-world violence discussed in this chapter.

	Trump Election	Trump Inauguration
AR-1	1.02***	1.04***
	(0.03)	(0.03)
AR-2	−0.05*	−0.06*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
MA-1	−0.89***	−0.90***
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Intercept	11.25***	11.73***
	(0.53)	(0.53)
Intervention	4.23***	3.55***
	(0.72)	(0.73)
AIC	12444.49	12455.84
AICc	12444.53	12455.87
BIC	12478.65	12489.99
Log Likelihood	−6216.25	−6221.92
Num. obs.	2191	2191

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

Table 4.2: ARIMA models

Appendix A: ARIMA Model Specification

The first ARIMA model measured the effect of Trump's election victory on hate crimes. The best fit model had two levels of autocorrelation and a moving average. Thus, this ARIMA model is a 2-0-1. The full table is shown below, and the Box-Ljung test which insignificant at p = 0.2617 and an X-squared of 42.041.

Similarly, the second ARIMA model measures the effect of Trump's inauguration. The best fit model also had two levels of autocorrelation and a moving average. Thus, this ARIMA model is again 2-0-1. The Box-Ljung test is insignificant at p = 0.2177 and an X-squared of 43.386.

Notes

[1] https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2017/trump-effect

[2] Instead, I look at the ratio between White income and city median income, as well as including White homeownership rates to capture a degree of economic security.

[3] https://ktla.com/news/local-news/man-charged-with-vandalism-hate-crime-after-being-seen-on-video-defacing-menorah-in-beverly-hills/

[4] https://www.foxnews.com/us/chicago-area-church-vandalized-swastikas-suspect-facing-hate-crime-charges

[5] https://www.cbsnews.com/losangeles/news/islamic-center-vandalism-suspect-arrested/

[6] https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/plano-pd-investigates-vandalism-of-homes-cars-with-racial-slurs/3159830/

[7]https://news.yahoo.com/just-want-safe-chicago-native-110000919.html

[8]https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/florida-man-pleads-guilty-federal-hate-crime-racially-motivated-attack-black-man

[9] It is important to note that offender tallies do not always add up, as they are not always labeled based on the target. This especially seems true following 9/11

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Chapter Five: Donald Trump and Mobilized White Identity

1 Introduction

While the last chapter helps show that hate crimes increased considerably based on national political events, demonstrating surges in hate crimes following Trump's election victory and inauguration, this chapter delves further into that phenomenon. Specifically, it looks at the extent to which Donald Trump's campaign mobilized and inspired extremist groups, and how it was able to do that. Essentially, by focusing on how Trump's appeals to White identity motivated extremists to support him, we can better understand howw the phenomenon discussed in the last chapter connects to claims made in Chapter Three about the relationship between White consciousness and political violence.

Importantly, Donald Trump's primary victories emerged despite the widespread denunciations of Republican party elites throughout the early primary period. Many senior politicians and even prominent *Fox News* and radio talk show hosts initially rejected Trump's credentials, conservatism, and inflammatory comments. However, he was supported early and enthusiastically by a series of prominent White extremist groups and personalities who praised his divisive language and emphasized that he stood as a symbol for the hopes of White America.

This early support for Trump included endorsements by the *Daily Stormer's* Andrew Anglin and former Klan leader David Duke. Another major White nationalist, Don Black, who runs the prominent forum *Stormfront*, described Trump in December 2015 as "the man on the White horse" and "the great White hope", crediting Trump's rhetoric for a dramatic increase in traffic to his *Stormfront* website and a general growth in White nationalist sentiment.[1] Other major alt-right and White supremacist voices have heralded Trump's primary campaign as signaling that "a new day is dawning in America"[2] or declared that "voting against Donald Trump. . . is really treason to your [White] heritage."[3]

As discussed in Chapter One, Trump did not appear to actively eschew such sentiment, as he also promoted extremist rhetoric and talking points on his Twitter account and demurred from immediately condemning extremist supporters, just as he would later refrain from condemning the Charlottesville protesters or the Proud Boys during a 2020 debate. Overall, it appeared that Trump was able to capitalize on both trends discussed in Chapter One: the increased racialization of mainstream opinion and an extremist movement with an appetite for influencing mainstream America. The former has been thoroughly analyzed by Schaffner et al. (2018) and Sides et al. (2018) as mentioned, but this chapter focuses on the confluence between Trump's campaign and White extremist movement ready to return to mainstream prominence.

Such a movement by extremists fits with the historical and theoretical account provided in Chapter Two. Violent extremists have not always maintained their frosty relationship with the State or mainstream politics, as they actively coordinated with State institutions throughout Reconstruction, the 1920s, and the Civil Rights Movement, to name a few. Their violence does not necessarily serve a pro or anti-establishment purpose but seeks to affirm the color line where it seems necessary, and as Chapter Four demonstrates, Whites, extremists and mainstream alike, tend to evaluate violent State institutions based on their propensity to promote White interests, and the same logic would reasonably apply to Trump. While many extremists dislike police officers, some are generally pro-police or at least support police perceived to be on "their side." Similarly, Trump emerged in 2015 as a Republican candidate who, unlike Rubio, Cruz, or Bush, was pro-White and would serve as a likely standard bearer for extremist support.

This chapter will show that Trump's announcement of candidacy had two major impacts on White extremist discourse. First, they responded with overt support in the form of pro-Trump blog articles praising Trump as the "Glorious Leader" and calling on readers to support him, consistently appealing to him as a representative of "White interests." Second, *Daily Stormer* increasingly began focusing on topics related to extremist mobilizing, discussing other activists as part of a pan-extremist movement with an eye to taking collective political action. Further support is provided for the link between Trump's racialized rhetoric and alt-right support, as pro-Trump sentiment also spiked following Trump's controversial support for a Muslim ban in December 2015.

While the mechanism by which Trump had this effect is not immediately obvious from the text data, initial expectations related to the role of White group consciousness were supported through a survey experiment which exposed participants to a range of racialized cues, asking them whether

or not they would be likely to support that hypothetical candidate. While most respondents were lukewarm on their support of the hypothetical candidate, those who identified strongly with the alt-right were more likely to do so, especially when they had high levels of White identity and group consciousness. This finding is expanded more clearly to Trump, by turning to observational data to show how support for Trump in the 2016 primary was heavily predicted by White consciousness measures in a unique way, helping to explain how the alt-right would then have been motivated to support him.

2   Theoretical Framework

Importantly, this mobilization is one drawn out of White consciousness, as it was discussed in Chapter Three. As Gurin (1985) argues, group consciousness evolves from that sort of social identity when a perception of a disparity between one's group and other groups emerges, especially when this disparity is seen as harmful and unfair. This consciousness develops into a sense of collective orientation, where the group should work together to advance group-wide aims. Similar points are emphasized in Miller et al. (1981)'s work on outlining the connection of group consciousness and political participation.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, such attitudes become more salient within certain political contexts and result in corresponding political action. Huddy (2013) emphasizes that these identities become politically relevant when they are either made salient by current events or by the increased relevance of group interests. The latter is more common when deprivation is perceived or feared in such a way that it is deeply connected with out-group hostility. Further research, including Gurin (1985)), Bishin (2010), and Miller et al. (1981), find that group consciousness is a strong predictor of political action and mobilization. Miller et al. (1981) find that, when activated, group consciousness significantly increases vote choice for the in-group, while Bishin (2010) emphasizes the ways that activated social identities lead to profound political activity, often determining elections where group interests are particularly salient.

Politicized group identity often results in identification with a prototypical member of the group. These themes are emphasized in Huddy (2013) and in Hogg and Reid (2006). Both papers discuss the ways in which group members perceive that certain attributes constitute a prototypical exemplification of the group. This can be imbued in a particular individual, a group leader, such as

a candidate like Trump who many extremists saw as exemplifying White norms with his rhetoric and policy stances.

This helps connect directly to why extremists would begin to support Trump. Hajnal and Lee (2011) explains that many radicals do not join mainstream parties, because they see them as failing to pay attention to the issues about which they are particularly radical. Under this framework, it then makes sense that extremists will begin to work with a party if they perceive that its candidate is beginning to pay attention to perceived threats against Whites. This would be especially true if Trump is perceived as being a "prototype" of White identity, which is reflected in extremist praise of him as the "God-Emperor" or the "man on the White horse."

Finally, the online context has provided additional opportunities for social movement mobilization. As Bimber (2017) helps show, online communities provide the context for "self-directed" activism, where, based on their sense of social identity and group belonging, individuals can be drawn to take concrete, real-world activism without the explicit mobilization of some formal group but instead based on their own desire to take collective action. Within a broader context of White consciousness, the increased engagement of previously disaffected extremists seems inevitable.

3 The Daily Stormer

This chapter will largely discuss the White extremist movement as it is presented by that blog: *Daily Stormer*, although I also draw on my own participant observation to complement that. This site, which the Southern Poverty Law Center notes became the largest White extremist website during July 2016, after surpassing the forum *Stormfront*,[4] offered consistent and enthusiastic support for Donald Trump's campaign from as early as June 2015 and explicitly tied that support to Trump's uniquely racialized discourse. In an article on June 28, 2015, *Daily Stormer* editor, Andrew Anglin, wrote his "official endorsement," emphasizing that Trump's most significant stance was about Mexicans" before quoting the infamous line from Trump's announcement address that: "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people." Anglin ended his endorsement by urging his readers to "do whatever they can to make Donald Trump President."

The *Daily Stormer* was selected because it serves as both the largest White supremacist news organization but also because it is a focal point for the alt-right. Not only does it situate itself within the alt-right movement, commenting on other leading members and associated news, but it also has opened its pages to contributions — though the extent of author complicity is unknown — by leading supremacists like David Duke, Jared Taylor, and Michael Enoch, as well as more mainstream so-called "alt-light" conservatives like Ann Coulter and Pat Buchanan.

The inclusion of multiple aspects of the American far-right is revealing. David Duke, a close friend of *Stromfront's* Don Black, is a central figure in the old-guard White nationalist movement, bringing *Daily Stormer* a perspective that emphasizes dramatic anti-Semitism and, along with Jared Taylor's *American Renaissance*, situates traditional White nationalism into *Daily Stormer's* discourse. Moreover, more contemporary alt-right figures, including the podcast host Mike Enoch, organizations affiliated with Richard Spencer, and "boots on the ground" neo-Nazis like Matt Parrot and Matthew Heimbach, combine the blatant racism of old-guard White nationalists with alt-right figures' attempts at mainstream respectability. Between Spencer and Enoch's broad appeal, and Anglin's more extreme rhetoric, the three figures have been described as the "triumvirate" of the alt-right and, despite an often tenuous relationship, form a central hub of alt-right discourse.[5] Finally, far-right conservatives have often flirted with alt-right talking points. This includes both Buchanan and Coulter who have seen inclusion on the pages of the *Daily Stormer* and are known for aggressive rhetoric on immigration, as well as support for Donald Trump. The presence of such a wide range of far-right views helps situate the *Daily Stormer* as a representative vehicle for far-right extremist discourse, beyond the simple fact that it is the largest White extremist blog.

Moreover, I determined that the *Daily Stormer* represents a focal point of what at that time was a rising and soon to be ascendant alt-right not just through its breath of contributors but based on its centrality within far-right funding networks. I collected data on cryptocurrency transactions between alt-right personalities from Bambanek Consulting which serves as an expert witness on extremist funding and analyzed that data with additional guidance from a cryptocurrency expert who asked to not be named. Both experts provided sufficient context on the data for me to create a network analysis of funding between alt-right groups and personalities. Figure 5.1 shows two centrality measures for the *Daily Stormer*, *Daily Stormer* affiliate "the Weev," and the three other most central groups between 2013 and 2019, divided into three time periods. These time periods were intended to estimate the over-time impact of the Trump campaign.

Centrality	Source	Before 2016	2016	After 2016
Degree	dailystormer	N/A	10	1983
	weev	105	171	156
	cantwell	169	156	104
	dailyshoah	9	182	111
	molyneux	1608	609	777
Betweenness	dailystormer	N/A	8852	4,301,390
	weev	5460	312,397	438,628
	cantwell	277,933	157,851	297,413
	dailyshoah	14,028	177,331	323590
	molyneux	1,529,528	542,035	2,095,702

Figure 5.1: Cryptocurrency Centrality

While neither Anglin's own *Daily Stormer* wallet nor Weev's wallet were particularly central at first, 2016 marks a prominent transition point for each, with their centrality measures steadily growing from before 2016 and becoming the most central alt-right wallets following Trump's election. This suggests that whatever mobilization effect occurred during 2016, which this chapter attempts to establish occurred, this mobilization saw Anglin and his website at the heart of the process. This helps further bolster confidence that this is an effective proxy for larger alt-right and extremist rhetoric during this period.

It is certainly important to re-emphasize that not all of those who report themselves as high in White identity are members of White extremist groups or the alt-right, but it is equally important to also stress that the modern alt-right is not a matter of membership in clear organizations, such as the Ku Klux Klan or American Nazi Party. Instead, the alt-right serves as a social movement that combines a series of discourse, memes, and ideologies. Somebody could be well described as alt-right, even if they have no affiliation with the Klan nor read *Daily Stormer*. Thus, *Daily Stormer* discourse serves as a proxy for a wider series of attitudes and groups that have been discussed in the last few chapters. This is reflected in the survey measures used, namely measuring sympathy to the alt-right via a feeling thermometer. This helps operationalize adjacency to and sympathy with the movement and its aims, while *Daily Stormer* rhetoric helps provide a quantitative source of data beyond the participant observation that I have used to study contemporary extremist attitudes in other chapters.

4 Hypotheses

This chapter is fundamentally grounded in emerging work on White identity as a mechanism by which members of the alt-right would be mobilized by Trump's rhetoric. Essentially, the puzzle of how the alt-right mobilized is explained by arguing that racial cues led to the mobilization of the alt-right, working by motivating a sense of White group consciousness rather than racial resentment or conservatism. This is diagrammed in Figure 5.2.
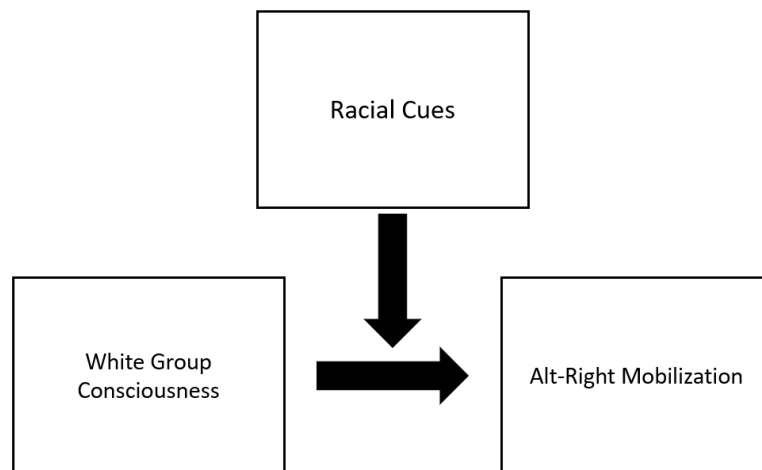
Figure 5.2: Hypothesized Mechanism

Initially, this theory would predict that Trump's announcement of candidacy, and specifically his inflammatory rhetoric, will result in White extremist mobilization. This leads to the first hypothesis predicting that Trump's candidacy will inspire extremists to endorse him explicitly, pushing pro-Trump rhetoric and a sense of mobilization after his campaign announcement:

- $H0_1$ Neither Trump's announcement of candidacy or discussion of a Muslim ban will lead to an increase in pro-Trump and pro-mobilization topics from the *Daily Stormer*

- Ha_1 Both Trump's announcement of candidacy and discussion of a Muslim ban will lead to a significant increase in pro-Trump and pro-mobilization topics from the *Daily Stormer*

More information as to the actual mechanism that is leading to support must be analyzed. Given the emerging importance of research on White identity, the survey-experiment component of this paper will seek to understand the role that White identity has in support for candidates who

use racialized rhetoric. This is suspected to be the crucial mechanism that drives White extremist support for Trump. This basic mechanism will be tested with the following:

- $H0_4$ When interacted with White group consciousness, sympathy for the alt-right will not predict support for candidates using White identity and explicitly racial appeals.

- Ha_4 When interacted with White group consciousness, sympathy for the alt-right will predict support for candidates using White identity and explicitly racial appeals.

However, it is necessary to further connect the White identity mechanism to Trump. Thus, I will examine different predictors of support for Trump in the 2016 primary. This is intended to pick a period where members of the American Right have a selection of options and where political elites are not united behind one candidate, as they generally were post-nomination. If White identity is unique and powerful in predicting support for Trump, this will help show how it was White identity that explains the likewise unique support the alt-right held for Trump.

- $H0_3$ Measures of White group consciousness will not predict positive evaluations of Trump's primary campaign at a significantly greater level than other measures such as ideology and out-group animus.

- Ha_3 Measures of White group consciousness will consistently predict positive evaluations of Trump's primary campaign at a significantly greater level than other measures such as ideology and out-group animus.

5 Data and Methods

5.1 Text-Based

The first hypothesis will be evaluated through text analysis from the *Daily Stormer*. Blog text was collected from their surface website by using R's *rvest* web scraping package and subjected to unsupervised learning techniques in order to determine topics including support for Trump and a sense of White supremacist movement mobilization. Overall, 14,560 *Daily Stormer* blogs were collected from the site's inception in August 2013 until data collection in February 2018. On average, the *Daily Stormer* corpus has 596 words per blog, and an average of 8.25 blogs were posted per day. These were analyzed using LDA learning via R's *topicmodels* package. I machine coded the

data based on established guidelines for unsupervised topic modeling process, basing my method largely on past uses of text models, especially as spelled out in Wilkerson and Casas (2017), Grimmer and Stewart (2013), Quinn et al. (2010), and Blei et al. (2003). Wilkerson and Casas (2017), for instance, lay out a basic framework, beginning with careful attention to converting text into data, as is discussed further in Appendix A's discussion of preprocessing, leading to the process of evaluating its performance. Grimmer and Stewart (2013), moreover, provides the basic framework of robustness checks used to ensure that the models are valid, as will be discussed in Appendix C.

Finally, as these papers emphasize, the number of topics must be determined. Here, I drew on Roberts et al. (2013) use of the *stm* R package. Using that package's SearchK function, each corpus is subjected to automated tests to determine the optimal number of topics. This process is elaborated on in Appendix A but resulted in 50 distinct *Daily Stormer* topics which are listed in the codebook in Appendix B.

These were then subjected to interrupted time series analyses, using ARIMA models, to determine whether Trump's announcement of candidacy on June 16, 2015, as well as his announcement of a proposed Muslim ban on December 7, 2015 had immediate and significant impacts. In each case the basic unit is the number of topics on a given day. All ARIMA model specifications are presented in Appendix D.

One topic was selected from the topic modeling corpus to measure pro-Trump sentiment. The process for verifying and selecting topics is further elaborated on in Appendix C. That topic, topic 7, was designated as a pro-Trump topic, based in part from the list of most likely terms. These included "Donald Trump," of course, but also "Vote Trump," "Support Trump," and "Glorious Leader." Moreover, the top ten articles were read, sorted on topic prevalence, to verify that this could be safely considered a "Pro-Trump" topic.

The language of topic 7 bears some discussion in its overt and aggressive support of Trump. In one article dated November 7, 2016, editor Anglin contended that "Trump is going to get a lower percentage of the Jewish vote than any Presidential candidate in the history of the country", arguing that this says good things about Trump. Anglin continues by declaring that "Against this massive assemblage of criminal gang-members, we have one man. An immortal warrior. An eternal hero. A dark horse who dgaf.[6] A Glorious Leader."

This language is relatively typical of how other posts under this topic portrayed Trump. In an article from November 10, 2015, Anglin praises Trump for saying "Merry Christmas" by describing

the alleged "War on Christmas" as a "deeply symbolic instance of the Jewish war on White culture and society," while declaring that "It is truly glorious, what Donald Trump has done for our race". Other contributors besides Anglin described Trump in much the same way. James Kirkpatrick of the alt-right VDare praised Trump's primary debate performance on March 9, 2016, calling Trump "the alpha of the GOP", while *Daily Stormer* contributor Zeiger gushed on August 2, 2016 that "the Clinton campaign is being utterly devastated by... Trump's cunning strategies" and that "Our enemies must learn to fear us."

Two additional topics (12 and 30) were selected to measure a sense of political mobilization. Top terms for the first were "Richard Spencer," "White Nationalist," and "White Nation." This topic also featured "Trump support," "Donald Trump," and "Hail Victory," the last of which was a common inclusion in articles urging support for Trump. The second of these topics featured terms like "White Supremacist," "David Duke," and "Race War," while also featuring "Donald Trump." In both cases, the top ten articles were hand read to verify that they were discussions about White identity and the White nationalist movement. Because both topics appeared to be largely comparable, just shifting focus between figures like Richard Spencer and David Duke and the ideas associated with both, the topics were combined for subsequent analysis. These will be referred to as "Mobilization I" and "Mobilization II".

Mobilization I and II show similar concerns about discussing the alt-right and "pro-White" political movements. The former topic includes articles such as Anglin's strident attacks on individuals such as Milo Yiannopoulos, statements such as "I care about my own race and people first. When I see a conflict between whites and nonwhites, I am inclined to side with the whites in every case", and concerns over how "Sir Richard Spencer" was treated at the 2017 CPAC. Similarly, the latter topic showcased Anglin praising David Duke and calling for Trump to pick him as Vice President and discussing other alt-right leaders' support of Trump, such as Klanswoman Rachel Pendergraft and White nationalist Jared Tyler. Other articles by Anglin and contributors discussed mass shooter Dylan Roof, with one by Benjamin Garland describing Roof as having been "overwhelmed by the truth and extent to which his people are under attack on a daily basis without even fighting back." These topics both consistently show an understanding of the alt-right as a united movement, which is particularly salient given the historically strong divisions between factions on the far-right.

5.2 Survey and Experimental Data

In order to better understand how the use of appeals helps explain the connections between the alt-right, Trump, and White identity, I investigate the results of a survey experiment which exposed participants to a series of in-group and out-group appeals and asked them to evaluate whether they would be likely to vote for the candidate in question. Specifically, the treatments were divided between fictionalized accounts of a political candidate utilizing explicit and implicit appeals to both White in-group attitudes and negative out-group attitudes to Latinos to discuss crime and immigration from Mexico. Pre-treatment questions included White consciousness, racial resentment, support for the alt-right, conservatism, and standard demographic questions (sex, age, income, education, and state of residence), while post treatment participants were simply asked if they were likely to vote for the candidate. The White in-group attitudes are captured by the same measures that Jardina (2019) uses: a measure asking how important being White is to their identity, how likely it is for a White person to not get a job because they are given to minorities instead (perceived threat), and if it was important for Whites to work together to change laws that are unfair to Whites (collective orientation). Further details of the experimental process are present in Appendix E, including vignette text, the specific wordings of questions, and a discussion of the manipulation checks.

This survey does not directly mention Trump, however. Instead, the findings will be connected to him as a concrete example by employing an OLS regression model applied to data from the 2016 ANES pilot study, conducted during January 2016. While this will measure more than just members of the alt-right, the goal of this analysis is to explore how Trump was uniquely perceived, among his primary rivals, as the candidate of White identity. This helps apply the findings of the experiment to Trump, as he can then be seen as very much the sort of hypothetical candidate who uses racial cues. This was subset to only include White respondents. The 2016 pilot provides 875 White respondents during Trump's primary campaign. I then compiled a White identity scale using the same measures as were used in the survey experiment. These were combined into one scale (alpha = 0.66). The analysis used four dependent variables: feeling thermometers for Trump, Rubio, Cruz, and Bush. Other covariates include racial resentment, whether there should be higher/lower levels of immigration, political ideology, party, gender, income, age, education, and how closely respondents follow politics. While this analysis is very close to that done in Jardina (2019), it differs both in the

covariates used and the explicit effort to compare racial resentment and immigration attitudes to support for other candidates.

6   Results

6.1   Text Analysis (H1)

The first analysis on time series data demonstrates strong support for my hypothesis. The interrupted time series analysis shows an immediate impact of both Trump's announcement of candidacy and his Muslim ban had on pro-Trump and Mobilization discourse.

This confirms my first hypothesis, showing a significant and very impactful effect of Trump's racial comments about Mexicans as "criminals" and desire to ban Muslims entirely from entering the United States on instances of *Daily Stormer's* pro-Trump topic. While it would be surprising to have seen much of such an election-focused topic before the election, these results show that extremists almost immediately responded to Trump's announcement with calls for support, as such support could have been delayed. The announcement's effect was also more than a modest increase (B = 0.56), indicating an average of one pro-Trump blog every two days, given approximately eight blogs per day on average. Thus, the analysis successfully tested White extremist responsiveness to the Trump candidacy, as the hypothesis would be contradicted by findings that this topic rose significantly only sometime after the announcement. By also testing responsiveness to Trump's controversial support of banning Muslims from the U.S. on December 7, 2015, this analysis comes closer to testing the impact of Trump's racialized rhetoric, specifically. When using the same ARIMA model to test an intervention at that date, I find another significant increase (B = 0.79), actually larger than his original announcement.

Similarly, interrupted time series results for the topics dealing with White activism again confirmed my hypotheses. After Trump's announcement *Daily Stormer* began releasing White activism articles at a significant and positive level (B = 0.21). While this topic appears to have been increasing even before Trump's announcement, these results indicate that the announcement spurred the topic on even further. This is only a modest increase of one topic every five days, but it continues to show how Trump's announcement primed attention to political activism. Apparently, this sense of political mobilization was further spurred on by Trump's announcement of a Muslim ban, with another relatively small increase (B = 0.13). While this clearly showed an increase in daily data with

my interrupted analysis, it is unclear whether this had a long-term impact. As Figure 5.3 shows, when aggregating to the month, there is little apparent increase, so this finding is not as robust as the response to his campaign announcement.

Both of these trends can be further visualized in Figures 5.3 and 5.4, while the full specifications of the ARIMA analyses present in Appendix D.
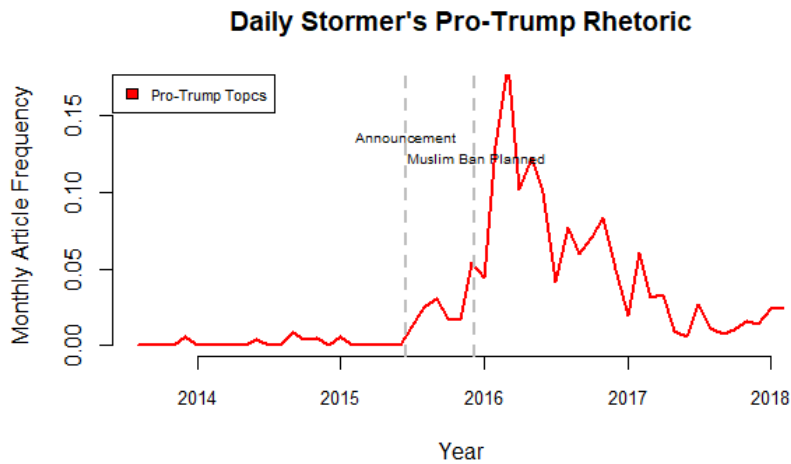
Figure 5.3: Pro-Trump Topic
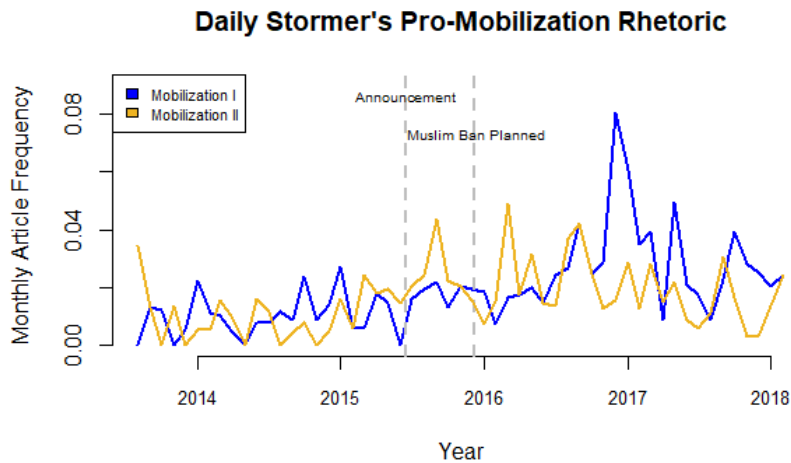
Figure 5.4: Mobilization Topics

6.2 Experimental Analysis (H2)

While the connection between support for Trump and extremist mobilization ought to seem clear here, more work is needed to done to show that it was White identity and Trump's use of racial appeals that were the important mechanisms here. Thus, this section looks at the relationship between sympathy for the alt-right and support for a hypothetical candidate who used a range of racial cues, as discussed in Appendix E.

This involved first looking at whether support for the alt-right predicts support for the hypothetical candidate by performing a simple OLS regression, looking at the effect of support for the alt-right on support for hypothetical candidates. This involved controlling for racial resentment, White identity, party, income, age, education, and state of residence, finding that support for the alt-right was significant, though so were racial resentment, conservatism and White identity. The results are shown in Table 5.1. Importantly, White identity serves as the most important predictor here.

Table 5.1: Experimental Results

	Dependent variable:
	Candidate Support
Alt-Right FT	0.360***
	(0.041)
Racial Resentment	0.483***
	(0.056)
White Consciousness	0.946***
	(0.053)
Conservatism	0.118***
	(0.039)
Constant	0.094
	(0.115)
Observations	2,567
R^2	0.454
Adjusted R^2	0.441
Residual Std. Error	0.559 (df = 2505)
F Statistic	34.158*** (df = 61; 2505)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

While these results help show the relationship between support for candidates who used racial appeals and those who support the alt-right, it appeared to mute the impact, given that very few participants were high in measures of alt-right support. It also does not fully capture the effect of White identity for those high in sympathy for the alt-right which is specifically under question. Therefore, an additional OLS regression was performed looking at an interaction between sympathy with the alt-right and White identity across treatment vignettes.

This interaction proved significant and highly impactful (B = 0.715), in fact more impactful than either White identity alone (0.513) or racial resentment (B = 0.560). Figure 5.4 shows how those high in White identity were the most likely to see their alt-right sympathy predict support for the hypothetical candidate, leading to those high in both to overwhelmingly support the use of racial appeals. However, it was important to test the impact of racial resentment, as well. As Figure 5. demonstrates in presenting an interaction between alt-right support and racial resentment, while those with low levels of racial resentment saw support increase alongside their alt-right sympathy, those with high levels of racial resentment saw little impact from alt-right sympathy, suggesting that these are independent mechanisms. The interaction term even indicates a negative interaction (B = -0.597), despite the positive impacts of each variable in isolation. Full readouts for these interaction regressions are displayed in Appendix E.
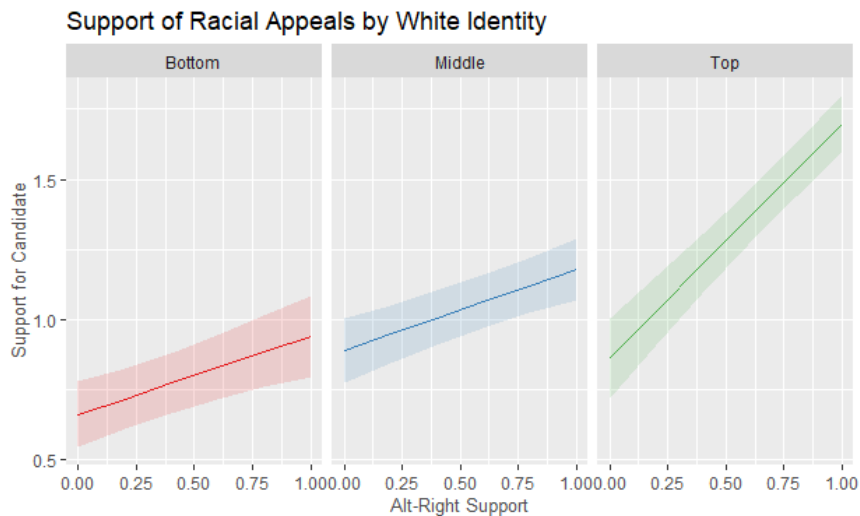
Figure 5.5: Support for Racial Cues: Alt-Right and White Identity Interaction
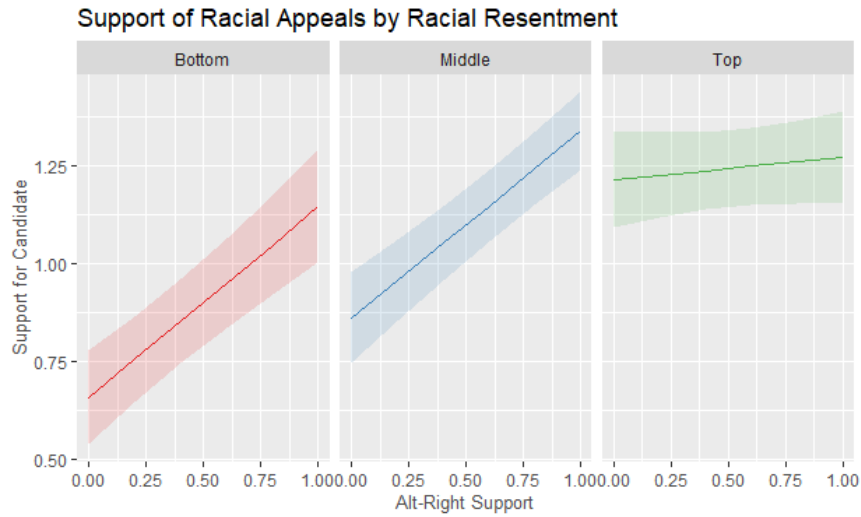
Figure 5.6: Support for Racial Cues: Alt-Right and Racial Resentment Interaction

6.3 Survey Analysis (H3)

Finally, much of the text analysis was dedicated to examining support for Trump during the 2016 primary, which unfortunately utilized no measure for alt-right support. However, observational data helps generalize the findings in the experiment which alleged that White identity was a key variable in predicting support by alt-right sympathizers. If White identity proves to be a key predictor of Trump, and we already know that alt-right sympathizers are mobilized by racial appeals and by Trump specifically, it helps draw the full connection for White identity as the crucial mechanism for Trump specifically. This involved performing an OLS regression with White identity as an independent variable regressed against the feeling thermometers for Trump, Bush, Rubio, and Cruz. Controls included racial resentment, immigration attitudes, gender, age, education, income, ideology, how closely they followed the campaign, and party. This analysis is closely modelled on that done by Jardina (2019) and attempts to build on that by explicitly contrasting measures of White identity with other indicators, namely ideology, racial resentment, and the desire to reduce levels of immigration.

As is shown in Table 2, Trump was the only primary candidate who saw support driven by White identity, and the impact of White identity dwarfed the impact of conservatism. While these findings are consistent with Jardina (2019)'s work, by looking at the full White identity measure, the differences are even more pronounced, with Bush and Cruz seeing a negative impact of White identity. While racial resentment certainly proved to be significant, it was not uniquely so for Trump

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and proved significant for each candidate, as did conservatism which was much more modest of a predictor. Finally, despite the emphasis of immigration during the 2016 election and by Trump specifically, it only slightly predicted support for Trump.

This helps show not only that White identity only predicts support for Trump but that it is perhaps the most unique aspect of Trump's support, as he appears quite similar to the other candidates in most other measures. This completes the picture that my survey experiment and text analysis found surrounding the alt-right and White identity by helping to show that the White identity mechanism which explained why alt-right sympathizers supported racially charged candidates was very much at play in support for Trump more generally, showing why White extremists would be so historically enthusiastic about his candidacy.

7   Discussion

Overall, these results broadly support my hypotheses. The text-based methods indicate that White extremists responded to Trump's presidential campaign, namely his inflammatory comments about Mexican "criminals and rapists" and the need to ban Muslim entry into the country, with vocal support for Trump and increased calls for White mobilization and White supremacist-related political activity. Similarly, when looking more closely at the impact of racial cues on candidate support, it appears that there is a close connection between White identity, alt-right sympathy, and candidate support. Namely, I find that the higher one's White identity is, the more impact alt-right sympathy has on candidate support for candidates using racial cues. This demonstrates that White identity serves as a critical mechanism through which the alt-right evaluates candidates, while racial resentment did not have this sort of effect.

Finally, observational data helps expand these experimental results to the 2016 election. During the 2016 primary, racial resentment and conservatism proved to be the most impactful predictors for support of non-Trump candidates, i.e. those who did not employ the explicitly racialized appeals that Trump did. White identity proved uniquely powerful in predicting support for Trump's uniquely racialized campaign. Thus, it can be seen that Trump's racial rhetoric was able to motivate the alt-right to support his candidacy by appealing to their sense of White in-group identity.

Table 5.2: Candidate Evaluations, 2016 Primary

	Dependent variable:			
	Trump FT	Bush FT	Rubio FT	Cruz FT
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
White Identity	0.156***	−0.081**	−0.036	−0.065*
	(0.040)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.034)
Racial Resentment	0.314***	0.113***	0.198***	0.315***
	(0.045)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.038)
Reduce Immigration	0.029***	−0.012*	−0.007	0.0002
	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Conservatism	0.032***	0.003	0.031***	0.057***
	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Constant	−0.141**	0.459***	0.379***	0.159***
	(0.070)	(0.061)	(0.060)	(0.060)
Observations	869	866	860	864
R^2	0.417	0.112	0.264	0.404
Adjusted R^2	0.409	0.101	0.255	0.397

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

8   Conclusion

Based on this analysis, not only is White consciousness deeply intertwined with the use of political violence, but the use of White consciousness by political leaders like Trump has the clear potential to incite and encourage violence. The last chapter found that Trump's electoral victories saw consistent surges in hate crimes, which also rose steadily throughout Trump's presidency, and now this makes further sense by showing that Trump's campaign also saw the crystallization and mobilization of the alt-right as a modern White extremist movement.

Specifically, this chapter helps show how appeals to White consciousness have this potential. This is important, because it shows how White extremists resonated with such appeals and, in turn, how a sense of attachment to Whiteness again leads to violence, hate, and extremism. Thus, this chapter provides a critical connection between the empirical findings related surrounding over-time hate crime trends and the conceptual relationship between White consciousness and political violence that undergirds this dissertation. The following chapter attempts to further strengthen this link.

Appendix A: Preprocessing and K Selection

Each corpus was analyzed to determine exactly what steps to take in the preprocessing stage. While many packages simply default to stemming, removing stop words, lowercasing, etc., such decisions have significant impacts on the overall relations between words (Denny and Spirling, 2018). This concern was broader than simply dealing with basic questions of preprocessing but also extended to the use of bigrams. Many phrases within both corpuses, such as "White genocide," "illegal immigrant," and "radical Islam," express strikingly different meanings than each given word would in isolation. The preText R package Denny and Spirling (2018) allowed me to see the net effect of each preprocessing decision in changing the average distance between documents in a given document term matrix.

I chose to engage in all preprocessing steps, including the use of bigrams (PNLSWI3). As can be seen in the accompanied figure, this has minimal impacts as doing more limited versions of preprocessing, and was the most optimal set of features, given the need to remove stopwords, numbers, and infrequently used terms which was seen as theoretically necessary to remove, as otherwise they result in a series of bizarre topic results.
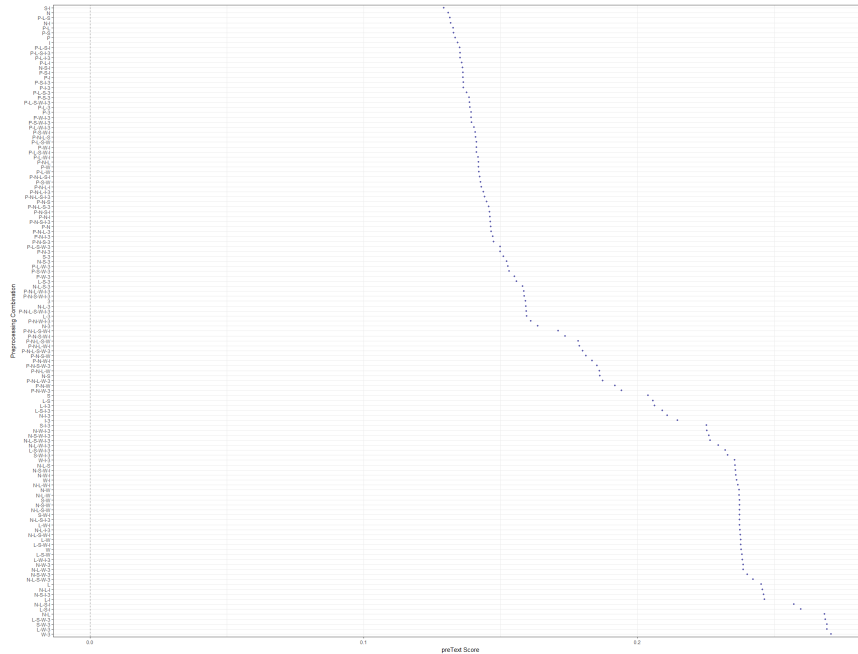
Figure 5.7: Daily Stormer PreText

Moreover, The searchK function in the STM package allows for topic models to be repeatedly run at different numbers of topics, yielding a series of measures of fit. This was employed on each corpus for values of K (topics) between 10 and 80.

- Held Out likelihood: For a subset of documents, half the document is withheld for creating a model, and the likelihood of it containing the held-out words is calculated. Higher values of this measure indicate that the held-out words are more likely and thus the model is more predictive.

- Residual analysis: When creating a model, this measures how dispersed the residuals are. The lower the value indicates a better fit.

- Semantic coherence: This measures the extent to which the top words in a given topic co-occur. When this is higher, it means that they frequently co-occur, suggesting a good fit.

- Lower bound: This approximates the lower bound of the marginal likelihood, as an internal measure of fit.

In each case, attention was made to minimize or maximize the above values, selecting topics where the values of held-out likelihood, residuals, and lower bound begin leveling off, while still picking the highest value of semantic coherence.
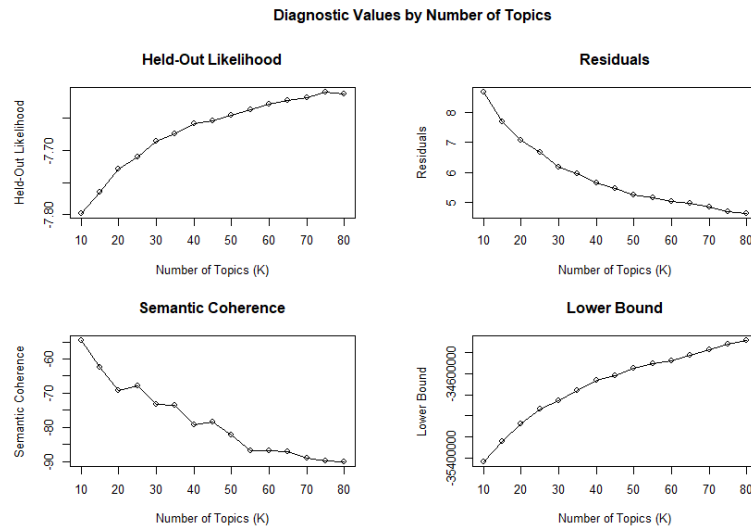
Figure 5.8: Daily Stormer K

Appendix B: Codebook

These are *Daily Stormer* topics explicated.

- 1: Here, they explicate fake news and conspiracy theories, specifically related to Russian conspiracy

- 2: New York City politics, especially as they relate to health

- 3: This is not a coherent category

- 4: They outline Hitler apologism and Holocaust denial

- 5: This focuses on the Obama administration as it relates to national security/foreign affairs

- 6: This is not a coherent category

- 7: This is a pro-Trump primary topic

- 8: These are negative discussions of Israel

- 9: Hitler apologism combined with anti-Semitism

- 10: Western cultural degradation via multiculturalism

- 11: This topic describes Jewish control of society broadly

- 12: White nationalism as a movement around White identity

- 13: Not a coherent topic

- 14: The crimes caused by refugees into Europe

- 15: This is not a coherent category

- 16: This portrays Trump as standing against illegal immigration

- 17: This discusses the 2016 election, focusing on Clinton's campaign

- 18: This is not a coherent category

- 19: This is not a coherent category

- 20: This describes how feminism is leading to cultural degradation

- 21: This argues for a pro-nationalist foreign policy

- 22: This warns of the notion of "White genocide" as a result of mass immigration

- 23: This is not a coherent category

- 24: This provides defense of and advice for those battling anti-racism

- 25: This expresses a strong resistance to multiculturalism

- 26: This is general indictment of U.S. foreign policy/trade

- 27: This warns of widespread sexual assaults allegedly committed by refugees

- 28: Here, they denigrate Black Lives Matter and discuss police shootings

- 29: This is discussions of and advocacy for Greece's Golden Dawn Party

- 30: This also describes White nationalism as a movement around White identity

- 31: This is largely dealing with the internal politics of European countries and the European Union more broadly

- 32: Here, they denigrate Black Lives Matter and discuss police shootings again

- 33: This discusses Putin, ISIS, and Middle Eastern foreign policy more broadly

- 34: This deals with defenses of free speech/hate speech, as well as social media censorship

- 35: This deals with defenses of free speech/hate speech, as well as social media censorship

- 36: This discusses the "differences" between Whites and blacks and denigrates the idea of White privilege

- 37: This is not a coherent category

- 38: Here, they talk about refugees committing sexual violence, especially surrounding the attacks in Cologne, Germany

- 39: They denigrate the media as run by Jewish people

- 40: This discusses the Trump administration's foreign policy

- 41: This involves endorsements of Trump's general-election candidacy, including serving as an uncritical platform for his Twitter

- 42: Here they decry tensions between black and White people, focusing especially on South Africa

- 43: Here, they argue for fallacies in the ideas black integration/multiculturalism

- 44: This discusses the threat of Islamic terrorism

- 45: This explicates black on White crime, amidst general denigrations of non-Whites

- 46: This is not a coherent category

- 47: This discusses the Trump administration's law enforcement policies

- 48: This is not a coherent category

- 49: Here, they talk about the interests of White people and the threats they allegedly face

- 50: Here, they talk about the interests of White people and the threats they allegedly face

Appendix C: Construct Validity Checks

Building off of Grimmer and Stewart (2013), this section provides a pair of robustness checks for my models. In that paper, they suggest the use of supplements to automated analysis, specifically naming the use of keyword searches. These were used to generate graphs which show comparable trends to the LDA models and respond to major events, such as Trump's announcement, in comparable ways.

For both the mobilization and pro-Trump topics, word searches were performed which demonstrate a comparable trend. The pro-Trump search simply used "realdonaldtrump" to designate Trump's Twitter handle which from hand reading this corpus is almost exclusively cited favorably, but it paired that with uses of the phrase "Make America Great Again", i.e. Trump's 2016 campaign slogan. The mobilization keywords were "davidduke","supremacist", "nationalist", "richardspencer", and "hailvictory". These figures are included below. While the pro-Trump keywords clearly provide support for my findings, the Mobilization word search is more tempered. There is strong support for the effect post-candidacy announcement, though little long-term effect from the Muslim ban announcement. This was also true when looking at monthly data, suggesting that, while there was some boost at the daily level, this did not have a huge impact when aggregating monthly.
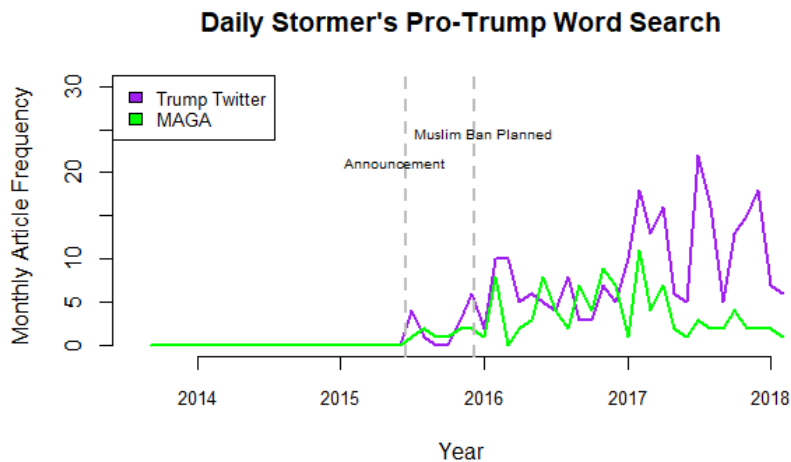
Figure 5.9: Pro-Trump Word Search
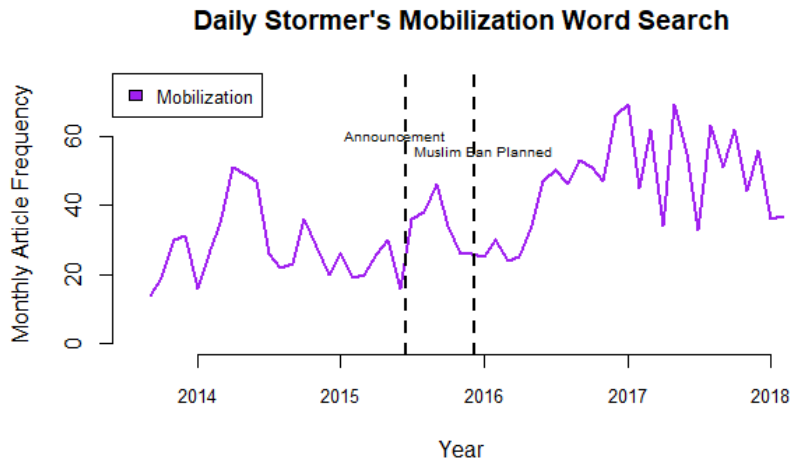
Figure 5.10: Mobilization Word Search

Similarly, the STM package was again used to independently replicate the LDA findings. This yielded 50 topics based on the same preprocessing steps. Of those topics, election-related topics were examined to determine two as pro-Trump topics. Similarly, two mobilization topics were selected, one emphasizing David Duke, with the other emphasizing modern White nationalists like Richard Spencer. The first of these topics show an admitted counter-trend to my hypotheses and the other models, but this appears to be an indicator that the type of activists being discussed in light of Trump were newer members of the alt-right like Spencer, rather than old stalwarts like Duke.
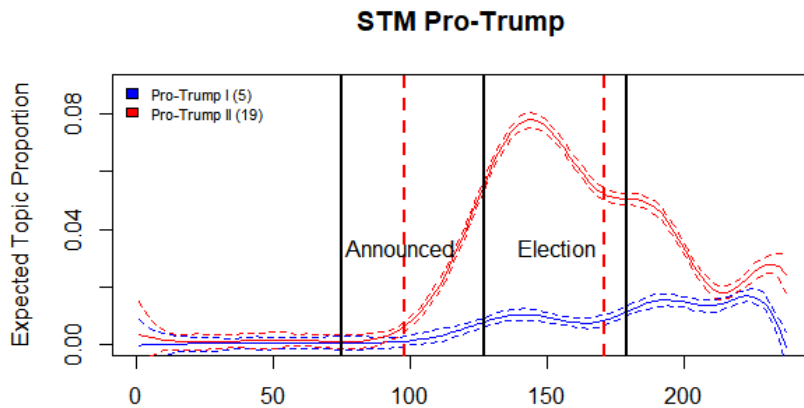
Figure 5.11: Pro-Trump STM

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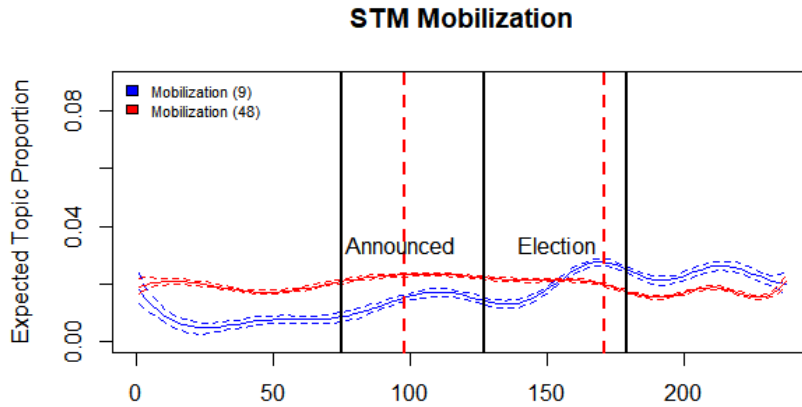
Figure 5.12: Mobilization STM

Moreover, Grimmer and Stewart (2013) also urge analysts to validate models by looking at a subset of ten to fifteen of articles to ensure that they reflect the topic in question. This was done specifically by sorting the articles within each topic based on topic prevalence. Topic prevalence measures the extent to which an article exemplifies the topic in which it is placed, so looking at the most "prototypical" topics allows for verification as to what LDA is conceptually grouping based on. The verification table below gives the topic name, number for reference to the codebook, and the percent of topics that clearly exemplified the construct:

Table 5.3: Topic Verification

Topic Number	Name	Percent
7	Pro-Trump	1.00
12	Mobilization 1	0.90
30	Mobilization 2	0.80

Appendix D: ARIMA Model Specification

The first ARIMA model measured the effect of Trump's announcement on pro-Trump articles. I compared different ARIMA models with differing levels of autocorrelation (which predictably was severe) and moving averages. The best fit model had no moving average but autocorrelation up to

Table 5.4: Pro-Trump ARIMA

	Candidacy	Muslim Ban
AR1	0.17***	0.16***
	(0.02)	(0.02)
AR2	0.15***	0.14***
	(0.03)	(0.03)
AR3	0.02	0.01
	(0.03)	(0.03)
AR4	0.02	0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)
AR5	0.11***	0.10***
	(0.03)	(0.03)
AR6	0.04	0.04
	(0.03)	(0.03)
AR7	0.08**	0.08**
	(0.03)	(0.03)
AR8	0.06*	0.05*
	(0.03)	(0.02)
AR9	0.05	0.04
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Intercept	0.10	0.22**
	(0.08)	(0.08)
Drift	−0.00	−0.00**
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Intervention	0.56***	0.79***
	(0.15)	(0.13)
AIC	2480.73	2467.10
AICc	2480.96	2467.33
BIC	2550.90	2537.27
Log Likelihood	−1227.37	−1220.55
Num. obs.	1632	1632

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

AR-9. Thus, this ARIMA model is a 9-0-0 model. The full table is shown below, and the Box-Ljung test which insignificant at p = 0.06 and an X-squared of 43.72

The second ARIMA model was that which evaluated changes in blogs discussing extremist mobilization. I again compared different ARIMA models before settling on one with AR-10. Thus, this ARIMA model is a 10-0-0 model. The full table is shown below, and the Box-Ljung test which insignificant at p = 0.08 and an X-squared of 41.74

Table 5.5: Mobilization ARIMA

	Candidacy	Muslim Ban
AR1	0.06*	0.06*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
AR2	0.00	0.00
	(0.02)	(0.02)
AR3	−0.03	−0.03
	(0.02)	(0.02)
AR4	0.02	0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)
AR5	0.05	0.05*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
AR6	0.08**	0.08**
	(0.02)	(0.02)
AR7	0.06**	0.07**
	(0.02)	(0.02)
AR8	0.01	0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)
AR9	0.06*	0.06*
	(0.02)	(0.02)
AR10	0.08**	0.08**
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Intercept	0.08	0.09
	(0.05)	(0.05)
Drift	0.00	0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Intervention	0.21*	0.13
	(0.09)	(0.09)
AIC	2870.75	2874.09
AICc	2871.01	2874.35
BIC	2946.32	2949.65
Log Likelihood	−1421.38	−1423.04
Num. obs.	1632	1632

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

Appendix E: Details on Survey Experiment

We fielded a survey experiment from October 28 to November 4, 2020, using Lucid Marketplace, an online survey platform that is becoming a tool widely used by social scientists to recruit respondents (Coppock and McClellan, 2019). To collect national sample of adults across the United States, we employed demographic quotas for respondents' sex (male, female), age (18–24, 25–34, 35–44, 45–54, 55-64, 65–over), ethnicity (White, Black, Hispanic, not Hispanic, other ethnicity), and region (West, Midwest, Northeast, South). To fill these quotas, we used respondent answers to standard qualifications questions asked by Lucid prior to entering our Qualtrics survey. The total number of respondents who completed the survey is 3500.

At the beginning of the survey, participants were asked about their age, income, education, race, gender, the U.S. state in which they resided, and their voting and political participation history. They were also asked a battery of white identity questions (Jardina 2019), a feeling thermometer for the alt-right, a battery taken from the ANES about immigration attitudes, their level of trust in the federal government, the ANES racial resentment battery, and a political ideology scale.

After this, they read a short randomized vignette. We used four vignettes, each of which expose participants to three short paragraphs describing immigration-related crime near the U.S.-Mexico border. Participants are prompted to see each vignette as a speech delivered by a potential candidate for Congress. Rather than including a control vignette that was unrelated to the issue, we chose to slightly vary the racial appeal in each vignette, as the goal was not to determine the efficacy of racial appeals but to compare the efficacy of different types of appeals. Specifically, the vignettes were divided between an explicit out-group, implicit out-group, explicit in-group, and implicit in-group appeal. All of the vignettes described the issue of undocumented immigration as a problem that is resulting in violent crimes, with specific victims named.

The implicit out-group appeal referred simply to "illegal immigrants" with Latino names, while the explicit out-group appeal instead emphasized that the crimes were committed by "Mexicans" who "refused to assimilate." Similarly, the implicit in-group vignette differed from the implicit out-group appeal by emphasizing the victims of the crimes as being "Americans" in "suburban neighborhoods" and refrained from describing the assailants beyond connecting the crimes to "illegal immigration." This was contrasted with the explicit in-group appeal by emphasizing the victims were "white" rather than "American" or "suburban." The full vignettes of in Appendix A.

After exposure to the vignette participants were asked simply if they would be likely to vote for the candidate giving the vignette as a speech. Specifically, respondents are asked "How likely would you be to vote for the candidate who gave that speech?" The possible answers included "Not at all likely, somewhat likely, very likely." At times these were aggregated to include "somewhat" and "very" in the same binary variable, but this generally did not produce difference results.

The full regression results for the interaction terms are presented in Table 6 and 7, although I excluded state of residence for display purposes.

Vignettes: *Implicit Out-Group* Over the last two decades, immigration has steadily increased over the U.S. border with Mexico. While many immigrants have entered legally, many have entered illegally. Unfortunately, there are an increasing number of violent incidents associated with rising illegal immigration.

Despite the fact that border security provisions could prevent the flow of illegal immigration, political gridlock has impeded solutions to this problem from being adopted. Most immigrants who illegally enter the United States are allowed to stay, even when they commit violent crimes. This has allowed individuals such as Luiz Alfonso, who had previously been deported multiple times, to rape and murder Susan Wayfeather in San Diego, CA.

In fact, incidents like this are not uncommon. This immigration crisis has overburdened police forces and federal authorities who lack the ability to effectively police illegal communities, leaving American citizens at risk of rising crime and drug rates. As a result, there have been other grisly murders, such as a double homicide in Houston last week that was committed by Carlos Lopez, an illegal immigrant.

Explicit Out-Group Over the last two decades, immigration has steadily increased over the U.S. border with Mexico. While many immigrants have entered legally, many have entered illegally. Unfortunately, there are an increasing number of violent incidents associated with rising Mexican immigration.

Despite the fact that border security provisions could prevent the flow of Mexican immigration, political gridlock has impeded solutions to this problem from being adopted. Many Mexicans refuse to assimilate and are shielded from effective law enforcement, even when they commit violent crimes. This has allowed individuals such as Mexican national Luiz Alfonso, who had previously been deported multiple times, to rape and murder Susan Wayfeather in San Diego, CA.

In fact, incidents like this are not uncommon. This immigration crisis has overburdened police

Table 5.6: Candidate Support: White Identity and Alt-Right Interaction

	Dependent variable:
	Candidate Support
Racial Resentment	0.560***
	(0.058)
Alt-Right FT	0.030
	(0.071)
White Identity	0.513***
	(0.093)
Democratic	−0.160***
	(0.030)
Independent	−0.130***
	(0.031)
Income	0.179***
	(0.056)
Some College	−0.024
	(0.034)
College Degree	0.034
	(0.037)
Post-College Degree	0.102**
	(0.040)
Conservatism	0.127***
	(0.039)
Age	−0.005***
	(0.001)
Alt-Right FT: White Identity	0.715***
	(0.126)
Constant	0.244**
	(0.117)
Observations	2,567
R^2	0.461
Adjusted R^2	0.448
Residual Std. Error	0.556 (df = 2504)
F Statistic	34.542*** (df = 62; 2504)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 5.7: Candidate Support: Racial Resentment and Alt-Right Interaction

	Dependent variable:
	Candidate Support
White Identity	0.930***
	(0.053)
Alt-Right FT	0.665***
	(0.081)
Racial Resentment	0.718***
	(0.078)
Democratic	−0.162***
	(0.030)
Independent	−0.141***
	(0.031)
Income	0.184***
	(0.056)
Some College	−0.021
	(0.034)
College Degree	0.050
	(0.037)
Post-College Degree	0.124***
	(0.040)
Conservatism	0.109***
	(0.039)
Age	−0.005***
	(0.001)
Alt-Right FT: Racial Resentment	−0.597***
	(0.136)
Constant	−0.019
	(0.117)
Observations	2,567
R^2	0.458
Adjusted R^2	0.445
Residual Std. Error	0.557 (df = 2504)
F Statistic	34.161*** (df = 62; 2504)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

forces and federal authorities who lack the ability to effectively police communities, leaving American citizens at risk of rising crime and drug rates. As a result, there have been other grisly murders, such as a double homicide in Houston last week that was committed by Carlos Lopez, a Mexican immigrant.

Implicit In-Group Over the last two decades, immigration has steadily increased over the U.S. border with Mexico. While many immigrants have entered legally, many have entered illegally. Unfortunately, there are an increasing number of violent incidents associated with rising illegal immigration.

Despite the fact that border security provisions could prevent the flow of illegal immigration, political gridlock has impeded solutions to this problem from being adopted. This has put increased pressure on American communities to deal with an influx of violence in areas previously safe from conflict. One recent example was last week's rape and murder of American Susan Wayfeather in her suburban home outside of San Diego, CA.

This crisis has overburdened police forces and federal authorities who lack the ability to effectively police communities, especially as suburban neighborhoods are becoming more diverse. As a result, there have been other grisly murders, such as those of Americans like Robert and Jennifer Rose in their Houston home last week.

Explicit In-Group Over the last two decades, immigration has steadily increased over the U.S. border with Mexico. While many immigrants have entered legally, many have entered illegally. Unfortunately, there are an increasing number of violent incidents associated with rising illegal immigration.

Despite the fact that border security provisions could prevent the flow of illegal immigration, political gridlock has impeded solutions to this problem from being adopted. This has put increased pressure on white communities to deal with an influx of violence in areas previously safe from conflict. One recent example was last week's rape and murder of a white woman, Susan Wayfeather, in her private home outside of San Diego, CA.

This crisis has overburdened police forces and federal authorities who lack the ability to effectively police communities, especially as white neighborhoods are becoming more racially diverse. As a result, there have been other grisly murders, such as those of Robert and Jennifer Rose, both white, in their Houston home last week.

Comprehension Checks Here, I discuss further the four comprehension questions which were asked of MTurk workers before fielding the full experiment, in order to determine that the racial primes in each vignette are being read and noticed.

The first simply asked for the topic of the article (Immigration), while the second asked them for something more detailed — the location of these crimes. These served as basic comprehension checks, with the first checking if they had paid even cursory attention and the second asking for more specific details about the locations of the events described. Our analysis of the responses to other questions removed responses (only four) that failed the first question, as we were concerned with verifying that those who read the treatment picked up on relevant racialized cues. The latter two questions asked for information on descriptive characteristics of the perpetrators or victims (illegal immigrant, Mexican, American, or white, depending on the vignette). The fourth question asked for specific names of the perpetrators or victims, intending to be a more difficult check on comprehension with an eye towards whether it was in-group or out-group. While most respondents showed effective comprehension to the vignettes, we considered comprehension of the implicit in-group vignette to be initially insufficient (only 63 percent responded correctly to the fourth question, as opposed to 81 percent of the other treatments) and revised the vignette by changing "private home" to "suburban home" before re-fielding an additional comprehension check that yielded better results (with 87 percent responding correctly. The results of our two pre-tests suggest that respondents would have noticed and understood the small differences in our experimental vignettes, i.e. the differences that prime racial cues.

In terms of duration, a total of 163 respondents were dropped for low duration. Specifically, only respondents who's duration was at least one third of the full sample's median of 749 seconds were included, i.e. removing those who only spent 249 seconds or fewer. This led to a median duration of 775 seconds and a mean duration of 1417.5 seconds. Importantly, this survey was embedded in a larger survey with approximately 150 questions for each, although due to randomization that varied slightly.

Notes

[1] http://www.businessinsider.com/trump-helping-White-supremacist-website-2015-12

[2] https://www.amren.com/news/2016/01/conservatives-blast-trump/

[3] https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/12/21/how-donald-trump-is-breathing-life-into-americas-dying-White-supremacist-movement/

[4] Https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2017/eye-stormer.

[5] https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2016/12/20/truce-battle-soul-american-white-nationalism

[6] "doesn't give a f**k"

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Chapter Six: Whiteness and Exclusionary Communities

1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to leverage my covert research within a hate group to understand why the presence of a hate group is particularly impactful for the emergence of hate crimes, as discussed in Chapter Four. This question, initially, may seem somewhat banal, as of course hate group members are particularly virulent racists who are most likely a priori to commit acts of violence. However, the relationship is critical to understand for several reasons: the persistence of hate group relevance despite the importance of national trends, the effective adaptation of older models of hate group activity to a more digitally focused period, and the ultimate lessons that such a question can offer to our larger understanding of the relationship between Whiteness and racial violence.

While the fifth chapter found that hate groups have some causal influence on hate crime outcomes, this impact was admittedly less salient than major national trends like 9/11 and the 2016 election, as explored in detail during the last chapter. Regardless, the persistent influence of hate groups was initially somewhat surprising, given work such as Bimber (2017) which emphasizes the principle of "self-directed behavior" and the growing emphasize on online manifestations of hate groups with the rise of the alt-right (see Nagle (2017) and Beyer (2017)). However, the continuing impact of hate groups suggests that they play a key role in what Simi and Futrell (2010) described as the connection between digital and physical spaces for hate groups, with members joining through the Internet and using it to make in-person connections that lead to real world activism.

Of course, the sort of online spaces that Simi and Futrell (2010) discuss are rooted in an earlier version of the Internet, one dominated by online chat rooms and forums, rather than a myriad of social media platforms, including platforms specifically conducive to extremist sub communities like Telegram or Gab. However, their conception of "Aryan free spaces" still fits closely with my own experience participating within an extremist community. For Simi and Futrell, Aryan free spaces

are uncontested settings where movement activists can "gather to privately cultivate racial hatred" (4). They mostly emphasize real-world places, such a survivalist camps or at-home meetings, but they also discuss the rise of online chat rooms. Such virtual free spaces are useful for more than just cultivating hatred, but also in developing "a sense of unity around core beliefs" (20) and help overcome the differences between various facets of what they call the "White power movement." This description of hate group spaces as playing an important role in developing unity is similar to Kathleen Blee's observations after spending years working with former Klanswomen and skinhead women. Blee (2017) maintained that such unity is necessarily "exclusionary" and "[seals] borders between the self... and those seen as different," while still creating "social boundaries that mold or intensify a sense of commonality within the self-group." (67).

These notions connect directly to the use of violence and hate crimes. Online spaces have the potential to translate to in-person activity, as Beyer (2017) tracks with the mobilization of Anonymous into real world protests, especially under perceptions of group threat. This can be seen as particularly worrisome for White extremist spaces which regularly glorify violence, as we saw in Chapter Three, and as Simi and Futrell found in older chat rooms, where users would "[fantasize] about racial cleansing and white domination" or would "link their violent fantasies to reality by posting models of real-world Aryan violence" (95-6), and my qualitative experience described in this chapter continues to support their perception. Blee sees such propensity for violence in the closed epistemic nature of these groups, writing that "the bizarre begins to feel normal, taken for granted...[out-groups] might come to seem so demonic and so personally threatening that you could be moved to actions that seem incomprehensible to those on the outside." (17) From within the echo chamber of a hate group, one made exclusive through its own brand of humor, memes, and idioms (Beyer 2014), individuals become one with a community that is seen as far outside the normal by outsiders, yet becomes the normal for group members.

Finally, it is important to see the communities described as not just abstract sociological categories but as concretely White communities. While they are extreme, violent, and generally at odds with the American mainstream, there is something essential about their attachment to Whiteness that remains the same. Many of the same concerns historically expressed by "mainstream" Whites, are also significant concerns for extremists: non-White immigration, law and order, traditional masculinity, and racial separation, to name just a few. The same historical processes described in Chapter Two that constituted the formation of Whiteness are at play regardless of whether those attached to

Whiteness are "mainstream", hold State power, or are fringe extremists, as Whiteness continues to serve a fundamentally exclusionary role and one that demands the exclusion of non-White groups. The findings in Chapter Three help reveal the similarities between how "mainstream," "bridge," and "extremist" Whites discuss violence and White identity, for instance. From this same logic, the same aspects of modern society that are leading Whiteness into crisis are also affecting extremist groups: the dissolution of State homogeneity and White society's failure to maintain racial separation. Thus, this chapter will conclude by connecting many of my qualitative experiences in what will be called "Club 14" to the larger theoretical and historical processes discussed in Chapter Two and the rest of this dissertation.

1.1 Plan for the Chapter

I begin by reviewing my "vetting" process, where I was formally interviewed online before joining the group, showing how this was primarily a process of verifying by "belonging" into the group both socially and ideologically, as well as an effort to encourage my own activism. Then, I spend the majority of the section discussing my time interacting with these extremists in their own private chat room. By leveraging four composite characters drawn from this community, I hope to paint a picture of people and conversations involved, drawing out the emphasis on camaraderie, the lifestyle benefits preached by group members, and the sense of political responsibility promoted within the community, although it is important to also see how each of these are connected to a willingness to do violence.

Importantly, my IRB approval process imposed relatively strict guidelines on this research, as has been discussed, and such restrictions are most salient during this part of the research process. Due to a need to both preserve strict confidentiality for the group and its members and also to reduce the likelihood that the group will recognize itself in these pages, I will use false names, both for the group and its members, change the wording of quotes provided here, and will falsify major geographic details. However, in each case, the essence of the experience is preserved with sentiment translated accurately and composite sketches of individuals approximating the people I met as accurately as possible. Finally, as will become relevant throughout the narrative, I was forbidden from participating in person or showing my face during this process, necessarily limiting the extent to which I was accepted within the community. Specifically, by being unable to attend activist events or group workouts, I am confident that I lost an important dimension of how community arises in groups such as Club 14.

2 Discovery and Vetting

While pursuing my participant observations, as discussed in Chapter Three, on Telegram, the encrypted messaging software, I encountered "Club 14" by following the promisingly pro-White image of a masculine Greco-Roman statue that served as the channel's profile picture. I was immediately drawn to a prominent chatbot application pinned to the top of the channel which recommended that anyone interested in activism submit their name and geographic location to be considered for inclusion. Because this opportunity had been largely closed for me, I quickly submitted my assumed name, identified myself as being from the Sacramento area, and expected to hear nothing from the group, as had been my experience with past attempts at similar involvement.

As I examined Club 14's channel further, I found that it was only one channel of part of a larger organization, as it consisted only of reposts from more local Club 14 chapters, amplifying images of their activism efforts which largely consisted of plastering racist stickers and flyers in public places around the country. On this day, for instance, Club 14 had shared images from Club 14-SoCal, Club 14-NYC, and Club 14-OK (Oklahoma), showcasing a "banner drop," racist stickers posted in obvious areas, and a video of a White man screaming "White Pride" from his truck at surprised passersby's, many of whom were also White. Each of these individual chapters also led to public groups which also showed similar posts, including re-posts from other chapters, and occasionally had new members asking to be vetted or for more information. It was clear that any actual discussion or community was kept in non-public groups, with each of these public channels serving the vetting or promotional project of the group as a whole.

However, the following day, I received a message from "YT" whose Telegram profile contained no public information and simply sported a close up of a bicep lifting a dumbbell as a profile picture. YT said he represented the Northern California-based "Club 14-NorCal" and asked me to set aside some time later that evening to be "vetted" into the group, which he explained would involve a short conversation online and eventually my attending an in-person "legal activism." The last part essentially set a limit to my involvement in this group, as I had not received IRB approval to engage in such activism, but in the meantime he was curious if I had engaged in activism previously. When I confessed that I had not, YT remained upbeat and welcoming, assuring me that many people didn't have activist experience and that it was a "super friendly group." At that time, YT also asked if I

was interested in joining his "NorCal Training Squad" as well, a subset of Club 14-Norcal devoted to physical training and exercise.

Even at this point, YT's focus was on the idea that I was joining a community and would see a sense of self-improvement from joining, rather than evincing a desire to discuss politics or ideology, although that could be due to a lack of trust on his end. When I admitted that I had not been previously involved in activism, blaming this on a desire to not be discovered as an extremist, YT was encouraging, saying that such activism was "really necessary in keeping sane" and that "it was about comradery [sic] more than anything." Similarly, when asked to join the "Training Squad", I admitted, this time honestly, that I "probably should workout more," YT was again positive and encouraging. His immediate response was to say "I get it man! I'm here for you" and to add that "the past two years have made it tough for a lot of our people to stay healthy." If I joined the group, however, he declared that it would be his "job to motivate [me]" and "help all of [his] people live long and happy lives." From the outset, I was not called on to sacrifice myself for a larger cause or told I was obligated to take up a fight. Instead, I was promised friendship, personal health, and involvement in a "group of really great guys," although I did learn that group support was not comparably unconditional, even for White men such as myself.

The vetting process was not altogether quick, as YT messaged me questions sporadically over the next week, which I answered several hours later in an effort to not seem overeager. Generally, he was curious to see if I could give a clear explanation of my own views on race and my intellectual influences to that effect, asking me to describe the process that led me to see the world within the context of White extremist thought, whether I was influenced by any particular books or documentaries, and if I owned any flags or literature that was "based" or pro-White. My answers appeared to satisfy him, as we moved onto more concrete questions, such as asking that I recite the 14 words[1] and for my views on the "way forward." I did the first correctly and then proceeded to offer a vague criticism of the party system, arguing the White people needed to take action on their own. I hoped to make this a convincing and banal response that would encourage him to open up about his views a bit. He did seem sympathetic to my views on the party system, responding that "everyone wants a Republican president but that's just so we don't get even more communist" while also affirming "the need to wake white people up."

Eventually YT admitted that the delays in responses had been due to turbulence in his own life due to anti-fascist activism against him. While expressing anger and sympathy, I used this as

another opportunity to voice my concern about the safety of in-person activism, in an effort to avoid that requirement for full inclusion. YT was again relatively encouraging, telling me that he would "help me out" to protect my identity and that "anything that could threaten your career is a big deal." He then told me that he felt "no personal need for activism," as he was "financially well-off with two cars and a pretty wife" but didn't want to "be a pu**y." From this, I took him to suggest that this activism was tied to a sense of self-worth, that it made him feel more manly and powerful, a sentiment which I found throughout the group, and also a slight rebuke that my concerns about doing so were coming from a place of cowardice. His measurement of self-success was also notable, with him including his "pretty wife" as part of his material success, as well as the fact that such material success was an indicator of his personal successes.

After this vetting process, YT added me to a private channel that he was "pretty sure" had no "Jews or communists" but reminded me that I still needed to attend in-person to secure my place. After that, I had little contact with YT, as he only infrequently posted in the channel and usually only messaged me to try to arrange my in-person attendance. I later learned that he was previously a member of another hate group, although one that I would likely classify as closer to a "bridge" community than Club 14 and that he was particularly committed to attending in-person gatherings and group workouts. He was very concerned with "opsec" or "operational security," despite being exposed himself for failing to cover an extremist tattoo on his leg, and that concern over security largely translated to a reluctance to speak about his own political view, outside of vague comments about the White race and "antifa."

3   Characterizations and Context of the Group

For four months, I spent some time almost every day participating in the Club 14 channel in some capacity, although I attempted to primarily listen so as to avoid undue disruption. With approximately fifty members, about a third of whom seemed relatively active, the conversation flowed throughout a given day, with about one to four hundred messages exchanged in a given 24 hour period. Generally, the channel followed the major news of the day, interpreting it from within White extremist ideologies and discourses and sometimes arguing about minor doctrinal differences brought out from these. Rather than recounting the day to day discussion of the group, I will focus on three composite characters that represent different types of involvement within the group and help

reveal how community and self-improvement are woven together within the group and its notion of belonging. Each is generally based on multiple active participants, but the sketches have been broadened to allow them to serve as archetypes. Their names are each fabricated but intended to roughly follow the usernames of their inspirations, as well as the form and style of usernames common on the site.

The first of these, Senator Julius, sported a cartoon image of a White man dressed as a general holding a sword as his profile picture and functioned as a sort of moderator or unofficial leader within the group. I later learned that he was one of the admins, and his contributions largely involved efforts to mediate disputes and to promote his, apparently very well researched, ideology which regularly involved uploading voice memos discussing the values of hierarchy or long discussions of military tactics and history. Julius was a member of many of the semi-public channels that I joined, as well as other "active clubs" and activist groups around California. He was also very concerned with maintaining an ecumenical approach of far-right activists, urging against the discussion of "divisive" topics such as religion and doctrinal differences, although he was simultaneously very aggressive in arguing against any rhetoric that downplayed the centrality of anti-Semitism in extremist action. Julius regularly emphasized the need for discipline: regular study, strict workout routines, and a substance free lifestyle, and he attempted to serve as a sort of mentor figure to the "less disciplined" members of the community. Julius' discussions of violence were generally vague and focused on "fighting" in terms of sparring or relatively friendly physical contests, although his view on the "movement" and the future were rife with military language and an anticipation of overt warfare.

Another user, Squat SS, who simply had an image of SS lightning bolts as his profile was similarly active but often clashed with Julius over the overtly hostile nature of his rhetoric. While slurs and overt racism were not frowned upon in Club 14, the group argued against the use of symbols, including swastikas, and was generally oriented to "waking white people up," as YT had put it. Yet Squat SS seemed to gravitate towards more aggressive and explicit ways of talking, pushing to wear swastikas at public meetings and seemingly particularly inclined towards the use of violence, although he always spoke carefully around that issue to avoid "fedposting."[2] Squat SS was particularly focused on sharing details of his workouts, posting his squat, bench-press, and dead lift amounts whenever he managed to break personal records, which was allegedly quite regularly. In some ways this was similar to Julius who also discussed his workouts, but Squat SS focused more on the workouts than other aspects of personal discipline espoused by Julius, focused on beating personal records, did not

exhibit the same emphasis on study, and seemed less strict on the idea of abstinence.

Finally, the last archetypical user will be called Local Taco Truck (LTT) who had no profile picture. LTT joined the chat shortly after I did and did not stay long. However, during his time in Club 14's chat, LTT was extremely prolific, generally posting memes, jokes, or rants that were aggressively racist, homophobic, or anti-Semitic. Like Squat SS, LTT regularly discussed violence, but he was not as careful about "fedposting" and instead was regularly censured and criticized for it. Eventually, it seemed in large part because of the criticism he faced for his conduct, LTT left the group, after which members joked about how they were glad to see him go. When I reached out to him after his departure, he told me he just had "a different idea of activism" but wished Club 14 "all the best." Club 14 members generally described him as "not being man enough" and pointed to his alleged moral vices, such as his use of cannabis and his being overweight. As will be discussed, LTT generally looked to Club 14 as a community to vent about politics rather than the source of personal and moral transformation that most of its prominent members saw in it.

Club 14 involved discussions on the private chat but also featured in-person meet-ups as part of the aforementioned active club and some other chapters met up to do at least one trash cleanup during my time in the group. They also organized several "banner drops" which served as their primary form of activism. At these events, members located a highway overpass and, often using a drone to capture footage, dropped large, crudely drawn cloth banners with slogans like the 14 words and "End White Genocide" scrawled on them. While Club 14 purports to be centered on real activism and movement building with an eye to the eventual "triumph of the race" and towards supplanting the current governmental structure with avowed neo-Nazis, it is unclear how poorly attended banner drops and workouts would achieve this. However, the primary focus of the group is probably better seen as the creation of a pro-White community that would ideally serve as part of a larger revolutionary terror movement, at least from the perspective of the central members. The remainder of this chapter will attempt to show how community building was central to Club 14 but specifically that this form of community, like Whiteness more generally, is an exclusionary one, in this case excluding not just non-Whites but also those deemed deviant, undisciplined, or insufficiently masculine. Moreover, the following sections will explore how a purpose of this community was to promote a sense of collective mental and physical discipline, creating a united front of White activists that would use violence strategically and judiciously to advance not just their personal interests but the cause of "Western Civilization" and Whiteness more broadly.

4 Building an Exclusionary Community

Various people appeared to join the group with different ideas of community in mind. LTT, for instance, joined with the hope of having a community he could "shitpost" in and with whom he could engage in relatively casual meetups. Squat SS was a bit more serious in his desire to actively spread hardcore racism, and he did so with very little tolerance for people like LTT who he described as "weak." Squat SS appeared to largely derive community from discussions of workout routines, fighting, and martial arts, although this was in dedication to a movement that wasn't "led by wet noodles." Finally, Senator Julius, who had apparently been involved in extremist movements for years, said Club 14 was finally an opportunity for him to join something close to his ideological beliefs and focused on attempts to educate newer members, both in terms of ideology but also personal discipline. As a strident believer in authoritarian hierarchy, Julius seemed to derive a great deal of meaning from his self-appointed role as mentor and moderator.

Despite these different notions on community, for each of them, the process of building community came out of a struggle of Whites against perceived enemies, especially Jews and racial minorities. This struggle, one allegedly situated at the existential level of civilization against savagery, represented a context where members were expected to train and discipline themselves, both preparing to collectively fight their enemies but also to improve themselves as "warriors" in this conflict. Group members regularly posted videos and photos, often extremely graphic, that depicted the violence that was allegedly particular to people of color, including grisly murders and graphic animal cruelty. They also regularly amplified channels like "Every Day" which posts daily stories about Whites who have been murdered by people of color, usually with sympathetic pictures of the Whites and gruesome details about their murders. Importantly, the group was also virulently anti-Semitic. Senator Julius would aggressively demean anyone who he claimed downplayed the centrality of Jewish people to contemporary problems. Slurs and anti-Semitic jokes were also quite common, often to the level of Daily Stormer-style rhetoric and thus often more extreme than other similar groups.

Situating community in the context of conflict is important here for two reasons. First, there is something about the struggle generally and violence specifically that makes "real men" out of Whites and is seen as a necessary way to overcome the supposed moral decadence that underlies the alleged decline of Western society. Second, the juxtaposition between the construction of in-group community and out-group hostility was already seen in Chapter Two as central to both the construction of

Whiteness and American democracy historically, and this chapter will conclude with a discussion of how the violent community building within Club 14 parallels the violent in-group construction of Whiteness more broadly.

Initially, the group exhibits itself as a welcoming environment to new members. YT, for instance, emphasized his desire to help everyone "live healthy and happy lives." When I joined, members welcomed me with "Welcome home brother", "happy to have you" or "welcome o/."[3] This welcoming environment was generally maintained throughout the community, with people like Senator Julius particularly eager to enforce civility and norms of respect. If Squat SS were to act in a hostile way, as he often did during disagreements, Julius would tell him to "check his tone" or remind him that this was a "civil discussion." Squat SS would generally apologize and there would sometimes be a conversation about the difficulty of reading tone online. In another example, at one point LTT brought up religion, criticizing Christians specifically, and Julius chided him for "divisive talk," reminding him that "every faith is welcome here, as long as you hate k**es." Yet as the anti-Semitic slur demonstrates, beneath this community of support also lay the underlying division both between Whites and "racial enemies" but also between the strong and the weak. In fact, as Julius would continue to explain, he saw potential allies in everyone as long as they were "pro-White and hated Jews."

The exclusion of those deemed deviant was particularly clear during the brief tenure of "Johnny Boy" in the group. Shortly after Johnny Boy joined, Squat SS noticed that Johnny Boy had "they/them" pronouns listed on their Telegram profile, along with a Transgender Pride flag, and he immediately began asking Johnny Boy to explain themselves, calling them a "f*g." Johnny Boy retorted that it had just been a joke, and the two began calling each other "f**s" before Squat SS challenged him to a fight: "let's box and then see who the f****t" really is. I'll bring some gloves to the next event." After this Johnny Boy left the group, and Senator Julius took Squat SS to task for his aggressive tone, saying "we're going to get shit tier people sometimes and should try to develop them. They just need fraternity, although tbh he was pretty much shit." This incident helps show how community membership was not unconditional but was based on a perception of strength and masculinity which could be cast into doubt easily and resolved through either conflict (Squat SS) or discipline (Julius). The following paragraphs will explore several of these discussions within this broader context of an exclusionary community exploring their discussions of physical training, mental

development, sexual and substance-related abstinence, and the goal of creating disciplined activists that can deal with a hostile world and a hostile government.

5   Physical and Mental Discipline

One of the central aspects of Club 14 is its status as an "active club" or as some members put it "a fight club." One of the most frequent ways that members met up and interacted in person was at workouts, where they would post videos of themselves working out with balaclavas on and overladen with music and verbiage to make themselves appear frightening. I was unable to attend these meetings, but the chat was frequently devoted to discussions of weightlifting and workout routines. Squat SS often posted his own personal records, such as "Hey boys, squatted 315 today!" to which another member joked "I guess that fits with your username!" In this specific instance, Senator Julius chimed in to gently chide Squat SS, saying "I'd avoid one rep maxes..still badass but that's how you get hurt.. but I understand that younger people are into that." Julius' role as a self-appointed guide and advice giver was common when other users would ask for advice on their workouts, and he would point them in the direction of "dead lifts, squats, and bench press." Other days, they would discuss which martial arts were most important, debating the relative merits of Brazilian jiu-jitsu, Muay Thai, or boxing. Often this sort of sentiment was brought up casually and integrated within the racist humor and ideology of the group, such as Squat SS sharing an image of a White weightlifter with the caption "Lift for Adolf Hitler and the future of white children!"

This focus on workouts was not without purpose and was tied into a greater notion of personal discipline. When LTT commented on a workout thread noting that he disliked exercise and was overweight, Senator Julius was quick to condemn him, saying "it's fine to be a little overweight when you join, but you gotta get fit and lose that fat asap." For Julius, being out of shape was a sign of indiscipline and fed into negative perceptions of extremists in general, scoffing at LTT after his departure by saying "No more fat nat socs [national socialists]." Squat SS, similarly, dismissed LTT as "a little p***y," and added "strong men don't tolerate weak men." This was not an attitude confined to exercise but extended to the idea of diet. As Squat SS declared, "eat like your race depends on it! Lift like your race depends on it!" Julius developed this perspective by offering a typically "philosophical" analysis of the importance of diet after pointing to Hitler's own fascination with

personal asceticism: "if a man eats too much and becomes obese, he is only comfortable at home. He's focused his life on comfort and abandoned the fight."

The idea of physical and dietary discipline proved central to the notion of strength and masculinity that both Squat SS and Senator Julius saw as necessary to the ideal White activist. In one discussion, Squat SS recounted getting punched in the face, saying "Getting hit sucks but I feel like it's a prerequisite to being a man." Senator Julius couldn't agree more, adding "There isn't any struggle anymore, men need to overcome pain as a rite of massage. Otherwise they won't really reach the next level of manhood." The necessity of personal discipline is central to the creation of men who would serve as "white warriors" within a larger movement.

Beyond LTT, the indiscipline was frequently called out in other extremists. Squat SS seemed quite focused on criticizing other groups and individuals whose activism suffered based on their own personal lack of discipline and strength. He singled out Nick Fuentes, a prominent White extremist,[4] saying "Look at Nick Fuentes, that's nationalism when run by weak men" and, after ensuring that it was acceptable to criticize Fuentes's America First movement, added "I don't want to pretend to like a bunch of beta soyboys[5] who probably can't bench 100." Squat SS also regularly dismissed any desire to interact with "weak men" like LTT on multiple occasions saying things like "I despise quitters" and "if you're a coward, GTFO!" Julius took a bit of a wider view with an eye less to his own likes and dislikes but towards a concern for the movement as a whole, and as we have seen Julius did enjoy mentoring "younger" men who were not quite at his level, allegedly. He would explain "I want this to primarily be a fight club to weed out all the weak people that make bad team members" and added that "people who make bad sparring partners also make bad political allies." Their different perspectives reflect the differences between their attitudes towards Johnny Boy and LTT, with Squat SS inclined to dismiss and exclude "the weak" and Julius instead holding out the hope of training and disciplining such potential activists.

The function of this exclusionary community and its relationship to norms of discipline is well revealed by further examining LTT's involvement in the group, which he joined not for discipline or exercise but to find similarly racist people with whom to talk. LTT appeared to join with the goal of chatting within a pro-racist echo chamber, without any obligation to be a "good sparring partner." LTT seemed deeply unengaged in any discussion of physical discipline or workout routines, aside from being the target of some of Julius' sermons. Instead, he demonstrated a desire to share his rage and fear around contemporary politics. He would make posts like "the media makes my skin

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crawl. It's filled with n***ers and mixed race couples. And all the people I hang around with seem to love it.. just venting, but this is so depressing and discouraging. I can't take it anymore." Often, LTT would make racial jokes and try to present these ideas in humorous ways. This was common throughout the channel, although people like Julius were more serious. LTT often made jokes like "Ever see a black man with a swastika tattoo?? Funniest shit I ever saw" or he would share racist memes like that in Figure 6.1, which also displayed a lack of abstinence as will be discussed. At one point, he shared a video of a young woman singing a racist song about the need to "kill all Jews" and "deport the Mexicans" with an image of Hitler's face serving as a singalong-style bouncing ball.

Figure 6.1: LTT's Non-abstinence Meme

From LTT's interactions, it seemed like he was seeking a space where he would not have to censor himself. He mentioned his frustration about being around people who enjoyed multiculturalism and showed a fondness for telling racist jokes and generally making outrageous comments about extremist politics. He expressed a feeling of alienation from his real-life community, with comments like "I'm a stranger in my own land" or "[my city] is basically n***er town now." This feeling of alienation seemed to encourage him to seek out solidarity with likeminded extremists. His comments reflected how excited he was to find this group, making posts like "we didn't want a fight, but (((they))) forced us to and frankly I'm glad I'm not alone in this." He repeatedly attempted to meet up with other members in real life, outside of official group events, in order to have them sell him home-printed racist stickers or put up the stickers with him. It seems like he was successful in at least one of these

meetups, and he appeared quite excited to join one of the in-person banner drops, posting "This is my first time engaging in political activism!" but also failing to make the meet: "I'm so f***ing disappointed in myself for missing this."

After he left the group, people like Squat SS were particularly vocal about him being a "weirdo" and "all over the f***ing place." I also believed LTT was acting a bit unusually at times and did consider whether he might be a law enforcement mole, although that might have been contagion from Club 14's obsession with detecting and calling out infiltrators. His later autobiographical posts and the nature of his departure generally dissuaded me of that concern, and no group members voiced it after LTT left, suggesting they did not believe that was the case either.

This perception that LTT was "all over the f***ing place" was connected to a perception that he was generally undisciplined. As mentioned, LTT had previously confessed that he was overweight and out of shape, and he also mentioned that he smoked cannabis, tobacco, and drank alcohol which is not surprising given the use of alcohol-related memes such as in Figure 6.1. Julius and Squat SS vociferously denounced LTT's cannabis use, connecting it to his weight and urging him to quit. Julius asserted that "straight edge is the way to go," adding "instead of training to fight you're getting high and getting fat." Squat SS agreed, in a more direct fashion, saying "only k**e f***ots smoke that mexican shit." Despite Squat SS exemplifying the workout-based forms of discipline that Julius espoused, he still struggled with his own forms of substance use and talked at length about his effort to quit smoking tobacco, posting about how he went from cigarettes to snuff to chew and finally to gum: "I've been stuck on the gum for a while now, but one day I'll quit. It's just that everytime something big happens in my life, I start smoking again." He also relayed a story of getting "far too drunk" at an extremist woman's house and expressed the need to apologize for that and drink less. Julius was, as usual, condescending but pedagogic, responding "You really should quit drinking [and smoking] but at least you're trying. That's something brother!"

This notion of discipline went beyond just bodily discipline, at least for Julius and some of the other senior members. Julius' expansive vision for personal discipline involved not just a regular exercise routine but efforts to read, cultivate artistic interests, and study nature. In a description of his day, he relayed how he and his son "did a two mile walk and some sparring. Then we did some work in the weight room and spent almost an hour studying the plants in our garden." Julius presented himself as a prolific reader, often posting books for others to read, including "leftist" texts like *How Nonviolence Protects the State*, *The Conquest of Bread*, and *Rules for Radicals*, as well as

recording very long (30 minutes to an hour) voice memos going through these books and talking about their significance for "the movement." His comment on "studying the plants" helped connects his notion of personal education to a wider variety of subjects, including the need to teach people to respect nature, but also to put animals "in their place," as well as the necessity of cultivating pro-White artistic sensibilities: "not enough whites, even nationalists, listen to classical European music" and "children used to be well educated in multiple languages, including Greek and Latin, it's no surprise why our society declined." While Squat SS and LTT did not usually echo similar ideas about mental discipline, it was clear that they, like many others, had a lot of respect for what Julius had to say. He was regularly acknowledged as an expert, and his chastising of Squat SS was always taken as constructive. When LTT left, he told me specifically that "talking to people like Senator Julius really opened my eyes to the importance of preparing myself and being ready, and that the body is just as important as the mind."

They certainly seemed to resonate with Julius' disciplined attitude towards sex. Julius regularly emphasized the importance of family and monogamy and tried to explain how this was the core of the nationalist cause. This idea is embedded in the 14 words, but he also talked about the need to extend education to the youth, such has his aforementioned son, given the need to "bring our sons up to also fight and, like us and our ancestors, to also die for the cause." The idea of Christian-style family values was quite popular on this site, even among non-Christians, with most members also denouncing pornography, divorce, and birth control, similar to how these were discussed in Chapter Three, although they rarely phrased it as philosophically or militantly as Julius. Squat SS was typical of this, posting about how he thought "casual sex is a sign of mental instability. Real men are committed to things beyond just getting p***y" and added, "I actually get really pissy when I see dudes criticizing goys for being virgins," a reaction which is certainly out of the mainstream of American masculinity. LTT, for his part, used this opportunity to share an intensely personal detail about his life while also showcasing a reason for his own "lack of discipline," in this case sexual promiscuity. He wrote "I mean I was assaulted by my baby sitter at like 13, so I never had a chance to not start with a sexual lifestyle," before adding in his typical joking fashion: "she was hot, I guess."

LTT's last comment here underlines the sense of personal pain that seemed to push him towards the group in question. He told me after leaving the group that he was "used to being the loner after being an involuntary outcast for most of his life," which helps illuminate the eagerness with which he engaged in casual conversation and efforts to meet up with people in the group. He often pointed

to the bleak way he perceived the world, both in terms of his social isolation from "normies" but also pointing to his cannabis use and "overeating" as linked to how depressing the world around him was. As mentioned, he spoke with admiration about the disciplined lifestyle of Julius and seemed to have a desire to emulate it, as his departing message to me emphasized how much he felt he had learned from talking with folks in the group. While he did feel hurt by his lack of inclusion, he said the path forward involved working on his own insufficiency: "I will prepare on my own so that I will be ready. I have plenty of my own problems that I need to focus on. When I have a wife, kids, and some money, I will have something real to defend." Essentially, his promise boiled down to a path towards the sort of disciplined goal that Julius envisioned, despite him having "concerns about the way Club 14 operates," which he refused to elaborate on.

6 Preparing for Violence

Ideally, at this point in the chapter the importance of self-discipline and the way it undergirds the creation of an exclusionary community are clear. If Julius' role is to present the ideal activist, Squat SS tried to live up to that ideal, and LTT was found to be lacking and thus excluded, just as Johnny Boy was immediately excluded. However, why is this discipline so necessary? Why do Club 14 and its related constellation of extremist groups emphasize physical discipline in the form of group workouts and why do other hate groups maintain intense standards about sexual abstinence and drug free lifestyles?[6] Based on my experience in Club 14 the answer has to do with the strategic and careful use of racial violence and terrorism.

Of course, Club 14 purports to be a non-violent group, committed to "legal activism," such as banner drops, but users clearly see that rhetoric as a façade used to protect them from legal action, rather than an actual statement against the use of violence, although a façade that moderators worked hard to maintain. Shortly after joining the group, LTT posted a message which was deleted before I could read it (although Telegram, like Facebook, keeps a placeholder saying that the message was deleted), to which Julius responded "no fedposting!" LTT quickly apologized, responding "oh yeah, sorry, of course. We don't support violence" and including in image of Pepe the frog giving a clear "winking" expression (see Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2: Pepe the frog with a "Just Joking" Expression

Despite this tenuous claim to not support violence, much of the way Julius attempted to discuss "the movement" drew parallels to warfare. While discussing one of his book recommendations, Julius explained that "the rules of war apply to social movements *even before the violence starts*" (italics mine), and his vision of a social movement was a highly hierarchized organization with a clear command structure, modeled after the military. Squat SS, for his part, was more focused on the glorification of violence than more abstract social theories and political objectives. He would post images of Viking warriors with captions like "Hail the struggle. Hail the true fight," or he would frame his own advice within military terminology.

One day when LTT expressed his feelings of alienation and depression, Squat SS appeared sympathetic, responding "constantly being at war with the world takes a toll! How can we stay ready for the fight without getting to land a blow? The warrior is constantly ready for violence!" Regardless of any claims on whether they support violence, group narratives were heavily intertwined with violence for Julius, Squat SS, and LTT. Some group members even discussed their own use of racial violence in the past. Julius mentioned a previous problem with a "big dumb mullato" but did not clarify, likely given the importance of avoiding "fed posting." LTT had less patience for discretion and told the group at length about his expulsion from high school for "scalping a Jew in the middle of a big event," and clarifying that by a "scalping" he meant "yeah, I ripped a part of his scalp off. It wasn't a perfect job." Even Squat SS seemed concerned and responded "Based! But make sure you aren't posting too much identifiable information here."

Because the notion of violence pervaded the group, discipline was necessary. This fits with the imagery of the soldier or the warrior within their discussions of racial politics, as certainly a soldier must be physically and mentally prepared for combat, but Club 14's conception of discipline was more specific and focused on the use of discipline to harness violent anger and use it strategically and carefully. As discussed, for Julius, discipline was an important way to become a successful activist, but violence was itself an important way to become disciplined. At one point he preached that "by engaging in direct violence, a man becomes ready for conflict, which must be his home. He becomes as comfortable fighting as resting. . . only then can be prepared to defend our race." This comment came during the same discussion as one discussed earlier about the dangers of overeating, which likewise make the individual "comfortable" and thus not willing to fight. It isn't just about avoiding being too comfortable, but for Julius was about hardening oneself towards hatred and further violent action: "The purpose of a fight club is to breed men who dislike peace, who hate their enemies, and who are unafraid of pain." However, this did not translate to an "anything goes" style of combat. For Julius, the vision of Club 14 as a fight club was one that taught violence in such a way to create disciplined fighters. He spoke at length of previous times where he started fight clubs among friends, where he would "as the winner I would never gloat. Instead, I would compliment them and try to foster a culture without ego. It was only an issue when people [like the "mulatto" referenced before] would showboat or hit people while they were down." It isn't enough for an activist to be trained for violence, but their physical and mental discipline would allow them to fight as part of a broader team, without ego and without prioritizing their own emotions or egos.

Despite being highly respected as an admin and mentor within Club 14, Julius' idealized view of the disciplined fighter was not shared universally within the group. Instead, I will hope to portray the nuances of views by detailing a pair of debates that Julius engaged in, first with Squat SS and then with LTT. Both of these debates essentially involve Julius chastising his interlocutor for advocating a form of violence that he disapproved of. While he often argued against such actions, it is still important to remember that Julius spoke in particularly pro-violence terms broadly speaking and did relay non-identifiable instances of violent confrontation with anti-racist counter protestors. He was thus not supportive of non-violence but instead an advocate for a particularly disciplined form of martial action.

Squat SS, who was enthusiastic about the idea that Club 14 was "not just for working out but for fighting," presented himself as someone who frequently got into fights in real life. He relayed a

story of drinking at a bar and witnessing a confrontation between some White men and a "n****r." In his retelling, he quickly intervened and "beat the sh*t" out of the non-White participant. This was presented as a noble act, where he saw non-White violence and stepped in, using his own physical prowess to protect fellow Whites, even though they did not seem to either be extremists or acquaintances of his. Julius seemed deeply concerned by this story, not by the violence, but by Squat SS's risk of legal reprisal, remarking "there's plenty of cases of someone knocking someone down, and your ass is in prison for something you could have avoided." Squat SS seemed offended by what he called a "cuck"[7] attitude, retorting "so should we just stand by the wall and watch bad things happen? We are here to protect and be the soldiers the white race needs." He added "fighting will make your girl hot for you too." Julius dismissed this idea, responding "sure, but if you're getting in 'self-defense incidents' that often, you're probably part of the problem," before attempting to de-escalate the situation and maintain civility after which the conversation shifted to other topics. Clearly, many of the themes of masculinity and White violence discussed in Chapter Three are present in Squat SS's diatribe, but this anecdote was presented to make two points. First, according to Julius, Squat SS ought to be more careful about when he uses violence primarily out of a fear of the State punishing him, and second, the violence against non-Whites was not questioned for its morality but for the efficacy of when and where to use it.

On another day, LTT posted a video of an African-American man attempting to destroy some shopping carts at a Wal-Mart and proceeded to rant: "look what these n****s have done to my town." People seemed enthusiastic, joining him in a denunciation of what was seen to be a problem of black criminality. Eventually, LTT added "at this point, it feels like we have to step in when dindus do what dindus[8] do." When asked to clarify what he meant, LTT clearly posted a call for violence, as his message was deleted, and he was chastised for "fedposting." However, Julius reaction made clear what LTT had in mind, as he retorted "imagine going to prison to protect Walmart. If Blacks want to destroy corporate America, it's win-win." LTT seemed shocked by this suggestion, as he apparently either lived near the location or was used to these sorts of incidents in his highly diverse town, responding "aren't we supposed to defend our community?" Julius clarified, "if it's your neighborhood, then that's different, but these corporations hate you and would like to see you replaced by mulato f****ts. They're a cancer." This interaction is again revealing as it helps show that, for Julius, there is a need to be judicious in selecting who the enemy is and who violence should be wielded against. His objection to LTT was not that violence was inappropriate, but that violence

should be saved for defending "your neighborhood." Moreover, just as in his exchange with Squat SS, Julius seemed particularly concerned about using violence indiscriminately given the role of a hostile State and the likelihood that they could go to prison, although he expanded this anti-establishment sentiment to also include a hatred for "corporate America."

In fact, the role of a hostile State helps underscore the vision of disciplined violence present throughout Club 14 and, especially, with Senator Julius. Much of the reason that violence must be conducted from a place of discipline is that the State is prepared to punish White activists. Club 14 was certainly in line with the most anti-establishment categories of individuals discussed during my participant observation in Chapter Four and, while they generally support border security, certainly did not hold that police were treating Whites better, although that last point is a bit nuanced, given a discussion where Squat SS and Julius distinguished between "country cops" and "city cops" with the former more likely to be on their side. Generally, however, the federal government was seen as deeply inimical to White interests. At one point, Squat SS mocked anti-fascists for "calling for violence despite the fact that we are the ones who constantly prepare for it." Julius responded with "It's because they have the state on their side, that's why antifa holds events next to federal buildings." In another conversation, Julius described the cops as "wiling to do whatever their system masters tell them," adding "antifa = cops and cops = antifa." Squat SS appeared to agree, posting "yeah, the relationship between cops and antifa is gayer than broke back mountain" and somewhat strangely adding "ACAB."[9]

7   Gender in Club 14

Club 14 is an unequivocally White organization. This is clear in their name, given the fourteen words, their vetting process, and the overarching discourse of the organization. However, that does not mean that issues of gender are not present in the group and an understanding of gendered discourse situates this notion of an exclusive community as a deeply men-centric and hetero-normative one. Club 14 is either overwhelmingly comprised of men or has its discourse dominated by them, with only one or two women active in the chat. Moreover there was a deep sense of masculinity, as can already be seen in discussions of exercise and violence, where the ideal activist is an idealized male figure, distinct from the feminine "cucks" or gay and trans individuals. It is these idealized men that are to train and do violence, while the women are expected to perform other roles, such as

the raising of children in line with the discussion at the end of Chapter Three and, of course, the fourteen words. Gender was not frequently discussed explicitly, but it was clear that much of the discourse within Club 14 was overtly directed towards men with women consistently relegated as secondary or as a type of asset that men could acquire.

Already, the previously discussed conversations showcased a notion of strength that was deeply tied to masculinity. Beyond just working out, emphasis was placed on lifting large amounts of weights and fighting. While women are certainly able to lift large amounts and fight effectively, it is not a stretch to situate both of these as stereotypically masculine activities. This was certainly how Club 14 members saw them, as they explicitly referred to "being a man" repeatedly and there was no discussion of weight lifting or combat among women. Similarly, any indication of failure was demeaned as being insufficiently masculine. When YT told me about his motivations for activism, he emphasized a desire to "not be a p***y." Moreover the discussion with Johnny Boy makes this trend very clear, as any indication that they did not use traditional pronouns was met with aggression and accusations that they were a "f*g." It is unclear whether Johnny Boy actually used they/them pronouns or, as they suggested, was using that as a joke (the latter being my read of the situation). If so, the notion of they/them pronouns as a joke reflects a deep level of anti-LGBTQ sentiment in the extremist movement and Club 14, which was also reflecting in frequent and disturbing posts dismissing individuals like Lia Thomas as a "freak" who "deserved a good beating." In fact, some of the most shocking posts made in Club 14 were direct attacks on trans people and celebrations of anti-trans violence. However, regardless of the truth about Johnny Boy's pronouns, Squat SS's aggressive reaction to their pronouns and the devolution of their conversation to mutual accusations of the other being a "f*g," help show how masculinity served as an important proxy for strength.

It is also clear that Club 14 members saw themselves as a group of men, referring only to themselves as such and emphasizing the need to spread the message specifically to men. This was evident from the moment I joined and was told by YT that it was a "great group of guys," and this set the pattern for how members would talk about each other. While often they would speak generally about "Whites," they would usually address the group as a whole as men: "hey guys" and "good evening gents," for example. At one point in discussing the need for mass mobilization, Squat SS ranted about the many ways that men could be recruited. The details of his rant are not interesting, except that at one point he referred specifically to women, saying "and women, well I don't know what women want." This was also clear in the way that both Julius and LTT talked about family.

Julius frequently referred to his son, and the need for others to "pass the baton to your sons." It is entirely possible that Julius only has a son, but that would not explain him using autobiographical discussions as inspiration for what other men should do for their "sons" rather than their "children" as such. Similarly, when LTT left, he told me that he would be back when he "has something to defend," namely "a wife and son."

LTT's comment also showcases a relatively subtle way that women were objectified within this group. As Club 14 members frequently talked about women as objects that could be acquired and had to be defended. YT did not tell me about his wife's involvement in activism or whether she supported it, only that she was "pretty" and a symbol of his success comparable to his vehicles and house. Similarly, LTT sought to acquire a wife who would presumably provide him with a son, pursuant to the common extremist, and relatively mainstream, norm that a women's role is fundamentally reproductive. Julius, for his part, discussed his son frequently and never mentioned his wife. Squat SS was presumably not in a relationship, as he alluded to partying with women and never described himself as a "family man." In fact, at one point he offered a way to pick up women by impressing them with violence. While arguing about the need to intervene in fights, as was previously discussed, Squat SS stressed the need to showcase one's masculinity and impressiveness by engaging in such bar brawls, and he promised that this would also "make women hot for you." He did not seem to know what women would want to become involved in activism, despite offering a clear suggestion on acquiring women by showcasing masculinity and violence.

8   Conclusion

Eventually, due to my lack of in-person commitment, I was unceremoniously removed from the group without private message nor explanation. This helps reveal some aspects of the exclusion upon which the community rested; an exclusion based both on weeding out the "weak" or uncommitted and combatting the out-group, whether they be people of color, infiltrators, or law enforcement. I was certainly a member of such an out-group, so my exclusion fits with group aims. I sought to delay this point as long as possible, telling YT that I was travelling for work and similar excuses to avoid in-group activity. It is possible that I just missed too many meetings, that I was insufficiently active in the chat, or simply that group admins were paranoid about "antifa" involvement following counter protests surrounding one of their banner drops.

This chapter is not intended to provide an understanding as to why extremists seek to commit violence, but instead sought to explain how involvement in Club 14 was intertwined with notions of belonging and community, the same notions that have their historical roots in the creation of Whiteness more generally. Club 14 created a community for activists, as long as they fulfilled the expectations and norms expected of them, and these norms and expectations were rooted in idealized notions of powerful White men. The prominence of Greco-Roman symbolism, of stylized White men in pictures, and of profile pictures, like Julius' White general, these norms are overtly associated with classical or mainstream notions of the strong White man. This relationship is similarly evident in "measures of success" like YT's owning a house, cars, and a "pretty wife."

It is not that people are brought into this group and told to commit violence but that they are encouraged to find a "safe space" where they can connect with a welcoming community, in line with Simi and Futrell's "Aryan safe spaces." Once in this space, they join a conversation that consistently embraces violence as a central part of the norms people are included into. The point of being disciplined, abstinent, physically fit, and mentally prepared is to be read to do violence against racial enemies and promote the future of the White race. Violence is thus a fundamental part of this process, where the norms being inculcated are, in fact, violence norms. This helps relate to the process of radicalization that Blee (2017) discusses, where people frequently join hate groups and learn violence. For Club 14, at least, this process of learning violence and extreme racism is also part of a process of assimilating and internalizing a particularly extreme, overt, and anti-establishment form of White identity.

Notes

[1] The 14 words are an extremist slogan, generally popular in all types of extremist groups: "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children." It is, of course, the inspiration for the name Club 14.

[2] Fedposting was a term commonly used by Club 14 members to denounce any speech that could be used as an excuse by law enforcement to accuse them of planning violence. Such messages were frequently deleted and censured.

[3] I saw this emoji repeatedly in Club 14, and it signifies a Nazi salute.

[4] https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/nick-fuentes

[5] A "beta" refers essentially to the opposite of an "alpha" man, while a "soyboy" is similarly effeminate, drawing from the myth that soy consumption increases estrogen levels.

[6] https://gen.medium.com/why-are-the-proud-boys-so-obsessed-with-masturbation-c9932364ebe2

[7] A slur intended to call the opponent "unmanly" or "weak," derived from the term cuckolding.

[8]"Dindu" is a common anti-Black slur that plays on virulently racist stereotypes of Black criminality and low intelligence, as in Black suspects saying "I dindu [didn't do] anything"

[9]All Cops are Bastards

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Conclusion

The politics of White violence have seen numerous developments between 2015 and 2023. Alt-right stalwarts like Richard Spencer, Milo Yiannoupoulos, and even *The Daily Stormer* have faded from prominence in favor of formerly marginal figures like Nick Fuentes, while groups like the Proud Boys and the Oathkeepers appear increasingly irrelevant and mired in legal trouble. Donald Trump, while still a major political figure, shares the spotlight with Ron DeSantis and Tucker Carlson as mainstream fascination for the far-right. Immigration and the Syrian refugee crisis have increasingly been replaced by virulent transphobia and debates over elementary school curricula.

At the same time, it feels as though very little has changed, and each of these trends has the potential to reverse. Even two years after the killings, Kyle Rittenhouse continues to serve as a minor celebrity among many right-wing groups,[1] and similar violence by vigilantes such as Daniel Perry has received mainstream support on both Carlson's former talk show and from Texas Governor Greg Abbott.[2] Major media personalities, across the right-wing media landscape, have adopted aggressively revisionist interpretations of the Capitol riot, downplaying the violence and framing the ensuing prosecutions as forms of political persecution.[3]

2015 and 2016 were watershed moments in contemporary White politics, because they saw a major extremist movement, the alt-right, mobilize to support Donald Trump electorally, signally the first national far-right electoral movement since the 1960s. Yet with Trump's presidency came divisions within the alt-right, and the disastrous march in Charlottesville, not to mention the fallout of the Capitol riot, further marginalized and disorganized extremist groups. Trump served as a vehicle for both mainstream and extremist Whites to realize pro-White interests, but ultimately even this vehicle required violence in the form of Proud Boys, vigilante action, and an attempted insurrection. The failures of this vehicle increasingly divided Whites over concrete tactical questions of how to advance White violence, with some growing disillusioned and thus more sympathetic to

violence and others continuing to seek out mainstream figures that now include Florida Governor DeSantis and Tucker Carlson.

This is in part because, while the circumstances and contours of White political violence constantly change, the phenomenon itself is so fundamentally intertwined with American politics that it continues to persist as an important issue. This dissertation is unable to fully explore all the conditions that lead to disparate manifestations of White political attitudes, or the behaviors of extremists, electorally minded or not. Instead, it sought to provide a clear basis for how identitarian and extremist Whites see their attachment to Whiteness and how this relates to the exclusionary and violent nature of that racial construct. I hope this dissertation can serve as a guide for understanding ongoing developments in White racial politics going forward. By seeing that Whites embrace violence, either through electoral institutions, in addition to electoral institutions, or instead of them, to enforce White hierarchy, and further seeing that violent attitudes emerge out of a White identity that is mobilized by perceived threats, this theoretical framework acts as a blueprint for understanding the role of violence White racial politics.

In order to best understand how this framework can serve as such a guide, this conclusion will first review the chapters of the dissertation, showing how my key findings fit together into a clear theory of White political violence. Then, I will synthesize these findings to show how they help make sense of the alt-right and the recent history of American White extremism. The dissertation will then conclude by returning to the larger theoretical framework of Whiteness as a central feature of American politics to gesture at a path forward towards confronting White political violence.

1 Key Findings

The central empirical findings of this dissertation were presented in Chapter Three. While research on White in-group identity, such as Jardina (2019), is invaluable to beginning to understand the politics of White violence, this chapter attempted to situate that research within the unique position that Whites have at the apex of the American racial hierarchy. Specifically this meant drawing from the racial formation discussion in Chapter Two to show how White in-group identity is particularly tied to out-group animus and, in turn, how White consciousness serves as a central predictor for support for political violence. Importantly, despite the relationship between out-group

animus and White consciousness, this relationship between support for violence and White consciousness is much stronger than that for just out-group animus.

Similarly, my qualitative research helps add nuance to this finding, suggesting that support for violence is specifically rooted in feelings of threat. Only the most extreme communities actively framed violence as desirable, but most communities saw violence as an inevitable reaction to group threats. This was true of almost all groups which saw violence emerging as responses to Black criminals, anti-racist or anti-fascist protesters, or other perceived antagonists, and more extreme groups only really differed in terms of layering more structural and systemic grievances into this mindset. This helps provide context for the relationship between in-group consciousness and out-group animus, as perceptions of threatening antagonists play into a larger narrative of racial threats, either in terms of "violent African-Americans" or in terms of broader "anti-White" discrimination. Thus the very relationship between animus, threat, and White consciousness is intertwined with the resultant support for political violence.

However, because support for violence, while robustly connected to a sense of White consciousness, is largely concentrated to a fringe of the population, i.e. those whose White consciousness is unusually intense, the remainder of the dissertation largely looked at a subset of White identitarians in the form of White extremists, including overt White supremacist activists, neo-Nazis, and other varieties of violent pro-Whites. By analyzing racist violence in Chapter Four, I hoped to show how such violence must be seen as a political phenomenon. This was shown by exploring how national events, such as Trump's election, led to increased levels of hate crimes, and I also found that hate groups serve as crucial organizing vehicles for hate crime prevalence. In both cases, political organizing appears central. However, these findings point us in different directions.

The first of these is that explored in Chapter Five which helped show that White extremists were mobilized by Trump's campaign, not only to employ violence as discussed in Chapter Four, but also to support the candidate and organize across the alt-right as a pan-extremist political movement. Moreover, they were motivated by the same appeals to White consciousness discussed in Chapter Three, appeals to the very predisposition that underlies support for political violence among Whites. This helps provide an instance where both White extremists and White identitarians appear motivated by their their attachment to Whiteness to support a mainstream candidate for president, looking to electoral politics as a vehicle for White group interests. While obviously only one instance of this tendency, the confluence of hate crimes, White extremist mobilizing, and White identitarian

support for Trump reveal how attachments to Whiteness extend beyond just support for violence but for a political candidate that vowed to wield State violence on behalf of those same White group interests.

Finally, Chapter Six helped further understand how White extremists, through their attachment to Whiteness, perceive political violence. Building on the importance of hate group organizing in the perpetuation of violence, this chapter delved further into the intra-hate group dynamics that contribute to political violence. I emphasize the centrality of violence both as a mechanism for self-improvement among hate group members but also as a facet of community building. Yet, at the same time, this was a hostile form of self-improvement and an exclusionary community, in that violence served to prepare members to defend their "brothers" from racial enemies and the hostile, Jewish controlled world around them. Similarly, the violence serves as a way to police deviancy within the group which in turn helps establish group members as strong, discipline warriors in contrast to either weak Whites or undisciplined and vicious racial Others. This helps build on the findings in Chapter Three by seeing how White self-identity and in-group consciousness are not only intertwined with threat and out-group animus, but how this relationship is one mediated through violence.

This in turn connects to the broader theoretical arguments provided in Chapter Two. Whiteness emerged as a category of in-group identity through the process of exclusion, be it the exclusion of African-Americans, indigenous people, or even the Irish, but that line was porous and mediated through violence. Just as Club 14 saw efforts to police the boundary of inclusion, such as by intimidating and excluding "weak" Whites, so did 19th century Whites police Whiteness by rooting out "degeneracy." The fundamental play of out-group animus, threat, and in-group solidarity, and the ways in which violence serves as an important vehicle therein, shows itself in my statistical research, my field work, and the historical development of Whiteness as an identity. This presents White identity as a unique construct born out of its own history of violent Whiteness, and it situates Whiteness as a particularly violent, hostile, and exclusionary form of group identity. Not only does this help avoid false equivalencies between dominant and marginalized racial groups, but it provides a great understanding as to the implications and possible ramifications of an increasingly salient form of groups consciousness in the United States.

2   The Alt-Right in Context

Overall, this dissertation has sought to understand the alt-right within the context of broader historical phenomenon but also to use the alt-right as a contemporary phenomenon that helps reveal dynamics within these historical phenomenon. The goal of the current section is to attempt to more cleanly synthesize the theoretical framework of Chapter Two with the empirical findings discussed during the rest of the dissertation. This is important both as a way of continuing to unpack the broader theoretical and historical context but also as a method of better grappling with and discussing the contemporary phenomenon. Whereas much contemporary discussion of White extremist violence denounces it as un-American or criminally deviant, I contended in Chapter Two that the fixation on either "foreignness" or "deviance" fails to see the centrality of violence to Whiteness and to American democracy more broadly. This section thus attempts to reframe the conversation given the theoretical insights yielded thus far.

The alt-right must be seen, as has been argued by Futrell and Simi (2017), as a new incarnation of a long historical movement of White extremism, sharing in the tradition of the post Civil Rights militia movement (Belew, 2018), the anti-Civil Rights Klan (Cunningham, 2012), the right-wing populism of the 1920s (McVeigh and Estep, 2019), and of course the long history of lynching (Du Bois, 1935). These are dramatically different movements in many ways, but each can be seen as a violent movement mobilized to maintain the color line during periods where it is under threat, such as through either the symbolic changes in Whiteness, such as that which occurred surrounding the Irish, or actual political and material threats by out-groups, such as the economic and political power promised to African-Americans by the Freedman's Bureau or the Civil Rights Act.

Still, they are dramatically different movements with their own internal complexities and nuances, and each responded to a particular historical situation. By understanding how the alt-right fits into its own political landscape, we can better understand it's significance within this longer history. As discussed in Chapters One and Two, the contemporary landscape is marked by three particularly relevant features. The first of these is the pronounced salience of race in American politics. The past decade and a half has seen increased racialization of public opinion via President Obama (Tesler, 2016), a rise in racial hostility over immigration (Abrajano and Hajnal, 2015), and mainstream conservative and racially resentful populism in the form of the Tea Party (Lowndes, 2021; Parker, 2016; Skocpol and Williamson, 2016). This salience in out-group animus, moreover, coincides with

the increased salience of White in-group identification in what is perhaps the most dramatic of these developments (Jardina, 2019). While racism never ceased to be a major feature in American politics, the colorblind period saw a shift towards cloaking racism in "racially-neutral" frames that emphasize "fairness" or "individual responsibility," (Bonilla-Silva, 2003) but the increased salience of both out-group animus and White in-group identification serve as a distinctive, arguably "post-colorblind" environment in American racial politics.

Second, this mainstream salience is concurrent with trends among White extremist groups to appeal more to the mainstream and sanitize their image to emphasize "White civil rights" and other appeals to in-group identification and less virulent racism than is traditional on the far-right (Berbrier, 2000; Saslow, 2018). This dissertation does not take a stance as to whether this change in tactics is rooted in observations about the mainstream susceptibility to such rhetoric, but it does set the stage for a change in the previously anti-establishment militia movement (Belew, 2018) to become more engaged with mainstream politics (Blee, 2017), eventually leading to extremists' embrace of Donald Trump.

Finally, Mbembe's account of "inversion" as presented in Chapter Two helps make sense of these events. Such an account situates them both as an extension of historical efforts to use violence to maintain the boundaries of Whiteness but also as emerging out of a novel threat to Whiteness born out of the widespread collapse of the color line through the emergence of a Black President or increasing levels of immigration. This collapse then necessitates further violence than previous more well contained threats to the color line ever did. For Mbembe, Western democracies emerged out of the practice of using violence to "satisfy mores" but kept that violence hidden and separate from the body politic through the use of racial designations or "non-places," but this process also resulted in the creation of fundamentally hostile and paranoid form of in-group cohesion which must conjure an enemy in order to justify the violence necessary to maintain society (Mbembe, 2019). Yet, as Mbembe argues, the contemporary period has been unable to maintain this tenuous but necessary boundary. As the West sees increasing diversity, political power for racial minorities, and a challenge to it's exclusive notion of Whiteness and privilege, that same violence becomes increasingly common place within civil society, as does the increasingly malleable and spectral figure of the "enemy." As discussed, Mbembe's account of violence fits closely with the historical accounts of Omi and Winant (2009), (Ignatiev, 2009), and Du Bois (1935), among others, in tracking how the deployment of violence serves as an important vehicle for the development and maintenance of Whiteness.

It was my hope through Chapter Two to demonstrate the applicability of Mbembe's diagnosis but further that this applicability is even more evident after the intervening empirical chapters. These chapters portray White identitarians of various varieties as feeling increasingly under threat, alienated, and unable to rely on the extant political institutions. The last tendency was especially true among White extremist groups, of course. Moreover, Whites perceived enemies to be both prolific and diverse, expressing concerns over Latinos, LGBTQ folk, African-Americans, feminists, Jews, White race traitors, and even sympathetic but weak Whites. For White extremists, we can see a series of paranoias rooted in fears of law enforcement, systematic discrimination, and even White genocide. Whites from "mainstream" to "extreme" often framed violence as a necessary response to these enemies, either as a form of self-defense, a response to provocations, or as a tool to deal with a political problem. Each of these justifications were offered for Kyle Rittenhouse, for instance.

This violence, moreover, is rooted in the collapse in separation that Mbembe describes. The enemy is everywhere, because they are able to cross the border, "groom" American children, defy the law, and even secure the White House. In other words, the traditional mechanisms of keeping enemies confined in "non-places" and excluded from society through the color line has broken down completely. In September 2015, Andrew Anglin exemplified this point in a post on *The Daily Stormer,* writing "Take a look at [Obama's] family and ask if that's an American family, or if that's a group of foreigners who are interlopers in our country."[4]. This idea of interlopers ties into both my quantitative evidence on anti-Latino and anti-Muslim animus, but also to the way members of pro-White sub-communities fret about "invaders" and even Jews. In each case, the framing is that of an element hostile to the American (White) populace, whose presence undermines it, either intentionally or inevitably.

Yet, a major part of this dissertation looks not at how Whites are alienated from mainstream politics but how Donald Trump motivated Whites to vote for him, organize politically, and use violence and intimidation at major moments of his campaign. This event signifies both White identitarians and extremists unifying behind a candidate, but it also shows extremists using violence in celebration of Trump's political victory, blurring the line between mainstream action and violent fringe extremism. During the process of inversion, Mbembe contends that the State becomes "decentered" (56). This does not mean that the State is not important, but that it becomes one of many "new forms of association" that perpetuate a newly aggressive and violent "struggle against an enemy" (42). The 2016 election was not just about securing the Presidency for a candidate perceived as pro-White, it

was about building a White extremist movement with an eye both towards mainstream influence and also towards the wielding of political violence.

Mbembe argued that this process of inversion signifies the return of "faraway" violence to the core of civil society which, alongside the breakdowns of traditional institutions, paves the way for an increasing violent, oppressive, and austere future, where overt violence takes the place of democratic norms, just as currently exists in the "late modern colony" (91). As colonial violence returns home to the metropole, the same violent tactics are also deployed ushering in a "permanent condition of "being in pain": fortified structures, military posts, and roadblocks everywhere... bones broken; shootings and fatalities - a certain kind of madness" (91). This dissertation does not seek to predict a future path for American democracy or anything quite so bold. However, I hope to present this state of affairs as indicative of Mbembe's framework in order to present this as a clear possibility. With out-group animus integral to Whiteness and to attachments towards Whiteness, the growth and salience of those out-groups can only result in mobilizing Whites through their Whiteness, thus mobilizing them to violence and to the use of both State and interpersonal forms of that violence, and it remains uncertain how severe the long-term impacts of these trends will be.

Thus, seeing contemporary White extremism as a sign of Mbembe's process of inversion stands as a distinctive framework from those criticized that paints such violence as a "foreign" threat to American democracy. It is not that White violence serves as a challenge to American values, but that it emerges out of the fundamental contradictions within American values, specifically the contradiction between democracy and the violent exclusion that has been used to maintain it in the United States. Such a conclusion encourages us not to look towards deradicalization or penal tactics to prevent White political violence, although both of those strategies can have a role, but instead at unpacking how this violence emerges out of our own attachments to Whiteness, implicit or explicit.

3   Implications on Moving Forward

Based on this framework, confronting White political violence requires more than the deployment of State violence, the election of non-White candidates, or even the de-platforming of hate groups, although this is not to say that these tactics cannot play a role. Instead, White Americans must confront their own attachments to Whiteness, interrogating what being White confers and how it structures our worldviews in diverse and subtle ways.

This is the task Malcolm X (1992) set for White Americans near the end of his autobiography:

> Where the really sincere white people have got to do their 'proving' of themselves is not among the black *victims*, but out on the battle lines of where America's racism really *is* - and that's in their own home communities; America's racism is among their own fellow whites. That's where the sincere whites who really mean to accomplish something have got to work (384).

In other words, White anti-racism must "teach non-violence to white people!" (Ibid.)

While overt support for illegal White violence may not be widespread, many Whites express support for Kyle Rittenhouse, a lack of sympathy for the murder of George Floyd, and even justifications for the murder of Ahmaud Arbery. Even more Whites promote law enforcement violence, immigration detention, and even the separation of immigrant families, while still more fail to express concern for the violence underlying White economic privilege. While these latter forms of violence are not extensively discussed in this dissertation, they complement my analysis of informal and interpersonal analysis and help again situate it into the theories of racial hierarchy and social dominance provided by Masuoka and Junn (2013) and Sidanius and Pratto (1999). This helps broaden the scope of the task set for White Americans, as attachment to Whiteness goes well beyond White extremists and its violence goes well beyond informal and interpersonal acts of terror.

In fact, Whites need to work through the inner contours of Whiteness and White identity and face the ways that it is integrated with anti-Black animus, and out-group animus more broader. James Baldwin (1962) contends in "Letter from a Region of My Mind" that Whites "have had to believe for many years, and for innumerable reasons, that black men are inferior to white men," and that this compulsion has also led to our being "trapped in a history which they do not understand; and until they understand it, they cannot be released from it." For Baldwin, anti-racism is necessary not just for the liberation of marginalized groups, but to rescue Whites from the blind alley of our racial attachment. He points out that White identity is very much at stake here, as Whites ceasing to be racist is akin to

> the loss of their identity. Try to imagine how you would feel if you woke up one morning to find the sun shining and all the stars aflame. You would be frightened because it is out of the order of nature. Any upheaval in the universe is terrifying because it so profoundly attacks one's sense of one's own reality. Well, the black man has functioned in the white

man's world as a fixed star, as an immovable pillar and as he moves out of his place, heaven and earth are shaken to their foundations (Ibid.).

The question is not so easy as imprisoning members of extremist groups or challenging these ideologies and organizations in concrete ways. Such efforts are often necessary to contain the situation, but by seeing White violence as rooted in White identity and Whiteness more broadly, to actually resolve these issues involves tackling some of the deeper questions of racial politics and identity. Clearly this conclusion points not just to the need for further research into Whiteness and White violence but to the need for Whites to engage more broadly in how other thinkers, and especially Black thinkers such as Baldwin and Malcolm, have spoken to the potential for Whites to work against Whiteness and its concomitant violence.

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