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Mainstreaming Hate: An Analysis of the Rebranding of White Supremacy

Lowell Smith
Walden University

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Lowell Smith

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Walden University
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Abstract

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by

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MA, California Baptist University, 2008

BS, California Baptist University, 2009

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

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August 2023

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative dissertation was to examine the feasibility of white supremacist and white nationalist organizations' abilities to alter their appearance and gain increased support in White American society. Nationalist agendas pushed by mainstream political platforms have been used by white supremacist and white nationalist organizations to alter their appearance and embed themselves into a political environment that has seen the former President of the United States Donald Trump and congressional representatives openly associating with known and self-proclaimed white nationalists. The research question included the understanding the perspectives of two civil rights organizations who work to address white supremacy and white nationalism. Ten interviews were analyzed to identify codes that were then analyzed to uncover themes. Five themes that emerged included political environment, nationalism, changing appearance, Christian nationalism, and internationalist movements. Results provided insight into a relatively new public threat known as "accelerationism" and it clearly reflects the role the American political environment can play in aiding the growth of white supremacy and white nationalism. Implications for positive social change include better understanding of the methods and strategies deployed by racist organizations to increase membership, become more active in society, and contribute to the growth of hate and violence that can destabilized society.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my wife, Cindy, and our children Eric, Devon, Mark, and Holly. For my Cindy, I deeply appreciate the sacrifice you have made by being alone for hours while I was conducting research and writing. You were always there to push and support me during times I felt like giving it all up. For the kids, you had endured me always having to take a laptop on our vacations, events planned around my academic schedules, and even calling and asking if I had time to talk. I truly appreciate everyone's patience and support.

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I also wanted to extend by appreciation to Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), while many may dread the IRB process, I can honestly say I learned a great deal from the IRB which not only helped strengthen my academic research skills, I will be able to use these skills in making my students better researchers and writers. Last but surely not least, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Kimberley Blackmon for all her support and guidance during my doctoral journey.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Problem	iv
Background of the Study	2
Problem Statement	5
Purpose.....	7
Research Question	7
Theoretical Framework.....	7
Nature of the Study	9
Definitions of Terms	9
Assumptions.....	10
Scope and Delimitations	11
Limitations	11
Significance of the Study	12
Summary	12
Chapter 2: Literature Review	13
History of American Nationalism.....	13
History of White Supremacy in the U.S.	20
Donald Trump’s Nationalist Political Agenda.....	33
Summary	37
Chapter 3: Research Methods	39
Research Question	39
Research Design and Rationale	40

Interview Questions	40
Targeted Population and Sample	42
Procedures	42
Data Collection	43
Data Analysis	44
Ethical Procedures	45
Summary	46
Chapter 4: Results	47
Research Question	48
Setting	48
Participant Selection and Demographics	48
Data Collection	49
Data Analysis	50
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	50
Results.....	54
Summary	68
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations	69
Interpretation of the Findings.....	69
Summation of the Study Findings.....	81
Limitations	82
Recommendations.....	83
Implications.....	85

Conclusion	86
References.....	88
Appendix A: Invitation to Participate	109
Appendix B: Interview Questions.....	110

List of Tables

Table 1. Years Involved in Study of White Supremacist/White Nationalist Groups55

Table 2. Emergent Themes60

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Problem

White dominance as a social norm date back to the era of the European quest for colonization and involved strengthening economic and political ambitions. White supremacy or White dominance was an accepted practice prior to the founding of the United States (Gordon-Reed, 2018). Social, economic, and political environments have provided required conditions to allow White dominant practices and policies to be hidden within a nationalistic purview in order to garner support for biased agendas.

White supremacy is “a political, economic, and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, and in which white dominance and non-white subordination exists across abroad array of institution and social settings” (Wilson, 2018, p. 3) The White supremacist movement today has been provided an advantageous pathway to augment its membership and activities by shifting its appearance and embedding itself in social and political issues that has allowed for White supremacy tenets to be embraced in mainstream society under the guise of White nationalism (Hartzell, 2018; Maskovsky, 2017). A large group of white nationalists gathered for a unite the right/alt-right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017 to protest the removal of the Robert E. Lee statue which they viewed was an attack on their Southern heritage as well as the need to protect and preserve the White race (Amaya, 2018). The events that took place at Charlottesville highlighted the evolutionary nature of white supremacy.

The alt-right white nationalistic doctrine endorsed by some political figures including President Donald Trump and Steven Bannon contributed to a societal climate where certain populations are viewed as threats to the American culture and way of life. Due to vilification of immigrant, Black, and Muslim populations under the guise of nationalism, white supremacist and white nationalist groups have been empowered to target certain demographics that are feared to be a threat to both the security of the U.S. and White Anglo-European heritage while openly seeking acceptance in mainstream society (Boehme & Isom, 2020; Giroux, 2017; Inwood, 2019;). The ultimate objective of the alt-right movement is to become advocates and defenders of White culture in a way that the movement feels the current conservative political environment has failed to do.

This study will fill a gap in knowledge concerning how white supremacy has been mainstreamed in the U.S. by exploring and identifying factors and pathways that have resulted in increased white supremacist activity, which is a significant threat to public safety.

Background of the Study

Preserving Anglo/European heritage via a nationalism ethos in mainstream American society has received sustained political and social support since President Donald Trump's first presidential campaign (Davila-Figueroa, 2017). The nationalist posture motivated by political leaders such as President Trump and Steven Bannon provided an ideal environment for white supremacists to take their place in mainstream

society (Amaya, 2018). The founding of the alt-right movement provided a mechanism for white supremacy to flourish in society.

The alt-right movement experienced overwhelming acceptance within the white nationalist audience and led to one of the largest demonstrations for white heritage to take place in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017. The Unite the Right rally at Charlottesville attracted hundreds of pro-White supporters from various known white nationalist, white supremacist, and Anglo/European heritage groups. They conducted two marches while chanting known pro-White and white supremacist slogans (Hartzell, 2018; Moten, 2018). During each of these marches, violence broke out between supporters of the Unite the Right rally and counterdemonstrators, which ended up with one person killed and several others injured.

Following the Charlottesville incident, the alt-right movement ceased to exist in its current form and transformed into what is now known as identity politics which involves professing the same nationalistic perspective of protecting the white racial culture and identity (Phillips & Yi, 2018). The embracing of identity politics has contributed to both an increase in white nationalist beliefs expressed in society and the formation of organized groups advocating for societal policies to protect European-American cultures. One particular goal of these groups is an immigration policy that is in favor of traditional European countries (Romano & Daum, 2018). White nationalist discourse that has circulated in both societal and political environments has attracted

individuals who openly profess white supremacist beliefs that have resulted in severe acts of violence targeting various demographics both internationally and in the U.S.

On June 17, 2015, Dylan Roof entered a predominantly African American church in South Carolina where he shot and killed nine people, injuring one. Roof left behind a manifesto where he mentioned African Americans and Hispanics as a threat to the Anglo-European culture. On March 15, 2019, Brenton Harrison Tarrant entered a New Zealand mosque and killed fifty-one people while injuring 40. Tarrant's seventy-four-page manifesto showed his support for the alt-right movement in the U.S. and his animosity towards immigrants and Muslim populations. On October 27, 2018, Robert Bowers entered a synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he shot and killed eleven people, injuring six. Bowers openly professed his hatred toward Jewish populations on social media forums where he considered the Jewish population a threat to Anglo-European culture in the U.S. (Jones, 2018; Maly, 2019; Moses, 2019). Bowers brought significant attention to social media and the role it plays in the spreading of racial-based hatred.

On April 27, 2018, John Timothy Earnest entered a synagogue in Poway, California, where he shot and killed one person while injuring three others. Earnest also published a manifesto that he posted online professing to be a white nationalist and held the biggest threats to Western European culture and heritage were Jews, Muslims, and immigrants. On August 3, 2019, Patrick Wood Crusis went to a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, and shot and killed twenty-three people while twenty-three others were injured. Crusis, an admitted white nationalist, also published a manifest where he deemed that the

Anglo-European heritage was at risk of being replaced by immigrant populations because of their high birth rates. Crusis also commented on the increasing size of the Hispanic population in Texas and how the political environment would shift to support Hispanics over Anglo-Europeans (Bjorgo & Ravndal, 2019; Quek, 2019; Ware, 2020). In each of these five incidents, assailants used a nationalistic dogma to justify violent activities supporting white supremacy.

When blatant acts of white supremacist activities occur in society, condemnation of such acts is usually abrupt, and consequences can be substantial. Nationalistic traits in political and societal environments have provided the ideal pathway for white supremacist tenets to garner more significant social support. Participants who took part in the Capitol attack in Washington D.C. on January 6, 2021, varied considerably. Some individuals acted independently, while some associated with more significant ideological movements, including white nationalist, white supremacist, and neo-Nazi movements (Campion & Poynting, 2021). The current study is significant because it involved examining how adherents of white supremacist beliefs have expanded support for racially based policies and mainstream social activities.

Problem Statement

The issue of white supremacy and white dominance can be traced back to an era before the founding of the U.S. (Gordon-Reed, 2018). Public policies and directives directed to benefit citizens of the U.S. by using a nationalistic purview has allowed for an increase in white supremacist activity. By using the nationalist ethos, white supremacists

have been able to modify their public appearance and embed themselves into nationalist social and political environments in mainstream society (Hartzell, 2018; Maskovsky, 2017). The alt-right white nationalist doctrine endorsed by certain political figures, including President Donald Trump and Steven Bannon, contributed to a societal climate where specific populations are seen as a threat to the American culture and way of life.

Due to vilification of immigrant, Black, and Muslim populations under the guise of nationalism, white supremacist and white nationalist groups have targeted specific demographics that are feared to be a threat to both the security of the U.S. and the White Anglo-European heritage while openly seeking acceptance in mainstream society (Boehme & Isom, 2020; Giroux, 2017; Inwood, 2019). The ultimate objective of the alt-right movement is to become advocates and defenders of White culture that the movement feels the current conservative political environment has failed to do.

Espousing hatred towards other demographics and proclaiming a need to protect Anglo-European heritage and culture have been featured in several manifestos following acts of violence, including the 2018 Pittsburgh synagogue shooting, 2019 Poway synagogue shooting, and 2019 El Paso shooting. Also, there has been a marked increase of hate crime activity directed towards Hispanics (Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], 2019; Ware, 2020). This research will fill a gap in understanding how white supremacy grew in mainstream society.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to better understand methods used by white supremacist organizations and their supporters to alter and disguise their extremist ideologies effectively enough for them to garner increased political and social support in White American culture. I identified specific approaches used by white supremacy adherents to disseminate biased ideologies masked by nationalistic concepts. This study involved using a qualitative paradigm where semi-interviews were conducted with representatives from two civil rights organizations who specialize in research and monitoring of white supremacist and white nationalist organizations in order to develop a greater understanding of their beliefs in White American political and societal environments.

Research Question

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What are perspectives concerning the ability of white nationalist and white supremacist organizations in terms of gaining increased support in White American society?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory (SCT). The SCT involves highlighting the psychological importance that social learning environments and environmental influences play in terms of motivation and learning (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). The generic social learning theory has often

been used to explain white supremacist behavior, but this often overlooks the role motivation and reinforcement plays in this type of extremist behavior.

The SCT has been used to explain reasons and motivations involved in forms of extremist behavior such as terrorism (Abbasi et al., 2017). The SCT was used to address how individual motivation can take place by effectively using personal behavioral and environmental mechanisms as a means to spread racial-based philosophies.

White supremacists who engage in flagrant activities in public encounter repudiation of their ideologies and activities. Nationalist dialogue involving patriotic duty and protection of American culture has effectively provided pathways for white supremacist leaders to entice a growing number of individuals into supporting white nationalist agendas focused on the preservation of Anglo-European culture. Abbasi et al. (2017) articulated two the elements that fashion individual behavior are punishment and reinforcement, which both have positive and negative impacts. Motivation and its environmental and psychological influences shape behavior among individuals and groups who are active within white nationalist movements.

The SCT has been used to illustrate why individuals become radicalized and then participate in acts of terrorism. Radicalized individuals commonly feel some degree of social loss which can lead to participation in racialized groups and movements. Manifestos posted by perpetrators of race-based mass shootings frequently contain narratives where shooters attempt to justify their actions. Bandura's SCT can be used to explain methods white supremacist adherents can use to effectively alter their ideologies

and activities by embedding them into mainstream societal movements, resulting in growth of race-based targeted violence.

Nature of the Study

The goal of this study was to explore how white supremacist ideologies have been able to become more prevalent in mainstream American society. I examined various societal and political environments that have contributed to growth and acceptance of white supremacy ethos. By using a qualitative approach to explore the phenomenon, I was able to gain insights regarding data collected during the study. The qualitative approach was used to observe how white supremacist beliefs have been embedded into conservative social and political movements in the U.S., which has led to mainstreaming of white supremacy in society. A deductive analysis of data collected during this study was used to illustrate the study findings.

Data generated during this study came from interviews with representatives from two civil rights organizations who are recognized as experts on white supremacy who actively monitor and conduct research of white supremacist organizations. The use of semi-structured interviews to collect the data and gain insights regarding methods used by white supremacist organizations to generate support for extremist ideologies in the U.S. provided an in depth understanding of the phenomenon being explored.

Definitions of Terms

Alt-Right: Right-wing political movement whose core values promote adoption of

White identity political strategies in order to protect the Anglo-European

American heritage with the ultimate goal of establishing white ethnostates (Hawley, 2018, p. 7).

Anti-Defamation League (ADL): Founded in 1913, the ADL is a civil rights organization that conducts research and provides educational programs to support the civil rights for all people. The ADL confronts antisemitism, extremism and hate, and discrimination globally (ADL, 2022).

Identity Politics: Discourses and movements involving questions of religious, ethnic, and national identity (Moghadam, 2019, p. 4).

Manifesto: Written statement of belief and aims (Glaveanu et al., 2020, p. 741).

Nationalism: Ideology that values membership in a nation greater than other groups while striving to preserve the national preference (Jenne, 2018, p. 546).

White Nationalism: The belief that a national identity should be built around White ethnicity, and White people should therefore maintain both a demographic majority and dominance over national culture (Taub, 2016, p. 1).

White Supremacy: A political, economic, and cultural system in which Whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, and White dominance and non-White subordination exist across institutions and social settings (Wilson, 2018, p. 3).

Assumptions

There were three primary assumptions that were made in this study. The first assumption was that specific political ideologies promoting a nationalist agenda provided the means for white supremacist ideologies to spread in White American society. The

second assumption is that the nationalist agenda promoted increased activity of white nationalism and played a significant role in several white nationalist terrorist attacks both in the U.S. and other countries. The third assumption was using a qualitative research method involving semi-structured interviews of subject matter experts on the subject of white supremacy would allow for rich data needed to fully understand how to spread white supremacist ideologies in American society.

Scope and Delimitations

This study involved social movements in the U.S. that could be manipulated by white supremacist adherents to advance these ideologies into mainstream American culture. Political and societal movements supporting nationalist agendas were studied to assess roles they play in the advancement of white supremacy in the U.S.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with a total of ten representatives from two civil rights organizations who are recognized experts on the subject of white supremacy. In addition, I explored manifestos published by both national and international far-right domestic extremist assailants to ascertain nationalist themes contained within their writings.

Limitations

There were two limitations identified while conducting this research project. The data was gathered from limited sources where the issue of bias could take place. The second limitation concerns some academic papers being authored by those who lack an

in-depth knowledge on the issue of the far-right, identity, and white supremacist movements.

Significance of the Study

This study involved filling a gap in the understanding on how the white supremacist ideology has embedded itself in conservative political and social movements in American society. This study is unique because it involved examining relationships between the alt-right, far-right, and identity movements and their capacity to cultivate environments where an overtly white supremacist ideology was permitted to be disseminated. President Trump's calling for a nationalist public policy agenda to protect U.S. sovereignty was used by white supremacist and white nationalist to rationalize the use of race-based violence in order to protect those of Anglo-European heritage in the U.S.(Nacos et al., 2020). Results of this study will Provide and in-depth understanding on how white supremacist ideologies have grown in the U.S.

Summary

In Chapter 1, the introduction to the problem, problem statement and significance of the study were presented. Chapter 2 includes a literature review covering the history of white supremacy in the U.S. as well as the development of far-right movements. Chapter 3 includes an overview of how data were collected for this study including ethical and safety considerations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of the study is to explore mechanisms used to advance white supremacist principles in mainstream American culture. In order to locate sources for this study, I used the following search terms: *white supremacy, nationalism, white nationalism, President Donald Trump and nationalism, Stephen Bannon, Charlottesville riot, Unite the Right, far-right, identity politics, domestic extremism, far-right violence, domestic shooter manifestos, Dylann Roof, Brenton Tarrant, Robert Bowers, John Timothy Earnest, Patrick Wood Crusis, alt-right, social cognitive theory, case studies, and phenomenology*. I used the following databases: Google Scholar, Google Books, Academic Search Complete, Global Terrorism Database, Homeland Security Digital Library, ProQuest, and Taylor and Francis Online.

Phenomenological data were collected by conducted semi-structured interviews with experts in the areas of white supremacy or white nationalism. Qualified experts from two civil rights organizations whose professional duties consist of monitoring and conducting research on white supremacist and white nationalist activity were participants in this study.

History of American Nationalism

During former President Donald Trump's initial presidential campaign, the term "Make America Great Again" was conveyed as a patriotic rallying cry to confront issues reported as being threats to the White American way of life. The implication that the U.S.

was no longer “great” was widely embraced in certain segments of the White American population which in turn led to the rebirth of American Nativism and nationalism (DeMatas, 2017). Nationalism is a centralized political ideology that involves prioritizing the interests of a nation in terms of civics, ethnicity, and economics (Yazici, 2019). Nationalistic views disseminated during Trump’s campaign for president were not an aberration in terms of the American political process but instead a call for further nationalistic laws, policies, and practices have existed throughout the history of the U.S., which has frequently targeted minority populations while giving support to white supremacy.

White nationalism has been institutionalized in the U.S. since its founding due to government policies and social practices that openly devalued lives of non-white and non-Protestant Christian populations (Joshi, 2021). Nationalistic agendas enacted by leaders in the U.S. considered by the ruling class. had negative ramifications for minority ethnic and religious populations. Historically, the U.S. has enacted immigration laws and used presidential executive orders directed toward populations viewed as threats without validity or evidence. The U.S. solidified its national identity of Whiteness by passing the Naturalization Act of 1790 which provided citizenship to any free white person and provided the standard of needing to be white to be welcomed into the U.S. (Oppenheimer et al., 2016; Cook-Martin & Fitzgerald, 2019).

The Naturalization Act of 1795 established court oversight of immigration based on race, moral standing, declaring intent, and establishing of residency periods as

qualifiers for becoming U.S. citizens (Banks, 2020). During the period between 1820 to 1860, over 500,000 Irish immigrants came to the U.S. seeking economic opportunities that were decimated due to the famine impacting Ireland's economy. Upon their arrival, the Irish immigrant population was subjected to a substantial amount of hostility and discrimination due to anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic nativist positions. The White Protestant majority in the U.S. feared a Catholic uprising and subsequent loss of American culture of the time and enacted policies that forced many Irish immigrants into slums with menial employment opportunities, where they were victims of targeted violence (Collins & Zimran, 2018, p. 6; McCorkle, 2018, p. 154-155). It was during this period the U.S. witnessed the nativist movement flourish, embracing enactment of social policies that targeted certain religions and immigrant populations that were considered threats to American culture (Betz, 2017). The Irish and Germans were once rejected by the ruling class in the U.S., and only after their numbers grew so large and their influence on trade and industry became vital were they recognized as being White, thus gaining acceptance into the governing class.

Organized white supremacist groups came into existence in 1866 with the founding of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). While the KKK focused their activities at African American's, many of their activities were also nationalistic and directed at other populations such as immigrants and Catholics who the KKK considered threats to White Protestant culture in America (Forsell, 2020; Pezzella, 2017). It was not until the Naturalization Act of 1870 that the requirement of being White would be waived by

allowing naturalization of those of African descent. While providing opportunities for citizenship to these populations, the Naturalization Act of 1870 excluded groups who were considered non-White such as Asian and certain European populations (Luconi, 2019). This was the last legislative act that centered on issues of race and citizenship for over a century but signaled a period where targeted immigration laws and policies were directed toward specific demographics that perceived as being threats to American White Protestant culture.

The Page Act of 1875 was the first federal immigration law that designated a specific demographic population as being undesirable for migration in the U.S. This act prohibited migration of Asian women for the purpose of prostitution as well as for the purpose of “coolie labor.” While the Page Act of 1875 was intended to suppress human trafficking at the time, it was not effective. Following the Civil War, the stagnant economy caused some states to enact laws that directly targeted Chinese immigrant populations who migrated to work on the growing railroad system in the U.S. (Das, 2018). Pressure applied by nativists due to the fear of economic competition by Chinese immigrants resulted in the California legislature passing legislation which categorized Chinese men as criminals who participate in global human trafficking and Chinese women as being involved in prostitution.

The Page Act of 1875 not only banned the importation of contract labor known as cooly labor, but it also specifically targeted Chinese women for further integration concerning their sexual behaviors which were considered as being a threat to white

American morals (Dadhania, 2018). The Page Act of 1875 closely emulated the anti-Chinese legislation that enacted in California to support a nativist agenda.

In 1882, the United States continued with its nationalistic agenda by passing the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, that banned the importation of Chinese labor for a period of 10-years, prohibited Chinese naturalization, and provided for a pathway for the deportation of Chinese individuals (Dunigan, 2017, p. 83-85; Hogan, 2018, p. 15-16). The targeting of immigrant population continued with the enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 which specifically targeted the immigration of Chinese individuals who were considered a threat to the American workforce. Chinese immigrants were often taken advantage of by employers by working them longer hours with lower pay.

In 1892, the Chinese Exclusion Act was extended in the form of the Geary Act which provided for the deportation of Chinese laborers unless a “white” person could speak on their behalf. Appeals to the United States Supreme Court were unsuccessful and included some justices openly making racist remarks regarding the Chinese immigrants (Chan, 2019; Dunigan, 2019). During World War I, the United States experienced an increase of immigration coming from a variety of places globally. To address this issue, the Immigration Act of 1917 was passed which continued targeting certain Asian populations by restricting immigration from defined regions and in addition the Immigration Act of 1917 instituted an English literacy test for virtually all immigrants with a few exemptions. The literacy test allowed the United States to restrict the immigration of those who were viewed as undesirable from other regions of the world

such as the Middle East (Abuhammour, 2017; Young, 2017; Donato & Amuedo-Dorantes, 2020). The literacy tests provided officials with a way to exclude those who did not fit into the national social profile that had been established in America.

Following the end of World War I, immigration into the United States from Europe grew rapidly with many immigrants coming from Eastern and Southern Europe. Economic and labor representatives, fearful of a growing immigrant population and how it may impact the economic and labor interests were successful in applying political pressure to legislators resulting in the enacting of the Emergency Quota Act in 1921. A quota system was put into place where immigration was limited to 3% of that demographic taken from the 1910 census that was currently residing in the United States (Abramitzky et. al, 2023). Prior to the enactment of the Emergency Quota Act of 1921, Asian immigration was already severely restricted due previously passed laws which meant their overall population in the United States was lower and this new legislation now allowed for the reduction in immigration from demographics who now were considered threats to white American society (Tabellini, 2020). Instead of overtly appearing to be racist-based legislation, the Emergency Quota Act's 3% quota was applied to all demographics with a maximum immigration number of 350,000.

During this time, the majority of approved immigrants migrated from the United Kingdom primarily from England and Scotland. The Emergency Quota Act of 1921 allowed for this demographic to remain the largest population for immigration approval into the United States further strengthening a national identity of being white. The

enacting of the Johnson-Reed Act in 1924 severely curtailed immigration from demographics that were not welcomed by nativists in the United States. The Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 established a 2% quota applied to certain demographic populations based on the 1890 census with maximum immigration capped at 150,000. The law specifically excluded all Asian populations in addition to banning entry into the United States any demographic based on race or nationality that was exempt from becoming a United States Citizen (Tinajero, 2017, p. 2; McNatt, 2021, p. 245). Because of the restrictive nature of the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924, Southern and Eastern Europeans were denied entry into the United States while Western and Northern Europeans were granted entrance into the United States in much larger numbers thus building on a national identity sought by nativists.

Immigration quota policies remained active until president Johnson signed into law the Immigration Act of 1965 which placed skilled labor as favorable attribute for immigration into the United States thus opening the door for increased immigration from Asian, Latin American, and African countries (Tichenor, 2016). While the Immigration Act of 1965 removed the quota system and other xenophobic immigration policies that existed, it did not prevent a shift in the manner immigrant populations will be targeted based on nationalist ideologies (Massey, 2017). The enhanced focus on the prevention of undocumented immigration and the removal of undocumented individuals who are in the United States allowed the issue for the continued weaponization of immigration thus

giving rise to white supremacist and white nationalist organizations and movements with the ultimate goal of a white nationalist state.

History of White Supremacy in the U.S.

In order to fully understand how sociological issues such as immigration and nationalism can contribute to a growth in white supremacy, a comprehensive understanding of the history of organized white supremacy in the U.S. is essential. As previously mentioned, the KKK is the oldest organized white supremacist group in the U.S. with it dating back to 1866. While initially started for the purpose of amusement, the KKK quickly grew throughout the South with the ultimate purpose of maintaining a white Anglo-protestant society in the United States (Laird, 2017). Increase in KKK activity have been recognized as running in three noticeable phases in correlation with significant social changes taking place. The first phase covered a period between 1866-1882, where the end of the Civil War took place and there was pushback towards the federal government and Republicans due to the rights awarded to newly freed African Americans (Bickford & Clabough, 2020). It was also during this era that the U.S. experienced increased immigration from Europe and Asia which accelerated KKK activity nationwide forcing the U.S. government to intervene due to increased violence taking place.

The second phase of KKK activity took place between the period of 1915-1944 during the time where the U.S. once again experienced an increase in immigration coinciding with World War I. During this phase of KKK activity, the KKK broadened

their targeting of demographics they viewed as threat to the Anglo-protestant way of life by increasing violent attacks on immigrants, Catholics, and Jews (Silva, 2019; Kasiński, 2021). The nationalistic political structure that existed in the United States during this period resulted in a substantial growth of Ku Klux Klan membership and support including from individuals who were presidential candidates as well as being members of Congress and the United States Supreme Court (Zilvar, 2021). In order to reach out to a larger segment of the American population, the Ku Klux Klan began to publish and distribute a newspaper addressing sociological issues they felt were threat to the Anglo-protestant way of life (Madison, 2020). The xenophobic political rhetoric and the use of media formats allowed Ku Klux Klan membership to estimate ranging between two-million and four-million members nationwide.

The third phase of significant Ku Klux Klan activity runs from a period of 1946 to the late 1960's where once again the United States saw an increase in immigration following World War II and onset of a sustained push for civil rights in the United States. While the Ku Klux Klan maintained a focus directed at immigrant populations, it significantly increased its activity directed towards African Americans during the Civil Rights Era (Laird, 2017; Cunningham et al., 2019). While the Ku Klux Klan membership had shrunken to an estimated 40,000 to 50,000 members nationwide, it remained a significant threat to any demographic which the Ku Klux Klan viewed as being a threat to their ideology (Boutcher et al., 201, p. 3). While the political push for equal rights was growing within the United States, there still remained a significant amount of resistance

from nativists and nationalist groups for progressive civil rights to be recognized nationwide. Ku Klux Klan activity in some regions in the United States had the support from local political and law enforcement entities which further emboldened the Ku Klux Klan to escalate the level of violence to include bombings, lynching, and the murder of civil rights workers (Cope, 2017; Blee & Latiff, 2019; Dittmer, 2019). The continued use of violence while systematically rejecting the advances in civil rights towards African American in some southern states resulted in the federal government deploying federal resources to investigate and suppress violations of civil rights.

The Ku Klux Klan was just the first of several white supremacist/nationalist organizations and movements that will use nationalist ideologies to recruit membership and support for their activities. In the 1920's an offshoot of Anglo-Israelism/British Israelism known as the Christian Identity emerged in North America and was embraced by those who viewed the United States government as no longer an advocate for the protecting of Anglo-protestant heritage, instead they viewed the United States government as co-conspirators with Jews to control key aspects of the American way of life including the media, banks, and religion (Wood, 2021). Christian Identity adherents use questionable interpretations of biblical texts to support their beliefs that certain European races specifically those of Aryan heritage are the part of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel and are God's chosen race while the Jews are descendants of Satan. The Christian Identity ideology also supports the belief that any individual of a race that is not Aryan, God's chosen people or Jews, descendants of Satan, evolved from the earth and are non-

human and are considered “mud-people” (Sweeney & Perliger, 2018). Adherents of the Christian Identity philosophy have used these beliefs to demonize certain populations they view as a threat to Anglo-protestant control in the United States.

The Christian Identity ideology’s anti-Semitic ideology was embraced by some influential people in the United States such as Henry Ford, whose *Dearborn Independent* newspaper contributed to the spread of anti-Semitic rhetoric nationwide (Sperry, 2020). The denigration of Jews and non-white immigrants as observed in the Christian Identity ideology would continue to gain traction over the next decades and play a vital role in the creation of white supremacist, white nationalist, and extreme Christian nationalist organizations such as the Church of Jesus Christ Christians by Dr. Wesley Swift (Berger, 2017). The threat of these groups and the Christian Identity ideology would later be realized when some of its followers would go on to commit serious acts of violence observed in the United States based on anti-government and racist beliefs.

In the period just prior to World War II, the United States experienced a growth in the support for National Socialism with many followers wanting the United States to align itself with Nazi Germany. The German American Bund became an organized national socialist group to form in the United States calling for the protecting of American values from the Jews and Bolsheviks. In 1939, a rally decorated in Nazi paraphernalia and American flags was held at Madison Square Garden that attracted over 20,000 attendees (Mowatt, 2021, p. 17). While public resistance to any alliance or affiliation with Nazi Germany led to the demise of the German American Bund

organization, the ideology of a neo-Nazi national socialism movement will not totally disappear from the United States and would be reborn twenty-years later. Following the end of World War II, the United States witnessed the re-birth of the American neo-Nazi movement which initially directed much of their targeted hate in the form of anti-Semitism but soon its attention towards immigrant populations.

In 1959, the American Nazi Party (ANP) was founded by George Lincoln Rockwell with the purpose to promote the support for a neo-Nazi nationalist agenda that endorsed an anti-immigrant and anti-Semitic political agenda (Plaster, 2017; Thompson, 2020). The American Nazi Party (aka: National Socialist White People's Party) signaled the first attempt of an openly white nationalist organization to advocate for a political agenda that openly prompted for white dominance in society since German American Bund movement prior to World War II. In 1967, Rockwell published a book in which he discusses a wide range of social issues that he views as being threats to white America. Rockwell readily calls for "white power" and the need to confront social issues such as immigration and race before they replace the white American heritage were purportedly disseminated by the use of racist-based paraphernalia and public demonstrations (Shaffer, 2019; Smith, 2020). In 1967, George Lincoln Rockwell was shot and killed by a former member of the American Nazi Party, while Lincoln's death did substantially reduce the activities of the American Nazi Party, his willingness to openly call for a political platform to promote and support white nationalism led to the later creation of other national socialist organizations.

During the late 1960's, a youth subculture developed in England that rejected multiculturalism and professed the need to protect the white working-class people. This subculture became what is now known as the racist skinhead movement which used fear and violence directed at immigrant populations as a method to confront and reject immigration policies they viewed as being threat to whites (Pollard, 2016). Over the next twenty-years, the racist skinhead movement saw significant growth in Western European countries as well as the Soviet Union by aggressively calling for white nationalist political agendas and the end to multiculturalist immigration policies (Rakos, 2018, 53-54). It was also during this period that the racist skinhead movement migrated to the United States and firmly entrenching itself as a subculture willingly to use violence as a mechanism to spread fear and intimidation towards minority and immigrant populations.

The racist skinhead subculture in the United States grew rapidly in the 1980's and 1990's with the founding of several organized skinhead groups such as the Hammerskins, American Front, White Aryan Resistance, and Blood & Honour. The racist skinhead movement in the United States quickly aligned itself with larger white supremacist groups and showed their appetite to use violence upon minorities and immigrant populations in support of a white nationalism agenda (Belew, 2018; Gassiot, 2021). In 1983, former Ku Klux Klan Grand Dragon and Christian Identity Minister Tom Metzger formed the White Aryan Resistance (WAR). Metzger recognized the opportunity to manipulate and use young skinheads as the enforcement arm of the white supremacist and white nationalist movement. Under Metzger's leadership the White Aryan Resistance

would pass out racist fliers and grotesque cartoons about immigrants and minorities in the community in an effort to recruit followers into his movement (Thompson & Gibson, 2020). In 1988, Metzger sent representatives of White Aryan Resistance to Portland, Oregon to meet with the local skinhead gang Eastside White Pride where the representatives were tasked with organizing the gang into becoming a violent arm for white nationalism.

On November 12, 1988, three members of Eastside White Pride with their girlfriends came across Mulugeta Seraw, an Ethiopian student and proceeded to beat Seraw to death with a baseball bat. The three white supremacists were convicted of manslaughter and assault. Metzger ended up losing a civil lawsuit and was ordered to pay 12.5 million dollars in damages for being an agent that contributed to the assault (Sweeny, 2020, p. 25; Rosenthal, 2019, p. 603). The financial damages as a result of the lawsuit caused Metzger to promote “lone wolf activism” as a method to prevent organizations from being finally responsible for their actions such as what took place with Seraw. Metzger remained active in promoting for white supremacy and white nationalism until his death in 2020.

On August 5, 2012, Wade Michael Page, a member of the Hammerskins, went to the Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin and fatally shot six people while wounding four others. A seven victim would die eight-years later from the wounds he suffered at the initial shooting. Page who was wounded in an exchange of gunfire with police, took his own life by shooting himself in the head. While Page was a documented member of

the Hammerskins, he was known affiliate of other white supremacist organizations throughout the United States and showed his willingness to die in support of their ideologies (Byrne, 2018). The racist skinhead movement's propensity to use violence upon minority populations has allowed them to be widely accepted by larger white supremacist or white nationalist organizations.

In the 1970's, 80's, and 90's, the United States experienced a growth in neo-Nazi nationalist organizations that would align themselves with other white supremacist organizations and movements declaring the need to protect the white Anglo-European culture in America. In 1974, the National Alliance was formed by William Pierce III who saw increase immigration and the advancement of civil rights as being a threat to the white American culture. Pierce, a close associate of George Lincoln Rockwell, a follower of neo-Nazi national socialist ideologies, also supported beliefs commonly observed in the Christian Identity Movement (Brooks et al., 2017; Winter, 2019; Boucher, 2021). Pierce's critical views regarding immigration, race-based genetics, and civil rights gained him a substantial following which allowed him to accumulate substantial funding resources which he reinvested in formats that can be used broadened his availability to recruit new members.

Pierce purchased Resistance Records, a near defunct record label that supported white supremacist music industry which was often followed by younger followers of the white supremacist and white nationalist movements (Thompson & Gibson, 2020). Under Pierce's leadership, the National Alliance published the magazine Resistance which

focused on the white supremacist music scene and the newspaper/book catalog called National Vanguard that provided Pierce the platform to attack social issues that he felt was a threat to white America and the need for a white nationalist political agenda (Ravndal, 2021). Pierce is responsible for one of the most if not the most far-reaching events to take place in United States history that has a direct correlation to white supremacy and white nationalism.

In 1978, Pierce, using the pen name Andrew McDonald, published the book *The Turner Diaries* which was a fictional account of a revolution/race war taking place in America. The results of the revolution were that the United States government was overthrown and then began the systematic elimination of all non-white races in America (Ward, 2017; Reese, 2018). The storyline contained in the *Turner Diaries* was so widely embraced by white supremacist and white nationalist followers, it is recognized as being a significant motivation factor for right-wing violent extremist activities. The extremist right-wing organization The Order, a splinter group of Aryan Nations named after the fictional group highlighted in *The Turner Diaries* became involved in several criminal activities such as robbery and counterfeiting to finance their operations (Kamali, 2017). In 1984, Alan Berg, a Jewish talk show host who often challenged Christian Identity and white supremacist proponents was murdered by member of *The Order*.

In one chapter of *The Turner Diaries*, the story tells of the ingredients and methods to build a bomb which was used to bomb a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) building causing mass casualties. On April 19, 1995, only ninety-minutes after the

bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Timothy James McVeigh was arrested for unlawful possession of a firearm and in his possession was a copy of *The Turner Diaries* (Blazak, 2021). The attack on the Alfred P. Murrah building as well as the type of bomb used in the attack had significant similarities to what Pierce described in *The Turner Diaries*. *The Turner Diaries* is also recognized as playing a significant role in the motivation of David Copeland, a British National Socialist Movement member who committed a series of three nail-bombing in London, hoping to incite a race-war (Tomczyk et al. 2020). While the *Turner Diaries* is just a fictional story about an extreme-right-wing revolution and race war, the impact of this book continues to play a pivotal role in the motivation of extreme right-wing violence support white supremacist and white nationalist beliefs.

In 1977, a few years following the death of Dr. Wesley Swift, a close associate Richard Girnt Butler who had seized control of the Church of Jesus Christ Christian inserted an additional title into what would be known as Church of Jesus Christ Christian-Aryan Nations. Butler, a Christian Identity minister would move the near dormant organization to a 20-acre parcel in bring life into an organization that would attempt to bring together white nationalist and white supremacist groups into a unified white nationalist movement (Ludwick, 2020). Under Butler, Aryan Nations would branch out to several states aligning itself with other neo-Nazi nationalist organizations and white supremacist groups.

While using a combination of national socialist ideologies combined with aberrant interpretations observed in the Christian Identity following, Aryan Nations sought to increase support for their beliefs by attending certain European heritage festivals such as to recruit and hosted the Annual Aryan National Congress (ANC) at their Idaho compounds which attracted members of white supremacist, white nationalist, national socialist, and Christian Identity originations from around the world (Perliger, 2020). Aryan Nations targeted the demographics as did the American Nazi Party and National Alliance. Immigrants, African Americans, and Jews were the common recipients of the targeted hate conducted by those associated with Aryan Nations. On August 10, 1999, Buford O. Furrow, a known member of Aryan Nations walked into the North Valley Jewish Community Center and began shooting. Furrow wounded five people and after exiting the North Valley Jewish Community Center, Furrow came into contact with Josep Santos Ileteo, a Filipino American postal worker. Furrow shot Ileteo nine times, killing him and after being arrested, Furrow admitted to shooting Ileteo because he thought Ileteo was either Asian or Latino (Cohen, 2017; Nopper, 2021). In 2002, the California state leader of Aryan Nations was arrested for falsifying documents, perjury, and unlawful possession of a weapon. At the time of his arrest, he was found in possession of a letters advocating for Aryan Nations to align itself Islamic extremist to target Jews and the United States government. Increased law enforcement pressure and internal fighting has substantially reduced its size and membership level of that was observed in the 90's and early 2000's.

The National Socialist Movement (NSM), a neo-Nazi nationalist organization that followed the ideologies of its predecessor the American Nazi Party, National Alliance, and Aryan Nations began in 1994 and quickly allied itself with other neo-Nazi organizations. The National Socialist Movement quickly grew to become the largest neo-Nazi organization in the United States focusing its attention of racial and immigration issues they see posing a threat to the white American way of life (Bjørge & Ravndal, 2019). Over the last decade, the National Socialist Movement has increased its focus and activities in calling for an end to all non-white immigration and the protecting of the Anglo-European heritage in the United States (Peters & Besley, 2017). The National Socialist Movement today has attached itself to the Identity Movement which calls for a political agenda supporting the protection of the Anglo-European heritage and culture in the United States by eliminating immigration for all non-white races.

The existences of far-right social movements in the United States are not a new phenomenon and easily can be traced back decades extending to the 1960's where they circulate anti-government, anti-banking, anti-tax, and anti-Semitic conspiracy theories that contributed to the growth of far-right extremism. One particular group that experienced sustained growth of followers was the Posse Comitatus, which believed of a mass conspiracy between the banks who they felt were controlled by the Jews and the United States government led to a large scale failing of the American farm system during the 1970's and 1980's (Correll, 2019). The Posse Comitatus was also influenced heavily by the Christian Identity Movement with many of its followers also adherent of the

Christian Identity Movements racial beliefs (Sarteschi,2020). The radical ideas espoused by both the Posse Comitatus and the Christian Identity Movement led to several incidents of violence between its followers and government officials. In one incident, Gordon Kahl, a Posse Comitatus member engaged in the murder of two federal marshals when they attempted to arrest him for tax evasion and the subsequent murder of a sheriff who engaged in the search for Kahl (Perliger & Sweeney, 2019). Kahl's widow was later remarried to Pastor Neuman Britton, the second in line of command of the Church of Jesus Christ Christian- Aryan Nations.

The Posse Comitatus was heavily influenced by conspiracy theories and viewed the United States government as being corrupt and no longer willing to support white Americans. Their extreme views of race, a New World Order, and religion provided the platform for other extremist movements such as the Sovereign Citizens and QANON to evolve and significantly impact the United States social and political arenas. The leadership with the Posse Comitatus movement's advocacy for far right and pro-white public policies led to the development of a close relationship with national white supremacist and white nationalist organizations and an increased interest in national politics in the United States (Winter, 2017). In 1995, Randy Weaver, a prominent anti-government and pro-white separatist engaged in a lengthy off with federal authorities over a weapons charge. A subsequent shootout between Weaver, his family and authorities resulted in the death of Weaver's wife, son, and United States Marshall Bill

Degan in an incident that would further solidify the commitment to push back from the traditional political purview and support a pro-white political agenda (Reese, 2018).

Timothy McVeigh, a decorated military veteran, became disillusioned in the manner the United States government was conducting itself in activities where McVeigh felt were intrusions on the civil liberties of Americans and became active in the far-right Patriot movement. The United States Patriot movement experience significant growth in the 1980's and 1990's due to a growing repudiation of government economic policies which were viewed as suppressing economic freedoms and for what were considered acts of tyranny perpetrated by the government (Berlet & Sunshine, 2019). The Patriot movement's core ideologies are a mix of conspiracy theories and targeted hatred towards certain religions, ethnicities, and immigrant populations while promoting a political environment supporting a white nationalist agenda.

Donald Trump's Nationalist Political Agenda

Nationalism promotes the advocacy for a nationalist or nativist political agenda embracing a means to provide support for the population of a country. Wimmer (2019), states the benefit of nationalism provides leaders the answer on who they should rule by "limiting the franchise to members of the nations and excluding foreigners from voting, democracy and nationalism entered an enduring marriage". The enactment of a nationalist agenda for public policy gives way to recognizing civil rights on different levels depending on an individual's citizenship or immigration status. The conservative political climates observed in the United States and in other countries has endorsed the

perception that nationalism is in alignment with a patriotism in order to view one's country as being superior to another thus condoning the enacting of public policies directed at non-native populations (Osborne et al., 2017). During President Donald Trump's initial presidential campaign in 2015, the United States witnessed the mainstreaming of a nationalistic agenda supported by President Trump which directly targeted non-American and non-Christian populations.

Immigrant populations remain a target for further victimization by a various entities including commercial and political interests in the United States. Migrants' workers are frequently subjected to lower pay and lower health and safety protections as compared to American workers. Immigrants are also a casualty of the American political spectrum where they are used as political pawns between the two major political parties (Moyce & Schenker, 2018). Former President Donald Trump routinely attacked certain minority populations and religions as being threats to the American culture or not capable of providing any beneficial service to the United States (Romero, 2018). During the period prior to the 2016 presidential election campaign, Trump became accustomed to directing derogatory and overt racist remarks to Mexicans, immigrants, Muslims, and those who were from countries he considered to be "shitholes".

Trump's campaign strategist and close advisor Stephen Bannon pushed the nationalistic perspective in the United States to its highest level when he promoted the book *Camp of the Saints*, a chilling anti-immigrant novel which mass migration is paramount to an invasion (Blanchet, 2019). Trump's campaign had placed certain

immigrant populations as being invaders and threats to the American culture with the need for others to join the movement to stop the threat. Former President Donald Trump's decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) contradicted the justification he used to "build a wall" at the border to suppression immigrants coming from Latin American countries were safety or economic threats to the country.

The DACA program enables undocumented immigrants to attend and complete high school or college thus gaining critical educational skills for their vocational future. Economist have also highlighted the DACA participants do not constitute a threat to the America economy and if fact is a positive influence on the American economy (Stone, 2017). President Trump's decision to eliminate the DACA program as a method to control who is allowed to immigrate to the United States runs parallel to the nationalistic immigration policies that have existed throughout a substantial portion of American history.

On August 11 and 12, 2017, a right-wing conservative movement called the Alt-Right along with other white supremacist, white nationalist, and militia groups held a two-day demonstration called "Unite the Right" promoting the "Great Replacement Theory" and calling for the protection of white European heritage in the United States while openly rejecting immigration and certain ethnic populations (Blout & Burkart, 2021. Obaidi, 2022). The demonstrators were confronted by a large group of counterdemonstrators comprised of citizens, clergy, civil rights groups, and anarchists

when violence erupted resulting in the death on one person and thirty-five others sustaining injuries. Post incident reviews of what took place in Charlottesville highlighted several failures among law enforcement, homeland security, intelligence, and public administration leadership.

While the most critical mistake noted was the failure to enact proper security measures at the location of the demonstration which led to violence and the subsequent casualties that took place, the failure to effectively recognize the various participants who openly planned to be involved in the “Unite the Right” rally negligent at best (Blout & Burkart, 2021). The analysis conducted of the participants who participated in the “Unite the Right” rally showed a distinct change in the appearance of many white supremacist adherents with many adopting nationalistic identity ideologies that can be used to obscure their racist beliefs. President Trump’s failure to openly condemn the alt-right’s determination to hold a demonstration promoting obvious racialist goals was seen by the far-right as support for their cause.

President Trump’s habit of attacking key American institutions such as the media and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) with divisive rhetoric resonated with far-right movements and white supremacist groups and played a role in political-based violence (Nacos et al., 2020). The most compelling example of President Trump’s incitement of the far-right movement concerns the results of the last presidential election. President Trump’s refusal to recognize the results of the presidential election because he

felt there was overwhelming acts of voter fraud led to thousands of his supporters arriving in Washington D.C. to protest the certification of the election results.

President Trump's inflammatory rhetoric during his speech where he called on his supporters to fight and march to the Capitol contributed to the violent attacks on Capitol police and the Capitol itself (Dave et al., 2021). While the majority of protestors who attended exercised their First Amendment rights peacefully and in accordance with the law, there were a substantial number of protestors from far-right extremist groups who carried white supremacist symbols such as Ku Klux Klan and Nazi flags and engaged in criminal activity (Rapport, 2021). Despite widespread condemnation of the events that took place on January 6th, President Trump still rejects any responsibility for his actions preceding the violence that took place and his continued denial of the election results still are used by white nationalist groups for recruitment.

Summary

The U.S. has a long history of enacting laws and policies that have targeted demographics that were viewed as being unworthy of either becoming naturalized citizens or immigrating into the U.S.. The first immigration policies enacted following the American Revolution identified ethnicity and national origin as acceptable parameters for naturalization, and if anyone fell outside those parameters, they were deemed unworthy of being U.S. citizens. Those who could immigrate came from England, Scotland, or Scandinavian countries.

The next set of immigration laws and policies were used to address those who were thought to be a threat to the Anglo-Protestant way of life focused on race, religion, and national origin to approve entry into the U.S. When changes to these laws and policies took place, they were done so that already preferred demographics would be allowed to immigrate in large numbers compared to others, thus maintaining a nationalistic majority. The next set of laws and policies directly targeted populations who were considered threats to the White American way of life by either taking jobs from Americans or due to perceptions of being immoral and unacceptable for immigration. The outright banning of ethnic minorities without justification illustrates racist and nationalist immigration agendas supported by the U.S. government.

Government-supported racism and nationalistic agendas aided the creation of organized white supremacist and white nationalist groups in the U.S. The first organized hate group was the KKK, and since that period, the U.S. has had organized hate groups calling for white supremacist and white nationalist political agendas. In order to bypass resistance to their ideologies and activities, white supremacist groups have had to alter their appearance so their ideologies and views can be disseminated to demographics they seek support from. Since the beginning of the U.S., nationalists have consistently provided platforms for white supremacists and white nationalists.

This nationalistic political agenda has provided white supremacist and white nationalist groups with the ability to disseminate their views by changing their appearances and attaching themselves to social movements and organized groups that

support nationalist agendas in society. The alt right, patriot front, and identity movements are examples of social movement and organized nationalist groups that have risen to confront what they view as threats to the White American way of life.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

The purpose of this qualitative study is to gain a better understanding of perspectives of participants in two civil rights organizations concerning the ability of white nationalists and white supremacist organizations to gain increased support in mainstream White American society. This study involved using a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews. Use of semi-structured interviews with an appropriate study population allowed me to gain a clear understanding of the phenomenological perspectives of study participants. I observed how white supremacist and white nationalist beliefs have been embedded in conservative social and political movements in the U.S. The literature review showed a gap in understanding how white supremacist and white nationalist beliefs have greater support in White American society. I used a qualitative approach consisting of semi-structured interviews with the selected population.

Research Question

The following research question guided this study:

RQ1: What are perspectives concerning the ability of white nationalist and white supremacist organizations in terms of gaining increased support in White American society?

Research Design and Rationale

The qualitative research approach allows for collection of data that can support interpretation of a phenomenon often based on personal experiences of study participants (Aspers & Corte, 2019). By using semi-structured interviews with recognized experts from two civil rights organizations who are involved in monitoring or research of white supremacist and white nationalist movements, specific experiences and perspectives provided data required for this study. By gaining awareness of real-life experiences of participants, I was able to gain a better understanding of data. In addition, interviews allowed me to ask follow up questions involving issues that may be unclear and alleviate risks of assessing an issue incorrectly. This study involved exploring methods that have been used to promote white supremacist beliefs in order to generate increased support in society.

Interview Questions

1. What is your position and role with the organization you are affiliated with?
2. How long have you been in your current role?
3. How long have you been involved in the monitoring/studying of white nationalist or white supremacist groups?
4. What is your definition of white nationalism and white supremacy?
5. How does white nationalism differ from white supremacy?

6. Since the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign, what political influences or rhetoric have you observed that has or could be supported by white nationalist or white supremacist groups?
7. How can the targeting of certain demographics such as immigrants and types of religions by political rhetoric contribute to growth in nationalist or supremacist beliefs?
8. How can the political environment contribute to white nationalist and/or white supremacist beliefs gaining broader support in the white American Society?
9. What specific events/incidents that were not an official political event have taken place that were influenced by the political environment in the United States?
10. How do nationalist organizations such as the Patriot Front differ from white supremacist organizations such as the Aryan Nations, KKK, or National Socialist Movement?
11. What is the Identity Movement?
12. How does the Identity Movement correlate to white nationalism and white supremacy?
13. How is the white nationalist and white supremacist movements in the United States influenced by international movements and incidents?
14. How can white supremacist and white nationalist movements hide their racist appearance to gain wider support in society?
15. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Targeted Population and Sample

Targeted semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts from two civil rights organizations were actively involved in research and monitoring of white supremacist and white nationalist movements in the U.S. The total research population was ten participants, five from each organization.

Procedures

Participant Selection

To recruit participants from two civil rights organizations, invitations to participate in the study were sent to appropriate administrative officials from each organization inviting them to participate in the study. Once approval to participate was received from each organization and their selected experts were identified for participation, an informed consent letter was emailed to each participant for review and approval. Participants were chosen based on their experiences involving conducting research on white nationalist and white supremacist organizations. Once identified by me, each potential participant was contacted via email at their respective university inviting them to participate in the study.

Due to the large geographical area where participants were located, interviews were conducted via Zoom or telephone. Each potential participant was given 5 days to respond to the initial inquiry before a follow-up inquiry was sent.

Participant Protection

Participants were identified and issued a unique number known only to me. This helped to ensure the identities of participants were kept confidential, and at no time was this information released to anyone. Interviews were conducted either by Zoom or telephone, and if conducted via Zoom, participants were issued specific invitations consisting of links for interviews as well as distinct passwords.

Participants were ensured their personal identification and the identification of their organizations was kept strictly confidential between the participants and me. All printed and electronic data is stored in a locked file cabinet when not in use and I am the only person who has access to this data. All data will be destroyed after 7 years in accordance with Walden University and federal policies. A review of risks associated with participating in this study has been completed, and the risk level is minimal to the participants. Measures were taken to protect participants of this study from harm.

Data Collection

Each of the study participants was supplied with information regarding the study, confidentiality and security issues regarding the information received in this study, and a voluntary consent form agreeing to participate in the study. The researcher personally informed each participant, the nature of the study, participants rights involved in the study, their right to terminate participation in the study at any time, and confidentiality precautions used while conducting this study prior to conducting any interviews.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom or telephonically only. The use of a waiting list and password access will be used for the Zoom to reduce the

opportunity for unauthorized access into the interview thus jeopardizing confidentiality. The primary reason for the use of Zoom or telephonic interviews was due to the large geographic area covered in this study. An Interview Questionnaire Guide was developed to maintain the accuracy of the initial interview questions asked to each participant (Appendix A). The Interview Questionnaire Guide consisted of ten primary interview questions that are semi-structured in nature but were flexible enough to allow the participants the opportunity to embellish upon his/her response. It should be noted that even though ten primary interview questions were asked of each participant, it often led to other questions being asked to obtain clarification concerning the issue addressed.

Due to the interviews being conducted remotely, I took copious number of notes regarding the answers being provided by the study participants. To ascertain the validity of the information being received by each study participant, I will review the answers that are provided by the study participants to ensure their accuracy. At the conclusion of the interviews, the study participants will be given my contact information in case there are any further questions or need for clarification about any portion of the study.

Data Analysis

In this qualitative study, a thematic analysis will be used as the primary method to analyze the data received from the interviews. The use of thematic analysis to analyze the data retrieved from interviews has been widely used and allows the research to identify identifiers that are related to the phenomenon (Judger, 2016). The use of the thematic analysis process is beneficial in qualitative researcher and will allow the researcher to

gain in-depth insight into a phenomenon being studied (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). In the case of this specific research, the thematic analysis will be used to identify themes that could be categorized into groups. During this study, the study participants were asked a series of interview questions that were designed to obtain the information required to answer the study research questions. I took copious notes of the responses received during the interviews conducted with the study participants.

I analyzed the data received from each interview to identify a specific theme and how it related to the research questions. Braun and Clarke (2021) identified the process where the researcher can identify a thematic pattern once the data was received from the entire study population. Waun (2016) noted that the ability to identify thematic patterns is helpful to the researcher by allowing a substantial amount of data to be analyzed where specific themes and explanations are recognized and then categorized into groups.

Once each interview is completed, I conducted an in-depth analysis of the data received to identify content that had a direct relationship to the research questions. I will be using the qualitative software analysis program MAXQDA to identify themes that are identified from the content obtained from the interviews conducted. At the completion of all the interviews, I conducted a further analysis of the coded data so any common meanings or themes could be recognized and categorized accordingly.

Ethical Procedures

During the interview, I provided each participant with an overview of the nature of the study as well as reviewing the confidentiality and security measures being taken to

insure confidentiality. To make sure the information being sought during the interviews was consistent, each of the participants were asked the same interview questions in the same manner each time. If at any time during the interviews there is a need to ask additional questions to obtain clarification of a participant's answer, that took place immediately and that was on a case-by-case basis. After each interview, I asked each participant if they had any further information or questions they would like to discuss regarding the study. Each of the participants will be provided with my contact information in case there are any questions or concerns they would like to address.

The primary ethical consideration that must be acknowledged when conducting research is that there should be no harm committed to any of the study's participants. Physical, psychological, or social harm can have a long-term affect upon the person or entity that was harmed thus calling into question the ethical steps taken in the process of conducting the research project (Cordisco, 2018). The confidentiality and protection of the rights of the study participants is a high priority of the researcher so every effort to protect those rights and maintain confidentiality will be adhered to during this study. There is no more than minimum risk to the participants of this study.

Summary

The purpose of this study is to explore perspectives of white nationalist and white supremacist experts from two civil rights organizations regarding the ability of these organizations to garner increased support in White American society. Since the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign, there has been increased dialogue calling for policies to be

implemented in order to support and protect Americans of Anglo-European heritage while targeting certain demographics as being a threat to White American culture.

This chapter included an overview of the methodology that was employed to conduct this study. The rationale for choice of research method, research question, participant selection and protection, data collection, data analysis, and my role as the researcher was defined.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study is to analyze white supremacist organizations and their supporters altering and disguising their extremist ideologies and appearance effectively enough to garner increased support in White American culture. This study was conducted to address the research gap involving effectiveness of white supremacist organizations in terms of gaining increased support in the U.S. by disseminating racially biased ideologies masked in nationalistic concepts that have been perpetuated due to the political climate in the U.S. (De Matas, 2017; Drolet & Williams, 2020). Findings could lead to substantial insights regarding evolutionary changes within white supremacist movements that are reliant on paleoconservative and nationalistic principles.

In order to gain data for this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten participants who are recognized experts on white supremacy and white nationalism and are employed by two civil rights organizations. As part of their duties, they conduct research and monitoring of white supremacist and white nationalist organizations both in the U.S. and internationally. In this chapter, I explain participant

demographics, data collection techniques, and data analysis procedures used to identify viable themes and subthemes that were observed in data.

Research Question

RQ1: What are perspectives concerning the ability of white nationalist and white supremacist organizations in terms of gaining increased support in White American society?

Setting

Data collection for this study was conducted using Zoom. Interviews were conducted at dates and times that were mutually agreed upon by myself and participants. The interview process took place in my home-based office with no other individuals in the immediate vicinity to ensure confidentiality of participant answers. Zoom interviews were recorded with the permission of each participant to allow for comprehensive and detailed transcriptions of interview sessions.

Participant Selection and Demographics

This study required expertise in the subject areas of white supremacy and/or white nationalism. In order to identify participants who qualified for this study, multiple civil rights organizations were invited to participate. Two organizations agreed to provide me with contact information of staff members who were qualified to meet criteria to be part of the study. Both organizations and study participants were advised that participation was strictly voluntary and they could withdraw at any time. I then contacted potential participants to seek their approval until I reached saturation.

To ensure confidentiality of participants, no detailed information about official roles with their organizations was provided to reduce risks of being identified. Instead, length of time in their current roles as well as overall time each participant has been involved in research, monitoring, and conducting training on white supremacy and white nationalist organizations was provided to document how long they have been involved with this phenomenon in a professional capacity.

Table 1

Years Involved in Study of White Supremacist/White Nationalist Groups

Participant	Years of Service
P1	30
P2	2
P3	17
P4	37
P5	29
P6	17
P7	25
P8	8
P9	7
P10	27

Data Collection

Data collection for this study consisted of semi-structured interviews being conducted by using Zoom. Interviews were conducted at mutually agreed upon dates and times. I conducted interviews in my own private home office, and there were no other individuals present to ensure confidentiality of participants. Semi-structured interviews consisted of the same fifteen interview questions that were given to each participant.

Audio was recorded with the permission of each participant in order for accurate transcription and data analysis.

Data Analysis

The first stage of data analysis for this study was to transcribe audio interviews into text. MAXQDA 2022 was used to transcribe participant responses that were used for data analysis. After reading completed transcription documents, MAXQDA 2022 was used to generate a series of code and subcodes. The second stage of the data analysis process involved identifying frequencies of these codes. A combination of manual reviews and MAXQDA 2022 was used in the coding process

The third stage of the data analysis process was examining codes and subcodes in order to identify themes and subthemes and place them into categories. The fourth stage consisted of identifying and naming themes that were identified from responses. Each theme was then analyzed in terms of its relevance to the research question. The final stage of data analysis was creating a report of findings.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, interpretive data analysis is commonly used to explain data that are gathered during the study. I explained how credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were achieved in this study.

Credibility

I used the qualitative research method to develop strategies and collect data involving a particular phenomenon. One effective way to learn about lived experiences of

others is to conduct personal interviews that are guided via a structured format in order to elicit information from participants in exactly the same manner. Data gathered from these interviews are evaluated for themes and patterns in order to gain an understanding of and answer the research question. Each participant was asked the same interview questions and allowed to freely answer questions as they chose.

Transferability

The concept of transferability refers to the opportunity that others could take the results of a study and apply them to other research projects. To establish the transferability of research findings, it is critical that the researcher provide information regarding the participants and the overall research methods that were used to generate the data collected (Korstjeans & Moser, 2018). In this study, the study participants were chosen based on their professional expertise on the subject being studied. In addition, the qualifications of the study participants were further strengthened by the length of time they have been involved in conducting research and studying the phenomenon being explored. The use of semi-structured interviews utilizing the same interview questions provided the participants the opportunity to answer these questions based on their professional experiences, which provided current detailed data on the subject being studied.

Dependability

The issue of dependability is important in qualitative research since the data generated from this study of research methodology is based on the interpretation of the

researcher. To establish rigor and reliability of the data generated in this study, an audit trail which consisted of maintaining records consisting of audible interviews sessions, transcriptions of the interview sessions, documents with codes and subcodes, and handwritten notes was established.

Confirmability

The issue of confirmability relates interpretation and the findings of the study being based on the data generated by the participants and being clear of any potential researcher bias (Scharp & Sanders, 2019). The research methods utilized in this study that includes the establishing of an audit trail which contains audible and text versions of interviews and documents containing the codes and subcodes recognized during the evaluation of the data generated by the interviews supports the study results' confirmability.

This study was conducted following the guidelines approved by Walden University's IRB. Approval to conduct this study was received from Walden University's IRB (09-14-22-0997735) prior to any contact was attempted towards any potential study participant.

The utilization of human subjects in research, the potential to generate detailed data that is rich with the lived experiences of the participant can potentially contribute to study's results that could have a substantial impact on society. Despite the potential benefits of the data that can be learned from the lived experiences of a study participant, ethical considerations regarding the risk and potential harm to both the participant and the

researcher must be evaluated in order to approve a study to proceed (White, 2020). In this study, the risk to the participant's has been evaluated as minimum due to their professional duties routinely placing them in a position of openly discussing issues to both private and public sectors on issues associated with the subject matter being explored.

Each participant was provided with detailed information regarding the research project through the use of an invitation to participate letter and the informed consent form. The participants were advised that participating in the research study was strictly voluntarily and that they have the right to revoke their consent and withdraw at any time. The participants were advised that their identities and the identity of the organization they are associated with would be kept confidential. In addition, each participant approved the audible recording of their interview for the purpose of transcribing the interview into text form for thematic analysis.

All documentation regarding the identification of the participants, their organizations, and all transcripts will be kept in a locked fireproof safe at my residence for security. All records generated during this study including transcriptions, informed consents forms, audible recordings, handwritten notes, identities of participants and their organizations will be preserved for a period of 5-years after the approval of the study or 7-years, whichever comes first. At that time, all records will be destroyed in accordance with the Walden University Institutional Review Board guidelines that are in place at this timeframe.

Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the capability of white supremacist and white nationalist groups gaining increased support in the white American society. While blatant racist-based ideologies and propaganda may be rejected by a substantial part of society, this study sought to explore the various pathways that could be possibly manipulated by white supremacist organizations to gain broader support in society while still maintaining a fundamentally racist-based agenda. To achieve the data for this study, ten recognized experts from two civil rights organizations whose duties include the monitoring, research, and training on white supremacist organizations were interviewed to obtain their perceptions regarding the research question being explored.

Data Analysis

The data collected for this study was generated by using the Interview Question Sheet (Appendix A) that was approved by Walden University's Institutional Review Board. The participants of the study were asked the same questions and allowed to respond freely to each question. The first three questions asked solicited information concerning job title, duties, and length of time involved in researching and monitoring white nationalist and white supremacist groups. The answers to the questions detailing job title and duties are not being disclosed due to confidentiality concerns and the answer to the question detailing time involved in working on white supremacist issues was reported in Table 1 . The data analysis process of this study consisted of several phases

including transcribing, reviewing of the data, coding, consolidation of the data, and categorization of the data with the use of the MAXQDA 2022 program. After reviewing the data collected, the primary emergent themes that were identified are listed in Table 2.

Table 2

Emergent Themes

Themes	Descriptions
Politics	Political Environment, Trump, Tucker Carlson Leftists, Conservatists, Nick Fuentes, Kanye (Ye), Immigration, Religion, Critical Race Theory, Republicans, Democrats, Polarization, Rhetoric January 6 th Capital Attack, Marjorie Taylor Green, Paleoconservatism,
Nationalism	Nationalist, White Identity, Tribalism, Alt-Right, Political Environment, Steve Bannon, Nick Fuentes Heritage, Christian Nationalism, Replacement Theory, American Values, Nation State, Manifestos,
Appearance	Changing Appearance, Recruitment, Mainstream Promoting Heritage, Extremism, Religion, Patriot Optics, Rebranding, Christian Nationalism, Racism
Propaganda	Recruitment, Radicalization, Accelerationist, Social Media, Media, Manifestos, Internet
International	European Heritage, Identitarianism, Slovakia, New Zealand Mosque, France, Germany, Austria,
Religion	Christian Nationalism, Christian Identity, Muslim

Interview Response Coding

Politics

During the interview with the study participants, four questions concerning the political environment in the United States and whether it has played a role the growth of white supremacy and white nationalist movements in the United States was asked and every participant (100%) acknowledge that the current political environment in the United States has significantly supported the growth of white supremacy and white nationalism in society. While President Donald Trump name was never specifically mentioned in the interview questions, every participant of the study cited his behaviors as resonating within the white supremacist and white nationalist sector. During the period around 2015 and 2016, the change in the political environment was highlighted during the interviews which an increased divisiveness and embedded itself into the American political scene consisting of the demonizing of non-Christian religions and immigrants from certain regions. This led to an accelerated effort from white supremacist organizations to broaden its support in the United States.

While the study participants acknowledge that President Trump did not have support from everyone in the white supremacist movement because of his son-in-law being Jewish and his daughter converting to Judaism, his overall support amongst white supremacist and white nationalist organizations was favorable because of his political rhetoric targeting non-Christian religions and immigrants primarily from Latin America, Africa, and Muslim-based countries. One participant of the study specifically noted that upon President Trump being elected, that Andrew Anglin, the founder of the Neo-Nazi

website the Daily Stormer immediately boasted support for President Trump because Trump was a great leader and that he will confront issues in our society such as multiculturalism. One hundred percent of the study participants discussed how President Trump's nationalistic political themes of "America First" and "Make America Great Again" reverberated within the white supremacist and white nationalist movements, with these movement believing they have someone in the White House who has some of the same beliefs as they do.

During the interviews with the study participants, it was noted by every participant that the "Unite the Right" rally held in Charlottesville, Virginia on August 11 and 12, 2017, was a significant development in the growth of white supremacist and white nationalist movements. The first event that took place on August 11, 2017, on the University of Virginia campus consisted of several hundred white nationalists shouting white supremacist, anti-Semitic, and white replacement slogans. Violence broke out between the protestors and counterprotestors resulting in several injuries. On August 12, 2017, the "Unite the Right" rally and march was held in Charlottesville consisting of white nationalist and white supremacist protestors chanting white supremacist, anti-Semitic, and other racially based slogans, and slurs. Several recognized members from white supremacist groups such as the Confederate Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and the Nationalist Socialist Movement were in attendance but were not wearing any of the traditional uniforms associated with their group. The study participants also noted that there were numerous people participating in the rally wearing "Make America Great

Again” hats. Violence broke out between the protestors and counterprotestors resulting in the death of Heather Heyer and injuries to several other by James Alex Fields Jr., a self-proclaimed white nationalist and neo-Nazi, and who was fascinated with President Trump’s policies on immigration and his political rhetoric of Make America Great Again. President Trump’s failure to immediately condemn the Alt-Right march and subsequent violence in Charlottesville, Virginia was also cited unanimously by the study participants as providing support to the movement’s leadership noted for professing extreme white nationalist and anti-multiculturalism ideologies.

During this study, what could be considered an advance towards paleoconservatism was noted following the election of President Trump. Paleoconservatism promotes a nationalistic view, promotes Christianity over other religions, and far-right views towards critical social issues. The far-right sector of the Republican party has embraced the concepts found within paleoconservatism which has embolden political representatives to openly associate and support self-acknowledged white nationalists. This study participant’s noted political figures such as Paul Gosar (R-AZ), Wendy Rogers (R-AZ) and Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) attending the far-right American First Political Action Conference which was hosted by Nick Fuentes, a self-proclaimed white nationalist and white replacement theory believer, who recently met with President Trump in November 2022. Fuentes is the President and Founder of the America First Foundation which openly promotes American and Christian Nationalism.

Paul Gosar (R-AZ), a strong President Trump supporter who openly defended the concepts of White and Christian nationalism, embraced the conspiracy theories surrounding the 2020 presidential election by voting not to certify the election. Wendy Rogers (R-AZ) not only attended Nick Fuentes American First Political Action Conference, but she has also publicly stated that white nationalists are patriots and was recently censured for implying the Buffalo mass-shooting committed by Payton Gendron at a supermarket frequented by African Americans was a “false flag” operation committed by the United States government. Rogers in the past has promoted the Great Replacement Theory that is an ideology that was not only embraced by the protestors at Charlottesville, but it has also been mentioned in several mass-shooting manifestos including the ones in Buffalo, New Zealand, and El Paso where minorities or non-Christians were targeted.

Marjorie Taylor Greene was also mentioned several times during this study because of her willingness to promote and support conspiracy theories frequently associated with QANON, 9/11 hoax theories, anti-Semitic views, and her association with white nationalists including Nick Fuentes. Despite the well documented concerns about the conduct of Gosar and Greene, they are continued to be supported and rewarded by the leadership of the Republican Party by being placed on key committees in the Senate and House of Representatives. During the interviews with this study’s participants, the polarization of the American society by the political environment in the United States contributed to the growth of white supremacist ideologies by allowing it to

embed itself in the form of white nationalism was well documented. The issue of nationalism and white nationalism will be discussed in the next section of this study.

Nationalism

During this study, the participants were asked if there was a difference between white supremacy and white nationalism and if so, who do they differentiate. Every participant stated that there is absolutely no difference between white supremacy and white nationalism other than how it has been defined by the various entities in society. It was noted that the unabashed appearance of white supremacist organizations and its adherents was more common and not so overwhelming rejected by society in the past as it is today. The term white nationalism was viewed by the study participants as an acceptable way of putting a publicly approved face on white supremacy. The term “nationalist” was viewed as a more acceptable term for the conservative media anchors such as Tucker Carlson to use in their paleoconservative-based broadcasts to their supporters.

Political policies and rhetoric supporting nationalist-based agendas that were endorsed by President Donald Trump and the paleoconservative arm of the Republican party provided the perfect mechanism for white supremacist groups to become more mainstreamed in the American society by attaching themselves to issues that are advocated as being threat to the American way of life. During the interviews that were conducted, the participants discussed the Great Replacement Theory or White Replacement Theory and the core of its meaning. When asked to elaborate on the Great

Replacement Theory or White Replacement Theory, the study's participants stated that is was a view held by white supremacists, anti-immigration groups, Christian nationalist, and white nationalist groups that felt that mass immigration will lead to the replacement of the white race and Christians in America. The manifestos of mass shooters from El Paso, Buffalo, and New Zealand contents included the subjects commonly associated with nationalism and were included in the motivational factors for them to commit their accelerationist of violence.

Nationalist movements in the United States which were heavily influenced by Identitarianism, began in Europe in the French anti-Muslim and anti-immigration white supremacist movement providing white supremacy leaders in the United States a way to mask racist-based ideologies and beliefs within politically supported agenda targeting social issues in the American society. Richard Spencer who is recognized as the founder of the Alt-Right movement attempted to portray his movement as a nationalist movement whose goals are to protect the American way of life. In 2016, Spencer gave a speech calling for an "ethno-state" for those of European heritage and further called for a "peaceful ethnic cleaning" of our society. At the conclusion of his speech, Spencer final comments were "Hail Trump, Hail our people, Hail Victory" and proceeded use a Nazi salute to the crowd where many of the attendees returned the Nazi salute to Spencer.

The participants in this study further detailed how white supremacist groups such as the Patriot Front mask their true beliefs and ideology by incorporating subtle promotions of patriotism propaganda in their messaging which has been extremely

successful in recruiting new members into their organization. Recent activities associated with the Patriot Front include posting of literature saying, “It’s OK to be white and It’s time to reclaim America.” Three of the participants discussed how the former leader of the National Socialist Movement (NSM) in the United State removed all appearances of Nazism and redesigned the groups appearance to be reflective of nationalist beliefs. The social media manager for the NSM at the time changed their appearance on social media from a Nazi appearance to one supporting American Nationalism and their recruitment numbers increased.

Every participant involved in this study unequivocally stated that the politically supported nationalist agendas and ideologies supported by President Trump and the paleoconservative arm of the Republican party abetted in the ability of white supremacist groups to bring their racist ideologies, masking them in a false patriotic calling and mainstreaming them into the American society.

Appearance

During the interviews conducted with the study participants, a question was asked concerning the ability of white supremacists and white nationalist movement to mask their appearance in order to gain greater support in society. Every participant agreed that the ability to be in public in blatant white supremacist dress or symbology has changed and those involved in white supremacist movements had to change their appearance and operational strategies in order to be more successful. The nationalist agenda with the assistance of the conservative media and the paleoconservative political environment

provided the opportunity for the white supremacist groups to adjust their appearances and operational tactics to gain increased support in the American society. One participant of the study had the key observation and said “that it is not necessarily the white supremacist who are altering the message, it is the media and political entities who are doing that for their benefit.

The change in tactics by white supremacist and white nationalist organizations included calling for the protection of the American way of life, preserving the Anglo-European heritage and culture, false declarations of attacks on Christianity and a Christian nation, and increased patriotism. Many individuals within these movements no longer wear their Klan robes or neo-Nazi uniforms, instead they are wearing suits, slacks, polo shirts, and other types of clothing devoid of any obvious racist symbology. During the event at Charlottesville, there were a mixture of some traditional-based hate groups wearing their atypical racist uniforms and carrying signs with recognized hate symbology and messaging along with many of the groups carrying signs about European heritage, Southern culture, and President Trump's slogan “Make America Great Again.”

The overall theme that was generated from the study participants was that white supremacist groups and its leadership has been able to effectively mutate their appearance and insert itself into the nationalist agenda that was being supported by the extreme right-wing or paleoconservative political environment in the United States. Organizations with indisputable ideologies based on racist or non-Christian beliefs have used the concept of

nationalism as the mode the insert itself into mainstream social issues in a great extent with the assistance of a polarized political climate.

Propaganda

The intent of this study was to explore the ability of white supremacist and white nationalist organizations in gaining increased support in the white American society. The participants of this study were asked if gaining increased support was achievable, and how was it done. As previously stated, the obvious racist appearance of groups like the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), National Socialist Movement (NSM) or Aryan Nations (AN) is often rejected by a large portion of society, groups like these must make changes within their operational strategies to recruit and potential radicalize its membership. The overwhelming theme that was presented by the participants of the study was that white supremacist groups have made adaptations in their recruiting strategies to increase their memberships. The largest significant strategy that was disclosed concerns the nationalist ethos pushed in the paleoconservatism arena.

The conservative media and political formats have been culpable in the spread of fear-based rhetoric targeting entities they view as being threats to the American way of life. White supremacist and white nationalist groups have used false-flag patriotic themes to generate interests and possible recruitment into their organizations. The Patriot Front is noted by the participants of this study as being highly successful in attracting interest and increasing membership through social media highlighting the American-European identity and by actively dispersing propaganda material during weekly events across the

nation. The internet and social media formats such as Telegram, Tik Tok, and VK were recognized as prominent avenues for propaganda to be spread by white supremacist and white nationalist organizations globally. One participant of the study discussed work they have done with in the past with a person who was once in charge of the social media and recruitment on a white supremacist organization who laid out their strategies to obtain interest in the organizations through various forms of propaganda sent via social media or the internet and once a person gained interest, then the process to bring them into the organization and further radicalize the person began.

Every participant of the study remarked how propaganda has always been used by white supremacist groups to generate interest and hopefully increased recruitment. The use of blatant white supremacist messaging has been determined to be detrimental to recruitment today so the leaders of these organizations must change their messaging strategies to be successful. The use of patriotic themes to confront issues that the conservative media and political sectors have labeled as being threats to the United States provided the setting for increased interests into these organizations and creating a climate where accelerationists have used to the propaganda to promote extreme acts of violence as documented in the mass shootings in New Zealand, El Paso, Buffalo, and Slovakia.

Internationalism

Participants were asked about how white supremacist and white nationalist organizations are influenced by international movements or incidents in order to gain a understanding on how domestic and international white supremacy movements may

impact each other. The participants reflected while the Identity Movement in the United States is relatively a new concept, Identitarianism in Europe has been in existence for decades. Identitarianism is recognized to have influenced many of the leaders in the American white nationalist movement such as Richard Spencer and Nick Fuentes who have both generated a substantial following with Nick Fuentes having direct connections with President Trump and several members of the United States Congress.

The overall feeling amongst the participants was that white supremacist and white nationalist movements are not necessarily affected by international movements and incidents but instead groups and movements in the United States and Internationally are affecting each other at various degrees. The manifesto written by Juraj Krajčák, the mass shooter in Bratislava, Slovakia and the manifesto written by Brenton Tarrant, of the Christchurch, New Zealand shooting contained specific rhetoric concerning issues of immigration, the European Identity movement, and writings from prominent white supremacist leaders in the United States such as William Pierce and David Lane. The topic of accelerationism within the white supremacy movement and how these ideas have been commonly found in the manifestos of mass shooters. The followers of accelerationism subscribe to a belief that if they can speed up the attacks on minorities populations and trigger a race war, that the system in whole will collapse allowing for the perfect white ethnostate to be developed.

The overall opinion of the participants in the study was that white supremacist and white nationalist groups in the United States and Internationally mutually affect each

other because of the efficiency of the internet and social media. European groups such as the Nordic Resistance Movement are observed communicating with groups such as the Patriot Front in the United States through the use of social media and American-based groups such as Atomwaffen are communicating with white supremacist organization throughout Europe.

Religion

During the interviews with the participants of the study, a topic that was brought up in every interview was that of Christian nationalism. The concept of Christian nationalism subscribes to the belief that America is defined by Protestant-Christian values and the United States should be recognized as a Christian nation has generated support from prominent United States politicians such as Marjorie Taylor Greene, Lauren Boebert, and Mary Miller have either admitted to or said they support the concept of Christian nationalism in the United States.

At the January 6th, United States Capital attacks, Christian nationalist were observed at the location protesting President Trumps election loss. Christian nationalists prescribe to the same fear-based rhetoric targeting immigration and non-Christian religions that has been observed in the nationalist agenda that was pushed by President Trump and paleoconservative platforms in the media and Republican party. Christian nationalists also prescribe to the concepts observed in the “Great Replacement Theory” fearing Christianity in America will be replaced by allowing immigrants who following other religions such as Islam or Judaism in such large numbers that Christianity will no

longer be considered the perceived religion of America. The overall views of the participants were that Christian nationalism promotes hostility towards immigrant populations, the non-religious, and non-Protestant Christian religions in the United States. The overlapping views of Christian nationalist and that of white nationalists such as Nick Fuentes is of great concern because of the intentional bias towards those who are not practicing Christians and the intent to ignore the First Amendment of the United States Constitution regarding “Congress make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting its free exercise.”

Summary

This study was conducted to address white supremacist and white nationalist groups in terms of their broader support in White American society. Participants were recognized experts from two civil rights organizations whose duties include research, monitoring, and conducting training for issues involving white supremacy and white nationalism. Years of experience ranged from 2 to 37. After reviewing all data and examining critical themes that were identified, results show that white supremacist and white nationalist organizations were observed to have developed the capacity to alter their appearance and gain increased support in White American society for several reasons.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the ability of white supremacist and white nationalist organizations to generate increased support in American society. Bandura's SCT was used as the theoretical framework to explain the role of motivation and reinforcement in extremist behaviors. The research question for this study was:

RQ1: What are perspectives concerning the ability of white nationalist and white supremacist organizations in terms of gaining increased support in White American society?

After conducting interviews with recognized experts from two civil rights organizations, an in-depth analysis of data generated identified six prominent themes: politics, nationalism, appearance, propaganda, internationalism, and religion.

The literature review for this study included an analysis of U.S. immigration and naturalization policies since its founding as well as an in-depth examination of the history of white supremacy and white nationalism in the country. This chapter includes interpretations of data obtained during this study, including themes from study participants, recommendations for future research, implications, and a conclusion.

Interpretation of the Findings

There were six significant themes that emerged as a result of data analysis: (a) politics, (b) nationalism, (c) appearance, (d) propaganda, (e) internationalism, and (f) religion.

This study can potentially impact law enforcement, homeland security as well as

sociological and public administration fields by exposing pathways used by white supremacist and white nationalist organizations.

Theme 1: Politics

The literature review conducted in Chapter 2 includes information about American immigration and naturalization policies that targeted specific ethnicities and religions as well as a comprehensive examination of the history of white supremacy in the U.S. U.S. naturalization and immigration laws and policies enacted during the period between 1790 and the mid-1900s frequently involved race, ethnicity, and religion as qualifying factors for admittance into the U.S. (Benthall & Haynes, 2019).

Participants stated that President Trump demonized certain demographics such as Latinos, Haitians, Africans, and Muslim, characterizing them as threats to the American way a life and thus unsuitable for immigrating to the U.S. President Trump's comments regarding immigrants resonated within white supremacist and white nationalist movements.

Political agendas and ideologies targeting immigrants from non-white Christian countries have existed throughout the history of the U.S. (Smith & King, 2021). Results of this study showed that President Trump's political platform was not only highly favored among a growing sector of as paleoconservatives, but it was also well received and supported by white supremacist and white nationalist organizations.

The resurgence of the extreme conservative political doctrine of President Trump was observed to be spreading among extreme conservative factions of the Republican

party, which further provided support for President Trump's vision of creating an American society void of any sense of multiculturalism (Drolet & Williams, 2019). Paleoconservative political leaders such as Marjorie Taylor Greene, Paul Gosar, and Wendy Rogers have openly associated with white nationalist leader Nick Fuentes and spoke at the American First Political Action Conference (AFPAC), a conference for white nationalists headed by Nick Fuentes. Fuentes, a self-admitted white nationalist, promoted anti-immigrant and anti-Semitic rhetoric while spreading conspiracy theories involving White genocide and the great replacement theory. Associations with individuals like Fuentes can be viewed as an endorsement of racist ideologies, which include the development of a White ethnostate.

The study showed that by embedding itself into the paleoconservative political platform being mainstreamed in the U.S., white supremacist groups have effectively adjusted their appearance and operational strategies to gain increased support in society. Nationalist political principles supported by President Trump and the far-right arm of the Republican Party have benefitted from far-right formats publicly spreading nationalism and Christian nationalism in America (Bennett & Livingston, 2019)., Participant #5 said "it isn't necessarily the white supremacists who are changing the messaging, it is the media and political entities who are doing that for them"

Theme 2: Nationalism

In 2015, President Trump campaigned on a platform calling for public policies to support America while at the same time making derogatory remarks towards non-White

immigrants and non-Christian religions. Participants said Andrew Anglin, the founder of the Neo-Nazi website the Daily Stormer, quickly embraced President Trump's victory and claimed it would stop the spread of multiculturalism in America.

During this study, participants detailed information that on August 11, 2017, a group of white nationalists held a march on the campus of the University of Virginia and during this event, these white nationalists chanted a variety of racist and anti-immigrant slogans supporting the conspiratorial views of the "Great Replacement Theory." The "Great Replacement Theory" is based on far-right rhetoric promoted by white supremacists and white nationalists concerning the replacement of whites and white Christians in the American society by mass immigration from non-white countries (Obaidi et al., 2022). The photographs of young white males marching and holding torches while chanting slogans that target non-white races and non-Christian religions took the United States back to an era reflective of Nazi Germany.

On August 12, 2017, during the main "Unite the Rally" event, violence that broke out during the event resulted in the death of one person and several other being injured by a known neo-Nazi (Blout & Burhart, 2020). This study determined that participants who attended the rally consisted of those from recognized hate groups and individual who were associated with white nationalist movements such as the Alt-Right and the American Identity movements. The Alt Right's rally in Charlottesville gave a unique insight into the Identity political movement that had been recognized rarely by American white supremacist and white nationalist groups (Hand, 2020). While Alt-Right leaders Richard

Spencer openly claimed the “Alt Right” movement was a nationalist movement started to protect conservative values, the study participants noted that Spencer had previously proclaimed to be a white nationalist and had once given a speech calling for the development of a white ethnostate. The study also showed that President’s Trumps slowly response towards the violence that took place and his failure to condemn white nationalism as being viewed by white nationalists as support for their cause.

The finding of the study show that the nationalist ethos motivated by President Trump and paleoconservatives aided by conservative media formats and news anchors such as Tucker Carlson helped stimulate white supremacist and white nationalist growth by brazenly spreading distorted fears of threats to the American culture posed by immigrant and non-Christian populations (Kao, 2020). The participants of the study discussed how nationalist movements in the United States were highly motivated by the Identitarianism movement whose foundation came from Europe and consisted of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim beliefs . The now defunct group “Identity Evropa” which later was rebranded as the American Identity Movement promoted anti-immigrant views while claiming their goal was the “restoration of the American Identity.”

While conducting this study, the discussion of mass shootings by followers of what is considered the “accelerationist movement” took place. Accelerationism is a view held by Marxist that it was feasible to accelerate the failure of capitalist government so ultimately all forms of government will then become communist-based (Gordon, 2021). Right-wing extremist have adopted the concept of accelerationism hoping that extreme

acts of violence will incite a racial holy war, leading to the collapse of Western governments then their ultimate goal of a white ethnostate being formed (Nilsson, 2022). This study showed that by examining the manifestos of right-wing mass shooters, the same nationalist rhetoric pushed by President Trump and the paleoconservative political sector such as immigration and non-Christian religions were identified as some of the reasons used by right-wing terrorist to justify their actions. Brenton Tarrant, the assailant who attacked the mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand wrote in his manifesto that he viewed President Trump as the symbol for “white identity.”

This study clearly showed that the nationalist agendas pushed by the President Trump and the extreme conservative political sector provided the operational strategy and pathway for racist organizations to target non-white and non-Christian religions. While professing the beliefs of patriotic causes and themes of supporting and protecting ones country may be noble and right, the unwarranted targeting of ethnicities and religions based on the unproven claims and fears that these populations distinctly pose a threat to the United States cannot be justified. The sole strategy of these nationalist groups is to establish the long sought American identity of being a pro-white Christian nation.

Theme 3: Appearance

One of the topics this study attempted to explore was the ability of white supremacist and white nationalist organizations to reshaping their overtly racist appearance into on that would be more palatable to mainstream American society. The white supremacist organization that has existed in the United States have generally

possessed unique dress or symbology that made it fairly easy to identify them, that was the ultimate goal of these groups. Whether it was the robes of the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazi uniforms resembling what the world experienced in World War II and Nazi Germany, or shaved heads with tattoos of swastikas and other racist symbols, the study showed that these blatant symbols of racism and hate is generally rejected by American society (Picca & Feagin, 2020). The results of this study showed that white supremacist and white nationalist organizations effectively modified their appearance and operational strategy transforming themselves into groups advocating for the same nationalist policies as the paleoconservative political platform supported by President Trump and certain conservative members of the Republican party.

The National Social Movement (NSM), the largest neo-Nazi organization in the United States removed all signs and symbology of neo-Nazism and replaced it with nationalist themes targeting immigration and certain religions. The study showed that the self-proclaimed nationalist group Patriot Front was using was termed as “false flag” patriotic themes to assist masking their true identity of being a white nationalist organization whose primary operational strategy is to target immigration. The Patriot Front was noted by every participant of the study as being highly successful in making themselves to appear as an American patriotic organization through the use of social media by highlighting what they viewed were threats to the American culture while promoting the American-European identity.

The study also showed that during the “Unite the Right” rally organized by the Alt Right, those who attended consisted of some from traditional white supremacist groups wearing the attire symbolic with their organization and then there were others who has signs and symbology that was relatively unknown as contained messaging and themes supporting nationalist ideas of protecting society from mass immigration and cultures that threatened the American way of life. The overwhelming view of the participants in this study was that white supremacist and white nationalist groups were aided by the conservative media platform in providing a publicly acceptable image of these groups as being concerned for the American culture while hiding their clear racial beliefs.

Theme 4: Propaganda

The ability for white supremacist and white nationalist groups to recruit new members surrounds the concept of messaging which can generate interest into any particular group or organization. When President Trump campaigned for president, his close advisor Stephen Bannon promoted the book *Camp of the Saints*, a fictional novel that targeted mass immigration as being a threat to the American culture (Blanchet, 2019). President Trump’s campaign aided by Bannon’s rhetoric targeting immigration was observed to be popular amongst racist and nationalist organizations. President Trump went further to launch attacks upon the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) program by canceling the program without any true justification other than it provides the opportunity to control who is permitted to immigrate and remain in the United States.

These same anti-immigration views are commonly found in the operational ideologies of white supremacy and white nationalist groups in the United States.

These findings of this study showed that white supremacist and white nationalist groups have used the nationalistic ideologies supported by the President Trump and paleoconservative political platforms to increase their membership and activity in the United States. President Trump's intentional derogatory remarks towards Latinos, Africans, Haitian, and Muslims served as propaganda material for the increased spread of white and Christian nationalism. President Trump's rhetoric and actions have generated the support from individuals who are known to be neo-Nazis, white nationalists, Holocaust deniers, and accelerationist mass murders who have killed hundreds of people based on the assertion that one race or one religion is better than others. The participants of the study also discussed how conservative media not only protected the fanatic views of President Trump, paleoconservatives political entities, and Christian nationalists, it endorsed such perspectives by aiding in the spread of xenophobia in the United States.

The study showed that the use of social media platforms became the effective tool used to spread extremist propaganda by both the political and nationalist sectors in society. White nationalist has effectively used social media to publish propaganda that could entice interests into their organization and once an individual decides to get more information from the groups, the radicalization process begins (Reyna et al., 2022). President Trump was specifically noted for his reliance on social media to not only lash out against political adversaries and his reliance on social media to push his nationalist

beliefs resulted in his starting of his own social media platform after being banned from mainstream social media platforms for violating those platforms rules on appropriate content.

To escape what they view as restrictive content oversight, white nationalists are using social media formats located in foreign countries. Social media companies such as Telegram, Tik Tok, and VK are located outside the United States and are frequently used by white supremacist and white nationalist groups to spread propaganda, aid in recruitment, and solicit funding supports. The accelerationist movement found in right-wing terrorism has used social media to live stream their terrorist attacks upon minority population and non-Christian religious sites in an effort to further gain attention and support for their actions.

Theme 5: International

During the study, the participants were asked to reflect on how American white supremacist and white nationalist groups are impacted by international movements and incidents. The study showed that the American Identity movement, while relatively new in the United States was deeply impacted by the Identitarianism in Europe which has existed for decades. Identitarianism subscribes to a belief system that rejects globalism and what they view as non-native religions (Zúquete, 2018). The Identitarian movement in Europe primarily in Germany and Scandinavia reject the concepts of multiculturalism (Larsen, 2022) and American far right leaders such as Nick Fuentes, and Richard Spencer have transplanted these beliefs into mainstream America. The study showed that

international white supremacist organizations such as the neo-Nazi Nordic Resistance Movement is in direct communication with American white nationalist organizations such as the Patriot Front.

The overall perception of the study participants was that the white supremacist and white nationalist groups in the United States was not critically impacted by the activities of international movements but instead United States and international white supremacist and white nationalist movements are mutually impacting each other and are working in concert with each other's goals. The manifestos written by right-wing mass shooters Juraj Krajčík, and Brenton Tarrant specifically address the topics of immigration, European Identity, and contained passages honoring notable American white supremacists David Lane of The Order and William Pierce of the National Alliance and author of the Turner Diaries. The study showed that white supremacist and white nationalist groups in the U.S. and those found internationally mutually impact each other due to the efficiency of social media and the internet.

Theme 6: Religion

While conducting this study, a topic that was never considered by me came up during the interviews with every participant highlighting its relevancy and importance to the study being conducted. The concept noted by the study's participants is Christian nationalism and how it intermingles with the nationalist ethos being pushed in paleoconservative politics and supported by white nationalists. Christian nationalism consists of an ideology that prescribes to the views that the United States was founded by

Christians and therefore the United States should be recognized as being a Christian nation (Armaly et al., 2022). While the use of Christianity has long been associated with white supremacist and white nationalist groups and movements such as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), The Church of Jesus Christ Christians Aryan Nations, and white nationalist movements such as Posse Comitatus, these groups prescribed to following the right-wing religion of Christian Identity and it should not be confused with Christian nationalism.

Political strategies effectively weaponized the fear of certain religions, misogyny, and xenophobia in assisting the election of Donald Trump in 2016 (Whitehead et al., 2018). The findings of the study showed that Christian nationalist subscribe to the same fear-based conspiracy theories that were advanced by President Trump and the paleoconservative arm of the Republican party. Christian nationalists subscribe to the concepts observed in the “Great Replacement Theory” fearing Christianity will be replaced in America due to immigrants prescribing to other religions and therefore Christianity should be recognized as the official religion of the United States which has generated support from prominent United States political figures such as President Trump, Marjorie Taylor Greene, Lauren Boebert, and Mary Miller, who all admitted to supporting the concept of Christian nationalism in America.

White supremacist and white nationalist groups in the United States have long held Christian nationalist views which has led to acts of political-based violence in the United States often directed at the federal government (Berlet & Sunshine, 2019). The

study also noted that Christian nationalist were observed at the January 6th attacks upon the United States Capital while protesting President Trump's presidential election loss.

Summation of the Study Findings

The study detailed very clearly that the political environment generated by President Trump, paleoconservatives, and Christian nationalists played a pivotal role in providing the ethos, enticement, and the pathway for white supremacist and white nationalist groups to change their appearance and operational strategies to become mainstreamed in the American society. The nationalist policies supported by President Trump and extreme conservative politicians has generated support and enthusiasm amongst those in the white supremacist and white nationalist environments. It is these same tenants professed by President Trump that have been highlighted in the manifestos of right-wing mass shooters both in the United States and internationally. Prominent American political representative openly associate and support self-admitted white nationalists who have called for the development of a white ethnostate. One critical finding of the study as it reflects to the political figures associating with known white nationalist is that when asked what the difference was between white supremacist and white nationalists, every participant stated there was no difference and if there is the term white nationalist is being used to provide white supremacy with a more favorable public appearance.

Limitations

The primary concern for this study surrounds the issue of bias on both the participants and the researcher. While the overall number of study participants were relatively small, rich data can be obtained by smaller sample sizes by using semi-structured interviews and conducting an in-depth analysis of the data to identify recognizable codes (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). For this study, MAXQDA 2022 was utilized to code the transcripts generated by the interviews. In an effort to control the interview process, an Interview Question guide was utilized to make sure each participant was asked the same questions. The use of two different civil rights organizations where the participants resided in different locations throughout the United States allowed for the data gathered to be significantly broader and allowed more in-depth analysis of the data. The participants' years of experiences can often play a role in how they view issues within the phenomenon being studied. This study participants had a variety of years of experience thus providing an extended perspective being collected from the participants. The second concern about bias is directed towards the researcher due to his past professional experiences on the subject of white supremacy. The researcher is a retired Deputy Probation Officer who in his professional duties supervised individuals associated with white supremacist groups, the overwhelming majority of these individuals associated with criminal-based gangs. The researcher retired from being a Deputy Probation Officer in 2014 which was prior to the events that were identified during this

study. The use of participants from multiple civil rights organizations and conducting an in-depth literature review reduced the concern for bias.

Recommendations

Based on the research results from this study, the need for further research on the subject of the “accelerationist” movement and its correlation to racial-based mass shootings could provide a great understanding of this issue. White nationalist-base mass shootings have taken place globally with the manifestos of the shooters often containing similar pro-white nationalist content and at times honoring previous mass shooters for their actions. While the term “accelerationism” has a significant base in classical Marxism, it did not overtly promote violence but instead professed a belief that the ultimate failure of capitalism can be accelerated thus resulting in a communist form of government (Noys, 2022). By adopting the Marxist base philosophy of accelerationism in viewing Western governments are inherently corrupt and destined to fail, right-wing extremists aspire to advance the concept of Western government collapse and failure by committing accelerated acts of violence targeting non-white and non-Christian populations thus inciting a racial or religious holy war then providing for the development of a white ethnostate (Adams & Gaines, 2020).

While the publishing of manifestos by assailants is not a new concept, society was given the opportunity to gain a new insight into the relatively new phenomenon of right-wing accelerationism following several high-profile right-wing terrorist attacks. Statistically, far-right extremism is significantly deadlier than left-wing terrorist attacks

and yet remains understudied as compared to other forms of terrorism (Am & Weimann, 2020). The manifestos penned by far-right terrorists Ander Breivik, Dylan Roof, and Brenton Tarrant contained similar nationalist-based rhetoric supporting the beliefs of the “Great Replacement Theory” that have been adopted by white nationalist and earned to some degree of support in the paleoconservative and Christian nationalist sectors. These manifestos brazenly call for accelerated acts of violence upon specific demographics such as immigrants, minorities, and non-Christian populations to take place with the overall goal of the collapse of Western government and then the formation of a white ethnostate can take place.

Since the manifestos posted by Breivik, Roof, and Tarrant, right-wing mass shooting shootings have taken place in Poway, California; El Paso, Texas, Buffalo, New York; and Bratislava, Slovakia, where the assailants have penned manifestos often citing the views portrayed by Breivik, Roof, and Tarrant (Wojtasik, 2020). The terrorist attacks committed by right-wing accelerationists has transcended international borders and pose a distinct threat globally. The tenants found within white nationalist ideologies including the “Great Replacement Theory” has been embraced by a population whose operational ideology is to commit abhorrent acts of violence including the killing of individuals based on ethnicity, sexual orientation, immigrant status, and religion.

The concept of right-wing accelerationism could use further examination and research to gain a greater insight into the phenomenon. Evidence shows the belief systems held by right-wing accelerationists have been advanced globally by the use of

manifestos whose contents are disseminated internationally by various social media formats. While lone wolf extremism and accelerationist acts of violence may look similar, violent acts perpetrated by lone-wolf extremists are viewed to be lacking any obvious aims other than perpetrating unconscionable acts of violence upon their targeted populations. Accelerationists on the other hand have adopted Marxist ideologies to push for the collapse of Western government so the ultimate pro-white utopia can be delivered to those supporting white nationalist beliefs.

Implications

The result of this study provides a comprehensive analysis on how white supremacist and white nationalist organizations can make changes to their appearance and operational strategy to gain increased support in the American society. Disciplines such as law enforcement, sociology, public administration, homeland security, and political science can benefit from the data gathered in this study because it specifically fills the gap of knowledge concerning the methods and strategies deployed by racist organizations to increase membership and to become more active in society. The data generated by this study can provide critical insight on how overt nationalist strategies that are unwarrantedly directed towards ethnic and religious groups can contribute to the growth of hate and violence in a society.

The data collected disclosed a troubling but compelling narrative on how white supremacist and white nationalist organizations have affixed themselves to a political platform that has candidly called for and provided support for nationalist ideologies that

inherently support white-Christians over other ethnicities and religions. The issue of a nationalist tenet, embedded throughout the history of the United States political, religious, and social environments has largely been ignored thus allowing itself to infect the American society with hidden racial and religious agendas favoring white Christian Americans (Geary et al., 2020). This study highlighted several critical issues including the support of known white nationalists, who have publicly called for the development of a white ethnostate and a “gentle” ethnic cleansing by some United States state and political leaders. Nationalist ideologies supported by President Trump and paleoconservative political platform have not only aided in allowing white supremacy and white nationalist to spread, but they have also been included in manifestos of right-wing accelerationist mass shooting that have resulted in hundreds of fatalities globally.

Conclusion

The result of this study identified critical issues that can be used to promote positive social change by providing public administration officials, law enforcement, homeland security officials, and political leaders with an in depth understanding on the methods and strategies used by racist organizations to recruit and increase racist-based activities in the American society. The findings of this study present a compelling observation into the role the American political environment played into aiding the spread of white supremacy and white nationalist ideologies in the American society. The literature review for this study clearly documents a history of immigration and naturalization policies enacted to provide support for white Christians over other

ethnicities and religions. While many of these policies and practices took part between the 1790 to 1960's, society has witnessed the rebirth of these same xenophobic ideologies being ingrained into the paleoconservative political spectrum supported by President Trump and the conservative-wing of the Republican party.

The white supremacist movement has effectively altered its appearance and operational strategies to ingrain itself into the political doctrine that has seen United States state and federal political leaders including President Trump knowingly associating with known and self-proclaimed white nationalists who openly spread white replacement conspiracy theories, denied the existence of the Holocaust, called for the development of a white ethnostate, and even have gone so far as calling for a "gentle" ethnic cleansing of the American society. These same beliefs have been seen in the manifestos of right-wing terrorists, who under the motivation of accelerationism, have killed hundreds of people globally. The nationalist tenants pushed by President Trump and paleoconservative politics has led America into reverting back to an era where pro-white Christianity was perceived as the official American identity.

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Appendix A: Invitation to Participate

Date:

Name

Title

Invited Participants Address

RE: Invitation to participate in research study.

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Lowell Smith, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. I am conducting my doctoral research study on the ability of white supremacist and white nationalist organizations to garner increased support in white American society. The title of my dissertation is "Mainstreaming Hate: An Analysis of the Rebranding of White Supremacy." I am requesting permission to interview five individuals from the _____ who are working in the capacity of monitoring or conducting research on white supremacist or white nationalist groups/movements.

The interviews will be conducted via Zoom with no video being recorded. The identity of the participants will be kept strictly confidential and not included in any part of the study. The _____ participation in this study would provide critical insight into the phenomenon being studied by one of the leading civil rights organizations in the United States where the results of this study could potentially impact public policy.

I have included the Informed Consent form which provides more in-depth information concerning the study and the steps that will be taken to conduct the interviews and to keep the identities of the participants classified. If there are any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Lowell Smith

lowell.smith@waldenu.edu

951-545-2806

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Participant Questions

1. What is your position and role with the organization you are affiliated with?
2. How long have you been in your current role?
3. How long have you been involved in the monitoring/studying of white nationalist or white supremacist groups?
4. What is your definition of white nationalism and white supremacy?
5. How does white nationalism differ from white supremacy?
6. Since the 2016 United States presidential campaign, what political influences or rhetoric have you observed that has or could be supported by white nationalist or white supremacist groups?
7. How can the targeting of certain demographics such as immigrants and types of religions by political rhetoric contribute to growth in nationalist or supremacist beliefs?
8. How can the political environment contribute to white nationalist and/or white supremacist beliefs gaining broader support in the white American Society?
9. What specific events/incidents that were not an official political event have taken place that were influenced by the political environment in the United States?

10. How does nationalist organizations such as the Patriot Front differ from white supremacist organizations such as the Aryan Nations, Ku Klux Klan, or National Socialist Movement?
11. What is the Identity Movement?
12. How does the Identity Movement correlate to white nationalism and white supremacy?
13. How is the white nationalist and white supremacist movements in the United States influenced by international movements and incidents?
14. How has white supremacist and white nationalist movements hidden their racist appearance to gain wider support in society?
15. Is there anything else you would like to add?