

**The Immigration Crisis
in Europe and the
U.S.-Mexico Border
in the New Era of
Heightened Nativism**

Victoria Carty

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back” (Castle 2020). Expressing a blatant nativist perspective, at a meeting with one of the leaders of the Vox Party in Washington, DC, Bannon argued that “it’s very important that a party exists in Spain, based on the sovereignty and identity of the Spanish people and willing to defend its borders” (Loucaides 2018). Indeed, this nationalist ideology has found fertile ground in the United States, which is the topic of chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Immigration and the Rise of White Supremacy

This chapter applies social movement, immigration, and critical race theories to immigration and the rise of white supremacy. There also is a focus on how the Trump administration uses both mainstream and social media to engage in misinformation campaigns and purposeful falsehoods to exploit the anxiety that many members of the white working class feel by scapegoating Muslim and Latinx immigrants. I also look at the role of media pundits, primarily on Fox News, in setting immigration policy through their close relationship with, and influence over, the Trump administration. The chapter further discusses Trumpism in a global perspective; his claims (and he makes similar ones about the United States) that allowing immigration leads to a loss of law and order, culture, and traditional values, reversing the post-World War II transatlantic alliances and refusing to participate in new ones, and embracing an overall stance of illiberalism.

The latter part of the chapter highlights the global nature of the rise of Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and white supremacy, much of which has resulted in a growing popularity of nativism and hate crimes. I note the links between extreme politicians and autocrats gaining prominence in Europe and the threat of the destruction of Western civilization held among substantial segments of the population.

As introduced in chapter 1, there are a variety of social movement theories that can refine our understanding of the rise of white nationalism and anti-immigrant feelings. Strain theory, the concepts of collective identity and framing are all important. However, resource mobilization theory, which views the media as a critical tool in activists’ repertoire, needs to be updated. A major change has taken place over the past several years in terms of how information is produced, distributed, and consumed due to the introduction of the internet and social media platforms. This, in turn, has altered the terrain

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of establishing collective identity and the farming of messages. New ICTs and social networking sites have shifted the relevance from activists merely gaining media attention from the mainstream press to ordinary citizens who become the message creators, or Mojos (often referred to as mobilize citizen journalists), who construct and distribute their own information (Carty 2015).

Henry Giroux emphasizes the importance of the communication field, and consequently the political environment, in motivating contentious politics. He summarizes, "Alternative newspapers, progressive media, and a profound sense of the political constitute elements of a vibrant, critical formative culture within a wide range of public spheres that have helped nurture and sustain the possibility to think critically, engage in political dissent, organize collectively, and inhabit public spaces in which alternative and critical theories can be developed" (Karlin 2018).

In essence, he argues that it is the media ecology that can accelerate serious political discussions and debate, and ultimately facilitate displays of collective behavior. He is among many theorists whose perspective was mainly focused on the use of media to promote democracy and ideologies that were representative of groups on the left. He was also referring to print media. The digital revolution, however, has advanced a new repertoire at the disposal of both those who challenge the status quo and those who support it. One of the benefits of new ICTs for organizers on both the left and right spectrum of politics is that they enhance the ability of organizers to recruit new members or at least encourage support for a particular cause.

THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION AND ITS IMPACT ON POLITICAL AND SOCIAL MOBILIZATION

Indeed, theorists have long noted that social networks, relational ties, and friendships are an invaluable resource by serving as a conduit of information and as a channel through which to recruit people to a cause. New ICTs expand the potential of these networks to develop and mutate exponentially, and especially through weak ties across diffuse networks and among individuals who might not receive this information through any other communicative format (Giungo 1999). Contrary to what some theorists feared, that the advent of digital ICTs would replace collective identity and weaken the capacity for collective behavior in real communities, mediated forms of communication often complement those based on face-to-face interaction and have a positive effect on political participation and activity.

The instantaneous peer-to-peer sharing also allows technologically enabled networks to serve as hybrids in that they do not result in mere "clicktivism" but rather encourage viewers of information to engage in contentious politics

(Carty 2015). New media technologies also substantially shift the way that activists can create, distribute, and consume information, which broadens the public sphere of communication and allows organizers to quickly and cheaply reach a critical mass, in contrast to the one-to-many flow of information through mainstream media (Kahn and Kellner 2003). This is demonstrative of what Alberto Melucci refers to as the "intermediate public space" through which individuals can politicize issues through dialogue outside of the authorities (Melucci 1996).

Additionally, Futekei (2013) argues that new digital technology and social media can facilitate the development of community in spite of physical distance, creating virtual public spheres and encouraging new organizational structures of social movements in a collective cause. The virtual infrastructure of this new media ecology therefore helps to build networks of coordinated action that are loosely articulated and decentralized. Boulainne's (2009) findings, for example, illustrate that the dissemination of information, peer to peer through electronic mediums increases the likelihood of participation in protests activity, and what Jenkins (2006) calls the "spillover effect."

THE RISE OF ANTI-IMMIGRANT IDEOLOGY AND WHITE SUPREMACY

The application of the social movement, immigration, and critical race theories are useful in understanding recent dynamics related to the increase of nativist sentiments, the organization of groups that promote an anti-immigrant agenda, and the carrying out of protest activity or hate crimes. Framing includes narratives that migrants are criminals, introduce health risks, and refuse to assimilate. Other frames are that through programs such as DACA or family sponsorship, politicians reward bad behavior and encourage illegal immigration.

During economic downturns immigrants are scapegoated (i.e., framed) as taking citizens' jobs, responsible for stagnant wages, and are an overall economic drain on society. They are also accused of ethnic balkanization—refusing to assimilate to dominant American customs, traditions, and language (Buchanan 2014). This is true on both sides of the Atlantic. Thus, strain theory as utilized by McVeigh (2009) and Van Dyke and Soule (2002) helps us to better comprehend this resentment. Jordan's (2019), Murtz's (2018), Deitrich's (2014), and Hutter's (2014) work are also helpful in deciphering this trend.

Political scientist Samuel Huntington (2009 in *Foreign Policy*), for instance, justifies this anxiety by stating, "The persistent flow of Hispanic immigrants threatens to divide the US into two peoples, two cultures, and

two languages. Unlike past immigrant groups, Mexicans and other Latinos have not assimilated into mainstream US culture, forging instead their own political and linguist enclaves . . . and rejecting the Anglo-protestant values that built the American Dream. The United States ignores that at its own peril.” This perspective becomes particularly manifest during times of social instability. These frames, as perpetuated through media outlets, influence public opinion and even more importantly on immigration policy (Cargile et al. 2014). While Huntington refers specifically to the United States, the same dynamic is prevalent in many countries in the EU.

For example, because of the rhetoric and narratives about Muslims, and especially post 9/11 that centered on fear mongering, many in the United States exaggerate perceptions of Muslims’ presence and power, which adds to anxiety of an existential threat. A 2016 survey showed that Americans believe 17 percent of the country is Muslim, yet it is around 1 percent (Pew Research Center 2017). These faulty perceptions are not restricted to the United States. In France, citizens think the proportion of Muslims is four times greater than what it is, and in Britain triple (Pew Research Center 2017). According to the media research institute, Media Tenor, 80 percent of (television) news coverage of Muslims is highly negative. A 2018 survey by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding found that perpetrators of violence who were perceived to be Muslim received seven times more media coverage than non-Muslims (Hussain 2018). On the Fox News program, Fox & Friends in 2010 cohost Brian Kilmeade claimed that “all terrorists are Muslims.” These erroneous assumptions highlight the importance of framing and its effect on public opinion as proposed by Cargile et al. (2014).

Additionally, Flores (2018) finds that Trump’s negative statements during his campaign and once in office negatively affected public opinion toward immigrants and particularly among Republicans and individuals without college degrees. This is also true in much of Europe. For example, Flores also argues that his rhetoric of “Make America Safe Again” implies that immigrants threaten safety. Her research supports Koopmans and Olzak’s (2004) work that analyzes far-right wing violence in Germany, finding that national media coverage of immigration issues, rather than competition between immigrant and native groups for resources, fuels attacks against immigrants.

THE POWER OF MEDIA IN FRAMING MESSAGES: FOX NEWS AND THE SPREAD OF TRUMP’S ETHNO-NATIONALISM

Consequently, the spread of misinformation through media outlets is also a part of framing, constituting immigration as a wedge issue to rally Trump’s

base of supporters. For instance, while running for office Trump characterized immigrants as criminals, causing unemployment and declining wages for native-born citizens, and referred to them as “animals” and “vermin” (McClewwen 2018). During his 2019 State of the Union address, he portrayed El Paso (a border town where he wants to build a wall to keep immigrants out) as having “extremely high rates of violent crime” and was “one of our nation’s most dangerous cities” until the government built a “powerful barrier” (Qiu 2019).

The El Paso County Commissioners Court challenged the White House on the basis of what it considered spreading misinformation and lies about a “crisis situation” on the U.S.-Mexico border. The resolution that the court released stated that “no crisis exists” and that “fiscal year 2017 was the lowest year of illegal cross-border migration on record” (Qiu 2019). In fact, crime was at historic lows before fencing began in 2006, and then rose again over the next four years after the fencing was constructed. El Paso’s (Republican) Mayor, Dee Margo chastised Trump on CNN contending that Trump’s depiction of her city is “not factually correct.” She also tweeted, “El Paso was never one of the most dangerous cities in the US” and Representative Veronica Escobar accused Trump of spreading “falsehoods” (Qiu 2019).

Fox News is often targeted as a news outlet that relies heavily on reporting and commentary filled with falsehoods and misinformation as a way to influence public opinion and shape policy. For example, on his television show, “The O’Reilly Factor” Bill O’Reilly asserted that the Deferred Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act (which would allow undocumented college students to pay in-state tuition) was discriminatory toward white students—though not acknowledging that there are also undocumented students who are indeed white (Cohen 2019). Fox & Friends hosts have called what many have referred to as cages (the detention centers holding children of immigrant parents) as “tender age shelters” and Laura Ingraham called them “summer camps” (Egan 2019). Political pundit Ann Coulter went further claiming that the children detained at the border were “child actors,” and warned viewers against falling for their lies or to show compassion (Chasmar 2018).

Lambasting multiculturalism and acceptance, Fox & Friends host, Brian Kilmeade stated that “the Swedes have pure genes because they marry other Swedes. Finns marry other Finns, so they have a pure society. We keep marrying other species and ethnics . . . They end up in schools on Long Island and, some of which are MS-13!” (Media Matters 2019). During the 2014 influx of unaccompanied minors, media pundits and celebrities also framed immigration as a threat to the legitimacy of the electoral system. Laura Ingraham described the situation as one in which the government was “trafficking illegal immigrants from one part of the country to another part of the

country to further erode American wages and further forward their goal of ultimate amnesty and changing the electoral and cultural landscape of the United States” (Durkin 2018).

Ann Coulter, at a Conservative Political Action Conference in 2014 stated, “Amnesty goes through, and the Democrats have 30 million new voters. I just don’t think Republicans have an obligation to forgive law-breaking just because the Democrats need another 30 million voters” (Titus 2014). In 2017, on the Carlson Tucker show Tucker added, in reference to Democrats, “Their political success does not depend on good policies but on demographic replacement, and they’ll do anything to make sure it happens” (Grynbaum and Sullivan 2019).

In April 2019, Carlson called Central Americans “border jumpers” and Coulter on Jeanine Pirro’s Fox News show said that to stem the flow “you can shoot invaders.” In a broader context, on her Fox News show host Laura Ingraham lamented, “It does not seem like the America we know and love doesn’t exist anymore. Massive demographic changes have been forced on the American people. And they are changes that none of us ever voted for, and most of us don’t like. From Virginia to California, we see stark examples of how radically, in some ways the country has changed. Now, much of this is related to both illegal and legal immigration, that of course progressives love” (Pannetta 2019).

In a similar vein, conservative political pundit, Rush Limbaugh on his radio show explained that “the objective is to dilute and eventually eliminate or erase what is known as the distinct or unique American culture. This is why people call it an invasion. There’s something behind this, folks, all these caravans amassing. This just doesn’t happen organically. This is part of a targeted political project to flood this country and to paralyze the Trump administration” (Clark 2020). In 2018, Carlson opined, “This is really destroying one culture and replacing it with the new foreign culture” (Clark 2020).

The comments made by these political pundits and talk show hosts support what Jardina (2019) and Mutz (2018) view as ethno-nationalism being rooted in white nativism and the threat of the declining social status among white citizens. They are also indicative of Bridge’s (2019), Herber et al.’s (2008), and Gallindo and Vilgii’s (2006) contention that nativism is used to justify and reward the native race and reinforce white superiority. Garner’s (2014) analysis, employing critical race theory is also relevant given his focus on white racialized identities and the norms of whiteness within a code that native citizens claim immigrants do not belong to. Garner (2014) also highlights the process of racialization which supposes whites sustaining relative privilege, and when threatened manifests itself as the “victimization of whiteness” as a consequence of rights being distributed to others who were formerly excluded

from receiving them. Ultimately, white citizens are losing a sense to dictate who belongs and who does not.

Theories that focus on economic populism as being at the root of nativism are also key in explaining the hostility toward immigrants. Garner (2012), for example, focuses on class-based issues related to processes of racialization. A poll by the Public Religion Research Institute and the Atlantic in May 2016 reported that 48 percent of white working-class Americans agree that “things have changed so much that I often feel like a stranger in my own country” (McHugh and Jordans 2017).

As resource mobilization theory points out, media is a powerful tool in the arsenal of social movement actors and invaluable in controlling the narrative of contentious issues through framing. Through its broadcasting Fox News successfully identifies prognostic, diagnostic, and action frames that Snow et al. (1986) refer to. It also demonstrates Berford’s (1993) emphasis on the importance of linking grievances to mainstream beliefs and values, and Ryan and Gamson’s (2006) focus on injustice frames to sway public opinion and mobilize support. Through these efforts the network also helps to foster a sense of collective identity through an “us versus them” mentality which is at the core of Melucci’s (1996) work.

IMMIGRATION POLICY SET BY MEDIA PUNDITS

There is often a blurring between politics, news, and entertainment which also can enhance the spread of misinformation. Almost two dozen regular guests on Fox News have or still do hold positions in Trump administration (Chokshi 2019). Conservative Fox News commentators, many critics argue, serve not only as a mouthpiece for the White House by supporting the president’s agenda or reacting to it, but in fact play a role in setting it. According to *New York Times Magazine*, in the context of Hannity’s influence it claims, “The call to the White House comes after ten o’clock most weeknights, when Sean Hannity is over. On some days they speak multiple times, with one calling the other to inform him of the latest developments” (Rogers and Nixon 2018).

An analysis by Politico supports this. It demonstrates that Trump has a tendency to “live tweet” based on Fox’s coverage of what they are reporting and often uses their precise language (Berber). For instance, on one segment Judd stated, “Our legislators actually have to stand up . . . they can go the nuclear option . . . they need to pass laws to end the catch-and-release program that’ll allow us to hold them for a long time.” A bit later President Trump tweeted, “Border Patrol Agents are not allowed to properly do their job at the Border because of ridiculous liberal (Democrat) laws like Catch & Release. Getting

more dangerous. ‘Caravans’ coming. Republicans must go Nuclear option to pass tough laws NOW” (Berver 2019).

While the caravan from Central America to the United States happens every year, Trump was unfamiliar with it until he heard about it on Fox News, where anchors referred to it as a “small immigrant army” (Media Matters 2018). Reacting to the coverage, Trump tweeted out messages of hordes of dangerous migrants invading the border and demanded that the Mexican government stop the immigrants or else he would end funding and trade negotiations (Rogers and Nixon 2018). When a reporter asked Trump who influenced his decision to declare a national emergency when he failed to get funding for the wall on the Southwest border, which was at the core of his campaign message, he named conservative media personalities and frequent guests on Fox News talk shows such as Sean Hannity, Rush Limbaugh, Tucker Carlson, and Laura Ingraham (Lee 2019).

Their previous attacks on the president for caving politically to Congress convinced Trump to refuse to sign a bill that did not include funding for the wall, which led to a record thirty-five-day government shutdown (Lee 2019). Trump also defended anchors and political pundits on Fox News, Tucker Carlson and Jeanine Pirro in 2019 when they were criticized for making bigoted statements. His message to them was to “stay strong.” Pirro had made disparaging remarks about representative Ilhan Omar, suggesting that because she is a Muslim, she may practice Shariah law and not be loyal to the United States (Cummings 2019). Carlson made comments on a shock-jock radio program referring to Iraqis as “semiliterate primitive monkeys” (Grynbaum 2019). On air Carlson portrayed himself as a victim of a liberal “mob” in their pursuit to silence conservative voices. On his behalf Trump tweeted, “The Radical Left Democrats, working closely with their beloved partner, the Fake News Media, is using every trick in the book to SILENCE a majority of our Country” (Grynbaum and Rogers 2019). Garner (2012) classifies this type of mindset as the “victimization of whiteness” under the rubric of critical race theory.

Trump constantly discredits media outlets aside from Fox News and often frames the mainstream media as the “enemy of the people.” On Twitter he wrote, “The Press has never been more dishonest than it is today . . . They are totally out of control . . . The New York Times reporting is false” (Grynbaum and Sullivan 2019). He also claimed (while fielding questions from reporters in Britain) that “CNN is fake news . . . I don’t take questions from CNN.” He then called on a White House correspondent from Fox News saying, “Let’s go to a real network” (Jannison 2017). On Twitter Trump referred to “fake news” 273 times in 2019—a 50 percent increase from 2018. He accused the *New York Times* of treason and said that *Washington Post* reporters

“shouldn’t even be allowed on the grounds of the white house.” The Trump campaign also revoked press credentials of journalists from the *Washington Post*, Politico, and BuzzFeed News during this 2016 campaign (Grynbaum 2019).

However, demonstrating Trump’s assumption that Fox must be loyal to him and frame issues in a way favorable to him, in October 2019, he criticized the network over a Fox poll that measured attitudes toward his impeachment trial. On Twitter he wrote “@FoxNews is much different than it used to be in the good old days,” and Fox is “letting millions of GREAT people down! We have to start looking for a new News Outlet. Fox isn’t working for us anymore!” (Koblin 2019).

In another retaliation against the press in February 2019 at the summit between the leaders of the United States and North Korea in Hanoi, Vietnam, the White House barred four American journalists from covering the dinner between Trump and Kim Jong-un. This was in retaliation after two reporters, in an earlier interaction with Trump called out questions to him about his former attorney’s testimony against him in court (Grynbaum and Rogers 2019). This broke a long-standing precedent set by all other U.S. presidents in their meetings with foreign leaders while traveling abroad, and especially with those who do not allow or restrict freedom of the press.

The White House Correspondents’ Association responded by a direct statement which read, “This summit provides an opportunity for the American presidency to display its strength by facing vigorous questioning from a free and independent news media, not telegraph weakness by retreating behind arbitrary last-minute restrictions on coverage” (Grynbaum and Rogers 2019). Trump’s attacks on American news organizations have also been cited by press advocates for emboldening foreign autocrats who censor, threaten, jail, and assault journalists. In fact, intimidation and vilification of the press is now a global phenomenon as many journalists have been jailed or killed (Committee to Protect Journalists 2020).

Mr. Sulzberger, the editor of the *Times*, has urged Trump to abandon the “enemy of the people” terminology due to more and more world leaders mimicking his statements and cracking down on independent journalism. He stated, “In demonizing the free press as the enemy, simply for performing its role of asking difficult questions and bringing uncomfortable information to light, President Trump is retreating from a distinctly American principle. It’s a principle that previous occupants of the Oval Office fiercely defended regardless of their politics, party affiliation or complaints about how they were covered. As I have repeatedly told President Trump face to face, there are mounting signs that this incendiary rhetoric is encouraging threats and violence against journalists at home and abroad” (Grynbaum and Sullivan 2019).

THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S CRITICISM TOWARD EU IMMIGRATION POLICIES

As mentioned previously, Trump and his supporters are also hostile toward Muslim immigrants. While running for the presidency he called for a “total and complete shutdown” of Muslims entering the United States. He constantly spoke of President Barack Obama being a secret Muslim and distributed misinformation about Muslims being behind the 9/11 attack (Abdelaziz et al. 2019). When there were debates about funding for the border wall on the southern border that he desperately wanted, he made the claim via Twitter that there were “prayer rugs” (i.e., implying Muslims were infiltrating the United States from the southern border) found along the border (Oprysko 2019).

Trump extends this anti-Muslim perspective in comments he has made about Muslim refugees in Europe. At a rally in Florida in February 2018, for example, he shared the following declaration with the audience: “Who would believe this? They took in large numbers. They’re having problems they never thought possible” (Lacapria 2017). He was insinuating about a terror-related episode involving Muslim immigrants in Sweden, and the supposedly high crime rates due to the presence of the immigrants.

Swedish leaders and citizens alike were at a loss as to what he was referring to. He later admitted he got his (mis) information from Fox News (Lacapria 2017). Trump also claimed London mayor Sadiq Khan was responsible for “spiraling crime” and terrorism because he allows too many immigrants into London (Dunn 2018). Referring to Germany he declared, “The people of Germany are turning against their leadership as migration is rocking the already tenuous Berlin coalition. Crime in Germany is way up. Big mistake made all over Europe in allowing millions of people in who have so strongly and violently changed their culture” (Langsdon 2018). However, according to government statistics as of May 2018, crime in Germany was down almost 10 percent from 2016 to 2017 (Langsdon 2018).

Trump has also described migration as a major contributor to what he considers a breakdown of law and order in Europe and that it is destroying its culture. Alluding to what he sees as white culture being threatened by invaders and a threat to the ethno-national majority he stated, “Allowing the immigration to take place in Europe is a shame. I think it changed the fabric of Europe and, unless you act very quickly, it’s never going to be what it was and I don’t mean that in a positive way. So I think allowing millions of people to come to Europe is very, very sad. I think you are losing your culture. Look around. You go through certain areas that didn’t exist ten or fifteen years ago” (Li 2018).

In November 2017, Trump retweeted three videos that were posted by the leader of the far-right British political party, Britain First (Waterson et al.

2017). They purported to show the effects of mass Muslim migration in Europe and consisted of titles such as “Muslim Migrant Beats up Dutch Boy on Crutches!”, “Muslim Destroys a Statue of Virgin Mary!”, and “Islamist Mob Pushes Teenage Boy off Roof and Beats Him to Death!”. The assailant in one video that he shared, in fact, was not a Muslim migrant and the other two videos depicted four-year-old events with no explanation. At least one of the videos, which originated in the Netherlands, was found to be completely false (Waterson et al. 2017).

The retweet was universally condemned among U.S. allies and a spokesperson for Prime Minister Theresa May declared, “It is wrong for the president to have done this. Britain First seeks to divide communities through their use of hateful narratives which peddle lies and stoke tensions. They cause anxiety to law-abiding people. British people overwhelmingly reject the prejudiced rhetoric of the far right, which is the antithesis of the values which this country represents: decency, tolerance and respect” (Waterson et al. 2017). In response to May’s comments criticizing the retweets, Trump encouraged her to “focus on the destructive Radical Islamic Terrorism that is taking place within the United Kingdom” on Twitter. The White House also defended the tweets by saying it doesn’t matter if the videos are accurate because Muslims pose a “threat” (Waterson et al. 2017).

Asked about Trump’s retweets on CNN’s “New Day,” former director of national intelligence James Clapper said he found the tweets “bizarre and disturbing.” He elaborated, “I think it causes friends and allies to question where he is coming from with this. So it has all kinds of ripple effects both in terms of perhaps inciting violence or encouraging anti-Muslim violence, and as well as causes, I think our friends and allies to wonder about the judgment of the President of the United States” (Jackson 2017). This once again highlights the significance that the framing of an issue can have on public opinion and policy that social movement theorists such as Benford (1993) and Snow et al. (1986) underscore.

These comments also represent how Higham (1999) defines fear of immigrants as an important factor of critical race theory as citizens can assert that outsiders jeopardize a shared sense of heritage, language, faith, ancestry, and cultural traits. Bridges (2019) and Huber et al. (2008) also argue that nationalism is important to nativism because it both illuminates the process of defending national identity from perceived threats, and simultaneously engenders a fear of foreigners. Racist nativism theories put forth by Midgley (2017), Hushman (2017), Schueths (2014), and Lippard (2011) further note that when the supposed superiority of the native status and domination is threatened, there is often aggressive action to challenge it. Jarret’s (1999) work also points to how real or perceived threats of cultural and social order lead to anti-immigrant sentiments as does the analysis of Dietrich (2014).

INCREASING HATE CRIMES AND SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL OF WHITE SUPREMACISTS

White supremacy and ultranationalism are currently among the greatest domestic security threats in the United States and are increasingly growing in other Western countries as well. In 2009, the Homeland Security Department predicted that the economic downturn, the increasing use of social media, and the election of Barack Obama would make a race-driven extremism a serious threat to national security (Belew 2019). The SPLC recorded a significant increase in hate crimes during the 2016 presidential campaign, and another large spike after Trump was elected president (Weiser 2019). According to FBI crime data, there was a 26 percent increase in white supremacist hate crimes in the last quarter of 2016 during the election compared to the same time frame the previous year, and the number of white supremacist murders more than doubled in Trump's first year of office (Wills 2019). Anti-Semitic crimes rose by 57 percent between 2016 and 2017 in the United States, which represents the largest increase in a one-year time frame, and incidents of white supremacist propaganda such as posting fliers or vandalizing synagogues and mosques increased 182 percent in 2018 (Weiser 2019).

This is a global phenomenon. In 2018, anti-Semitic attacks killed more Jews around the world than in any year in decades. In the first two quarters of 2019, there was a 40 percent increase in anti-Semitic incidents compared to the same time period in 2016 according to Anti-Defamation League (Watkins and Corasaniti 2019). In 2017, the New York City Commission on Human Rights surveyed over 3,000 Muslim, Jewish, and Sikh residents and found that 38 percent claimed they had been verbally harassed or taunted because of their race or faith (Nasa 2018). Almost 10 percent said they were victims of physical assault and a similar figure said they had their property vandalized or defaced.

In 2019, the FBI reported that of its 850 pending domestic terror investigations, about 40 percent involved racially motivated extremism. In 2017 and 2018, it had made more arrests connected to domestic terror than to international terrorism, and hate crimes reached a nine-year high in 2017. Michael McGarrity, an official in the FBI's counterterrorism division testified before Congress in June 2019 that, "Individuals adhering to racially motivated violent extremism ideology have been responsible for the most lethal incidents among domestic terrorists in recent years" (Watkins and Corasaniti 2019).

Since 2002 there have been three times as many deadly far-right terrorist attacks than jihadist attacks (Reitman 2018). In 2018, the FBI reported that hate crimes spiked in 2017 and nearly 60 percent of victims of hate crimes were targeted based on race and more than 20 percent based on religion. According to data compiled by the University of Maryland's Global

Terrorism Database, the number of terror-related incidents has more than tripled in the United States between 2013 and 2017, and the number of those killed by hate crimes quadrupled (University of Maryland Global Terrorism Database 2017).

These recent trends illustrate that immigration has replaced terrorism as a top concern in the United States. In 2018, hate crimes against Latinos were at their highest level since 2010 (Hassan 2019). Most of the violence has been against Latinos, followed by Muslims and Arab Americans. The SPLC reported the number of hate groups is at a record of 1,020 in 2018, and that alt-right groups have killed far more people since 9/11 than any other category of extremist (Reitman 2018). During a congressional hearing in the wake of the Charlottesville riot in 2017, the director of the FBI, Christopher Wray told lawmakers that the bureau had about 1,000 open domestic terror investigations, which is about the same number of investigations open on the international terrorist group ISIS.

A George Washington University study tracked a 600 percent increase in the followership of American white nationalist accounts on Twitter between 2012 and 2016, the followers of these accounts overtaking those of pro-ISIS accounts as the leading radical users of the platform (Bennett and Powell 2019). The Anti-Defamation League found that 71 percent of the extremist-related fatalities in the United States between 2008 and 2019 were committed by members of far-right or white supremacist movements (Anti-Defamation League 2020).

The racist rhetoric used by Trump—calling Mexicans "rapists" and "criminals," and his attempt to ban immigrants from Muslim-majority countries—may be emboldening groups and individuals that hold similar bigoted attitudes to express and act on their beliefs, assuming that this is acceptable and legitimate in the new political and cultural terrain (Horowitz et al. 2015). The director of the SPLC's Intelligence Project, Heidi Beirich stated, "This president is not simply a polarizing figure but a radicalizing one. Rather than trying to defuse hate encourage unity, as presidents of both parties have done, President Trump elevates it—with both his rhetoric and his policies. In doing so, he's given people across America the go-ahead to act on their worst instincts" (Conley 2019).

Trump also suggested in March 2019 there may be violence by his supporters if his policies are not supported. A few days later Representative Steven King of Iowa posted on Twitter a cartoon/meme referring to a possible modern-day U.S. civil war (Abramasky 2019). King, in fact, has a long history of xenophobia. In 2005, he introduced a bill that would have made English the official language of the United States and sued the Iowa Secretary of State for posting voting information on an official website in languages other than English; in 2006 he called the deaths of Americans at the hands

of undocumented immigrants “a slow motion Holocaust”; he embraced the birther conspiracy against President Obama and tweeted a cartoon of him wearing a turban, and in 2018 stated he did not want Muslims working in meatpacking plants in Iowa because, “I don’t want people doing my pork that won’t eat it let alone hope I go to hell for eating pork chops” (Gabriel 2019).

While many of his statements (and those made by other lawmakers and political pundits) are clearly racist, he often prioritizes either culture or civilization to conflate, or perhaps confuse his message. In an interview with Steve Bannon in 2015, for instance, he claimed, “We have a right to protect our borders, our culture and our civilization.” At the Republican National Convention in 2016 he stated: “I would ask you to go back through history and figure out where are these contributions that have been made by these other categories of people you are talking about. Where did any other sub-group of people contribute more to civilization?” and he tweeted, “Cultural suicide by demographic transformation must end” (Crowley 2017).

As one of the authors of “How Democracies Die,” Steven Levitsky laments, “violent talk, can, at minimum, encourage lone-wolf violence. It can also slowly normalize political violence, turning discourse and ideas that were unsayable and even unthinkable into things that are sayable and thinkable” (Lenohardt 2019). Indeed, the framing of the issues and intolerant rhetoric has resulted in violence and death. One of the most egregious white supremacist events took place in August 2017 when white nationalists gathered in Charlottesville, VA, for a “Unite the Right” march, chanting “blood and soil” and “you will not replace us” and throwing up stiff-armed Nazi salutes (Roose 2019). The rally is a great example of nativist racism and its relationship to white superiority that Gallindo and Vigil (2006) refer to: defending the natives’ right to dominance, as well as Huber et al. (2008) and Jarret’s (1999) theories pertaining how a perceived lack of assimilation among immigrant groups is envisioned as a threat to the cultural and social order.

The following day an alt-right supporter drove his car into a crowd of counter activists, killing one and injuring thirty others. Trump was assailed for his comments in reaction to the incident saying that there were “very fine people on both sides” (Gray 2017). James Fields, twenty-one years old pleaded guilty to twenty-nine charges in March 2019, one of which was counted as a hate crime, or “domestic terrorism” that resulted in the death of activist Heather Heyer who was protesting the white nationalists (Zraick and Jacobs 2019). In his online posts, Fields expressed support for white supremacist and neo-Nazi views and policies, as well as violence against nonwhites.

Another deadly and high-profile hate crime occurred in Pitsburgh at the Tree of Life synagogue on the Jewish Sabbath in October 2018 that left eleven worshippers dead. The shooter, Robert Bowers shouted anti-Semitic slurs during the rampage and claimed that the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society

(HAIS), which has resettled over 400,000 Jews coming to the United States, was aiding refugees in the caravan coming from Central America (Serwer 2018). The Pittsburgh attack was the deadliest against Jews in U.S. history (Garcia 2018). Misinformation coming from ultracconservative media outlets and social media sites that promote conspiracy theories likely influenced Bowers. For example, his belief that George Soros (a Jewish billionaire donor to the Democratic Party) was funding the caravans and were full of ISIS terrorists may be due to Trump’s framing of the situation that the caravans represented an “onslaught,” and an “assault” by “unknown Middle Easterners” (Garcia 2018).

Vice President Pence also promoted conspiracy theories. He told Fox News, “what the president of Honduras told me is that the caravan was organized by leftist organizations, political activists within Honduras, and he said it was being funded by outside groups, and even from Venezuela. . . . So the American people, I think, see through this, they understand this is not a spontaneous caravan of vulnerable people” (Garcia 2018). Fox News had called the caravan an “invasion” over sixty times in October 2018 (Rozsa 2018). Whether Bowers was a viewer of Fox News we don’t know. We do, however, have his digital fingerprints. He was very active on the Gab website which hails itself as a guardian of free speech that does not censor individuals who indulge in hate speech and extremism as other platforms do (Berkowitz 2018). Hours before the attack he posted, “HAIS likes to bring invaders in that kill our people. I can’t sit by and watch my people get slaughtered. Screw your optics, I’m going in” (Adone et al. 2018).

In April 2019, a self-professed nineteen-year-old neo-Nazi, after shouting anti-Semitic slurs, used an assault-style weapon and opened fire at worshippers inside the Chabad synagogue in Poway in Southern California, killing one person and injuring three others (Dreier 2020). The attacker, John Earnest, posted on online, “I would die a thousand times over to prevent the doomed fate that the Jews have planned for my race. Every Jew is responsible for the meticulously planned genocide of the European race. They act as a unit, and every Jew plays his part to enslave the other races around him, whether consciously or subconsciously. Their crimes are endless” (Dreier 2019). Later, in December 2019 three people were shot dead at a kosher supermarket in Jersey City, NJ (Knowles et al. 2019). Just a few weeks later in Monsey, NY, a man entered the home of an Orthodox Jewish family and stabbed five worshippers with a machete (Dwyer 2019). The attacker, Grafton Thomas, had searched online many times for “why did Hitler hate the Jews.” Below (2019) views these types of examples of what she perceives to be a brewing global “race war.” She maintains that white power ideology is the connecting thread of all of these attacks which are planned to incite a much larger slaughter by “awakening” others to join the movement.

In July, a nineteen-year-old male in Gilroy, CA, opened fire at a garlic festival killing three and injuring thirteen before taking his own life (May 2019). He had been using Instagram to promote white supremacy, and minutes before the shooting he posted a picture with a caption that told followers to read a nineteenth-century proto-fascist book, "The Might is Right," which glorifies "Aryan" men and condemns racial intermarriage (Alexander 2019). In another act of domestic terrorism, Patrick Crusius shot and killed twenty-two and injured twenty-four at a shooting in a Walmart store in August 2019 in El Paso, TX. Online he explained that he was "simply defending my country from cultural and ethnic replacement brought on by an invasion" (Arango et al. 2019).

His online manifesto titled, "The Inconvenient Truth" was inspired by the mass murder of Muslims at Christchurch in New Zealand in March 2019. It begins, "In general, I support the Christchurch shooter and his manifesto. This attack is a response to the Hispanic invasion of Texas . . . If we can get rid of enough people, then our way of life can be more sustainable" (Arango et al. 2019). It goes on to argue that immigration "can only be detrimental to the future of America" and Hispanics would be "changing policy to suit their needs. . . . I am against race mixing because it destroys generic diversity and creates identity problems . . . the natives (American Indians) didn't take the invasion of Europeans seriously, and now what's left is just a shadow of what was" (Arango et al. 2019). Arguing for the creation of ethno-states for different races he elaborates, "I am honored to head the fight to reclaim my country from destruction."

Another *attempted* hate crime in 2019 by a domestic terrorist and white nationalist, which the FBI successfully interrupted, was a plan intended to attack Trump's opponents to establish a "white homeland" (Conley 2019). FBI officers arrested U.S. Coast Guard Lieutenant Christopher Hasson in Maryland after finding a stockpile of weapons in his home that he planned to use against Trump critics, proclaiming that he wanted to trigger a race war. His list of potential targets was Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Senator Elisabeth Warren, and Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and high-profile journalist Joe Scarborough.

Hasson professed that he was inspired by a right-wing Norwegian terrorist Anders Breivik, who slaughtered seventy-seven people in 2011 in a crusade to resist multiculturalism and immigration (Cullen 2019). The U.S. government submitted a statement to the courts which proclaimed, "The defendant intended to murder innocent civilians on a scale rarely seen in this country" (Conley 2019). As with many recent domestic terrorist attacks, the internet played a role in finding and sharing information with those of a similar persuasion. One of his internet searches included "civil war if Trump impeached" (Cullen 2019).

The FBI was also able to abort the attempted domestic terror attack by Cesar Sayoc, who is a major supporter of Trump and sent bombs through the mail to Democrats he disliked including Hillary Clinton, former president Obama, former CIA director John Brennan, former director of national intelligence James Clapper, Democratic donor George Soros, the CNN office, and actor Robert De Niro who has been highly critical of the president (Weiser 2019). On Twitter and Facebook, he chastised former president Obama using racial slurs, and threatened former vice president Joe Biden. Federal prosecutors labeled his actions "a domestic terrorist attack" (Weiser 2019).

This xenophobia and violence have spread to schools across the United States and among young people in general. Following the election of Trump, the SPLC released a report entitled, "The Trump Effect: The Impact of the 2016 Election on Our Nation's Schools" (Southern Poverty League Center 2016). The organization surveyed more than 10,000 educators and their findings revealed an increase of incidents that involved swastikas, Nazi salutes, and Confederate flags on school property. At the university level neo-Nazi groups such as Identity Evropa (which was once one of the largest "alt-right" fascists groups but renamed itself the American Identity Movement after many of its members were doxed), The Right Stuff, and Vanguard America have been very active (Bader 2017).

On and off college campuses Evropa has conducted several banner drops decrying immigration, some reading, "Import the Third World, Become the Third World," "Make America White Again," "Imagine a Muslim-Free America," "Are You Sick of Anti-White Propaganda in College? You not Alone," "Take Your Country Back," and "You Will Not Replace Us" (Poster 2017). The distribution of white supremacist propaganda on college and university campuses has nearly doubled between 2018 and 2019 (Hassan 2020).

Other far-right groups such as The Patriot Front, The Right Stuff, and Vanguard America also seek to inspire students to oppose multiculturalism and efforts to promote diversity. The Patriot Front has dropped banners reading, "Americans are White. The rest must go" (Bader 2017). They frame their argument by claiming that "non-privileged" whites are victims of unfair government policies and are frustrated by what they see as the "cultural cleansing of white history." On college campuses fliers have been posted with the message of "Look Around White Man, Your Culture is being Eroded." To appear more mainstream, many of these groups are trying to make inroads into the Republican Party. Additionally, leaders of far-right organizations are articulating to their members that rallies and protests are no longer needed given that many of the policies of the Trump administration are consistent with their worldview in terms of policy and language (Becker 2019; Woods and Hahner 2019). Their advice is to recruit through social media and infiltrate the political system to move the mainstream farther toward the extreme.

The work of these organizations to reach out to and recruit those who feel that they are disenfranchised and are subject to injustice—in this case white males—is a hallmark of social movement theories that focus on the role of collective identity. Gansson (1992), for example, discusses the importance of the intrinsic rewards of being part of a movement or organization for the purposes of self-realization and satisfaction, and a sense of group belonging. Ryan and Gansson (2006) note the significance of “injustice frames” for recruitment purposes which these far-right groups utilize in a very powerful way. Tarrow (1988) find that promoting a sense of urgency to a real or perceived injustice (and many of these are perceived rather than real threats) advocates a sense of worthiness to the cause and provides potential recruits with a sense of agency.

Far-right groups also employ the concept of frame bridging as proposed by Snow et al. (1986). This happens when organizations can reach people who share their beliefs and values through information sharing, consciousness-raising efforts, and organizational outreach. It allows them to expand the boundaries of the initial frame to include issues or social problems of importance to potential participants. In this case, leadership combines issues of injustice against white males with a loss of culture and blaming immigrants for their perceived misfortune.

The dynamics of these groups and their supporters also support social movement theories that focus on the role of digital media as a critical resource. The ability to expand networks and mutate at high rates through weak ties and among people who might not receive information or meet similar-minded people any other way is central to Carty’s (2015) and Giunigni’s (1993) work. These supporters exist in intermediate public spaces that Melucci (1980) theorizes as being a core component of political and civic discussion and engagement in the digital age.

Critical race theory is also necessary to make sense of these dynamics. The obsession with an “invasion” by foreigners and their perceived attempt to shape policy based on their own demographic interests, the need to build an ethno-state and white homeland, fear of a race-based civil war, and the cleansing of white/European culture and history are at the crux of what Schueths (2014), Selod (2014), and Huber et al. (2008) theorize as the basis of protecting white supremacy, oftentimes under the pretense of fake patriotism. Jardina (2019) and Mutz (2018) view this as rooted in what is felt like a decline in social status, primarily among young white males which lends itself to the appeal of far-right groups who promise to protect and maintain their privileged status. The competition for schools, jobs, political representation, and overall resources further spark the kind of resentment against immigrants that Mutz (2018) and Hutter (2014) include in their analyses.

THE RISE OF IDENTITARIANS, ILLIBERALISM, AND THE ROLE OF ICTS

As the incidents described above reveal, the internet and social media are powerful tools in the repertoire of alt-right groups to recruit new members, build new organizational structures, and fundraise. Indeed, new ICTs serve as a perfect tool for the spread of racist and otherwise hateful ideas among individuals who take advantage of the anonymity of online tools, social media, and messaging boards. Between 2014 and 2015, for example, the number of “likes” on hate group tweets and comments tripled, and between 2015 and 2016 they once again tripled, demonstrating how they are exponentially gaining traction among supporters, if not membership and participation in public, street-based demonstrations (Eversely 2017). To recruit and organize the alt-right movement uses websites and social media platforms such as Stormfront, 4chan, 8chan, Reddit, and Patron, as well as more mainstream devices that include Twitter and Facebook to radicalize people, and young white males in particular.

These kinds of websites proactively attempt to reach young white males who feel slighted and are looking for a scapegoat to assuage their anger and sense of despair. The design of the various sites, through messages, videos, and chat rooms, is intended to convince or reinforce the feeling that white males are victims in the current cultural environment that embraces diversity, multiculturalism, and gender equality (Kingsbury 2019). A strategy paper released by the DHS reads: “In an age of online radicalization to violent extremism and disparate threats, we must not only counter foreign enemies trying to strike us from abroad, but also those enemies, foreign and domestic, that seek to spur violence our youth and our disaffected—encouraging them to strike in the heart of our nation” (Kingsbury 2019). The DHS is focusing on right-wing terrorism and white supremacist groups in particular.

Andrew Anglin, the founder of the Daily Stormer website has been exploring this strategy. He writes online, “Our target audience is white males between the ages of 10 and 30. I include children as young as 10, because an element of this is that we want to look like superheroes. We want something that boys fantasize about being a part of. That is a core element of this. I don’t include men over the age of 30, because after that point you are largely fixed in your thinking” (Berkowitz 2018). In addition to targeting members of the GOP and recruitment efforts on college campuses, think tanks such as Richard Spencer’s (who coined the term alt-right) National Policy Institute help legitimize white supremacists and nationalist ideologies, and make it easier for white nationalists to share their messages with a broader audience. He frames racial animosity under the rubric that the problem with whites is

that they will not promote their own racial identity, or their “rightful place” while other groups increasingly do so (Berkowitz 2018).

The *altright.com* website posts,

“Our movement is almost 90 percent young White men who know they are being screwed if things don’t start improving. We are de facto not a White advocacy group as much as we are a Young White Men’s Advocacy group . . . Minorities have explicit advocacy groups, Jews have just about everything. Young White Men do not have any money or political power . . . or even deep-pocketed supporters. But then, they never have. Young White Men have always had to make up for this disadvantage through their enthusiasm, energy and ambition. They have always had to rise up and take what was theirs”. (Nagle 2017)

In 2013, Spencer further elaborated, “We need an ethno-state so that our people can ‘come home again’ . . . We must give up the false dreams of equality and democracy. Ethnic cleansing is impossible as long as marginalized people have enough votes to stop it. But this roadblock disappears if you get rid of democracy” (Berkowitz 2018). Spencer also claimed that the United States is a “white country designed for ourselves,” and added that “the forty years between the 1924 and 1965 law were the country’s best” and that “The age of mass immigration and the age of multiculturalism has been an age of division and fragmentation” (Berkowitz 2018).

Purposively, representatives of the alt-right, like Spencer, reject the white supremacist label to try to appear mainstream. The SPLC summarizes the new white nationalists this way: “Cultured, intelligent and often possessing impressive degrees from some of America’s premier colleges and universities, this new breed of white radical advocate is a far cry from the populist politicians and hooded Klansmen of the Old South.” Instead of blatantly promoting white supremacy they emphasize racial self-preservation rooted in the supposed superiority of white culture (i.e., racist nativism). They often describe themselves as *identitarians* and embrace cultural nativism, racial self-preservation, and affirm that culture and race are inextricably bound. Thus, they conclude that the replacement of white culture will diminish civilization as other races and ethnic groups are perceived to be intellectually and morally inferior.

They further assert that Western civilization is being endangered by immigrants from developing countries and undermining “traditional Western values” and feel threatened by what they perceive to be the cosmopolitan establishment in the media, universities, government, and the Democratic Party. Data collected by the SPLC finds that there are over 600 active neo-Nazi and white supremacist groups, in addition to hundreds of anti-government militias that either have a stated intention to overthrow liberal

democracy or historically engaged in armed struggle (Southern Poverty Law Center 2019).

The “Base” is one of the most recent neo-Nazi groups espousing white supremacy and call for a race war. Seven members were arrested seven days before a gun rally in Richmond, VA, scheduled for January 20, 2019, after the FBI recorded messages among the seven to infiltrate the rally and “derail some trains, kill some people, and poison some water supplies” (MacFarquhar and Goldman 2019). Similar to Al Qaeda it attempts to radicalize over the internet and social media and create independent cells and/or lone wolves to carry out terrorist attacks to achieve the ultimate goal of creating an ethno-state in the Pacific Northwest. The agenda has evolved from discussions and recruiting online to actual acts of violence and training in military and survival skills (MacFarquhar and Goldman 2019).

In late February 2020, five individuals affiliated with a neo-Nazi group were charged with efforts to intimidate, attack, and harass a variety of people, mainly journalists, media buildings, politicians, and faith-based leaders by federal prosecutors (O’Brian 2020). They had links to the white supremacist group, Atomwaffen Division, which is a violent paramilitary neo-Nazi organization. Their main tactic is swatting (calling authorities alluding to an imminent threat a certain location to which they will respond with excessive force as a precaution).

Law enforcement officers began monitoring the group’s activities in 2018 once they became aware that they were participating in military-style training and “hate” camps (Baker et al. 2020). The main intent of the group is to spark a race war which they feel would inevitably lead to the collapse of the United States and thereby allowing it to create a white ethno-state (thus sharing an ideological perspective with the Base). This supports Below’s (2019) theory of the emergence and purpose of white supremacist groups—creating a global race war.

The call for ethnic cleansing and an end to democracy; the desperate desire for a homogenous, white nation-state; and the preservation of a supposed superior culture and values rooted in Western civilization are key to Higgam’s (1999) understanding of how religious and political differences, which sometimes intersect with racism, often evolve into the desire for ethno-nationalism.

The Trump administration has played a role in encouraging this ideology. For example, in stark defiance of multiculturalism and global democratic liberalism, in October 2018 at a rally in Houston, TX, President Trump declared, “Really, we’re not supposed to use that word. You know what I am, I’m a nationalist, OK? I’m a nationalist. Nationalist! Use that word! Use that word . . . radical Democrats want to turn back the clock, go back to the rule of corrupt, power-hungry globalists. You know what a globalist is right . . . a person

that wants the globe to do well, frankly, not caring about our county so much . . . We can't have that" (O'Brian 2020).

At the United Nations in September 2019, Trump further stated "The future does not belong to globalists. The future belongs to patriots. The future belongs to sovereign and independent nations" (Crowley and Sanger 2019). He also argued that governments must defend their "history, culture and heritage. . . . The free world must embrace its national foundations. It must not attempt to erase them or replace them. . . . Many of the countries here today are coping with the challenges of uncontrolled migration. Each of you has the absolute right to protect your borders. And so, of course, does our country" (Crowley and Sanger 2019). Previously, Steve Bannon, who was the former manager of the Trump campaign told an audience in France in March 2018 that "the central government is debasing your citizenship and the big capitalists are debasing your personhood. Let them call you racists. Let them call you xenophobes. Let them call you nativist. Wear it as a badge of honor" (Bowden 2018).

ILLIBERALISM ON A GLOBAL SCALE

As I mentioned in chapter 3, Bannon is currently setting up a political foundation in Europe which he refers to as "The Movement" to try to solidify power across the continent that will support right-leaning nationalist parties to counter the forces of liberal democracy. Trump has a similar agenda. In addition to the comments above, he left the Human Rights Council, the Paris Climate Accord, and the Asia-Pacific Trade Pact; revoked funding for the UN agency that provides education and health care to Palestinians classified as refugees; announced a withdrawal of troops from Syria without consulting his administration or allies; boycotted the Global Compact on Immigration; called EU members a foe and the World Trade Organization a disaster; and denigrated Canada and Mexico which are the two other members of NAFTA (Byas 2016).

When he withdrew the United States from the Iran nuclear deal in May (which the Obama administration solidified together with France, Britain, Germany, Russia, and China to have Iran agree to cut its enrichment of uranium in exchange for lifting economic sanctions) France's ambassador to the United Nations lamented what he called the coming of "a new world disorder" (Schiritz 2018).

Trump has also expressed ambitions to withdraw from NATO several times because he perceives the military obligations to be an economic drain, and according to Michèle Flournoy, who was his undersecretary of defense under President Barack Obama, "would be one of the most damaging things

that any president could do to U.S. interests" (Barnes and Cooper 2019). James Stavridis, a former allied commander of NATO said a withdrawal would be "a geological mistake of epic proportions" (Barnes and Hooper 2019). Trump further supported some of the most extreme anti-EU politicians during the Brexit debate.

On other fronts Trump refused to sign the collective agreement at the 2018 G7 summit, which championed a dedication to "shared values of freedom, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and our commitment to promote a rules-based international order" (Schake 2018). By doing so, he disregarded decades of alliance building and the economic and political institutions underlying it. Commenting on this defiance Louis Charbonneau, the United Nations director of Human Rights Watch remarked, "It's not just stepping back, it's an assault on one of the most important institutions we have for accountability and monitoring and exposing abuses" (Schwartz 2018). German foreign minister, Heiko Maas declared, "nothing can be taken for granted any more in foreign policy . . . the United States is becoming a place of increasing nationalism, tribalism and self-interest" (Erlanger 2018b).

The disdain for the American president shared by its former allies came to a crescendo in 2019 at the annual Munich Security Conference in February 2019. This was entitled "Who Will Pick up the Pieces?". The agenda was to address the disturbance of the post-World War II order and the insecurity that European allies have regarding the unpredictable behavior of President Trump (Benhold and Erlanger 2019). At the meeting Chancellor Angela Merkel boldly defended the multilateral institutions in opposition to pressure from the United States on European allies to pull out the Iran nuclear deal. She also criticized unilateral moves that included Trump's decision to pull American troops out of Syria, considering a withdrawal from Afghanistan, and his suspension of the Intermediate Range Missile Treaty with Russia (Venhold and Erlanger 2019).

While her speech was received with robust applause, Vice President Mike Pence was greeted with silence when he notified the members that he was bringing greetings from President Trump. At the conference Pence denounced some of the closest allies of the United States—Britain, France, and Germany for not challenging "Iran's murderous revolutionary regime" (Mark 2019). The contrast was stark symbolically and substantively. While Merkel emphasized collaboration and shared values, Pence put forth a list of demands for the allies that suited American interests (Benhold and Erlanger 2019).

A few hours later, ironically, former vice president under Barack Obama, Joe Biden received a standing ovation for delivering a rebuttal to the administration's "America First" attitude (Rogers and Sanger 2019). In addition to Trump's denigration of globalism and the institutions of liberal democracy,

there has also been plenty of support for this type of nativism and xenophobia rhetoric among far-right political pundits and lawmakers. For example, on “The Laura Ingraham Show” which broadcasts on Fox News, Pat Buchanan warned that “This is the great issue of our time. And the real question is whether Europe has the will and the capacity, and America has the capacity to halt the invasion of the countries until they change the character—political, social, racial, ethnic—character of the country entirely. You cannot stop these sentiments of people who want to live together with their own and they want their borders protected” (Blow 2018).

On his blog, conservative radio host Rush Limbaugh posted, “The existential question, however, thus remains: How does the West, America included, stop the flood tide of migrants before it alters forever the political and demographic character of our nations and our civilization?” (Blow 2018). In the past he had written about white America being an endangered species and committing “Western suicide,” claiming, “We are truly dealing here with an ideology of Western suicide . . . but on the mega-issue—the Third World invasion of the West—he (Trump) is riding the great wave of the future, if the West has a future” (Blow 2018). In 2017, Representative King from Iowa tweeted, “diversity is not our strength . . . we can’t restore our civilization through someone else’s babies” (Serwer 2019).

King, like President Trump and others in government also has ties to autocrats and neo-Nazi groups in Europe (Silva 2018). In 2015, he met with the far-right and anti-Islam Dutch politician Geert Wilders, one of the most anti-Muslim politicians in Europe who calls for the closing of mosques. He endorsed a Toronto mayoral candidate with neo-Nazi ties and met with a member of the far-right Austrian Freedom Party (founded in the 1950s by former Nazis) which has been accused of trivializing the Holocaust. On Twitter he follows an Austrian anti-Semitic activist who promotes hanging a portrait of Hitler “in every classroom” (Walker 2019). He is also in agreement with Hungarian leader Orbán, who declared that “Mixing cultures will not lead to a higher quality of life but a lower one” (Nozicka 2017).

King’s xenophobic and nationalist rhetoric eventually caught up with him, however, and he was stripped of his House Committee seats (the Judiciary and Agriculture committees) in January 2019. This happened after an interview with the *New York Times* in which he asked, “White nationalist, white supremacist, Western civilization—how did that language become offensive? Why did I sit in classes teaching me about the merits of our history and our civilization?” (Gabriel 2019). He was also quoted in a statement he made in response to the record number of black Americans and women elected to Congress in 2018 saying (referring to a picture of the incoming freshmen), “you could look over there and think the Democratic Party is no country for white men” (Gabriel 2019).

All of these comments above exhibit racist nativism, the desire for ethno-nationalism, and an undeniable communitarian perspective both globally and domestically. Once again the hyperbolic language about of an invasion, the loss of Western culture and heritage, the longing for different ethnic groups (in this context, that is, whites) to live among their own, and the fear of the “suicide” of Western culture speak to the essence of Bridge’s (2019), Van Wornart and Link’s (2016), Condensine and Hampshire’s (2013), and Garner’s (2014) analyses. The “white” code is being challenged, white people are therefore feeling alienated economically, politically, and socially, their superiority did not guarantee any more, and thus the easy scapegoat is immigrants. Rather than relying on blatant bigotry and racism, the arguments and language are couched in terminology that resonates with a sense of patriotism and loyalty to country, and the victimization of whiteness.

WHITE NATIONALIST GROUPS, ICTS, AND THE HYBRID EFFECT TO CARRY OUT HATE CRIMES

Radicalization toward extremism, when it comes to anti-immigrant, anti-Semitic, and Islamophobia attitudes, occurs almost exclusively online and later has consequences on the streets—the hybrid effect as referred to by social movement theorists including Carty (2015) and Jenkins (2006). Sites like Gab are a welcoming place for members of neo-Nazi groups such as The League that also has an agenda intent on attacking and overthrowing liberal democracy, globalization, and multiculturalism. This far-right organization formed in the mid-1990s and is the largest and oldest neo-Confederate group. It relies heavily on the internet and social media to promote an “Anglo Celtic culture” and advocates for a second Southern secession and a society dominated by European Americans (Wayne 2019).

In 2016, the president of the group, Michael Hill published an open letter to the Russian Federation explaining,

“We traditional Southerners look upon the people of Russia as fellow white Christians who are seeking to protect themselves from the corrupt and diabolical forces of globalism. We want to be part of a war with the Russian Federation instigated by the USA/NATO alliance, the head of the globalist cable . . . For over two decades, The League of the South has opposed the infernal machinations of the American Empire. We still seek our independence from it for the survival and well-being of people—the Southern nation. We encourage the Russian Federation to discern that Washington DC . . . has become more and more disconnected from the people over whom they rule . . . we seek friendship and peace with the Russian people and their leaders in the hopes that the

true interests of both can be served by opposing the immoral globalism order” (Wayne 2019)

The Proud Boys is another new far-right, white supremacist organization that formed in 2016 and is classified by the SPLC as a hate group. It views white men and Western culture under siege (Moynihan 2019). To recruit members, the organization posts and glorifies political violence that it has engaged in against progressive activists. In 2017, the leader of the group, Gavin McInnes gave a talk at New York University which several Proud Boys attended. A fight broke out between protesters of the event and the Proud Boys and eleven people were arrested by the New York Police Department; two Proud Boys members were convicted on charges of attempted assault and riot (Moynihan 2019).

In 2017, at a Trump rally in Berkeley, CA, a supporter of the alt-right was caught on tape hitting a counterprotester over the head with a shovel. The image went viral and the Proud Boys organized a crowdfunding campaign for the attacker’s bail, who later became a Proud Boy (Wilson 2018). In October 2018, McInnes gave a talk at the Metropolitan Republican Club in Manhattan, NY. Antifascist activist had been protesting outside before the event and once again a violent struggle broke out and videos showed that the Proud Boys were the instigator (Shallwant and Weill 2018).

“Roadshow” protests are another outgrowth of online recruitment and organizational strategies in the white supremacist movement. These events are planned online in an attempt to bring outside agitators to support white nationalist rallies in local communities, while making sure there is a clear strategy and script to follow (Geha 2020). For example, on the website *Occidental Dissent* organizers give specific recommendations of what to wear (khakis and polo shirts so as to look respectable), chants, and symbolical imagery to use.

Through the spillover effect, which Carty (2015) and Jenkins (2006) view as an integral part of social movement activity—organizing online and using public spaces to demonstrate in large numbers—a united and committed gathering of white nationalists may be perceived by the larger community as a legitimate social movement. Also, the role of outsiders can provide cover for locals who support the cause, but do not want to be seen at these kinds of protest activities in their own communities for fear of reprisal.

The Rise Above Movement is also a very active neo-Nazi group which promotes violence. The leader of the organization has been involved in twenty-eight violent incidents in thirteen different states (Sidner 2018). It distributes videos of members training and spreading graffiti and, similar to the Proud Boys, shares clips of their members engaged in acts of violence at rallies against counterprotesters. The founder and leader, Robert Rundo was

arrested in California in October 2018 on charges of organizing riots, federal conspiracy, and inciting violence over the internet, including the events that unfolded at the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville (Sidner 2018). Four others were indicted on conspiracy to riot and attacking counterprotesters. They have traveled to several countries in Europe to meet and collaborate with other neo-Nazi groups in an attempt to make this an international movement against multiculturalism and democratic liberalism.

One of the most recent and deadliest attacks carried out by an individual in the name of hatred toward immigrants and liberal democracy took place in New Zealand in 2019. The massacre, conducted by Brenton Tarrant, resulted in the death of fifty people and injured dozens more (Hassan 2019). In his seventy-four-page manifesto, entitled “The Great Replacement” and which he posted online minutes before his attack he wrote, “Even if we were to deport all Non-Europeans from our lands tomorrow, the European people would still be spiraling into decay and eventual death. In the end we must return replacement fertility levels, or it will kill us” (Hasan 2019). The manifesto mentions self-proclaimed white supremacist Dylan Roof who killed nine African Americans attending a church service in South Carolina in 2015 as a source of inspiration. Tarrant called Trump “a symbol of renewed white identity and common purpose” (Benhold and Eddy 2019).

The New Zealand atrocity demonstrates the contagion of extreme right-wing ideology and violence, and the vital role that the internet and social media play in spreading hate and white supremacist ideology. It was his obsession with online white nationalist message boards and internet sites that at least in part spurred Tarrant’s ambitions (Kirpatrick 2019). He is the first accused mass murderer who plotted a mass killing as itself a meme. He wrote in his manifesto that “Memes have done more for the ethnonationalist movement than any manifesto” (Kirpatrick 2019). While carrying out the massacre he wore a head camera that allowed him to live stream the attack on Facebook (Graham-McLay et al. 2019). Though Facebook tried to immediately delete the video and canceled his Facebook and Instagram accounts it was distributed on YouTube, Twitter, and Reddit on a massive scale (Strack 2019).

These organizing activities and strategies are representative of Fufekci’s (2012) contention that ICTs facilitate community in spite of physical distance through virtual public spheres and can enable new organizational infrastructures and networks of coordinated action that are loosely articulated and decentralized. They further illustrate Juris’ (2014) emphasis on aggregation among activists through online tools. These dynamics also highlight the nuanced way that activists are creating a sense of agency and assuring potential recruits that alternatives are possible to the status quo, an essential component of social movement activity that Tilly (2006) gives credence to.

VIOLENCE-FUELED NATIVISM IN THE EU

The ramifications of these political trends has real meanings for the lives of immigrants in Europe as well. Critical race theory, the communitarian perspective, and concepts of framing and collective identity provide a useful lens through which to try to comprehend the rising right-wing populism, neofascism, and violence in Europe against minority groups, and the trending toward extreme right-wing nationalism.

The increasing anti-immigrant sentiment across the Atlantic is prevalent. The drain on social and financial resources that Juris (2018) and Van Dyke and Soule (20002) refer to and forms of racism, nativism, and ethno-nationalism as connected to particular historical, cultural, geographic, and political contexts amid the threat of reduced social status among white citizens as pointed out by Jardina (2019) and Mutz (2018) are all relevant. Nativism, justifying and rewarding the superiority of the “native,” and racism, reinforcing “White’s superiority” often go hand in hand as Bridges (2019) and Herber et al. (2008) argue.

For example, according to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, in 2016 “Asylum seekers and migrants face various forms of violence and harassment across the European Union. These include attacks undertaken by individuals, vigilante groups, and state authorities and crisis of violence, harassment, threats and xenophobic speech” (EUAFR 2016). The majority of these are against immigrants. Statistics from a Greek police report confirms that hate crimes more than doubled in 2017 as compared to 2016 (Kitsantonis 2018). According to a report by France’s National Human Rights Advisory Committee, in 2018 anti-Semitic acts in France increased more than 70 percent from the previous year, and the government reported a 74 percent increase in offenses against Jews (Kitsantonis 2018).

Britain has also experienced a rise in anti-immigrant sentiment, and in particular against members of certain religions. The British government reported that between 2013 and 2017 hate crimes against immigrants almost doubled in England and Wales, and those motivated by religious hatred nearly quadrupled (Kirk 2018). The highest number of hate crimes in history was recorded by the police in England and Wales in 2017–2018; most of them undertaken as hate-based crimes on the basis of race and religion (Kirk 2018).

The alt-right group British First, mentioned in chapter 3, is the organizer and mobilizer of many of these incidents. It is a Christian, far-right, nationalist, antimulticulturalism, organization that encourages the undertaking of aggressive acts/hate crimes toward minorities. These include confronting Muslims in public places with a message that Islam is destroying the country and British culture (Camus and Leburg 2017). It has encouraged what it calls the “mosque invasion”—a disruption of Islamic services to intimidate and

threaten Muslims and has organized dozens of demonstrations across Britain in opposition to Muslim immigrants. In March 2018, an anonymous letter was sent to people in six communities in England with a message stating that April 3 would be “Punish a Muslim Day” (Joseph 2018). The author of the letter promised to reward points for acts of violence targeting Muslims, which included pulling off a woman’s head scarf, killing a Muslim, or bombing a mosque.

One of the leaders of Britain First summarized, “We want Islam banned in the UK. We don’t see why we should have to implement sharia courts and have people wearing burkas, Islamic schools, mosques, everywhere in our Christian country” (Glenday 2017). Many are assuming that a holy war will take place in the UK in the near future and the white people will be a minority. Online, the group has 1.6 million followers and has a very global appeal. The UK-watchdog group, Community Security Trust, found that in 2018 the country surpassed its record of anti-Semitic incidents by over 200 incidents—the most recorded in a single year. It concludes that this trend has been accelerating for years across Great Britain due to the refugee crisis and recent arrival of Muslim immigrants from the Middle East and Africa (Haverluck 2019). The leaders of Britain First, and the ex-leader of the English Defense League, all used social media to spread third divisive narrative before they were banned from most platforms.

Germany has also witnessed a drastic increase in hate crimes against immigrants over the past few years. The AfD Party has been broadly accused of encouraging discrimination and violence against refugees, Muslims, and Jews (Rees et al. 2019). They and other militant right-wing extremist groups have advocated for the desecration of Jewish intuitions and attacks against Jews. In 2016, Germany experienced almost ten attacks against immigrants on a daily basis, and according to the Interior Ministry, three-quarters of the attacks targeted migrants in public places (Carless 2018). Distrust in institutions and the rise of AfD have fractured the usually consensus-driven politics. Authorities say there are now more than 12,000 in Germany who have far-right views and are potentially violent, and Christine Lambrecht, the justice minister said “Far-right terror is the biggest threat to our democracy right now” (Benhold and Eddy 2018).

In 2018, Germany anti-Semitic crimes rose by 20 percent according to government data reported by Germany’s domestic intelligence agency and the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution has placed the youth wing of the AfD under surveillance and labeled it as an “extremist group” (Benhold 2019). This organization was established after World War II to protect the country from the rise of any extremist group that may threaten democracy. This is the first time since World War II that any party has been scrutinized to this extent. The main things that caught the agency’s attention

are widespread physical attacks on immigrants, the free press, and the values and institutions of liberal democracy (Benhold 2019). On May 26, 2018, Germany's government warned Jewish men to not wear the kippah in public given the rise of attacks against Jews.

In September 2018, in the city of Chemnitz, the worst rioting in Germany in thirty years took place as far-right activists beat those suspected of being foreigners and flashed Nazi salutes, yelling "foreigners out!" (Bredemier 2018). The demonstrations were a reaction to the stabbing of a thirty-five-year-old German man by a Syrian asylum seeker. The police were overwhelmed by their aggressiveness and acts of violence. Counterprotesters challenged them by mobilizing in proximity to them and chanted "Refugees welcome!" (Bredemier 2018).

In June 2019, Walter Lübcke, a conservative politician, who defended refugee policies was fatally shot in his home by a neo-Nazi shot and killed in Hesse (McHugh and Jordans 2020). In October 2019, in Halle there was an attack on a synagogue by someone radicalized online who, after failing to be able to enter a synagogue, killed two passersby. Twelve men were arrested in February 2020 on charges of forming and supporting a far-right terrorist network. They had planned several attacks on politicians, asylum seekers, mosques, and Muslims. In February, a right-wing extremist tried to carry out a large-scale attack on mosques throughout Germany to start a civil war, but their efforts were thwarted by authorities (Ewing and Eddy 2020).

In another affront against immigrants, nine people were killed in February 2020 by Tobias Rathjen in the city of Hanau who opened fire in two shishas that are frequented mainly by Kurdish and Turkish communities. The authorities note that he was self-radicalized online, and he left a video and twenty-four-page manifesto on social media declaring that all races should be eliminated and foreigners who could not be deported should be destroyed. Prime Minister Angela Merkel stated that evidence showed the shooter acted out of "right-wing extremist, racist motives. Out of the hatred against people of other origins, other beliefs or other outward appearances" (Ewing and Eddy 2020).

Bridges (2019) and Garner (2009) argue that racialization is a process that tends to attribute innate characteristics and cultural values to a certain group—a difference between in-groups (shared cultural norms, beliefs, and behaviors) and out-groups (that don't share these) and which exists within the dynamic of a power relationship. Currently a quarter of the population in Germany is immigrants or descendants of immigrants (Ewing and Eddy 2019). The "victimization of whiteness," which intersects with racialization, as contended by Garner (2014), is a reaction to ethnic minorities being granted rights and privileges previously exclusive to the whites who no longer get to determine the boundaries of "belongingness." This is a growing trend in the EU as the above incidents give credence to.

Higham's (1999) reference to how religious and political differences, as well as racism and the perception of a lost cultural heritage historically as proven to be persuasive in Europe and the United States. Huber et al. (2008) combine racialization and anti-immigrant sentiment with the manifestation of this ideology within institutions and practices to sustain white privilege which is on full display across both the United States and the EU. The increase of hate crimes and growing xenophobia also support Schueths's (2014) and Lippard's (2011) identification of racist nativism as a way to justify the superiority of the (white) native versus non-native (perceived to be immigrants and/or people of color) who do not fit the Anglo-European heritage, religious traditions, and other values and beliefs deemed dominant. Dietrich's (2014) and Hutter's research demonstrates that when globalization is accompanied by ethnic and racial diversification, membership in far-right groups increases.

CONCLUSION

Domestic terrorism is rising in the United States and in the EU, and according to authorities, much more pernicious than outside threats. Most of the radicalization to commit domestic terrorism is happening online. Social movement theories, theories of immigration, and most importantly critical race theory provide a lens through which we can analyze the developments described in this chapter. Conflict resolution experts who have worked for decades in other countries are now shifting their focus toward the United States for the first time (Tavernise 2019). Their concern is the inflamed rhetoric that politicians have normalized, the amount of misinformation and conspiracy theories that lead to violence.

Both mainstream and social media are being used to fuel this misinformation and conspiracy theories about immigrants, exploiting white anxiety across the dimensions of both class and race. The digital revolution has in particular made it easier and faster for hate groups to share information, organize, and mobilize. The rise of anti-immigrant sentiment, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism has led to a resurgence of nativist feelings and hate crimes on both sides of the Atlantic. Mainstream news outlets, and specifically Fox News, decry multiculturalism and perpetuate stereotypes about immigrants, opining that immigrants are an "invasion" which is destroying American culture and are to be blamed for the struggles of working-class Americans.

The Trump administration has also (falsely) meddled in the EU's struggle with the immigration crisis, stating that migrants are making their countries unrecognizable, bringing in crime, and making their countries disorderly, which on many occasions has baffled the leaders of the countries he is referring to.

In most of these cases, which is now a global phenomenon, there is an intent to inspire a global “race war”—awakening other potential young people who may become radicalized to join the movement. The word invasion is constant not only on Fox News but also in the online and social media posts that the perpetrators use sometimes minutes before attacking their victims. Much of this, in addition to the broader phenomenon of the surge of hate groups, is accredited to “Trumpism.” However, there are global connections between leaders of countries, and grassroots organizations promoting neo-Nazism and white supremacy that adhere to the Great Replacement theory.

Chapter 5

Contentions Politics and Advocacy Work to Support Immigrant Rights

I begin this chapter with a glimpse into some of the more popular waves of protest and other forms of contentious politics (actors working outside of the formal political system and institutional processes to affect social change) that surround the issue of immigration over the past few decades. The main focus is on the events in the United States, though some of the more noteworthy and recent protest activity that has occurred in certain EU countries is also addressed at end of the chapter.

In both the United States and parts of the EU, pro-immigration rights activists have engaged in marches, demonstrations, and rallies. In the United States some businesses activists have also participated in boycotts. A variety of activities are organized to resist pending legislation that was still being debated in Congress, or upcoming elections. Others are in opposition to laws and policies that had already been approved.

In the United States, protest activity increased significantly once Donald Trump was elected president, as well as in Italy and Germany (and other countries in Europe) in light of the emergence and/or resurgence of all-right groups. Many Italians and Germans also felt that anti-immigrant rhetoric had become too extreme, which has resulted in a steady uptick of protest activity. Across the globe, in fact, there is an increasing fear of the popularity of autocratic leaders, far right-wing extremist groups, and the rise of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

For example, there were large and widespread demonstrations when President Trump introduced the Muslim ban and the zero-tolerance policy that led to the separation of Latinx families and threats to phase out DACA. Thus, this chapter also includes mobilization efforts by the DREAMers— young people brought to the United States at a young age and are without documents but seeking citizenship. There has also been a strong reaction