Unhooding the Alt-Right: Framing and Metapolitics in Far-Right Discourse

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Abstract

The 2016 United States presidential campaign propelled the fringe "alt-right" social movement into mainstream American political consciousness. The alt-right, a loosely organized network of web-savvy young men, threw its collective weight behind Donald Trump, the politically incorrect, provocative outsider. Though failing to disavow the white supremacist alt-right throughout the campaign, a series of *unhooding events* following the election brought the movement greater notoriety, forcing the President to condemn his loudest online community. An unhooding event (Atkinson 2018) is an instance that exposes a far-right movement's potential for violence or connection to neo-Fascism. From 2016 to 2018, following three keys unhoodings analyzed in this study, a decline in movement mobilization is observed. This study utilizes the framing theory of social movements (Benford & Snow 2000) to consider how grassroots members of the alt-right react to an affront to their carefully constructed framing. With explicit connections to violence or Nazism being politically untenable, alt-right participants engage in a *metapolitical framing* that shields their affinities for violence and fascistic elements (á la *Nouvelle Droite* or French New Right).

In the month following an unhooding event, I mine alt-right online forums for activist's reactions and find four distinct proposed framing strategies: *commitment to the metapolitical, claims of conspiracy, concessions of defeat, and radicalizers.* This study provides insight into the internal communications of white supremacist activists; providing a novel perspective on the dynamics of a movement's decline. To conclude, I question the implications of an unhooded social movement in the social media age.

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1 Introduction

For a brief dark moment, the alt-right was the most salient critic *of* the American right *from* the grassroots American right. From roughly 2015 to 2018, the movement's online vitriol emerged from the recesses of the web to dominate political discourse. Participants in the alt-right post outlandish anti-semitic, racist, and misogynistic memes on forums like Reddit, 4chan, and 8chan. Violence is often encouraged. The line between outlandish irony and genuine hate is blurred. Beyond the internet, the alt-right's rhetoric and tactics have been observed in violent acts at the fringes of America's growing white nationalist scene. Peaking with the election of Donald Trump and declining following the 2017 Unite the Right rally, the alt-right may not remain the coherent force it was, but its impact on international subcultures and politics is undeniable.

Feldman (2018) writes that the alt-right is the most successful re-branding of fascism since the end of World War II. But what happens when this branding is challenged? How do movement activists react and re-frame their message when a connection to old school fascism, racism, or violence is exposed?

The Unite the Right rally gives some of the best insight into the results of an exposed, unsavory connection. Within a year of the Trump victory, alt-right leaders organized the 2017 demonstration in Charlottesville to protest the proposed removal of Confederate statues. One hundred men with tiki torches marched on the University of Virginia campus chanting "Jews will not replace us!" (VICE, 2017). By the next day, the rally had concluded with riots and the death of an activist, Heather Mayer, after a car drove into a crowd of counter protestors. The car was driven by James Alex Fields, a Unite the Right participant affiliated with the Vanguard American nationalist group.

The Unite the Right rally was an *unhooding moment* (Atkinson, 2018) for the alt-right. A potential for violence and connection to neo-Fascism was exposed and the American public was confronted with the same sour wine of white supremacy in a newly designed bottle. But what is this new design exactly?

The alt-right's unique style of strategic framing and self-proclaimed metapolitical warfare is what makes the movement unique and salient. Participants interact with one another and recruit more into their ranks through online vitriol: trolling, shitposting, or *lulz.* It is through these distinctive forms of online rhetoric that the alt-right distinguishes itself from earlier white supremacist American movements. Andrew Anglin's *Normie's Guide to the Alt-Right* (2016) confirms this:

> While racial slurs are allowed/recommended, not every reference to non-white should be a slur and their use should be based on the tone of the article. Generally, when using racial slurs, it should come across as half-joking— like a racist joke that everyone laughs at because it's true. This follows the generally light tone of the site. It should not come across as genuine raging vitriol. That is a turnoff to the overwhelming majority of people" (Anglin, 2016).

With outwardly racist statements branded too taboo for mainstream discourse, the alt-right has pioneered an ironic "coded rhetoric" or "hate appeal" (Whillock, 1995 p. 32) to discreetly communicate their ideology. Arguments for the supremacy of the white race are presented through humor and memes outrageous enough to maintain plausible deniability. In the same guide, Anglin writes: "The unindoctrinated should not be able to tell if we are joking or not" (2016). Richard Spencer and other alt-right leaders recognize and embrace this approach. "We aren't quite the establishment but let's act like it" Spencer (The Atlantic, 2016) claimed in a National Policy Institute speech. In earlier remarks, he has noted, "If I wanted to create a movement that was 1488 white nationalist, I would have done that. But I didn't because I recognized that this is a total nonstarter. No one outside a hardcore coterie would identify with

it" (Spencer quoted in Weill, 2018). Messaging is the medium of activism in alt-right mobilizations and intrinsically connected to movement success. The movement's endorsed "ironic distance" (May and Feldman, 2018, p. 26) both *removes* a barrier from recruiting into the mobilization and *presents* a barrier to accusations of overt racism.

This thesis examines the aftermath of three unhooding events and their impact on alt-right strategy. An explicit goal of the alt-right is to present a distance between itself and unsavory elements of racism and fascism. How do members react when a gunman enters a synagogue in Pittsburgh screaming slurs, gunning down 11 worshippers in 2018? Or following the riots of the Unite the Right rally in 2017? Or is purely rhetorical, like in the case of Richard Spencer's 2016 "Hail Trump" National Policy Institute speech?

Relying on methods developed by framing theorists, I analyze online forum posts made by alt-right participants in the month following each of the above three unhooding events. I consider how these challenged frames are interpreted and engaged with by white supremacist activists. *Reactions range from a commitment to the metapolitical strategy, claiming conspiracy, conceding defeat, and radicalization.* While descriptive accounts of these framing contests (Ryan 1991) are common in literature, there is little evidence to indicate what brings one frame's "victory" over another other than "an achievement of greater resonance" (Benford & Snow 2000). Considering frames in an arena of competing resonance from a temporal perspective allows us to see which frames emerge consistently and which are dropped.

2 Theoretical Framework and Conceptualizations

In the early 1990s, studies of social movements began to embrace cultural considerations. A well-documented genealogical trajectory led scholarship from theories of grievance, to resource mobilization theory, to political opportunities to a constructivist discourse analysis approach dubbed "framing" (Goffman, 1974). In this chapter, I demonstrate the compatibility of this approach with my study of the mobilization tactics of the white supremacist alt-right movement.

First, a definition of social movements is provided — and the alt-right is linked to the concept. Then I introduce the framing theory of social movements. The routes to a successfully framed social movement are established and then linked to a wider historical trajectory. The ideological origins of the alt-right movement lie with the French *Nouvelle Droite*, a group characterized by its use of *metapolitical discourse*. When analyzing coded rhetoric from a contemporary white supremacist movement, insights into the roots of the group's strategy help distinguish the genuine from disingenuous, the ironic from the violent. Once provided with these insights, we return to the contested processes of framing where we are confronted with our major gap in the literature: when frames go head to head, and one fails, how does the loser react, regroup, and reorganize? I conclude the chapter on several critiques of my chosen approach and the steps taken to avoid its pitfalls.

2.1 Social Movements

The nature of the alt-right movement demands a social movements framework that embraces its disparate nature. I rely on Diani's (1992, p. 13) definition of a social movement as "a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations,

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engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity." Diani's definition appropriately captures the balance between the diverse, informal nature of alt-right and its pursuit of collective identity. It also avoids the rigidity of other canonical definitions that may exclude modern internet-based movements (e.g. #MeToo). An understanding of the *political or cultural conflict* aspect of this definition is aided by McAdam, Tilly and Tarrow's (2001) classic treatment of series of mobilizations as *contentious politics*. Tilly and Tarrow (2008, p.5) define contentious politics as "interactions in which actors make claims bearing on someone else's interest, in which governments appear either as targets, initiators of claims, or third parties." Wright (2009, p.195) provides a description of the connection between Tarrow et al.'s model and processes of framing:

> The contentious politics model gives special attention to strategic framing and other interpretive/social construction processes that mediate between opportunity and action and it also addresses the elusive problem of 'trajectories of contention' or the 'mutation of paths' taken by movements in response to state actions, third parties, and shifting political conditions. Movement survival often depends on the ability of movement actors to reframe issues and reinvent themselves in ways that transform contention and change the discourse of ongoing struggles.

This "mutation of paths" helps us understand why a movement may "tone down" the rhetoric of a predecessor given a specific political opportunity structure — a distinct feature of contemporary white supremacist movements. This model of understanding social movements is intrinsically connected to a movement's chosen framing (Benford & Snow, 2000). In a liberal democratic environment frequently hostile to far-right groups, the process of framing and re-framing helps a movement conform to the specific constraints of their environment — the very subject of this study. The following section of this study outlines the framing theory of social movements.

2.2 Framing

The "frame" as a social psychological concept has proved fruitful for studies of political sociology since its introduction by Goffman (1974) and then Gitlin (1980). While Gitlin's original study, which introduced the term to studies of social movements, examined mass media's portrayal *of* a student movement, the use of framing has been expanded significantly; encompassing the processes by which a movement frames *itself* and its *own* goals. The intuitive nature of framing has propelled the theory into dominance in studies of social movements. Picture frames accentuate the image they contain — drawing a viewer's attention or (in the case of failure) repelling it. A frame takes a raw perception of reality and filters it through an appropriate "cultural toolkit" unique to each organization and individual (Swidler, 1986). If the picture is one of injustice, then social movement entrepreneurs attempt to attract attention and support. But students of social movements know, from half a century of research, that even the clearest pictures of injustice are not enough to trigger a well-supported movement (Noakes & Johnston, 2005). Frames provide the language of dissent and the means to express it, whether or not a hypothetical "grievance threshold" has been met.

Already, before even formal definition, the subjective nature of the frame should be clear. The framing perspective is inherently constructivist, recognizing that participation in a social movement cannot be reduced to a rational calculation. Instead, it is an evaluation of individually perceived reality. There is a complex interplay of the frame developed, how that frame will be perceived, and whether that frame is enough to mobilize. In a study of a white supremacist movement, where injustice to participants may be objectively absent (Blee 2006, Wright 2007), framing theory provides the means of understanding *meaning creation and destruction*. Whereas I will be analyzing the strategic reactions of a movement to an adverse event, framing theory helps

us understand how movement entrepreneurs engage in the competitive field of meaning manipulation (Zald 1996, Ryan 1991, Gamson et al. 1992).

Framing, at its core, describes the micro processes of mobilization. I consider a frame, in line with leading scholars of the field Benford and Snow (1992, p. 137), as "an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the 'world out there' by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one's present or past environment." This definition begs a distinction between the internal and external dynamics of a movement — a "world out there" can only exist given a "world in here." In the underground, stigmatized world of white supremacist organizing, this dichotomy is even more profound (Blee, 2017). Still, as with a movement of the left, movements of the far-right rely on some interaction with the "world out there" for resource support, mobilization capacity, and sympathy to claims. The frame within and the frame to the outside world are deeply connected. Actions strategically considered within movements are enacted externally through collective action frames.

2.2.1 Collective action frames

Collective action frames provide a means of considering both the social-psychological and structural factors that impact mobilization. They encourage students of social movements to recognize that mobilizations occur within a larger context (Noonan, 1995). Before mobilization is possible, social actors should accept a shared collection of meanings and understandings that make an expression of grievances possible (Wright, 2009). These actors, though sharing grievances, express discontent in different ways and envision different solutions. The continuous process of framing results in the development of collective action frames (Benford & Snow, 2000). "Collective action frames are not merely aggregation of individual attitudes and perceptions but

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also the outcome of negotiating shared meaning" (Gamson 1992, p. 111). If frames seek to create meaning then a collective action frame is the physical or discursive form that meaning manifests. Collective action frames have a variety of forms: protest slogans, commonly understood metaphors, or strategies of dissent. If a primary aim of a social movement is to make claims on others' interests on the basis of a collective identity, then a collective action frame provides a means of channeling both the strategy and ideology. The negotiation of this frame creation sometimes takes place throughout the course of grassroots acts of contention but are more often the product of social movement "entrepreneurs" (Noakes & Johnston, 2005). These entrepreneurs are heavily reliant on their knowledge of the cultural landscape; balancing regionally specific knowledge against the goals of their movement.

2.2.2 Frame resonance and strategic appropriation

There is a push and pull between utilizing the familiar frames of a dominant group and an oppositional frame to encourage potential participants to take action (Tarrow, 1998). Striking the proper balance between the two results in resonance (Valocchi, 2005). Resonance is the ultimate goal of the *frame maker* and is contingent on several factors beyond the interplay between dominant culture and dissent (consistency and credibility to name two) (Snow & Benford, 1992). The literature on framing resonance is overlapping and limited in its successful empirical testing (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 1996). For clarity and consistency, this study relies on Benford & Snow's (2000) tripartite categorization of framing tasks being: discursive, strategic, and contested. Resonance is achieved differently depending on which task is pursued — with strategic processes of appropriation being of particular interest to this study.

Well-recognized symbols of dominant groups are often powerful tools of mobilization. Williams (2002, p. 247 cited in Meyer et al. 2002) argues, "Movements must produce rhetorical packages that explain their claims with extant, culturally legitimate boundaries." This can be achieved through a process of "frame alignment" (Snow et al 1986) where individual and organizational "interpretive orientations" become effectively linked (p. 464). Frames are aligned through Snow et al.'s (1986) identified mechanisms:

- Frame bridging — the connection of two previously unrelated frames (i.e. New Zealand shooter Brenton Tarrant's self proclaimed "eco-fascism.")
- Frame extension — when a frame's boundaries are pushed to a new, previously unaccounted for demographic.
- Frame amplification — a re-branding through a memorable, broadcastable slogan
- Frame transformation — "change old understandings and meanings [the content of the frame] and/or generate new ones" (Benford & Snow 2000, p. 625).

The appropriation of dominant values can be channeled through any of these tactics, but best fits frame transformation, where social movement entrepreneurs engage directly with the values and structures they oppose (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 625). If done correctly, this strategy can provide the ingredients of a resonant frame. Credibility, consistency, and transmissibility have already been achieved by a previous movement or the state. A frame cannot be owned by a particular movement or cadre of movement leadership. These actors come and go but frames remain resilient yet malleable to the next generation of opposition (Zald, 1996). Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 's tactics are exemplary of frame transformation during the American Civil Rights Movement. The Constitutional language of liberal democracy and Biblical anecdotes were redirected at the oppressive conditions of the Jim Crowe American South. Or in the Polish Solidarity Movement, where the dominant symbols and teachings of Catholicism were incorporated into mobilization efforts. The practice is so common that Noonan (1995) has argued that countermovements do not always need to employ oppositional frames. "As countermovements, [white supremacist] rhetoric

and tactics are influenced by opposing movements. White supremacists borrow slogans from civil rights movements and claim equal rights for whites" (Fetner 2005, 2008; Staggenborg & Meyer 1996 quoted in Blee & Creasap 2010). These new, mutated frames are then used by countermovements against their creators.

2.2.3 Competitive processes of framing

We have already established that white supremacist movements are, by nature, countermovements (Blee & Creasap 2010). This implies a process of framing that occurs in opposition to a dominant frame. Ryan (1991) refers to this collision of frames as a "framing contest." Seeing as most social movements' raison d'etre is an impactful challenge to a status quo, this contest is intrinsic to the creation and maintenance of a movement (Coles 1998). But in the case of the alt-right, instead of targeting, for example, a specific policy, in many ways frames are the object of their activism.

Framing contest challenges take three forms in literature: "Counterframing by movement opponents, bystanders and the media; frame disputes within movements; and the dialectic between frames and events" (Benford & Snow 2000, Fransozi & Vicari 2018). Framing disputes within movements are the subject of this thesis. If the ultimate goal of framing processes is resonance, then disputes internal to movements should generally concern the best path toward the highest amount of resonance or "how reality should be presented so as to maximize mobilization" (Benford 1993, p. 691).

For example: Wright (2009) demonstrates this "toning down" in his study of racial-nationalist American social movements following the Oklahoma city bombing. 21st century developments of these groups in the United States are characterized by a strategic adaptation of

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the frames of hegemonic liberal society. According to the author, a demobilization of Patriot militia groups and a disavowal of the attacks by right-wing terrorists paved the way for the swells in grassroots far-right mobilization and tactics observed today.

In the case of the alt-right, internal dialogue frequently concerns how to hijack the language and values of the hegemony through a metapolitical warfare (Stein 2018). This appropriation is not a phenomenon unique to the American far-right. This facet of the alt-rights strategy has origins in the French *Nouvelle Droite* (New Right; ND) movement. The following section reviews the origins of these theories and their relevance to the alt-right's strategic framing.

2.3 Metapolitical Theory and Origins

Metapolitics, as broadly defined in a key study from Zienkowski (2019, p. 132) —

> "differs from politics as usual in the sense that it consists of practices that potentially reconfigure existing modes of politics, the associated logics and rationalities, as well as the dominant power structures in a given public sphere. Metapolitical debates have the potential to reshape the structure of a public realm, the entities and processes that constitute it, as well as the concepts and practices of politics that underpin it."

"Politics as usual" can be considered the traditional realm of institutionalized democratic politics. This extends to political violence, coups d'etat, and traditionally seen struggles for power. Instead, actors engaged in metapolitics operate on a cultural and discursive plane. A movement's chosen realm of conflict becomes the site of their strategic framing activities and is, hence, worth addressing at a theoretical level. Though not intrinsically connected to developments within the French *Nouvelle Droite* movement, metapolitics as a strategic process of framing employed by the alt-right cannot by pried apart from its postwar origins.

It is well documented in scholarship and self-reported accounts that the alt-right's metapolitical tactics are borrowed from the ND (Lyons 2017, Zienkowski 2019, Heikkilä 2019). In the aftermath of the Second World War, ideologies connected to fascism were systematically

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excluded from reconstructed democratic structures. In his book, *Metapolitics*, Viereck (1941) traces early uses of the German *metapolitik* to Wagner's nationalist community as a means of describing politics that go beyond the failing parliamentary structures of the Weimar Republic. Griffin (2000) directly connects the development of the ND to those interwar fascist principles. Three decades later, in the aftermath of the May 1968 protests in France, Alain de Benoist would channel the metapolitics into the thinking of a burgeoning *Nouvelle Droite* (Capra Casadio, 2014). The '68 protests exposed grievances shared between the emergent New Left and de Benoist's anti-egalitarianism: "radical anti-liberalism, anti-capitalism, and anti-American" (Bar-On 2001, 342). In an appropriation of Frankfurt school philosophers Adorno, Horkheimer, and Altusser, the ND engaged in cultural struggle through a revolutionary myth-making just-far-enough distinguished from the politically unfeasible fascism (Bar-On 2001, Bar-On 2009). The precedence of culture over formal politics is explicitly derived from another left-wing thinker, Antonio Gramsci. The ND and the alt-right embrace a common "right-wing Gramscianism" with the following justification:

> "[...]we chose a metapolitical strategy that, according to Gramsci's teachings, allows us to gain cultural power before political power, which does not exclude that in the near future someone should bring our cultural programs to a more political plane" (de Benoist 2014 quoted in Bar-On 2015)

This re-framing of Gramsci's work, a practice that Griffin (2000, p. 48) refers to as "an impressive piece of sleight of hand by the ND which disguises its extreme right-wing identity", has taken three forms of "metapolitical intersection" that can be operationalized in this study of alt-right identity formation and framing:

- Metapolitics as political strategy: Where ND and alt-right actors establish the arena in which conflicting parties struggle for hegemonic control of the cultural realm.
- Metapolitics as intellectual leadership: Where politics are taken beyond parliamentary structures — to the internet, in the case of the alt-right.

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- Metapolitics in opposition to modernity: Where metapolitical actors attempt to undermine egalitarian legacies of Enlightenment with a fascist model of society. (Zienkowski 2019, p. 141-142).

This overview should suggest a natural congruency between social movement theories of framing and the metapolitics as political strategy. In their efforts to strike resonance with potential recruits, far-right movement entrepreneurs, just like any other social movement actor, seek framing resonance. But the above mentioned "consistency and credibility" (Varocchi 2005) are inhibited by the stigma towards these movements. An irony of modern white supremacism is that the stigma and disdain these groups hold for marginalized groups is often re-directed back at them by the wider public. Eric Goffman describes a stigmatized person as an individual "reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted discounted one" (1963, p. 3). Media perpetuated images of the white supremacist as exhibiting "hatred, boorish irrationality, and violence or violent intent" are widespread (Berbrier 1999, p. 411). This stigma introduces high costs for public participation in a white supremacist organization and prompts even these groups to distance themselves from the racist signifier (Berbrier 2002). These barriers to entry of new recruits and credibility of the movement force alt-right entrepreneurs to seek new frames — just as the ND did following the collapse of actual existing fascism.

The ND, though arguably of the extreme right, is decidedly not white supremacist (Griffin 2000). But the theories developed in 1970s Paris clearly have an impact on today's American white supremacist scene. Systematically excluded from mainstream politics and the Republican party, alt-right entrepreneurs have been forced to pursue a metapolitical path in their pursuit of hegemony. Zienkowski's (2019) operationalization in particular aids the empirics of this study — where I address the strategic framing employed in this pursuit. The metapolitical field has

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important parallels with the field social movement entrepreneurs engage on in the competitive processes of framing.

2.4 Critiques of Framing Theory

In her excellent essay "How the study of white supremacism is helped and hindered by social movement research" Blee (2017) outlines a discomfort between mainstream social movement theory and white supremacist social movements. In many regards, these criticisms reflect wider critiques of framing theory; critiques that apply to movements of the left as well. "Rightist movements fit awkwardly into the theoretical templates of social movements that were largely developed in studies of feminism, the New Left, and civil rights" (Blee 2017, p 271) Already in this chapter, I have made comparisons between the tactics employed by the American Civil Rights movement and a contemporary movement decisively intent on reversing that movement's progress. While not eliminating the alt-right from consideration under these theories, a bias towards progressive movements in these theories should be addressed (Hutter & Kreisi 2013). In this section I will outline several of those discomforts and the steps I have taken to confront them.

2.4.1 The social movement entrepreneur?

Consistently throughout this chapter, I have used the concept of "social movement entrepreneur" to describe an actor responsible for selecting and enacting their chosen frame. The language of organizations applied to a movement presents clear issues — conjuring up images of executives deliberating profit maximization in a boardroom. In reality, frames are not the exclusive product of elite negotiations. Nor are they the product of rational actors with the foresight to anticipate their success.

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Even when the terminology of entrepreneur may be appropriate to descriptive accounts of a frame's formation, it can at times shield the intentions behind a frame's development. Most accounts of an entrepreneur's duties point towards the sole duty to spur public opinion in favor of a cause. Blee (2017) recognizes that white supremacist activists generate frames with many of the same intentions as progressive movements. But there is often an aspect of terror involved in their frame dissemination. In Blee's earlier landmark study *Women of the Klan* (2008) the author details how Klanswomen would form "poison squads" to spread rumors and destroy the reputations of Jewish families and Protestant families accused of being race traitors. These techniques went well beyond the sole purpose of mobilization often cited in framing literature. These frames ruined lives and inspired fear. This duality will be important to reckon with when evaluating my own data.

2.4.2 Chaotic by nature?

The alt-right movement, though distinguished from its predecessors, in many ways fits the standard profile of other grassroots American white supremacist movements. Social movements often struggle in their early days to define themselves — their goals, conditions for entry, their strategies of mobilization. But in the case of white supremacist movements, this chaos is definitive (Blee, 2017). Even when a young movement survives its early conflicts and establishes guidelines for membership, these rules are likely to be changed often (Blee 2003). Collective action is inhibited by internal cultures of violence that attract top-down, authoritarian styles of leadership characterized by self-designation and threats (Daniels 2009, Simi 2010). Ideological diversity is also characteristic. Scholars have identified 8 characteristics of white supremacist social movements that are not always unanimously adopted by all groups or members within groups (Atkinson 2018). This tendency toward disorder is shared by the alt-right and is only compounded

by the movement's nearly-purely online presence. I have chosen a broad but still well-cited definition of social movements from Diani (1992) to ensure I capture the informality of interactions among white supremacist movement networks.

3 Defining the Alt-Right

Despite novel style and techniques, many argue that the ideology of the alt-right is nothing new in the American white nationalist scene (SPLC 2018, Atkinson 2018, Daniels 2018) with some authors even drawing a direct link to classic fascism (May & Feldman, 2018, in Fielitz & Thurston 2018). Those connections are demonstrated through Atkinson's (2018) identification of eight classically white supremacist concepts that "animate alt-right thinking:

- The Jewish Question;
- the 14 words (We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children);
- white genocide;
- white nationalism;
- Identitarianism;
- race realism;
- misogyny and,
- the ethno-state (p. 309).

There is disagreement over whether these principles translate into goals the movement actually pursues (Hawley 2017, in Fielitz & Thurston 2018). May and Feldman (2018) present the clearest outline the movement's prescriptions for American society:

- Reactionary gender roles,
- Militant state focussed on dynamic expansion, even colonization;
- A top down policy of ethics and politics putting the collective above individuals, save a charismatic leader. (p. 26)

These academic categorizations are a decent reflection of the issues claimed by alt-right blogs themselves. According to r/DebateAltRight, members of the alt-right believe in race realism, gender realism, ethnonationalism and that "diversity is weakness" (u/MortalSisyphus, 2016). None of these racist concepts were created by the alt-right. And not every participant in the alt-right movement endorses each of the concepts. In line with the broader trend of far-right social movements in the United States, the alt-right is disorganized, nebulous, and chaotic (Blee, 2017). Whatever loose connections exist between activists is maintained through social media platforms

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that allow for anonymity and limitless free speech; beginning on Reddit and migrating to 4chan, 8chan, and Gab.

For the five years after alt-right leader Richard Spencer coined the name of the movement in 2008, the alt-right operated in obscurity. Then in 2016, the movement and Donald Trump rose simultaneously — though not necessarily hand-in-hand. As the post-Mitt Romney Republican Party worked to move away from anti-immigration rhetoric to appeal to a new base, Donald Trump capitalized on the void with his own bombastic brand of politics. Alt-right online communities took notice and embraced Trump as their choice candidate (Hawley, 2017). The future President began to retweet content originating in Islamophobic alt-right blogs and replicating the style and performances of the movement — injecting alt-right principles and rhetoric into mainstream political discourse (Switzer, 2018).

4 Methodology

I begin by selecting three key junctures, or "unhooding events" to serve as case studies. Each juncture exposes the violent or openly racist underbelly of the carefully constructed exterior of the alt-right movement. More extensive accounts of each case are included in their respective sections, but these brief synopses are included for purposes of justifying their inclusion methodologically.

The first case study analyzed is Richard Spencer's November 21, 2016 National Policy Institute speech. The speech gained international notoriety after Spencer concluded the speech with "Hail Trump, hail our people, hail victory!" Members of the audience raised their arms in the Nazi salute, utilizing the symbolism and language of German fascism. The second case study is the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, USA on August 11 and 12, 2017. Alt-right leaders Richard Spencer and Jason Kessler called for a union of right-wing forces that quickly devolved into violence and the death of a counterprotestor. In attendance, alongside members of the alt-right, were Ku Klux Klan members and Swastika flags. The third case study is the Tree of Life massacre of 2018. David Bowers, an American man who frequented alt-right social media, entered a synagogue during Saturday worship and murdered 11 worshippers. Though not claiming allegiance to the alt-right movement, his Gab profile featured alt-right memes and language.

These case studies were selected with intervals of approximately one year between each of them to capture the movements' strategic progression from November 2016 to March 2018. Each also, arguably, become progressively more serious and violent. The cases are alike in their unhooding capacity, but dissimilar in their means of doing so. The object of comparison shifts between each case. This allows me to analyze how movement activists react to different events. I consider the varying degrees of direct connection to the movement,

The texts used in this analysis are the full set of 4chan /pol/ (or "politically incorrect") forum posts referencing both the unhooding and the alt-right movement in the month immediately following the event. This forum is a plane of strategy and conflict where framing is manipulated. Through an intensive discourse analysis, the framing movement activists used is identified. 4chan is not the only online forum alt-right activists utilize. 8chan, Reddit, and Gab are also popular. 4chan was selected over others for its capacity to be mined for specific words and phrases over certain periods of time. Reddit is easily searched, but the designated alt-right subreddit r/debatealtright has low traffic and is far from representative. Gab is a decentralized, Twitter-esque site with no retrospective searching capacity. And 8chan posts are no longer archived after web masters discovered large amounts of child pornography in their archives.

I used two archival engines to scrape the relevant data: 4chansearch.org and 4plebs.org. The advanced search features on these sites allowed me to select a time frame for my search and the keywords that must be included. Duplicates of the "alt-right" with a hyphen and without are included to capture all relevant posts, though I use the canonical "alt-right" in this study. Below are the time frames and keywords:

	Time Frame	**Keywords**	**Forums Yielded**
Case Study 1: Spencer Speech	November 21st, 2016 through December 21st, 2016	"Spencer" "Richard Spencer" "Hail Trump" "Alt-right" "Altright"	*29 threads* explicitly connecting the alt-right to the unhooding
Case Study 2: Unite the Right	August 11th, 2017 through September 11th, 2017	"Unite the right" "Charlottesville" "Alt-right" "Alt right"	*46 threads* explicitly connecting the alt-right to the unhooding
Case Study 3: Tree of Life Massacre	October 27, 2018 through November 27th, 2018	"Bowers" "Synagogue" "Alt-right" "Altright"	*9 threads* explicitly connecting the alt-right to the unhooding

No concerns of violating activist privacy are relevant as all posts on 4chan are anonymous.

5 Case Study 1: "Hail Trump! Hail our people! Hail victory!"

"What blocks our progress is the meme that has been carefully implanted in White people's minds over the course of decades of programming, from Mississippi Burning to Lee Daniel's The Butler—that any kind of positive racial feeling among Whites is inherently evil and stupid and derives solely from bigotry and resentment. And that the political and social advancement of non-Whites is inherently moral and wonderful." – Richard Spencer in National Policy Institute column from 2013 (quoted by ADL, 2018).

Many participants in the alt-right reject the notion of their movement having a leader. Instead, they choose to embrace the nebulous, anarchic sphere built through anonymous internet forums. But few disagree that the name "alt-right" originated with Richard Spencer, current president of the D.C. think tank The National Policy Institute (NPI) and founder of AlternativeRight.com. Spencer, an Ivy League educated writer and self-proclaimed white nationalist, spent time as a literary editor for the American Conservative before being fired for his radicalism. Deeply influenced by democratic critics Carl Schmitt and Friedrich Nietzsche (Wood, 2017), Spencer advocates for a "peaceful ethnic cleansing" non-white Americans. He ultimately envisions a new American empire resembling the Roman Empire (ADL, 2017). Spencer often invokes his European identity as a determinant of greatness. His fondness for European culture is reciprocated in limited supply. Spencer's Twitter bio describes himself as an "international thought criminal" in reference to his 2014 deportation from Budapest, Hungary and subsequent banning from all 26 Schengen Zone European countries and the United Kingdom.

Spencer and the NPI operated in relative obscurity for the five years after he assumed control of the small think tank in 2011. Then, in 2016, Donald Trump began appropriating alt-right's tactics and rhetoric (Switzer, 2018). When Hillary Clinton gave credence to the alt-right moniker in a 2016 speech, media inquiries into the movement sought out Spencer and pinned him as the alt-right's figurehead. In Clinton's speech, she laid out the connections between Trump and

the movement — aiming to denounce racism. But Clinton's speech has been widely criticized for backfiring and elevating the alt-right grassroots, and Richard Spencer, into the American political spotlight (Rapeport, 2017).

Part of Spencer's success in (whatever command and he has over a band of anonymous trolls) has been his capacity to bring online tactics and concepts offline. Despite being the sole operator of the NPI, the institute has consistently hosted a biannual conference and publishes two books yearly. The NPI's 2016 conference in Washington DC featured Spencer as the keynote speaker. Richard Spencer's 2016 NPI speech was an early unhooding moment for the alt-right. Spencer has consistently claimed his remarks were made in humor and "exuberance" (Chang & Thompson 2016) fitting with the alt-right's metapolitical *modus operandi.* Still, it drew ire from some activists and praise from others — serving as an instance where framing was internally challenged and renegotiated. As this speech was solely the work of Spencer and came as a surprise to many alt-right members, there is not a clear-cut preemptive framing going into the NPI speech (as there is with a planned event like the Unite the Right rally.) But returning to the exact content of the speech, how does Spencer frame the alt-right's mission in the United States? The frames laid out throughout the 30-minute talk can serve as a benchmark to determine how grassroots members' framing interacts with an unhooding from an elite.

Coming in the immediate aftermath of the Trump presidential victory, Spencer refers to the mainstream media as the German *lugenpresse*, a favorite phrase of Adolf Hitler to describe the "lying press." Spencer spends the remainder of the speech framing his vision of contemporary American society. A conflict between the morally corrupt elite and the morally pure white American is painted with a *populistic injustice master frame*. Those in power are portrayed as at odds with the will of the majority: "The state wars against the nation rather than protecting it."

According to Spencer, this absence of nationalism has fostered a "sick disgusting society run by the corrupt, defended by hysterics, drunk on self-hatred and degeneracy" (Spencer, 2016). Spencer claims to see a hypocrisy in tolerant, egalitarian American society: "Refugees who commit horrible crimes are set free while people who criticize them are arrested" Donald Trump is purported to be the new defender of the nation and white Americans — a return to the status quo of white dominance. "Because for us as Europeans it is normal again when we are great again" (Spencer, 2016). Spencer concluded by shouting "Hail Trump! Hail our people! Hail victory!" (The Atlantic, 2016). Several members of the crowd raised their arms in the Roman salute popularized at Hitler's Nuremberg rallies. Though conference organizers instructed all press to leave the room, reporters from The Atlantic were able to capture video footage of the speech.

An intersection of timing (given Trump was elected two weeks prior) and too-close-for-comfort fascist references gave the speech a particular resonance within and beyond the movement. As counter protestors at Spencer's speeches labeled him a neo-Nazi, movement activists negotiated how to frame the speech with conspiratorial framing dominating the dialogue.

5.1 Conspiratorial Framing

Barkun (2003) outlines three principles of conspiracy theories being: 1) nothing happens by accident; 2) nothing is at it seems; and 3) everything is connected. 4chan is known for its high-speed layout of messaging that occasionally produce conspiracies capable of infiltrating mainstream media sources. Conspiratorial counter-framing is the first to appear in alt-right discourse following this unhooding event. Richard Spencer's credentials as a white supremacist and his commitment to the movement are immediately attacked. The perceived recklessness of Spencer's Hitler references, to some participants, can only be explained as an intentional attempt

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to sabotage the movement's progress. Accusations of Spencer being "controlled opposition" are

common:

> "But you understand that painting the whole movement as extremist is exactly what (((they))) want right? All it takes is for the feds to frame or catch one really stupid extremist who got egged on by a government plant or a really dumb persuader in the movement (spencer) and that will be enough reason alone to bust the whole thing up. Say bye bye to /pol/ if you think spewing the nazi stuff to jews who work at the New York Times is a good idea in the long run after the CIA foils some phony 'far right terror plot.' I know it's hilarious to send them offensive pics, but they are no longer oblivious and out of touch with how the alt right organize and indoctrinate. They know where we come from and how we think now. And they are 100% certainly trying to blow us up from the inside. Don't be dumb guys. These people have been playing the game longer than us" (No. 99884725, 2016).

Movement activists consistently launch this claim at Spencer but disagree over the source of the

"controlled opposition" manipulation. The three parentheses around the word "they" denotes that

the object of the pronoun is the international Jewry. This "echo" is a common, not-so-subtle means

of shrouding anti-semitism (ADL, 2017). ZOG (or Zionist Occupied Government) and JIDF

(Jewish Internet Defense Force) occupy high positions on the conspiratorial hierarchy. They are

alleged to control The Atlantic and Spencer himself. Alternatively, the source of the infiltration

could be Hillary Clinton supported PAC "Correct the Record" (CTR) which worked throughout

the 2016 election to collect opposition research on Bernie Sander and Donald Trump. The below

post, from 48 hours after the speech, summarizes many key attempts at conspiratorial counter-

framing pitched by alt-right participants over the following month:

> "Why is nobody questioning the fact that (((The Atlantic))) are producing a documentary on the """alt-right leader""", Richard Spencer, and were invited to film and report on his rally? Why does nobody question the fact that they were filming the speech from the back of the room, in order to conveniently capture the shots of the crowd members giving Roman salutes? Why does nobody question the fact that dozens of MSM outlets have simultaneously started pushing the narrative that he leads the "alt-right"?... Why does nobody question the fact that the Nazi salutes just looked so obviously unnatural and unorganic? Why does nobody question the fact that Nazi salutes such as these were not seen among the "alt-right" until now? Why would anybody want to evoke the imagery and symbolism of Hitler's party? Even if you're as NatSoc as it gets, it still makes absolutely

no fucking sense to adopt the Nazi salute and the Nazi greeting "Hail victory" (Sieg Hail). NOBODY looking to further the NatSoc cause would publicly behave like this, NOBODY AT ALL. Who benefits from this recent Nazi hysteria? Do you even have to ask? Richard Spencer is a fucking sellout cuck, who's taken (((The Atlanic)))'s shekels and free publicity in exchange for behaving this way in front of the cameras. This is nothing but a deliberate attack on the reactionary conservatism sweeping the Western world right now, that ((they)) seem to be genuinely afraid of." (No. 99892987, 2016)

The above post also presents a connection between the conspiratorial framing and metapolitical softening framing's logic. Because "NOBODY AT ALL" would utilize stigmatized National Socialist symbols and language in a 21st century conference, the "Hail Trump" comments must be the product of outside influence. The far-right widely and the alt-right more specifically are jeopardized by this outward display of a "power level" — or awareness of white power and the forces mobilized to destroy it.

5.2 Metapolitical Commitment Framing

In the aftermath of this unhooding event, several movement activists propose "damage control" measures that align with the metapolitical commitment framing. Use of this framing implicitly acknowledges that Spencer's comments were made it error and have the potential to damage the movement. But instead of pointing to outside influence, as in conspiratorial framing, these activists aim to spin the unhooding in their favor, or at least make decisions that will minimize the fallout. The below quoted post is a message attempting to quell any concerns over Spencer's co-optation. There is an overtone of conspiracy (as the post opens with accusations of CTR's involvement) but is metapolitical in that it poses specific solutions to maintain the group's unity.

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"CTR [Correct the Record] is in full force today because of Richard Spencer's speech. Don't worry /pol/, just about every one of these people have only heard of Richard yesterday and have no idea what their talking about, and like always these shills will have no effect other than a brief 2 day annoyance. No real member of the alt-right honestly thinks this bullshit media narrative.

But I'd like to dispel some things

>Richard Spencer popped up out of nowhere like Milo [Yiannopoulis, another alt-right media figure and arguably, an elite]
he's been around for years in the national policy institute and saying something like this makes your status as a ctr shill plain as day. And even so, Milo was a problem because he tired to co-opt the alt-right movement, Richard Spencer literally fucking created it.

>We are not Germany so doing Richard Spencer's "German Nazism is stupid"
this seems valid on the surface but it's actually really dumb. He's a WHITE NATIONALIST not a German Nazi, you can tell because he believes America should be a homeland for the white European people and create a society which benefits whites over non-whites which has fucking nothing to do with German Nazism.

>Richard Spencer is a Nazi LARPer
see above, also nothing about him is LARP besides his (admittedly cringey) "Hail Trump" comment. He believes in creating a white nation not through genocide, not through violence, but through creating policies that specifically benefit white people and does not take into account the needs of other people, while also creating economic incentive for non-whites to leave.

If anyone has any actual arguments I'd love to hear them but all I hear is concern trolling, ctr shills, and people who have been living under a rock who are judging Richard's entire career based on one speech they saw on the news yesterday" (No. 99720670, 2016).

Though embarrassed ("cringey") over Spencer's Nazi allusions and unable to account for them, the poster defends Spencer's credentials. Spencer is consistently accused of "Nazi LARPing" (or live action role playing) in an attempt to claim his white supremacist activism is illegitimate or for personal gain. The activist cited disputes this by claiming an incompatibility between "white

nationalism" and German National Socialism. Spencer's positions are defended in a characteristically metapolitical fashion. White supremacist policy prescriptions are made more palatable by disavowing violence and advocating for "economic incentives" for non-whites to leave the United States.

Other activists are less confident in the media's purported short attention span regarding the story. A metapolitical perspective and commitment are espoused, but few solutions are provided.

> "He fucked up. He used inflammatory rhetoric designed to motivate the LARPers, and the camera caught it all. The alt-right is now a Nazi movement. Plausible deniability gone. /pol/tried to warn you alt-righters that embracing the label was bad, but you didn't fucking listen. Now everyone who had previously identified with the label is facing a PR nightmare. They only have two choices: acknowledge or disavow" (No. 101192305, 2016).

Potentially prescient of the following two sections, "acknowledge" could be treated as a *continuation* of the unhooding while "disavowal" could be treated as a *concession* of the movement and its goals.

5.3 Radicalization Framing

Not all members of the alt-right considered Spencer's "Hail Trump" as a detriment to the movement's progress. Some aim to continue pushing the limits of what is acceptable to a mainstream audience at risk of alienating some.

> "Yes, god forbid some autists do the nazi salute and trigger the planet. I was so sure they were ready to jump on the bandwagon of white nationalism before that. And did you even notice that Richard Spencer didn't do it? Look again, he's raising his glass in a toast, and so are half the crowd with their arms up.
>
> But even if he were, how many people do you think, who were going to be comfortable with discussing white nationalism in a positive or even neutral light, are now going to shrink into hatred of it because some people in a crowd did a Nazi salute? 100? 200? What little percentage of people has this crowd lost to us?

It's the nature of the beast they made. When every other option has been taken from you, you use the taboo and the shocking to make your point. There's been such a hard dig into the hatred of whites, with privilege and microagressions that we are at the precipice to our very existence, when not spent in blind worship to them, would be an affront. So when the world is that extreme, you take the mantle of the beasts they fear. Is it classy? It is respectable? No, but what has class and respectability gotten people these days? A position at a round table on CNN?" (No. 99879898, 2016)

The alt-right participant from the above quote believes the mainstream affront to white culture both a) disqualifies them from participation in the movement and b) justifies the use of shock tactics to gain a platform. The poster directly argues against the respectability politics urged by advocates of the metapolitical strategy. This re-framing was praised by several activists after Politico editor Michael Hirsch resigned following a Tweet where Hirsch published Spencer's address — urging his followers to go to Spencer's home with baseball bats. One activist celebrated Hirsch's resignation with a gif of a dancing man and the caption "[My face when] this whole thing gives us more publicity and drives the left insane" (No. 99900354, 2016). The decision to place media attention over ideological cloaking is praised similarly by another activist in reference to the "Hail Trump" remark: "It's short and simple, and deceptive enough that people think they know what it means without properly grokking it. In other words, it's a classic Trump-style troll that exposes cognitive bias brilliantly. Well played!" (No. 99739288, 2016).

5.4 Concession Framing

">Idiotically, Richard Spencer yells "Hail Trump!"
>The audience responds with "Roman salutes"
>LARPing failure - doesn't understand politics
>Alternative Right now associated with Nazism
>Pollutes label - target audiences now limited
>Normies less likely to be red-pilled
>This was all quite foreseeable

>Paul Joseph Watson disavows "racism" - attempts to relabel the Alternative Right as some sort of civic nationalist movement
>Facebook pages, including God Emperor Trump, begins to call Richard Spencer and original Alt Right racists
>The Alt Right is successfully divided
>The Alt Right is successfully co-opted and watered down from its original identitarian, ethnic-nationalist origins

Where were you when Liberalism again destroyed its only ideological competitor? Great job, you fucking retards. All that for which we have work, and not it's gone" (No. 99858296, 2016)

The final, most pessimistic reaction to the Spencer "Hail Trump" speech frames this event as one that cannot be recovered from. Proponents of the concession frame see this unhooding as a blow to the movement's constructed framing that cannot be mended. The above post attempts to lay out the logic of the movement's "division and co-optation." The post cites the condemnation of several "alt-light" groups and forums as the source of the group's failure. This framing and logic holds the importance of ideological unity in the face of the opponent — liberalism. By interjecting rhetoric that is alienating to some groups within the movement at the movement's flagship conference, Spencer (within this logic) has established a line in the sand that some groups cannot cross. Whether disavowers, like the above cited Paul Joseph Watson, genuinely disagree with Spencer's use of Nazi-tinged language or not, the costs of association with the movement became too high for further participation.

The same is true for then President-elect Donald Trump. This framing is bolstered most by Trump's first of two condemnations of the alt-right. In an interview the day following the NPI speech, Trump disavowed the alt-right and claimed that he did not intend to energize the alt-right (New York Times, 2016).

The alt-right was uniformly pro-Trump in the 2016 American presidential election; churning out memes and content that were occasionally used in the President's official messaging

(Switzer 2018). Though the movement's enthusiasm towards the President in office tempered from its election season fervor, many members of the movement report being demoralized by the President's condemnation. The President's reaction prompts many conversations over whether the "alt-right" even exists — a topic that comes to dominate many threads in this case study.

6 Case Study 2: The Unite the Right Rally

Since 2015, throughout the American South, coalitions of citizens, progressive interest groups and politicians have demanded the removal of monuments to the Confederate Army. In 2016, the Charlottesville, Virginia City Council published a report suggesting a statue of General Robert E. Lee being either relocated or "radically transformed" (Fortin, 2017). The proposed removal of the statue was cited as a catalyst for a national gathering of American far-right groups under the name "Unite the Right" on August 11 and 12, 2017. Organizers Richard Spencer and Jason Kessler secured permits for a protest in Charlottesville's Lee Park for 400 people — though it is estimated that 4,000 white supremacists were in attendance by the second day of the demonstration. Groups represented included the American National Socialist Movement, Vanguard America, neo-Nazi organizations, and Klansmen (Washington Post staff, 2017). On the night of August 11th, a coalition of tiki torch wielding men in white polo shirts and khaki pants marched on the Robert E Lee statue, where a group of University of Virginia student counter-protestors were assaulted (ADL, 2017). The protestors, an all-male crowd, chanted "Jews will not replace us!" and "Tomorrow belongs to us!" (Hartzell, 2017).

The first series of forum posts collected in this sample was taken immediately preceding this first tiki torch march, beginning at 11 Aug 2017 16:30. Throughout the week preceding the demonstration, a 4chan user made daily calls encouraging participation:

> "UNITE THE RIGHT
> Saturday at 12PM – 5PM
> Charlottesville, Virginia
> Lee Park
> 201-299 2nd St, Charlottesville, Virginia 220902
>
> In response to the Alt-Right's peaceful demonstration in support of the Lee Monument on May 13th, the City of Charlottesville and roving mobs of Antifa have cracked down on the First Amendment rights of conservatives and right wing activists. They have

threatened our families, harassed our employers and tried to drive us from public spaces with threats of intimidation. We are not afraid. You will not divide us.

Thousands are going to turn out, both nationalists and antifa, and both sides are gearing up (pics to come). If you're looking for a ride, lodging, or others to go with, there should be a lot still available through the Daily Stormer forums and the Faceberg. Godspeed anons.

This is an event which seeks to unify the right-wing against a totalitarian Communist crackdown, to speak out against displacement level immigration policies in the United States and Europe and to affirm the right of Southerners and white people to organize for their interests just like any other group is able to do, free of persecution.

#UniteTheRight" (No. 136953453, 2017)

This introductory post demonstrates the plurality of frames employed by the alt-right. These frames provide a baseline of where the movement stands before an unhooding event and gives perspective once these frames begin to devolve. Before the demonstration begins, movement activists constantly frame their own struggle and the adversity they anticipate. Immediately following instructions on how to participate in the demonstration, the purposes and targets of the alt-right's message are listed. The enemies are established and homogenized as the "roving mobs of antifa (anti-fascists)," the entire city of Charlottesville, and Communists. Each enemy presents a foe resonant enough to mobilize white supremacist activists. Activists use these examples to demarcate the boundaries of forces sympathetic to the "rights of white people" and the opposing other.

Through a classic *injustice master frame*, Unite the Right attendees victimize themselves in two ways. First, again, as the victims of antifascist groups that have targeted right-wing activists for their political beliefs. Second, through the "culturally Marxist" practices of cities like Charlottesville that impede on white rights and establish "safe spaces" (literally for migrants and discursively against politically incorrect speech.) The alt-right claims to be the object of physical

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and cultural violence. These injustice master frames translate into collective action frames: "in the face of this adversity, how do we react?" Victimization serves as justification for veiled, yet clear calls for violence. Though an earlier cited May 13th alt-right rally was "peaceful," the encroachment of individual enemies and the broader "totalitarian Communist crackdown" has encouraged activists to arm themselves. The "pics to come" references a post made two hours later showing "Shields made by the League of the South" and "helmets by the Traditionalist Workers Party" (No.136964869, 2017)

This post is met with a consensus of enthusiasm from self-identified alt-right members and the broader /pol/ community. Activists translate the veiled calls for aggression into open encouragements of violence: "Can't wait to get comfy and watch live streams. Antifa gonna get destroyed," "Glory to you brother, one of us is worth at least 10 of them" and "There's talk of IEDs, improvised weapons and water bottles filled with cement. I'm going armed just in case they need to dig another blm (Black Lives Matter) rifleman out with a suicide robot" (No. 136972684, 2017). A post in reply to these provocations lists out the rules for the event, providing this sample's first expressions of concerns for the group's aesthetics:

> "**Look Good:** Dress in a way that's flattering, not in a way that makes you look like a clown or a LARPer. Remember, you are representing our movement. If your appearance is seriously lacking (morbidly obese, disfigured etc — be honest), please do not go to the rally and instead spend time working on yourself" (No. 136972072, 2017).

The poster clarifies the purposes of these rules as public relations precautions and makes references to European groups with the appropriate look: "Nordic Youth's crisp white shirts and green ties, or Golden Dawn's black fitted shirts and military fatigues." Participants are encouraged by those claiming to be rally organizers to not attack counter protestors unless in self-defense.

To summarize, the framing leading up to the rally is tinged with optimism and calls for non-violence. Responses to the proposed union of far-right groups are positive. The first series of

forum posts calls for participants to take revenge for their victimhood but to do so while presenting themselves respectably. This highly resonant injustice master frame used in this initial post was developed during the American Civil Rights Movement (Benford & Snow, 2000) — where movement leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. would encourage activists to wear suits to marches and never engage in violence. The frame's appropriation can be considered *frame extension* when connected to white American males. In the bottom right hand corner of the image embedded in Figure (2.1) is an *amplified frame*; the slogan "You will not replace us!" which was widely used throughout the two days of demonstrations. Also connected to the injustice master frame, this collective action frame utilizes pronouns to keep its object ambiguous. The protest chant can be aimed Charlottesville, the Communists, Antifascists, or people of color.

Over the course of the following 48 hours, the /pol/ community and members of the alt-right use 4chan to live comment on livestreams of the events in Charlottesville. They engage in their own virtual collective action by making fake Twitter accounts of antifa activists to spread confusion among counter protestors (No. 137066430, 2017). Protest slogans continue to be amplified as online activists applaud rally attendees' chants of "fuck you faggots" and "white sharia now" (No. 137069177, 2017).

But by 11:22 on August 12th, the Governor of Virginia declared a state of emergency and the first criticism of the rally begins to appear. In a post that appears to place the anonymous critic outside of the alt-right: "The alt-right is so fucking dumb. Like, actually stupid. They try to 'unite the right' using hate symbols, completely alienating and repulsing anyone with an IQ over 50. then they cause a bunch of violence and use a shit ton of hate speech against the left, thinking it will somehow benefit them, even though it just makes them more hated. the alt-right is literally just killing themselves as we speak (No. 137086225, 2017). By the time this post was made at 17:23,

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media outlets had begun to report that a 20-year-old white supremacist terrorist with ties to the nationalist group Vanguard America had driven into a crowd of counter protestors. One woman was killed and approximately 20 were injured. Throughout the day protestors battled one another in well-documented street brawls. The opposing sides maced one another, used homemade flamethrowers, and beat each other with clubs.

Following this unhooding event, /pol/ posts are broadly characterized by a push and pull between whether to consider the events of Unite the Right as a positive step forward for the movement or a negative affront to the group's attempted aesthetic and ideological framing. The high volume of threads being posted in the hours immediately following the rally are, by preponderance, positive. Those critical of the rally are accused of being Jews and paid shills aiming to derail the movement's progress. These two broader conflicting frames are summarized (coherently) by the two following posts. First positively:

> "I mean sure, at first I thought a right wing protest was a good idea, but if you watch any MSM right now, including Fox, they're all being referred to as "racist white supremacists" they're cherry picking the people they interview. The last guy I just saw on Fox literally said
>
> >I survived genocide when I was a child. We're being gassed by the jew lovers.
>
> Any of the violence that crops up is being painted as being started and caused by the "racist white men" no matter who starts it. And whenever they find a sensible person to interview they cut him off as quickly as possible. The right wing was better off sitting at home, doing nothing. I fear that this will kill any momentum the right had. It will turn moderate people away from the right. Hell, I'm pretty sure there's Antifa there posing as dumb white rednecks, and that's who the MSM is interested in interviewing. I'm just saying, the right was better off sitting at their jobs, or at home, and allowing the left to go out and make a fool of themselves. That helped the right immeasurably. This does not. If you don't believe me, turn on any MSM network and see what they're saying right now" (No. 137087748, 2017).

And then negatively,

it is worse because the left is actually a tiny minority , and they seem like some giant beast because the media works to make them seem like they a majority or very close to one. Add to this internet bots and paid shills .

(((They))) are terrified that we will realise we outnumber them not just a little, but massively despite all the lies and decades of manipulation, you just can't make people like (((enrichment))).

No matter how much propaganda they inject into your eyes just a few actual real life encounters with brown people reverse it all.

The jew will shift gears and try to turn this power to their side, that is what civic nationalism is, their attempt to turn the tide into a fake nationalism they can just change the language and give token gestures in the hope the goyim will be fooled into thinking they won.

Don't let civic nationalist faggots subvert us" (No. 137028245, 2017).

Given the non-linear nature of the data, its difficult to derive a consensus from 4chan posts on whether the rally was successful in its goal of "normalizing" alt-right ideals. But what does emerge in the following days is a series of posts calling for "damage control." Beyond the broad considerations of "positive vs negative", more strategic alt-right dissenters to the rally's outcomes discuss how to re-frame the weekend's unhooding. I have identified those proposed *frame transformations* below:

6.1 Conspiratorial Framing

The events of August 11-12 were highly scrutinized by the /pol/ community and many attempted to rework the unhooding in their favor. Conspiracies proposed ranged from tactics on how to blame the Charlottesville Police department for condoning the violence to, at their most bizarre peak, attempts to claim that the woman killed was the same crisis actor used in the Boston Marathon Bombing. These reactions emerged first from the Virginia Governor's decision to declare a state of emergency. But the claims stemmed primarily from the systematic de-platforming of alt-right blogs, Twitter accounts, and means of funding in the rally's aftermath.

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Activists argue that the murder of the counter protest was falsified in order to rationalize internet service providers' elimination of the movement's means of communication.

As media scrutiny over the rally intensifies in the following days, the conspiracy theories begin to shift internal to the movement. Jason Kessler, one of the permit holders for the rally, is outed as a participant in the Occupy Wall Street movement. Richard Spencer, the second permit holder, is accused of being a Jewish spy within the movement.

This conspiratorial framing is an extension of the victim framing used in the lead up to the rally. Activists who employ the conspiratorial framing shirk responsibility from movement elites and their own actions. Instead, responsibility for the rally's failures is placed on the Zionist Occupied Government (or ZOG). These conspiracies are usually denoted by an anti-Semitic cartoon depicting a plotting merchant with an overly sized nose.

6.2 Metapolitical Commitment Framing

Other activists remain committed to the metapolitical direction endorsed by many movement elites. A post titled "DMG (damage) CONTROL alt right" captures the sentiments of those with intentions to continue cloaking the far-right's tarnished image with respectability politics:

> "We need to create a positive outcome from the Charlottesville rally. Whether it be online or real life, we need to stand up and show that the MSM narrative is false. It's the only way of getting normies back onto our side. At this point, the alt right is about to be labelled as a terrorist group. Then there will be no more rallies, no more movements. I say we stand up and post images of the girl who died, saying 'rest in peace'. It's the only way to appease the normies and get them thinking that the alt right isn't some terror cell full of KKK members.
>
> After that, I say we have a peaceful rally - something like a park BBQ, where everyone's welcome to join and discuss the alt right ideologies in a safe environment. Bring families. Show them what a peaceful white ethno state could be like and they'd want to join. And if Antifa attacks the white families, they're going to look like monsters. What do you think, /pol/ ?" (No. 137233668, 2017)

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The poster suggests a continued commitment to the strategy of pursuing public mobilization, just with a greater emphasis on peaceful events. Whether ironically suggested or not (the line is difficult to determine), the alt-right activist suggests a family-friendly picnic with the intention of normalizing the movement's activities. Outside aggression from opposition groups is invited and only expected to strengthen the movement's cause.

Though met with some dissent from those seeking to continue violence against leftists, many other posters offer suggestions on how to continue softening the movement's image. One activist concurs with disavowing all alt-right elites and neo-Nazis but advocates for keeping the movement's true goals covert. While the above post intends to shed a white ethno-state in a positive light, it is argued that

> "Talking openly about an ethnostate only leads to failure, so disavow anyone who reveals his power level. Leftists will recognize the dog whistles and know we're crypto, but normies won't listen to them. Examine and copy the successful tactics of cultural marxists. Liberal morality is deeply embedded in modern society, and it's going to take a long time to change that. Don't get trapped in a echo chamber where you can no longer relate to normies. That's what led to Charlottesville") (No. 137235987, 2017).

Normies, in this context, are those on the fence about commitment to white supremacism and the alt-right movement. When the poster cites the movement's goal of "normalization" it is these normies who the alt-right hopes to convert to their side. In these attempted conversions though, there is disagreement over whether this metapolitical softening should come as purely image-based or a change in actual ideology. The following post strikes a balance between image and ideological change:

> "As you all know, the image of the alt-right/white nationalism has been permanently destroyed after the thing in Charlottesville and in the eyes of the public and with the help of the media, alt-right is synonymous with neo-nazi and kkk. And for good fucking reason. We cant let this shit go on any longer. This cannot be a movement associated with dead movements of the past that America fought and defeated and that instantly delegitimize us at every turn. Yes, Hitler wasn't the worst guy ever in the world and he

was right about some things, but Nazism is irredeemable, and even if you don't believe in that a literal holocaust occurred, there is still undeniable examples of terrible mass murder they committed to other whites (Poles, French, Greeks etc.).

Stop idolizing these faggots and be original for once. White identitarians have legitimate grievances and arguments about the state of the world that are impossible to argue against. We have coherent ideas. How do you think the movement (and offshoots) was able to grow to hundreds of thousands of supporters worldwide in just a few years.

From now on, we focus on what matters: spreading our ideas to more and more white people. We are Americans, not German nationalists and the only thing we need is the fucking American flag. Our heroes are the founding fathers themselves, they were hardcore white nationalists. Lincoln was a white nationalist. Every president until FDR was a white nationalist. Every (nonwhite) fucking country in the world is de-facto ethnonationalist. Reality is on our side. Once we start getting these ideas out there and the lefties try to take down monuments of the founding fathers, normie whites will see the anti-white insanity they are up against.

So from now on:
>FUCK Nazis
>Fuck the KKK
They are literal larping shitstains that cant keep from chimping out and destroying any movement they are a part of.
>FUCK that Cia op David Duke" (No. 138198924. 2017).

This activist argues that image maintenance can be achieved through "original ideas" and a rebirth of white nationalist ideology. This shows a connection between the image and ideology of a movement. The alt-right's ideological core may not differ considerably from older white supremacist movements (as activists acknowledge) but embedded in their ideology is a commitment to packaging this core in a novel manner. To reiterate the above post: "From now on, we focus on what matters: spreading our ideas to more and more white people." This spreading is only possible when the ideas are packaged in a fashion that does not expose the recipient to the stigma open white supremacists face. Historical examples and logic are employed to appeal to the movement's targets — such as citing early American heroes as ideologically aligned with the alt-right movement.

6.3 Concession Framing

The most pessimistic activists argue for a full-on rejection of the alt-right moniker and the creation of a new movement. One poster compares Unite the Right to the notorious concert at Altamont Speedway that signaled the end of the "Summer of Love" after several people were killed at a free Rolling Stones concert in California. Another defeatist post suggests the alt-right changed their name to "State Socialism" connecting the concession frame to the metapolitical frame.

6.4 Radicalization Framing

No self-identified participants in the alt-right from the data mined in this study advocated for a radicalization of the tactics in line with those used at the Unite the Right rally.

7 Case Study 3: Tree of Life Massacre

On Saturday October 27th, 2018, Robert D. Bowers entered the Tree of Life synagogue in a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania suburb armed with an assault rifle and several handguns. While shouting slurs, he killed 11 worshippers. It has been classified as the United States' worst terrorist attack on the Jewish community (Robertson et al. 2018). Bowers' neighbors reported limited interaction with the truck driver, describing him as a quiet man who kept to himself. But journalists quickly connected the terrorist's name with his outspoken social media accounts — most notably an active presence on the free speech haven, Gab (Turkewitz & Roose 2018). Gab, which launched in 2017, has been described as an alt-Twitter. It was specifically created to rival more popular platforms with stricter content limitations (Vesoulis 2018). Bowers' bio reads: "jews are the children of satan. (john 8:44) ———- the lord jesus christ come in the flesh." Immediately before the shooting began, he posted "[Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society] 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" (Bowers 2018).

Bowers' Gab profile provides no self-recognition with the alt-right movement. And as 4chan posts are, by design, anonymous there is no publicly available evidence that Bowers frequented the forum. Still, enough network and stylistic similarities with the movement exist for the SPLC (2018) to label Bowers an "alt-right killer." In the data mined from 4chan in the month following the killings, those critical of the alt-right were quick to also associate the movement with Bowers. Yet despite constant calls to "gas the kikes" in years prior, few alt-right participants expressed positive outlooks for the movement in light of the massacre. Though, of the three case studies addressed in this analysis, the Tree of Life shooting is the event least explicitly connected to the alt-right, the reactions of movement activists to the event are worth examination. The

following section justifies the Tree of Life shooting as an unhooding moment and analyzes the /pol/ posts in reaction.

In the immediate aftermath of the Tree of Life shooting, Gab web administrators seized Bowers' account. Archived images of Bowers' 627 posts reveal notable stylistic and ideological connections to the alt-right. Apparent from the account's final posts is an anti-Semitism that pervades a majority of Bowers' online activity. He frequently employs the (((echo))) used to denote covert Jewish opponents as well as the Happy Merchant cartoon (*Figure 2.4).* The week before the attack is spent fixated on conspiracy theories of Jewish provocateurs ushering a "Migrant Caravan" across the US-Mexico border. He frequently posts the word "kike" and calls Jewish online enemies "oven dodgers." More broadly, returning to Atkinson's (2018) concepts that animate alt-right thinking, Bowers' Gab presence suggests an ideologically leaning towards concerns over "The Jewish Question" and "white genocide." These similarities may only mark two boxes on Atkinson's list of eight facets of alt-right ideological makeup, but these beliefs are symbolically expressed in a fashion identical to the movement.

Again, there is no evidence that Bowers used the anonymous site 4chan. But his Gab reposts and accounts followed included several devoted to the /pol/ message board analyzed in this study. He reposts a "/pol/ flowchart" meme: "Did something happen? → YES → Check articles and related information → Discover that Jews are involved every time." This post suggests a familiarity with the board, its community, and its symbols. The final and, most notable to this study, stylistic similarity to the alt-right movement comes from Bowers' final post. Again, he writes, "Screw your optics, I'm going in." As evidenced by the previous two case studies, alt-right participants spend significant amounts of time discussing their movement's *optics* — a term that corresponds with metapolitical framing. Optics refers to the perceptions of the alt-right and white

supremacism from the mainstream white community. To effectively influence the hearts and minds of those "normies" who are potential converts, the optics of white supremacism have to be manipulated to be acceptable to a broader public. If we were to consider Bowers an "alt-righter," then the Tree of Life shooting would be a clear frame transformation to continuation. Optics are explicitly rejected and tangible action against the enemy is taken.

The alt-right's diverse chorus of reactions is much quieter than in the months following unhoodings in 2016 and 2017. Conspiratorial, continuation, and concession frames are dominant while the metapolitical frame was minimal.

7.1 Concession Framing

Given the hyper violent nature of Bowers' shooting, a high volume of reactionary concessions is not surprising. Targeted violence against ethnic groups may be the final goal of some alt-right participants, but this must be achieved through, first, a strategic priming of the population. Many claim that the time for this action has not come and that the Tree of Life shooting sets the movement back. Interestingly, one activist places this unhooding in the context of the previous two unhoodings considered in this study:

> "Depressing stuff. You goys remember all that energy we had in 2015/2016? Very similar to the left. Nobody even denounced the extremists...We had a broad spectrum of people with a common goal. Like the left. It's shocking really how easily it all fell apart after Charlottesville. I mean the people are still here but the front faces of the right are all dead. It's an embarrassment really. We used to dominate the youtube sphere (No. 194324225, 2018)."

The poster expresses nostalgia for a time when the movement remained hooded and more oriented around the grassroots activism. The Unite the Right rally is cited internally within the movement as a reason for its decline. In direct reply to this post, another user attaches a photo of Richard Spencer and writes: "Nah, it all came crashing down before CWCville. You can

thank this retarded fuck and his publicity stunts for ruining all that" (No. 194324567, 2018). In

agreeance, another self-identified alt-right participant claims

> "It started with Spencer throwing nazi salutes in front of his leftist kike media buddies
> like Julia Loffe of The Atlantic, that was the first, Trump had NEVER denounced his
> supporters until that moment. It was also when normie-friendly e celebs like Sargon,
> Cernovich, and PJW disavowed the term alt-right." (No. 194325100, 2018)

Both of these posts highlight the damaging nature of denunciations to the movement. The alt-

right's purported irony loses credibility when recognized by a movement elite or admired

individual. Even if the anonymous online participants of the alt-right can maintain connections to

an unhooded movement, public figures like internet celebrities or the President of the United

States cannot maintain associations with a violent subculture. Clearly a massacre of this

magnitude crosses a line for the alt-right that Unite the Right and the Hail Trump speech did not.

7.2 Conspiratorial Framing

No self-identified members of the alt-right advocated for a proliferation of conspiracy

theories related to Bower's attack.

7.3 Metapolitical Commitment Framing

The metapolitical reaction to the Tree of Life shooting is limited but articulate and on-

message for the alt-right movement. Two threads provide insight into how movement activists

intend to move beyond the massacre and continue their optical maintenance. The first is an

instance of "real-world" collective action. On Halloween night of 2018, a coordinated series of

messages were sent out across the /pol/ thread urging alt-righters to flyer their neighborhoods

and university campuses with the message "It's OK to be white" (IOTBW). Alt-right participants

are encouraged to wear Halloween mask to blend in and are assured that their actions are not

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illegal (No. 191572994, 2018). The IOTBW is a prime example of victimization framing and

metapolitical strategy. The phrase is, at its face innocuous, and was developed by /pol/ in 2017 as

a means of exposing a hypocrisy they claim in a society dominated by cultural Marxists. IOTBW

stickers and leaflets have been found on American college campuses and consistently sow

division amongst university communities. In the metapolitical war for cultural relevance,

IOTBW was successful. Fox News host Tucker Carlson hosted a segment in defense of IOTBW

(Edison Hayden 2017) and the hashtag was briefly trending on Twitter. In light of the Tree of

Life shooting, activists chose engaged in damage control by spreading the message. The

conversations instigated by IOTBW give alt-right activists the opportunity to spread a message

of "Not All White People" are murders, racists, etc.

The second example of metapolitical framing is the standard line taken by alt-right

activists. But where these comments dominated previous unhoodings, only one was mined in this

final unhooding's sample. This activist sees the unhoodings cited as setbacks, but not

unconquerable events:

> "[Civic nationalists] let that be a lesson to you. IF YOU CAN'T BE OPENLY AND
> PROUDLY WHITE NATIONALIST, YOU HAVE NO BUSINESS CALLING
> YOURSELF ALT-RIGHT, CONSERVATIVE, OR A WHITE MAN...Hitching our
> wagon to Trump was a mistake. He was never our guy, and he's cost us the House [of
> Representatives] making WN look retarded and scary. The Charlottesville L ARPing by
> Spencer didn't help either. Let's regroup and choose new leaders for the movement...We
> need to inoculate and infiltrate Republican politics and NOT reveal our power level until
> AND ONLY UNTIL we have a majority vote that is made up of dedicated, intellectual,
> non-troll, non-grifter, American White Nationalists (No. 194325929, 2018).

7.4 Radicalization Framing

No self-identified members of the alt-right advocated for a further radicalization through

Bower's tactics of violence.

8 Discussion & Conclusions

This thesis utilizes the strategic posts of alt-right activists to develop categories of reactions to unhooding events. When faced with a situation that could impede the movmement's mobilization capacity, alt-right activists either commit to their metapolitical strategy, conspire, concede, or radicalize. Clearly though, each strategy is not as equally utilized in every unhooding. The three cases selected for this study show how white supremacist actors react to situations of varying degrees of explicit fascist allusions or violence. This research demonstrates that strategic options are limited if violence is involved. Following Richard Spencer's "Hail Trump" speech, the full range of re-framing devices were available. But in the case of the Unite the Right rally, radicalization was not advocated for. And following the Tree of Life shooting, radicalization and conspiracy were neglected. This indicates one of two things: (1) The methodological condition of only relying on the data of self-reported members of the alt-right could omit posts made by alt-right participants who did not want their movement attached to a more radical or less popular opinions. Future study could treat "alt-right" as as much of a style as it is a movement in order to capture a broader range of data. Or (2) real world violence presents a line for the alt-right's keyboard warriors. In my research for this thesis, I came across more "Gas the kikes" than I could count. But the month of reactions to Robert Bowers' massacre of 11 Jews was by far the smallest sample of posts mined and the most limited range of reactions. Alt-right activists either were less active on 4chan, accepting their movement's broader decline — or did not want to claim responsibility for the shooting.

As well as reverberating within the alt-right movement, each of these unhoodings had reactions beyond 4chan as well. There is a delicate relationship between the public attention and stigma a movement receives and its members' ability to mobilize. Each of these unhoodings

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triggered a wave of media attention and deplatforming efforts. As many activists noted, the "Hail Trump" speech was the event that prompted Donald Trump to disavow the alt-right for the first time. Spencer's speech was removed from Youtube (Meyer 2018) but the video was eventually re-posted but de-monetized, a move intended to prevent white supremacists from profiting from provocative content. Unite the Right had even deeper financial consequences for movement elites. Following the 2017 rally, Paypal deleted Altright.com and rally organizer Jason Kessler's accounts. Apple Pay, Visa, Gofundme, and American Express quickly did the same. One of the alt-right's main means of communication, Discord, was cancelled by its internet service providers. The Twitter accounts of several rally organizers were deleted. The Tree of Life shooting resulted in Gab's de-platforming and a third disavowal from Trump.

These de-platformings and disavowals seem to have had a role in the weakening of the alt-right. They provide insight into how movements that threaten our democracy could be combated in the future. But what is important to note is that these unhooding moments all come from within the movement itself. Large businesses and media outlets may have acted effectively *after* violent acts, but forces in opposition to the alt-right had little to effective role in combating the movement before these unhoodings. It took (what many activists would call) an internal mistake to trigger any repercussions for the movement's years old online extremism. These affonts to the movement's framing come from within and are not a product of democratic safeguards our social media platforms claim to have.

An unintended side effect of these de-platformings and unhoodings is addressed by Nagle (2017). In the aftermath of the Unite the Right rally, many alt-right activists posted and reposted Nagle's article "Goodbye, Pepe: The end of the alt-right." Reactions to the piece and the movement's purported "death" varied from those choosing to concede versus those choosing to

radicalize. Activist's debate the article's core question — one that does not stray too far from the core question of this thesis: "What will be the real-world consequences of forcing such figures out of their semi-ironic anonymous online fantasyland, and potentially thrusting them into a toxic flirtation with violent offline tactics?" (2017) Nagle hypothesizes that, in the absence of these more established communities, the young men radicalized on these forums will seek violent outlets elsewhere. With nearly two years removed from that piece's publication, we may have to accept that Nagle is correct. As of early February 2018, the SPLC had counted 100 people killed or injured by young men with ties to the alt-right (2018). Then in early 2019, Brenton Tarrant massacred 50 Muslims in New Zealand while livestreaming the attack from 4chan successor 8chan. While self-identification with the alt-right may be declining, the /pol/ community still operates 24/7. Those who spent their youth engaging in the creation of fake antifa Twitter accounts and spreading "It's Okay to be White" posters around their college campuses will grow up hiding their stigmatized ideology.

As for scholarships next steps, ideally, future comparative case studies should apply these categories to the unhoodings of contemporary and historically relevant white supremacist and far-right social movements. While many studies of social movements analyze the conditions that bring a social movement resonance, few consider the conditions involved in a movement's decline (with the notable exception of Piven & Cloward, 1976). Social movement studies' bias towards progressive movements pushes the motives of academia toward a need to identify and replicate a formula of success. But it's important to recognize that some grassroots movements pose a pernicious threat to our democracy. When studying social movements that present these dangers, more work is needed on the tactics needed to dismantle and de-platform those whose explicit goal is to evade outside detection.

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