

The Perpetual Scapegoat: Antisemitism in the Ideology and Activities of Hate Groups in the United States Pre- & Post- Trump’s Election

*Ashley V. Reichelmann, Virginia Tech¹**

*Stanislav Vysotsky, The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater**

*Jack Levin, Northeastern University**

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the antisemitic undertone in the ideology and activities of white supremacist hate groups in the United States before, during and after the 2016 United States presidential election. After examining the historical movement, we highlight the strategies of the contemporary movement and how hate groups have capitalized on President Trump’s rhetoric. We demonstrate how an interchange between the political, virtual and social spheres has allowed hate groups to alter their tactics in order to attract a wider base. In doing so, we explain how antisemitism became a major theme during the 2017 “Right to Unite” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, when the manifest purpose of the organized protest was to stop the removal of a Confederate statue. Lastly, we conclude by offering tactics and strategies to combat the growing influence of the white supremacy movement and hate groups.

KEYWORDS: hate groups; white supremacy; antisemitism

INTRODUCTION

August 11, 2017 at 10:00 pm, Charlottesville, Virginia:

Amidst the University of Virginia’s prestigious campus, a protest is under way. Composed of (largely) white men dressed in khakis and button-up shirts, protestors march by the hundreds waving lit tiki torches and an array of flags. The chants begin: “You will not replace us.” Just as quickly, they turn to “Jews will not replace us!” “Blood and Soil!” “Whose streets? Our streets!” The marchers, uncovered and unashamed, look directly into the camera, proudly chanting these accusatory phrases deeply rooted in the rhetoric of the Nazi regime. The march proceeds to the place of contention: a statue of Robert E. Lee. At its footsteps, the protest disperses beneath the culmination of chants: “White Lives Matter!”

This narrative details the images of “Race and Terror,” a VICE news documentary that was replayed on mainstream news channels during primetime broadcasts for weeks following the rally. To the average viewer, the protest appeared spontaneous, made up of white Americans from all walks of life—from California to Washington DC to Florida—and that all marchers

¹ Corresponding Author Email: avr@vt.edu.

* These authors contributed equally to this work.

were there for the same reason: to protest what they perceived to be the dismantling of (white) history.

You are likely thinking: Why would people protesting the removal of a symbol of racial oppression be chanting antisemitic slogans? How does a protest against the removal of a Confederate statue result in antisemitic and Neo-Nazi rhetoric? Although the rhetorical transition seems counterintuitive, a deeper sociological inquiry into the current underlying antisemitic and general xenophobic perspectives within the United States provides a framework to understand this modern day event: antisemitism continues to underline extremist and discrete white supremacist views on black and other non-white groups, because prejudice against Jews is racial at its core.

This chapter explores how and why antisemitism informs white supremacist views, and more generally racism and bigotry, in the United States. That is, specifically, the chapter demonstrates how the presence of extremist bigoted views in the political sphere is directly associated with an increased presence of such views in the virtual and social spheres of society. In particular, when antisemitism is overtly present on a political platform, hate groups re-emerge: Ku Klux Klan (KKK) members take off their hoods and dress in suits, appearing socially acceptable to conventional Americans. The Neo-Nazis use academic jargon, offering the perception that their views are factually rooted. In short, white supremacist hate groups take advantage of the mainstream publicity of politicians who spout general hate. This allows such hate groups to spread their message that “whites are threatened” to empathetic ears. The wider exposure of these views online and on the ground is coupled with an increase in intolerant behavior and indiscriminate hate in the social sphere, such as the violent and destructive actions which occurred in Charlottesville.

NOT IN THE AVERAGE U.S. HISTORY BOOK: THE ROLE OF STEREOTYPING IN THE HISTORY OF ANTISEMITISM

Broadly, stereotyping is defined as treating members of a group as possessing the same “well-deserved” reason for their mistreatment. For most victimized groups, there is a single set of stereotyped attributes that perpetrators select to justify their prejudice and discrimination. Members of a despised group are viewed as some sort of “other,” such as terrorists, unintelligent thugs and drug dealers, rapists, or job stealers. Although the stereotyped images differ, each group is regarded as a threat to the majority’s well-being. When the perceived threat passes, so does the worst discriminatory behavior (Levin and Reichelmann 2015), as we have seen throughout US history.

Group Threat Theory, developed by Herbert Blumer, provides a basic framework to understand the current racial tension in the United States: Whites have historically been at the top of the racial hierarchy with respect to power, status, and wealth. When “others” (i.e. non-whites) seek to gain rights, whites feel that their superior position is in jeopardy. Therefore, the white majority responds with prejudice to prevent a change in the status quo. Such a response is not uniquely American: arguably, it underlies the German and Hungarian populist movements against Syrian refugees, and the Brexit push in England, to name a few.

Nor is antisemitism—here, a negative bias toward individuals who are religiously, ancestrally or culturally Jewish—exclusively an American quality. Historically, Jews have been targeted as the cause of almost everything: the Black Plague, disappearing Christian children, bad economies, political radicalism, racial conflicts, harmful globalization, and media

domination. At the personality level, Jews have been considered pushy, ostentatious, loud, devious, stingy, entitled, and without ethics. Yet, the most damaging stereotype is that Jews possess almost supernatural powers in order to maintain control and dominance over political and economic affairs across the globe.

This antisemitic image is perhaps rooted in the Christ-killer accusation that has circulated for nearly 2,000 years. Stereotypically, all Jews were regarded as responsible for Jesus Christ's crucifixion, whereby they were viewed as possessing demonic powers which could impact societal leadership and its major institutions. In some quarters, Jews have been characterized as the "children of Satan." In this view, they were seen as "puppeteers" who manipulated and controlled the thinking and behavior of others, causing them to become radicalized and problematic to the majority. Even black Americans' efforts to achieve equality (e.g., the Civil Rights Movement and Black Lives Matter) have been shadowed by claims that Jews are simply seeking to foster racial conflict (Gerstenfeld 2018).

The widespread accusation that Jews are incredibly powerful and deceitful individuals who seek world domination, combined with their historically-rooted stereotype, has allowed antisemitism to persist across time and space, in culturally diffuse forms throughout the globe (Levin and Nolan 2017), reaching the eliminationist racialist peak with the Nazis (Goldhagen 1996).

SETTING THE CONTEXT: WHAT IS WHITE SUPREMACY?

White supremacy is both a simple and complex concept. Its simplicity lies in the philosophy that white people are inherently superior—biologically, culturally, economically, politically, and socially. White supremacy becomes complicated in its sociological conception because there are two ways in which it is understood: structurally and socially.

From a structural standpoint, white supremacy is understood as a system of racial hierarchy that organizes social life and concurrently develops numerous processes for maintaining that system. Both the historical and current racialized right-wing social system in the United States could be identified as white supremacist because it has regularly placed and maintained whiteness at the top of a racial hierarchy that ideologically, culturally, and structurally benefits people identified as white (Bonilla-Silva 1997). Historical practices (e.g. redlining) and policies (e.g. the GI Bill and "urban renewal") demonstrate how the distribution of benefits unevenly by race has reinforced the economic, political, and social dominance of white people (Lipsitz 2006). Many of these practices were employed against non-whites, including Jewish people, demonstrating they were not considered white, racially speaking. Although this conception of white supremacy does not require any individuals to personally hold prejudice, the system often revises and reconstructs prejudice in the form of ideological statements that are accepted by individuals (Bonilla-Silva 2017).

The more common and accepted form of white supremacy is a populist social movement. It presents itself as a challenge to illegitimate elites and parasitic racialized underclasses in an effort to maintain white, male, heterosexual dominance (Berlet and Lyons 2000). The "ultra-right" sector of white supremacy peddles antisemitic conspiracies that are heavily reliant on stereotypes. These conspiracies frame a unique white victimhood (Berlet and Vysotsky 2006), where Jewish people are responsible for both capitalist excess and communist oppression. This movement attributes almost all social problems to central planning by Jews who control a "Zionist Occupied Government" (ZOG). People of color, LGBTQ people, feminists, and leftists

are all seen as puppets of the Jewish people, who—as the white supremacist narrative goes—seek to penalize white people for their inherent superiority.

Here, we focus on the impact of the populist movement—in maintaining the structural status quo and spreading bigotry into popular discourse (Berlet and Lyons 2000; Vysotsky and Madfis 2014)—and the unique role of the political sector in elevating, destigmatizing, and normalizing the movement’s bigoted views.

ORGANIZED ANTISEMITISM: THE HISTORY OF WHITE SUPREMACIST HATE GROUPS

The ebb and flow of white supremacist movements in the United States demonstrates how these hate groups have developed and become active at key moments when blacks and other non-white Americans were at the cusp of advancement. Beginning during Reconstruction and declining in the 1970s with the legal success of the Civil Rights movement, the historical white supremacist movement operated in a climate of mainstream acceptance.

For most Americans, organized white supremacy is synonymous with the KKK. This hate group has actually operated in three distinct historical eras. The original KKK was founded by former Confederate officers as a fraternal organization during Reconstruction. It was intended to serve as a white insurgency against the integration of freed slaves into the economic, political, and social life of the postbellum South. However, the group quickly began violently intimidating freed blacks and their white allies, such as Franklin J. Moses, Jr., a Jewish secessionist convert who championed racial justice (Ginsberg 2010).

The Klan experienced a major revival in 1915 with the founding of the “Second” KKK in Atlanta, GA. This renewal was driven by a desire to maintain the racial order as well as white Protestant concerns over increasing European immigration from Europe, since over two million Eastern European Jews came to America’s shores between 1881 and 1924 (Hyman 2009). The second wave of the Klan was often more virulently antisemitic and anti-Catholic than anti-black in its organizing campaigns (Gordon 2017; McVeigh 2009), thus solidifying the interchange and overlap between white supremacy hate groups and antisemitic ideology.

The third wave of the Klan arose in opposition to the Civil Rights movement. Jewish civil rights activists were disproportionately represented in the Civil Rights movement in comparison to their white colleagues (Greenberg 2006), and some actively worked beside Martin Luther King, Jr. (Schneier 1999). While most Klan presence took the form of political jostling, some of the most notorious acts of violence against Civil Rights activists were committed by Klan members and their supporters, such as the murders of Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, Jewish activists who were working with James Chaney, a black activist (King 1986). This wave of the Klan was short-lived as the legal success of the Civil Rights movement led to federal resources that secured desegregation and prosecuted vigilante violence. Also, people began to sympathize with Civil Rights activists and social norms shifted away from *de jure* discrimination and overt expressions of bigotry. This wave solidified the current stereotypes of white supremacists: stubborn and ignorant reactionaries desperately holding on to a historically-rooted racial domination which could only be sustained through white purity, despite a lack of economic or social standing. As the Klan’s domination in the white supremacist movement declined, new hate groups came to prominence in the contemporary era, ebbing and flowing in popularity and influence as threats to the status quo were identified.

HATRED IN THE PRESENT: WHITE SUPREMACY, PRE-TRUMP

The modern white supremacist movement is generally identified as emerging in the 1970s and 1980s. The contemporary era is defined by a lack of public support and comfort with white supremacy, thus forcing the movement to innovate in structure and form. Due to the stigma attached to the white supremacist stereotype and to legal repression, the days of large, centralized white supremacist organizations had ended; the movement transitioned to a strategy of “leaderless resistance,” composed of numerous hate groups and individuals loosely affiliated by ideology (Berlet and Vysotsky 2006; Michael 2012). It is, therefore, best to understand the contemporary movement as consisting of overlapping sectors rather than organizations. The five key sectors—political, religious, intellectual, subcultural, and criminal—are defined by their ideological orientation toward white supremacy and action repertoire (Berlet and Vysotsky 2006; Vysotsky and McCarthy 2018).

The political sector of the white supremacist movement derives its ideology from fascism and Nazism, engaging most directly with their political platforms and philosophies. Aside from similarities with their predecessors—such as a veneration of violence, a sense of mission, and a disdain for modern and liberal values (Berlet 1992)—this sector also presents a critique of capitalism and globalization, advocates for direct (racial) democracy, and opposes centralized state intervention (Ross 2017). Many of the groups within the current political sector are direct or indirect descendants of George Lincoln Rockwell’s American Nazi Party. The landscape of the political sector now consists of numerous groups and well-known individuals. The National Socialist Movement is likely the most prominent and overtly Nazi organization, branding themselves as “America’s premier white civil rights organization.” Their website states that they demand land where they can create a nation of “white blood” and where “no Jew or homosexual may be a member.” Patriot Front and Identity Evropa use a more covert approach to their white supremacist politics, presenting themselves as patriotic warriors of European identity (code: whiteness) who are answering the call to rescue America from attack. Although direct references to Hitler and the Nazi party are still prevalent, some members prefer more esoteric and radical fascist ideologues, allowing for an identity-based platform to attract prospective members (Ross 2017; Vysotsky and McCarthy 2016).

The religious sector derives its white supremacist dogma from translating Nazi ideology into a spiritual belief system. Betty Dobratz (2002) identified three distinct religious tendencies within the white supremacist movement: Christian Identity, Creativity, and neo-paganism. Christian Identity’s core beliefs identify white Christians as the true children of Israel, whereas Jewish people are believed to be children of Satan and people of color are not fully human. Creativity, formerly known as the World Church of the Creator, rejects Christianity as a “Jewish” religion and instead elevates the biological superiority of white people as a spiritual mission. Christian Identity and Creativity have lost much of their influence within the movement due to leadership casualties and loss of resources. While both these tendencies have some adherents, they are a faint shadow of their former glory. In the wake of their collapse, there has been a surge of white supremacist involvement in neo-paganism: Ásatrú, Satanism, and New Atheism. Supremacists are attracted to neo-pagan practices associated with Ásatrú, a worship of the Norse Gods, because they see it as the true religion of white people which rejects normative religious practices in Christianity and opposes Middle Eastern religions (i.e. are non-white). At present, this is arguably the dominant religious tendency within the movement. Satanism appeals to contemporary white supremacists because it identifies Satan as an allegory for resistance to normative order, venerates individualism and hedonism, and preaches themes of social

Darwinism that align with the neo-Nazi ideology. The New Atheist movement extols the virtue of rational thought and scientific positivism, coupled with essentialist notions about race and gender that align with alt-right ideological positions (Torres 2017). The religious sector also has significant overlaps with the intellectual sector because prominent New Atheists regularly provide a public platform to supremacist intellectuals under the guise of free speech and expression.

The intellectual sector serves as the incubator for white supremacist ideology and framing strategies (Berbrier 1999; Vysotsky and McCarthy 2016). Its activities often mirror those of academia including hosting conferences, publishing research reports, and critiquing existing scholarship in pursuit of conducting “scholarly research and creative activity.” Many individuals in this sector hold legitimate scholarly credentials and/or established roles in academic institutions (Burley 2018), or in distinctly white supremacist think tanks, like the National Policy Institute. These individuals are often the public face of the white supremacist movement because their affiliations make them accessible to journalists, and they present the most respectable version of the movement’s racist and antisemitic ideologies.

The subcultural sector is the most diverse and decentralized element of the movement. White supremacists generally and actively seek out participation in subcultures because such outlets provide access to individuals experiencing strain and isolation (Blazak 2001). Members of this sector often express their white supremacist beliefs through cultural production of personal style, music, fanzines, and websites (Berlet and Vysotsky 2006). It is crucial to note that the subcultures discussed are generally constructed as inclusive spaces with progressive values; therefore, white supremacist participation is often contested by many subculture enthusiasts (Sarabia and Shriver 2004; Vysotsky 2013; Wood 1999). The earliest and most common subcultural affiliation for white supremacists is the skinhead subculture. Racist skinheads began to participate in the British punk music scene because of its use of the swastika and its general climate of nihilism (Hamm 1993). Since racist skinheads were actively resisted in many punk spaces, they built their own punk and skinhead subculture which exists parallel to the dominant scenes. They also sought refuge in other subcultural genres that were less overtly leftist, such as National Socialist Black Metal, Goth, and Neo-Folk, many of which express neo-Nazi and fascist views.

Recently, a phenomenon of white supremacist hipsters, known as nipsters (i.e. Nazi hipster), has flourished. Using hipster irony, appropriation, and aesthetics, they have spread fascist and neo-Nazi ideas (Rogers 2014; Smith IV 2018). Similarly, an online culture of trolls and gamers engage in overt white supremacy under the guise of irony and “lulz,” a process of pranking designed to attack viewer/player sensitivity. Websites, such as 4chan and 8chan, are bulletin boards for racist, antisemitic, and misogynist memes and images, purportedly for humor. The deployment of irony by white supremacist hipsters and trolls is designed to simultaneously allow them to express bigotry and deny its impacts.

The final sector of the white supremacist movement is the criminal sector. It consists of groups and individuals who are primarily oriented toward “profit-oriented criminal activity” (Simi, Smith and Reeser 2008), like racist prison gangs, such as the Aryan Brotherhood, biker gangs, and street gangs. While these members hold racist beliefs, they may be modified to achieve short- and long-term criminal goals. Historically, the criminal sector was essential to the political and religious sectors of the movement because it provided financial and material resources to the movement, often in the form of illegal weapons. Its importance and strength has waned as subcultural commodities have generated larger profits than criminal activity.

“WHITE NATIONALIST” AS A HOUSEHOLD NAME: HOW WHITE SUPREMACY CAME INTO OUR LIVING ROOMS

Since overt expressions of racism and antisemitism are generally stigmatized in normative American culture (Bonilla-Silva 2017), the white supremacist movement utilizes a series of mainstream strategies to appear palatable to average Americans. Many of these strategies involve methods to covertly reframe the stereotypes of white supremacists. Macro-strategies generally fall into two categories: ethnic claims-making and intellectualization (Berbrier 1998a; 1998b; 1999).

Ethnic claims-making involves the framing of historically marginalized groups into a discourse that asserts a white identity politics. White supremacists claim they are representing the interests of white people in a pluralist American society that is no different from advocates for other ethno-racial groups (i.e. the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the Anti-Defamation League). The most recent ethnic-claims-making attempt can be seen in the term “white nationalist.” This framing is a form of stigma management intended to present the current movement as comprised of average everyday people who are simply trying to protect their group’s interests. The simplicity of the term “nationalism” provides the perception that it is an extension of patriotism, and that the views are widely accepted. However, few members directly acknowledge that the views associated with the white nationalist movement are simply a re-branding of white supremacy.

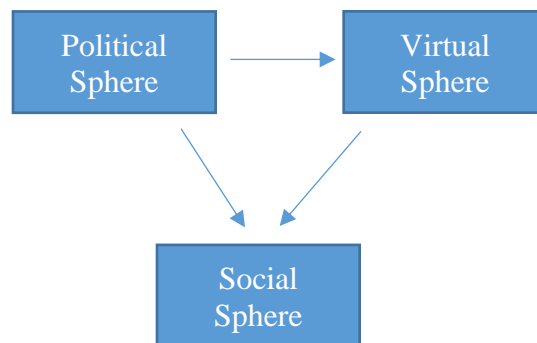
The second macro-strategy, intellectualization, presents white supremacist beliefs as products of rigorous scholarly debate and research. This strategy typically portrays white supremacist assertions as legitimate counterpoints to established academic viewpoints. Deeply impacted by the intellectual sector, these framers often depict themselves as seekers of knowledge and presenters of taboo information. Both strategies have been successful in allowing white supremacists to enter public discourse, especially university settings where they exploit abstract commitments to pluralism and free speech to legitimize their movement’s activity and discourse.

White supremacists also use a variety of micro-level strategies for minimizing stigma during daily interactions. Pete Simi and Robert Futrell (2009) identify five key strategies: distancing; silencing, avoidance, or hiding; civility or avoiding conflict; mainstreaming; and passive expression. Distancing involves separating movement activities from other aspects of life through engagement in “free spaces” such as music and camping events, parties, and Internet forums. Silencing, avoidance, or hiding occurs when proponents refrain from overt displays of their movement’s ideology in front of family and friends. This strategy works in tandem with civility or avoiding conflict, when supremacists actively steer clear of political discussions with non-members of the movement. Mainstreaming and passive expression involve more outward-oriented behavior: mainstreaming normalizes supremacist views as conservative discourse, and passive expression uses coded symbols only known to other group members. White supremacists deploy these numeric, linguistic, and symbolic codes to identify one another and express movement membership and ideology. Combined, the macro- and micro- strategies of stigma management create a series of ideological frames and arguments that can be introduced into mainstream political debate and culture, and are slowly finding their way into our living rooms.

TRICKLE DOWN HATRED: ANTISEMITISM IN POLITICS AND ITS EFFECT ON THE EVERYDAY

What is the relationship between politics, hate groups, and everyday life? We believe the political and the virtual spheres are structural elements which affect the micro-social sphere (see flowchart 1); however, the political sphere also affects and strengthens the virtual sphere's impact on the social sphere. Specifically, when a political figure overtly and publicly uses hate-filled language and bigotry, these actions provide validation for the views of the white supremacist hate groups that had previously existed in the margins. Upon feeling accepted by political representatives, these groups begin to increase their public presence in both the virtual sphere and the social sphere. Their increased presence, coupled with validation from the political sphere, attracts non-members who are empathetic to the surface views expressed.

Flowchart 1: Relationship between Spheres



We believe that this theory is exemplified by the relationship between Trump, hate groups, and levels of hate crimes. Although antisemitism in the United States has always been present, it was generally situated in the margins of society. However, in 2015, the arrival of Republican candidate Donald Trump allowed dormant antisemitism to become more pronounced in the everyday social arena. Through his well-publicized actions and words, Trump publicly validated and normalized the beliefs and worldviews of white supremacist groups, thus emboldening them to mobilize online and on the ground. This virtual and social groundswelling of supremacist ideology sent messages to white Americans that they should feel threatened about their status. In this particular case, the concurrent actions between Trump and white supremacist hate groups played on the fears of average Americans. Both the political and virtual sphere assisted in identifying groups who could be scapegoated for causing the woes of white Americans. In seeking an answer to stagnant wages, higher living costs, poor education, and the presence of diversity, whites latched onto the Trump's framing and felt threatened by "the other," resulting in increased racism and bigotry toward non-whites.

The Political Sphere:

From his rise to Republican nominee in 2016 to the present, President Trump has provided a steady stream of stereotyped remarks and biased behavior. To name a few, he mocked a reporter with a disability, berated an Islamic Gold Star family, questioned the objectivity of an American judge with Mexican heritage, and characterized the violence at Charlottesville as

coming from all sides. In our opinion, this variety of bigoted sentiments is indicative of a career hater, who expresses hostility toward outgroups of various sorts. This display of hate—seen in administrative moves as well as individual actions—laid the foundation for daily expressions of hate already occurring in the virtual sphere, and condoned that expression at the micro-social level.

Trump’s bigoted rhetoric specifically gave a boost to the status of white nationalist hate groups who organized Charlottesville in August 2017. Former KKK leader David Duke called that rally a “turning point” for the resurgence of the white supremacist movement. Although there has not been a census of such groups since the rally, the trend of data supports his claim: In 2014, there were 784 hate groups in the United States, an all-time low in nearly a decade (Southern Poverty Law Center 2018). In the years since Trump’s entrance onto the political landscape, however, the number has steadily increased. In 2015, when Trump entered the Republican primary, there were 892. In 2016, when he was elected, there were 917, and in 2017, when he was inaugurated, there were 954.

The clearest signals to white supremacists have come from the Trump administration’s actions and policy announcements. While many of these decisions may be attributed to a strong concern with Islamic terrorism, they have been interpreted by white supremacists as signs of support for their ideologies. The first signals came with the hiring of key staff who represented alt-right political interests: chief strategist Steve Bannon, deputy assistant Sebastian Gorka, and political advisor Stephen Miller. However, the primary administrative actions that continue to send signals of support are budgetary in nature. The administration has consistently announced budget proposals that cut funding to domestic terrorism law enforcement programs, the majority of which involve identifying far-right and white supremacist plots of violence (Kopan 2017; Neiwert 2017). The administration also announced a revamping of the Department of Homeland Security’s “Countering Violent Extremism” program, changing its title to “Countering Islamic Extremism.” As part of this decision, it cut funds to “Life After Hate,” a program that supports withdrawal from white supremacist activism, and a University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill program designed to counter white supremacist and “jihadist” recruitment (Zanona 2017). Such actions sent a clear message to white supremacists, which is best encapsulated by Andrew Anglin, editor of the neo-Nazi website *The Daily Stormer*: “It’s fair to say that if the Trump team is not listening to us directly (I assume they are), they are thinking along very similar lines” (Neiwert 2017).

In modern times, the clearest signs of an emboldened white supremacist movement are public mobilizations which attract average people who empathize with their views. The Trump candidacy and presidency saw a pattern of increasing numbers of white supremacists at campaign rallies. One of the first appearances came at a primary campaign rally in Kentucky when an African-American protester was assaulted by three attendees, including Matthew Heimbach, a fixture in the supremacist movement (Lenz 2016). Overt displays of white supremacy, such as Confederate flags, became commonplace at Trump campaign rallies (Sexton 2017). Yet, it was Trump’s ascension to the presidency that truly mobilized the white supremacist movement, culminating with an inauguration party dubbed “the DeploraBall” which featured high profile far-right agitators and media celebrities (Marantz 2017). Trump’s presence,

language, and actions continue to serve as a rallying cry to the movement, indicating that they have an empathetic ear in the Oval Office.

The Virtual Sphere:

While the ideological elements of the movement were emboldened by Trump, the membership was enhanced by its use of public and private virtual spaces to organize. After the events at Charlottesville, several servers like GoDaddy severed ties with any white supremacist websites, claiming terms of service violations. As pressure on service providers increased, white supremacist accounts on social media and crowdfunding sources were also dropped. Exclusively white supremacist forums, such as *Stormfront* and *The Daily Stormer*, quickly drew notoriety as spaces for alt-right organizing. Currently, they function as meeting grounds for individuals to share racist and antisemitic beliefs and memes without fear of challenge or need for justification. In the wake of Charlottesville, users flocked to these sites to make light of the violence, denigrate victim Heather Heyer, and generally reinforce the aggressive position of alt-right mobilizations. Such sites ideologically move individuals further to the right, because they reinforce the legitimacy of white supremacist beliefs (Lee and Leets 2002; Vysotsky and McCarthy 2016).

White supremacists also use anonymous posting sites such as 4chan and 8chan to share memes that reflect their bigotry and violent intent. These sites are storehouses of memes that glorify the most aggressive protesters at public mobilizations, including James Alex Fields and the Dodge Challenger he used to maim protesters. Beyond these largely public forums, white supremacists organize using Discord, a chat application popular among gamers where users log on to private servers. Banned white supremacist users switched to the Gab app for their social media needs and created their own crowdfunding site Hatreon, named to troll the crowdfunding site Patreon. Despite public opposition, the movement has no shortage of online spaces and platforms to maintain its activities.

The influence of hate group presence in the virtual sphere cannot be understated. Many individuals who have been ostracized by peers and disconnected from their parents spend their days in front of computers, logging on and visiting hate-filled websites where racist and antisemitic propaganda is easily available. More influential than offline propaganda, hate websites often also include chat rooms and discussion boards where people discover the important fact that they are no longer alone. These spaces ultimately provide feelings of a community, and suddenly, these individuals recognize there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Americans who hate Jews, blacks, and gays. They now have plenty of like-minded company, a necessity in order to maintain marginalized movements.

A DIFFUSE HATE OF THE PERPETUAL SCAPEGOAT: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The interplay between the political sphere and the virtual sphere shows how rhetoric in the social sphere can slip between racism and antisemitism in the blink of an eye. The political and virtual spheres are made up of identifiable groups spearheading the macro-development and distribution of ideologies, while the social sphere is comprised of individuals who often identify with communities of “like-minded individuals” who offer acceptance. While the political sphere shifts regularly, hate has always been a constant on the internet. Although the spheres used to serve as checks on one another, since 2016, they now regularly reinforce one another. Therefore, individuals within the social sphere, who are largely independent of political groups or virtual

hate groups, are now bombarded with the same damning message: white people are at risk and must, as David Duke said, “fulfill the promises of Donald Trump” to “take our country back” (Stolberg and Rosenthal 2017).

Now back to Charlottesville. One day after the antisemitic march on the University of Virginia campus, James Alex Fields drove his car into a crowd of people, killing Heather Heyer and injuring dozens. Fields was affiliated with Vanguard America, a hate group he marched with and whose symbols he adorned. However, his hate crime—like the vast majority of hate crimes—was more likely a product of his exposure to general hatred and bigotry present in both the political and the virtual sphere. In this microcosm, one can see how racism quickly becomes antisemitism particularly when influenced by the current political and virtual climate, both of which are deeply impacted by white supremacist beliefs and values.

The narrative throughout this chapter attempts to present the underlying reasons why such slippage is even possible. Historically, white supremacist movements rose at times when whites felt threatened by gains of non-whites. In its recent formation, the movement is heavily driven by smaller, decentralized hate groups that employ tactics successful in leftist social movements: hate groups utilize identity politics, offering an argument that is palatable to an economically-wounded public. Seeing their values mirrored in Trump’s language and administrative decisions, the hate groups were comfortable entering public discourse. Upon observing Trump’s popularity with the public, these groups began playing the “white threat” card. This is how white supremacy entered our living rooms: Trump and the white supremacist movement emboldened the average American citizen, by playing on their vulnerabilities and fears of displacement. As previous literature has shown, feelings of status displacement result in increases in hate crimes against those groups who represent that threat (see Levin and Reichelmann 2015). According to FBI statistics, there was an overall 5% increase in hate crimes nationally, in 2016. The Center for Hate Studies and Extremism divulged in their “Hate Crime Analysis and Forecast for 2016/2017” that in five of the twelve largest US cities, appearing non-white or Jewish were two of the three most frequent hate crime targets, while at least one of these targets topped the list in the other seven cities (Levin and Grisham 2017, 9). The Anti-Defamation League found increases in antisemitic hate crimes between 2015 and 2016 in all four states with the highest number of Jews (Levin and Grisham 2017, 18).

In this way, we see that antisemitism and racism share underlying elements. Neither can be discussed in a strict “presence/absence” way, but only as a prejudice which appears dormant because it is so diffuse in society. Antisemitism, like racism in this country, is historically and culturally rooted, and therefore never absent, but rather simply awaiting the right moments when it is condoned and allowed to reappear. These prejudices are about denigration of the “other,” the outsider. They yield someone to scapegoat, an “other” to blame for the misfortunes of globalization and other changes. Today we battle knowing who it is that is hated. In fact, both the ADL and the FBI have altered their protocol for determining when a swastika represents antisemitism specifically versus racism or hate in general (Goodstein 2010; Federal Bureau of Investigation 2015, 6). Today, white supremacy is no longer just hatred of Jews. The movement has now shifted to a protection of whiteness, even though antisemitism lies at its core and Jews still represent enemy number one.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: REDUCING THE INFLUENCE OF ANTISEMITIC HATE GROUPS

White supremacy thrives on economic decay, problematic socialization, and racial separatism. Even if we cannot eliminate such groups, certain strategies and tactics exist for reducing their influence on the next generation.

Utilizing former white supremacists. Most young people who join white supremacist groups seek feelings of familial belonging, since they lack the intellectual, educational, or economic resources to assume a societal position that would give them a sense of importance and power. Some of the more resourceful white supremacists have been able to eliminate antisemitic and racist activities from their lives, opting instead to join anti-racist movements. One example is T.J. Leyden who spent 15 years as a racist skinhead before renouncing racism and antisemitism. The impetus for Leyden's transformation was twofold: First, he overheard his 3-year-old son verbalizing racial slurs and became concerned about the boy's future. Second, he was anxious about his mother possibly being marked for death by his neo-Nazi colleagues, because she had a physical disability. Leyden has since worked at the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, and given anti-racism speeches at over 100 high schools and to law enforcement agencies around the country. Another important example is provided by the transformation of Frank Meeink, the inspiration for the film *American History X*. He transformed from an influential skinhead recruiter of teenagers to an anti-racist ADL activist and an organizer of the youth program *Harmony through Hockey*. The triggering event responsible for Meeink's conversion was the kindness of a Jewish employer who failed to fit any of the antisemitic stereotypes that Meeink had uncritically accepted.

Rewarding students for their efforts to reduce prejudice. The United States is very good at punishing bad behavior (e.g., mass incarceration), but far less willing to reward good behavior. Educational institutions across the country need to recognize students who go out of their way to promote positive intergroup relations and to reduce hate and prejudice. On two occasions, the Brudnick Center on Violence and Conflict at Northeastern University co-sponsored a national student conference on combating prejudice and hate on campus. The main purpose of the conference was to recognize students from across the United States and Canada, who had been nominated by a faculty member for promoting inter-group cooperation and reducing hate on or off their campus. Hundreds of students participated in formal sessions about hate on campuses, met other student activists, and received awards for their inspirational work.

Forming student coalitions. Given that campus life is normally dominated by identity-based groups focused on serving members of marginalized groups, we must capitalize on coalition building and cooperation between groups. Some examples include: the Jewish-Latino coalition at the University of Texas, the Jewish-Muslim coalition at UCLA, the University of Delaware coalition against domestic violence, the Rowan University gay-straight alliance, the student sustainability council at Portland State, and—on many campuses—the ADL Interfaith seder.

Will the white Supremacist movement last? The reality is that it depends on ordinary people. We cannot control the political or the virtual spheres, but we can lessen the effectiveness of hate and antisemitism in the social sphere. Preventing the spread requires us to not become complacent. These white supremacist ideologies are accepted because they are presented in palatable ways, packaged into a wider narrative about protecting free speech. The “Unite the Right” rally has boxed conservative Americans into a corner, telling them they can either stand with whiteness or against it. But that is a false dichotomy, one which always involves a perpetual

scapegoat. No matter how you identify, we simply ask that you stand and speak: against bigotry, hatred and stereotyping, and for the right to speak. At the same time, it is important for an honorable government to take ownership of its mistakes, respect differences, and accept the challenges of a changing society—for the perpetual scapegoat, for you, and for us!

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