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## **MASTER THESIS**

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English Studies

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### **The Alternative Right Movement and Its Ideological Power in the United States**

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## **Dedication**

I am forever grateful to my beloved parents who pray for my success and bright future.

I'm also thankful to my siblings, Lobna, Kenza and Rafik, thank you for supporting my  
education.

And I also dedicate this work to my classmates second year Master Literature and  
Civilization, and I thank them for their friendship, understanding and support.

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## **Abstract**

The Alt-Right, or the Alternative Right, is a movement developed in the United States during 2010s by a group of white supremacists and nationalists, who believe that white cultural dominance being taken away as the rest of culture slowly moves toward equality. They defend the superiority of white identity and rhapsodizing about the eventual creation of white ethno state in North America. The alt-Right is variously characterized as anti-political correctness, anti-immigration, anti-Semitic, and anti-feminist ideologies. The Alt-Right is purely an online movement and anonymous; it relies heavily on mass media where its supporters use insults and online harassment of marginalized communities and attack their opponents, they also use memes extensively. This thesis aims to study the Alt-Right movement, its development and impacts on American social and political arena. The results of this study suggest that the presidential campaign and eventual election of President Donald Trump in 2016 emboldened and highlighted the existence of the Alt-Right in the American political landscape. In addition to the violent events of the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville in 2017, this made the Alt-Right movement become prominent in mainstream media.

**Key words:** Alt-Right, Donald Trump, Harassment, Memes, Online white supremacism, Unite the Right rally, White nationalism.

## الملخص

اليمين البديل هي حركة تم تطويرها من قبل جماعة سيادة البيض و القوميين في الولايات المتحدة خلال عام 2010، الذين يعتقدون أن الهيمنة الثقافية البيضاء تنتزع بينما تتحرك بقية الثقافة ببطء نحو المساواة. هاته الجماعة تقوم بالدفاع عن تفوق الهوية البيضاء و انشاء ما يسمى بدولة العرقية البيضاء في أمريكا الشمالية. تتميز حركة اليمين البديل بأنها ضد الصواب السياسي و معادية للهجرة و للسامية و للنسوية. يستخدم اليمين البديل الأنترننت و مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي بشكل كبير حيث يستخدم أنصارها الإهانات و التحرش عبر الإنترنت للمجتمعات المهمشة و مهاجمة خصومهم كما يستخدمون الميمات أيضا بصورة واسعة. تهدف هذه الأطروحة إلى دراسة حركة اليمين البديل و تطورها و تأثيراتها على الساحة السياسية و الاجتماعية الأمريكية. تشير نتائج هذه الدراسة إلى أن الحملة الرئاسية و انتخاب الرئيس دونالد ترامب في عام 2016 شجعت و أبرزت وجود اليمين البديل في المشهد السياسي الأمريكي. بالإضافة إلى الأحداث العنيفة لمسيرة "وحدوا اليمين" في شارلوتسفيل في عام 2017، جعلت حركة اليمين البديل تصيح بارز بقوة في وسائل الإعلام الرئيسية الأمريكية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** اليمين البديل، القومية البيضاء، التحرش عبر الأنترننت، الميمات، دونالد ترامب، سيادة البيض، مسيرة "وحدوا اليمين"

## Résumé

Alt-Droit ou la Droite Alternative, est un mouvement développé aux États-Unis au cours des années 2010 par un groupe de suprématistes blancs et de nationalistes, qui croient que la domination culturelle blanche est brisée alors que le reste de la culture se dirige lentement vers l'égalité. Ils défendent la supériorité de l'identité blanche et rêvent de la création éventuelle d'un état ethnique exclusivement blanc en Amérique du Nord. L'Alt-Droite est anti-politiquement correct, anti-immigration, et contre le féminisme. L'Alt-Droit est purement un mouvement en ligne et anonyme. Il s'appuie fortement sur les réseaux sociaux où ses partisans utilisent des insultes et le harcèlement en ligne des communautés minoritaires ou marginalisées et ils attaquent leurs opposants. Ils utilisent également abondamment les mèmes. Cette thèse vise à étudier l'Alt-Droit mouvement, son développement et ses impacts sur l'arène sociale et politique américaine. Les résultats de cette étude suggèrent que la campagne présidentielle et l'élection éventuelle du président Donald Trump en 2016 ont enhardi et mis en évidence l'existence de l'Alt-Right dans le paysage politique américain. En plus des événements violents de la manifestation « Unite the Right » à Charlottesville en 2017, l'Alt-Droit est devenu important dans les médias grand public.

**Mots clés :** Alt-Droit, Donald Trump, le harcèlement en ligne, les mèmes, la manifestation « Unite the Right », Nationalisme blanc, Suprématisme blanc

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## Acronyms

Alt-Right	Alternative Right
KKK	Ku Klux Klan
ANP	American Nazi Party
NA	National Alliance
CofCC	Council of Conservative Citizens
CMS	Charles Martel Society
NPI	National Policy Institute
AmRen	American Renaissance
CCP	Counter-Currents Publishing
PF	Patriot Front
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning
NBC news	National Broadcasting Company
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CRT	Critical Race Theory
CLS	Critical Legal Studies

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## **General Introduction**

### **Background**

Racism has existed since the concept of race was invented in the United States. However, white nationalism is a recent invention only developing as we currently understand it after World War II, when the United States began to change course on issues of race, eventually abolishing racial segregation, allowing large-scale immigration from various non-European countries, and later electing an African American president, Barack Obama.

On this point, White nationalists claim that white people should maintain their majority and dominance in mainly white country, because they believe that miscegenation, multiculturalism and mass immigration are threatening the white race. However, these white racial groups; such as the Ku Klux Klan, the National Alliance founded by William Pierce in 1974, and Aryan Nations, led by Richard Butler in 1970s are now in a state of disarray or no longer exist.

### **Research Problem**

In 2010s, a period of the rapid rise of new white nationalist, anti-feminist, anti-immigrant, far right movement, the Alt-Right (short for Alternative Right). It espouses other white racial groups in the sense that they advocate white nationalism. However, the Alt-Right is unique in that it is well adapted in the digital age. It includes those who believe in the superiority of the white race and the idea that white people are being pushed to the back of the line by people of color, immigrants and Muslims.

Richard Spencer, who invented the term in 2008, focuses on changing the ideological outlook of white Americans, pushing them to reject basic Americans values such as democracy and equality. Many factors have contributed to the rise of the Alt-Right to prominence, but one of the most is its heavy use of social media. Alt-Right views have

been promoted online by a small army of trolls promoting racist internet memes and slogans, activities staging harassment campaigns, pushing hashtags and posting links to extremist contents and conspiracy theories. Since 2016, the Alt-Right and its allies have held and increasingly prominent place in American society and politics, receiving support from a variety of known personalities and organizations.

In the light of all what have been stated, the present research aims to answer a set of basic questions:

### **Main Question**

- To which extent has the Alt-Right affected America’s social and political landscape?

### **Sub Questions**

1. What are the Alternative Right’s ideologies?
2. How did the movement gain popularity in recent years?
3. Is the Alt Right movement still powerful? Or has it fade away as other white nationalist movements?

### **Thesis Aims**

This thesis aims at understanding what the Alt-Right is, how the movement evolved over its short history and what are its leaders rebelling against. It also shows the ways that the Alt-Right differs from other white nationalist groups. On the other hand, the research seeks to study the Alt-Right link in rising racism in the United States and most important its impacts on the American society and politics.

### **Significance of the Thesis**

A focus on this movement is interesting, because it helps the reader to understand that there are Americans who are against equality and democracy; one of the basic values in which the United States was built. These racial groups such as the Alt-Right present a

security risk to citizens in the United States and around the world especially as globalization, mass immigration and multiculturalism flourish, various white nationalists and white supremacists will continue to embrace far-right policies and employ violent means to enforce them.

### **Methodology**

This thesis uses the historical method to gain a clear understanding of how has the Alternative Rights movement developed over its history. It also relies of primary and secondary sources of information about the Alt-Right such as websites, articles, books and etc. It seeks to analyze and interpret some main ideologies of the Alternative Right movement by relying on the perspective of Critical Race Theory.

### **Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is composed of three chapters, a general conclusion, and this introduction. Chapter one deals with the concept of Whiteness and racism in the United States, beginning with its definition and its construction since the creation of the United States. The chapter also analyzes the basic ideologies of the Alt-Right, white nationalism and white supremacism using the Critical Race Theory. By giving a brief history of white supremacism in the United States, the chapter flows into the radicalization of four extremists, white supremacists that may have carried out public violence to achieve significance. The chapter concludes by highlighting the meaning of term Alt-Right and its features.

Then in the second chapter goes deeper on the movement. Focusing on how did the Alt-Right movement come at the first place and its development in the United States. Beginning with, its ideological roots as well as its major pioneers and organizations that helped the rise and the expansion of the movement. It also illustrates the rise and the

decline, as well as the reinvention of the movement, with highlighting the differences between the first and the new Alt-Right.

At the last chapter, it discovers the Alt-Right impact and expansion in social and political arena, especially during the 2016 presidential election; where the movement has witnessed a clear prominence in various social networking sites and the mainstream media. This chapter also highlights the consequences of the deadly “Unite the Right” rally, as Alt-Rightists were among the most prominent participants of the rally. The tragic results of the rally made the Alt-Right movement to be the talk of many American news channels and social media outlets.

## Chapter One

### Conceptual and Theoretical Framework: Racism and Whiteness in the United States

#### 1.1. Introduction

This chapter gives a Conceptual and Theoretical structure to the thesis. It examines some important concepts and theories related to our research. First, it defines the *Critical Race Theory* that will be used in this research to explain and interpret some ideologies that inspired the Alternative Right movement.

Then, the chapter deals with white identity and the concept of whiteness. It also explores its construction and development in the United States. Its aim is to give a clear meaning of Whiteness as a key concept with regard to historical events that shaped whiteness in the United State

Thereafter, the chapter deals with the history and activities of some racist white supremacist and extremist organization in the United States, that believe in the superiority of the white race and the rejection of other races, such as the *Ku Klux Klan* (KKK), the *American Nazi Party*, the *National Alliance*, the *Council of Conservative Citizens*. Finally, the chapter attempts to give an introduction of the Alternative Right as a key concept of this research by giving a clear definition of it and its aims and objectives.

#### 1.2. The Critical Race Theory: an Overview

Critical Race Theory (CRT) has its origins in the Critical Legal Studies (CLS) which emerged in the late 1960s when several of legal scholars and activists around the U.S. recognized that the “heady gains” of the Civil Rights era had stopped and were being rolled back (Delgado, 2003, p.125). CLS failed to address the impacts of race and racism in the U.S. jurisprudence. As a result, CRT analyzes the role of race and racism in

perpetuating social differences between dominant and marginalized racial groups (Hiraldo, 2010, p.53, 54).

CRT emerged during the mid-1970s from the early work of Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman. It believes that “the law and legal institutions are inherently racist and that race itself, instead of being biologically grounded and natural, is a socially constructed concept that is used by white people to further their economic and political interests at the expense of people of color” (Curry, 2020, par.1). According to Britanicca, CRT was inspired by figures such as Martin Luther King, Jr., W.E.B. Du Bois, Malcolm X, the Black Panthers, and Frantz Fanon. Critical Race Theory advanced theoretical understandings of the law, politics, and American sociology that focused on the efforts of white people (Euro-Americans) to maintain their historical advantages over people of color (Curry, 2020, par.2).

There are five major components or tenets of CRT: (1) the notion that racism is ordinary and not aberrational; (2) the idea of an interest convergence; (3) the social construction of race; (4) the idea of storytelling and counter-storytelling; and (5) the notion that whites have actually been recipients of civil rights legislation (Hartlep, 2009, p.6).

### **1.3. The Concept of Whiteness**

The word “white” is sometimes used to refer to a skin color or “race.” But, in the United States, when people refer to “white people,” the word white, in this case, used to refer to “whiteness.” Ruth Frankenberg defines whiteness as “a dominant cultural space with enormous political significance, with the purpose to keep others on the margin.” He asserts that “white people are not required to explain to others how ‘white’ culture works, because ‘white’ culture is the dominant culture that sets the norms” (Estable et al, 1997, p. 21). According to the *National Museum of African American History and Culture*, this white-dominant culture also “operates as social mechanism that grants advantages to white

people, since they can navigate society both by feeling *normal* and being viewed as *normal*.” People, who are white, rarely have to think about their racial identity because they live within a culture where whiteness has been “normalized” (“whiteness”, par.2).

#### **1.4. The Construction of Whiteness in the United States**

The American historian, Nell Irvin Painter, illustrates in her essay, entitled *White identity in America is ideology, not biology. The history of 'whiteness' proves it*, that the construction of whiteness has its own history that includes white people who think of themselves as “individuals without a meaningful racial identity as well as white nationalists and Klansmen parading around in theirs.” Painter asserts that there's so much more to the history of white people that is less than a century old and has changed over time, over place, and in the myriad situations of human ranking” (Painter, 2020, par.2,4)

Painter emphasizes, before the Enlightenment, people rated themselves and others according to clan, tribe, kingdom, locale, religion and an infinity of identities dependent on what people thought was important about themselves and others. They could see human difference concerning who was tall, short, light-skinned and dark. They explained those differences according to religion, cultural habits, geography, wealth and climate, among the most usual characteristics, but not race (Painter, 2020, par.6).

However, scholars in the Enlightenment began to classify humanity into groups that came to be called races, defined according to “bodily measurements” such as eye color, skin color, height, and skull dimensions (Painter 2020, par.7). Enlightenment luminary, Immanuel Kant, expressed the view in his lectures on Physical Geography, published in 1802, that full perfection of humanity was reserved for “the white race”; next came the “yellow Indians,” following by “the Negroes” and finally “the American peoples.” Americans he regarded as “ineducable” and lazy. Moreover, Kant claims, in his notes for his lectures on Anthropology, that “White contains all the impulses of nature in affects and

passions, all talents, all dispositions to culture and civilization and can as readily obey as govern. They are the only ones who always advance to perfection (Bouie, 2018, par.8).

The social construction of “race” and whiteness and their social significance in the United States are intimately linked to the history of social organization in American society. Blumer observed that the organization of American “race” relations emerged from the intersection of three significant events in history. He opined that these events were “the conquest of the Indians, the forced importation of Africans, [and] the more or less solicited coming of Europeans, Asians, and Latinos” (Lyman, 1977, p.25).

Historian David A. Roediger examines in *The Wages of Whiteness* (1991) the role “race” plays from about 1680 to the late 1800s in the emergence of America’s labor market. Relying on historical writings, folklore, song, and language as documentary evidence, the work demonstrates the social construction of white identity in America. Roediger admits that although racist attitudes were present during the 17th and 18th centuries, “there were no compelling ways to connect ‘whiteness’ with a defense of one’s independence as a worker” (Roediger 1991, p.20). Roediger argues that the construction of the “white race” in the United States was an effort to mentally distance slave owners from slaves (Roediger, 1998, p.186). Roediger finds that minstrel performances supported pro-slavery and white supremacist politics between 1830 and 1900. Part of his overall point is to show how white worker groups participated in creating a white working-class identity to assure their own differentiation from and superordination over enslaved and emancipated blacks in the newly developing industrial labor market (Roediger, 1998, p.123).

Before the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, many people in the United States who were seen as white were commonly accepted (and could vote if they were adult white men) but were classified as inferior (or superior) white races. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the existence of various white races in the U.S was largely assumed; notably, the superior Saxons and the inferior Celts.

The Saxons were said to be intelligent, energetic, sober, protestant and beautiful. However, Celts (Irish) were classified as the inferior white race and were said to be stupid, impulsive, drunken, Catholic and ugly. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, many new waves of immigrants arrived including Irish, poor Eastern and southern European, inspiring new racial classifications: the “Northern Italian” race, the “Southern Italian” race, the “Eastern European Hebrew” race and so on. They were all white, members of white races, but like the Irish before them, the Italians and Jews and Greeks were classified as “inferior white races” (Painter, 2015, par.6).

Ian Fidencia Haney Lopez’s acclaimed book, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race*, emphasizes the constructions of Whiteness as constructed by the prerequisite courts through two steps. The First step is that the courts defined who is white through a process of negotiation, and anyone has an African blood is considered as non-White (Lopez, 2006, p.13). In the early twentieth century, a social and legal principle of racial classification named the *One-Drop Rule* has been codified by state legislatures such as Tennessee, Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, Virginia, and North Carolina. It asserted that white-looking individuals with documented or visual evidence of African heritage were black (Middleton, 2016, p.11). Although historians such as Nell Irvin Painter and Patrick Rael claim the emergence of one-drop rule in the nineteenth century, then it was codified a century later (Middleton, 2016, p.12).

The second step in the construction of Whiteness, Henry Lopez adds that those who are non-White were excluded from citizenship and considered as inferior by the courts. While those who are White considered as superior to non-White. In addition to the negative characteristics imputed to Blacks and the positives ones attributed to Whites, Blacks have been seen as “lazy, ignorant, lascivious, and criminal” while Whites have been considered as “industrious, knowledgeable, virtuous, and law-abiding” (Lopez, 2006,

p.13). These aspects of law and societal based segregation led only to furthering the privilege of whites which only furthered aspects of superiority and continued to cement whiteness as the mechanism to obtain and maintain societal positions of power (Blauner, 2001, p.69).

### **1.5. White Supremacism**

White Supremacism is the idea (ideology) that white race is superior to all other races and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. White supremacists believe that white people are created to rule people of color. They view non-whites as subhuman and usually refer to them in “derogatory terms” (“FBI Counterterrorism Division,” 2006, p.4).

In CRT, the concept of white supremacy is recalled to describe a process and persistent state of affairs that is dominant in the Western world where the interests of White-identified people are given priority over the interests of other groups through political, social, economic and cultural structures and practices that have evolved over centuries and are maintained and continually recreated by these structures and through individual actors and actions (conscious and unconscious). These structures and practices are generally taken for granted and ‘invisible’ in the normal, day-to-day operation of western societies, particularly to White people. Thus conceived, ‘White supremacy’ takes on a more nuanced and wide ranging meaning than it is ascribed in everyday parlance where it is usually reserved only to describe the attitudes and actions of extreme racist and right-wing groups and individuals such as the Ku Klux Klan (Gillborn, 2006, p.318).

In an often-quoted passage, Ansley (1997) offers the following description of the CRT concept of White supremacy: “By ‘White supremacy’ I do not mean to allude only to the self-conscious racism of white supremacist hate groups. I refer instead to a political, economic, and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are

widespread, and relations of white dominance and nonwhite subordination are daily re-enacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings” (Ansley, 1997, p.592).

### **1.6. White Nationalism**

Eric Kaufmann, a professor of politics at Birkbeck University in London, defined white nationalism as the belief that national identity should be built around white ethnicity and that white people should therefore maintain both a demographic majority and dominance of the nation’s cultural and public life (Taub, 2016, par.3). Many white nationalists believe that miscegenation, multiculturalism and immigration of nonwhites are threatening the white race (“State of Domestic White Nationalist,” 2006, p.4).

According to *The National Museum of African American History and Culture*, white nationalism is “a concept born out of white supremacy”. The main difference is that white nationalism focuses on nationhood. White nationalists in the United States advocate for a country that is only for the white race due to the feelings of entitlement and racial superiority. They also believe that the diversity of people in the United States will lead to the destruction of whiteness and white culture (“Whiteness,” 2019, par.12).

White supremacists and white nationalists both place the interests of white people over those of other racial groups. They also believe that racial discrimination should be incorporated into law and policy. However, some will see the distinction between white nationalism and white supremacy as a semantic sleight of hand. But many white supremacists are also white nationalists, and vice versa (Taub, 2016, par.4-5).

### **1.7. White Supremacists and Extremists in the United States**

White supremacy, which embodies the root of white nationalism and the research key concept, the Alt Right, is not new to the United States. In fact, some American historians such as Robert McColley, Lynd Staughton, William Cohen and Winthrop D. Jordan date white supremacy back to the nation’s inception, They argue that the

Founding Fathers were motivated by a sense of white supremacy, and that this motivation influenced their policy making to champion the white American. They also argue that the Declaration of Independence was a white man's document, and the U.S. Constitution "created aristocratic privilege while consolidating black bondage" (Freehling, 1972, p.81-82).

One of the most notorious white supremacist groups in the United States is the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). The name Ku Klux Klan was derived from the Greek word kuklos, which means "circle of friends" (Martin, Jr. and Sullivan, 2011, p.1). The Klan has existed in three distinct eras at different points in time during the history of the United States. Each has advocated extremist reactionary positions such as white nationalism, anti-immigration, antisemitism, anti-Catholic, and anti-miscegenation ("KKK (Ku Klux Klan)", p.1).

The original Klan was founded by a group of six Confederate army veterans in Tennessee in 1865. The First Klan's primary focus was subverting Republican Reconstruction policies and preventing emancipated African Americans from receiving the benefits of citizenship. . However, the KKK declined after the passage of the Ku Klux Klan Act in 1871, which allowed for the federal prosecution of KKK members as terrorists (Grant, 2015, par.1). The KKK has used violence as a tool of fear and intimidation from its earliest days in the late 19th century. According to the *Southern Poverty Law Center*, "lynchings, tar-and-featherings, rapes and other violent attacks on those challenging white supremacy became a hallmark of the Klan" during the Reconstruction era ("Ku Klux Klan Background", 2018, par.2).

The KKK re-emerged in 1915 in Atlanta, Georgia by William Joseph Simmons. This Klan was the largest in history, in which the organization claimed four to five million men as members by 1925. While the Reconstruction era Klan focused its wrath on blacks, the Klan of the 1920s broadened its message to oppose other ethnics such as Catholics, Jews,

and immigrants, as well as the political left and proponents of unionization (Martin, Jr. and Sullivan, 2011, p.1). In addition with the shifting nature of America from a rural agricultural society to an urban industrial nation, the Klan attacked also the elite, urbanites and intellectuals (“The Ku Klux Klan in 1920s,” par.2). Numbers of the Klan collapsed, however, and the organization effectively disbanded before the advent of World War II (Martin, Jr. and Sullivan, 2011, p.1).

The KKK’s third resurgence was during the Civil Rights Movement that took place during 1950s and 1960s for Black Americans to gain equal rights under the law in the United States (“Civil Rights Movement,” 2009, par.1). In this period, the Klan embraced widespread violence, especially with the discovery of dynamite as a weapon. According to the SPLC, “the Klan’s campaign of terror against the Civil Rights Movement resulted in almost 70 bombings in Georgia and Alabama, the arson of 30 black churches in Mississippi, and 10 racial killings in Alabama alone (“Ku Klux Klan,” 2011, p.26). By the late 1960s the organization was beginning to decline in membership and activity due to the leadership and criminal activities (Martin, Jr. and Sullivan, 2011, p.1).

While the Klan from this point to the present has never fully disappeared. Today, there are at least four main KKK branches among the 72 active groups operating under the Klan name: the Brotherhood of Klans, the National Knights, the Imperial Klans of America and the Knights Party (“KKK (Ku Klux Klan”, p.1).

On the other hand, the extreme white-nationalist American Nazi Party (ANP) founded in 1959 based in Arlington, Virginia, by an American politician and Neo-Nazi George Lincoln Rockwell (Hawley, 2018, p.36) with the mission deporting Blacks to Africa, Sterilizing all Jews, and furthering other racial policies (Abel, par.1). The party is based largely upon the ideals and policies of Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party in Germany during the Nazi era, and embraced its uniforms and iconography (Potok, 2001, par.2). The American

Nazi Party addressed an increasingly angry minority of whites alarmed at the progress of the Civil Rights Movement, seemingly at their expense. The party's magazine, *The Stormtrooper*, spread racist and anti-Semitic propaganda through provocative slurs—a tactic that the Alt-Right continues with a successor publication of the same name (Hawley, 2018, p.36–37). However, Rockwell was killed on August 25, 1967 by John Patler, a former member of The American Nazi Party (Abel, par.2).

Following the assassination, the ANP had renamed the National Socialist White People's Party. The group did less public picketing and demonstrating, instead focusing on producing literature, recruiting members and setting off stink bombs in local movies theaters. The stink bombs attacks were in protest of the “slaves,” which the group called the latest in “a series of race-mixing spectacles produced by ‘Hollywood Jews’” (Boldt, 1969, p.10). In 1982, the group announced it would relocate to the Midwest, citing a lack of local support for its mission. According to then leader Martin Kerr, Arlington was filled with government workers and military personnel and “these are not people looking to join the revolutionary organizations” (Latimer, 1982, par.1). The group moved to New Berlin, Wisconsin in 1984 and took the name “New Order”. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Harold Covington, a National Socialist White People's Party, carried the legacy of *Rockwell*. The group sells Rockwell's writing and audiotope speeches on websites (Clark, 2010, par.13).

In time, the extreme right in the United States began to evolve. The Neo-Nazi and white supremacist National Alliance was formed in 1974 by William Pierce, a former physics associate-professor and author of the white supremacist novels, *The Turner Diaries* and *Hunter* (Hawley 2018, p.41). The National Alliance comes at time when groups like the Ku Klux Klan are becoming weaker and more fragmented (“A growing threat”, par.1). It was developed out of the National Youth Alliance (NYA), which was formed out of the remains of an organization called Youth for Wallace, established by Willis Carto, the anti-

Semitic founder of Liberty Lobby, in support of the segregationist Governor George Wallace's bid for president as American Independent Party candidate in 1968 (History of National Alliance, par.2). According to the SPLC, The National Alliance (NA) was for decades "the most dangerous and best organized neo-Nazi formation in America.

Explicitly genocidal in its ideology, NA materials call for the eradication of the Jews and other races and the creation of an all-white homeland." Pierce has run the group and edited its magazine, *National Vanguard*. However, the NA declined after the death of its founder, William pierce in 2002. Today, despite the attempts to revive it, it remains a tiny group that engages in little activity ("National Alliance," par.1).

About a decade after the National Alliance was formed in 1970, the Council of Conservative Citizens (CofCC or CCC) was founded in 1985 in St. Louis, Missouri by Gordon Baum, a worker's compensation attorney and longtime racist activist ("Council Conservative Citizens: Background," 2020, par.1). David A. Graham described the CCC as "the largest white-supremacist group in the nation," traces its roots directly to the racist, anti-integrationist White Citizens' Councils of the 1950s and 1960s (also known as White Citizens Council). CCA was a coalition of white-supremacist groups and individuals formed throughout the South to defend school segregation after the Supreme Court outlawed the policy in 1954 in *Brown vs. Board of Education* ("Council Conservative Citizens: Background", 2020, par.1). Its purpose was somewhat more respectable alternative to the Ku Klux Klan for white southerners who opposed integration (Graham, 2015, par 3-4).

Similar to the American Nazi Party and National Alliance, a *Southern Poverty Law Center* documented that the CCC was a hate group "routinely denigrated blacks as 'genetically inferior,' complained about 'Jewish power brokers,' called LGBT people

‘perverted sodomites,’ and accused immigrants of turning America into a ‘slimy brown mass of glop’” (“Council of Conservative Citizen: Background,” par. 5).

The CofCC’s Statement of Principles, written by Dr. Samuel Francis, defines in fourteen bullets the CofCC’s beliefs about America, both culturally and politically. According to the CofCC, America is a Christian nation with a European heritage; America was derived from European heritage and should remain European in her character and composition as far as government is concerned. By token of this belief, the CofCC is against all non-European and non-Western immigration. All non-Western immigrants should be severely restricted by means of laws and policies, and the organization’s opinion is that all illegal immigration should be immediately halted, including the return of all illegals to their home countries (Francis, 2007, par.2-3).

The CofCC advocates racial segregation and rejects the mixing of races. The CofCC is against affirmative action and other similar programs designed to help primarily non-Whites. In their opinion, as listed in the Statement of Principles, this is the “degeneration of America’s European heritage” and the heritage of Southern people specifically. Thus, the CoCC opposes “all efforts to mix the races of mankind” and “to promote non-white races over the European-American people (Francis, 2007, par.3).

### **1.8. The Alternative Right Movement**

The Alternative Right is a term embraced by some white supremacists and white nationalists “to refer to themselves and their ideology, which emphasizes preserving and protecting the white race in the United States” (Daniszewski, 2016, par.1). According to the *Southern Poverty Law Center* (SPLC), the Alternative Right, commonly known as the Alt-Right, is “a set of far-right ideologies, group and individuals whose core belief is that “white identity” is under attack by multicultural forces using “political correctness” and “social justice” to undermine white people and their civilization” (“Alt Right,” 2014,

par.1). Included in the Alt-Right, argues the Anti-Defamation League, is “a range of people on the extreme right who reject mainstream conservatism in favor of forms of conservatism that embrace implicit or explicit racism” (“Alt Right,” 2018, par.1).

While the term alt-right is merely a decade old, the ideals that this platform espouses are a rebranding of a rich tradition of far-right activism in America. According to George Michael, a scholar of right-wing extremism at Westfield State University, “The alt-right derives from the same impulses that have launched other white extremist groups, including a belief that white civilization, the white race in particular, is imperiled” (Darby, 2017, par.16).

Thomas Main summarizes the Alt-Right features into four elements. First, the Alt-Right rejects liberal democracy, or the idea that all man created equal. Second, the idea white racialism, the belief that a society can only function properly if whites hold political dominance. Third, Anti-Americanism; the United States has declined and no longer deserves the allegiance of its white citizens, because of the displacement of white dominance with racial equality, loyalty ought to shift from American principles to the promotion of the white race. Lastly, the Alt-Right embraces “vitriolic rhetoric” commonly found among fringe elements of the political spectrum. The movement “indulges in race-baiting, coarse ethnic humor, prejudicial stereotyping, vituperative criticism, and the flaunting of extremist symbols.” In other words, the Alt-Right rejects equal rights and liberal democracy, two central political and cultural tenets embraced by the United States (Main, 2018, p.8).

## **1.9. Conclusion**

White nationalists and supremacists claim that white people should maintain their majority and dominance because they believe that white race is under attack with miscegenation, multiculturalism and mass immigration invade the United States.

The Alternative Right is the twenty-first century immortalization of white nationalism in all its variety of aims and methods including maintaining white identity in the United States as a dominant one, rejecting equal rights, liberal democracy and multicultural society. In addition, it seeks division of the United States in order to create a racially pure white ethno-state.

## **Chapter Two**

### **The Origins and the Development of the Alt-Right Movement**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter explores the origins and the development of the Alt-Right movement, starting with the various ideologies such as white supremacy, white nationalism, Identitarianism, and neo-Nazism, as well as movements such as Paleoconservative and the European New Right, that have all inspired the emergence of the alt-right. The chapter also defines some American white nationalist organizations and magazines that helped the spread of Alt-Right ideas, among of them the *Charles Martel Society*, the *National Policy Institute*, the *AltRight Corporation*, and the *American Renaissance*.

Then the chapter examines how the term “Alternative Right” first emerged and the reasons behind the rise of the movement in 2008, as well as its decline in 2013 and how the term was resurrected online two years later in the midst of the 2016 presidential election season. The chapter discussed some notable differences between the first Alt-Right and the second one, highlighting the reasons why the new Alt-Right was more successful than the first.

Finally, the chapter presents how the movement went from online to the real world, especially after Trump’s victory in 2016, the Alt-Right group started to organize conferences and events in order to spread and share their beliefs and ideologies to the mainstream.

#### **2.2. The Alt Right Ideological Roots**

The Alt-Right had various ideological forebears (Hawley, 2017, p.21). It has a connection with white supremacy and white nationalism. White supremacy enjoyed broad political support and success in the United States throughout the 19th and early 20th

centuries, especially in the south, in the age of slavery and during the Jim Crow period of legal racial segregation. The ideology was associated with some violent groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, which enjoyed some success in the United States essentially in 1920s. However, after World War II, it was repudiated and relegated to the far-right of the country's political spectrum ( Niewert, 2017, p.220).

During the 21<sup>st</sup> century, several white supremacists reformulated their ideas as white nationalism (Niewert, 2017, p.220). The latest focused mostly on criticizing mainstream conservatives under the Republican presidency of George W. Bush (Niewert, 2017, p.229). George Hawley, a political scientist at the university of Alabama, emphasized in his book *Making Sense of the Alt-Right* that there is variety of opinion among people that describe themselves as part of the 'alt-right,' but most of them can be described as white nationalists. They reject most mainstream conservative ideas, such as economics and foreign policy, and they both calls for the creation of a homogenous white nation (Dimmer, 2016, par.4-5).

In its early history—before white nationalism influences crept in—the Alt-Right had more in common with movements that provided an alternative to traditional conservatism. One political movement that had direct influence on the early Alt-Right is the paleoconservative movement (Hawley, 2018, p.29). Greg Johnson (born 1971), an editor-in-chief of the white nationalist imprint *Counter-Currents Publishing* (Mulhall et al, 2017, p.98), asserts the Alternative Right term first appeared in the “fuzzy space” where the paleoconservative movement overlaps with white nationalism. Paul Gottfried, an American Jewish political theorist and commentator, coined the term “paleoconsevatism” that is an opposition to the neoconservatism. Paleoconservatism stresses on the American tradition, Chritianity, America's white identity, immigration restriction, supporting an openly nationalistic foreign policy, and everything that neo-conservatism sought to abolish

from the conservatism (Kerboua, 2018, pp. 57-70). Various conservative leaders, aside from Gottfried, including Samuel Francis, Joseph Sobran and Patrick Buchanan have been openly associated with White Nationalists (Johnson, 2018, p.8). Gottfried would go on to be the inspiration for the creation of the term Alternative Right: he coined the term in a speech many years later to lament the sputtering paleoconservative movement (Chernikoff, 2016, par.2). Early on, Gottfried mentored Richard Spencer, who later became an avowed white supremacist responsible for the initial emergence of the Alt-Right, and wrote published articles in paleoconservative publications that popularized the alt-right term (Hawley, 2018, p.23).

On the other hand, the European New Right (ENR) is one such foreign ideological influence on the Alt-Right with parallels to American intellectual white nationalism. The European New Right is a French far-right movement founded in 1968 by French far right philosopher Alain de Benoist. Then it spread to other European countries as an initiative by far-right intellectuals to reformulate the fascist ideology, largely by allocating elements from other political traditions - including the left - to mask their fundamental rejection of the principle of human equality. European New Rightists believe in separating racial and ethnic groups in order to maintain their cultures and identity (similar to white nationalism and the alt-right.) The ENR ideology concern began in the United States during 1990s, notably as it shares various beliefs with paleoconservatism, such as opposition to multicultural societies, non-White immigration, and globalization. The links between paleoconservatism and ENR ideas held promise for Americans seeking to develop a White nationalist movement outside of traditional neonazi/Ku Klux Klan circles (Mulhall et al, 2017, pp.30-31, Lyons 2017, par.6).

According to *Anti-Defamation League* (ADL) publication entitled *Alt Right: A Primer on the New White Supremacy*, many Alt-Rightists claim to be identitarians, an anti-

globalist and anti-Islamic movement originated in France and Italy. The Identitarian intellectuals and activists have been a source of inspiration beyond Europe and the emerging American Alt Right. American identitarians, including Richard Spencer, claim to want to preserve European-American (i.e., white) culture in the U.S. (“Alt Right,” par.3, Zúquete, 2018, par.2). He prefers to refer to the Alt-Right as “identitarianist,” which he describes as the belief that identity is the most fundamental aspect of political life. The Alt-Right claims to defend white or European identity, not to oppress those with other backgrounds but in order to maintain and care for their own (Lopez, 2017, par.7).

Another ideological influence on the alt right is neo-Nazism. Neo-Nazis are white supremacist groups that revere Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany and adopt many of the trappings, symbology and mythology of the Third Reich. Neo-Nazis also adopt its extreme anti-Semitism, though many Hitlerian notions were dropped along the way, such as seeing Slavs as subhumans (modern white supremacists simply see them as “white”). The best-known Alt-Right figure associated with neo-Nazism has been Andrew Anglin, the Ohio-based founder of the *Daily Stormer*, which grew to be one of the most popular white supremacist websites. *The Daily Stormer* was an attempt to repackage Anglin’s earlier website, Total Fascism, into a punchier, more enticing format (Nathan et al, 2018, p.22).

### **2.3. The Alt-Right Organizations**

William H. Regnery II is one of the important figures in the rise of the Alt-Right, because of his work in creating institutional spaces in which paleoconservatives and White Nationalists could exchange ideas (Johnson 2018, p.9). Starting in 1999, he has poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into the quest to transform America and create what he calls a white “ethnostate.” Regnery’s donation was gone to two white nationalist organizations, both of which he was one of its founders (Roston and Anderson, 2017, par.4-5). The first was the secretive *Charles Martel Society* (CMS) which publishes *The*

*Occidental Quarterly* journal. That organization helped create the second named *National Policy Institute* or the NPI in 2005, which he made Louis R. Andrews its chairman (Johnson, 2018, p.9). According to the NPI original mission statement, its goal is to “elevate the consciousness of whites, ensure our biological and cultural continuity, and protect our civil rights.” In 2011, the Alt-Right pioneer Richard Spencer became the president and the director of the organization, after the death of its chairman Louis R. Andrews. Spencer launched the NPI’s journal, *Radix*, in December 2013, whose writers have included Alex Kurtagic, Jack Donavan, Nathan Damigo and Jared Taylor (Mulhall et al, 2017, p.100) The CMS and the NPI are both White Nationalist and *The Occidental Quarterly* is also openly anti-Semitic (Johnson, 2018, p.9). However, the NPI started to lose its energy as Spencer has faded from the headline when he was filmed shouts the Nazi salutes, “Hail Trump! Hail our people! Hail Victory” at an NPI conference he held in Washington DC, after two weeks of 2016 election (Barrouquere, 2020, par.5).

The *Counter-Currents Publishing* (CCP) also helped the rise of the Alt-Right movement; it was founded in 2010 by American white nationalists, Greg Johnson and Mike Polignano. According to *Counter-Currents Publishing* webzine, its aim is “to create an intellectual movement in North America that is analogous to the European New Right” and would “lay the intellectual ground work for a white ethnostate in North America” (Johnson, 2010, par.1). CCP has published original works by white nationalist and right-wing writer such as Johnathan Bowden, Francis Roger Devlin, Andy Nowicki, James O’meara and Johnson himself. Its fortunes have been linked to the rise of the Alt-Right webzine which made March 2017 the best month ever of the *AlternativeRight.com* in terms of unique visitors (187,296) from Europe and especially Great Britain, who provided the most visitors after America (Mulhall et al, 2017, p.102).

In January 2017, Richard Spencer launched the *Altright Corporation*, an alt-right organization based in Alexandria, Virginia. His business partner was Jason Jorjani, a book editor and professor at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. Its aim according to *NBC news* is to “unite global factions of the so-called alt-right” (“Altright Corporation,” 2017, par.1) and to bring together “the best writers and analysts from the Alt-Right, in North America, Europe, and around the world.” Alt-Right described its message as “not a call to arms but a call to consciousness!” attempting to “restore honor and our identity as a white people” (Mulhall et al, 2017, p.102).

*America Renaissance* (AmRen) also came to be associated with the Alt Right, partnering Spencer’s *AlternativeRight.com* in 2010. AmRen is the magazine website and conference founded by Jared Taylor in 1990 and the New Century Foundation (Mulhall 2017, p.101), which is, according to the *Southern Poverty Law Center*, “a self-styled think tank promotes pseudo-scientific studies and research that purport to show the inferiority of blacks to whites” (“American Renaissance,” 2012, par.1). Taylor has stated that he founded AmRen “in order to awaken whites to the crisis they face and to encourage them to unite in defending their legitimate interests as a race” (Mulhall et al, 2017, p.101). Taylor supports the idea of America as “a self-consciously European, majority-white nation” which he argues was “the original conception of the U.S.” In 2002, for example, *American Renaissance* released an article by Richard Lynn, American race scientist, under the title *Race and the Psychopathic Personality* that argued that blacks “are more psychopathic than whites” and suffer from a “personality disorder” characterised by being stolid, shameless, pathological lying and so on (American Renaissance Background, par.1). In January 2012, the site posts daily news articles as well as longer opinion pieces, with contributors including Gavin McInnes, Tomislav Sunić, Francis Roger Devlin, Richard Spencer, Pat Buchanan, Jack Donovan, and Alex Kurtagic. It also publishes a regular

podcast stewarded by Taylor, runs an active YouTube channel and has published interviews with *European New Right* philosopher Alain de Benoist (Mulhall et al, 2017, p.101).

#### **2.4. The First Alt-Right Movement**

The Alt-right was born at a time when the mainstream conservative movement was losing influence and respectability. The Iraq War had become a quagmire by the end of President George W. Bush's time in office. The economic crash resulting from the collapse of *Lehman Brothers* (one of the fourth-largest investment bank in the United States) and the sub-prime mortgage crisis erased the gains the US economy had made under the Bush in seven years in the matter of months. Various Republican leaders have been resigned for being involved in humiliating scandals which made the Democrats to control of Congress in 2006, and it was clear that Barack Obama was heading toward an easy victory in 2008, which would lead to the dominance of the Democratic Party of the federal government. It was also a time when the explicit White supremacist movements were collapsed such as Aryan Nations, the Ku Klux Klan and the National Alliance (Thompson & Hawley, 2020, p.4).

Richard B. Spencer (born May 1978) started as a paleoconservative and appeared a white nationalist, following influence field of Regnery. In 2007, Spencer was an assistant editor at *The American Conservative*, a paleoconservative magazine founded in 2002 by Scott McConnell, Patrick Buchanan, and Taki Theodoracopulos in opposition to the neocon-instigated Iraq War, where he was pursuing his Ph.D in modern European intellectual history at Duke University at the same time. According to founding editor Scott McConnell, Spencer was fired from *The American Conservative* for his extremist views. From January 2008 to December 2009, he served as the executive editor of *Taki's*

*Magazine*; a libertarian online magazine published by the Greek Journalist and writer Taki Theodoracopulos (Johnson 2018, p.9, Mulhall et al, 2017, p.94).

The term “Alternative Right” was first appeared at *Taki’s Magazine* under Spencer’s editorship, when he published the speech of Paul Gottfried entitled, “The Decline and Rise of the Alternative Right” on December 1, 2008, just after Barack Obama was elected president. Primarily, Gottfried gave the title as an address at the H.L. Mencken Club conference in November, where he questioned how mainstream conservatives couldn’t stop the election of the nation’s first black president. While Spencer claims that he is the one who created the name Alternative Right, Gottfried asserts that they co-created it (Johnson 2018, p.10, Sangillo 2019, par. 5-6).

At first, the term was not exclusively associated with race. Rather, it started as a “catch-all phrase” that could include anyone on the right that was against mainstream, Bush-era conservatism; including libertarians, paleoconservatives, localists, as well as white nationalists (Hawley, 2017, p.5). Saif Shahin, an American University School of Communication professor wrote a paper on Alt-Right Twitter that was presented at the Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences in January, 2019. Shahin emphasizes that the Alt-Right basically started as a reaction to Obama’s election in 2008. He asserts that after the neoconservative figures; who had become prominent during the George W. Bush administration, had failed, the Alt-Rightists wants the conservative movement to return to its roots. Hence, the need for an alternative right (Sangillo, 2019, par.7).

Greg Johnson claims in his book *The Alternative Right* that the first Alt-Right was largely influenced by White Nationalism and paleoconservatism. The Alt-Right initially encompassed a range of intellectual voices at odds with mainstream conservatism, such as book publishers, print journals and speakers from quasi-academic conferences, who wore coats and ties (Johnson, 2018, p.12), but its meaning gradually narrowed to focus

specifically on white identity politics or white nationalism (Hawley, 2017, p.68). In 2010, Spencer started his webzine, the *AlternativeRight.com*, after he left *Taki's Magazine* (Hawley, 2017, p.68). Joining Spencer were two senior contributing editors, Peter Brimelow, whose anti-immigrant VDARE Foundation sponsored the project, and Paul Gottfried, one of the founders of paleoconservatism. The magazine published works of old-school “scientific” racism along with articles from or about the *European New Right*, Italian far right philosopher Julius Evola, and figures from Germany’s interwar Conservative Revolutionary movement. There were essays by National-Anarchist Andrew Yeoman, libertarian and Pat Buchanan supporter Justin Raimondo of *Antiwar.com*, Jack Donovan, and Black conservative Elizabeth Wright (Lyons, 2017 par.2, 7).

Despite the fact that the Alternative Right webzine got off to a strong start, after about six months, the webzine appeared to lose energy because of the lack of publications. In 2011, Spencer fully expanded from the internet to reality. He became president of the National Policy Institute (NPI) and its affiliated Washington Summit Publishers, which made him to stop in editing the webzine. On May 3, 2012, Spencer turned *AlternativeRight.com* over to other editors, Andy Nowicki and Colin Liddell. Then on Christmas day of 2013, he shut it down completely without warning to its current editors, establishing a new online magazine, *Radix*, in its place. The sudden shutdown of the webzine led to debates, to which Spencer replied in *Radix*, that the term alternative right was a “bold experiment and short-term project to differentiate itself from the American conservative movement” (Hawley, 2018, p.15).

However, the term Alt-Right had become a generic term for a whole range of a radical alternatives to mainstream conservatism, even after being abandoned by its creator, Writers at *Counter-Currents*, the Alternative Right BlogSpot site, and *Radix* kept the term

of the Alt-Right till early months of 2015, after which “it caught on as the preferred name of a new movement” (Johnson, 2018, pp.10-11, Lyons, 2017, p.4).

## **2.5. The New Alt-Right Movement**

After a period of decline, the term Alt-Right returned in 2015 by a new generation of social media users who gave the movement a dramatically different character: “ostentatiously vulgar and offensive,” emphasizing irony and humor, and skillfully using internet memes and trolling to spread their message and attack opponents (Hawley, 2018, p.68). The second wave of the Alt-Right movement was somewhat different from the first. The New Alt-Right had different “ideological origins, different platforms, and a radically different ethos.” The new Alt Right emerged largely from the breakdown of the *Ron Paul* movement, specifically the takeover of the libertarian movement by cultural Leftists, which drove culturally more conservative libertarians to the Right. Other factors driving the emerging racial consciousness of this group were the *Trayvon Martin* and *Michael Brown* controversies, the rise of the *Black Lives Matter* movement, and the beginning of the migrant crisis in Europe. The new Alt-Right appeared as racist, misogynist, anti—immigrant, and anti-Semitic on the social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook, on image boards such as 4chan, on discussion boards like Reddit, on podcasts, within the comment sections of news articles, on Youtube. The misogynistic GamerGate movement, which attacked progressives, and especially progressive women in the video game community, was a breakout movement for online far right, as it demonstrate the potential power of anonymous, decentralized right-wing movements to influence the “real world” (Johnson, 2018, p.13, Thompson & Hawley, 2020, p.5).

Unlike the first Alt-Right which was the product of a Gen-Xer under the sponsorship of people born in the Baby Boom and before, whom actually had memories of America before the cultural revolution of the 1960s and the massive demographic shifts

after 1965, when America opened its borders to the non-white world. However, the new Alt-Right created a much younger Millennials and Gen-Zs who were products of “multicultural America with rampant social and familial decay, sexual degeneracy, and drug and alcohol abuse” (Johnson, 2018, p.13). The first Alt-Right headed for being conservative, because they had memories of a better country, unlike the new Alt-Right that had no such memories, and went toward “radical rejection of the entire social order” (Johnson, 2018, p.13).

Greg Johnson argued that white nationalists required finding out a significant numbers of white millennials who had graduated from college during Obama’s era. Mainly the ones who were unemployed and found themselves ended up living with their parents. Johnson believed that this “boomrang generation” could be an ideal “proletariat” because they were extremely educated; “they were from middle and upper middle class backgrounds; they had a great deal of leisure time, much of which they spent online; and they were angry and disillusioned with the system, and rightly so” (Johnson, 2018, p.13).

On the other hand, the reinvention of the Alt-Right intentionally follows a “leaderless resistance philosophy”. This strategy began in the 1960s as a way to battle Soviet communism (Kaplan, 1997, p.80). The leaderless resistance philosophy has been co-opted by white supremacists such as the KKK and also by “Islamic terrorist organizations” such as Hezbollah and Hamas (Michael, 2012, p.259). Andrew Anglin, a neo-Nazi and one of the most prominent public members of the Alt-Right, acknowledges the alt-right’s intentional lack of hierarchical structure in the article *A Normie’s Guide to the Alt-Right*, posted on his blog, *The Daily Stormer*. In line with many extremist groups, the Alt-Right does not have organized leaders, chapters, or a formal structure (Anglin, 2016, par.10).

The Alt-Right's rapid growth partly reflected trends in internet culture, where anonymity and the lack of face-to-face contact have fostered widespread use of insults, bullying, and supremacist speech. More immediately, it reflected recent political developments, such as a backlash against the Black Lives Matter movement and, above all, Donald Trump's presidential candidacy. A majority of Alt-Rightists supported Trump's campaign because of his anti-immigrant proposals; defamatory rhetoric against Mexicans, Muslims, women, and others; and his clashes with mainstream conservatives and the Republican Party establishment (Lyons, 2017, p.5).

## **2.6. Alt Right Moving from Online to Real World**

The Alt-Right was for a number of years an online movement. The Alt-Right groups spent a lot of time on the internet trolling and harassing people they did not like, particularly Jewish journalists and public figures opposed to Donald Trump. The first notable real-world Alt-Right group, Identity Evropa, emerged in the months prior to the 2016 presidential election. IE was originally led by Alt-Rightists Nathan Damigo. It aims to present "a clean-cut face for the Alt-Right" and describe itself as "a North American based Identitarian Organization" (Mulhall et al, 2017 p.105). Damigo believes that immigration and diversity were destroying the country and that no place heralded the decline of White's fortunes in America like his home of California (Branson-Potts, 2016, par.6). The group posts fliers around college campuses nationwide with slogans like "Let's Become Great Again" and "Protect Your Heritage." Brian Levin, a director of the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at Cal State San Bernardino, California, said Identity Evropa's description reads like "a template that exists within the Alt-Right" (Branson-Potts, 2016, par.3). Levin asserts that "Identity Evropa members believe that western Civilization is falling apart because people who are non-white groups and other groups are not 'assimilate-able' into our society" (Atkinson, 2019, par.6).

IE has targeted college campuses and as Damigo told the Daily Beast that IE intended to “attract high-quality individuals from doctors to lawyers to economists” in order to “act as a fifth column, over time shifting the edifice of our political establishment to encompass our interests.” In May 2017, Damigo claimed that since Trump’s inauguration IE had increased in numbers of people (from 12 people to more than 50 members). However, Damigo decided to step down as leader in August 2017 and was replaced by Eli Mosley (Mulhall et al, 2017, p.105).

Following Trump’s victory, the Alt-Right’s expansion into real-world activities included taking part in white supremacist events, such as conferences, rallies, protests, counter-protests and other gatherings (Nathan et al, 2018, p.35). On 21 November 2016, Richard Spencer gave a press conference at a Willard Hotel in downtown Washington, D.C. Spencer with his guests, Jared Taylor, editor of the white supremacists site *American Renaissance*, and Peter Brimelow, of the anti-immigration site VDARE, discussed about “What is the Alt-Right?” Spencer began his speech by questioning “who are we?” He directly answered his question and said “I think if I were to describe what a lot of people now about the Alt-Right, it’s probably some things they’ve seen online” (Cogan, 2016, par.4) such as Pepe the Frog meme, a green frog first debuted in 2005 in the comic *Boy’s Club* by Matt Furie. Then, in 2014 became a symbol of white supremacy by the Alt-Right (Mulhall et al, 2017, p.26). At another point, Spencer said that to be “white is to be a striver, a crusader, an explorer and a conqueror... We don’t gain anything from their (other racial group) presence. They need us and not the other way around” (Spencer, 2016, 01:07). He believes that “America was until this past generation a white country designed for ourselves and our posterity,” spencer added, “it’s our creation, it is our inheritance, and it belongs to us” (Lamborso and Appelbaum, 2016, par.4). As he held his arm up, he

proclaimed triumphantly, “Hail Trump, hail our people, hail victory!” in response, several attendees erupted in Nazi salutes (Lamborso and Appelbaum, 2016, par.6).

Another prominent Alt-Right group is *Patriot Front*, based in Texas and led by Thomas Ryan Rosseau. It formed in August 2017 as a breakaway faction of neo-Nazi group Vanguard America but adopted an alt right sensibility. Like Identity Evropa, it attempts to position itself as a “patriotic.” The group was chanting slogans such as “Jews will not replace us” (Nathan et al 2018, p.35). The manifesto continues with a call for the formation of a white ethnostate, “the state has long since ceased to advocate for the interests of the descendants of its creators, and thus a State which will be, above all else, a reflection of the national interest must be implemented fully and absolutely” (“Patriot Front”, par.14). PF’s manifesto is also explicit in its exclusion of people of color from its conception of pan-European identity: “An African, for example, may have lived, worked, and even been classed as a citizen in America for centuries, yet he is not American. He is, as he likely prefers to be labelled, an African in America. The same rule applies to others who are not of the founding stock of our people as well as to those who do not share the common unconscious that permeates throughout our greater civilization, and the European diaspora” (“Patriot Front”, par.3).

The *Anti-Defamation League* (ADL) identified 120 events, public and private, from the start of 2017 through the first half of 2018, organized or attended by white supremacists around the country. Alt-Right activists organized or were among the attendees at slightly over half of these events. Of these white supremacist events, Alt-Right activists actually organized or helped organize at least 40. However, these events were not like the Identity Evropa and Patriot Front, which were the most energetic Alt-Right groups generally, and were also the most frequent organizers of events, especially in 2018 (Nathan et al, 2018, p.35).

## **2.7. Conclusion**

The chapter has detailed the Alt-Right's own development since Richard Spencer developed the term "Alternative Right" in 2010. The movement was divided into two phases. The early period centered on the online journal *AlternativeRight.com*, which Spencer founded and edited from 2010 to 2012. The Alt-Right initially encompassed a range of intellectual voices at odds with mainstream conservatism, but its meaning gradually narrowed to focus specifically on white identity politics or white nationalism. After a period of decline, the term Alt-Right was revived in 2015 by a new generation of online activists use websites, chat boards, social media and memes to spread its message.

## **Chapter Three**

### **The Impacts of the Alternative Right Movement on Social and Political landscape in the U.S.A**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter deals with the impacts of the Alt-Right movement on both social and political arena in the United States. As the movement has grown in size during the 2016 election, the chapter attempts to examine the role of Alt-Right in the election and its relation with the election-candidate Donald Trump. This chapter also seeks to discover how the movement gained popularity during the election and moved from being anonymous to the mainstream.

On the other hand, the chapter attends to illustrate the tools used by the alt-right supporters to attack their enemies and opponents, such as the usage of memes, harassment and conspiracy theories. Moreover, it discusses how the Alt-Rightists criticize the feminism, as well as how the females of the movement influence other women to support the ideologies of the movement. Finally, the chapter examines the consequences of the white supremacist “Unite the Right” rally that took place in Charlottesville, Virginia, on August 11-12, 2017.

#### **3.2. The Role of the Alt Right in Donald Trump’s 2016 Election Campaign**

Public visibility of the Alt-Right grew exponentially during the 2016 election cycle. Inspired by Donald Trump’s nativist campaign, Alt-Right activists were among the most enthusiastic supporters of Donald Trump, attacking Trump’s critics on Twitter and other online venues. A majority of Alt-Rightists supported Trump’s campaign because of his anti-immigrant proposals; defamatory rhetoric against Mexicans, Muslims, women, and others; and his clashes with mainstream conservatives and the Republican Party establishment (Lyons, 2017, p.5).

The Alt-Right blogosphere gravitated towards Trump. Starting in the summer of 2015, the white nationalist blogs of *VDare*, the *Daily Stormer*, *Radix Journal*, the *American Renaissance*, *InfoWars*, and the *AltRight.com* posted their support of his candidacy. These Alt-Right sites urged their readers to support Trump. The Daily Stormer announced on their website in June 2015, “I urge all readers of this site to do whatever they can to make Donald Trump president” because Trump was “the only candidate who is even talking about anything at all that matters” (Neiwert, 2011, p.270). *Radix Journal* stated in July of 2015 that their supporters should support Trump because he is a disrupter; “He is worth supporting because we need a troll. We need someone who can expose the system that rules us as the malevolent and worthless entity it is. We need someone who can break open public debate” (Hood, 2015, par.8). In August 2015, the *American Renaissance* stated that Donald Trump is “the last hope for a president who would be good for white people” (Taylor, 2015, par.4). *InfoWars* stated in August 2015 that “Trump is the best candidate... The less a president does, the better. The more Congress is gridlocked, the better. The fewer Lobbyist-written laws are passed by corrupt Washington politicians, the safer our liberty” (Nimmo, 2015, par.3).

On November 8th 2016, the American people elected their new president, the Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump was elected as the 45<sup>th</sup> president of the United States of America. During his entire presidential campaign, polls predicted a hopeless defeat for Trump against his Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton, but against all the odds Trump became the next president of America (Kohler, 2016, p.3). Despite that many red flags were raised over his character by a prevalent ‘24/7’ media, deluging the public with numerous Trump controversies including misogynistic and racist remarks, a pledge to ban Muslims from the US, an infamous ‘birther’ claim against US President Barack Obama’s place of birth, Trump’s reputation as a habitual liar and a leaked 2005

video that exposed his comments about making unwanted sexual advances towards women (Tan, 2017, par.2).

After Trump's victory a large number of alt-rightists including Richard Spencer gathered at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, D.C. to celebrate their European Heritage and the victory of Trump. In presence of many media outlets, Richard Spencer was the final speaker at the NPI conference. Spencer declared in reference to "meme-magic" that, "though we may use these terms half-jokingly, they represent something truly important, the victory of will." He then added, "America was until this past generation a white country designed for ourselves and our posterity. It is our creation, it is our inheritance, and it belongs to us." He ended his speech with this tribute to trump's rise: "Hail Trump, hail our people, hail victory!" while some members of the audience raised their arms in the Nazi salute (Horsey, 2016, par.2-4).

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center researcher, after Trump's election, the alt-right began to see themselves as an ascending political force. They were the earliest group to jump on the Trump bandwagon and believed that they were a determining factor in his election. Indeed, the day after the billionaire's victory, Damigo propped his cellphone up in his ear, turned on the Periscope live-streaming app and started talking. "We as the alt-right are the reason why Trump won," he said, laughing. He then held up a bullhorn and described how, as he drove home from celebrating with friends in Falsom, he had shouted at people who are presumably not white: "you have to go back" (Branson-Potts, 2016, par.9). A month out of Trump's victory, Spencer said, "If Trump wins, we could really legitimately say that he was associated directly with us, with R word, all sorts of things. People will have to recognize us" (Harkinson, 2016, par.10).

Although Trump says he does not return the affection shown by the white nationalists. In a meeting with New York Times reporters and editors, he disavowed alt-

right extremists (Horse, 2016, par.5). However, In January 2016, marketing research company little Bird ran an analysis of Trump's Twitter and found that a majority of the accounts he retweeted in a given week had significant ties to white supremacy. Trump's ideas fed off the alt-right and the alt-right fed off Trump because he has brought those ideas with him to the white house. Richard Spencer said in a YouTube video after the election, "the fact is social media did help elect Trump... This is a clear sign that we have power, Even if it's just sending a sarcastic tweet or two. We have power, and we're changing the world" (Romano, 2016, par.5). He told interviewer David Pakman following Trump's inauguration that despite Trump's rejection of the alt-right, his nationalism is "irredeemably white" and that "Trump is a white nationalist, so to speak, [and] is alt-right whether he likes it or not" (Mulhall et al, 2017, p.42).

### **3.3. Alt-Right and Breitbart News**

Breitbart News was founded in 2005 by Andrew Breitbart to become "the Huffington Post of the right." and makes its conservative, anti-establishment viewpoint clear in both its design and reporting. The site features large subsections titled "Big Journalism" and "Big Government," which work to portray the news media and government as large, oppressive, and singularly organized structures (Ballard, 2017, p.12). Mr. Breitbart, a conservative political Internet publisher, was known for being a divisive and provocative figure. In 2009, he pointed to the Holocaust Museum shooter as a "multiculturalist." He took part in the anti-Muslim protests against a Muslim community center erroneously dubbed the "Ground Zero Mosque" ("Bridge Initiative Team," 2019, par.1).

In 2012, Steve Bannon, an American political strategist, media executive, and filmmaker who served (2017) as senior counselor and chief White House strategist for U.S. Pres. Donald Trump, became the executive chairman of the Breitbart media outlet, after the

death of Andrew Breitbart (KGO, 2018, par.4). In July 2016, the executive chairman of *Breitbart News*, Stephen Bannon, declared in an interview at the Republican National Convention that Breitbart is “the platform for the al-right” (Posner, 2016, par.2 ). Under Bannon, the site spoke increasingly to the Alt-Right supporters with headline and stories seemingly defined to offend African-Americans, Latinos, women, gays, transgender people and others (Folkenflik, 2016, par.6).

Although the Alt-Right’s origins lie elsewhere, *Breitbart News* was “the entering wedge, the link between the alt-right and the mainstream right,” as Nicole Hemmer noted (Hemmer 2016, par.3). In November 2016, Alex Marlow, the company’s editor-in-chief of Brietbart was asked if Breitbart was associated with the Alt-Right, he said, “I hesitate to deny it, but I hesitate to confirm it, also, because there is so much overlap in our audience” (“Bridge Initiative Team,” 2019, par.3).

In October 2017, a BuzzFeed article exposed extensive ties between Breitbart and the Alt-Right, especially Milo Yiannopoulos, who was a senior editor of Breitbart at the time, and self-avowed white supremacists and Neo-Nazis. The article reveals that Yiannopoulos contacted white supremacists and neo-Nazis for input on a Breitbart publication on the “Alt-Right” that referred to white nationalists as “intellectuals” and “young, creative and eager” individuals (“Bridge Initiative Team,” 2019, par.3). Bernstein wrote that Breitbart “does more than tolerate the most hate-filled, racist voices of the alt-right. It thrives on them, fueling and being fueled by some of the most toxic beliefs on the political spectrum--and clearing the way for them to enter the American mainstream” (Burns, 2017, par.5)

The Democratic presidential candidate of 2016 election Hillary Clinton summarized *Breitbart News* as a platform for “ideas on the extremist fringe of the conservative right.” Although the speech was promoted as a denunciation of the Alt-Right,

the movement itself was explicitly mentioned only briefly toward the end of the speech. “These are racist ideas. Race-baiting ideas. Anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, anti-women—all key tenets making up an emerging racist ideology known as the ‘Alt-Right,’” Clinton said (La Ganga, 2016, par.8). The ideology of the alt-right, as Clinton saw it, was given relevance by the “de facto merger between Breitbart and the Trump Campaign,” especially after Trump has hired Steve Bannon to serve as the chief executive officer of his 2016 presidential campaign in the administration (La Ganga, 2016, par.5).

In a tweet after Clinton’s speech, Trump lashed out and accused Clinton of “pandering to the worst instincts in our society” and “race-baiting to try to get African-American voters” (Lemire and Lerer, 2016, par.4). However, George Hawley, assistant professor of political science at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, and author of the book *Right Wing Critics of American Conservatism*, noted that “in order to have this speech make any sense, she’s going to have to explain what the alt-right is—anime Nazis and frog memes... and undercurrents of white supremacy.” He also reflected the concern that this was seen as evidence that they are “playing a role in the 2016 election” (La Ganga, 2016, par.13).

After Clinton’s speech about the Alt-Right, the word Alt-Right blanketed 24-hours cable news, it was covered in every major mainstream news outlet such as NBC News, New York Times, Vice News and the Voice of America. The leading voices of the alt-right were delighted to be denounced by Clinton, and they reveled in the national spotlight. As Clinton’s speech made them the focus of attention, this was seen as the legitimization they had been waiting for (Caldwell, 2016, par.2). Andrew Anglin wrote on the day of the speech: “Well guys. We’ve made it. Hillary Clinton is giving a speech about us today” (Anglin, 2016, par.4). Richard Spencer told the *Wall Street Journal* that their “fundamental obstacle was people having no idea who we are.” Therefore, in Spencer’s view, this

mention of the movement by a presidential candidate meant that they had “made it” (Reinhard, 2016, par.6).

### **3.4. Alt-Right on Social Media**

Social Media has created space to far-right groups like the Alt-Right to promote its extremist ideas globally. On internet forums like 4chan, Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit, the alt-right has spent years strategically developing methods to mask its sincere ideology, these methods including ironic trolling and memes, harassment and conspiracy theories to feed on people’s fears to intimidate women, immigrants, people of color, religious minorities, LGBTQ communities, and basically anyone who isn’t straight, white and male (Kıldıř, 2020, p.1-2). Malmgren argues that the alt-right “represents one of the only cross-sections of society who could possibly laugh about putting Jews in gas chambers, bringing slavery back to the United States, or reinforcing a rigid hierarchy of the sexes. With nothing personal at stake, they are free to embrace a politics of radical discrimination, incite justified outrage and fear from marginalized groups, and even seek to drive victims to suicide, ‘for fun’” (Malmgren, 2017, p.9).

The Alt-Right usage of trolls and memes enables for its ideologies such as white supremacy to spread faster, once it moves to the mainstream sites. Moreover, it makes the movement unique in the political activism sphere, and one meme especially characterizes the content the movement shared during the 2016 election: a famous cartoon names “Pepe the frog,” a green frog first debuted in 2005 in the comic *Boy’s Club* by Matt Furie which quickly turned into the symbol of white supremacy by the Alt-Rightists (Mulhall et al, 2017, p.26). Particularly on 4chan the meme transformed into an overwhelming amount completely different forms and contexts and used to evoke the certain cynical gesture that undermined onto many online actions of the movement. Following the spread of the meme on 4chan, Pepe the Frog became code for Trump

supporters on Twitter to be poster under political discussions. The last event that fueled the spread of the meme was when Donald Trump retweeted a meme depicting Pepe as him on October 2015 (Nagle, 2017, p.29).

The Alternative Right started to use trolling since the emergence of an online movement called Gamergate which was an “aggressive nature of organized and coordinated trolling.” It was effectively begun because a man wanted to punish his ex-girlfriend by accusing her that she had cheated on him with several men in the video game industry. Its most notable achievement was harassing a large number of progressive figures (mostly women) that led the movement to act as “a catalyst for online anti-feminism and the Alternative Right’s white male identity politics” (Mulhall et al, 2017, pp.20-21).

Kamenetz (2018) reports that the Alt-Right explicitly target young men who play video games. They seek online gamers who play first person-person shooter games, which are multiplayer games, where they must form groups with friends or strangers so they can chat in the game. With digital lines of communication being open, this leaves room for the Alt-Right recruiters to befriend gamers to convince them of their ideology by using a racial slur when communicating with potential target (MacNeil-Kelly, 2020, pp.72-73).

The Alt-Right members can reach many proponents through digital media which is what makes the movement effective through rapid spread of information. Hate speech, harassment, bullying, fake news, and many other forms of propaganda are delivered to more people than ever before through social media. Numerous false and unsourced claims surrounded Clinton such as that she was terminally ill, that she had had FBI agents killed, that she sold weapons to ISIS, that her daughter was stealing money from the Clinton Foundation, that her associate George Soros was an evil foreign (Jewish) overlord who was paying protesters and rigging voting machines. Normally this is all kind of fake news that circulates on the fringes of the internet (Romano, 2016, par.4). However, in 2016, it

extended over the mainstream and many Americans believed these fake news. For example, a man from North Carolina named Edger Maddison Welch shot up a Washington pizzeria. He said he “had been drawn after reading fake online news stories about the *Pizzagate* conspiracy theory,” which falsely said that 2016 Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton was running a pedophilia ring out of the pizzeria (Reuters, 2016, par.1).

Although websites like 4chan, 8chan, Reddit and numerous extremist enclaves have all contributed to the rise of the alt-right. But Twitter was the most public website members of the alt-right, due to its public-facing infrastructure, its celebrity-friendly culture, and the ease with its users interact with the mainstream media and each other. The Alt-Rightists were well known by using Twitter for harassing people online, especially their enemies and who criticize them (Romano, 2017, par.4). The *National Review* writer David French was bombarded with hateful tweets. French said in an interview at *FRECH AIR*, “I began to see images, for example, of my youngest daughter, who we adopted from Ethiopia many years ago... images of her in a gas chamber with a – Donald Trump in an SS uniform about to push the button to kill her. I saw images of her photoshopped or, you know, artist’s rendering of her face in slave fields.” He also said that he was called all manner of unbelievable names such as “cuckservative” which is somebody “who’s been cuckolded by the establishment, by the liberal elite.” He also said that people accused his wife that she cheated on him with black men when he was deployed to Iraq in 2007, 2008. French admitted this was all because he criticized the alt-right group and Donald Trump; he said “I’d always criticized Donald Trump throughout the primary, but I had never received that.” He added that “it was when you began to make the linkage between Donald Trump and the Alt-Right that they really began to get stronger and stronger,” because they are sort

of the online troops of Trump movement, “they are the most aggressive, the most vicious, the most threatening, the most targeted,” French said (Fresh Air, 2016).

Another typical example of a social media campaign instigated by the Alt-Right was the harassment of the comedy actor *Leslie Jones*, which garnered increasing media attention for the alt-right. Following the release of the new *Ghostbusters* movie in July 2016, Milo Yiannopoulos and a number of his followers and members of the Alt-Right community started to abuse Leslie Jones on social media and harassing her with full of sexism, racism, and odious memes as well as threatening her to leave Twitter. Jones started to retweet some of the abusive messages she had received, which led Twitter to respond by banning professional alt-right troll Yiannopoulos from the service. The worst vitriol against Jones ceased for a moment, but returned in late August when her personal website was hacked (Silman, 2016, par.4). The racist harassment and hacking of Jones served, as Aja Romano writes, as “a flashpoint in the Alt-Right’s escalating culture war” (Romano, 2016, par.3). The movement’s problematic relationship with the media was outlined by Chava Gourarie: “if the primary purpose of the Alt-Right is to provoke, then attention is their life force and media attention their fuel” (Gourarie, 2016, par.4).

After the election in November 2016, Twitter started new “anti-harassment tools” and “internet protocols to help users report abuse. But Twitter’s rules and policies were frequently flouted by Donald Trump, whose behavior on the site often fits a pattern of harassment Twitter has banned, which led to many people to interpret these moves, as Aja Romano writes, “as a clear message from Twitter that it was ready to normalize white supremacy.” In addition, twitter has also reinstate Richard Spencer to the site after he was banned, which sparked widespread concern that twitter was giving the alt-right a “larger microphone” than it gained in the election (Romano, 2017, par.6).

### 3.5. The Alt-Right Antifeminism Influence

The Alt-Right's greatest impact may come from its effort to shift the political culture, in which it has helped to revitalize far-right politics in the United States, during Donald Trump presidency, with the skillful use of internet activism and has a receptive ear in Trump's chief strategist Steve Bannon who proclaimed his network, Breitbart News, "the platform of the Alt-Right." However, patriarchal politics is also central to the movement. Several observers have pointed out that the alt-right advocates not just white supremacy, but more specifically "white male supremacy" (Lyons, 2017, par.1).

The Alt-Right is opposed to feminism; they are against the idea that men and women are equal. Author George Hawley explains that "the Alt-Right promotes what it calls 'sex realism'—that men and women have biological differences that make them suited to different social roles" (Hawley, 2017, p.51). Andrew Anglin, who runs the neo-Nazi website the *Daily Stormer* assert that alt-righters believe "in abolishing feminism and reestablishing traditional gender roles in society, a process which would involve sending women back to the home to produce and raise children, largely removing them from the workplace" (Nathan et al, 2018, p.5). Researchers such as Joe Mulhall, David Lawrence and Simon Murdoch asserts that Alt-Righter believe that "feminist inroads into the public sphere have selfishly prioritized women's autonomy over their duties to the family, and has led women to neglect their biological desire to become the "trad wives" of alphas" (Mulhall et al, 2017, p.18).

While the Alt-Right has embraced several prominent females, and many of these women came into the Alt-Right initially as anti-feminists. Journalist Seyward said that these women were "people who felt that the feminist progressive agenda was not serving them," she added, "they felt like they wanted more traditional things: home, family, etc" (Darby, 2017, par.5). One of those women was Lana Lokteff, a Russian-American from

Oregon who co-runs Red Ice, an alt-right media company, with her Swedish husband, Henrik Palmgren. Lokteff influences and motivates women who hear her messages through the digital medium of video and YouTube to join white race movement. Lokteff believes that man is the vehicle through which wives and conservative women will feel empowered. She also encourages early marriage because then women can really focus on themselves as their stories have already conquered the “marriage plot” (Salice 2019, pp.13-15).

In its continued evolution, the Alt-Right has strengthened its antifeminist positions. For example, researchers note crossover with online antifeminism communities dubbed the manosphere (Ging 2017, p.640). Like the term Alt-Right, the term manosphere has no consistently clear definition, but often describes misogynist ideologies present on many of the same sites used by the Alt-Right like 4chan, Twitter, and Reddit and among others (Ging, 2017, p.641). The manosphere includes communities such as pick-up artists (men who treat romantic seduction as a skill that can be learned and perfected), incels (involuntarily celibate men who blame women for their inability to find romantic partners), men’s rights movements, fathers’ rights movements, and other antifeminist philosophies (Ging, 2017, p.644).

On the other hand, the men of the Alternative Right often treat women as tools or currency in an economy of honor. It is worth remembering that the blizzard of abuse, including rape and death threats, hurled at women (Mulhall et al, 2017, p.19). In 2014, as an example, a monospherian man and a member of the Alt-Right movement, Elliot Rodger, killed six and wounded 14 in a shooting spree in Santa Barbara, California. He justified his actions as retaliation against women for refusing to not sleep with him. This man has become a hero to many incels; the Toronto perpetrator praised him as the “Supreme Gentleman” (Beauchamp, 2018, par.1).

The central rallying point of the Alternative Right was Donald Trump. The revelations of Trump's sexist comments and his bragging about grabbing women's genitals only helped forge stronger ties between the racist and sexist wings of the alt-right. After the bombshell revelation of the Access Hollywood tape, Spencer said it was "ridiculous" and "puritanical" to call Trump's behavior sexual assault, adding, "At some part of every woman's soul, they want to be taken by a strong man" (Drum, 2016, par.2).

### **3.6. The Consequences "Unite the Right" Rally**

In recent years, officials in Charlottesville have been reevaluating public displays of Confederacy. In May 2016, the city passed a resolution forming the Blue Ribbon Commission on Race, Memorials, and Public Spaces. In February 2017, the Charlottesville City Council voted to remove a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee from Lee Park in downtown Charlottesville. In June 2017, the City Council voted to rename Lee Park to Emancipation Park (Baker et al, 2017, p.4). According to Hunton and Williams, this statue was to some members a symbol of "discrimination" and "violence". To others, it was a "proud symbol of history from which we must learn, not ignore" (Heaphy, 2017, p.1).

In May 2017, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) reported that Richard Spencer, a leader in the white nationalist movement and a University of Virginia graduate, led several dozen torch-wielding protesters in a demonstration in downtown Charlottesville against removal of the statue. Protesters were carrying flags and chanting Nazi slogans such as "blood and soil" and "you will not replace us" (Heaphy, 2017, p.1). The IACP reported that "The protest lasted approximately 10 minutes until local police dispersed the crowd" (Baker, 2017, p.4). However, several speakers addressed the crowd at these events, suggesting that Charlottesville's attempt to remove the civil war statue was part of a broader war against white people and their heritage (Heaphy, 2017, p.1).

On July 8, 2017, the Ku Klux Klan held a rally in downtown Charlottesville protesting the city's decision to remove Lee's statue. "The event included approximately 30 Klansmen and 1,000 counter protesters." Police response to this event, which included officers from multiple jurisdictions, resulted in "more than 20 arrests and was criticized by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) as being overly aggressive and militaristic" (Baker et al, 2017, p.4).

On 11 and 12 August, 2017 the "Unite the Right" rally occurred in the Emancipation Park in Charlottesville, Virginia. This was one of largest, most violent gathering in the United States in decades. The rally brought together various racist, anti-Semitic, white nationalist, and white supremacist groups and most them were very young and almost all were men, including the Alt-Right, neo-Nazis, and the Ku Klux Klan. The rally was organized by Jason Kessler, a president of Unity and Security for America, and Nathan Damigo, including notable attendees, Richard Spencer and David Duke, former KKK Imperial Wizard. Kessler claimed the rally's goal was to save the statue of the Confederate general Robert E. Lee. During the rally, hundreds of people came to Charlottesville to march and show their anti-Semitic views. Protesters chanted "you will not replace us," "Jews will not replace us," and "blood and soil," directly echoing the chants and slogans used in Nazi Germany. Many brought full battle gear, including torches, weapons, shields, and flags with Nazi or Confederate insignia. Many openly gave the Nazi salutes during the marches (Peters 2017, par.2-3).

The event resulted in documented violence between protesters and counter protesters. After the declaration of an unlawful demonstration and the subsequent clearing of the park and surrounding areas. Patrik Hermansson, a Swedish young anti-racist activist who went undercover inside the alt-right for *Hope Not Hate*, found himself at the center of an angry protest when the gathering was declared unlawful, "as soon as I left the park a

counter-protestor jumped in front of me and sprayed me full in the face with mac. Thankfully I was wearing sunglasses so my eyes were spared, but the rest of my face and arms began to burn,” Hermansson says. After a walk to another venue outside the city, it was time for some rest, “after returning to my hotel to clean up, I headed out once more to the streets, thinking the day’s event were over.” That’s when a car drove into the crowd killing one woman, Heather Heyer, and 35 others were injured (Mulhall et al 2017, p.69). The events of that day became more tragic when a VSP helicopter assigned to the event suffered a mechanical failure and crashed, killing two troopers inside (Heaphy, 2017, p.7).

After the Charlottesville rally, various media outlets announced that “white nationalists are winning” (Serwer 2018, par.6) and “the genie is out of the bottle” (Hughes 2018, par.6). The president Trump has also pointed in a combative exchange with reporters at Trump Tower in Manhattan, that there was “blame on both sides” which prompted the suggestion that his claims “reinvigorated” the Alt-Right movement (Shear & Haberman 2018, par.3). In addition, many reports also noted that white nationalists have entered the mainstream conversation and some say they were aided in doing so by Trump administration (Atkinson, 2018, p.310).

### **3.7. Conclusion**

The Alt-Right movement has gained attention and support throughout Trump’s election and particularly through his appointment of Steve Bannon, the former head of Alt-Right-friendly Breitbart News, to be the chief executive officer of his 2016 presidential campaign. The movement has also succeeded to have an impact on the mainstream media like Twitter, 4chan and many others, where Alt-Right members post memes, fake news and conspiracy theories to attack their opponents, people of color and women. Moreover, following the violent rally in Charlottesville, the Alt-Right received significant attention in the media and public discourse because of its deadly and violent events.

## General Conclusion

This thesis has examined the Alt-Right movement and its ideological power in the United States. Following a historical approach, the research has discovered the origins and the development of this movement in recent years, as well as, its aims and impacts on both social and political arena. Within that, the research found out that The Alt-Right is a contemporary white supremacist movement that does contain trace elements of historical white supremacist movements such as the Ku Klux Klan, the National Alliance, the American Nazi Party and the Council of Conservative Citizens. But initially it was more closely linked to the alternative conservative movement such as paleoconservatism and foreign anti-immigrant movements such as the European New Right and European identitarianism. There were also links between the American Libertarian movement and the Alt-Right, many senior alt-rightists considered themselves libertarians, as well as some but not all Alt-Rightists are neo-Nazis, who identify directly with Adolf Hitler's genocidal ideology.

The term Alternative Right has its roots in 2008 speech by paleoconservative Paul Gottfried and the neo-Nazi Richard Spencer picked up the term and began using it in online magazines, such as the *American Renaissance*, *Counter-Currents Publishing* and *VDare.com*, to represent ideals counter to traditional conservatism. Although some references were of white identity, white nationalism, others referred to libertarian and paleoconservative. Alt-Right articles were written intellectually defending white nationalist ideals without the hate and vitriol of older movements. While the term Alt-Right faded from prominence in 2013, after Spencer shut down the Alternative Right webzine which was launched in 2010 under his leadership.

In 2015, the term Alt-Right started to revive on websites like 4chan, Twitter and Reddit and began to even grow in popularity. This version of the movement was

represented by a group of youth, Millennial and ‘Z’ generations, on social media and it became anonymous using trolling that was prominent on internet sites such as 4chan and freely exchanging offensive memes with each other and encouraging followers to create their own spins. The Alt-Right attempts to push its memes into public discourse, create controversy, and thus invite mainstream attention that can draw in disaffected individuals. It also famous by creating conspiracy theories, fake news and using insults, bigotry, and inflammatory rhetoric to harass their enemies, and attack people of color, immigrants and women.

Though the term Alt-Right was coined in 2008, it did not gain national prominence until the 2016 presidential election. At the time, presidential-candidate Donald Trump’s hardline rhetoric on immigration fell in line with Alt-Right beliefs. Because of the Alt-Right online nature, it is able to punch its weight in the political and social arena because it is good at using the internet. Alt-Right members began to support Trump and encourage people to vote for him through online sites such as *VDare*, *AltRight.com*, *Radix Journal* and many others. The Alt-Right also has made ties with Steve Bannon’s time as executive chairman of *Breitbart* news, turning the right-wing news site into the platform of the Alt-Right.

As a result of this the Alt-Right was mentioned for the first time by Hilary Clinton as the emerging racist ideology, the radical fringe that takes over the Republican Party. She also has tied Trump to the movement after he hired Bannon to the chief executive officer of his 2016 presidential campaign in the administration. Since then the alt-right movement has gained significant exposure in the mainstream media. The movement has also caused a stir on the mainstream media after the violence of Charlottesville rally on August 12, 2017, where self-identified white-supremacist James Alex Fields Jr. drove his car on peaceful counter protestors of the “Unite the Right” rally, killing one and injuring 28 people. Many

media outlets have announced that white nationalists are winning and have entered the mainstream conversation.

Despite that Alt-Right made a large prominent during and after the election of Donald Trump, it declined after the deadly events of “Unite the Right” rally. However, it may appear again or may merge with other ideologies or subcultures to produce an even more dangerous movement in the United States.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Trolling

The Alternative Right relied on using the trolling (the act of being deliberately offensive or provocative online with the aim provoking a hostile, negative, outraged reaction). Purportedly, the actual use of the term "troll" dates back to the 80s with the practice of flaming (Mulhall 2017, p.) The first recorded use of the term 'trolling' came in 1992, when someone wrote on the alt-folklore-urban board the statement 'Maybe after I post it, we could go trolling some more and see what happens' (Feinberg, 2014, par.4). The term first referred to minor pranks, such as speaking admiringly of the 'para-homosexuality' found in American fraternities in the hopes of upsetting many people (Brown, 2016, par.2). In time, individuals who engaged in trolling began to connect with each other on message boards, in particular the Usenet group alt-tasteless as well as 4chan's /b/ board, and the character of trolling changed. Rather than simply posting statements to get a response, actions became more extreme (Brown, 2016, par.3).

As trolling developed, more collaboration became possible. 4chan's /b/ message board, which allows for the posting of anything save that which is explicitly illegal (like child pornography), is responsible for numerous well-known acts of trolling carried out by many individuals at the same time. Examples include getting a swastika to appear on Google's hot trends chart, hacking Sarah Palin's email during her vice-presidential run, fabricating the death of Steve Jobs, and allegedly telling Justin Bieber fans to slit their own wrists to support the singer. Fernando Alfonso III says, '[4chan's] influence is vastly understated in the media because 4chan is known as the place for misogyny, racism and pedophilia. Because of this dark side of the site, its influence often gets shrugged off by the mainstream media' (Suber-Jenkins, 2016). Drawing from 4chan, similar communities have

sprung up on sites like 8chan, Reddit, Voat, and Gab. Their tactics are now commonplace on mainstream platforms like Facebook and Twitter (Mulhall 2017, p.20).

The Alt-Right members began to use trolling for a political purpose, encourage discord and receive attention from out-group. They spread their trolling to a variety of sites such as 4chan, and to mainstream social media and online newspaper comment sections, infusing ideas into popular discourse beyond the reach of their standard platforms (Hawley, 2018, p.108,26).

### **Appendix B: The Alt-Right and the Usage of Memes**

The term meme coined by the British biologist Richard Dawkins in 1976 to describe how ideas spread from a person to person within a culture, with a given meme acting as a “unit of cultural transmission” (Dawkins, 1967, p.249). Nowadays, the word represents a concept; image, text, song, hashtag, among others, that expands virally through social media and encourages creative people to add their unique touch on the specific concept (Greene, 2019, p.69).

Memes play big part in Alt-Right movement. These images and slogans comprise not only an attempt, but a successful attempt, to formulate a new culture for Alt-Rightists (Anglin, 2016, par.15).

I will give a list of examples of memes which used by the Alt-Right members.

#### **a. Pep the Frog**

The Alt-Right branded a popular online cartoon frog named Pepe as their mascot. The meme that launched a thousand twitter blocks. A cartoon smiling frog created innocuously by comic artist Matt Furie, (see **Figure 1**) (Mulhall et al, 2017, p.26). Pepe soon became the defacto alt-right logo, spread virally through Alt-Right Twitter pages; many Alt-Righters used frog emojis in their Twitter profiles. After Hillary Clinton made a comment about Donald Trump supporters being “deplorables” in the height of the 2016 presidential

election, the Alt-Right altered the poster for the movie The Expendables to show Trump and his advisors, featuring Pepe (see **Figure 2**) (Roy, 2016, par.6)



**Figure 1.** Pepe the Frog. Antonia Cundy, “Is Pepe the Frog really a hate symbole?”

November 2, 2016, <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/world/pepe-the-frog-hate-symbol-alt-right-donald-trump>



**Figure 2.** Alt-Right meme shared by Donald Trump Jr, “A friend send me this. Aparantly I made the cut as one of the Deplorables...” Instagram, September 10, 2016,

<http://www.instagram.com/p/BKMtdN5Bam5/>.



**Figure 3.** Mr Trump re-tweeted a caricature depicting him as Pepe. BBC News, “You Can't Stump the Trump,” October 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-39843468>

#### **b. Red Pill**

The Redpill is a “metaphore” taken from the 1999 movie *The Matrix*. Just as taking the red pill allows Neo to leave the fantasy world of his current reality and enter the true, unpleasant reality of the matrix, the alt-right believes that the majority of Americans—“normies”—live in a fantasy world filled with progressive myths; being red pillled awakens one to inconvenient realities. It was used by the Alternative Right to refer to “the process of someone awakening to the truth of some aspect of reality” (Hawley, 2018, p.83, Mulhall et al, 2017, p.26). (See **Figure 4**).



**Figure 4.** [u/HonkinMargz](#), “Red Pill memes are always so cringy. The fact that the right just embraced the whole narrative from incel forums and uses it unironically is bizarre,” Reddit, 2020,

[https://www.reddit.com/r/TheRightCantMeme/comments/hahpev/red\\_pill\\_memes\\_are\\_always\\_so\\_cringey\\_the\\_fact/](https://www.reddit.com/r/TheRightCantMeme/comments/hahpev/red_pill_memes_are_always_so_cringey_the_fact/)

### c. Happy Merchant

The Happy Merchant is an anti-Semitic meme depicting a drawing Jewish man rubbing his hands together and smiling. The image was drawn by a racist cartoonist who used the pseudonym “A. Wyatt Mann,” exposed in 2015 as actually being artist Nick Bougas (Mulhall et al, 2017, p.27). It is used for the purpose of dehumanizing the Jew as a type of evil monster, rather than a human being. It became the most popular memes on both 4chan and Gab, two major outlets for Alt-Right expression (Anglin, 2016, par.20) (see **Figure 5**)



**Figure 5.** “Le Happy Merchant Meme,” PNGitem, accessed in June 9, 2021,

[https://www.google.com/search?q=the+happy+merchant&sxsrf=ALeKk02SIMcD6GhhzkdJNBzxEohX8OTyQ:1623263538129&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj6j8T0l4vxAhXQQEEAHZdpBUcQ\\_AUoAXoECAIQAw&biw=931&bih=364#imgsrc=VfhChK38oB0bnM&imgdii=HBWB89mQyn6PCM](https://www.google.com/search?q=the+happy+merchant&sxsrf=ALeKk02SIMcD6GhhzkdJNBzxEohX8OTyQ:1623263538129&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj6j8T0l4vxAhXQQEEAHZdpBUcQ_AUoAXoECAIQAw&biw=931&bih=364#imgsrc=VfhChK38oB0bnM&imgdii=HBWB89mQyn6PCM)

## Appendix B: Breitbart news

Figure 6 shows a screenshot of Breitbart news website talking about Alt-Right movement



Figure 6. “NPR: Breitbart ‘Famous for Fake News,’ Bannon ‘Created’ Alt-Right,”

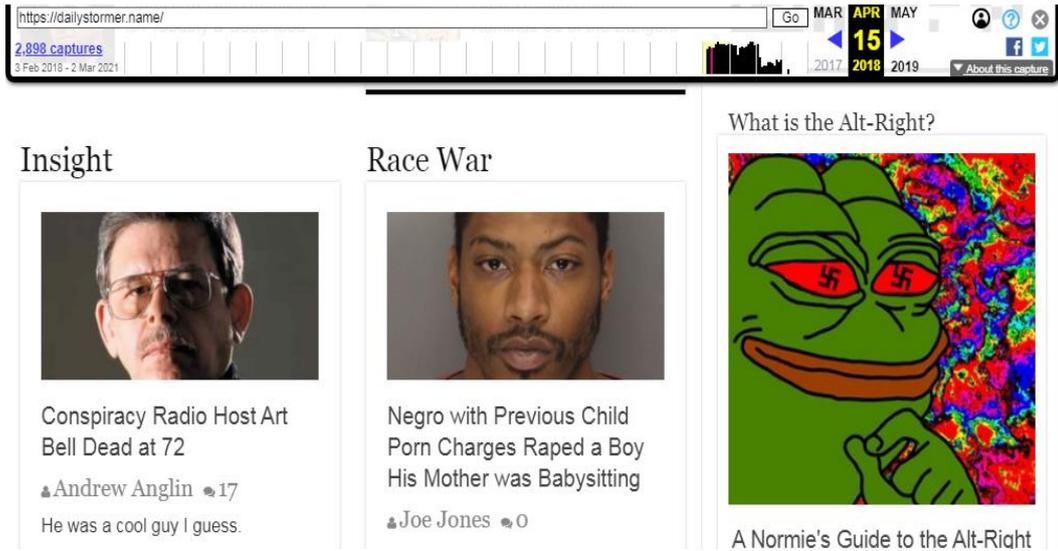
accessed in July 5, 2021,

## Appendix D: The Daily Stormer

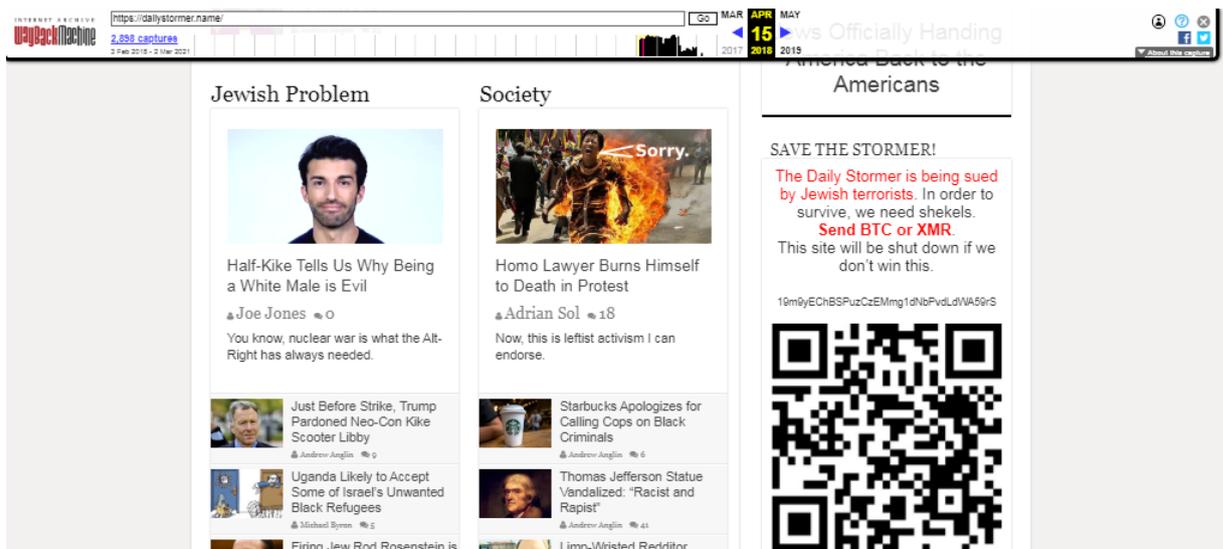
The website *dailystormer.com* is an American far-right, neo-Nazi, white supremacist, misogynist, and Holocaust denial commentary and message board website. It was created by Andrew Anglin in July 4, 2013. Anglin considers his website as a part of the Alt-Right. This website represents the vulgar, harshly racist (especially anti-black) and anti-Semitic aspects of the alt-right. Andrew Anglin is heavily involved with this website, often writing blogs and the use of internet memes, which have been linked to the imageboard 4chan (“The Daily Stormer” par.1). The Southern Poverty Law Centre explains that “the Daily Stormer is dedicated to spreading anti-Semitism, neo-Nazism, and

white nationalism, primarily through guttural hyperbole and epithet-laden stories about topics like alleged Jewish world control and black-on-white crime” (“The Daily Stormer” 2018, par.1).

**Figure 7** and **8** demonstrates a screenshot of the Daily Stormer’s vulgar sections and aggressive racism, anti-Semitism and sexism.



**Figure 7.** <https://web.archive.org/web/20180415151142/https://dailystormer.name/> accessed in June 9, 2021.



**Figure 8.** <https://web.archive.org/web/20180415151142/https://dailystormer.name/> June 9, 2021

## **Appendix E: 4chan**

4chan is a famous image-based discussion board launched in 2003. A user, the “original poster” (OP) creates a new thread by posting a message, with an image attached, to a board with particular topic. Other users can also post in the thread, with or without images. 4chan features 76 boards, split into 7 categories, e.g. Video Games (8 boards), Japanese Culture (10 boards) and Adult (13 boards). Most popular boards are Politically Incorrect or (/pol/) board, as well as /sp/ (sports), /int/ (International), and /sci/ (Science) boards, etc. 4chan allows users to post anonymously, though some boards assign an id to users to prevent what is known as sock puppeteering, or pretending to argue with oneself to prove a point. Each board can enable a function that allows a flag to be posted based on the IP address of the user. This flag can provide context for users about from where users are posting from. However, these can be manipulated through the use of VPNs, and users are well aware of this capability (Hine et al, 2017, p.2).

Alt-Right activity on 4chan is largely confined to Politically Incorrect board or /pol/. Within /pol/ there is a strong consensus among users toward far-right ideas, the users agree generally on ideas such as white supremacy, ethno-nationalism, and conspiracy theories about ideas of “white genocide” (Elley, 2021, p.2).

