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Introduction

The Where and When of Radicalization

On August 3, 2019, Americans went to bed grieving a white-supremacist mass shooting that killed twenty-two people in El Paso, Texas. The next day, we awoke to the news of another mass shooting in Dayton, Ohio, which left ten dead. Although the ideological motive for the Dayton shooting would turn out to be muddled, its timing—so quickly on the heels of El Paso—helped boost the global far right anyway. Within hours of the shootings, extremists were celebrating on social media with phrases like "it's happening!" and "the fire rises!"[1]

These shootings came nearly two years after the world was stunned by scenes from the University of Virginia showing scores of white men in polo shirts marching across campus, bearing flaming tiki torches and chanting "white lives matter" and "Jews will not replace us." The following afternoon, the governor of Virginia declared a state of emergency in response to the violence at the Unite the Right rally, downtown. Shortly thereafter, a twenty-two-year-old neo-Nazi drove his car into a crowd of counterprotesters, injuring at least nineteen people and killing thirty-two-year-old Heather Heyer.[2] All of this came on the heels of an increase in violent hate crimes. Dylann Roof had recently received a death penalty sentence for murdering nine African American worshippers in a South Carolina church, amid a wave of hate incidents in schools, college campuses, and public places across the country. In short, the events at Charlottesville catapulted the modern far right into the public eye and helped cement a growing realization: white-supremacist and far-right movements were unquestionably on the rise in the United States.

In the months that followed, a steady stream of hate confirmed that Charlottesville was not an exception. In 2018, the number of hate groups

in the United States reached an all-time high, with white-nationalist groups alone experiencing a nearly 50 percent increase.[3] That same year, right-wing extremists killed at least fifty people in the United States, outnumbering all other terrorist- and extremist-related deaths.[4] Meanwhile, hate incidents have surged in local communities nationwide, with thousands of incidents of swastikas, nooses, white-supremacist fliers, and hate crimes reported across the country, from synagogue shootings in Pittsburgh and Poway, California, to arson attacks on Black churches in the south. In spring 2019, a private militia self-deployed to the US-Mexican border and—under no authority from the US government—began illegally holding migrants and turning them over to US immigration authorities.[5] Combined with global developments like the March 2019 right-wing terror attack on two mosques in New Zealand, which killed fifty-one worshippers, these trends have spurred an increase in attention to the far right. Ordinary Americans along with journalists, policy makers, and scholars alike have scrambled to answer several key questions: What is driving growth in the contemporary far right? Why do people join far-right movements? How should communities respond when far-right propaganda or violence occurs?

Most attempts to answer these questions have focused on two broad categories of explanation, examining either far-right groups or the individuals who join those groups. We might think of these as "top–down" and "bottom–up" approaches. Top–down approaches generally focus on groups, organizations, and broad social structural issues like economic changes, globalization, demographic shifts, and the impact of new media technologies. Scholarship on groups and organizations, for example, looks at the strategies and tactics of formal extremist organizations in their messaging, recruitment techniques, and radicalization efforts. Researchers have studied the varied ways that groups communicate extremist messages and ideology; how they recruit, radicalize, and plan violence; and whether and how banning groups from social media or financial platforms can constrain their growth or impact. Sometimes these are referred to as the "supply-side" aspects of extremism: how top–down messaging and structural or organizational

dynamics among extremist groups shape patterns of radicalization and terrorist violence.

Studies of individuals, on the other hand, focus from the "bottom up"—on ways that individuals can be drawn into extremist groups and movements. This is referred to as the "demand-side" aspect of radicalization toward extremist violence. Research on individuals usually focuses on vulnerabilities that might make people more receptive to extreme ideas, including individual psychological and personality traits, personal and early childhood trauma, exposure to violence, and a variety of cognitive aspects of radicalization—in other words, what is happening inside people's heads. This includes research on the emotional and intellectual aspects of radicalization, such as the role of individual grievances related to perceived marginalization, disenfranchisement, or relative inequality; a sense of betrayal, anger, and shame; exposure to violence; or the desire for belonging, meaning, purpose, and engagement. Scholarship on individual vulnerabilities has been key to helping understand both what drives individuals to the far right as well as what kinds of de-radicalization interventions might work to draw them away.

This book takes a different approach. In addition to focusing on the *why* and *how* of far-right radicalization and growth, I suggest we should be asking *where* and *when* radicalization happens. Where do people encounter extremist messages in their day-to-day lives? What are the new spaces and places of contemporary far-right extremism? Answering these questions requires looking closely at the physical and virtual scenes, the imagined territories and sacred geographies, and the cultural spaces where hate is cultivated. By asking where and when radicalization happens, we shift the lens to people's ordinary and everyday encounters with radicalization messages—or what I call new gateways where people can be radicalized toward far-right ideologies and actions. This includes, for example, cultural spaces like far-right coffee shops, pop and country music, clothing brands, fight and fitness clubs and the mixed martial arts (MMA) scene, schools and college campuses, social media and online spaces, clubs and soccer stadiums, and spaces and places specific to microcommunities that overlap with far-right-extremist groups, from evangelical churches to doomsday prepper

communities and gun shows. It also includes imagined or symbolic spaces like the "American heartland" and national homelands—geographic ideas reconceived in racist and exclusionary ways by the far right, as white spaces that need to be protected from incursions, invasions, and being overrun.

By de-emphasizing formal social and political movements and far-right individuals and focusing instead on where extremism is concentrated, *Hate in the Homeland* offers a new lens with which to examine individuals' experiences with extremism. It focuses on the kinds of places where young people in particular may encounter extremist messages and ideas in their ordinary lives—perhaps long before they have made an ideological commitment to the far right—and the role that these new, mainstream gateways may play in shaping extremist engagement. Before we can even begin to address these questions, though, it is important to be clear about just what the "far right" means, and how it should be understood in its modern form.

What Is the Far Right?

In order to fully understand the far right, we have to look at four separate but overlapping categories: antigovernment and antidemocratic practices and ideals, exclusionary beliefs, existential threats and conspiracies, and apocalyptic fantasies.

Antigovernment and Antidemocratic Practices and Ideals

Far-right ideas run fundamentally counter to the norms, values, and beliefs that underpin democratic practice across the globe, threatening hallmarks like free and fair elections; systems of checks and balances; the protection of individual freedom; the rule of law; and freedoms of the press, religion, speech, and assembly.[6] Far-right movements pose a challenge because they seek to undermine one or more of these key features, challenging how rulers are elected (by promoting authoritarianism, for example) or seeking to loosen the limits placed on rulers

once in office—and thereby reducing the protections guaranteed to the people against unjust rule.[7]

Some far-right groups and movements seek to undermine democracy globally, through extreme actions that include disinformation campaigns, election interference, attacks on freedom of the press, violating the constitutional protection of minority rights, or using violence and terrorism to achieve political goals. Others engage in radical actions that promote authoritarianism, seek to undermine the free movement of people, advocate for restrictions on rights, challenge principles of equality and egalitarian liberty, and interfere with the functioning and rule of democratic states. The goals of the extreme far right lead to nondemocratic ends, typically around the establishment of white ethno-states, the re-migration and deportation of nonwhites or non-Europeans, and the reduction of rights for ethnic minorities.

Historically, the far right has worked actively against mainstream governments, but in recent years, there has been a tactical shift toward trying to undermine governance from within. In the United States, where the political system does not allow for smaller or third parties to engage seriously in mainstream politics, far-right groups have encouraged members to run on Republican platforms and have worked to get far-right anti-immigration platforms onto mainstream political agendas.[8] In Europe, far-right movements have taken a different approach, running for office and winning parliamentary seats in nearly every European country. More importantly, as mainstreaming strategies and tactics have become more effective all around the globe, they have forced issues and ideals of the far right into the mainstream. For their part, established conservative political parties have fought to retain the voters to whom far-right arguments and policies appeal. This has made it harder and more confusing for the public to distinguish between groups that once reflected the extreme fringe from those who are in the mainstream conservative right. Some far-right groups are explicitly antigovernment, antiauthority, or intentionally separate from mainstream society, organizing themselves into patriot militias, sovereign citizen groups, paramilitaries, and doomsday prepper groups. But the election of Donald Trump shows how a candidate running on a mainstream political platform can be

successful by capitalizing on the appeal of anti-elite and antigovernment arguments, most clearly expressed in his promise to "drain the swamp" of the current government.

In sum, the far right is a fluid spectrum of groups and individuals who represent more extreme and less extreme versions of the antidemocratic and illiberal ideals, practices, and beliefs described above. Some far-right ideas have bled into the mainstream, and mainstream politicians, pundits, and media platforms also reinforce, validate, and legitimize far-right ideas. This is clearest in the adoption of exclusionary and dehumanizing language, which is at the core of far-right ideology.

Exclusionary and Dehumanizing Ideologies

Far-right ideologies are hierarchical and exclusionary. They establish clear lines of superiority and inferiority according to race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, religion, and sexuality. This includes a range of racist, anti-immigrant, nativist, nationalist, white-supremacist, anti-Islam, anti-Semitic, and anti-LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and others) beliefs. At their extreme, these are ideologies that dehumanize groups of people who are deemed to be inferior, in ways that have justified generations of violence in such forms as white supremacy, patriarchy, Christian supremacy, and compulsory heterosexuality. These kinds of ideologies have imbued individuals from the dominant groups with a sense of perceived superiority over others: slaves, nonwhites, women, non-Christians, or the LGBTQ+ community.

Dehumanization refers to language and beliefs that position entire groups of people as subhuman or less than human. It rests on the unconscious belief that while some groups of beings appear fully human, "beneath the surface, where it really counts, they aren't human at all."[9] Such beliefs are what allow individuals to imagine other people as subhuman animals who "have the essence of creatures that elicit negative responses, such as disgust, fear, hatred, and contempt, and are usually thought of as predators, unclean animals, or prey."[10] Sometimes this belief is expressed explicitly, such as the Nazi labeling of Jews as *Untermenschen* (subhumans), but often it is evoked through the use of

metaphors like rats, wolves, cockroaches, vermin, and snakes, or with language that evokes those animals—such as references to immigrant infestations, invasions, swarms, "shithole" countries, or being overrun. It also comes across in language that equates immigrants from particular regions or countries as rapists or criminals, or positions Muslims or Islam as an existential threat to European or Western civilization.

While dehumanization is often cited as a foundational aspect of exclusionary far-right ideologies, it is also important to acknowledge the counterargument made by philosopher Kate Manne in her analysis of misogyny. Manne argues that dehumanization cannot entirely account for the kinds of brutal mistreatment that human beings are capable of enacting toward one another. Instead, she suggests, "the mistreatment of historically subordinated people who are perceived as threatening the status quo often needs no special psychological story, such as dehumanization, to account for it." Rather, "people may know full well that those they treat in brutally degrading and inhumane ways are fellow human beings," despite the horrific violence they may perpetrate against them. Manne argues that the notion of aggrieved entitlement holds more explanatory value—the idea that dominant groups are being surpassed by individuals from groups they deem beneath them in social status, taking jobs or positions to which they believe they are entitled.[11]

Whether rooted in dehumanization or aggrieved entitlement, white supremacism in the United States has been the primary—although not the only—form of exclusionary ideology, and is therefore especially key to understanding the American far right. Racist ideas coalesced into a fully fledged ideology sometime around the 1830s, initially oriented around the defense of slavery but eventually fixated on opposition to equality for African Americans.[12] Uniquely American variations on white supremacy emerged over time, including Christian-identity groups who believe whites are God's chosen people, white-supremacist prison gangs like the Aryan Brotherhood, and groups inspired by overseas ideologies, including neo-Nazis and racist skinheads. The so-called "alt right" and "alt lite" that emerged in the 2010s are the latest American innovation in the white-supremacist scene.[13]

At their core, then, all far-right ideological beliefs share exclusionary, hierarchical, and dehumanizing ideals that prioritize and seek to preserve the superiority and dominance of some groups over others. Modern far-right groups will often use suggestive or coded language that implies exclusionary beliefs rather than espousing them directly. The rapidly growing Identitarian movement, for example, uses euphemisms like "European heritage" or "European descent" to talk about whiteness. Racist and white-supremacist ideas are not the only entry point to the far right. Far-right groups focused on other themes—like antiabortion extremists—can also become gateways to white-supremacist extremism, in part because of the considerable overlap among groups in online spaces. For example, incel (involuntary celibate) and men's rights groups—often referred to in online spaces as the "manosphere"—espouse misogynistic beliefs that sometimes overlap with white-supremacist and racist ideologies. In fall 2019, for example, the neo-Nazi Andrew Anglin referred to himself as the "self-appointed spiritual successor to Elliot Rodger" in a caption under a photo of the female founder of the Institute for Research on Male Supremacism.[14] Rodger is the name of a 2014 Isla Vista, California, shooter who murdered six people after becoming radicalized as an incel. He was initially labeled a "misfit" whose mental health and personality problems led him to lash out in anger at women for rejecting him and at men who were more successful at dating.[15] But after a 2018 Toronto van attack inspired in part by Rodger killed ten people, along with other incel-inspired mass violence such as a shooting in a Florida yoga studio, closer analysis of Rodger's manifesto revealed that his misogynistic views were strongly laced with racist and white-supremacist beliefs as well. The fact that Rodger has now been lauded by a neo-Nazi on his prominent far-right website is just one more illustration of the overlaps among misogynistic incel movements and the far right. This also confirms the potential for groups in one part of the far-right spectrum—such as incels—to act as gateways for other parts of the spectrum.

A common focal point for exclusionary ideologies is the issue of immigration and demographic change. In Europe and the United States, native and white populations are aging out of the majority, while

nonwhite and immigrant-origin populations are growing. In the United States, the country is projected to be minority white by the year 2045.[16] These trends are used by far-right groups to mobilize followers around themes of white identity and the need for its protection and defense. The clearest example, of course, is in the conspirational narrative about a great replacement.

Existential Demographic Threats and Dystopian Conspiracy Theories

The extreme far right not only expresses exclusionary and dehumanizing ideologies, but also embeds those ideologies within a framework of existential threat to the dominant group—such as white people, men, Europeans, Americans, or Christians. In its suggestive form, this sense of existential threat appears in language about the need to defend or protect the country, the homeland, or the dominant people from immigration or demographic change. In its most extreme iterations, far-right extremists rely on three overlapping dystopian fantasy theories: the "great replacement" (used globally), white genocide (used predominantly in the United States), and "Eurabia" (used primarily in Europe). They are dystopian because they imagine a frightening future of decline, degradation, or chaos. All three theories emphasize the need to preserve and defend whiteness against an invasion of immigrants, Muslims, or Jews who will eradicate or replace white nationals, Christians, Americans, or Europeans. These fantasies rely on a sense of white victimhood and are frequently tied to emotional appeals to protect, defend, and take heroic action to restore sacred national space, territory, and homelands.

The "great replacement" is currently the leading far-right conspiracy theory of demographic change. It argues that there is an intentional, global plan orchestrated by national and global elites to replace white, Christian, European populations with nonwhite, non-Christian ones.[17] The term was coined by French scholar Renaud Camus in 2011 and was quickly taken up globally by white supremacists, for whom the theory now provides a single, overarching framework for ideas that had already

been percolating for years in more disparate ways. Decades before Camus wrote *Le Grand Remplacement*, the American neo-Nazi David Lane had already popularized the idea of "white genocide," arguing that white populations were dying out demographically due to immigration, abortion, and violence against whites. Lane's famous "14 Words"—"We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children"—is a call to defend whites against genocide,[18] and the term, or even just the number fourteen, became a global mantra for white supremacists and pan-Aryans, frequently paired with the number eighty-eight (for the eighth letter of the alphabet, "H," making "HH," or Heil Hitler). In the American case, the idea of a "great replacement" is underlaid with anti-Semitism and linked to a broader conspiracy theory that suggests that an organized international group of Jewish elites is deliberately funding or otherwise supporting migration in an intentional effort to create multicultural societies.

While Lane was busy peddling anti-Semitic conspiracy theories about white genocide in the United States, a parallel theory of demographic replacement emerged in Europe. Coined by the British author Bat Ye'or and published in 2005 in a book of the same name, the concept of "Eurabia" suggests that Muslims are deliberately working to replace white Europeans through immigration and high birthrates in order to broaden the territory of the Caliphate. Ye'or argues that this will create a territorial space in which white Europeans are subject to Sharia law and Islamic rule, forced to convert to Islam or surrender into subservient roles.[19] The end result, described as Eurabia, is a Europe that has been converted from a white, Christian civilization to an Islamic one.[20] Eurabia is clearly a motivating concept for violent extremists, most notably discussed in the manifesto of the Norwegian terrorist who murdered seventy-seven people—mostly children—in Oslo in 2011. But Eurabia was also invoked in a 2019 advertising campaign for Germany's Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD) party, which used Jean-Léon Gérôme's 1866 *The Slave Market* painting, depicting a naked white women having her teeth and mouth probed by a turban-clad Arab man. In a billboard-size poster, *The Slave Market* image

is overlaid with text urging voters to learn from history and vote for the AfD "so that Europe does not become Eurabia."[21]

Together, the great replacement, Eurabia, and white-genocide theories have helped to inspire a sense of shared mission among the global far right, who see themselves as facing a common demographic threat. But what has changed in recent years is that we are closer to the demographic changes that underpin replacement and genocide conspiracy theories. It is well documented that whites in the United States will be an ethnic plurality—the largest group in a nation with no ethnic majority—in a couple of decades. National political leaders regularly frame this demographic reality as a threat and a problem, which reinforces and legitimizes white supremacists' fears and sense of urgency. The neo-Nazi Matthew Heimbach summed this up in a recent conversation with journalist Vegas Tenold:

> The majority of births in this country aren't European American. There's no way to stop this thing, even if you were to ban all immigration. Whites will be the minority in twenty-five years, and people are beginning to see it now, but more importantly they are starting to feel it. Nobody wants to be a minority. Being a minority fucking sucks. Look at how we've treated black people. Don't for a second think that they'll treat us any better, which is why people are starting to realize that we need to think racially.[22]

Conspiracies like the great replacement and mottos like "14 Words" are used to inspire anger, resentment, and hate, coupled with fear of existential danger and a sense of betrayal and backlash against those elites who are deemed responsible. But existential threats and dystopian fantasies can also be used to call for cohesion, shared purpose, and meaning. They can offer a sense of belonging, brotherhood, and the opportunity to engage in what is seen as heroic action to save one's people from an imminent threat. They rely on a sense of nostalgia (or faux nostalgia, based on a past that never was) and utopian desires for a better future, the restoration of a beloved homeland, and a righteous call for justice. This combination of both negative and positive emotions—not

only anger and resentment but also the desire for belonging, meaning, and purpose—is proving to be a deadly formula for recruitment and radicalization to far-right extremism.

These three overlapping fantasies—the great replacement, white genocide, and Eurabia—create a sense of urgency and call whites to action. Each has already inspired mass terrorist violence by far-right extremists.[23] The terrorist responsible for killing seventy-seven people in Norway in 2011 wrote a manifesto heavily referencing the concept of Eurabia.[24] The shooter who allegedly gunned down fifty-one Muslim worshippers at two Christchurch mosques in 2019 justified his actions based on the great replacement theory. Before he allegedly murdered twenty-two people in an El Paso Walmart, a Texas man posted a document online that explicitly referenced the Christchurch shooting and referred to a "Hispanic invasion of Texas."[25] The terrorist who allegedly murdered thirteen people in a Pittsburgh synagogue in 2018 was motivated by white-genocide theories suggesting Jews were orchestrating the resettlement of refugees in order to create a multicultural society that would eventually eradicate whites. Together, white genocide, Eurabia, and now the overarching theory of the great replacement have helped foster transnational inspiration and a sense of shared mission among the global far right.

These conspiracy theories represent ideas that have been core to white-supremacist beliefs for decades. They place blame on ethnic and racial minorities or immigrants for the degradation of society, coupled with global elite manipulation and intentional orchestration.[26] But the past several years has seen one of the most significant shifts in the history of global white supremacy. The far right has increasingly moved from the realm of fantasy to one of reality. Conspiracies today are not mere stories to frame far-right ideas. They are motivating violent action. After I testified before the US Congress on white-nationalist terrorism in September 2019, someone wrote to me from an anonymous account to tell me that "White genocide is not a theory," noting that I am "complicit" in the US state sponsorship of "genocide against the White population of America and those European descent worldwide [*sic*]." For growing numbers of individuals like this, white genocide is no longer

just a fantasy or a theory. It is a deeply held belief. What were once frequently written off as fringe conspiracy theories and doomsday cult fantasies about demographic replacement are now beliefs that forge global connections across the far right and inspire individuals to engage in violent terrorist acts. This happens in part through a specific principle that motivates extreme violence—far-right acceleration.

Acceleration, Destabilization, and Apocalyptic Fantasies

As the previous sections have established, the far right relies on a set of dehumanizing and exclusionary ideologies that establish hierarchies of racial and ethnic difference and then position whites as facing an existential threat from demographic change. The inevitable result, according to this logic, will be the replacement of Western civilizations with Islamic ones, the implementation of Sharia law, and the ultimate genocide of white populations by nonwhite or non-Christian immigrants. On the extreme fringe, the far right believes that the only way to prevent this process is through an apocalyptic race war, which will result in the rebirth of a new world order and a restored white civilization.[27] This is an exceptionally similar ideology to the Islamist extremist effort to restore the Caliphate—in this sense, Islamist and far-right extremists share a similar apocalyptic vision and use the same kinds of violent terrorist strategies in an effort to accelerate the process toward the end times. This becomes particularly relevant for what is known as reciprocal radicalization or cumulative extremism—acts of terror that develop out of revenge or in response to terrorist acts from the "other side."[28] The 2019 Islamist extremist Easter attacks in Sri Lankan churches, for example, were a direct response to the Christchurch mosque attacks a few weeks prior.

At the most-extreme fringe, far-right extremists not only believe that a violent apocalypse is coming, but also argue that the best and fastest way to reach the phase of rebirth is to accelerate the path to the apocalypse and eventual new world order by speeding up polarization and societal discord as a way of undermining social stability overall.[29]

Violence is foundational to this approach, because violent acts create immediate societal panic, inspire copycat actors, and encourage reciprocal or revenge terror attacks from affected groups. For this reason, each violent act of terror is viewed as heroic, celebrated in the name of the global cause, and is understood to bring white supremacists one step closer to the end-times collapse and subsequent restoration of a new white civilization. This principle—acceleration—is a key aspect motivating terrorist violence from the far right.

Acceleration is not unique to the far right. A variety of fringe groups and philosophies across the political spectrum can be characterized as "accelerationist" for the ways they aim to hasten the demise of current economic and political systems and create a new one. What unites accelerationists is a sense that global economic, technological, political, environmental, and demographic changes are happening faster than anyone can control, with disastrous effects on human well-being. Since those changes—so it is argued—can't be effectively directed, a more strategic path is to accelerate the inevitable collapse of political and economic systems and start anew.[30] The apocalyptic fantasy component of white-supremacist extremist ideology and accelerationism also overlaps significantly with the beliefs of survivalist and extreme prepper groups, along with doomsday cults and Islamist-motivated extremism.

Although accelerationism isn't unique to the far right, violent far-right extremists' adoption of it as a strategy is recent and reflects a major shift from the realm of apocalyptic fantasies into direct action. In Germany, eight members of the group Revolution Chemnitz have been on trial since fall 2019, charged with forming a right-wing terrorist organization.[31] The group had plans to launch a "civil-war-like rebellion" in Berlin on October 2, 2018, and five of the defendants allegedly led a "test run" in September 2018 in Chemnitz, using glass bottles, weighted knuckle gloves, and an electroshock appliance to attack several foreign residents.[32] Similar approaches are evident in the neo-Nazi terrorist group Atomwaffen, active in the United States since 2015 and responsible for five recent murders.[33] Atomwaffen follows a set of strategies laid out in neo-Nazi James Mason's book *Siege*, which calls for leaderless terrorist cells and guerrilla war against "the System." The group openly

calls for violence as the primary strategy to achieve white revolutionary goals.[34] Similar themes are evident in the plans of the white-supremacist group the Base to lead a "violent insurgency" against nonwhites and the US government; several members of the group were arrested in January 2020, just prior to a gun-rights rally in Richmond, Virginia, where "credible intelligence" of extremist violence led Governor Ralph Shearer Northam to declare a state of emergency.[35]

In sum, white-supremacist extremism is a global ideology based on extreme and violent ideological beliefs that rely on violence—as a solution and an imperative response—to a perceived existential threat to white civilization posed by demographic change and immigration. Individuals do not need to believe in the full theory of an apocalyptic solution in order to be drawn to the vision of rebirth and renewal. Indeed, the language of restoration and renewal is key to a range of populist nationalist and far-right movements, through both a sense of nostalgia for a traditional past and utopian fantasies about the future. In the United States, the language of a coming civil war—evoked periodically by conservatives and the far right alike—evokes the same kinds of emotions and a sense of end times. These kinds of stories are what J. M. Berger calls violence-inducing "crisis narratives"—descriptions of threatening developments in the world that require solutions through violent, hostile action against enemies to protect one's group and identity. Importantly, crisis narratives don't come only from the extreme fringe—they also originate in the mainstream, as illustrated today in the "constant stream of crisis narratives" from elected politicians and media pundits.[36] In this way, extreme ideas can be reinforced and normalized by the mainstream.

Contested Labels

Although there is broad agreement about the range of ideas, beliefs, and practices the far-right spectrum represents, there has been no agreement to date among policy makers, scholars, or the media on which term best reflects the phenomenon. No single term currently in use captures the broad range of ideologies, frameworks, and actions

espoused by the far right in one phrase. Terms currently in use in the United States to refer to parts or all of the far-right spectrum include the extreme right, right wing, radical right, right-wing radicalism, right-wing extremism, right-wing terrorism, white power, white nationalism, white supremacism, white separatism, neo-Nazism, counter-jihadism, Identitarianism, racially and ethnically motivated extremism, alt right, and alt lite. Some parts of the far right also include antigovernment, antiauthoritarian, sovereign citizen, patriot militia, and paramilitary movements. There is overlap with groups such as conspiracy theorists, doomsday preppers, and apocalyptic cults, along with "single-issue" extremist groups like incels (involuntary celibates), antiabortion extremists, anti-Muslim extremists, and anti-immigration extremists.[37]

The FBI has controversially proposed the designation "racially motivated violent extremism" to encompass both white-supremacist groups as well as what they previously—in a highly criticized move—labeled "black identity extremists."[38] The term has been critiqued for drawing a false equivalency between the extremist fringe of black-separatist and white-supremacist groups. Many scholars argue that the better equivalency is between Islamist and white-supremacist extremists, who both work toward an apocalyptic end times, prioritize the restoration of sacred geographies (the Caliphate, a white ethno-state), and believe in mass-scale violent attacks as an imperative to accelerate societal chaos and lead toward an eventual world collapse and rebirth into a restored (Islamic or white) civilization and new world order.[39] This is further complicated by a distinction that the US federal government draws between international and domestic terrorism. The category of international terrorism includes a category of "homegrown violent extremists" inside the United States who are understood to be radicalized by a global ideology. But there is currently no such category for domestic terrorism, which is understood as comprising individuals who are motivated by ideology that comes from "domestic influences, such as racial bias and anti-government sentiment."[40] This distinction is unfortunate because it can lead individuals to overlook the many ways that far-right extremism, especially today, is globally networked and intertwined. White-supremacist extremists are inspired to act not only

because of domestic issues, but also through a global and interconnected ideology of a great replacement and the need to accelerate violent acts to bring about the collapse of current society and the rebirth of a new white civilization.[41]

The term "white nationalism" is problematic for similar reasons, inadvertently softening the extreme nature of white-supremacist ideas with the more neutral term "nationalism," and simultaneously obscuring the global interconnectedness of the far right, making it seem as if movements are only domestically oriented instead of collaborating with and learning from one another.[42] The definitional challenges are global as well. Other countries have distinctive ways of depicting the far right that contribute to the difficulty in defining a common set of terms cross-nationally. In Germany, for example, there are legal distinctions between categories like right-wing extremism (acts that are against the German constitution) and right-wing radicalism (acts that may be troubling but are technically within constitutional bounds). There are also several countries in Europe where far-right and even neo-Nazi parties—such as Greece's Golden Dawn—have been democratically elected into office. These global developments tend to complicate the kinds of terminology that US government agencies use, particularly in cross-national conversations.

Blurriness and Contestation across the Far-Right Spectrum

In the face of the wide range of definitional complications, I find the term "far right" to be the broadest and most practical term to refer to the broad spectrum of exclusionary ideologies and groups described above. I often refer to "far right" as the "best bad term" we have available, and acknowledge that not everyone will agree on the terminology.[43] Throughout this book, I use the term "far right" unless referring to specific categories used by other scholars, policy makers, or law enforcement. I also use terms like "white supremacist" or "antigovernment" when I am referring to specific groups or elements within the overall far-right spectrum. In referring to the specific subset of the far right

responsible for the Charlottesville or Christchurch violence, for example, I will use the terms "white supremacist" and "white-supremacist extremist." Where it is helpful or necessary, I occasionally use the term "alt right" to refer to the specific form of the modern far right in the United States that is distinct from previous far-right groups as well as from groups abroad. However, because the term "alt right" came from within the far-right spectrum as part of a rebranding effort, using it can make journalists or scholars inadvertently complicit in helping soften extremist ideas. For this reason, I use quotation marks around the phrase to signal its contested nature.[44]

Far-right ideologies, individuals, and groups espouse beliefs that are antidemocratic, antiegalitarian, white supremacist, and embedded in solutions like authoritarianism, ethnic cleansing or ethnic migration, and the establishment of separate ethno-states or enclaves along racial and ethnic lines.[45] The entire far-right spectrum does not share belief in all of these elements equally. In fact, there is sometimes significant contestation across groups within the spectrum on particular points of this broader set of frames. The term "far right" must always be used and understood as representing a spectrum of beliefs and approaches. To add confusion to the mix, some groups that fall within the far-right spectrum officially espouse nonviolence, promote positions on some issues that counter some part of these three key domains, or work to deliberately disrupt the optics of traditional white-supremacist movements. For example, while traditional far-right groups have typically been opposed to same-sex marriage and LGBTQ+ people, some far-right parties and groups in Europe promote women's and LGBTQ+ rights as part of Western values, in order to position those values as under threat from increasing Muslim populations or immigration from Muslim countries.[46] In other cases, far-right groups promote violent ideas—like "re-migration" to countries of origin for ethnic minorities—while officially espousing nonviolence as an operating principle.

Viewing the far right as a spectrum or as a cluster of overlapping ideologies and practices is essential for understanding the potential motivation of violent actors. This also matters for public legislative and private regulatory efforts to monitor, surveil, and shut down far-right

extremism on social-media sites or elsewhere. For example, although incel groups are now considered part of the far-right spectrum, this was not always the case.[47] Such understandings are crucial for helping understand how the range of exclusionary and dehumanizing far-right ideologies can mutually reinforce and amplify one another.[48]

How Big Is the Threat?

White-supremacist extremism is currently the most lethal form of extremism in the United States. The vast majority (81 percent) of the forty-two extremist-related murders in 2019 were attributed to white-supremacist extremists, with another 9 percent committed by other right-wing extremists, such as antigovernment extremists. The 2019 figures come on the heels of high numbers in 2018 as well.[49] Far-right extremists were responsible for at least fifty US deaths in 2018—the fourth-deadliest year since 1970 in terms of domestic extremist deaths—with the majority of those deaths linked to white supremacy specifically.[50] There have been over one hundred deaths in the United States and Canada at the hands of white-supremacist extremists since 2014.[51] The number of hate groups in the United States, which had more than doubled to over 1,000 after the presidential election of Barack Obama but then declined by 2014 to 784, rose to a record high of 1,020 in 2018. White-nationalist groups alone increased by nearly 50 percent in 2018, from 100 to 148.[52]

The pace of far-right attacks is also rapidly increasing. In the four weeks after the El Paso shooting that killed twenty-two people, forty individuals were arrested for plotting mass shootings, a dozen of which were linked to far-right ideology.[53] Even before El Paso, domestic terrorism incidents were outpacing the numbers from previous years. FBI director Christopher Wray testified in July 2019 that his agency had made about one hundred arrests related to domestic terrorism in the first three-quarters of the 2019 fiscal year, noting that a majority of those arrests were related to white supremacy.[54] The United States has also seen a significant rise in far-right propaganda, recruiting, and activism. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) reported that white-supremacist

propaganda hit an all-time high in 2019, with 2,713 incidents, more than doubling the 2018 numbers, along with a steady rise in propaganda tactics and increasing hate crimes.[55] This comes on the heels of a 182 percent increase in white-supremacist propaganda incidents from 2017 to 2018.[56] Propaganda is often linked to recruitment through fliers, banners, and other actions that express white-supremacist statements and may include a website link for more information. Moreover, the propaganda is not limited to any single group. The hundreds of instances of far-right propaganda documented in 2018 came from at least ten separate national "alt-right," white-supremacist, and neo-Nazi groups.[57]

But while growth in the far right is well documented, the potential for future violence is harder to assess, in part because the federal government has put the clear majority of terrorism-related resources into tracking and combatting Islamist extremism, neglecting the threat of white-supremacist extremism. In recent congressional testimony, FBI officials noted that 80 percent of their counterterrorism field agents focus on international terrorism cases and 20 percent on domestic terrorism. The imbalance in resources is consequential. Between 9/11 and the end of 2017, two-thirds (67 percent) of violent Islamist plots in the United States were interrupted in the planning phase, but this was the case for less than one-third (26 percent) of violent far-right plots.[58]

The best estimate—looking across all groups and organizations—is that there are currently 75,000 to 100,000 people affiliated with white-supremacist extremist groups in the United States, not including individuals who engage occasionally from the peripheries of far-right scenes or who are ideologically supportive but unengaged either online or offline.[59] Data from countries with more comprehensive monitoring and surveillance of extremism are more precise. The German intelligence services, for example, estimate that in 2018, Germany had 24,100 right-wing extremists, of whom over half were not members of formal groups or organizations. Of those 24,100, an estimated 12,700 are considered potentially violent.[60]

One important aspect of threat assessment has to do with how well connected white supremacists are transnationally, and whether these connections rise to the level of a global movement. There are

indications that the global interconnectedness of white-supremacist extremist groups is growing in at least five areas.[61] Far-right groups and individuals are increasingly crowdsourcing funds online, enabling more fundraising and growing financial interconnections, along with the use of internet-based currencies like Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies like Monero.[62] There is clear evidence of increased sharing of tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) for attacks, as well as other support activities, potentially contributing to more attacks, greater lethality, and more extensive propaganda. Experts have documented increased cross-national recruitment for combat. For example, former FBI agent Ali Soufan testified before the House Committee on Homeland Security in September 2019 that fighters from Western countries—including from the United States—have traveled to Ukraine to fight, in part for groups espousing white supremacist ideology.[63] The internet has facilitated increased sharing of manifestos and livestreamed attacks, driving more inspiration from terrorist attacks globally. And finally, there is clear evidence of increased global gateways to extremist youth scenes in cultural realms like music festivals and combat sports tournaments, which contribute to more networked relationships.

Social media and online modes of communication are key to supporting all five of these global strategies. Online spaces offer training, advice, how-to guides, ideological materials, and places where violent attacks are livestreamed, downloaded, circulated, and celebrated.[64] Importantly, while online spaces and modes of communication facilitate these cooperative engagements and have significantly reduced burdens to transnational collaboration, they are not the root cause of the collaboration—rather, those collaborations are motivated by shared, global ideologies based in common understandings about a threat to "white civilization" from immigration and demographic change. And online spaces work in tandem with in-person gatherings that also enhance global interconnections, such as transnational music festivals, conferences, MMA tournaments, and festivals associated with or linked to white-supremacist scenes.

No single estimate of the numbers of far-right individuals in a given country can help us understand the potential for any one of those

individuals to become violent. Despite decades of research on violent extremism, we still do not have a very good understanding of what makes one individual turn toward violence while another remains ideologically supportive but nonviolent. For this reason, the trends I describe above—which clearly document an escalation in murders, violent attacks, and hate crimes; increases in the number of arrests and thwarted attacks; rising propaganda and increased recruiting from far-right and white-supremacist groups; and show evidence of multiple strategies enhancing cross-national collaboration and transnational terrorist inspiration—provide the best indication of the rising threat of far-right and white-supremacist extremism in the United States and globally.

Serious attention on the part of government and law enforcement began to shift in the wake of the spring 2019 Christchurch shootings, with particular urgency emerging following the El Paso shootings that left twenty-two dead. Six separate congressional hearings related to white-supremacist extremism and white-nationalist terrorism were held over the spring and early fall of 2019. And in September 2019, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced a new strategic framework for countering terrorism and targeted violence, which notably includes a new major focus on white-supremacist violent extremism and an acknowledgment of the threat posed by it.[65] The impact of any of these efforts is still to be determined. What is clear, however, is that in important ways the United States and many of its allies overseas are only scratching the surface of understanding the dynamics of rising far-right extremism and the strategies that might work to combat it.

Youth Spaces, Youth Places

This book makes frequent reference to "youth," "young people," and "youth culture" in discussions of radicalization to and engagement in extremist violence. Extremism is not the exclusive domain of youth, of course.[66] In fact, among the most violent offenders—those who have killed someone—extremists are almost as likely to be older men as they are younger ones.[67] Older people are key to far-right-movement

leadership and to the development and mainstreaming of far-right ideologies and conspiracy theories consumed in traditional media outlets. But young people are disproportionately engaged in or affected by extremist violence, including violent extremist plots as well as murders, assaults, hate crimes, and other related forms of youth violence like bullying.[68] Youth also have a higher risk of terrorist recidivism and reengagement after release from detention.[69] From the issue of violence prevention alone, there are good reasons to focus on young people.

Youth are also particularly vulnerable to recruitment and radicalization. Adolescence and early adulthood are key phases of identity formation and transition, as youth become more independent, meet new people and friends, and navigate complex sets of expectations from the cultural worlds of their peers, families, and the broader society. Young people are more likely to be impulsive, seek risk, or engage in experimentation in ways that aim to break norms or rebel against adult expectations.[70] These are all factors that put youth at greater risk for engaging with extremist ideas and movements as they try on new identities and life philosophies. The kinds of emotional needs already known to be key to extremist radicalization—such as the desire to provoke or to rebel against authorities, and the need to fit in and belong to a community—are particularly strong among youth. This makes them especially vulnerable to extremist recruiters' attempts to weaponize existing grievances and feelings of exclusion, rejection, and anger. And because adolescence and early adulthood is the primary period in which political attitudes develop and solidify—in ways that tend to persist across the life course—engagement with extremist ideas is potentially more consequential during this phase of life.[71]

In this light, the efforts of organized far-right groups to engage with young people in the spaces and places described in this book—combat sports and MMA clubs, music scenes, YouTube cooking channels, college campuses, and a variety of youth-oriented online spaces like gaming chatrooms or social-media platforms—are especially important. Far-right groups have always worked to recruit young people to their movements and politicize youth spaces like concerts, festivals, youth-oriented events, and music lyrics.[72] These are sometimes referred to as

youth "scenes"—a word that reflects a less hierarchical and more disorganized structure than traditional social movements. Today there exists a broader range of spaces, places, and scenes to engage young people in the far right. Older leaders in far-right movements rely on college students for speaking invitations and campus activism. They recruit young people to join boxing gyms and compete in combat sports tournaments. Propaganda videos featuring fit, young men in training camps and shooting ranges use music and imagery clearly oriented toward younger recruits.

Young people are also the drivers of the cultural changes in online modes of communication—like meme sharing—in ways that have been tremendously consequential for the growth of the modern far right. Youth and young adults were essential architects of the kinds of online trolling and harassment that predated the emergence of the "alt right" through phenomena like Gamergate—a 2014 online movement that launched a torrent of misogynistic abuse and harassment of women in the gaming industry. Milo Yiannopoulos, for example, rose to prominence as a journalist at Breitbart by championing Gamergate and its narratives about "social justice warriors," "snowflakes," and an overreaching liberal left that was trying to indoctrinate youth. Gamergate channeled a peculiar form of young men's disaffection and alienation into narratives about culture wars and male entitlement in ways that quickly intersected with broader far-right and white-supremacist themes.[73] The contemporary far right is unimaginable without the influence of these youth-driven developments.

It's not only youth who drive most of the violence on the far right, of course. Mostly, it's youth who are men. There is much to say about masculinity and toxic masculinity as drivers of far-right violence in both online and off-line contexts, through online harassment and trolling as well as physical violence against others. It's also important to note that we have seen and are still seeing increasing participation of women in the far right, including in violent fringe and terrorist groups. Women also enable the far right in important ways, whether through YouTube cooking videos that create a softer entry or by playing more supportive

roles in extremist movements as mothers, partners, and wives who help to reproduce white nations.

There is no dedicated chapter related to gender in this book, in part because I see issues of gender and misogyny as central to all of them.[74] Each chapter takes up questions of gender in specific ways. I explore how women are called on to produce white babies and nurture them with wholesome, organic food, and how men are marketed to by clothing brands selling a particular kind of far-right manhood, through messages about brotherhood, loyalty, and togetherness, as well as language around being a warrior, soldier, defender, or protector or taking heroic action. I look at how far-right recruiting through combat sports and MMA infuses messaging about physical fitness and male bodies with ideas about preparedness for national defense, street battles, and the coming race war. I note how a subculture of young men engaged in trolling, misogynistic sexual harassment, and antifeminist ideologies emerged from Gamergate and helped fuel the growth of the far right. In each of the new, mainstream spaces and places where the far right is recruiting and radicalizing young people today, gender, misogyny, and masculinity play a foundational role.

This book takes a deep dive into the new spatial domains of far-right extremism in the United States, looking at where and when youth engage in these kinds of spaces. Focusing on the spaces and places where far-right extremism is thriving today builds on and extends prior work on violent white-supremacist movements in the United States, but situates modern movements within the changing ecosystem of far-right radicalization. As this book shows, today's far right is characterized by more diverse entry points, fragmented scenes, and newer groups and associations, some of which deliberately target domains not previously known to be particularly key to far-right and white-supremacist groups. Far-right youth today might initially encounter extremist narratives through chance encounters in mainstream spaces like the MMA, a campus auditorium, a podcast, or a YouTube video. Each of those mainstream spaces, however, can act as a channel, opening the door to dedicated far-right MMA festivals, alt-tech platforms and encrypted

communication platforms, and dedicated YouTube subscriptions that mix mainstream interest in cooking or music with far-right ideology. Understanding these new spaces and places—the geography of hate—is key to comprehending the far right in its modern form.[75]

The movement of far-right ideology into mainstream spaces is particularly important because growth in far-right extremism in the United States and globally is driven in no small part by growing numbers of youth who are on the periphery of the far right rather than at its core. Because they are prone to experimentation and exploration, youth are more likely to be moving in and out of the kinds of places and spaces where they might encounter extremist messages. Young people on the periphery of extremism are particularly consequential for how extremist rhetoric, ideology, beliefs, and conspiracy theories are channeled from the core to the mainstream as these youth interact with others in non-extremist spaces. Placing space and place at the center of our analysis makes this clear. Focusing on space and place requires us to consider hate groups and far-right extremism not only as static, organized movements but also as flows of people who move in and out of the periphery and interstitial spaces of far-right scenes. This dynamic is understudied and underanalyzed in scholarship on the far right more broadly.

This approach is an extension of studies of far-right extremism that focus on youth or adults at the hard core of far-right-extremist movements. For many—perhaps even most—modern far-right youth, I argue, extremist engagement is characterized by a process of moving in and out of far-right scenes throughout their adolescence and adulthood in ways that scholars and policy makers have yet to understand. Extremist radicalization processes are fluid and staggered, and may well reverse course, veer off into new trajectories, or intensify in unanticipated ways. We need better ways of understanding where and when youth on the margins of far-right scenes are mobilized through quotidian, flexible engagements in mainstream-style physical and virtual spaces, especially ones that the far right has actively targeted for this purpose. This approach to far-right extremism and radicalization significantly broadens what we know about the far right, and how and when people engage with it. It also offers a new way of thinking about how to study and

engage with the fragmentation and broadening of the scenes and spaces where far-right youth and adults gather today.

Overview of the Book

Hate in the Homeland focuses on the mainstreaming of far-right extremism in the United States over the past decade, with reference to global events related to the rise of the far right where relevant.[76] The first part of the book has two overall goals, both aimed at providing readers with foundational knowledge about the kind of far-right content youth encounter when they enter the kinds of spaces and places discussed later in the book. In this introduction and in chapters 1 and 2, I define terms, lay the groundwork for understanding the role of space and place in mobilizing extremism, and examine three simultaneous developments that have characterized the rise of the US far right: the mainstreaming of far-right political rhetoric, the mainstreaming of far-right conspiracy theories, and transformations in far-right aesthetics and communication styles, particularly for youth. This lays the groundwork for understanding the changing nature of far-right content that youth encounter when they engage with the far right in the kinds of mainstream spaces and places discussed in depth in the remaining chapters.

In chapters 3 to 6, I turn to the question of where and when radicalization happens, focusing on young people's ordinary and everyday encounters with radicalization messages in mainstream spaces and places. In these chapters, I trace new gateways where youth are radicalized toward far-right ideologies and actions: cultural spaces related to food and fashion; fight clubs and the MMA scene; educational settings and college campuses; and social media/online spaces. In the conclusion, I address the implications of a focus on space and place for how we respond to rising far-right extremism, and suggest what better interventions might look like.

I chose these four cases for their power to illustrate some of the unexpected places where violent hate groups are recruiting young people today. As I will argue, new, mainstream spaces are helping mobilize financial capital, cultural markets, physical capacity, and intellectual

foundations that support the far right's growth, along with a broad eco-system of new media technologies to communicate about it all. But it is important to remember that these are not the only places where the growth of extremist rhetoric and ideas is taking place. My hope is that the examples I highlight will inspire analysis of other ways that everyday encounters with extremism in mainstream places matter, challenging readers to pay attention not only to how radicalization happens, but also where it takes place.

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