

Terrorist in Training: The Role of Social Media and the Rise of Terrorism through Nationalistic White Agenda

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Abstract

The U.S. political landscape is increasingly divided, fueled in part by the indignant, caustic, and divisive language used in our social media and online conversations. The authors examine a subset of white males who feel marginalized and powerless as they hear messaging advancing tolerance, diversity, equality, and political correctness. This in turn has fueled vocal and strident opposition to mass immigration, rage over the disappearance of a so-called pure culture of Germans and Europeans, and an underlying fear at the prospect of losing their history and heritage. The open nature of social media has provided a safe haven for our youth to be radicalized by those espousing Generation Identity and Alt-Right ideologies, euphemisms for white supremacist thought and Nazism. The authors explore this trend through the recent terroristic actions in El Paso, Texas, Charleston, South Carolina and the related events of Oslo, Norway and Christchurch, New Zealand.

Introduction

January 27, 2020 marked the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp where 1.1 million innocent people died in a span of five years (Gera, 2020). To honor those who lost their lives and remember the horrors to which they were subjected, survivors and political leaders from many nations traveled to Auschwitz to commemorate the anniversary of the liberation. Many survivors were joined by generations of family, there as sources of strength to their loved ones, the last living survivors.

There were many powerful moments and a warning. In attendance was the president of the World Jewish Congress, Ronald Lauder, who spoke of the reality that set in throughout the world when details of Auschwitz emerged (Gera, 2020). Lauder stated,

...the world finally saw pictures of gas chambers, nobody in their right mind wanted to be associated with the Nazis...But now I see something I never thought I would see in my lifetime, the open and brazen spread of anti-Jewish hatred...Do not be silent. Do not be complacent. Do not let this ever happen again – to any people. (in Gera, 2020, para. 7)

Lauder's statement reflects a growing concern due to a resurgence of the mindset held by Nazis during WWII. The world is slowly experiencing a backward spiral of hate and a quest for ethnic "purity," which is a frightening echo of years past.

Also attending the commemoration was 93-year-old Marian Turski, of Polish-Jewish descent. Turski's statements are not mere reflections. They represent facts and experience. Turski warned that what began as seemingly small acts exploded into the destruction of Jews. He referenced the fact that the world tolerated acts such as banning Jews from sitting on benches in Berlin, dismissing them as insignificant. He related the incremental intensity of hateful acts to those happening today and stressed that this could happen again in the United States (Gera, 2020).

The authors of the present manuscript are aware of the growing violence that started small among fringe groups and is now gaining momentum in part due to the ability afforded by travel and the worldwide web, allowing the spread of hate. One need only reflect on recent weeks, as the Boogaloo Bois have had a salient presence at the Black Lives Matter protests across the United States. Boogaloo Bois describe themselves as anti-government rather than white supremacist. Members of the group state they do not have issues with any race or culture, but rather, their issues revolve around the government (Miller, 2020). However, this is misleading. The goal of Boogaloo Bois is to take down the government and create new leadership. But for most members, it doesn't end there. The new government is to be dedicated to creating and maintaining a white nation. They are not alone, and they are growing in number and

propensity for violence.

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL), created in 1913 to address increasing anti-Semitism and extremism, continues to work toward equality and justice for all racial and ethnic groups. The ADL is considered a leader in research and education geared toward fulfilling their mission. They recently shared data representative of a 10-year span that revealed white supremacists (a politically correct term for neo-Nazi) committed 54% of ADL-documented murders in a ten-year period within the United States (ADL, 2018). However, the U.S. is not alone. There are similarities among white supremacists that extend across oceans.

Hatred in Action

On August 3, 2019, a 21-year-old white male shot and killed 22 people at an El Paso Walmart. He published a white nationalist, anti-immigration manifesto on the website 8chan 27 minutes before the attack. His motivation for the attack was to stop a Hispanic invasion, military imperialism, automation, large corporations, and environmental degradation. He writes in the opening of his manifesto, "The Great Replacement,"

In general, I support the Christchurch shooter and his manifesto. This attack is a response to the Hispanic invasion of Texas. They are the instigators, not me. I am simply defending my country from cultural and ethnic replacement brought on by an invasion. Some people will think this statement is hypocritical because of the nearly complete ethnic and cultural destruction brought to the Native Americans by our European ancestors, but this just reinforces my point. The natives didn't take the invasion of Europeans seriously, and now what's left is just a shadow of what was. My motives for this attack are not at all personal. Actually, the Hispanic community was not my target before I read The Great Replacement (Van Brunt & Solomon, 2020, p. 21).

The Christchurch attacker of whom the El Paso shooter was referring was a 28-year-old Australian man who carried out two attacks, killing 51 people and injuring 49 in New Zealand on March 15, 2019. The Christchurch attack was livestreamed to Facebook with a GoPro camera. In addition to the statement above, the shooter documents the purpose of the attacks within his manifesto as, "To agitate the political enemies of my people into action, to cause them to over-extend their own hand and experience the eventual and inevitable backlash as a result. To incite violence, retaliation and further divide between the European people and the invaders currently occupying European soil" (Van Brunt & Solomon, 2020, p.8).

This follows in the footsteps of the Norwegian massacre that occurred in July of 2011. The attacker killed eight in Oslo, Norway, before continuing onto Utøya and gunning down 69 youths. The terrorist claimed these events were conducted to further the attention for

his 1,500-page manifesto outlining an impending war against the Muslims. During his trial, the attacker shared some thoughts about his selection of targets for the attack. “Giving evidence on the fourth day of his trial, the 33-year-old said he would have preferred to carry out three bomb attacks that target Utøya, where the Norwegian Labour Party was holding its annual youth summer camp on 22 July last year. In the end, he went on the rampage on the island after planting one bomb in Oslo’s government district, killing eight people” (Pidd 2012, p. 1).

This is a high-stakes problem because our youth are being radicalized by white supremacists inciting them to violence through open and unmonitored social media platforms (Andone et al., 2020; Counter Extremism Project, 2019a; Davey & Ebner, 2019; Kernohan, 2019; Lowry et al., 2018). The problem is exacerbated by the U.S. government lacking focus on homegrown, white extremist groups. To address this growing problem, we will familiarize the reader with Generation Identity (GI) and their “Great Replacement” philosophy and offer suggestions on how to attend to this speech on social media.

To address this growing problem in U.S. society, the authors will publish a follow-up article focused on helping reduce the risk of radicalization and violence inspired by this hardened, hate-filled perspective. There will be some practical suggestions on how to strike a balance between free speech on social media and speech that radicalizes and incites others to violence. In addition, the authors will afford readers the knowledge necessary to know how and to what authority to report concerns of potential white supremacy radicalization.

Keep Them Closer: Generation Identity & The Great Replacement

The newly coined term, Generation Identity (GI), highlights one example of an attempt to mask the growing movement of a nationalistic, isolationist white agenda. Other groups include: Traditionalist Workers Party, Identity Evropa, American Renaissance, The Base, Vanguard American/Patriot Front, Hammerskin Nation, and Atomwaffen (Counter Extremism Project, 2019b). Those who created the term GI attempted to create a reasonable sounding term in an attempt to diminish the growing threat to the safety of immigrants throughout Europe. Their philosophy aligns with Renaud Camus’ *Great Replacement* as is evident within the GI website (Generation Identity, 2019).

While some of the aforementioned groups claim to adhere to a GI philosophy geared in ethno-Nationalism, others do not hide their beliefs of white supremacy centered in a National Socialism (neo-Nazi) ideology. The difference is, ethno-Nationalists claim to view whites as distinctive, while National Socialists do not hesitate in supporting the idea of whites as superior (Counter Extremism

Project, 2019b). The authors of the current article align both ideologies as the groups’ claims are only a matter of semantics. The bottom line is, “cleaning up” a nation with the goal of a “pure” society is hate at its core.

With GI, the heart of the argument is an opposition to mass immigration and its “consequence,” the disappearance of a pure population of “Germans and Europeans in their own countries.” To date, there are branches of GI within the United Kingdom, Italy, France, Germany, and Austria (Aljazeera, 2018). A concern is this agenda growing further into the U.S culture given the increasingly divided U.S. political landscape.

The neo-Nazi, alt-right, white supremacist agenda, by whatever name it is called, has gained momentum (McGarrity, 2019) and become increasingly violent in Europe through the so-called GI. A parallel perspective is gaining prominence within the United States where domestic terror organizations, what the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) deems “hate groups,” are rising in number (2019). There is a similar trend to slip more digestible names past mainstream media and researchers by calling the racist, neo-Nazi agenda in the U.S. “alt-right” or “patriots.” The SPLC indicates a seven percent increase from 2017 to 2018, bringing the total number of groups to 1,020 and rising. Social media is playing a role in the contagion of a hate mindset and related violence. As stated in Niewert (2019), “this violent and vicious ideology is almost entirely enabled by the internet and its ability to connect people with fringe ideologies across large distances” (p. 11). The ADL echoes Niewert’s sentiment, as their findings indicate:

Global access to white supremacist ideology, and its easy dissemination across borders via various social media platforms, means many of the ideas promoted by the white supremacist movement — curtailing of non-white immigration, attacks on globalization and the accompanying conspiracies about elitist globalists — are increasingly, part of mainstream political and social rhetoric. (p. 4)

While the hate group umbrella encompasses a number of world views, upon examining the SPLC report and increasing acts of violence, it is evident that white supremacists are increasing the fastest and pose the greatest threat to safety in the U.S. The number of hate groups surged 50 percent in a year, growing from 100 chapters in 2017 to 148 in 2018 (SPLC, 2019). They too fit within the definition of GI and all pose a threat. More recently (Lomas, 2020), a study of YouTube found the presence of radicalization pathways through the comments, likes and views of hate-filled, white supremest content. The study found an escalation from less concerning comments and posts, labeled as alt-lite, to commenting and viewing more concerning far-right content over time. This gives further evidence to the radicalization and movement toward more extremist thoughts and actions as exposure increases.

September 25, 2019, United States Secretary General Antonio Guterres made the following statement to the Security Council Ministerial Meeting, “[The world is facing] an unprecedented threat from intolerance, violent extremism and terrorism... the new frontier is cyber-terrorism – the use of social media and the dark web to coordinate attacks, spread propaganda and recruit new followers” (United Nations, 2019). Secretary Guterres was correct, as is evident in research conducted by the ADL (2019) and the SPLC (2019) that will be described within this manuscript.

It is likely Guterres’ aforementioned statement arose due to cases such as the March 2019 Christchurch, New Zealand shooting which extends beyond a “lone wolf” incident into terrorism. Specifically, the Christchurch shooting was committed by a white male who acted against those he felt were a threat to the white race. These attacks are further escalated when social media is used as fertile discussion ground for this kind of bigotry and hate. The Institute for Strategic Dialogue discovered, via their 2019 Generation Identity Europe Census, 11,000 members of GI Facebook groups, 30,000 members of GI Telegram groups, 70,000 followers of official GI accounts on Twitter, and 140,000 YouTube GI channel subscribers (Ebner & Davey, 2019).

The U.S. is not immune from this exposure to increasingly disturbing radical thoughts through social media platforms. This content is viewed often and inspires attacks on U.S. soil by radicalized individuals. The August 2019 shooting in an El Paso, Texas Walmart was perpetrated by a white male who held beliefs similar to those expressed in the Christchurch shooter’s manifesto. In his manifesto, the Christchurch shooter expressed disdain for multiculturalism, immigration, and the “decaying” culture of Western Europe and its white demographic through such statements as,

We are experiencing an invasion on a level never seen before in history. Millions of people pouring across our borders, legally. Invited by the state and corporate entities to replace the White people who have failed to reproduce, failed to create the cheap labour, new consumers and tax base that the corporations and states need to thrive.... This crisis of mass immigration and sub-replacement fertility is an assault on the European people that, if not combated, will ultimately result in the complete racial and cultural replacement of the European people. (Christchurch Attacker, 2019, p. 5).

As mentioned earlier, the El Paso shooter’s statements to law enforcement after the shooting revealed a philosophy parallel to that of the Great Replacement. This is reflected in his pre-shooting online post, which lamented “the Hispanic invasion of Texas,” and in his selection of victims who were predominantly Hispanic.

The individuals described above live across the ocean from one

another, worlds apart, yet their views and actions run parallel. They are all part of Generation Identity, whether direct followers or products of its propaganda. They too desire a purely white population. It is of great concern that a post-WWII era finds itself back to the hate-filled perspective reminiscent of Hitler.

Given the rise in neo-Nazi groups and the incidents of violence encouraged and perpetrated by them, the ADL recommends that attention be paid to addressing the issue (2019). The communication among various groups in the United States and Europe is leading to what the ADL deem a “surge” in right wing extremism (2019). The ADL, within the Hate Beyond Borders: The Internalization of White Supremacy report, describe the support, encouragement, and recruitment taking place among U.S. and European hate groups that utilize online communication in addition to face-to-face conferences toward encouraging a similar mindset. To put it simply, the ADL 2019 report states, “they [white supremacists] feel empowered and emboldened because they perceive that they are influencing the political climate and reaching new audience” (p. 4).

This reflects research on risk factors for violent extremism pointing to the desire to seek or build affiliations with like-minded individuals in order to strengthen their resolve for violent action (Van Brunt et al., 2017). The online group communication and interaction offer a desired sense of belonging and acceptance for some and may confirm existing beliefs for others (Pressman, 2009). There is a distinct danger in those intentionally using the façade of less extreme, more reasonable sounding campaigns to recruit a community of followers and then evolving toward more fringe ideas and actions. For those more easily manipulated or more prone to disinformation, their grievances can be leveraged toward more extreme ideas and actions.

There are often catalyst events that impact individuals and create in their minds a justification for action (Van Brunt et al., 2017). Since beginning work on this article, two events may serve as catalysts for extremist violence. First, the COVID-19 pandemic spread throughout the globe killing more than 475,000 and infecting almost 10 million people as of this publication. Second, George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man, was killed during a police officer arrest over a counterfeit \$20 bill in Minneapolis when a police officer held him down with his knee on his neck for more than 8 minutes, continuing after he lost consciousness.

As COVID-19 rages through the world and causes both human and economic tragedy, many look for a source to blame. Since the virus was first detected in Wuhan, China, President Trump and others referred to it on occasion as the “Chinese Virus” and even “Kung Flu.” The need to assign blame for our suffering and circumstance can be exploited by extremist groups as a justification for violence (Van Brunt et al., 2017). In fact, since the COVID-19 outbreak, Asian-Americans

report an increase in incidents of threats, violence, and discrimination with COVID-19 related influence (ADL, 2020).

Additionally, the impact of Floyd's death resulted in widespread protests against police brutality and racial discrimination. In some areas, this turned to vandalism and looting. In others, it resulted in renewed calls for the removal of various symbols of past racial wrongs, such as statues and monuments. While in many ways this was a renewed call to address issues of systemic racism across the nation, for groups such as those described in this article, it provides an opening to extort divisiveness in these issues. Extremists on both sides of an issue can exploit legitimate protest. It was reported that the Department of Homeland Security warned local law enforcement about white supremacist messaging to incite violence at protests (Swan & Bertrand, 2020). In fact, members of the Boogaloo Bois are currently facing charges for planning to terrorize protesters (Miller, 2020).

The upheaval also provides an opportunity to identify those of similar beliefs and attitudes. For example, groups can gain online followers by sharing messages disavowing the looting and vandalism and promoting an us against them ideology, or the removal of statues can be framed as the desecration of history important to white identities. For those seeking to take advantage of these moments, this provides an opportunity to identify those that could be exploited for group goals or to gain support for more extreme and potentially violent action against others.

When working to prevent violent extremism, there is a need to look beyond the public-facing statements and campaigns that often avoid using explicitly racist terms. Hate groups attempt to soften explicit hate speech, so it is key that one recognizes more subtle risk factors. Of concern are messages that are polarizing and restrict followers' beliefs from considering those that are different (Van Brunt et al., 2017). This inability to consider other perspectives or see credibility in those unlike ourselves leads to a sense of separation which can evolve to objectification and other moral disengagement from our actions (Borum, 2011). Other risk factors to consider when viewing messaging from groups includes distorting information and facts in order to shift the blame for one's situation to others, messages of solidarity and community among only one identity group, and emotional calls for action. The problem is that almost any group attempting to persuade others to give, support, or act use similar strategies. Thus, it becomes important to identify strands of communications that are embedded in the already radical group communications in an intent to expand their extremist reach but also represent ideas "too extreme for the other extremist" while also looking for cues that individuals are beginning to mobilize toward violent action in the name of a cause. Unfortunately, current federal and state policies do not prioritize efforts focused on these types of risk factors, prevention strategies, or white nationalist extremism.

A recent article (Satkalmi & Miller, 2019) written by two high ranking officials within the New York Police Department presents a solid case about the importance of monitoring the online activity of individuals within the U.S., not solely those whose description fits within the definition of a foreign terrorist organization. The authors make several points in regard to the dangers posed by domestic terrorists. Their primary concern is the legal line between foreign and domestic terrorists is misleading. It diminishes the fact that the majority of individuals who carried out and are continuing to carry out attacks within the United States, even those claiming allegiance to ISIS and Al Qaeda, are Americans. They also discuss the Atomwaffen Division as a lethal neo-Nazi group skilled at telling their audience whom to hate, why to hate them, and how to kill them. Satkalmi and Miller (2019) describe how Atomwaffen relies on anonymous, encrypted social media channels, chat applications, and gaming platforms to avoid attention from law enforcement. Specifically, Atomwaffen joins numerous white supremacy groups who seem to model foreign terror organizations via the use of encryption and anonymity to avoid law enforcement and continue their secret communication and recruitment of neo-Nazis. Atomwaffen is insidious in their tactics of deceiving the public toward thinking they have disbanded. Experts believe this message is solely for the purpose of flying under the radar, which is of great concern.

The aforementioned statements echo the findings of the SPLC in their detailed report on hate groups. The rise attributable to social media is summarized by the SPLC report (2019):

As user growth accelerated on social media platforms, so, too, did the presence of hate groups and their leaders, finally able to transcend geographic boundaries and enjoy unprecedented audience for their carefully tuned propaganda. (p. 33)

Yet, while attention has been focused on foreign terror organizations (FTOs), we took our eyes off the prize and must now increase our domestic efforts or find ourselves face-to-face with a new world that is strikingly similar to the 1940s.

The Problem with a Sole Focus on "Foreign Terror Organizations"

Despite post-9/11 views of extreme violence as acts linked to designated foreign terror organizations, the majority of deaths caused by extremists between 2009 and 2018 were perpetrated by white nationalist extremists. In January 2020, law enforcement apprehended several members from the white supremacist group "The Base" and charged them with conspiracy in connection with the vandalism of a synagogue as part of a nationwide series of attacks on minority-owned properties. In addition, there was alleged involvement in plans to overthrow the government and to kill a married couple whom they identified as having high-profile roles in the far-left group Antifa (Chappell et al., 2020). By extension, 74% of

deaths by extremists were caused by those with no ties to foreign terror organizations. At the low end (3%) of extremist-related deaths are those caused by individuals with leftist beliefs, while 23% occurred at the hands of Islamist extremists. According to Jones et al., (2020) in their report, “The Escalating Terrorism Problem in the United States,” “right-wing extremists perpetrated two thirds of the attacks and plots

in the United States in 2019 and over 90 percent between January 1 and May 8, 2020” (p.1). In recent decades, the attention of the U.S. government and its entities has been primarily directed toward FTOs, while homegrown hate groups have been increasing in magnitude. Table 1.1 is a representation of variety of attacks fueled by white supremacist ideology.

Table 1.1 Summary of Hate-Motivated Attacks Fueled by White Supremist Ideology

	Date	Case Details
1	12/28/2019	A white male entered the home of a rabbi in Monsey, NY and began stabbing individuals attending a Hanukkah celebration. Five people sustained injuries (ADL, 2019).
2	12/10/2019	Two suspects, intentionally targeting a kosher market, killed three individuals inside in addition to one responding police officer (ADL, 2019).
3	8/3/2019	A mass shooting occurred at a Walmart in El Paso, TX. The gunman shot and killed 22 people and injured 24 others. In his manifesto, he writes, “In general, I support the Christchurch shooter and his manifesto. This attack is a response to the Hispanic invasion of Texas...I am against race mixing because it destroys genetic diversity and creates identity problems. Also because it’s completely unnecessary and selfish” (Van Brunt and Solomon, 2020, p. 21-22).
4	7/28/2019	The Gilroy (CA) Garlic Festival erupted in chaos when a gunman began shooting into the crowd, killing two adults and one child. Prior to doing so, he ranted on social media, referring to mixed race Latin Americans with a derogatory term. His message indicated he felt the U.S. is making room for these individuals at the expense of white people (Insider, 2019).
5	4/27/2019	A white male entered the Poway synagogue and began firing, killing one and injuring three. Recent unsealed documents revealed that the shooter called 911 as he was leaving the scene and stated, “I just shot up a synagogue...because Jewish people are destroying the white race” (Watson & Spagat, 2020). This individual also made GI-inspired statements online, praising the New Zealand shooter and being proud of the fact that he felt he could commit an act of terror against synagogues, mosques, and an immigration center (Associated Press, 2019).
6	3/15/19	In Christchurch, New Zealand, an attacker killed 51 people and injured another 49 in the name of white supremacist beliefs outlined in his lengthy manifesto. (Van Brunt & Solomon, 2020; Christchurch Attacker, 2019).
7	10/27/18	The Tree of Life Synagogue’s services came to a tragic end when an anti-Semitic gunman, armed with an AR-15 assault rifle, killed 11 congregants. His hate crime was punctuated with a slew of anti-Semitic slurs, yelled in the midst of gunfire (Green, 2019).
8	10/24/2018	After failing to breach the entrance of a predominantly Black church, a gunman entered a Kroger in a suburb of Louisville, KY where he shot and killed a Black couple shopping with their grandson (CNN, 2018).
9	8/11/2017	The Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, VA turned violent and was shut down. A neo-Nazi man attending the rally went to his vehicle and began driving into the crowd of counter-protesters. Before he was stopped, one person was dead and many injured. Subsequent interviews with those who knew the suspect as a child indicate that he was obsessed with Hitler while in school (Rosenblatt, 2018).
10	6/19/2017	After only three weeks of ingesting online right-wing propaganda, a male sought out a peaceful, Islamist march and drove his car into the crowd, killing one and injuring twelve. The night before, the perpetrator had been kicked out of a bar after making racial slurs (Dodd, 2018).
11	5/26/2017	On a light rail train in Portland, OR, a man was confronted for shouting racist and anti-Muslim slurs at two Black women. He killed three of the men who confronted his behavior with a knife. The attacker described himself as a white nationalist and had been filmed making Nazi salutes at protest marches during the previous weeks (Bernstein, 2017).
12	3/20/2017	A white supremacist who eventually stated that he was practicing for a larger attack, used a sword to stab a 66-year-old Black man who was doing nothing more than walking on the streets of NYC (Beckett, 2019).

13	1/29/2017	Alexandre Bissonnette, a student at Laval University, killed six and wounded eight people when he opened fire at a mosque in Quebec. Bissonnette was described by friends as being very right leaning and an ultranationalist white supremacist, with many related posts on social media. He made frequent extreme comments on social media denigrating refugees and feminism. The mosque was previously a target of a hate crime when a severed pig's head was left there in June during the month of Ramadan (Van Brunt, Murphy and Zedginidze, 2017).
14	10/14/2016	Three men belonging to a group that held sovereign citizen, antigovernment, anti-Muslim, and anti-immigrant extremist beliefs targeted specific locations that had high Somali immigrant populations in Garden City, Kansas. They gathered firearms, ammunition, explosive materials, and discussed setting off a massive explosion at an apartment complex. One referred to the group's targets, Somali immigrants, as "cockroaches" and discussed dipping bullets in pig's blood before using them. All three men's Facebook pages contain links to articles on conspiracy websites, many of which are anti-Muslim in nature. The three men were arrested after revealing the plan to attack an apartment complex in Garden City, Kansas, to an undercover FBI agent (Van Brunt, Murphy & Zedginidze, 2017).
15	6/16/2016	A documented white supremacist stabbed repeatedly, then shot, the Labour MP during a European Union referendum campaign. The investigation into the case revealed such strong information linking the killer to white supremacy that the judge stated, "It is evident from your internet searches that your inspiration is not love of country or your fellow citizens, it is an admiration for Nazis and similar anti-democratic white supremacist creeds ... Our parents' generation made huge sacrifices to defeat those ideas and values in the second world war. What you did ... betrays those sacrifices" Cobain & Taylor, 2016).
16	10/22/2015	A white male, carrying a sword entered the building of the Trollhattan School in Sweden. The area, known for its high immigrant population, was intentionally targeted. Witnesses report that the assailant was wearing a WWII Nazi-era helmet and a mask, and targeted dark-skinned individuals in his rampage. The sword attack resulted in the deaths of a student and teaching assistant and injuries to two others. Subsequent to the attack, a suicide note was found in which the assailant had spoken about his hatred for immigrants and fear of a takeover (Henleu, 2019).
17	10/1/2015	A student at Umpqua Community College shot and killed nine people and injured nine others. He was described as antireligious and a white supremacist. (Van Brunt, Murphy and Zedginidze; 2017). In addition to complaining about being isolated and denied sexual relationships with women, he expresses strong racist thoughts in his manifesto, "The black man is the most vile creature on the planet. He is a beast beyond measure...Africa would be better off without the black man, they should be executed and the black queen should take over Africa. After all, it was black men who made it inferior" (Anderson, 2017).
18	6/17/2015	The attacker targeted a Black church in Charleston, SC and killed nine African Americans. He posted a manifesto he wrote before the attack describing his motivation, "I have no choice. I am not in the position to, alone, go into the ghetto and fight. I chose Charleston because it is most historic city in my state, and at one time had the highest ratio of blacks to Whites in the country. We have no skinheads, no real KKK, no one doing anything but talking on the Internet. Well someone has to have the bravery to take it to the real world, and I guess that has to be me" (Bernstein, Horwitz, Holley 2015, p. 1).
19	4/13/2014	A KKK member who was also a neo-Nazi entered two different scenes, a Jewish retirement center and Jewish community center, and killed one and two people, respectively (Stucker and Schoichet, 2014).
20	8/5/2012	A white supremacist used a semiautomatic weapon to murder six people during an attack on a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. The attacker's connection to the white supremacist movement was well documented: he had been a member of the neo-Nazi rock bands End Empathy and Definite Hate (Van Brunt, Murphy & Zedginidze; 2017).
21	7/22/2011	The Norway attacker detonated a bomb, killing eight young people, and then killed an additional 69 youths on Utøya Island in Norway. He believed his attack was justified, and he wrote a 1,500-page manifesto about the evils of the Muslim population and how it should be eradicated from Norway. Prior to his attack, he collected military-style weapons and clothing, going so far as to create a fictitious uniform for himself, emulating a modern-day Knights Templar (Van Brunt, Murphy & Zedginidze; 2017).

Social Media and Extremist Thoughts: Gateway to Radicalization

Leaders of hate groups are tech savvy to the extent they use traditional social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter in addition to such chat sites as 8chan, 4chan, the Telegram, and sites popular with youth such as TikTok, YouTube, and iFunny (Flanagan et al., 2019). Social media is playing a role in the contagion of a hate mindset and related violence.

Law enforcement should be aware of how social media is used to spread the philosophy of extremist views and how skilled the terrorist groups are at targeting youth by identifying their interests in order to lure them into extremist ideology and related violence. Most disconcerting is the fact that electronic media has provided a forum, not only for future shooters to post their rants and collect injustices, but also to host dozens of hate groups. In fact, it didn't take experts long to connect the title of the New Zealand shooter's manifesto to "The Great Replacement" (Christchurch attacker, 2019).

In the field of threat assessment, we use the term "injustice collector" to describe the overarching mindset of extremist shooters (O'Toole, 2000). While, there are numerous biopsychosocial factors (Langman, 2017) associated with extremist shooters, experts agree that injustice collecting stands at the forefront in terms of motivation (O'Toole, 2014).

The themes in the New Zealand shooter's previous social media posts, the music playing in his vehicle on the way to the first mosque, and his manifesto provide clear evidence of the injustices he had collected. While he may have endured or perceived injustices directed at him throughout his life, it is likely he learned of the societal "injustices" through various forms of media. There were several phrases immediately recognized as hate verbiage. For example, the title "14 Words" was written on the weapon used in the attack and signifies white nationalist David Lane's statement, "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White children" (SPLC, 2020). Also written on the weapon was, "Here's [your] migration compact." The music playing in his vehicle en route to the shooting was intentionally selected; one can overhear the Chetniks' marching anthem in the background of his recording, an ode to Serbian nationalist paramilitary units from the 1990s. Further, the aforementioned manifesto speaks of revenge toward "foreign invaders" whom he blames for thousands of deaths. Similar ideology is evident in location

choice by white supremacists who committed acts of deadly violence in the U.S. Lives were lost at the 2015 Charleston, South Carolina church shooting, the 2017 "Unite the Right" rally in which a white supremacist plowed his vehicle into the crowd, the Walmart shooting in El Paso, TX and others.

While the growth of social media has led to some positive new technologies, services and ways of connecting with the world, it brings certain challenges. As the roads of Rome created the infrastructure for its growth, they additionally created the access that led to the empire's downfall. In our follow-up work building on the foundation of this article, we will offer some suggestions to identify concerning writing and speech, conduct an evidenced based analysis of risk, and ensure prevention and education programming that pushes back on the unfettered growth of hate speech and ideology.

Conclusion

Moving forward, it is time that the world begins to take seriously the violent outward manifestations of white supremacist hatred that is rationalized by Generation Identity. Though we like to think "it can't happen here," it is happening and will continue to happen, especially if we are in denial with our eyes wide shut, and online sites like YouTube continue to allow the posting of real-life carnage. Research suggests that in the two weeks following a highly publicized incident, similar venues should be on high alert. But the authors have learned as of late, the two weeks seem to now span across years, especially due to 24/7 extremist content online. Rampage, targeted, and mass shootings are contagious and various forms of media are contributing to the overall expansion of white supremacist hate-based ideology.

With the problem of rising white nationalism defined in this paper, the authors will publish a second article in *The Journal of Behavioral Intervention Teams* (JBIT) in Fall 2020 entitled, "Opposing the Rise of Terrorism through the Nationalistic White Agenda: A Three-Tiered Approach." The tiers are: 1) increased attention and awareness to objectified and hardened speech on social media, 2) an evidence-based analysis of these social media posts by law enforcement and BIT/CARE teams in K-12 and college/university settings, 3) and further development and deployment of educational and prevention programs.

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