

Tradition and Authoritarianism as a Solution to Social Decay- An Analysis of Canadian Right-Wing Extremism Online

by

Kayla Preston

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts

at

Dalhousie University  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
April 2020

© Copyright by Kayla Preston, 2020

## **Dedication**

To my wonderful cohort and friends. Thank you for the laughs and the fond memories.

## Table of Contents

<i>List of Figures</i> .....	v
<i>Abstract</i> .....	vi
<i>List of Abbreviations Used</i> .....	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i> .....	viii
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b> .....	1
Canadian Context .....	2
Extremism in the United States .....	4
Right-Wing Groups in This Study.....	6
Gaps in Current Research.....	7
<b>Chapter 2: Common Worlds and Whiteness Theory- Analyzing Online Content</b> .....	10
Race and Right-Wing Extremism.....	10
Politics and Political Ideologies.....	11
The Internet.....	12
Theoretical Framework.....	14
<i>Critical Whiteness Theory</i> .....	14
<i>Sociology of Critical Capacity</i> .....	17
Limitations.....	20
<b>Chapter 3: Analysis of Online Content</b> .....	22
Benefits and Challenges to Online Research .....	22
Data .....	23
Data Collection .....	24
Data Analysis- Content Analysis .....	25
Variables and Strategies of Coding.....	26
Summary.....	29
<b>Chapter 4: Findings: Claims about Canadian Identity, Belonging, and Politics</b> .....	30
Overview of Canadian Identity is White .....	32
<i>Identity and Whiteness</i> .....	32
<i>A Lack of Assimilation</i> .....	35
Overview of Equating Canadian Values to Traditional Values .....	37
<i>Canadian Values</i> .....	37
<i>Queerness and the Authority of the Parent</i> .....	39
<i>The Media</i> .....	42
Overview of Social Decay .....	45
<i>Increase in Crime</i> .....	46

<i>Increase in Illegal Immigration</i> .....	47
<b>Overview of Implementation of Authoritarian Governments</b> .....	<b>50</b>
<i>Distrust of Governmental Institutions</i> .....	50
<i>Vilification of the Liberal Party</i> .....	53
<i>Valorization of Right-Wing Governments</i> .....	54
<b>Summary</b> .....	<b>57</b>
<b>Chapter 5: Using Mundane Language to Make Key Claims</b> .....	<b>59</b>
<b>Connection to the Bigger Story</b> .....	<b>60</b>
<i>Canadian identity</i> .....	60
<i>Canadian Values are Traditional Values</i> .....	63
<i>Social Decay</i> .....	65
<i>Authoritarian Government</i> .....	67
<b>Summary</b> .....	<b>69</b>
<b>Chapter 6: Conclusion</b> .....	<b>70</b>
<b>Study Contributions</b> .....	<b>70</b>
<i>Studying Right-Wing Extremism in Canada</i> .....	70
<i>Studying Extremism Online</i> .....	71
<i>Extremist Groups and Mundane Language</i> .....	73
<b>Relevance</b> .....	<b>74</b>
<b>Summary</b> .....	<b>75</b>
<b>References</b> .....	<b>77</b>
<b>Appendix 1- Initial Observation Keywords</b> .....	<b>92</b>
<b>Appendix 2- Number of Posts Coded in Each Theme</b> .....	<b>93</b>
<b>Appendix 3- Hierachal Coding Structure</b> .....	<b>94</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1 Example of Coding.....	28
Figure 2 "About" Tab from ID Canada Webpage .....	32
Figure 3 "White Guilt" Poster from ID Canada.....	34
Figure 4 "Break the Shackles of White Guilt" Tab from ID Canada Webpage.....	34
Figure 5 Yellow Vests Canada Post#74.....	36
Figure 6 "Resource Competition" ID Canada Website.....	36
Figure 7 Soldiers of Odin-BC Information Poster.....	38
Figure 8 "ID Canada's Role" from ID Canada's Webpage .....	39
Figure 9 Soldiers of Odin-BC Post#16 .....	40
Figure 10 Soldiers of Odin-BC Post#83 .....	41
Figure 11 Soldiers of Odin-BC Post#52 .....	42
Figure 12 Soldiers of Odin-BC Post#77 .....	43
Figure 13 Yellow Vests Canada Post#72.....	44
Figure 14 ID Canada Post#79 .....	45
Figure 15 Soldiers of Odin-BC Post#60 .....	46
Figure 16 Soldiers of Odin-BC Post#15 .....	47
Figure 17 ID Canada Mountie Poster .....	48
Figure 18 Yellow Vests Canada Post#60.....	49
Figure 19 ID Canada Post#69 .....	50
Figure 20 Yellow Vests Canada Post#55.....	51
Figure 21 Yellow Vests Canada Post#64.....	52
Figure 22 Yellow Vests Canada Post#56.....	53
Figure 23 Yellow Vests Canada Post#66.....	54
Figure 24 Yellow Vests Canada Post#51.....	55
Figure 25 Yellow Vests Canada Post#45.....	56
Figure 26 ID Canada Post#61 .....	57

## **Abstract**

Recently, Canadian researchers have turned their attention to online right-wing extremism. For this research I conducted a content analysis of 300 Facebook and Twitter posts from the accounts of three Canadian right-wing extremist groups: Yellow Vests Canada, ID Canada and the Soldiers of Odin BC. My research examines the key claims right-wing extremist groups make about Canadian identity, belonging and politics and how they justify these claims. I found that they make four key claims on social media: that Canadian identity is white, that Canadian values are traditional values, that society is decaying, and that authoritarian governments should be elected. However, these claims are not overt, rather right-wing extremist groups discuss apolitical topics such as rising crime and misplaced white guilt. These topics together convey a particular message that is in keeping with what literature suggests are extremist groups ideological beliefs such as racial nationalism, strong states, and online mobilization.

### **List of Abbreviations Used**

BIPOC	Black, Indigenous and People of Colour
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
C.A.S.I.S	Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ID Canada	Identitarian Canada
Soldiers of Odin-BC	Soldiers of Odin- British Columbia
U.S.	United States

## **Acknowledgements**

I would first like to thank my parents for always supporting me throughout my academic career. I know that at times it has not been easy, and the road has not been straightforward, as it has taken me far from home, but I will always appreciate your encouragement during this adventure. To my supportive partner Katrina, thank you for making sacrifices so that I could focus on research, writing and editing this past year. I would also like to thank you for always supporting my dreams, no matter how big. This thesis would not have been possible without your unconditional encouragement that has not wavered even during a global pandemic.

I would also like to thank my supervisor Dr. Fiona Martin and committee members Dr. Laura Eramian and Dr. Howard Ramos for their guidance, support and advice during this process. Working with these great mentors has made my academic journey at Dalhousie University immensely more enriching. Thank you to the many members of Dalhousie University's sociology and social anthropology department for their encouragement and enthusiasm for my research during my time in Halifax.

Finally, I would like to thank my cohort and the great friends that I have made these past two years. You made Halifax feel like home through your support, encouragement and kindness. I can't wait to watch the great things that you all will do.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

On January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017, Alex Bissonnette killed six people as he opened fire at the Québec City Islamic Cultural Centre (Keith, 2019). Unfortunately, this horrific act provided inspiration for violent hate crimes, guaranteeing that it would not be the last time right-wing extremists committed violence in a multicultural country. On the afternoon of March 15, 2019, in Christchurch, New Zealand, a gunman opened fire in two mosques during afternoon prayer. That gunman killed 50 people present at the mosques; the youngest victim was only three years old (Coaston, 2019). The shooter stated in his so-called ‘white nationalist manifesto’ that he committed this terrorist attack because of his belief in the “great replacement” of the white race through mass immigration. He also live-streamed the event on Facebook so that like-minded individuals could watch the death of those he claimed have replaced white people (Coaston, 2019). The Christchurch New Zealand shooter had Bissonnette’s name inscribed on his gun as a tribute to the Canadian terrorist (Keith, 2019). Canada’s right-wing extremist violence is now center stage in a growing global threat.

Canada is a unique location for the analysis of right-wing extremist groups given the nation’s stated commitment to multiculturalism since the 1980s and its hate crime and propaganda laws that have existed in Canada since 1970 (Walker, 2018, p.3-4) Despite these commitments and laws, right-wing groups attempt to undermine multicultural claims of racial inclusion. For example, there have been calls to create special councils to address overt racism, such as racist graffiti, in Toronto and Ottawa (CBC News, 2019). How then do right-wing extremist groups make their claims known in a nation that has explicit multicultural policies, such as the 1988 Multicultural Act, created to preserve different cultures in Canada (Paquette, Beauregard & Gunter, 2017, p.277)?

The main research questions underlying this study is: 1) what key claims do right-wing extremist groups make about Canadian identity and belonging as well as politics; and 2) how do they justify these claims? I am interested in answering these questions because there has been little recent research on how Canadian right-wing extremist groups in particular make distinctions between who does and does not belong in the state on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

Through a content analysis, the study examines the online presence of three Canadian based right-wing-extremist groups (Yellow Vests Canada, ID Canada, and The Soldiers of Odin-BC), asking how each group discusses identity, politics and values. Drawing on the sociology of critical capacity (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006) and critical whiteness studies (DiAngelo, 2011), my findings suggest that right-wing extremist groups in Canada make apolitical claims which convey more alarming beliefs about Canadian identity, belonging and politics. These important group beliefs are what I call the bigger story. This bigger story is that extremist groups feel like white Canadians are under threat. This is similar to Hochschild's (2016) deep story found among rural Louisianan GOP and Tea Party supporters who feel left behind by progressive federal policies which they believe are helping racialized minorities and women get jobs and get ahead in the U.S. (p.135-136).

## **Canadian Context**

Perry and Scrivens (2018) state that right-wing extremism has persisted in Canada because extremism is always present in communities that have a history of colonization and racism, which are both central to Canadian history (p.173). However, these features often go undiscussed outside of academic circles. For example, many Canadians refuse to acknowledge that they live on Indigenous land (Denis, 2015, p.228). This means that when right-wing

extremist groups promote beliefs about the treatment of other non-white people, such as denying Indigenous treaties and rights, they can do so without seeming controversial.

Canadian society has also had a significant history of normalized racism (Cho, 2018; MacDonald & Hudson, 2012), sometimes supported through Canada's legal system (Perry and Scrivens, 2018, p. 173). Parent and Ellis (2014) argue that racism has often been overlooked in Canadian society, and there has been a lack of research in Canada connecting right-wing extremism to Canada's racist past (p. 3). Examples of normative and unquestioned racism in Canada include the history of residential schools (MacDonald & Hudson, 2012); the Chinese head tax, which also resulted in Canada's first photographic surveillance against Chinese immigrants (Cho, 2018); and the displacement of African-Nova Scotian communities (Rutland, 2011). The prevalence of the Ku Klux Klan in Canadian provinces such as Ontario, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, also provide a stark example of the normalization of racism in Canada (Bartley, 1995; Lund, 2006; Parent and Ellis, 2014, p. 9; Perry and Scrivens, 2018).

Right-wing extremist groups thrive off of the country's colonial legacy. For example, ID Canada (a group that will be analyzed in this research) have attracted members to their group by protesting the destruction of colonial statues such as the statue of Cornwallis in Halifax (ID Canada, 2018). Because Canadian history of colonization often goes unacknowledged, extremist groups claim that such efforts are an attempt to preserve the past.

Canada has also introduced extensive hate crime laws and has invested a lot of money into research to counter hate propaganda. One of the first hate crimes laws in Canada was introduced in 1970 which combatted discrimination against "identifiable groups" (Walker, 2018, p.3). In 1985 Canada introduced more exhaustive hate crime laws into the Criminal Code, these new laws made incitement and promotion of hatred illegal in Canada (Government of Canada,

1985). Recently more attention has been paid to right-wing extremism in the Canadian criminal justice system. In June of 2019 Canada added neo-Nazi white supremacist groups to the Official List of Terrorist Organization, which includes the addition of these groups to the Criminal Code (Platt, 2019). The two groups added to the Official List included Blood and Honour and Combat 18 (Platt, 2019). Law enforcement has reported these two groups as active hate groups in Canada for eight years and have charged members with assault against visible minorities since 2011 (Platt, 2019). In the spring of 2019, the Federal government also gave Canadian-based researchers \$366,000 in funding to study the prevalence of right-wing extremism in Canada (Boutilier, 2019). This is good news, as research on extremism in Canada has found that extremist groups are more active online than previously thought (Perry & Scrivens, 2016, p.824).

Right-wing extremist presence online in Canada did not translate into votes during the 2019 election. These groups still lay at the fringes of Canadian society and have not gained the same electoral success as some right-wing extremist individuals and parties in places such as France (Wilcox, Weinberg, Eubank, 2003), Italy (Mancosu, 2014), and arguably the United States where the Republican party has recently thrived off of anti-immigration and nationalist sentiments (Gökarıksel, 2017). Canadian right-wing extremist groups' lack of political success is evident in the People's Party leader Maxime Bernier's failure to secure any seats in the House of Commons during the federal election (Quan, 2019) and the Conservative Party's failure to run on a more socially conservative pro-life traditional family values platform (Wherry, 2019).

## **Extremism in the United States**

For researchers who study right-wing extremism in English speaking provinces and territories in Canada, it is important to understand the American experience. English Canadians consume American film, television, news and music (Flaherty & Manning, 1993). Canadians

also have knowledge about American politics and political climate that is often not reciprocated (Gravelle, 2014, p.136). Given the close trade, media, political and even familial ties between Canadians and Americans, the political climate in the United States does impact public opinion in Canada (Gravelle, 2014, p.136). Understanding the current state of American right-wing extremism can therefore help researchers unpack the rise in extremism in Canada.

Extremist ideas of racial supremacy have always existed in the United States. However, their presence in mainstream society has not been consistent. In the past 10 years, there have been three major social and technological changes that have influenced the increase in right-wing extremism in mainstream American society: the start of the recession in 2007; the election of “left-leaning” governments, such as the Obama administration that symbolize an attempt through politics to address inequality (e.g. gender, racial inequalities); and the election of right-leaning governments (such as Donald Trump) as a response (Neiwert, 2017).

Currently, the United States is considered a major location for right-wing extremist activity on the world stage (Jones, 2018). Although extremist groups and right-wing extremist activity differs between Canada and the United States, with the United States having more active right-wing extremist groups that engage in offline demonstrations (Klein, 2019), extremist groups in Canada and the United States have recently interacted and influenced one another. For example, there have been instances where right-wing extremist groups that existed in Canada have fled to the United States to avoid detection or persecution. Resistance Records, a white power record company founded in Ontario moved their company to the U.S. for fear of propaganda charges in Canada (Perry & Scrivens, 2016, p.828). More recently, a Canadian military personnel was discovered to be a part of a right-wing militia group, The Base. Once the Canadian media revealed his affiliation to The Base he fled to the United States. During his time

in the United States, he organized paramilitary training exercises to pass on his knowledge of combat to other members of the group (Makuch, Lamoureux & Kamel, 2019). Hate crime rates in Canada and in the U.S. have also fluctuated in the past three years. In 2017 the FBI reported that hate crimes in the U.S. rose 17% (Stevenson, 2019, p.233), while Statistics Canada stated that hate crimes in Canada rose 47% between 2016 and 2017 with 2,073 incidents reported (The Daily, 2018), and decreased by 13% with 1,798 incidents reported in 2018 (The Daily, 2020). Racially motivated hate crimes made up 43% of those reported in Canada in 2017 (The Daily, 2018), and 44% of those reported in 2018 (The Daily 2020). Although extremism in Canada and the United States have had different stimulants, they do share many common similarities.

### **Right-Wing Groups in This Study**

For this research, I examined three different right-wing extremist groups. Starting with the newest group, Yellow Vests Canada, has been active on Facebook since 2018. Yellow Vests Canada attempts to take advantage of the more left-leaning Yellow Vests movement in France. One of Yellow Vests Canada's main positions, besides being opposed to the carbon tax, is ending illegal immigration and only allowing entry to immigrants who will "successfully integrate" into the nation (Yellow Vests Canada, 2019). The Yellow Vests have also held protests in Canada since the spring and summer of 2018. Although Yellow Vests Canada is a new group, Evan Balgord, director of the Canadian Anti-Hate Network has stated that members of the Yellow Vests in Canada "have the greatest potential for radicalization leading to violence" (Mussett, 2019).

ID Canada has been active on Twitter since 2017. ID Canada defines itself as protectors of European-Canadian identity and traditional western values. They also claim to fight against diversity. Stemming out of the identitarian movement in the United States which focuses on

spreading nationalist white racial identity, ID Canada states that the most important part of a person's sense of self is their identity, particularly their ethnic identity. The members of this group label themselves 'ethnic Canadians' living in Canada (ID Canada, 2019).

The Soldiers of Odin Canada is a national group modeled on the Soldiers of Odin factions in the United States. Originally founded in Sweden by a neo-Nazi, the Soldiers of Odin is an anti-immigration group that states that they "want to protect Canadian laws and values" (Frontburner, 2019, 5:40). The Soldiers of Odin have chapters all across Canada. In this analysis, I examined the Soldiers of Odin British Columbia (BC) branch, it has more Facebook followers and interactions (i.e. posts per day) than any other Soldiers of Odin branches, including the National chapter during the time of data collection. This Facebook page was created in March 2016. In BC, the Soldiers of Odin conduct street patrols where they walk through communities dressed in their "Soldiers of Odin" leather vests to "keep the community safe" (Frontburner, 2019).

At the time of data collection these three groups were very active on social media sites, sometimes posting two to three times per day. Each of these groups is also Canadian based. All three had open, publicly available social media accounts. Having open access social media posts allows extremist groups to spread their ideas and beliefs to more people. In this research, I will explore how these groups refer to Canadian politics and how they describe their own political stances.

## **Gaps in Current Research**

Right-wing extremist groups, and right-wing violence, are on the rise in Canada, particularly online (Boutilier, 2018). Extensive research is beginning to be done in Canada

examining the risk of right-wing extremism on online platforms (cf. Boutilier, 2019). The federal government has also recently invested 45 million dollars into strategies to combat racial discrimination and promote multiculturalism in Canada (The Government of Canada, 2019). Included in this amount is five million dollars that is being used to create digital literacy programs across Canada to combat problems such as online extremism (The Government of Canada, 2019). Research on right-wing extremism in Canada can help these programs, and future initiatives respond to extremism, especially as it changes so quickly on online forms. Although research on right-wing extremism has been done in the United States (cf. Horne, 2009; Lipset & Raab, 1970; Jackson & Shekhovtsov, 2014) and within the European context—for example in Germany (cf. Miller-Idriss, 2017; Lewis, 1991; Salzborn, 2016)—more research could be done on right-wing extremism online in Canada. Canada is a unique site of investigation because it has a history of colonization while also having federally implemented policies of multiculturalism. Research on extremism in the Canadian context can tell us what key claims right-wing extremist groups make, even if many people in the country where they live disagree with their views.

Studies of extremism online typically look at online chat forums or webpages (cf. Daniels, 2009; Klein, 2010), with little research conducted on Canadian right-wing extremist groups' use of social media. However, Richard Spencer, an alt-right leader and founder of the term also stated that online mediums have helped to facilitate mobilization of the right-wing and have been instrumental in the spread of right-wing anti-immigration ideas and the creation of an ethnostate (Lough, 2018). The lack of literature on online right-wing extremism in the Canadian context is a significant gap given that they are becoming active on social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter. Nadeau and Helly's (2016) study looked at the radicalization of the right on Facebook pages in Québec and the politics of that region. However, since that publication, there

has been very little research on social media platforms. My research attempts to help fill this gap.

Content analysis of social media platforms like Facebook cannot explain why right-wing extremism is on the rise, or how to best eradicate these groups. It can, however, describe which ideas right-wing extremist groups think are important and worth sharing (Lupton & Jutel, 2015, p.130). Research suggests that right-wing extremist groups are increasingly preoccupied with race (Daniels, 2009), strong states (Mudde, 1995), and online mobilization (Klein, 2010). I want to identify if this is the case in Canada, and if not, I want to identify what themes are discussed by right-wing extremist groups. The analysis of social media content can provide an understanding of how members of the right-wing describe themselves and others. The main objective of this research is to address how the Yellow Vests Canada, ID Canada and the Soldiers of Odin BC speak about identity, belonging and politics in Canada.

In this thesis I ask: how do right-wing extremist groups frame discussions about identity and belonging, and politics? I found that right-wing extremist groups in Canada use mundane discourse, ideas and beliefs that are not uncommon in Canada when talking about these topics. Pascale (2019, p.11-12) defines mundane discourse as "... the linguistic delivery device through which weaponized language enters the mainstream.". I develop this analysis by drawing on studies of race, right-wing extremism online, the sociology of critical capacity (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006), and critical whiteness theory (DiAngelo, 2011; Kincheloe, 1999). In chapter two of my thesis, I briefly outline this literature and its importance to my study. In chapter three, I detail how I conducted a content analysis of the social media posts and webpages of right-wing extremist groups. In chapters four and five, I outline my findings and my analysis, describing the apolitical claims extremist groups make when talking about identity, belonging and politics. In chapter six, I conclude by summarizing my findings.

## **Chapter 2: Common Worlds and Whiteness Theory- Analyzing Online Content**

The sociological study of right-wing extremism is a field that is growing (Tetrault, 2019). I argue that instead of focusing on the connection between race, political ideology and the Internet, the majority of research on right-wing extremism has focused on radicalization and violence (Sivenbring, 2019), and has not connected right-wing extremism to their key claims about identity, belonging and politics online. The literature has also tended to focus on recommendations for policy and law enforcement (cf. Perry, Hofmann & Scrivens, 2018), but does not consider extremist's key claims on popular online platforms.

### **Race and Right-Wing Extremism**

Right-wing extremist groups frequently make claims about who does and who does not belong in the nation (Nadeau & Helly, 2016, p.9). They do so by talking about a homogenous European identity in North America (Anderson, 2015, p.11; Bobo, 2017, p.S86). In Canada, European ethnicity is celebrated as the ethnicity of the nation. This is evident in the celebration of Christian holidays such as Christmas and Easter where businesses across Canada shut down, similar treatment is not given to holidays celebrated in other religions. While this runs counter to Canadian multiculturalism, as Bannerji argues, European Canadians have always made the rules on who does and does not get accepted into Canadian multiculturalism, which traditions will be celebrated, and what diversity will look like (2000, p.551).

Although ethnic nationalism is a common characteristic of right-wing extremist groups, they also promote the idea of *translocal whiteness*. Daniels (2009) defines translocal whiteness as a racial identity that is meant to transcend geographical location and link all those who identify as white under a global white identity, which is used to foster racial superiority on a local level (p.7). For example, North American white supremacist groups often reference a

shared European ancestry (Baldwin, 1963, p.107; Daniels, 2009, p.7), as well as promote the unquestioned superiority of their European “founding fathers”, and descendants in the Global North. This way of thinking is so normalized in Canadian society that streets and buildings have in the past been named after European settlers. These practices have recently been questioned and action has been taken to rename these streets, and parks and take down colonial statues.

### **Politics and Political Ideologies**

Mudde also found that another common characteristic of right-wing extremism is the belief in the *strong state* (1995, p.206). Some characteristics of the strong state include efforts to strengthen state militarism, anti-pluralism, and law-and-order (Mudde, 1995, p. 216). Right-wing extremist groups also believe that socially conservative national values such as family values and tough-on-crime policies must be maintained to avoid criminality (Anahita, 2006; Mudde, 1995, p.216). Simi and Futrell (2010) argue that right-wing extremist groups are often in favour of a government that adopts aggressive forms of social control (p.3).

The strong state is not to be confused with *big government*, which right-wing extremist groups oppose. Right-wing extremist groups often define big governments as any political party or government that would violate libertarian values, such as freedom of expression and unnecessarily impinges on the lives of their citizens through regulation and taxes (Madrick & O'Brien, 2010, p.15). Even the phrase strong state evokes a sense of superiority and security. Right-wing extremist groups appeal to these beliefs when they claim that their governments or elected officials will provide a strong state.

Right-wing extremist groups often foster resentment toward those they believe are “undeserving” of the benefits of capitalism, such as politicians and immigrants who are said to “steal jobs” from the “deserving” (Salmela & von Scheve, 2017, p.575). This is another critique

of big government, as even conservative politicians often critique big government for creating too much of a social safety net for people who they believe are undeserving (Bulley & Sokhi-Bulley, 2014, p.455). Racialized people are also labelled as “underserving” by right-wing groups. Stanley found that racist groups use the term “undeserving” in order to avoid using racial terms to describe workers or citizens, with white people being considered the most deserving of jobs and government assistance (2018, p.83). Right-wing extremist groups use political and economic arguments in order to cover their covert racial sentiments.

In order to justify enacting violence, even violent discourses, right-wing extremist groups often also adopt authoritarian views (Altemeyer, 1996; Radkiewicz, 2016). In his canonical text *The Authoritarian Specter*, Altemeyer (1996) argues that right-wing authoritarianism is characterized by three main attitudes: authoritarian submission, defined by submitting to worthy authority figures (typically a right-wing leader); authoritarian aggression, typified by aggression toward a particular group of people deemed as Other; and conventionalism, or an adherence to traditional gender and religious social norms (Altemeyer, 1996, p.6, p.11). All three authoritarian attitudes validate violent actions against those outside of the nation-state (Altemeyer, 1996, p.3). My research explores how Canadian right-wing extremist groups use their support for authoritarian views as well as their opposition to big government when making claims about Canadian identity and belonging and politics.

## **The Internet**

Right-wing extremist groups also actively mobilize nationalist sentiments and beliefs in the strong state online (cf. Blee & Creasap, 2010, p.277; Daniels, 2009; Gerstenfeld, Grant & Chiang, 2003; Klein, 2010). Brown (2009) even suggests that the Internet is the fastest-growing communication medium for extremist groups (p.192-193). However, why do extremist groups

use the Internet to mobilize these beliefs? Some studies have attempted to answer this question (Gerstenfeld et al., 2003; Scrivens, Davies & Frank, 2018). For example, Gerstenfeld et al. (2003) conclude that the Internet is seen as a viable platform for right-wing extremism because of its low barriers to entry and near-instant communication (2003, p.37). The Internet is also virtually costless, anyone who can get on a computer can participate in online group discussions (Earl & Kimport, 2011, p.66; Simi & Futrell, 2006, p.118). It also permits people to interact both individually and as groups (Daniels, 2009, p.103; Gerstenfeld et al., 2003, p.32). Because the Internet allows users to be anonymous and has little regulation, people online can transgress norms of conduct that would not be tolerated in in-person interactions (Blee & Creasap, 2010, p.277; Zimmermann, 2003, p.219). Blee and Creasap (2010) also found that right-wing extremist groups may use online mainstream platforms that everyday people can interact with to promote group beliefs such as anti-immigration sentiments (p.277). The Internet acts as shield to protect people from interacting with those that oppose their beliefs, while also giving extremist groups a platform to express these beliefs and reach far more people than a poster or a book ever could.

Researchers are also looking at how the structure of online platforms might promote extremist growth and message mobilization (Ben-David & Matamoros-Fernández, 2016). For example, Internet platforms, by their very nature, provide ample opportunity to study whiteness. This is because policies implemented by Facebook and Twitter to protect users from “offensive” or pirated content are based on western values (e.g. not showing specific types of nudity as oppose to censoring offensive language) as well as corporate interests (such as pirated music) (Selwyn, 2019, p.62). What we see on social media also depends on the posts, advertisements and pages that we follow, as algorithms tailor online experience so that individuals are often seeing much of the same content and may not be exposed to alternative views, opinions and

beliefs (Earl & Garrett, 2017, p.486). Social media community guidelines and policies ignore or are slow to react to overtly offensive language such as racial slurs that are derogatory towards Black, indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC) while they also protect whiteness and capitalist corporations (Selwyn, 2019, p.63). This may generate a preference for less extreme language on right-wing online platforms; the term ‘illegal alien’, although dehumanizing, would not stand out or be deleted on any online platform as it is common language, for example (Pascale, 2019, p.12). The very nature of online platform design opens up opportunity for researchers to use critical race theories to study online extremism.

## **Theoretical Framework**

I used critical whiteness theory (Frankenberg, 1993) and the sociology of critical capacity (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006) as the two key theoretical frameworks for this project. Critical whiteness theory, specifically the concepts of the crisis of whiteness and white fragility (DiAngelo, 2011; Kincheloe, 1999, p.171), assisted in my examination of racial discourse within online extremism because it highlights how white people may react when white racial superiority is challenged. Boltanski and Thévenot’s (1999) sociology of critical capacity also helped to unpack the claims that right-wing extremist groups in Canada make online.

### ***Critical Whiteness Theory***

A common misconception about white supremacy is that it is a personal prejudice or a psychological state. Critical whiteness theory highlights the importance of analyzing white supremacist structures to revise these misconceptions (Meer, 2019, p.502). It is not possible to study whiteness without tracing it back to the colonial structures that have put it in a place of superiority. For example, white European culture is normative in Canadian society. Although Indigenous people were the first people living on the land that is now Canada, the two official

languages in Canada are English and French. Critical whiteness theory is a useful tool to analyze how right-wing extremist groups describe Canadian identity and belonging as it takes the historical legacies of colonization into account.

I used two key concepts from this theory in my research: white fragility (DiAngelo, 2011) and the crisis of whiteness (Kincheloe, 1999). White fragility is defined by DiAngelo as:

...a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. (2011, p.57)

This phenomenon is not new; it is cited in the work of postcolonial theorists and early critical race theorists such as Du Bois (1920/2003). Du Bois, a key figure in the literature on whiteness, argued that white anger is often easily triggered and can even arise by the presence of Black people in historically white spaces (1920/2003, p.47). White fragility exists in spaces where white people believe their authority is under question or their superiority is under threat. The sudden rise in right-wing extremist social media accounts may be influenced by white fragility as extremist groups lash out because they feel threatened in a country that has been predominately white.

White fragility is crucial in understanding reactions to who has a claim to nationhood in the Global North. The fragility of the white person is then not fixed onto the subject, but also the spaces and places that a person occupies or sees as their own. Anderson (2015) discusses white fragility in his account of the *white space* (p.10). Anderson states that spaces become white in society when they are believed to belong to the white majority; this could apply to neighborhoods, as well as public and private school systems (2015, p.12). When a person who is perceived as Other enters or questions these spaces, they could be at risk of institutional violence such as police profiling or questioning (Anderson, 2015, p.14).

When the Other violates the white space, this may lead to a crisis of whiteness. The crisis of whiteness is defined as a response that occurs when white people are held accountable for the violent actions of European colonialism (Kincheloe, 1999, p.171). A crisis of whiteness can occur when the dominant culture is challenged or the norm is disrupted and those within the majority panic, becoming more attached to their cultural backgrounds, such as European descent (Merkl, 2003, p.4). Kincheloe (1999) states that right-wing extremist groups often capitalize on this emotional response, which he describes as white plight or white fear (p.172). Right-wing extremist groups exemplify the crisis of whiteness when they state that they are being attacked by diversity and that there is an anti-white conspiracy taking hold in western countries (Kincheloe, 1999, p.172).

Critical whiteness theory, white fragility, and the crisis of whiteness inform my understanding of the key claims extremist groups make about Canadian identity and belonging, and politics at this current time period in Canada when many people are experiencing racial consciousness. Racial consciousness being the sudden realization of one's racial privilege (Flowers, 2016, p.1060). For example, more people outside of academia are being exposed to terms such as white privilege and white superiority, CBC has even published articles on white privilege, making discussion about whiteness more mainstream (Inutiq, 2019; Wright, 2019). However, the crisis of whiteness and white fragility are not overt. For example, when many white people are told by coworkers, relatives or friends that racialized individuals have a hard time finding employment, they may get defensive and argue that white people are actually the victims of job loss due to their race (DiAngelo, 2011, p.57). In my study, I ask what claims Canadian right-wing extremist groups make about identity and belonging. My second theory helps to unpack these claims.

## *Sociology of Critical Capacity*

The sociology of critical capacity, associated with the work of French scholars Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot (1999; 2006), analyzes actors' and groups' ability to understand and justify their behaviour within disputes. With this theory, researchers can understand disputes by examining the different perspectives that actors bring into the conflict. Boltanski and Thévenot's (2006) sociology of critical capacity is in fact designed to study conflict between groups or individuals, with both sides of the conflict being considered. This theory was also originally used to analyze situations and conflicts in France; however, I am using an adaptation of this theory to only look at one side of a conflict in a Canadian context. This is ultimately a limitation of my study which I discuss below. I used this theory in my research because I am interested in how right-wing extremist groups express their claims.

A key argument in the sociology of critical capacity that is useful in my research is that the justification of ideas and beliefs must be accompanied by tests of validity to solve disputes and conflict (Kurnicki & Sternberg 2016, p.265). Tests of validity are defined as a tool used by actors to evaluate how others see the world, usually during an attempt to resolve conflict (Kurnicki & Sternberg 2016, p.271). These tests need to be applied to actors' actions to make sense of conflicts that arise when they disagree about how the world should look or operate (Cloutier, Gond & Bernard, 2017, p.12). For example, if a person values tradition, an action is justified if it appeals to the test of custom. Therefore, if an actor states that it is necessary to attend church on Sundays, in a world that values tradition, that would be seen as valid because it fulfills that world's test of validity - custom (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006, p.173).

The accumulated product of the sociology of critical capacity is represented in Boltanski and Thévenot's (2006) common worlds. Common worlds are defined as "mental maps" of justification used by actors to evaluate the objects, arguments and even other individuals in a dispute (Weber, 2000, p.130). Another way to think of a common world is as a type of perspective or lens through which a person or community sees the world. Boltanski and Thévenot believe, however, that there are multiple worlds that actors can see through. Each world describes different values as worthy and has different rationalizations (such as worthy figures like politicians and higher common principles) that are valid within a social space (Reinecke, van Rommel, & Spicer, 2017, p.49). The common worlds include: the inspired world, the domestic world, the world of fame, the civic world, the market world, and the industrial world (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006, p.159- 203; Patriotta, Gond & Schultz, 2011, p.1810). A seventh world, described as the green world which highlights the need to protect ecosystems, was later created by theorists that use Boltanski and Thévenot to be included with the other common worlds (Jaumier, Daudigeos, & de Lautour, 2017, p.78; Lafaye & Thévenot, 2017, p.287). These worlds are all identified by how actors justify claims within the world, the test of worth that they use, and the figures that are worthy within each world (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006, p.130). For example, the industrial world may judge actions based on their productive value while the world of fame would judge actions and arguments based on the opinion of others (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006, p.178, p.203). I used Boltanski and Thévenot's (1999) sociology of critical capacity to better understand the worlds or social logics that right-wing extremist groups draw on when making their key claims. Although these common worlds were developed to understand dialectic conflict in France, I borrow Boltanski and Thévenot's civic and domestic common worlds in my analysis. There may also be relevant common worlds that exist in the

North American context, however for this research I used Boltanski and Thévenot's original common worlds as a helpful tool to unpack how extremist groups make their key claims.

A common world that was analytically useful for my research was the civic common world. The civic common world was useful for my research because in this world, collective feelings and the interests of the group are the worthiest form of justification (Ten Eyck, 2016, p.224). Right-wing extremist groups can be viewed as a group of like-minded people who often consider themselves a collective (Daniels, 2009, p.46). Beamish and Biggart (2017) state that one test used to justify actions in this common world is to claim that an act adheres to the public good (p.194). Previous research has theorized that the civic world is also highly political as it often relates to the political beliefs of the community, such as civil rights mediated by the state or sovereign figure (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999, p. 371; Mailhot & Langley, 2017, p.261).

I also use the domestic common world as an analytical tool to examine the key claims Canadian right-wing extremist groups make online. Cloutier, Gond, and Bernard (2017) state that in the domestic world worth is validated through traditions, the respect of authority figures, and responsibility (p.11). The domestic common world is a useful tool to examine extremist groups because they also often value hierachal groups structures and traditional values that maintain rather than challenge the norm (Neiwert, 2017, p.4; Perry & Scrivens, 2018, p.171). Vital to the functioning of this world are hierarchical social structures such as the family (Beamish & Biggart, 2017, p.179). The most important test within this common world is trustworthiness, as value is placed on trust within social relations (Camus-Vigue, 2000, p. 220; Lamont & Thévenot, 2000, p.5). An example of this would be the trust that people have in kinship relationships, especially in a patriarchy where a male head of household would be a

worthy individual (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999, p. 370). In my research, I found that right-wing extremist groups often appeal to authority or a strong leader to justify their claims about Canadian politics. I will explore this point more in my analysis.

## **Limitations**

There are a few limitations to my study. The first limitation in this study is my use of Boltanski and Thévenot's (2006) common worlds. These common worlds were developed to unpack dialectic situations and conflicts in France; however, I have adapted them to look at only one side of a conflict in a North American context with Canadian examples. Although this was not the original way for them to be used, I found Boltanski and Thévenot's (2006) domestic and civic common worlds helpful to unpack Canadian right-wing extremist's key claims. That being said, there may be other common worlds more applicable to the North American context that I could have used. Another limitation in my study is that due to language barriers I was only able to study English speaking right-wing extremist groups. There are extensive examples of right-wing extremist activity in Québec (Montpetit, 2019). The emergence of right-wing extremism in Québec is also very different from extremism in English speaking Canada, because of the difference in laws and European influence on Québec's national identity (Nadeau & Helly, 2016). An examination of Québec extremism may also have found different language being used to make claims about identity, belonging and politics than the ones that I found. Another limitation in my research is that I only focused on the similarities in the groups that I analyzed, not the differences. I focused on similarities because I found that the groups shared many common beliefs and opinions. An examination into the differences between the groups may have yielded different results.

I use critical whiteness theory and the sociology of critical capacity to analyze the key claims that Canadian right-wing extremist groups make on their social media pages. Critical whiteness theory and Boltanski and Thévenot's sociology of critical capacity can be used as analytical tools to understand extremist groups key claims about identity, belonging and politics. The methodology that I used to examine the key claims found in this study will now be explored.

## **Chapter 3: Analysis of Online Content**

My research analyzed the online presence (publicly accessible Facebook posts, Twitter posts, and a website) of three Canadian based right-wing extremist groups. I used content analysis to identify how each group discusses Canadian identity and belonging, and politics. The cases analyzed for this research include three right-wing Canadian extremist groups: Yellow Vests Canada, ID Canada, and the Soldiers of Odin-BC. I used qualitative methodology to identify the key claims the groups make on their platforms.

### **Benefits and Challenges to Online Research**

I chose to do a content analysis of online social media posts from the three groups to answer my research question for two reasons. The first is that social media accounts allow researchers to see what the users are saying about a particular topic to a wide audience of people. Much like blog posts that contain opinions and beliefs, social media posts act as a way for users to reach out to like-minded people via a channel where they can publish their own content. The second reason is the feasibility of collecting this data. It would have been very difficult logistically to find participants who self-identify as right-wing extremists to conduct face-to-face interviews or to conduct an ethnography or participant observation among these groups.

By using social media, researchers can also collect data in real-time as it is published and shared online (Steinert-Threlkeld, 2018, p.2). For example, online computer software can conduct data scrapes and automatically collect publicly accessible online content with little effort. This can be an effective way to conduct data collection, especially on constantly updated forums, such as Reddit. Collecting posts in real-time can also allow researchers to understand social phenomena as a snapshot of online life at the time of data collection. For example, because I was able to collect posts immediately as events unfolded, I collected some of the last posts that

the Soldiers of Odin-BC was able to publish before they were banned from Facebook. By doing so I was able to see a snapshot of the claims that this particular group used before they were removed from the platform. Online data collection can provide documentation of social phenomena happening immediately.

There are challenges to online research. Because ideas can be published so fast online, analyzing online content can often feel like trying to hit a moving target. When you think you have collected all the data surrounding a particular discussion in a platform, the group may introduce something new. I also found doing research online challenging because of the way the social media platforms are constructed to change constantly. For example, it is not uncommon for social media platforms to delete a post, restrict a group, or outwardly ban a person or group. When extremist groups are banned, it is also common for them to remerge on Facebook under a different name (Lytvynenko, Silverman, Boutilier & Chown Oved, 2019b). Online platforms change swiftly, even if a particular group is fleeting. Right-wing extremist organizations persist as new groups pop up in their place and banned groups convert to underground online platforms, therefore my research in particular is a snapshot in time of Canadian extremist groups during the time of data collection.

## Data

For this research, I analyzed only Canadian based right-wing extremist groups because I wanted to know which key claims extremist groups make about Canadian identity and belonging, and politics. The cases for this study include three right-wing extremist groups, Yellow Vests Canada, ID Canada and the Soldiers of Odin-BC. I chose to use these groups as my cases because of their online and media presence (cf. Canadian Anti-Hate Network, 2019; Musset, 2019; Parsons, 2019). Of the Canadian right-wing extremist groups that could be identified

online at the point of data collection, these groups also had the largest online following (number of “followers” on social media). The sample frame for this research are the people who post in these groups. At the time of data collection, ID Canada had 1,341 followers on Twitter as they had just switched to this social media site, The Soldiers of Odin-BC had 4,202 “Likes” and had 4,407 people following their Facebook page, and Yellow Vests Canada had 108,906 group members. The sample for this research are the 300 Facebook and Twitter posts and one website that I analyzed. I collected 100 Facebook posts from Yellow Vests Canada, 100 tweets from ID Canada and screenshots of the different tabs of ID Canada’s website, and 100 Facebook posts from the Soldiers of Odin-BC.

## **Data Collection**

I had to shape my data collection to accommodate the fast pace of online extremist platforms. For example, on March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Facebook announced that it would begin to ban white nationalist and white separatist content on their social media site, 12 days after the Christchurch mass shooting (Doffman, 2019). Facebook created this ban after countries such as New Zealand threatened legal action against Facebook executives for their role in the development of right-wing radicalization on their platform (Doffman, 2019). This recent ban comes over a year after Facebook stated that they would be more vigilant in the removal of content that promoted hate, violence and white supremacy from their platform after the Charlottesville attack in August 2017 (Ortutay, 2019).

On April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Facebook banned some Canadian based right-wing extremist groups (Lytvynenko, Silverman, Boutilier & Chown Oved, 2019a). Political commentator Faith Goldy, The Canadian Nationalist Front, and the Soldiers of Odin, including its British Columbian chapter, which I analyzed for this research, are some of the Canadian groups and right-wing

people that are now banned from Facebook (Harris, 2019). I was able to complete data collection before this ban was complete.

I collected 100 social media posts from each group (100 Facebook posts from Yellow Vests Canada, 100 tweets from ID Canada and screenshots of their website, and 100 Facebook posts from the Soldiers of Odin-BC) during a 24-hour period on March 30<sup>th</sup> 2019 to get posts that had been published around the same timeframe. Posts had been published within the past few months and they were collected in chronological order; I did not exclude any posts. I date-stamped the posts I collected with the date of publication, and the date of collection. I then assigned each post a number per its order in the total number of posts I collected for each group.

I captured these posts from the publicly available Facebook or Twitter pages of each group. I collected data from each group's most active social media account (either from Twitter or Facebook). I determined account activity by accessing the amount of content that was published, and how many people followed the account. I also collected data from ID Canada's public website to better understand their collective mission statement and objectives as a constant frame of analysis separate from their social media activity. At the time of data collection, ID Canada's website was the only site remaining of the three groups that I analyzed, so I was not able to collect data from the webpages of Yellow Vests Canada and the Soldiers of Odin-BC. I collected all of this data via screenshot and stored it in a password-protected computer.

### **Data Analysis- Content Analysis**

I used a content analysis to examine the posts I collected. Academics can understand their research participants by examining the themes they use in written documents or through

conversation (Gee, 2005, p.10). Both verbal and written communicative material can be examined using content analysis as a tool (Mayring, 2004, p.266). In this study I used content analysis to examine the social media posts and a website from right-wing extremist groups in Canada. Graneheim, Lindgren and Lundman (2017) argue that content analysis allows for researchers to pull relevant themes from data, which was important for my research. By doing so I was able to see similarities from the posts of three different groups. Research has also stressed the growing need to perform content analysis on social media platforms in order to understand the key ideas and themes that are being shared on these sites (Lai & To, 2015, p.138). Using this method I was able to draw on the key claims that right-wing extremist groups in Canada make about Canadian identity, belonging as well as politics.

### **Variables and Strategies of Coding**

After data collection, I did an initial read through of the posts and webpages. I made notes about any phrases and words that continuously re-appeared in the data. In total, I found 30 different words that were common throughout the three groups; these included the words culture, pride, treason, media, queer and immigration to name a few. A table of these key words is attached below in Appendix 1. Using the literature on race, political ideology and right-wing extremism, I looked for connections between the common words and themes. For example, in the posts that I analyzed, the word corruption was often mentioned. Similarly, literature has identified the belief in the corruption of left-leaning governments as a feature of right-wing political ideology (Mudde, 1995, p. 216). Therefore, the concept of corruption was identified as being common in discussions of political ideology and was grouped under the theme of how extremist groups speak about politics. I found that all of the common words could be characterized under two key primary codes: the first is Canadian identity and belonging and the

second is politics. Belonging is operationally defined as a feeling of closeness to and involvement within a social system (Hagerty et al., 1992, p.173). Identity is operationalized as shared collective social norms, goals, and worldviews that are internalized (Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston & McDermott, 2006, p.696). Canadian identity and belonging are operationalized with the above definition. In the posts that spoke about Canadian identity and belonging I found the themes of identity, Canadian values and traditional values, and social decay prominent. In the posts that spoke about politics I found the theme of a belief in an authoritarian government prominent.

I coded “Canadian identity” when posts referred to racial identity and heritage. I coded “Canadian values and traditional values” when posts referred to loss of culture, threats to Canada, loss of tradition, or a nostalgia for a past Canada. I coded “social decay” when extremist groups mentioned how Canadian identity was under threat, for example if a group mentioned an increase in crime and illegal activity.

In my research, I define politics as discussions or actions that deal with how a country or an area is governed through policies and leadership (King & Marian, 2008, p.210). I use the variable of politics to code posts that refer to political parties, political leaders, and discussions on how the nation should exist politically, such as the policies that should or should not be enforced. In my research, I found the theme of authoritarian governments evident in discussions about politics. I coded “the belief in an authoritarian government” when posts referred to distrust in government institutions, the Liberal Party, and right-wing governments and leaders.

My secondary codes were then: Canadian identity as white, Canadian values as traditional values, social decay, and the implementation of authoritarian governments. In the

secondary theme of “Canadian identity as white” I found posts discussed identity, white guilt, and assimilation. In the theme of “Canadian values as traditional values”, I found the posts discussed Canadian values, queerness and authority of the parent, and the media. In the theme of “social decay”, posts discussed increases in crime, and illegal migration. Finally, in the theme “implementation of authoritarian governments” posts discussed distrust of government institutions, distrust of Liberal Party, and the valorization of right-wing government/people. The hierachal coding structure used in this research is attached below in Appendix 3. The following is an example of how I initially coded posts:



Figure 1 Example of Coding

**Higher Order Code(s):** Politics

**Secondary Theme:** Authoritarian Government

### **Third Theme:** Distrust of Liberal Party

**Comments/Justification:** This post motions to the fact that the Liberal Party is not taking returning ISIS fighters seriously and putting Canadians in danger.

I coded the post above by Yellow Vests Canada under the theme of Politics- authoritarian government- distrust of the Liberal Party. In this tweet, the poster mentions returned Canadian ISIS fighters being allowed back in Canada by the Liberal Party and calls out Trudeau by name. In Appendix 2 I have identified how many posts were coded under each theme with some cases of cross coding when a post could fit under more than one theme.

### **Summary**

This study used qualitative content analysis to examine the social media posts of right-wing extremist groups in Canada. I examined Facebook and Twitter posts as well as a webpage to understand the key claims that right-wing extremist groups make online, with regard to Canadian identity and belonging, and politics. I undertook a content analysis of social media posts because it was vital for my research that I look for themes within the data published by each group to truly understand the group beliefs and ideologies.

## **Chapter 4: Findings: Claims about Canadian Identity, Belonging, and Politics**

For this research, I examined the webpages and social media accounts of Yellow Vests Canada, ID Canada and the Soldiers of Odin-BC. One of the social media accounts that I examined was Yellow Vests Facebook account. The Yellow Vests Facebook page is an open-discussion platform for all members to post their concerns or commentary on topics such as the government, climate change or taxes. Therefore, the posts that I analyzed were published by individual members rather than the group itself. Yellow Vests' posts often include news articles and webpages shared from other right-wing extremist groups. Their posts act as commentary on these news articles or shared pages.

ID Canada did not have a Facebook page; therefore, I collected tweets from their Twitter page. ID Canada's tweets are published by a group leader on behalf of the collective under the group name. The group leader typically tweets a message that includes hashtags; for example, #LestWeForget was used during Remembrance Day. This leader may “retweet” posts from other prominent right-wing extremist groups or individuals. ID Canada's leaders also post tweets from other right-wing webpages and give their commentary above the shared link.

The ID Canada webpage looks very different from its Twitter page. ID Canada can post whatever they choose on their site because there are no corporate censors; this means the webpage consists solely of original material. This material includes anything from information on group mission statements to beliefs on key topics in right-wing discourse such as white guilt. The content on their webpage includes original posters meant to be distributed by their members. Other sections of the ID Canada website are dedicated to keeping members up to date about demonstrations and group activities. Their website also includes a section meant to help recruit new members who may be interested in their group.

In contrast to the national ID Canada webpages and Twitter page, the Soldiers of Odin have many different Facebook accounts for their provincial branches. I examined the Soldiers of Odin British Columbia Facebook account, which had the most followers at the time of data collection. The posts on the Soldiers of Odin-BC account often consist of news articles and webpages shared from other far-right groups with commentary in the form of a caption on the post. In these posts, The Soldiers of Odin highlight threats to the community. For example, the Soldiers of Odin-BC post about crimes that have taken place in their area. All posts from the Soldiers of Odin are published in the name of the organization by a group leader.

One of the major differences between the groups that I analyzed is in their page design. This is significant because it means that followers engage with the groups differently. On some platforms, such as Yellow Vests Canada's open Facebook forum, any member could share their thoughts and opinions. This makes for a different discussion than ID Canada's Twitter platform where a group leader made tweets which the larger group can re-tweet or like. The Soldiers of Odin-BC page is run by group leaders but allows members to comment and share posts, with very little say in what posts get shared and when. Therefore, one of the biggest differences in the groups is how their followers can interact with the profile. Page design and organization also impacts the types and frequency of shared posts and post authorship.

Although these groups differ, they make shared claims on all of their social media and webpages, namely that Canadian identity is white and that Canadian values are traditional values, and that both are currently under threat. These groups also claim that authoritarian governments need to be implemented to counter this threat. These claims are not made directly. Instead, I found that right-wing extremist groups often discuss more mundane topics, such as

illegal migration in Canada, queer activism, and corrupt government institutions. The following sections will discuss the key claims right-wing extremist groups make.

## Overview of Canadian Identity is White

ID Canada talks about Canadian identity on their webpage. Although they talk frequently about this topic, they are never overt about what Canadian identity is. However, they often speak negatively about immigration and positively about protecting European people. Extremist groups speak about European identity and being proud of white identity, and they also speak about assimilation.

### *Identity and Whiteness*

In their posts Canadian right-wing extremist groups often refer to European identity when talking about Canadian identity. Out of the total posts that I analyzed 30 posts were coded under European identity or whiteness.

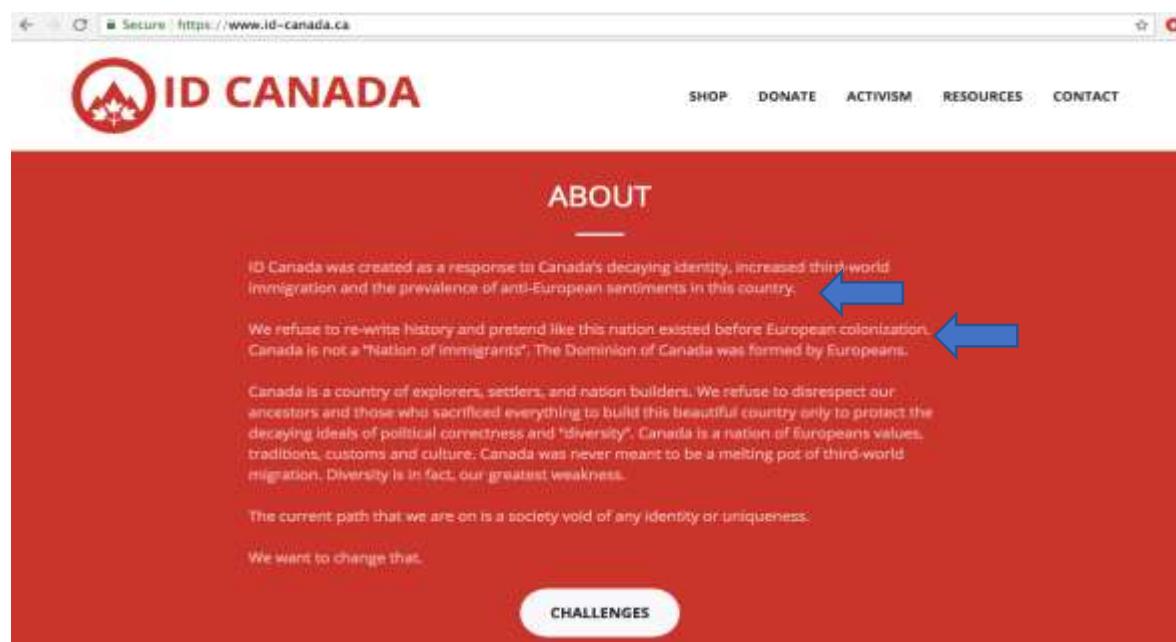


Figure 2 “About” Tab from ID Canada Webpage

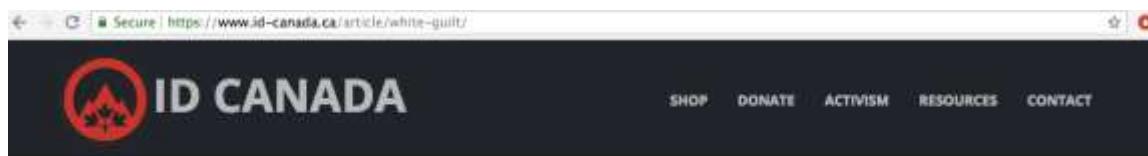
In the post above, ID Canada makes a few claims about European identity. These include a fear of “...the prevalence of anti-European sentiments” and “refusing” to “...pretend like this nation existed before European colonization.” Right-wing extremist groups consider Canadian identity as exclusive to certain ethnic groups. For example, ID Canada mentions in their webpage above that “Canada was never meant to be a melting pot of third-world migration”. Therefore they consider anyone from a “third-world nation” a threat to Canada and Canadians.

ID Canada does mention whiteness on their webpage quite frequently. This may be because the group is established to protect “Canadian identity” given that they are an identitarian movement in Canada. However, they position white people not as the racial majority in Canada, but as a group of people that are being left out and made to feel guilty. They argue that a threat to Canadian identity is white guilt. Extremist groups in this study claim that whiteness is an identity that a person should be proud of by suggesting that white people should not feel any guilt about past and current acts of colonization and systematic racism. In the social media posts of extremist groups, white guilt is discussed as a state of mind from which white people need to break free as evident in the ID Canada poster below.



Figure 3 "White Guilt" Poster from ID Canada

In the post below, white guilt is also mentioned. This webpage features a discussion about how white people in Canada are not the only populations who have committed horrible acts of colonization.



### Break the Shackles of White Guilt

This week our activists in Toronto took to the streets with a very clear, concise message: Break The Shackles of White Guilt. Take Pride in Your Identity.

All races have committed crimes against humanity. All races have enslaved others. All races have conquered, explored and used force to control others. All races are guilty of the same crimes, yet when someone takes to the streets and chants "Black Power", they're seen as a civil rights activist, a hero, and an inspiration. When a white person says "I'm proud of my race", they're told they're "racist, insensitive, bigoted, and hateful". It's a classic example of a double standard.

It's high time we have an honest conversation about not only our own history, but the history of others, and the crimes committed by all races. If we continue to turn a blind eye to the realities of our history, we're bound to repeat them. No one should be shamed for atrocities they themselves didn't commit.

Everyone should be proud of their identity. Whether you're from England, France, Ireland, India, China, Vietnam or Senegal, taking pride in your identity is at the very foundation of one's own individuality and uniqueness.

Figure 4 "Break the Shackles of White Guilt" Tab from ID Canada Webpage

ID Canada states in the above post that, “All races have committed crimes against humanity. All races have enslaved others. All races have conquered, explored and used force to control others.” ID Canada claims that all races are guilty of the crimes often associated with European colonization, such as enslavement.

ID Canada uses imagery in the two posts above to deny guilt and support the idea of white people as victims. For example, extremist groups imply that white people are imprisoned by stating that “shackles need to be broken”. When they use the term shackles (and depict these shackles being broken in their poster), they support the claim that white people are also victims. ID Canada makes this evident in the webpage above, which directly states, “All races have enslaved others.” They use slavery and colonization- examples often used to describe the horrible acts of European white settlers – to justify their own arguments of white victimization and the need for white pride. In their posts ID Canada states that white people should not feel guilty about past transgressions, and that they too are victims (evident in the post above). However, they also make the claim that European culture is inherent to the country.

### ***A Lack of Assimilation***

Right-wing extremist groups also make the argument that a lack of assimilation from unfamiliar Others who have immigrated to the Global North is a threat to Canadian identity. I coded 20 posts that spoke about a perceived lack of assimilation. Extremist groups make this claim by arguing that immigrants cannot be trusted and are in competition for Canadian resources (see ID Canada post below).

In the Yellow Vests Canada post below, a member questions whether a Muslim woman fighter pilot in the United States should be allowed to serve. This member states that the pilot

may commit treason against the United States or murder her co-workers. In the group's post, the fighter pilot's ability to assimilate into American society is called into question.

The screenshot shows a Facebook group page for 'Yellow Vests Canada'. The group has 15 members and was created on March 28 at 10:42 PM. A post from a member asks: 'My dear Canadians I try to notify you of news from the US that is relevant. A female muslim has become the celebrated first US military fighter pilot. I got the article from the VA womens veterans news. So is she a patriot or Jihad? Remember Fort Hood where a muslim psychiatrist got a job on the base as a therapist and then shot people on the base. Will she be loyal to the US or will she go home and give up design secrets?' The post has 15 likes and 30 comments. The sidebar on the left lists group categories: About, Discussion (which is selected), Members, Events, Videos, and Donate.

Figure 5 Yellow Vests Canada Post#74

ID Canada also speaks about assimilation on its website. They argue in the image below that different groups who immigrate to Canada are all in competition for their own self-interests rendering assimilation impossible.

The screenshot shows the ID Canada website. The main navigation menu includes SHOP, DONATE, ACTIVISM, RESOURCES, and CONTACT. The 'RESOURCES' menu item is highlighted. On the left, there is a section titled 'The reality facing someone born today is that of becoming an adult in a country that is no longer of ethnic Canadian majority.' Two blue arrows point to two paragraphs below: 'Our best statisticians concur, Canada will be a minority-majority country by 2036. This means that there will no longer be an ethnic Canadian majority. Indeed, all signs point to an increasingly fragmented nation inhabited by dozens of groups of people, each vying for their own self-interest.' and 'Where is the place of the ethnic Canadian in this scenario? If one is to believe the current state of affairs, it seems inevitable that ethnic Canadians will be where ethnic minorities are today: forced to fend for themselves and defend their group interests.' To the right, there are three callout boxes: 'EROSION OF IDENTITY' (with a red arrow pointing to it), 'Resource Competition' (with a red arrow pointing to it), and 'RESOURCE COMPETITION' (with a red arrow pointing to it). At the bottom center is a red button labeled 'ID CANADA'S ROLE'.

Figure 6 "Resource Competition" ID Canada Website

ID Canada also makes the claim that assimilation is impossible on their webpage above. They argue that if different ethnic groups come into Canada and compete for resources this will

create problems for “ethnic Canadians”. This shows that they are concerned that anyone outside of the white ethnic majority of Canada might threaten the nation. The group claims that new generations of Canadians may face a nation that is no longer an “ethnic Canadian” majority. However, these groups never define who is an ethnic Canadian.

By making the claim that Canadian identity is European, that whiteness should be celebrated not shunned and by arguing that assimilation is essentially impossible, right-wing extremist groups share a more troublesome message, that they believe Canadian identity is white. This is consistent with the literature that has found racial nationalism as a key ideological feature in extremist groups (Saslow, 2018, p.98).

### **Overview of Equating Canadian Values to Traditional Values**

The posts that I analyzed showed that extremist groups often refer to Canadian values when they discuss the defense of Canadians, and infringement on traditional gender norms. However, when making their claims about Canadian values the groups never mention that they are advocates for traditional values rather they discuss unspecified Canadian values, the acceptance of queer people and the distrust of the media.

#### ***Canadian Values***

In the post below, which shows an informational poster about the Soldiers of Odin-BC group, they state they believe “...in core Canadian values, upholding the constitution and defending the rights and freedoms of Canadians.” In total I coded 21 posts under the theme of Canadian values. Canadian values are never specified. However, in their posts these values are often associated with traditional values such as traditional gender norms. I will discuss this below.



Figure 7 Soldiers of Odin-BC Information Poster

Canadian values are mentioned in the above information poster as the main reason for the group's existence. However, the statement does not describe what these Canadian values are or how they are protected. This was a common feature of the right-wing extremist groups. Right-wing extremist groups do however use phrases such as "helping hand" when talking about their commitment to their community and to the protection of Canada in general, as evident in the poster above.

Canadian values were often presented as under threat on ID Canada's website. A screenshot from their webpage below is an example of how they discuss traditional Canadian values.



Figure 8 "ID Canada's Role" from ID Canada's Webpage

Similar to the post above which mentions “helping hands”, in this post there are multiple times that ID Canada states that they have a “love for our nation” as their reason for creating the group and their commitment to upholding Canadian values.

ID Canada also states that they look to “re-install” Canadian values that are under threat. In the extremist’s posts, the danger to Canadians appears ominous.

### *Queerness and the Authority of the Parent*

In their social media posts, right-wing extremist groups argue that the acceptance of queer people corrupts traditions and harms both women and children, I coded 33 posts that spoke about queerness and the authority of parents. The Soldiers of Odin-BC posted frequently about queerness and the dangers of queerness among children. The Soldiers of Odin-BC have an information poster above stating their group’s mission statement and purpose, however they never mention why they speak about queerness so often.

In the post below, the Soldiers of Odin-BC state that transgender ideology has an impact on women and children. In this post, the group promotes an event in British Columbia that critically analyzes “transgender ideology.”



Figure 9 Soldiers of Odin-BC Post#16

Right-wing extremist groups in Canada also argue that traditional gender norms are threatened due to a loss of parental authority over children. This claim is particularly apparent when they discuss the increase in queer youth in Canada. In their social media posts, extremist groups claim that parents need to protect children from queer ideology. They also argue that parents are in danger of having little control over their children's sexuality.

Below is an example of a post about loss of parental authority that leads to the degeneracy of traditional values. The post by the Soldiers of Odin-BC contains an advertisement for a speaking event in the province. This speaker is to give a talk, warning parents and educators who interact with youth about the “Dangers of Transgender Ideology”.



Figure 10 Soldiers of Odin-BC Post#83

In this post, The Soldiers of Odin-BC mention “transgender ideology”. This ideology is never specified; however, it is seen as a danger to children. Parents and teachers are placed at the forefront of the battle against “transgender ideology” and are responsible for ensuring that it is stopped. The fact that this event takes place at a school board office also shows that the speaker is attempting to attract an audience consisting of people who work with youth and the parents of youths.

The post below, published by the Soldiers of Odin-BC, is another example of a right-wing extremist group who argues that parents need to protect youth specifically from queer ideology. Their post details a legal battle where a father tried to prevent his child from receiving hormone therapy and was instructed to call his child by their pronouns and chosen name or face family violence charges.



Figure 11 Soldiers of Odin-BC Post#52

The Soldiers of Odin-BC's post is an example of the group arguing that parents are losing control over their children in the fight against traditional gender norms. Extremist groups position parents at the frontlines of the battle against queerness in Canadian youth.

These posts also surprisingly use more “liberal language” to make their point. For example, in Post#16 (Figure 9) by the Soldiers of Odin-BC they speak about how transgender people may infringe on the rights of women. Post#52 (Figure 11) by the Soldiers of Odin-BC also touches on the rights of parents.

### ***The Media***

Right-wing extremist groups also blame the mainstream news media such as CBC for the loss of traditional values. These groups often present the media as an enemy that does not promote the best interest of the country. I coded 31 posts which spoke about the media. Extremist groups claim that the media corrupts traditional norms in society, is untrustworthy, and does not publish content that reflect Canadian values. The Soldiers of Odin-BC post below is an

example of the media publishing stories about the change in social norms. They use this post to accuse the media of spreading transgender propaganda.



Figure 12 Soldiers of Odin-BC Post#77

The Soldiers of Odin-BC further accuse the media of turning children into “eunuchs” through the promotion of gender-confirming surgeries (Figure 12). Their above article serves as “proof” that the media is to blame for the attack on binary gender.

Yellow Vests Canada also shared a post that depicts the media as untrustworthy and a threat to Canadians. A Yellow Vests member states in the post below that the media threatens older individuals.

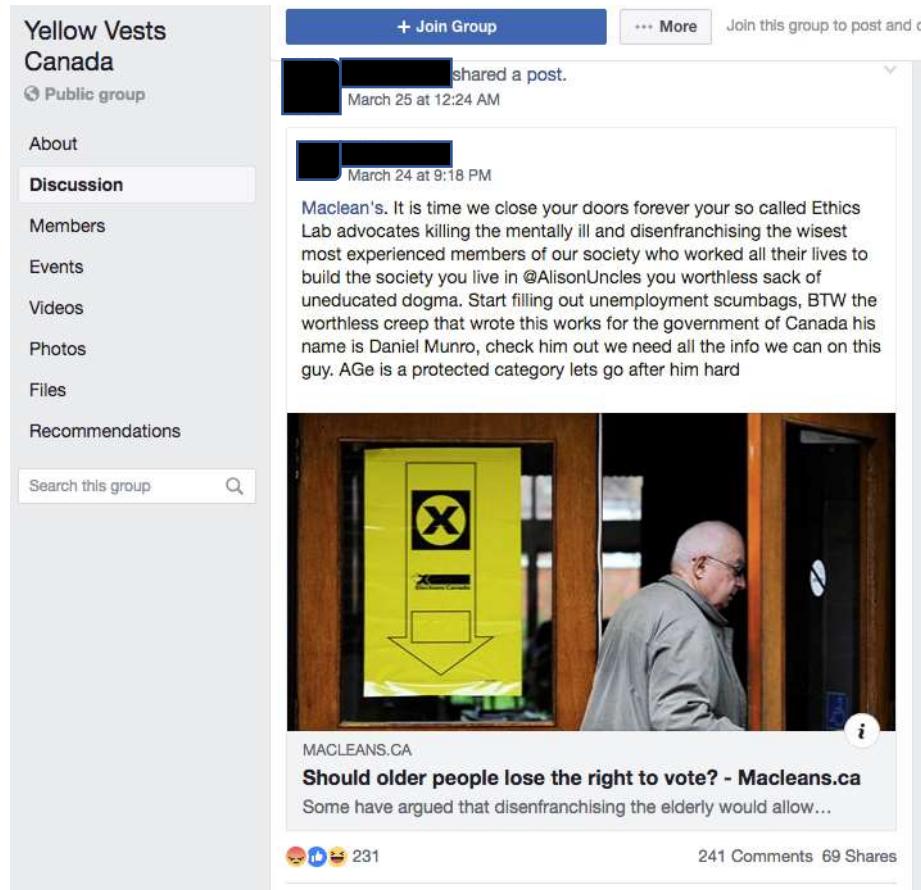


Figure 13 Yellow Vests Canada Post#72

The Yellow Vests member states that Maclean's magazine discriminates against older adults. The individual even argues that the author of the article is spreading ageist "dogma" (Figure 13).

ID Canada also discredits the media in the post below. They re-tweeted a post by far-right commentator, Faith Goldy, who at the time was running to be mayor of Toronto. In their re-tweet, Goldy states that she agrees with the media that the main political issues in Toronto are public safety and gun crime, but that the media does not acknowledge how important these values are.

Retweeted by ID Canada

Faith J Goldy @FaithGoldy · 6 Aug 2018

The liberal media acknowledges public safety & crime are top of mind for Toronto voters but refuses to acknowledge the ONLY Mayoral candidate running a tough on crime campaign 😊

We're going to Make Toronto Safe Again — with or without the media's help !!!



**Toronto voters have public safety, gun crime on their minds, poll says...**

The new Forum Research survey says Torontonians are concerned about gun crime but split on the top priority to address the problem.

[thestar.com](http://thestar.com)

Figure 14 ID Canada Post#79

Right-wing extremist groups and leaders in Canada claim that the Canadian media does not tell the whole story of an event, and that the media does not express the values of Canadians, such as an emphasis on public safety and the reduction of crime.

In these three posts “vulnerable populations” such as children and senior citizens are depicted as being harmed by the media. In all of the extremist groups’ posts above, the media is depicted as a threat to traditional values, untrustworthy and not representative of the issues that Canadians care about.

### Overview of Social Decay

On the social media platforms of Yellow Vests Canada, ID Canada, and the Soldiers of Odin-BC, the theme of social decay is conveyed in posts about increases in the rate of crime, and illegal migration. Right-wing extremist groups also blame racialized groups for social decay in

their social media posts. Research has shown that the belief in social decay is a common characteristic of right-wing extremist groups (Merkl & Weinberg, 2003, p.5)

### ***Increase in Crime***

Right-wing extremist groups claim that there is an increase in crime in Canada; and in their social media posts, extremist groups blame the increase in crime on racialized people. This belief is evident in their posts which often feature racialized others committing crimes. In my analysis, I coded 35 posts under the theme of an increase in crime.

The Soldiers of Odin-BC publish posts about the increase in crime in British Columbia. The post below features a Global news article about a woman who was sexually assaulted in Vancouver. Posts about sexual assault were very common among the groups that I analyzed. Women were often depicted as being the most at risk from an increase in crime. I found that extremist groups use normative gender roles in their posts.



Figure 15 Soldiers of Odin-BC Post#60

The Soldiers of Odin-BC also published the post below to argue that there has been an increase in crime. Their post includes a Global News article about a rise in “crime tourism” in

Canada. The article states that there are groups of people who are coming to Canada and committing crimes, such as breaking and entering. Their shared article is about a Chilean gang who has committed crimes in Toronto.



Figure 16 Soldiers of Odin-BC Post#15

Right-wing extremist groups publish many posts depicting violent crimes. However, most of the extremist's social media posts often highlight crimes that are committed by racialized individuals with white people, white communities and white women as the primary victims.

### ***Increase in Illegal Immigration***

Right-wing extremist groups claim that illegal migration is also on the rise. In total, 30 of the posts that I analyzed were coded under the theme of increase in illegal migration. In the Yellow Vests Canada post below, a member highlights the impact of illegal migration on Canadian society. In this post ID Canada depicts an RCMP officer being overworked because of the threat of illegal immigration, they even use the hashtag “Secure the Frontier”. In this post ID Canada is depicting the country as being under threat due to illegal immigration.

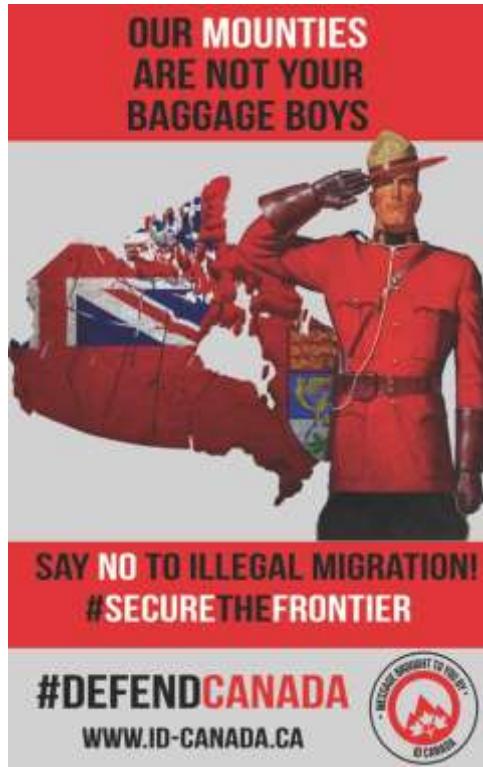


Figure 17 ID Canada Mountie Poster

Yellow Vests Canada also had many posts about illegal immigration. In the post below, a member states that illegal immigrants are rewarded when they enter Canada. The individual also argues that illegal immigration is a big problem in Canada.



Figure 18 Yellow Vests Canada Post#60

ID Canada also posts extensively about illegal immigration. In the group's tweet below, they state that illegal immigration is a major problem in Canada and that they will not "lay dormant as the nation we once knew and loved is turned into a cesspool of third world, illegal migration." (Figure 19). In right-wing social media platforms, illegal migration is depicted as a key reason for the changing Canadian population.



Figure 19 ID Canada Post#69

In the social media posts that I analyzed, illegal immigrants are often described using words with negative connotations. For example, in the post above ID Canada describes illegal immigrants as responsible for turning Canada into a “cesspool” while the other post by a Yellow Vests member describes illegal immigrants as undeserving of help.

### **Overview of Implementation of Authoritarian Governments**

Extremists’ posts also argue that government institutions are untrustworthy, the Liberal Party is corrupt, and right-wing governments in the Global North should be in power. Extremist groups claim that politically right-wing governments are the only solution to what they see as an elitist threat to identity, values and the Canadian way of life.

#### ***Distrust of Governmental Institutions***

In my study, I coded 21 posts under the theme of distrusting the government. These extremist groups believe that governmental institutions are corrupted by the Liberal Party and

Liberal policies that celebrate diversity and inclusion (Figure 20). They also argue that Canadian institutions such as the RCMP support the governmental elite (Figure 21). The groups' view Liberal Party policies as detrimental to Canadians because of their progressive views on immigration (Figure 20). Another major problem for right-wing extremist groups is Canada's commitment to multiculturalism that is entrenched into federal policy.

In the Yellow Vests Canada post below, a member states that Canadian multiculturalism is socialist and is used to steal Canadian "land and wealth" to give to the Other. The post also argues that multiculturalism is federally implemented to prevent Canadians from standing up against globalism. This right-wing extremist post illuminates their belief in fraudulent governmental institutions.

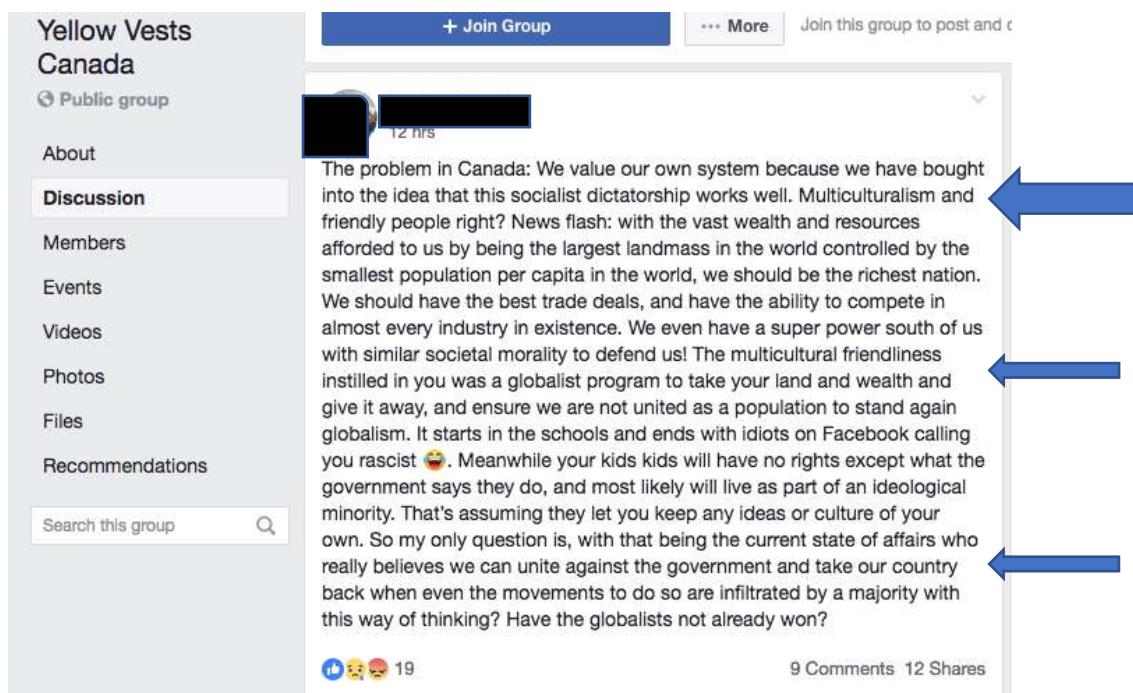


Figure 20 Yellow Vests Canada Post#55

Right-wing groups depict governmental institutions as corrupt and elitist. The author of the post above criticizes Canada's commitment to multiculturalism.

Below, a member of Yellow Vests Canada shares a post arguing that the government and Canadian law enforcement are corrupt, making this claim based on the belief that the government and the RCMP conduct surveillance operations on Facebook. This member argues that the government hinders free speech, harasses and is a threat to law-abiding citizens.

**Yellow Vests Canada**

+ Join Group ... More Join this group to post and cc

Public group

About Discussion Members Events Videos Photos Files Recommendations

Search this group

[REDACTED] shared a link.  
March 27 at 3:31 PM

Welcome to socialism. This is more proof that our government and law enforcement is no longer for by the people for the people, but rather control the people through control of freedom of speech and laws being passed to control movement and expression. I have been targeted by the Notley government for my posts. I have been targeted by the RCMP for my posts. Here is why I am being targeted for my posts. I don't believe our governments have Canadians best interests at heart. Our freedom is a thing of the past. Its time for people to wake up and realize that if something isn't done soon Canada will be just like south America within 15 years. Stop saying "it can't happen here" or "that won't happen here" wake up people. The government controls the only law enforcement in the country. The government can stop investigations into corruption at the level of government. Canadians are being controlled by a socialist government and a socialist law enforcement that is at the beckon call of the government.

#remembermyface

THETYEE.CA  
['Project Wide Awake': How the RCMP Watches You on Social](#)

Media | The Tyee

125 78 Comments 168 Shares

Figure 21 Yellow Vests Canada Post#64

Right-wing extremist groups claim that the government cannot be trusted. They discredit government institutions by claiming that Canadians are under attack by the government and

demand that this requires and justifies immediate action. This is evident in Post#55 which states “ ..with that being the current state of affairs who really believes we can unite against the government and take our country back...” (Figure 20).

### ***Vilification of the Liberal Party***

Right-wing extremist groups in Canada make mundane claims, such as those criticizing the Liberal government. The Liberal Party was first elected in 2015 and was re-elected in 2019 under the leadership of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Right-wing extremist groups often accuse the Liberal Party of committing treason. I coded 51 posts under the theme of a distrust in the Liberal Party.

An example of how these groups talk about the Liberal Party is depicted below. In this post a member of Yellow Vests Canada shares a photo that claims that Trudeau has committed treason and needs to be charged for allowing Canadian ISIS fighters back into the country.



Figure 22 Yellow Vests Canada Post#56

Another member of Yellow Vests Canada also shares a news story about Liberal member of parliament Freeland, who stated that neo-Nazism and Islamophobia are a threat to the world. The author of the post captions the news story by stating that Freeland is a traitor and has been funded by left-leaning billionaire George Soros to take over the country from Trudeau (Figure 23).



Figure 23 Yellow Vests Canada Post#66

The posts above depict the Liberal Party as traitors. Extremists also view Liberal governments as elitist. They depict elites as not having the same opinions as right-wing groups and refusing to listen to the “left-behind individuals” in society. Right-wing extremist groups’ vilification of the Liberal Party conveys a more worrisome message about the need for right-wing governments who are more authoritarian and who side with right-wing policies.

### ***Valorization of Right-Wing Governments***

Right-wing extremist groups also propose the appointment of an extreme right-wing government to fix untrustworthy governmental institutions and the corrupt Liberal Party. In their social media posts, they claim that right-wing authoritarian governments listen to their followers by creating a more nationalist society (Figure 24). The right-wing governments that extremist groups in Canada valorize do not only consist of far-right or Conservative Canadian governments, they also support right-wing governments in other countries such as the United States. Yellow Vests Canada, ID Canada, and the Soldiers of Odin-BC look to countries such as the United States for what they believe is strong leadership. In total, I coded 28 posts under the theme of valorization of right-wing individuals or parties.

A member of Yellow Vests Canada argues in the post below that patriotism is extremely important for a nation (Figure 24). This member also shares a picture of Trump as he hugs a Vietnam war veteran with a quote that speaks to the bravery of veterans.



Figure 24 Yellow Vests Canada Post#51

Another member of Yellow Vests Canada also posts a picture which depicts Trump and Justin Trudeau. American Trump receives obvious favouritism over Canadian Justin Trudeau in this picture, with Trump seen as the better politician and Trudeau seen as the “idiot” (Figure 25).



Figure 25 Yellow Vests Canada Post#45

Extremist groups in my study also supported the Canadian politician, Faith Goldy, a far-right commentator and failed Toronto mayoral candidate. ID Canada shows their support for Goldy by re-tweeting her post about her campaign promise to defund Planned Parenthood. Extremist groups depict far-right leaders as politicians that listen and help the people.



Figure 26 ID Canada Post#61

When making claims about politics, extremist groups valorize right-wing governments and people while they criticize the Liberal Party and government institutions. These less controversial topics depict a belief that right-wing governments are better leaders, as evident in Figure 25. Far-right groups often turn to right-wing governments in other countries as a model for Canada. Extremist groups depict right-wing extremist leaders as nationalist, competent politicians that listen to citizens (Figure 24, 26).

## Summary

Literature has found that right-wing extremist groups are preoccupied with issues on race (Anderson, 2015; Daniels, 2009), strong governments (Mudde 1995; Simi & Futrell, 2010) and online mobilization (Klein, 2010). However, I found that these beliefs are not overt, instead Canadian extremist groups speak about topics such as an increase in crime and illegal migration, the distrust of the Liberal Party, and the fear of queer acceptance on their social media posts. Used together, these topics send a particular message about how extremist groups view Canadian identity, belonging and politics. These being that Canadian right-wing extremist groups believe

that Canadian identity is white, that Canadian values are traditional values, that Canadian society is in decay, and that right-wing governments need to be elected in order to prevent this social decay and the loss of traditional values.

## **Chapter 5: Using Mundane Language to Make Key Claims**

In my research, I set out to find out how right-wing extremist groups frame their beliefs about Canadian identity and belonging, and politics. In my analysis of posts from right-wing social media platforms, I found that these groups make mundane, less controversial claims on their social media sites. However, as a whole, the mundane arguments that they use actually convey a more controversial message.

Boltanski and Thévenot's domestic and civic common worlds help understand how extremist groups make banal claims that may lead to more troublesome beliefs. I used this theory in my analysis because the claims that right-wing extremist groups make, such as the need to protect Canadian values, can be better understood as an attempt to call to a shared social logic. Boltanski and Thévenot's sociology of critical capacity common worlds help explain how extremist groups make arguments that are quite extreme. For example, extremist groups justify their belief in the decline of traditional values and racial homogeneity in a nation by highlighting the need (and current lack of) tradition. In Boltanski and Thévenot's domestic common world, statements and behaviours are tested of their worthiness by examining if they appeal to tradition (2006, p.173). In the posts I examined, extremist groups also justify the belief in social decay with the claim that society is in disarray and is under attack. With this statement, right-wing extremist groups use the “greater common good” as justification for actions and behaviours which are in line with the civic common world (Annisette, Vesty, & Amslem, 2017, p.217). Finally, extremist groups justify their position of supporting authoritarian governments by calling to the worthy principle of maintaining hierarchical structure in the domestic world (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006, p.164-165), and the need for solidarity and uniformity in society which is an aspect of the civic common world (Boltanski, & Thévenot, 2006, p.187).

## **Connection to the Bigger Story**

When extremist group's mundane claims are made en masse, they make up more controversial beliefs about Canadian identity, belonging and politics. Right-wing extremist groups claim that Canadian identity is white, that Canadian values and traditional values are similar, that society is in decay, and that authoritarian governments need to be elected to counter this decay. Hochschild used the notion of a “deep story” to similarly understand how Louisianan Tea Party supporters, who felt left behind by government institutions during the Obama years, understood their rural southern identity, as well as their political stance (2016, p.135). Hochschild states that the deep story “is a feels-as-if-story— it’s the story feelings tell, in the language of symbols.” (2016, p.135). The appeal to the “left behind” is important to the bigger story. Hochschild described her deep story using the analogy of a line; the white Christians of rural America felt as though in the line for the American Dream, women, racialized minorities and people who were not Christian had cut in front of them leaving them at the back (2016, p.136-137). Those who have been left behind feel a sense of resentment, not only towards the people they believe have cut in front of them, but also towards those they believe may be influencing who is first in line, such as the government (Hochschild, 2016, p.151).

### ***Canadian identity***

In my study, I found that when right-wing extremist groups spoke about identity and belonging, they motioned to a homogenous Canadian identity that was under threat. Right-wing extremist groups in my study did not make overt claims about Canadian identity being white. Instead they spoke about European identity and white pride as well as their belief in assimilation. Taken together, these claims convey a particular message of how extremist groups view

Canadian identity. This is similar to research that has also found that right-wing extremist groups feel that their white identity is increasingly threatened by racialized Others (Betz, 2003, p.78).

In the posts that I analyzed, I also found that Canadian right-wing extremist groups fear that Canada may become a white minority country. On ID Canada's webpage about "resource competition" they even ask, "Where is the place of ethnic Canadians in this scenario?" (Figure 6). Kincheloe states that white people experience a crisis of whiteness when white racial dominance is questioned by those around them, whether that be colleagues, friends or family members (1999, p.171). White people who are in crisis may also revert back to the valorization of the past when white racial dominance was not questioned (Kincheloe, 1999, p.172). Extremist groups show this crisis directly in their posts fearing that white people may become a racial minority (Figure 6). Referring to a collective struggle also appeals to a common sense of collective group identity found in Boltanski and Thévenot's civic world (2006, p.185). For example, many extremist groups even state that they are trying to maintain Canadian way of life and Canadian culture (Young & Craig, 1997, p.193).

For extremists, the negation of guilt and white fragility, defined as an inability to handle racial tension and stress, is also an essential step to white pride (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 54, 57). White guilt challenges traditional forms of white supremacy and makes it more difficult to be proud of white identity and claim whiteness as a national identity (Turner, 2014, p.449). In the posts that I analyzed I found that extremist groups directly speak about negating white guilt. This was evident in the ID Canada poster which stated "Break the Shackles of White Guilt. Take Pride in Your Identity" (Figure 3). When individuals make right-wing extremist groups that are predominately white face the consequences of colonization and institutional racism, they may become angry or upset because white meritocracy and superiority are called into question

(DiAngelo, 2011, p.54). In her book on women in hate movements, Blee (2002) also found that many women said that they remained in these movements because they believed that it was wrong that white people were made to feel guilty about being white while other races were celebrated (p.54).

Extremist groups also claim to be victims that have overcome racial prejudice and should be proud of their racial identity. This is evident in ID Canada's webpage about "Breaking the Shackles of White Guilt" where they claim that "All races have committed crimes against humanity." (Figure 4). In my study, I found that extremist groups often call to racial solidarity when critiquing white guilt.

Right-wing extremist groups also question immigrants' ability to assimilate (Bar-On, 2018, p. 18-20). In my analysis, I found that Canadian extremist groups doubted that immigrants could assimilate into the Global North. For example, a member of Yellow Vests Canada in Figure 5 doubted the allegiance and cultural assimilation of a Muslim fighter pilot in the United States military. In this post, right-wing extremist groups appeal to a sense of collective identity, particularly national identity and loyalty, when making this claim. Using the civic world, extremist groups make the claim that worth is dependent on if a person is a member of the collective (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006, p.191). In my study, extremist groups used national loyalty and identity as a litmus test for assimilation.

However, extremist claims about assimilation are contradictory. As the ID Canada post about resource competition above shows (Figure 6), immigrants are automatically viewed as a direct threat. Many extremist groups have stated that they support cultural assimilation, while also arguing that citizenship should be strictly designated for those in the ethnic majority (Carter, 2018, p.172). When extremist groups state that immigrants cannot assimilate, they appeal to

Boltanski and Thévenot's civic world and its worthy characteristic of solidarity and common interests in a similar cause of unity (2006, p.187). For example, in the posts extremist groups state that they are critical of immigrants not because they are racist, but because they are trying to protect the greater good (Figure 5 and 6). On the other hand, they also argue that it is impossible for immigrants to assimilate into the national space out of fear they may impact "Canadian" way of life (Figure 6). Right-wing extremist groups' claims about a perceived lack of assimilation show a more disturbing belief in who can and cannot claim to be Canadian.

### ***Canadian Values are Traditional Values***

Extremist groups' claims about unspecified Canadian values, queer acceptance, and the media were all reminiscent of beliefs in traditional values that have been seen in the literature on right-wing extremist groups (Neiwert, 2017, p.236; Stanley, 2018, p.110). Again, the relevance of the crisis of whiteness is apparent in these discussions. When the norm is disrupted in societies that are white, those who benefit from the norm may go into crisis and try to maintain dominate structures in society such as traditional gender norms (Kincheloe, 1999, p.172).

Right-wing extremist groups often talk about traditional values and how the acceptance of queer people threatens heterosexuality in society (Daniels, 2009, p.54). Research has shown that extremist groups also depend on their members to maintain hyper-masculinity and heterosexuality to further prove that they belong to the group and uphold broader group beliefs surrounding social issues (Anahita, 2006, p.151). Salmela and von Scheve also found that right-wing extremist groups stress the need to enforce traditional gender roles when these norms become more fluid (2017, p.578). In their analysis of white supremacy platforms, Scrivens, Davies, and Frank found that platforms that were male dominated often depicted queerness as a major component in the destruction of traditional white families and white culture (2018, p.4).

Appealing to tradition is not abnormal, in Boltanski and Thévenot's domestic world appeals to tradition is a worthy way to justify your position within a dispute (2006, p.165).

I found that extremist groups in Canada argued that parents have failed to instill gender norms amongst their children, which they believe leads to an increase in queer identity among youth. For example, Soldiers of Odin-BC Post#16 (Figure 9) contains a picture telling parents that children can now medically transition without parental consent. This acts as a warning to parents about the spread of queerness and their loss of control.

While transgender people are seen as a threat to right-wing extremist groups, other groups of people are depicted as needing protection. For example, in Yellow Vests Canada Post#72 (Figure 13) older adults are depicted as being threatened by the media. Appeals to protecting older adults is a valid claim to worthy principles of tradition and respect for lineage and family, both methods of justification in Boltanski and Thévenot's domestic world (1999, p. 370). An individual in Yellow Vests Canada Post#72 (Figure 13) even stated that the author of the article was attacking "...the wisest and most experienced members of our society..." Right-wing extremist groups also make the claim that younger people are being harmed by the media (Figure 12). For example, the Soldiers of Odin-BC argued that the media is turning children into eunuchs through gender confirming surgeries (Figure 12).

Right-wing extremist groups also make claims about helping their community in an effort to maintain Canadian values. For example, in the Soldiers of Odin-BC information poster and ID Canada's webpage (Figure 7 and 6), they both talk about helping and loving the community and the nation. This is not contentious but is a valid way to frame claims in the civic common world which prizes civic solidarity (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006, p.187). Most Canadians would value community and helpfulness. That is why, even in the middle of a pandemic, Canada made

international news for creating “caremongering” groups to assist neighbours that were impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020 (Moscrop, 2020).

Similarly, right-wing extremist groups in Canada also use “liberal language” in their posts which is very commonplace. For example, in Post#16 by the Soldiers of Odin-BC (Figure 9) they speak about how transgender people may infringe on the rights of women. Post#52 by the Soldiers of Odin-BC (Figure 11) also touches on the rights of parents. Referring to human rights is often a characteristic of left-leaning governments and groups. Using language of rights appeals to a sense of justice and collectivity that again is very mundane.

### ***Social Decay***

In the extremist posts that I analyzed, I found that the groups expressed a belief in social decay when they spoke about crime and illegal immigration. This is consistent with the literature that has found that extremist groups highlight crime perpetuated by racialized people as being national threats (Ignazi, 2003, p.141). In the social media posts of extremist groups that I analyzed, I also found that they equate an increase in crime and illegal migration to racialized people. Anderson (2015) theorized that this is a common practice when faced with white fragility. When the Other enters the white space and changes it, some white people who had historically been part of the unquestioned majority may act out in anger by immediately rejecting the Other, stating that they do not belong (Anderson, 2015, p.12). Parasram (2019) also found that this is a common practice of right-wing extremist groups who grasp on to this feeling of fragility and use it to sympathize with people who may be afraid of their changing world (p.203).

However, I found in my study that right-wing extremist groups make claims about an increase in crime and illegal immigration by arguing that they are doing so to protect populations that they believe may be under threat, such as women (Figure 15). In the civic world, this would

be a worthy action because it centers about helping the common good (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999, p. 371). For example, when right-wing extremist groups in this study refer to crime, many reference an increase in sexual assault, and will post about sexual assault cases. They will also encourage their members to share the posts to spread awareness among the community. The Soldiers of Odin-BC Post#60 (Figure 15) which reports a sexual assault that took place in Vancouver, was just one example of the many sexual assault posts that the Soldiers of Odin-BC published on their Facebook timeline.

Illegal immigration was another issue that extremist groups spoke about. Literature has found that right-wing extremist groups view illegal immigration as a government attempt to change the racial and social demographic of a nation (Ekman, 2014, p.88). In my analysis, Yellow Vests members posted many articles and images stating that illegal immigration was a threat to Canadian communities. For example, Yellow Vests Post#60 (Figure 18) featuring a Breitbart article on the increase in illegal immigration in Canada not only discusses the harm of illegal immigration to Canadian communities, but it also places blame on the Liberal Party. Research has also found that online extremist groups in Europe claimed that migration was a form of left-wing violence or incompetence, which was detrimental to white nationhood (Ekman, 2014, p.88). In the social media posts of right-wing extremist groups, illegal immigration was equated to a growing threat to white normativity.

Right-wing extremist groups use the idea of belonging, a worthy principle in Boltanski and Thévenot's domestic world (1999, p. 370), when they speak about illegal immigrants. For example, in Post#69 (Figure 19) ID Canada states that illegal immigrants will turn Canada into a cesspool because they are so vastly different from people who have citizenship.

Together the claims that crime and illegal immigration are increasing reveal that society is in decay. This is similar to literature that has also found that right-wing groups argue that they are trying to prevent social decay by stating that they are not anti-immigrant, they just want to protect their race and way of life (Perry & Olsson, 2009, p.194).

### ***Authoritarian Government***

In the posts I analyzed, the key claim that extremist groups made about politics was that right-wing authoritarian governments must be installed to overcome the loss of traditional values and social decay. Research has also found this to be true of extremist groups that favour authoritarian governments in order to maintain social norms (Davies, 2018, p.93). However, this is not overt. Instead extremist groups claim that government institutions have failed, the Liberal Party commits treason, and that right-wing governments and individuals should be elected.

The Soldiers of Odin-BC, Yellow Vests Canada, and ID Canada also express mistrust of governmental institutions similar to American far-right groups such as the Tea Party and the alt-right movement (Neiwert, 2017, p.289). The right-wing groups in this study show a particular fear and mistrust in government taxation, as well as government agencies that violate the rights of citizens. Yellow Vests Canada Post#64 provides an example of this distrust of the government where they argue that the government and RCMP are spying on Canadian citizens, encroaching on their rights (Figure 21).

A common theme that arose in the posts where right-wing extremist groups talked about distrusting governments was a discussion of the failings of multicultural policy. This is not uncommon; there has been opinion pieces published in well-known news sites which both question if multiculturalism is working and if it is necessary in Canada (Hecht, 2019). Bar-On found in his study on far-right nationalism that right-wing groups often attack European

multiculturalism and other policies that support immigration because these policies threaten the very fabric of white ethnic nationalism (Bar-On, 2018, p.18).

In the posts I analyzed, extremist groups also argue that the Liberal Party's beliefs are not compatible with their own, nor those of Canadians. Extremist groups in my study also often attacked the Liberal government by calling them traitors (Figure 22). For example, in Yellow Vests Canada Post#66 (Figure 23) Liberal member of parliament and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland is called a traitor for speaking out against neo-Nazism and islamophobia. In this post the Yellow Vests member insists that Freeland is placing too much emphasis on Islamophobia and not enough on radical Islam. This is just one example of extremist groups denouncing Liberal policies and political stances. Hochschild similarly found that the Tea Party members who felt like they had been "left behind" and under-represented by left-leaning governments for years, latched onto the possibility of a presidential candidate that was anti-democrat and anti-Washington (2016, p.221-223).

Research has also found that extremist groups believe that authoritarian governments can stop leftist feminism and political correctness in society (Perry & Scrivens, 2018, p.171). ID Canada's re-tweet of Faith Goldy's post about her campaign commitment to defund Planned Parenthood (Figure 26) shows a similar support for far-right political candidates that adhere to socially conservative values. In her analysis of rural Wisconsin, Cramer (2016) also found that right-wing governments convince their constituents that the left-leaning governments did not have the same values as citizens on issues such as traditional values and taxation (p.146).

Similar to how the groups in this study depicted members of the Liberal Party as incapable of representing the general interests of Canadian citizens, they claim that right-wing governments do in fact represent the common interests of the group. Appealing to group (or

national) representation is common in Boltanski and Thévenot's civic world (Cloutier, Gond & Bernard, 2017, p.11). In my study, right-wing extremist groups often valorized right-wing leaders by depicting them with other worthy individuals in society, such as the depiction of Trump hugging a Vietnam war veteran in Yellow Vests Canada Post#51 (Figure 24). Many people in Canadian society do respect war veterans. Showing support for a charismatic leader can also be a way to reaffirm that person's message and the validity of that person's ability to lead (Joosse, 2018 p.928). In my study, I also found that extremist groups valorize right-wing leaders, and claim that they distrust government institutions and the Liberal government.

## **Summary**

Research has found that extremist groups speak about race (Bobo, 2017), strong states (Mudde, 1995), and online mobilization (Brown, 2009). At first, it does not seem that Canadian right-wing extremist groups discuss these topics. Instead they make everyday claims about distrusting the Liberal Party, the media and validating right-wing governments. Put together, these claims tell a more problematic story about how extremist groups view identity, belonging and politics. Canadian right-wing extremist groups make three claims about Canadian identity and belonging. They claim that Canadian identity is white, Canadian values are equated with traditional values and that society is decaying. Kincheloe (1999) argues that when extremist groups feel as though the norm is being disrupted, they may take more of an interest in self-preservation including racial preservation (p.172). Canadian right-wing extremist groups make one major claim about politics in Canada: they believe that strict authoritarian leaders must be put into power to stop the loss of traditional values and social decay.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

In this research, I wanted to know how extremist groups spoke about Canadian identity, belonging and politics. I found that the claims they make on their social media sites are quite mundane. Some of these claims include the belief that crime is increasing, and that the government cannot be trusted. However, when these banal topics are discussed together they convey more worrisome beliefs about identity, belonging and politics in Canada consistent with the literature on right-wing extremist discourses (Brown, 2009; Perry & Olsson, 2009, p.192; Perry & Scrivens, 2018, p. 179).

### **Study Contributions**

My study has three main contributions. My research highlights the importance of studying right-wing extremism in the Canadian context. This research also contributes to the study of extremism online as this medium grows substantially. My study analyzes how Canadian right-wing extremist groups make mundane claims that may not seem out of the ordinary.

### ***Studying Right-Wing Extremism in Canada***

Since I began this thesis, there have been multiple news stories across Canada about right-wing extremism. For example, the groups that Facebook banned, including the Soldiers of Odin, Blood and Honour and the Canadian Nationalist Front have now re-appeared on less censored platforms such as Gab (a platform that has a similar design to Twitter) (Bell, 2020). This situation creates the need for researchers to ask: how exactly should these groups be eradicated if censorship will not work, and is censorship the right way to combat extremism? In 2017 the Government of Canada also highlighted the growing threat of right-wing extremism nationally and globally in their annual Report on Terrorist Threats. This suggests that in the past three years the government has taken more interest in the prevalence of extremism. In 2020 an

ex-Canada reservist who fled Canada to join the American neo-Nazi group, The Base, was also arrested by the FBI, he is currently being charged with transporting firearms and intent to commit a felony (Breen, 2020). Although Canada has had hate crime laws in the Criminal Code since the 1970s (Walker, 2018), the federal and provincial governments overt focus on combatting right-wing extremism has been a recent change in national security in the past few years. These news stories combined with the findings of my thesis show that right-wing extremism in Canada is alive and is a topic that is being monitored by the government, even if it is lying at the fringes.

Issues that concern right-wing acts of violence and their historical and social impacts in the nation-state are a prominent issue that federal and provincial governments are trying to address. The presence of right-wing extremist groups is not only a threat to national security but also threatens the populations that right-wing extremists deem as the Other. For example, hate crimes committed by right-wing extremist groups often target visible minorities (Chongatera, 2013, p. 45). My research made a small contribution to this literature by highlighting right-wing activity in Canada.

### ***Studying Extremism Online***

Although there has been research done on right-wing extremist websites in countries such as the United States (cf. Blee & Creasap, 2010) there has been very little research on Canadian right-wing extremist groups on social media. Although Nadeau and Helly (2016) published research on the Québec far-right who are active on Facebook, and the Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence published a report in 2018 about the rising threat of Yellow Vests Canada both on and off social media (Vancouver C.A.S.I.S, 2019), there has been a lack of

research about Canadian extremism on these platforms. This absence of research presents a problem for accurately addressing right-wing extremism in Canada. This is especially troubling as my research and the media (Bell, 2020) has shown that right-wing extremist groups are very active on social media platforms.

Research on social media is important as these sites continue to grow and expand. Crilley and Gillespie (2019) have identified social media platforms as growing sites of right-wing extremist activity. Right-wing extremist groups may mobilize on social media pages for many different reasons, including the fact that social media platforms allow extremist groups to publish their own stories and create their own group identity outside of mainstream media (Crilley & Gillespie, 2019, p.175). Scholars also suggest that the Internet can be used to mask racism and make it more palatable, less controversial, and more acceptable (Topinka, 2018, p.2052). However, the lack of literature on right-wing extremism online in Canada in particular also hinders any social study on right-wing extremist groups in general as they become more active on social media platforms. My research hopes to contribute to this field.

Social media research is important because platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have users from all over the world (Steinert-Threlkeld, 2018, p.4). The Internet is also accessible and contains data from large amounts of people from around the world. For example, although I studied three right-wing extremist groups in Canada, these groups each had thousands of followers spanning across the nation, meaning I was able to observe the same posts and tweets as thousands of other individuals simultaneously.

### ***Extremist Groups and Mundane Language***

My research contributes to discussions of the intersections between right-wing extremist group's online perception of race, identity and belonging. My research highlights how right-wing extremist groups in Canada may target racialized communities online, especially racialized immigrants.

My research on right-wing extremism in Canada also emphasizes the presence of troublesome forms of racism online. This is especially worrying considering Canada's commitment to multiculturalism. In Canada, multiculturalism is defined as a celebration of diversity and difference, and has been legally and institutionally implemented (Bannerji, 2000, p.538). However, as scholarly literature and news reports have confirmed, racist sentiments are common among the rising tide of right-wing extremist groups in Canada (Perry & Scrivens, 2016, 2018).

Research has found that these racial sentiments commonly occur in discussions of national identity (Bell, 1989, p.156-157). For example, although Canada has had significant European immigration, immigration is discussed on right-wing extremist platforms as a racialized phenomenon. In these discussions, anti-immigration claims are justified as needed for the protection of ethnic Canadian identity and are an example of how everyday racism often goes unquestioned (Walton, Priest & Paradies, 2013, p.76). My research has helped to identify the forms these discourses take in Canada and how they are, in fact, harmful and divisive.

My study also highlights that overt anti-immigration and xenophobic discourses are challenged in Canadian society. An example of these discourses being challenged occurred in Halifax during the 2019 federal election. In the fall of 2019, a billboard erected by the People's

Party of Canada featured leader Maxime Bernier and the message “Say NO to mass immigration” (Benjamin, 2019). Many people in the region spoke out against the billboard and its xenophobic message including local politicians (Benjamin, 2019). In Hamilton Ontario – a place that has seen an increase in right-wing extremist groups and protests against immigration – there has also been governmental investment in anti-racist work; for example, in 2020 the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion is hosting an anti-racist conference to combat the rise in xenophobia in the city (Polewski, 2019). However, despite these initiatives, extremist groups are still active on popular social media platforms, evident in the fact that ID Canada and Yellow Vests Canada were not only able to bypass Facebook’s ban, but are also very active on these platforms.

The fact that the Soldiers of Odin-BC was banned from Facebook also shows that there have been disputes about extremism online in Canada. Actors appeal to social logics and tests of worth when they encounter disputes (Nyberg, Wright, & Kirk, 2017, p.144). When this happens, different groups use competing worlds of social logics, with one world sometimes winning over another (Nyberg, Wright, & Kirk, 2017, p.166). If Facebook or right-wing watch groups are able to leverage their own arguments against those of a right-wing extremist group, the extremist group may be banned as a result.

## **Relevance**

My finding that right-wing extremist groups make four key claims about Canadian identity and belonging, and politics is relevant for a few reasons. First, it can show researchers how extremist groups are able to grow in a multicultural place such as Canada that prides itself on diversity and inclusion. Second, it also can help understand how extremist groups’ use language that is often not seen as extreme.

Research has shown that many Canadians do support multiculturalism and believe that Canada should be defined as a multicultural country (Berry, 2013, p.668). Many Canadians also believe it is good for young people to live in a place where they can interact with people of different cultures and traditions (Berry, 2013, p.669). However, there have been contradictions in the Canadian political landscape when it comes to a commitment to multiculturalism. For example, Bill-21 passed in Québec bans employees that work in the public sector from wearing religious symbols in the name of secularism, this includes any form of head covering (Laframboise, 2020). Although Québec has already rejected multiculturalism provincially in favour of interculturalism, the bill shows Canada's complicated relationship with multiculturalism and its fragility in Canada. My findings may shed light on how extremist groups further disrupt this relationship.

This coincides with the second reason my findings are relevant. It is important to understand how right-wing extremist groups use everyday language and popular social media platforms. Using mundane discourse, such as calling all immigrants illegal immigrants, acts as a way of dehumanizing racialized Others that may not seem that extreme or contentious to the average person online (Pascale, 2019, p.12). My findings also act as a call to action to recognize and critically analyze online content from groups on Facebook and Twitter that may claim to be nationalist.

## **Summary**

In this study I found that extremist groups in Canada make various mundane claims such as that immigrants should assimilate into Canadian society, and that the media and the Liberal party cannot be trusted. When these claims are made simultaneously, they tell a more worrying message about Canadian identity and belonging and politics. These are that 1) Canadian identity

is equated with being white, 2) Canadian values are synonymous with traditional values and both are under attack, 3) the loss of traditional values is resulting in social decay and 4) to stop this decay, authoritarian governments need to be implemented. These claims have also been found in the literature on extremist groups major beliefs (Bar-On, 2018, p. 18; Neiwert, 2017, p.245)

## References

- Abdelal, R., Herrera, Y., Johnston, A., & McDermott, R. (2006). Identity as a Variable. *Perspectives on Politics*, 4(4), 695-711.
- Altemeyer, B. (1996). *The authoritarian specter*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Anahita, S. (2006). Blogging the Borders: Virtual Skinheads, Hypermasculinity, and Heteronormativity\*. *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 34(1), 143-0\_6.
- Anderson, E. (2015). The White Space. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 1(1), 10-21.
- Annisette, M., Vesty, G., & Amslem, T. (2017). Accounting Values, Controversies, and Compromises in Test of Worth. In C. Cloutier, J-P, Gond & L. Bernard. (Eds.), *Justification, evaluation and critique in the study of organizations: Contributions from French pragmatist sociology* (1st ed., pp.209-239). Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited
- Applebaum, A. (2019, May 17) "How Europe's 'Identitarians' are mainstreaming racism." *Washington Post*. Retrieved from [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/how-europes-identitarians-are-mainstreaming-racism/2019/05/17/3c7c9a6e-78da-11e9-b3f5-5673edf2d127\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/how-europes-identitarians-are-mainstreaming-racism/2019/05/17/3c7c9a6e-78da-11e9-b3f5-5673edf2d127_story.html)
- Baldwin, J. (1963). *The Fire Next Time*. New York: The Dial Press
- Bannerji, H. (2000). The paradox of diversity: The construction of a multicultural Canada and "women of color" 1. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 23(5), 537-560.
- Bar-On, T. (2018) The Radical Right and Nationalism In J. Rydgren (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of the radical right (Oxford handbooks)*. (pp. 17-41) New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Bartko, K. (2019, February 18). "Large pro-pipeline truck convoy protests federal oil policies in Ottawa." *Global News*. Retrieved from <https://globalnews.ca/news/4972392/truck-protest-ottawa-oil-policies/>
- Bartley, A. (1995). A Public Nuisance: The Ku Klux Klan in Ontario 1923-27. *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue D'Études Canadiennes*, 30(3), 156-174.
- Beamish, T. D., & Biggart, N. W. (2017). Capital and Carbon: The Shifting Common Good Justification of Energy Regimes. In C. Cloutier, J-P, Gond & L. Bernard (Eds.), *Justification, evaluation and critique in the study of organizations : Contributions from French pragmatist sociology* (1st ed., pp.173-205). Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited
- Bell, D. (1989). *And we are not Saved the Elusive Quest for Racial Justice*. New York: Basic Books

- Bell, S. (2020, February 3) “Kicked off Facebook, Canadian far-right groups resurface on the internet’s fringes.” *Global News*. Retrieved from  
<https://globalnews.ca/news/6490848/canadian-far-right-groups-internet-fringes/>
- Ben-David, A., & Matamoros-Fernández, A. (2016). Hate speech and covert discrimination on social media: Monitoring the Facebook pages of extreme-right political parties in Spain. *International Journal of Communication*, 10, 1167-1193.
- Benjamin, G. (2019, August 26). “‘One of the least Canadian things I’ve seen’: anti-immigration billboard sparks anger in Halifax.” *Global News*. Retrieved from  
<https://globalnews.ca/news/5806296/anti-immigration-billboard/>
- Berry, J. (2013). Research on multiculturalism in Canada. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 37(6), 663-675
- Betz, H. G. (2003). “Chapter Three: The Growing Threat of the Radical Right.” In Merkl, P., & Weinberg, Leonard. (Eds.). *Right-wing extremism in the twenty-first century* (p.71-89) (2nd rev. ed., Cass series on political violence). London ; Portland, Or.: Frank Cass.
- Betz , H. G.(2018) “The Radical Right and Populism” In Rydgren, J. (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of the radical right* (Oxford handbooks). (pp.86-104) New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Blad, C., & Couton, P. (2009). The Rise of an Intercultural Nation: Immigration, Diversity and Nationhood in Quebec. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 35(4), 645-667
- Blee, K. (2002). *Inside organized racism : Women in the hate movement*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Blee, K. M., & Creasap, K. A. (2010). Conservative and right-wing movements. *Annual review of sociology*, 36, 269-286
- Bobo, L. (2017). Racism in Trump's America: Reflections on culture, sociology, and the 2016 US presidential election. *British Journal of Sociology*, 68(S1), S85-S104.
- Boltanski, L., & Thévenot, L. (1999). The Sociology of Critical Capacity. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 2(3), 359-377.
- Boltanski, L., & Thévenot, L. (2000).The reality of moral expectations: A sociology of situated judgement. *Philosophical explorations*, 3(3) 208-231.
- Boltanski, L., & Thévenot, L. (2006). *On Justification: Economies of Worth*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Boutilier, A. (2018, October 7). “Rise of right-wing extremists present new challenge for Canadian law enforcement agencies.” *The Toronto Star*. Retrieved from

<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2018/10/07/rise-of-right-wing-extremists-presents-new-challenge-for-canadian-law-enforcement-agencies.html>

Boutilier, A. (2019, March 6). “Researchers to probe Canada’s evolving far-right movements.” *The Star*. Retrieved from <https://www.thestar.com/politics/federal/2019/03/06/researchers-to-probe-canadas-evolving-far-right-movements.html>

Breen, K. (2020, Janurary 16). “FBI arrests Patrik Mathews, missing ex-reservist from Manitoba accused of neo-Nazi ties.” *Global News*. Retrieved from <https://globalnews.ca/news/6420266/patrik-mathews-neo-nazi-ties-fbi/>

Brown, C. (2009). WWW.HATE.COM: White Supremacist Discourse on the Internet and the Construction of Whiteness Ideology. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 20(2), 189-208.

Bulley, D., & Sokhi-Bulley, B. (2014). Big Society as Big Government: Cameron's Governmentality Agenda. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 16(3), 452-470.

Camus-Vigue, A. (2000). Community and civic culture: The Rotary Club in France and the United States. In M. Lamont & L. Thévenot (Eds.). *Rethinking comparative cultural sociology: Repertoires of evaluation in France and the United States* (Cambridge cultural social studies., pp.213-228). Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Canadian Anti-Hate Network. (2019, February 18). “A few key takeaways: ID Canada was disappointed to lose their Facebook page....” [Twitter Post] Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/antihateca>

Carter, E. (2018). Right-wing extremism/radicalism: Reconstructing the concept. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 23(2), 157-182.

CBC News. (2019, May 21). “Councillor calls for new body to target anti-black racism.” *CBC News*. Retrieved from [https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/anti-black-racism-unit-member-1.5142574](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/toronto-anti-black-racism-unit-member-1.5142574)

Charalambous, G., & Christoforou, P. (2018). Far-Right Extremism and Populist Rhetoric: Greece and Cyprus during an Era of Crisis. *South European Society and Politics*, 23(4), 451-477.

Cho, L. (2018). Mass capture against memory: Chinese head tax certificates and the making of noncitizens. *Citizenship Studies*, 22(4), 381-400.

Chongatera, G. (2013). Hate-Crime Victimization and Fear of Hate Crime Among Racially Visible People in Canada: The Role of Income as a Mediating Factor. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 11(1), 44-64.

Cloutier, C., Gond, J., & Bernard, L. (2017). Justification, Evaluation and Critique in the Study of Organizations: An Introduction to the Volume. In C. Cloutier, J-P., Gond & L. Bernard (Eds.), *Justification, Evaluation and Critique in the Study of Organizations : Contributions from French Pragmatist Sociology* (First ed., Research in the sociology of organizations; v. 52., pp.3-29). Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited

Coaston, J. (2019, March 18). “The New Zealand shooter’s manifesto shows how white nationalist rhetoric spreads.” *Vox News*. Retrieved from <https://www.vox.com/identities/2019/3/15/18267163/new-zealand-shooting-christchurch-white-nationalism-racism-language>

Cramer, K. (2016). *The politics of Resentment: Rural consciousness in Wisconsin and the rise of Scott Walker (Chicago studies in American politics)*. Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press.

Crilley, R., & Gillespie, M. (2019). What to do about social media? Politics, populism and journalism. *Journalism*, 20(1), 173-176.

Daniels, J. (2009). Cyber racism: White supremacy online and the new attack on civil rights. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Davies, W. (2018). Nervous States: How feeling took over the world. London, UL: Penguin Books.

Denis, J. S. (2015). Contact Theory in a Small-Town Settler-Colonial Context: The Reproduction of Laissez-Faire Racism in Indigenous-White Canadian Relations. *American Sociological Review*, 80, 1, 218.

DiAngelo, R. (2011). White fragility. *The International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 3(3).

DiAngelo, R. (2018). *White fragility: Why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism*. Beacon Press.

Doffman, Z. (2019, March 27). “Facebook Bans White Nationalism Content After Being Threatened with Jail.” *Forbes*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/zakdoffman/2019/03/27/microsoft-attacks-social-media-as-facebook-and-youtube-are-sued-and-threatened-with-jail/#1b5379e81678>

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1993/2003). The Souls of White Folk. *Monthly Review* 55(6):44-58

Dunmire, P. L. (2012) Political discourse analysis: Exploring the language of politics and the politics of language. *Language and Linguistics Compass*. 6(11), 735-751.

Dyer, R. (1997). *White*. London: Routledge.

- Earl, J., & Kimport, K. (2011). *Digitally enabled social change: Activism in the internet age* (Acting with technology). Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Earl, J., & Garrett, R. (2017). The new information frontier: Toward a more nuanced view of social movement communication. *Social Movement Studies*, 16(4), 479-493.
- Eatwell, R. (2003). Chapter Two: Ten Theories of the Extreme Right. In P. Merkl & L. Weinberg (Eds.). *Right-wing Extremism in the Twenty-First Century* (2nd rev. ed., Cass series on political violence., pp.44-70). London ; Portland, Or.: Frank Cass.
- Ekman, M. (2014). The dark side of online activism: Swedish right-wing extremist video activism on YouTube. *Mediekultur: Journal of Media and Communication Research*, 30(56.)
- Facebook (2020). “Pages, Groups and Events Policies.” [Webpage]. Retrieved January 20, 2020, [https://www.facebook.com/policies/pages\\_groups\\_events/](https://www.facebook.com/policies/pages_groups_events/)
- Facing History and Ourselves (2019). “Until There is Not a Single Indian in Canada”, Facing History and Ourselves. Retrieved from <https://www.facinghistory.org/stolen-lives-indigenous-peoples-canada-and-indian-residential-schools/historical-background/until-there-not-single-indian-canada>
- Farough, S. D. (2004). The Social Geographies of White Masculinities. *Critical Sociology*, 30(2), 241-264.
- Fisher, R. (1992). *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*(2nd ed.). Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Flaherty, D. H., & Manning, F. E. (Eds.). (1993). *The beaver bites back?: American popular culture in Canada*. McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP.
- Flowers, N. (2016). Native black consciousness responding to the complexity of white racial consciousness. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education (qse)*, 29(8), 1059-1064.
- Frankenberg, R. (1993). *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Frontburner (2019, June 13). “How a far-right hate group operates in rural B.C. and across the country. *CBC News*. <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/frontburner/how-a-far-right-hate-group-operates-in-rural-b-c-and-across-the-country-1.5173155>
- Gee, J. P. (2005). *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*. New York: Routledge.
- Gerstenfeld, P. B., Grant, D. R., & Chiang, C.-P. (2003). Hate Online: A Content Analysis of Extremist Internet Sites. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 3(1), 29-44.

- Ging, D. (2017). Alphas, Betas, and Incels: Theorizing the Masculinities of the Manosphere. *Men and Masculinities*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X17706401>
- Gökarıksel, B. (2017). The Body Politics of Trump's "Muslim Ban". *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 13(3), 469-471.
- Government of Canada (1985). "Public Incitement of Hatred Act of 1985." *Criminal Code of Canada*. Retrieved from <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-46/section-319.html>
- Government of Canada (2017, December 21). "2017 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada." Retrieved from <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/pblc-rprt-trrrst-thrt-cnd-2017/index-en.aspx>
- Government of Canada (2019). "Building a Foundation for Change: Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy 2019-2022." Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/anti-racism-engagement/anti-racism-strategy.html>
- Graneheim, U., Lindgren, B., & Lundman, B. (2017). Methodological challenges in qualitative content analysis: A discussion paper. *Nurse Education Today*, 56, 29-34.
- Gravelle, T. (2014). Love thy neighbor? political attitudes, proximity and the mutual perceptions of the canadian and american publics. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 47(1), 135-157.
- Hagerty, B., Lynch-Sauer, J., Patusky, K., Bouwsema, M., & Collier, P. (1992). Sense of Belonging: A Vital Mental Health Concept. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, 6(3), 172-7
- Harris, K. (2019, April 8), "Facebook bans Faith Goldy and dangerous alt-right groups." *CBC*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/facebook-faith-goldy-ban-alt-right-1.5088827>
- Hecht, M. (2019, September 6). "Mark Hecht: Ethnic diversity harms a country's social trust. Economic well-being, argues professor." *Vancouver Sun*. Retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20190907021958/https://vancouversun.com/opinion/op-ed/mark-hecht-ethnic-diversity-harms-a-countrys-social-trust-economic-well-being-argues-professor>
- Hochschild, A. R. (2016). *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. New York: The New Press.
- Horne, G. (2009). *The color of fascism: Lawrence Dennis, racial passing, and the rise of right-wing extremism in the United States*. New York : Chesham: New York University Press ; Combined Academic
- ID Canada [@ID\_Canada]. (2018, February 01). Today we wrote a letter to the Mayor of Halifax and all city councilors denouncing their decision to remove the General Cornwallis statue

- from Cornwallis Park. [#Cornwallis #Halifax #IDCanada](#). [Tweet]. Retrieved from [https://twitter.com/ID\\_Canada/status/959132002690637824](https://twitter.com/ID_Canada/status/959132002690637824)
- ID Canada (2019). “About”. [Webpage]. Retrieved March 30, 2019, <https://www.id-canada.ca>
- Ignazi, P. (2003). Chapter Six: The Development of the Extreme Right at the End of the Century In P. Merkl & L. Weinberg (Eds.). *Right-wing extremism in the twenty-first century* (2nd rev. ed., Cass series on political violence., pp.137-152). London ; Portland, Or.: Frank Cass.
- Inglehart, R., & Baker, W. E. (2000). Modernization, cultural change, and the persistence of traditional values. *American sociological review*, 65(1), 19-51.
- Inutiq, S. (2019, February 17). “Dear Quallunaat (white people).” *CBC*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/dear-qallunaat-white-people-inuit-sandra-inutiq-1.5020210>
- Jackson, L M. (2019, September 4). “What’s Missing From “White Fragility””. *Slate*. Retrieved from <https://slate.com/human-interest/2019/09/white-fragility-robin-diangelo-workshop.html>
- Jackson, P., & Shekhovtsov, Anton. (2014). *The post-war Anglo-American far right : A special relationship of hate* (Palgrave pivot). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jaumier, S., Daudigeos, T., & de Lautour, V. J. (2017). Co-operatives, Compromises, and Critiques: What do French Co-operators Tell Us About Individual Responses to Pluralism? In C. Cloutier, J-P. Gond & L. Bernard (Eds.), *Justification, evaluation and critique in the study of organizations : Contributions from French pragmatist sociology* (1<sup>st</sup>., pp.73-106). Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited
- Jones, S. G. (2018, November 7) “The Rise of Far-Right Extremism in the United States.” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*. Retrieved from <https://www.csis.org/analysis/rise-far-right-extremism-united-states>
- Joosse, P. (2018). Countering Trump: Toward a theory of charismatic counter-roles. *Social Forces*, 97(2), 921-944.
- Kanji, A. (2018). Framing Muslims in the “War on Terror”: Representations of Ideological Violence by Muslim versus Non-Muslim Perpetrators in Canadian National News Media. *Religions*, 9(9), 1-26.
- Keith, E. (2019, March 15). “New Zealand Shooter ‘Inspired’ By Canadian Mosque Shooter Alexandre Bissonnette In Today’s Attack.” *Narcity*. Retrieved from <https://www.narcity.com/news/new-zealand-shooter-inspired-by-canadian-mosque-shooter-alexandre-bissonnette-in-todays-attack>
- Kincheloe, J. L. (1999). The Struggle to Define and Reinvent Whiteness: A Pedagogical Analysis. *College Literature*, 26(3).

- King, R., & Marian, C. (2008). Defining Political Science: A Cross-National Survey. *European Political Science: EPS*, 7(2), 207-219
- Klein, A. (2010). *A Space for Hate: The White Power Movement's Adaptation into Cyberspace*. Duluth, Minn.: Litwin Books.
- Klein, A. (2019). From Twitter to Charlottesville: Analyzing the Fighting Words Between the Alt-Right and Antifa. *International Journal of Communication*, 13, 22
- Kurnicki, K., & Sternberg, M. (2016). Arrested conflict: Transnational place-making in Polish-German border towns. *Space and Polity*, 20(3), 263-279.
- Lafaye, C., & Thévenot, L. (2017). An Ecological Justification? Conflicts in the Development of Nature. In C. Cloutier, J-P. Gond & L. Bernard (Eds.), *Justification, evaluation and critique in the study of organizations: Contributions from French pragmatist sociology* (1st ed., pp. 273-300). Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited
- Laframboise, K. (2020, April 10). “Quebec government ‘happy’ after Supreme Court declines to hear Bill 21 challenge, premier says.” *Global News*. Retrieved from <https://globalnews.ca/news/6805550/legault-responds-bill-21-challenge/>
- Lai, L. S., & To, W. M. (2015). Content analysis of social media: A grounded theory approach. *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, 16(2), 138-152.
- Lamont, M., & Thévenot, L. (2000). *Rethinking comparative cultural sociology: Repertoires of evaluation in France and the United States* (Cambridge cultural social studies). Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lamoureux, M. (2019, January 29). “Mayor Apologizes for Wanting to Sodomize Justin Trudeau with Pipeline “Pig”” *Vice News*. Retrieved from [https://www.vice.com/en\\_ca/article/mbze4q/mayor-apologizes-for-wanting-to-sodomize-justin-trudeau-with-pipeline-pig?utm\\_source=vicefbus&fbclid=IwAR1qHb41zXo-YaF7Bss37YzaNCw2BvyEYp3aEu\\_NsnZhRJeZXa9OPOhCxI](https://www.vice.com/en_ca/article/mbze4q/mayor-apologizes-for-wanting-to-sodomize-justin-trudeau-with-pipeline-pig?utm_source=vicefbus&fbclid=IwAR1qHb41zXo-YaF7Bss37YzaNCw2BvyEYp3aEu_NsnZhRJeZXa9OPOhCxI)
- Lewis, R. (1991). *A Nazi legacy : Right-wing extremism in postwar Germany*. New York: Praeger.
- Lipset, S., & Raab, Earl. (1970). *The politics of unreason; right wing extremism in America, 1790-1970* (1st ed.). New York: Harper & Row.
- Lluch, J. (2019). Unpacking Political Identity: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationhood in a Federal Political System. *Ethnopolitics*, 18(2), 178-200.
- Lough, A. B. (2018) *Alt-Right: Age of Rage*. United States: Gravitas Ventures.

- Lund, D. (2006). Social Justice Activism in the Heartland of Hate: Countering Extremism in Alberta. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 52(2), 181-194.
- Lupton, D. & Jutel, A. (2015). 'It's like having a physician in your pocket!' A critical analysis of self-diagnosis smartphone apps. *Social Science & Medicine*, 133, 128-135.
- Lytvynenko, J., Silverman, C., Boutilier, A. & Chown Oved, M. (2019a, April 8). "Facebook Will Ban Faith Goldy And Canadian White Nationalist Groups In Its Latest Crackdown." *BuzzFeedNews*. Retrieved from <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/janelytvynenko/facebook-bans-faith-goldy-canadian-white-nationalists>
- Lytvynenko, J., Silverman, C., Chown Oved, M., & Boutilier, A. (2019b, April 9). "A Day After Facebook Banned Canadian White Nationalists, Some Found Their Way Back." *BuzzFeedNews*. Retrieved from <https://www.buzzfeed.com/janelytvynenko/facebook-canada-ban-evaded>
- MacDonald, D., & Hudson, G. (2012). The Genocide Question and Indian Residential Schools in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 45(2), 427-449.
- Madrick, J., & O'Brien, R. (2010). *The case for big government*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Mailhot, C., & Langley, A. (2017). Commercializing Academic Knowledge in a Busniess School: Orders of Worth and Value Assemblages. In C. Cloutier, J-P. Gond & L. Bernard. (Eds.), *Justification, evaluation and critique in the study of organizations: Contributions from French pragmatist sociology* (1st ed., pp.241-269). Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited
- Makuch, B., Lamoureux, M. & Kamel, Z. (2019, December 5). "Neo-Nazi Terror Group Harbouring Missing Ex-Soldier: Sources." *Vice*. Retrieved from [https://www.vice.com/en\\_ca/article/8xwwaa/neo-nazi-terror-group-harbouring-missing-ex-soldier-patrik-mathews-sources?fbclid=IwAR38\\_jdgxlbt5dhCNRkSEldSslLF\\_fYg4orhKTTEphPHZhiWEX406v0kSIg](https://www.vice.com/en_ca/article/8xwwaa/neo-nazi-terror-group-harbouring-missing-ex-soldier-patrik-mathews-sources?fbclid=IwAR38_jdgxlbt5dhCNRkSEldSslLF_fYg4orhKTTEphPHZhiWEX406v0kSIg)
- Mancosu, M. (2014). Geographical context, interest in politics and voting behaviour: the case of the Northern League in Italy. *Contemporary Italian Politics*, 6(2), 131-146.
- Mayring, P. (2004). "Qualitative content analysis." In Flick, U., von Kardorff, E., & Steinke, I. (Eds.). *A companion to qualitative research*, (pp.266-269). Sage
- Meer, N. (2019). The wreckage of white supremacy. *Identities*, 26(5), 501-509.
- Merkel, P. H. (2003). Introduction In Merkl, P., & Weinberg, L. (Eds.), *Right-wing extremism in the twenty-first century* (2nd rev. ed., Cass series on political violence., pp.1-20). London ; Portland, Or.: Frank Cass.

Merkl, P. H., & Weinberg, L. (2003). *Right-wing extremism in the twenty-first century* (2nd rev. ed., Cass series on political violence). London ; Portland, Or.: Frank Cass.

Miller-Idriss, C. (2017). *The extreme gone mainstream: Commercialization and far right youth culture in Germany* (Princeton studies in cultural sociology). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Minkinberg, M. and Schain, M. (2003). Chapter Six: The Development of the Extreme Right at the End of the Century. In P. Merkl & L. Weinberg (Eds.). *Right-wing extremism in the twenty-first century* (2nd rev. ed., Cass series on political violence., pp.155-183). London ; Portland, Or.: Frank Cass.

Montpetit, J. (2019, April 25). "Why hasn't Facebook banned any far-right groups in Quebec?" *CBC*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/facebook-far-right-quebec-1.5109744>

Moscrop, D. (2020, March 24). "In Canada, an inspiring movement emerges in response to the coronavirus." *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/03/24/canada-an-inspiring-movement-emerges-response-coronavirus/>

Mudde, C. (1995). Right-wing extremism analyzed: A comparative analysis of the ideologies of three alleged right-wing extremist parties (NPD, NDP, CP'86). *European Journal of Political Research*, 27(2), 203-224.

Musset, B. (2019, May 8). "What It's Like Monitoring Canada's Yellow Vest Movement Every Day." *Vice News*. Retrieved from [https://www.vice.com/en\\_ca/article/9kxkwp/what-its-like-monitoring-canadas-yellow-vest-movement-every-day](https://www.vice.com/en_ca/article/9kxkwp/what-its-like-monitoring-canadas-yellow-vest-movement-every-day)

Nadeau, F., & Helly, D. (2016). Extreme right in quebec? the facebook pages in favor of the "quebec charter of values". *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 48(1), 1-18.

Neiwert, D. (2017). *Alt-America: The rise of the radical right in the age of Trump*. Verso Books.

Nyberg, D., Wright, C., & Kirk, J. (2017). "Re-Producing a Neoliberal Political Regime: Competing Justifications and Dominance in Disputing Fracking." In Cloutier, C., Gond, J., & Bernard. L. (Eds.), *Justification, evaluation and critique in the study of organizations : Contributions from French pragmatist sociology* (143-171). (First ed., Research in the sociology of organizations; v. 52). Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited

Ortutay, B. (2019, March 27). "Facebook extends ban on hate speech to 'white nationalists'" *CTV News*. Retrieved from <https://www.ctvnews.ca/sci-tech/facebook-extends-ban-on-hate-speech-to-white-nationalists-1.4354241>

Paquette, J., Beauregard, D., & Gunter, C. (2017). Settler colonialism and cultural policy: The colonial foundations and refoundations of Canadian cultural policy. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 23(3), 269-284.

Parsons, P. (2019, January 27). "Hate crime unit monitoring anti-Islamic group after confrontation at Al Rashid Mosque." *Edmonton Journal*. Retrieved from <https://edmontonjournal.com/news/crime/hate-crime-unit-monitoring-antiislamic-group-after-confrontation-al-rashid-mosque>

Pascale, C. (2019). The weaponization of language: Discourses of rising right-wing authoritarianism. *Current Sociology*, 001139211986996, 001139211986996-001139211986996.

Patriotta, G., Gond, J. P., & Schultz, F. (2011). Maintaining legitimacy: Controversies, orders of worth, and public justifications. *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(8), 1804-1836.

Parasram, A. (2019). Pathological White Fragility and the Canadian Nation: Pathological white fragility and the Canadian nation. *Studies in Political Economy*, 100(2), 194-207.

Parent, R. B., & Ellis, J. O. (2014). *Right-wing extremism in Canada*. TSAS, Canadian Network for Research on Terrorism, Security and Society.

Perry, B., & Olsson, P. (2009). Cyberhate: The Globalization of Hate, *Information and Communications Technology Law*, 18(2): 185-199.

Perry, B., & Scrivens, R. (2016). Uneasy Alliances: A Look at the Right-Wing Extremist Movement in Canada. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 39(9), 819-841.

Perry, B., & Scrivens, R. (2018). A Climate for Hate? An Exploration of the Right-Wing Extremist Landscape in Canada. *Critical Criminology*, 26(2), 169-187.

Perry, B., & Scrivens, R. (2019). Epilogue: The Trump Effect on Right-Wing Extremism in Canada. In *Right-Wing Extremism in Canada* (pp. 143-172). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham

Perry, B., Hofmann, D. C., & Scrivens, R. (2018). "Confrontational but Not Violent": An Assessment of the Potential for Violence by the Anti-Authority Community in Canada. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 1-21.

Platt, B. (2019, June 26). "For the first time, Canada adds white supremacist neo-Nazi groups to its list of terrorist organizations." *National Post*. Retrieved from <https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/for-the-first-time-canada-adds-white-supremacist-neo-nazi-groups-to-its-list-of-terrorist-organizations>

Polewski, L. (2019, October 9). "Hamilton to host anti-racism conference, thanks to federal funds." *Global News*. Retrieved from <https://globalnews.ca/news/6013165/hamilton-anti-racism-funding/>

- Quan, D. (2019, October 22). "Maxime Bernier tried, and failed, to ride the populist wave to victory." *National Post*. Retrieved from <https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/election-2019/canadian-federal-election-2019-maxime-bernier-ppc-loss>
- Radkiewicz, P. (2016). Does authoritarianism imply ethnocentric national attitudes: A revised look at the "authoritarian triad" and right-wing ideology. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 46(2), 224-236.
- Reinecke, J., van Rommel, K., & Spicer, A. (2017) "When the Orders of Worth Clash: Negotiating Legitimacy in Situations of Moral Multiplexity" In Cloutier, C., Gond, J., & Bernard. L. (Eds.), *Justification, evaluation and critique in the study of organizations : Contributions from French pragmatist sociology* (33-72). (First ed., Research in the sociology of organizations; v. 52). Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited
- Rutland, T. (2011). Re-remembering Africville. *City*, 15(6), 757-761.
- Salmela, M., & von Scheve, C. (2017). Emotional roots of right-wing political populism. *Social Science Information*, 56(4), 567-595.
- Salzborn, S. (2016). RENAISSANCE OF THE NEW RIGHT IN GERMANY?: A Discussion of New Right Elements in German Right-wing Extremism Today. *German Politics and Society*, 34(2), 36-63.
- Saslow, E. (2018). *Rising Out of Hatred: The Awakening of a Former White Nationalist*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.
- Scott, C., & Safdar, S. (2017). Threat and Prejudice against Syrian Refugees in Canada: Assessing the Moderating Effects of Multiculturalism, Interculturalism, and Assimilation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations : IJIR*, 60,28-39
- Scrivens, R., & Perry, B. (2017). Resisting the Right: Countering Right-Wing Extremism. Canada. *Canadian Journal of Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 59(4), 534-558.
- Scrivens, R., Davies, G., & Frank, R. (2018). Measuring the Evolution of Radical Right-Wing Posting Behaviors Online. *Deviant Behavior*, 41(2), 1-17.
- Selwyn, N. (2019). *What is digital sociology? (What is sociology?)*. Cambridge, UK ; Medford, MA: Polity Press.
- Setzler, M., & Yanus, A. (2018). Why did women vote for donald trump? *Ps: Political Science & Politics*, 51(03), 523-527
- Simi, P., & Futrell, R. (2010). *American swastika: Inside the white power movement's hidden spaces of hate*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

- Simi, P., & Futrell, R. (2006). Cyberculture and the endurance of white power activism. *Journal of Political & Military Sociology*, 34(1).
- Sivenbring, J. (2019). Signs of Concern about Islamic and Right-Wing Extremism on a Helpline against Radicalization. *Journal for Deradicalization*, (18), 108-145.
- Southern Poverty Law Centre (2012, June 12). “Racist Skinheads: Understanding the Threat”. Southern Poverty Law Centre. Retrieved from <https://www.splcenter.org/20120625/racist-skinheads-understanding-threat>
- Stanley, J. (2018). *How fascism works: The politics of us and them*. New York: Random House
- Steinert-Threlkeld, Z. (2018). *Twitter as data (Cambridge elements)*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Stevenson, J. (2019). Right-wing Extremism and the Terrorist Threat. *Survival*, 61(1), 233-244.
- Susen, S. (2017). Remarks on the Nature of Justification: A Socio-Pragmatic Perspective. In C. Cloutier, J-P. Gond & L. Bernard (Eds.), *Justification, evaluation and critique in the study of organizations : Contributions from French pragmatist sociology* (1<sup>st</sup> First ed., pp.349-381). Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited
- Ten Eyck, T. (2016). Justifying graffiti: (Re)defining societal codes through orders of worth. *The Social Science Journal*, 53(2), 218-225.
- Tetrault, J. E. C. (2019). What's hate got to do with it? Right-wing movements and the hate stereotype. *Current Sociology*, 0011392119842257
- The Daily. (2018, November 29). “Police-reported hate crime, 2017.” *Statistics Canada*. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/181129/dq181129a-eng.htm>
- The Daily. (2020, February 26). “Police-reported hate crime, 2018.” *Statistics Canada*. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200226/dq200226a-eng.htm>
- Tolz, V. (2003). “Chapter Ten: Right-Wing Extremism in Russia: The Dynamics of the 1990s?” In Merkl, P., & Weinberg, Leonard. (Eds.). *Right-wing extremism in the twenty-first century* (p.243-261) (2nd rev. ed., Cass series on political violence). London ; Portland, Or.: Frank Cass.
- Topinka, R. J. (2018). Politically incorrect participatory media: Racist nationalism on r/ImGoingToHellForThis. *New Media & Society*, 20(5), 2050-2069.
- Turner, B. S. (2014). Reflections on the Indignation of the Disprivileged and the Underprivileged. In S. Simon & S. Turner, (Eds), *The spirit of Luc Boltanski: Essays on the 'pragmatic sociology of critique'* (pp. 445-468). London, UK: Anthem

- Twitter (2019). "Twitter Privacy Policy". Retrieved April, 11, 2019,  
<https://twitter.com/en/privacy>
- van Dijk, T. A (2006). Ideology and discourse analysis. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 11(2), 115-140.
- Vancouver, C. A. S. I. S. (2019). Yellow Vests, Right-Wing Extremism and the Threat to Canadian Democracy. *The Journal of Intelligence, Conflict, and Warfare*, 1(3), 12-12.
- Walker, J. (2018, June 29). "Hate Speech and Freedom of Expression: Legal Boundaries in Canada. (Background Paper)" *Library of Parliament*. Publication No. 2018-25-E
- Walton, J., Priest, N., & Paradies, Y. (2013). "It Depends How You're Saying It": The Complexities of Everyday Racism. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, 7(1), 74-90.
- Weber, D. (2000). Culture or commerce? Symbolic boundaries in French and American book publishing. In M. Lamont & L. Thévenot (Eds.). *Rethinking comparative cultural sociology: Repertoires of evaluation in France and the United States* (Cambridge cultural social studies). (pp.127-147) Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wherry, A. (2019, December 12). "Conservatives face an awkward question: What if Scheer wasn't the problem?". *CBC*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/andrew-scheer-conservative-party-wherry-1.5394020>
- Wilcox, A. Weinberg, L. Eubank, W. (2003). "Chapter Four: Racism and the Political Right: European Perspectives." In Merkl, P., & Weinberg, Leonard. (Eds.). *Right-wing extremism in the twenty-first century* (p.121-152) (2nd rev. ed., Cass series on political violence). London ; Portland, Or.: Frank Cass.
- Wright, A. (2019, May 3). "White Supremacy isn't a problem just for conservatives – it's a problem for everyone." *CBC*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/opinion/conservative-politics-1.5120577>
- Yellow Vests Canada (2019). Yellow Vests Canada [Facebook Page]. Retrieved March 30, 2019, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/5655213087274651>
- Young, K., & Craig, L. (1997). Beyond white pride: Identity, meaning and contradiction in the Canadian skinhead subculture. *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 34(2), 175-206.
- Zimmermann, E. (2003). Chapter Nine: Right-Wing Extremism and Xenophobia in Germany: Escalation, Exaggeration, or What? In P. Merkl & L. Weinberg (Eds.). *Right-wing extremism in the twenty-first century* (2nd rev. ed., Cass series on political violence., pp.213-241) London ; Portland, Or.: Frank Cass.

Zwet, J., Croix, A., Jonge, L., Stalmeijer, R., Scherpbier, A., & Teunissen, P. (2014). The power of questions: A discourse analysis about doctor–student interaction. *Medical Education*, 48(8), 806-819.

## Appendix 1- Initial Observation Keywords

<b>Canadian Identity and Belonging</b>	<b>Politics</b>
(Illegal) Immigration	Taxation
Europe	Border
Culture	Election
History	Politicians
Values	Censorship
Pride	Treason
Media	Corruption
Whiteness	Globalists
Refugee	Elites
Religion	Healthcare
Crime	Education
Violence	Patriot
Queer	Climate Change
Children	Privacy
Security	
Colonization	

## **Appendix 2- Number of Posts Coded in Each Theme**

### **Canadian Identity and Belonging**

#### **Canadian Racial Identity as White**

Identity/Whiteness– 30 posts

Assimilation- 20 Posts

#### **Canadian Values Equating to Traditional Values**

Canadian Values- 21 posts

Queerness/Authority of Parents over Queer Children- 33 posts

The Media- 31 posts

### **Social Decay**

Increase in Crime- 35 posts

Increase in Illegal Migration- 30 posts

### **Politics**

#### **Authoritarian Government**

Distrust of Government Institutions- 21 posts

Distrust of Liberal Government – 51 posts

Valorization of Right-Wing Politicians- 28 posts

There were some posts that overlapped- such as those speaking about the distrust of the Liberal government and a valorization of politicians such as Trump as an alternative. There were also some posts that did not fit into the categories that I coded- such as posts encouraging followers to keep up to date on the group's webpage.

### Appendix 3- Hierachal Coding Structure

