Malicious Enclaves:
Racism, Hate, and Violence in Social Media Use of
Right-Wing Extremists in Canada

by

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Abstract

Canadian right-wing extremism is now recognized as a serious problem and their use of social media to circulate hate, violence, and racism is a growing concern. However, not until circa 2016 did Canadian academics, police agencies, and intelligence agencies view the threat of right-wing extremism as a national security issue within Canada. My dissertation examines the usage of social media by “right-wing extremist” (RWE) groups in Canada to contribute to the collective knowledge pool of Canadian right-wing extremism. It aims to identify hate as an affective form of communication regularly utilized by right-wing extremists through their usages of social media. This dissertation draws upon conceptual resources in media and communication studies to develop an analytical framework to examine how four Canadian RWE Facebook pages, Pegida Canada, Act for Canada, Canada Defence League, and Canada Three Percenters, created a digital space to justify and circulate racism, hate, and violence in social media. I use social network analysis, news event analysis, and frame shift analysis to unpack the digital space that leads to what I label as “malicious enclaves”: a facade of a politically oriented group that establishes a veil of legitimacy to facilitate hateful and violence-endorsing views primarily on digital social media. The social network analysis generates an understanding of how malicious enclaves are connected and interacted with various Facebook pages, the news event analysis provides a glimpse at a two-day data inclusion window to ascertain how the malicious enclaves respond to a pre-defined news event, and finally, the frame shift analysis examines how the malicious enclaves collectively switch their frames to respond to a novel news event. My dissertation demonstrates how the online circulation of grievances around victimization has positioned racism and violence toward hated others, especially Muslims, as an RWE’s defensive response necessary to protect the nation. My research into malicious enclaves unravel an intimate
relationship between social media, racist forms of hatred, and violence. Ultimately, it challenges the notion that we need only be concerned about the possibility of spillage from online to offline activity, and it encourages attention to less “spectacular” and visible forms of violence.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

“and then the muslims [sic] wonder why the mosques in NZ were attacked, because the government etc are allowing islam [sic] to take hold in our countries, a law for islam [sic], a law for the rest of us, islam [sic] can not fit in and live in a modern society, and needs to be banned in all western countries, we need leaders that will stand against islam [sic] with out fear, but the politicians [sic] we have now don’t give a shit and muslims [sic] are taking over slowly for now but it will some time in the future where civil war will happen, if those that want to live free take up arms, or we all become slaves to bloody islam.” (Canada Defence League Member, 2019, March 18).

The quotation above might not seem like an expected reaction to the New Zealand Christchurch Mosque attack on March 15, 2019, where the convicted terrorist Brenton Tarrant murdered 51 people and injured 49 while they prayed. However, it is anything but unique. While much of the world watched in horror at the aftermath of the terrorist plot, Brenton Tarrant, the attacker, live-streamed himself on Facebook, executing as many people as possible to immortalize his acts online. Almost simultaneously, as Tarrant shared the livestream, it was repurposed by viewers and uploaded to numerous other social media outlets. Followers of the Act for Canada¹, the Canada Defence League², Pegida Canada³, and (the now designated terrorist entity) Three Percenters Canada⁴, all are Canadian right-wing extremist groups, similarly relished the opportunity to blame the attack on the Muslim victims (Roy & Graham-McLay, 2019).

¹ Act for America is an “advocacy” group based out of the United States that seeks to present itself as a lobbying group. They primarily seek to pass bills and laws that prevent Muslims from “taking over” the United States (Beinart, 2017; PLC, “Act for America,” n.d., n.p; ADL “ACT for America,” n.d.). Due to their vociferousness, they have inspired Canadians to adopt their moniker (See pages 98-101).
² The English Defence League is a hooligan-styled group out of the United Kingdom that seeks to implement change to prevent Muslims from taking over by holding protests to “raise awareness” of Muslim criminality when they inhabit non-Muslim majority countries (Kassimeris & Jackson, 2015; Lee 2016) (See pages 101-104).
³ Pegida is a German street movement that inspired other countries across Europe and North America to fight primarily against Middle Eastern and Muslim immigration (Berntzen & Weisskircher, 2016; Matusitz, 2015). (See pages 104-111).
⁴ The Three Percenters are an American militia that has resonated with many Canadians who embrace the need to act as a defensive organization to halt an Islamic takeover (Hutter, 2018; Lamoureux, 2017). (See pages 126-107).
As the Facebook post above demonstrates, many would go further than simply siding with the terrorist attacker and express the need to prepare for, and ultimately escalate, violence to prevent Muslim encroachment. There was vocalized support for further coordinated violence by various Islamophobes and far-right groups against Muslims expressed across Facebook and quickly shared on other platforms. Within minutes, the live-streamed footage appeared across Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, 4Chan, and other central social media platforms. Some individuals and groups commenting on Facebook justified the Christchurch Mosque attack. Others argued that it did not go far enough. Many believed it was a “psy-op” to make Muslims look like victims (EndTheFed2011, 2013). The internalization of social media by hateful and violent actors works in tandem with such a murderous plot to ensure its widespread dissemination. Although such comments being displayed proudly on public pages is disturbing and dehumanizing, this dissertation inquires into their wider significance. How should events such as the Christchurch attack be situated within broader social networks of hate, harm, and violence? How did the filmed terrorist attack not only circulate in real-time but get folded into wider networks of hate and dehumanization through sharing, posting, and racist forms of history and memory? How do acts of violence committed by someone belonging to a particular group get repurposed to vilify a global community? And, how are other types of political and cultural news events utilized to support, sustain, and promote similar hateful convictions?

1.1. Background: Inspiration and Formulating the Dissertation

While compiling data for a course essay in Fall 2017 on the Sons of Odin⁵ within Canada, I was deeply disturbed by the abundance of hateful and racist individuals I encountered.

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⁵ The Sons of Odin and Soldiers of Odin are a far-right anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim gang out of Finland that adorns uniforms that resemble Biker gangs. They have successfully spread across Europe and many North American countries like Canada and the United States (Neville & Langlois, 2021; Veilleux-Lepage and Archambault, 2019).
Using their real names and profiles, they openly endorsed, called for, and celebrated violence and racism against those they viewed as detrimental to Canada. What I uncovered through the “Similar Pages” feature provided by Facebook was the sheer volume of Canadian Facebook “group pages” (see Chapter 5 for an in-depth explanation) like the Sons of Odin that similarly endorsed violence and racist views through public Facebook pages. It was initially chilling as I believed the pages must have been obscure and overlooked by Facebook Community Standards. However, this was not the case. Instead of being halted, Canadian pages with a similar sentiment to the Sons of Odin, including dozens of Yellow Vest pages, Militia pages, successionist pages, anti-Islam pages, anti-leftist pages, and anti-globalist pages, were abundant and publicly accessible. So much so that my data collection from public Facebook group pages compiled well over 500,000 posts from all the Canadian-specific pages I was following. Right-wing extremist? Or Hateful? Facebook group pages that were popular outside of Canada, such as the English Defence League, Pegida, The Three Percenters, and Act for America (to list a few), had been adopted by Canadians but were being used to establish an international hub of such content. These hateful Facebook group pages (as Chapter 4 highlights) champion politicians such as Donald Trump, Geert Wilders, Nigel Farage, and Matteo Salvini for their hardline stance against immigration and Muslims. Articulated by many commentators as a “populist resurgence,” groups and political movements that spouted the need for a nativist shift in political focus, with little regard for other nations or their citizens, grew in tandem with Facebook pages and other social media platforms where individuals express similar sentiments. Seeking to

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6 The Yellow Vests are a French-inspired “Gilets Jaune” that used an actual yellow vest as the uniform adorned by members of the movement. Surprisingly, despite their left-wing outlook, France’s Gilets Jaunes inspired offshoots that were right to far-right winged individuals (Tewksbury, 2021).

7 Geert Wilder is a far-right Dutch politician known for Islamophobic remarks and likening Muslim Immigrants to an invading military force (Wildman, 2017).
advance the collective understanding of hate within Canada, I utilized the ease of public data collection to document openly discriminatory and hateful Facebook group pages.

What became apparent in my early literature review was the seemingly agreed-upon nature of digital conglomerations that allow for extremists to connect, being described by academics as “digital networks,” “digital spheres,” “digital space,” a “filter bubble,” and “echo chambers.” Built within these critical terms, I discovered a partial understanding of interactions between individuals and how they congregate while on digital social media. My research objective is to bring an understudied aspect to the study of extremism generally by demonstrating that digital networks are far less unified than what these terms indicate when combined with particular ideologies such as right-wing extremism. In my pursuit to unpack right-wing extremism online, I argue that there needs to be better vocabulary to articulate a more involved digital social setting while also allowing for the complexity of human relationships to be encapsulated. As such, this dissertation builds on scholarship that relies on critical terms such as “digital spheres,” “digital space,” “filter bubbles,” “echo chambers,” and advances instead the notion of a “digital enclave” (later “malicious enclaves” for those seeded in extremism) as more astute (Dubois & Blank, 2018; Nguyen, 2020).

Urban sociologists generally draw upon enclaves to depict a neighbourhood where individuals of similar races, classes, and creeds live. Examples of enclaves are neighbourhoods within North America, such as the many versions of “China Town” and “Little Italy.” Whether or not members of these enclaves have anything aside from their cultural background in common seems irrelevant. The tie that binds them together is perhaps fear of leaving the enclave, comfort in being around “like-others,” and other basic human needs addressed by immersing oneself with seemingly alike individuals (Campbell & Golan, 2011; Graham, 2014). Although a physical
neighbourhood is not the same as a digital social media platform such as Facebook, this
dissertation draws on recent scholarship describing websites, networks, and interactions within
digital social media platforms through the lens of “digital enclaves” (Campbell & Golan, 2011;
Graham, 2014; Lim, 2017; Robinson, 2022). Like urban sociologists, scholars utilize the term
digital enclave to discuss websites, digital networks, and social media platforms to describe a
purposely designed self-segregated space used by racially, religiously, and politically distinct
individuals. For instance, Campbell and Golan (2011) discuss how Orthodox Jewish
communities have found comfort in websites designed to maintain their religious faith without
being compromised by outside internet influences. Similarly, Graham (2014) looks at websites
with discussion forums that African Americans primarily use to discuss concerns unique to their
communities. Lim (2017) looks at how algorithms have helped create digital enclaves of
individuals who share similar political orientations and are free to converse while excluding
outsider opinions.

Hence, the authors utilize the term digital enclave to complicate how community and
relationships foment across digital social media platforms. While it may seem evident that
groups of people interact with each other online in recognizable patterns, many take for granted
the sheer complexity of what makes sustained interactions with individuals online possible.
“Digital networks,” “digital spheres,” “digital space,” “filter bubbles,” “silos,” and “echo
chambers” all have their merits (Dubois & Blank, 2018; Nguyen, 2020). However, what research
thus far ignores, and my dissertation aims to identify, is the “glue” that encourages enclaves to
form and be sustained (Lim, 2017). Sure, there is often a shared political, cultural, or religious
interest, but these interests appear in numerous other areas. To unpack what makes a digital
enclave distinct requires we take seriously the multiple ways individual members encourage and are encouraged to participate.

A crucial part of digital enclaves is understanding the “currency” that sustains them (Lim, 2017). Unlike online forums that often seek to encourage cogent debate (presented as separate from affective interaction and appeals to emotion), the digital enclave is often entirely (and openly) affective. When examining authors like Campbell and Golan (2011), the glue binding the Orthodox Jewish community on these websites is the fear of being exposed to irreligious and problematic material on other websites and their love for their faith and community. In comparison, Graham (2014) identifies how African Americans are seeking out digital enclaves to air their grievances away from the dominant public that question the grievances of Black Americans. The point is that affective commentary is an acceptable expression in the digital enclave. Essentially, because individuals congregate with those who share similar outlooks and feel similarly, they are confident to share their views and concerns without the same rigour expected from expressing a political point of view to a diversely situated crowd. In a sense, the digital enclave limits opposing views. The digital enclave allows for intensifying affective claims and broader appeals to emotion (Han, Hwang, & Lee, 2017). At the same time, Han, Hwang, and Lee (2017) discuss racialized and minority populations as Campbell and Golan (2011), and Graham (2014) do; we can see this as a positive social development. It allows these marginalized and racialized communities to discuss current events impacting their communities with less risk of having political or ideological opponents undermine the support needed for affective relationships to develop. I am not suggesting that everything within a digital enclave is merely

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8To provide a primer on affect I drawn on Papacharissi (2014). “Yet affect itself extends beyond feeling as a general way of sense-making. It informs our general sensibility toward the world surrounding us, which is inclusive of potentialities… Affect informs our sensibilities, theorized both in sense-making processes of the human body and in relation to the sensemaking technologies… (Papacharissi, 2014, p. 15).
affective or that factual claims are inherently unfounded. I argue that the affective and emotional are equally welcome within a digital enclave in tandem with more rigorous, evidence-based claims.

While the positives provided by the digital enclave are apparent in the cases of Campbell and Golan (2011) and Graham (2014), what this dissertation questions are the way this sense of community and connection is embraced by broader digital networks premised on those that do not seek equality but look, rather, to encourage right-wing extremist views. The various platforms, such as web forums and affiliated websites, that give life to digital enclaves show how various communities can form them. Moreover, this is where a nuanced understanding of affect and “digital intimacy” becomes essential, especially regarding “love” and “hate” (Ahmed, 2004; Hage, 2003; Ley & Rambukkana, 2021; Lim, 2017; Rambukkana, 2015). The fine line between love and hate will explore how those guilty of expressing pernicious views can also harbour a sense of love and loyalty to that which they believe they are protecting (Hage, 2003; Lim, 2017). This dissertation aims to identify hate as an affective form of communication regularly utilized by right-wing extremists (Ahmed, 2004; Ahmed, 2014; Cerulo, 1997; Drotner, 2005; Robinson, 2022). Hate filters content to curate the right-wing extremist enclave affectively (Ahmed, 2004; Ahmed, 2014; Lim, 2017). Specifically, I locate the “antagonisms” of “the politics of living identity through difference” identified by Hall (1991). Hall (1991, p. 68) writes that in terms of political momentum, the part of what is sold to a crowd is the promise of what can be maintained, attained, or protected through discussions of political and social promises. Hall (1991) writes, “You must identify yourself with the larger things inside my project. That is how you become part of history. You become a little cog in the larger part of history” (p. 68). The attempt to make one a “cog in the larger part of history” is apparent within the malicious
enclaves and the promises they make, the views they express, and the aspirations they pronounce (Hall, 1991, p. 68).

Drawing on the work of Ahmed (2004) and Levin and Rabrenovic (2009), I argue that hatred is the “glue” that binds and allows right-wing extremists to expand and thrive through their multitude of digital enclaves (Lim, 2017). I pay particular attention to Ahmed’s (2004) argument that a critical task for white supremacists is to situate their hatred in a defensive formation, presenting those they discriminate against as the aggressors. I similarly draw on Hage (2003, p. 22), who argues that such “affective expression” constitutes a “paranoid nationalism.” Through his work, Hage (2003) argues, “‘worrying about one’s nation’ has become such a dominant cultural trend in most Western societies that it is sometimes uncritically equated with what it means to be attached to the nation” (p. 22). This paranoia, coupled with a sense of love for their race, culture, religion, and country, means that instead of simply listing all the things white supremacists hate about a particular race or religion, they frame themselves as victims of the groups they wish to demean, often with appeals to protect their own country (Ahmed, 2004; Hage, 2003; Lim, 2017). Therefore, according to Ahmed (2004) and Hage (2003), white supremacists in the age of digital social media frame news, current events, and political opponents through the lens of being “real” patriots, and thus, those that feel victimized for loving their country.

Keeping with the breadth of websites and networks that can become digital enclaves, my dissertation examines how “Facebook group pages” become digital enclaves for many right-wing extremist organizations. Facebook group pages allow individuals with common interests to isolate themselves from other users. Taking the lead from Ahmed (2004), this dissertation unpacks the relationship of social media to racist forms of hatred that manifest both on and
offline through these pages. In doing so, I pay close attention to the circulation of news and everyday events framed and interpreted through posts. By drawing on scholarly approaches to framing and posting, I demonstrate how information, identity, and hate combine through a constant flow of communication.

My argument develops using multiple methodologies and data sources in this dissertation. The primary data source is Facebook posts from far-right “Facebook group pages.” I select Facebook posts from pre-determined date ranges that correspond to “news events” likely to encourage increased participation from members of the selected right-wing extremist digital enclave. News events are vital to understanding digital enclaves because they allow the affective atmosphere to flourish by escalating engagement. Understanding what becomes news events for these digital enclaves enables us to reveal what they determine as post-worthy (topics worth discussing in the digital enclave). By unpacking the content within a right-wing extremist digital enclave, we get a more accurate glimpse of what amplifies engagement and pinpoint what “affective triggers” lead to their participation (Han, Hwang, & Lee, 2017). This process requires an in-depth analysis of each digital enclave, its individuals, and the content that increases their likelihood of posting.

My research into digital enclaves raises questions about the relationship between social media, racist forms of hatred, and violence. It challenges the notion that we need only be concerned about the possibility of spillage from online to offline activity, and it encourages attention to less “spectacular” and visible forms of violence (Nixon, 2011, p. 4). As discussed,

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9 News event will be elaborated upon in Chapter 3. However, briefly, a news event is a story, typically found in a mainstream or alternative news source, and becomes post-worthy to a particular digital enclave by relevance to their overall objective and/or outlook. So, for right-wing extremists, discussions pertaining to religious, racial, and ethnic communities, as well as current policies or politicians that may allow for hatred to be expressed are likely the news events that would resonate for these digital enclaves.
the digital enclave is a digital space for culturally, religiously, racially, and like-mindedly similar individuals. While this can act as a precursor for a social movement, riot, or any form of offline collective action, we need to be more attuned to how such spaces allow for hate speech itself, regardless of what it may morph into, to constitute a form of “slow violence” (Nixon, 2011). As Nixon (2011) articulates, “slow violence” is “…a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all” (p. 2).

1.2. Chapter Summaries

My dissertation is organized into eight chapters. Following this introduction, the remaining seven chapters are summarized as follows. In Chapter 2: Right-Wing Extremism and Media in Canada, I review the existing literature on how racism, white supremacism, and rightism facilitate their content across the internet and other digital infrastructure. I discuss theories of how digital social media made it possible for racist views to find a resurgence within Canada and other nations by easing connections for interested individuals through a Trans-Atlantic link (Scrivens & Conway, 2019). After examining multiple definitions and designations, I adopt the term “right-wing extremism” as the broad categorization for this dissertation. Finally, the chapter critically assesses the variety of ways scholars researching right-wing extremism have chosen to study its multiple manifestations.

In Chapter 3: Right-Wing Extremists Online: An Introduction to Malicious Enclaves, I outline the social movement and digital network’s approach to far-right extremism. Social media platforms that encourage “likes” and “shares” often promote “affective” appeals that resonate immediately and on the surface level. Scholars such as Karppi (2015) and Han, Hwang, and Lee (2017) discuss how “affectively enthralling” users are part of the reason for the success of
platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Ahmed (2004) and Levin and Rabrenovic (2009) theorize affect and examine the strategic uses of hate and the cultural components of individuals and groups immersed in hatred. I build upon these works by adapting framing analysis, as outlined by Entman (1993), to the posting activities within specific enclaves of hate.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Ethical Considerations details the three primary methodologies (social network analysis, news event analysis, and frameshift analysis) I use throughout my dissertation. Finally, I identify the ethical parameters I follow concerning the collected Facebook data accumulated between February 2019 and August 2019 (Bernard, Wutich, & Ryan, 2017; Remenyi, 2012; Yin, 2009).

In Chapter 5: Social Network Analysis and Four RWE Malicious Enclaves, I introduce the four right-wing extremist malicious enclaves I study. To provide context, I trace the origins, leadership, mantras, and purpose identified by the malicious enclaves for the original and the Canadian offshoot. Following this description and summary of the malicious enclaves, I utilize a social-network analysis for each Canadian right-wing extremist malicious enclave studied. The conversation pathways provide insight into these pages’ international and domestic connections and illustrate how other malicious enclaves on Facebook connect to the four central ones studied here.

In Chapter 6: What’s Worth Hating? Examining Six News Events, I analyze the posts from the four Canadian right-wing extremists’ malicious enclaves. By identifying 6 “news events” of likely importance to the enclave, I track the quantity and content of posts concerning news events that trigger or interrupt the immediate discussion. In doing so, I explore the disparity between news events that correspond to Christian, Jewish, and Muslim victimization about news events where Christian and Muslim groups are responsible for the violence. I contrast these news
events to stories related to the Canadian political scene, such as Conservative political victories at the provincial level and the sentencing of Alexandre Bissonnette. Further, I identify when posts discuss violence as acceptable and identify people or groups as worthy targets of “retribution.” Building off the idea of enemies and opponents getting their “just desserts,” I introduce the concept of “affective escalation” in this chapter to describe the type of conversation that occurs within malicious enclaves.

In Chapter 7: The Christchurch Mosque Attack and Frame Shift Analysis, I focus solely on the Christchurch Mosque attack to examine the reaction in posts by examining data from eight days before and eight days following April 15, 2019. The frameshift analysis illuminates in greater detail how enclaves react to a news event involving terrorism and physical violence, and it also illustrates what is absent in the ‘news event’ approach analysis undertaken in Chapter 6.

In Chapter 8: Conclusion, I summarize the dissertation results and consider its broader implications for studying social media, violence, and far-right extremism in Canada. While drawing attention to January 6, 2021, Capitol Hill attack in Washington, DC, and the month-long occupation of Ottawa from January 22, 2022, to February 23, 2022, I distinguish law enforcement and counter-terrorism-driven approaches from the social movement and digital media approach. Instead of focusing on (so-called) lone wolves and physical violence, my dissertation emphasizes an understanding of right-wing extremism that grasps the complexity of network coordination and digital enclaves in creating conditions for hate, racism, and violence. In doing so, the communicative dynamics involved in posting, framing, and the circulation of affect to affirm exclusionary identities and hateful othering are brought to bear on our understanding of violence. I conclude with a subsection on policy and practical suggestions for researchers and policymakers regarding preventing violent extremism and de-radicalization.
Chapter 2: Right-Wing Extremism and Media in Canada

This chapter reviews the scholarly literature on racist, white supremacist, and white nationalist views on right extremism and social media in Canada. In my review of this scholarship, several problems are discussed, including the relationship between national and transnational forms of right extremism; the units of analysis that are typically used to conceptualize extremists, the importance of digital and social media to the circulation of hate and violence, and the complexities involved in defining extremism. Although interest in digital and social media is growing among scholars dealing with right extremism in Canada, I demonstrate that a historical understanding of networked media is needed to conceptualize how hate and violence are circulating today. The emergence of digital enclaves is illuminated, and a networked illustration of the relationship between political institutions, extremist groups, and violent individuals becomes demonstrable. I begin by reviewing the literature on the history of white supremacy and racism in Canada and exploring the categories used to identify and conceptualize right extremism (i.e., political institutions, groups, and individuals). I then review how these categories inform studies of right extremism before discussing scholarship on the importance of communication and social networks in this context. I also discuss popular definitions of extremism as anti-pluralist, supportive of violence, and all-encompassing from a network perspective. Finally, I conclude that for my purposes, a definition of extremism must incorporate the breadth of words and actions encompassed as “slow violence” (Nixon, 2011).

2.1. Studying Right Extremism in Canada

Racist, white supremacist, and rightist extremist groups have long been present in Canada. “Traditionally, radical right-wing violence in Canada has been racist, anti-Catholic, anti-
Communist, and anti-Semitic. Right-wing violence in Canada can be traced back as far as 1784 when Canada’s first race riot took place in the Nova Scotian towns of Shelburne and Birchtown” (Ross, 1992, p. 77). The 1784 race riot would be the first of many where white men reacted violently to employers hiring racialized workers at a lower wage (Ross, 1992). Race riots were relatively common throughout Canada during the late 19th and early twentieth centuries (Ross, 1992). As Ross (1992) documents, while politicians were drawing attention to the negative impact of Chinese Canadians on the economy, “On 24 February 1887 Chinese shanties and possessions were destroyed in Vancouver as targets of anti-oriental sentiment. The most notable incident…was a race riot on 7 September 1907 in Vancouver during which whites attacked both Japanese and Chinese [Canadians]….” (p.77).

Other instances of targeted violence were enacted by the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), who frequently engaged in arson throughout the early 20th Century against “several Catholic institutions in the Montreal area” (Ross, 1992, p. 78). Such KKK violence towards Catholics and ideological opponents was expected, as Ross writes:

In 1924 a fire set by the Klan at St Boniface College in Manitoba killed ten Catholic students. Juvenaut College was also damaged in a fire which also led to the basement of the village of Terrebonne. Also that year in Sarnia, Ontario, two Klansmen robbed a Catholic church and destroyed religious symbols in the process. And in February 1930 Klansmen at Oakville forcibly removed a white girl from a house where a black was living. The Klan bombing of a Catholic church at Barrie in June 1926 brought fear into a generally peaceful town. In May 1930, at Lacombe, Alberta, the Klan abducted, tarred and feathered a blacksmith by the name of Fred Doberstein. In February 1933 Klansmen fired upon union leaders in Blairmore. Also that month, Coleman, a KKK member, helped provoke a riot. (Ross, 1992, p. 78)

Aside from KKK-led violence, numerous fascist organizations within Canada in the 1930s engaged in anti-Semitic attacks and hate crimes (Ross, 1992). Jewish businesses, synagogues, and students were regularly targeted by “Swastika clubs,” resulting in the 1933 Christie Pits riot (Ross, 1992, p. 78). Fascist violence was so common that “[o]nly two incidents of right-wing
violence, not of the Nazi or Fascist variety, could be located during the 1930s” (Ross, 1992, p. 78). Fascist efforts appear to dwindle throughout the 40s and 50s within Canada, aside from racist vandalism towards Japanese Canadians “following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour” (Ross, 1992, p. 79). However, during this time, the government enacted policies overseeing the internment of “enemy aliens” (Karim, 2003). While there was a decrease from the 1940s and 1950s, Ross (1992) details that “during the early 1960s Canada experienced the resurgence and fomentation of radical right-wing extremism. Various groups loosely connected to racist, anti-Semitic, and anti-Communist activities spawned; some, out of the ashes of others” (p. 79).

A few key examples demonstrate the evolution of racist, white supremacist, and rightist ideologies within post-WW2 Canada and the development of their methods and concerns. For instance, Barrett (1987) identifies that the Canadian Nazi Party in 1966 was accepted “as an affiliated branch of the World Union of National Socialists” (p. 46). The Canadian Nazi Party established a connection to other like-minded National Socialist movements following WW2 (Barrett, 1987). Similarly, the Edmund Burke Society was anti-Semitic and tied Jewish conspiracies to communism (Barrett, 1987). Barrett (1987) argues it is “believed…that the danger of communism and the disintegration of Western society demanded action [and the need for] a new organization, one that would canalize ‘militant conservative activism’” (p. 49). The concern was the amount of violence the individuals should employ within these organizations. When the Edmund Burke Society failed to achieve its objectives, a new group, the Western Guard, was formed in 1972 (Barrett, 1987). The Western Guard described their objective, according to Barrett (1987), to “…preserve and promote the basic social and spiritual values of White People. Under the symbol of the Celtic Cross, we fight for our Christian moral values, our European heritage, and the spiritual and cultural rebirth of our people”” (p. 85). This official
slogan was a soft cover for the racist narratives that the Western Guard spread via “recorded telephone message,” “slogans on buildings and construction sites,” and their “leaflets” (Barrett, 1987, pp. 85-86). As Barrett (1987) writes, “[s]ome of the slogans were as follows: ‘White Power’; ‘Racism Is Not Evil’; ‘Hail Don Andrews’; ‘Kill Communist Pigs – White Power’; ‘More *******10, More Crime – Kill Racial Mixers’; ‘Happy Birthday Adolph [sic] Hitler’” (p. 86, emphasis in original). Such open support for racism inevitably inspired violence (Barrett, 1987). It is therefore not surprising that in 1975 three members of the Western Guard:

were arrested with an arson plot, planning to disrupt an Olympic soccer game at Varsity Stadium involving an Israeli team, illegal possession of weapons and explosives, and mischief; the latter concerned window-smashing and painting swastikas and racial slogans on synagogues and other buildings. (Barrett, 1987, p. 88)

Despite the Western Guard being active throughout the 1970s, their unsuccessful activism was due to infighting and numerous arrests of leaders (Barrett, 1987). Accompanying the racist activism that openly promoted “white power” was a call to attack dissenting white voices. So, when white people that supported racial equality, befriended non-white people or engaged in romantic relationships with non-white people, they were regularly (and historically) disparaged as “race traitors,” “race mixers,” and “******* lovers”11 (Barrett, 1987; George, 2004; Lensmire, 2017; Moon & Flores, 2000).

The Western Guard, like their immediate predecessors, such as the Canadian Nazi Party and the Edmund Burke Society, failed to establish a renewed nationwide white supremacism and could not increase wholesale violence toward non-Christian and non-white citizens (Barrett, 1987; Kinsella, 1994). Seeking to ramp-up their polemics, the Western Guard split, and many members established the “Canadian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan” (Kinsella, 1994, p. 237).

10 Racist term omitted.
11 Racist term omitted.
David Duke, “the founder and leader of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan” within the USA, inspired the Canadian chapter (Kinsella, 1994, p. 236). According to Barrett, the members chose “The Ku Klux Klan label, because of its notoriety…” (1987, p. 127, emphasis in original). The founding members deliberately sought to attract mainstream attention and liken themselves to the notorious KKK organizations founded within the USA. The Canadian offshoots were responsible for numerous hate crimes and murders throughout the early 20th Century (Barrett, 1987; Kinsella, 1994). We also see various iterations of “Christian Identity” movements within Canada throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Kinsella, 1994). Christian Identity groups coalesced around the belief that “Anglo-Saxons are the true biblical Israelites and that Jews are the literal spawn of Satan, that non-whites have no souls and that Adolf Hitler was Elijah the Prophet” (Kinsella, 1994, p. 38). Such neo-Nazism mixed with Christianity is part of the Canadian Christian Identity ideology.

Accompanying the Canadian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan was a rise in “neo-Nazi skinheads” (Kinsella, 1994). The neo-Nazi skinheads were established in the U.K, and they “were [also] active in major Canadian and American cities as early as 1980” (Kinsella, 1994, p. 307). As Kinsella (1994, p. 307) details:

By the mid-1980s, Canadian racist leaders, whose temples had been growing decidedly grey under their pointed white hoods, were recruiting skinhead members on a wide scale. The hate movement leaders regarded the skinheads as ideal recruits because they were everything those same leaders were not: they were young, they were numerous and they were more than willing to do battle with the enemy. (1994, p. 307)

The older white supremacists favoured the skinheads for their capacity and willingness to use violence (Kinsella, 1994). In fact, during the mid-1980s to early 1990s, “Police confirm that most violent racist crimes committed in Canada…[were] linked to skinheads” (Kinsella, 1994, p. 332). Alongside the Skinhead movement was the Heritage Front, which used “white supremacist
dogma” to recruit (Kinsella, 1994, p. 277). The RCMP accused members of the Heritage Front of “fire-bombing of an anti-racist activist’s Kitchener home, numerous beatings, and even the ‘breaking into’ of telephone answering machines” (Kinsella, 1994, p. 277). The Heritage Front and the Skinhead movement dwindled in the mid to late-1990s. Still, like the influence of the Edmund Burke Society, the Western Guard, and the Canadian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, their legacy laid the foundations for future groups (Kinsella, 1994).

While open Skinheads and neo-Nazis dwindled or became more secretive in the mid-to-late 1990s, the 2000s are when a variety of “right-wing extremists” started remerging with prominence across Canada. Parent and Ellis (2014), writing on the “right-wing extremism” within Canada, argue that “The September 11, 2001 attacks … inspired a resurgence in white supremacism, anti-Semitism, and anti-immigrant sentiments” (Parent & Ellis, 2014, p. 15). While much of the racist violence in Canada once came from orchestrated efforts, there has been an adjacent effort led by individuals (Parent & Ellis, 2014). Scholars suggest a historical shift in right-wing extremist violence in this context. “Much of the modern right-wing extremist threat comes from lone wolf actors and small, free-floating cells” (Parent & Ellis, 2014, p.17). Rather than being proponents of violence, “much of right-wing extremist violence is perpetrated by individuals that are outside of big organizations and are only loosely connected to the larger movement, if at all” (Parent & Ellis, 2014, p. 26).

The looseness of these movements, if they become movements at all, is often confused because of the widely adopted narratives adopted through culture war narratives (McCauley, 2021). McCauley (2021) identifies two competing forms of right-wing supremacism within the United States: racial and cultural. While acknowledging the significant overlap between the two, the point of contestation is significant. Essentially, culture wars distinguish between those
“concerned with beliefs, ideals, religion, cultural assimilation and similar constructivist concerns” (McCauley, 2021, p. 194). Culture war dynamics are worried about struggles to define cultural norms. This dynamic in the Canadian and American contexts resembles a challenge to the Christian assumptions built into these countries’ bedrock and social institutions. Key topics resembling culture wars are issues such as abortion, reproductive rights, sexual freedom, multiculturalism, and assumptions behind the ideal family unit (McCauley, 2021).

Political formations have also taken conspiratorial and cultural war dynamics to gain attention across Canada. As Tewksbury (2021) argues, the Yellow Vest Movement, which gained momentum across Canada in 2018, was emblematic of a far-right politic in the form of “Petro Nostalgia” deeply entrenched in the politics and values of the far-right that often attracts a “white-straight-male” crowd (p. 944). Tewksbury writes of the Canadian Yellow Vest members, “Group members were not unlike the supporters of U.S. President Donald Trump—Yellow Vests Canada members commonly displayed signs, hats, and t-shirts stating ‘Make Canada Great Again!’ or ‘Canada First!’ in a Canadian appropriation of favourite Trump slogans—but the nationalism of Yellow Vests Canada was uniquely Canadian” (Tewksbury, 2021, p. 945). Displaying similar Canadian nationalist sentiments was the 2018 establishment of Maxime Bernier’s People’s Party of Canada. The People’s Party of Canada is a far-right political party celebrated by multiple far-right groups within Canada, such as the Yellow Vest Movement, the Proud Boys, and the Soldiers of Odin (Neville & Langlois, 2021). While presenting a united front, Neville and Langlois (2021) describe how the social networks of these groups spanning from the variety of Yellow Vest Canada pages to the variety of Canadian Odin pages, are not connected through their social networks, indicating that these are “fragmented” and “…that the far-right monolith is an imaginary construct” (p. 789). The work of Tewksbury (2021) and
Neville and Langlois (2021) reveals that opportunism engrained within “far-right” activism portends to have established a united front. The facts reveal that the Canadian “far-right” is widely dispersed across Canada and regularly seeks foreign inspiration.

While academics have been essential in drawing attention to the nuanced threat of right-wing extremism, national security organizations within Canada have also identified this ideological threat and the numerous tactics used. While my dissertation focuses on extremism and not specifically on terrorism, the similarities of a diversified approach extremists utilize to achieve their ideological ends is mirrored in the rhetoric used by Public Safety Canada to define terrorism. Public Safety Canada (2013) crafted an effective definition of terrorism as a “tactic.” Specifically, terrorism is:

an act or omission undertaken, inside or outside Canada, for a political, religious or ideological purpose that is intended to intimidate the public with respect to its security, including its economic security, or to compel a person, government or organization (whether inside or outside Canada) from doing or refraining from doing any act, and that intentionally causes one of a number of specified forms of serious harm. (Public Safety Canada, 2013, p. 6).

While the definition of terrorism provided by Public Safety Canada (2013) focuses on tactics regardless religion, ideology, or motive, we see a considerable overlap in how the Canadian Government is viewing extremist actors and terrorism.

Further articulating security threats, in 2017 Public Safety Canada released a report detailing the terrorist threat to Canada. Public Safety Canada (2017) identifies right-wing extremism as a major threat to national security and identifies the amorphous nature of right-wing extremism alongside religiously motivated extremism. Similarly, the threats posed by right-wing extremist groups and neo-Nazis was listed as a significant cause for concern in CSIS’s 12

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12 The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) is Canada’s national intelligence agency tasked with countering threats to Canada's national security such as terrorism and espionage (CSIS, 2022).
2021 public report, with multiple manifestations of this often-violent ideology emerging across Canada (CSIS, 2022). The identification of right-wing extremism and its variants posing a continuous threat to Canada’s national security is an ongoing historical pattern within Canada.

Over the 20th Century and into the first quarter of the 21st Century, studies suggest a shift within Canada from riots and violence organized by hate groups to attacks by individuals inspired by racist, white-supremacist, and rightist rhetoric. Right-wing extremist groups can be violent or openly call for violence. Still, terrorist attacks across the Western world by right-wing extremist individuals have tended to be lone actors (“lone wolves”) (Parent & Ellis, 2014). In addition, right extremist political institutions and groups attempt to mask their support of violence and often openly (if deceptively) discourage it.

2.2. Political Institutions, Groups, Individuals, and Technological Affordances and Digital Networks, in Studies of Right Extremism

While academics have studied right extremism regularly since the 1980s, usually in tandem with hate crime studies, the field experienced an exponential increase in interest circa 2010, given the surge in racist, white-supremacist, and rightist political parties, groups/gangs, individuals, and technological affordances (Carter, 2018; Perry & Scrivens, 2019; Wodak, 2015). Of the different motivations for renewed academic interest, 9/11 is a typical explanation of the evident upsurge in Islamophobic rhetoric, policies, hate crimes, and negative public perceptions toward Muslims since the terrorist attack in New York City, NY, Arlington, Virginia, and rural Pennsylvania (Poynting & Briskman, 2018; Singh, 2019; Wodak, 2015). To unpack how scholars study right extremism today (2010-present), I focus on their analyses’ main sites and categories: 2.2.1) government and political parties, 2.2.2.) groups like criminal organizations and gangs, 2.2.3.) individuals, 2.2.4) technological affordances and digital networks.
2.2.1. Political and Governing Bodies: Advancing Discrimination Through Legislation

Academic scholarship on the “right,” “populist-right,” “far-right,” or “right-wing extremists” often focuses on governments and politicians that campaign and actively encourage divisiveness in their respective jurisdictions. While scholars may be tentative about labelling a particular government as “extremist,” terms such as “populist” and “nativist” are interchangeable with many definitions. What “right-wing extremist” or “right-wing populist parties” (depending on the scholar) have in common historically are the tactics they implement to invigorate their base by isolating minority populations. For instance, to capture this widespread tactic, Wodak writes:

all right-wing populist parties instrumentalize some kind of ethnic/religious/linguistic/political minority as a scapegoat for most if not all current woes and subsequently construe the respective group as dangerous and a threat ‘to us’, to ‘our’ nation; this phenomenon manifests itself as a ‘politics of fear’;...all right-wing populist parties seem to endorse what can be recognized as the ‘arrogance of ignorance’; appeals to common-sense and anti-intellectualism.... (2015, p. 2, emphasis in original)

This quote summarizes the way “right-wing populist” political parties, and their leaders promote discriminatory policies through increasingly fearful rhetoric at the expense of a “scapegoat” (Wodak, 2015). Because of government-led bigotry, such deliberately stoked fear trickles down to the public, and this is where discrimination and hate gain impetus (Wodak, 2015).

Other academics examine how populist, racist, white-supremacist, and rightist governments seek to capitalize on discriminatory fears. A common tactic—identified for its broad-based and cross-cultural appeal—is the anxiety produced in public around linking immigration to economic turmoil. Cochrane and Nevitte (2014) investigate a specific instance of this “linking” by studying how “far-right” political parties in numerous countries “link” unemployment rates to immigration. Using “cross-time data coverage in the World Values Survey....[they] focus both on countries that have, and those that do not have, far-right parties”
(Cochrane & Nevitte, 2014, pp. 7-8). Based on a survey they conducted, Cochrane and Nevitte found that “levels of anti-immigrant sentiment do not increase alongside the unemployment rate in countries without far-right parties…however…anti-immigrant sentiment does increase alongside the unemployment rate in those countries that do have far-right parties” (2014, p. 18). They conclude, “[i]n sum, the core conjecture that far-right elites animate the link between immigration and unemployment has cross-national, cross-time and cross-level implications” (Cochrane & Nevitte, 2014, p. 22). And that “these findings emphasize the role of far-right parties as active sources, rather than passive beneficiaries, of anti-immigrant sentiment” (Cochrane & Nevitte, 2014, p. 22). What this study demonstrates is that there is an incentive for “far-right” governing actors to deliberately link immigrants to economic struggle. In a similar study, Poynting and Briskman (2018, p. 1) examine how “far-right parties” within Australia connect (with the assistance of corporate media) immigrants and Muslims in particular, to a decline in “Australian values.” Such discourse and actions have served to normalize conversations of Islam being “incompatible” within Australian society (Poynting & Briskman, 2018). The authors note:

Islamophobia …[and] ideological scapegoating of Muslims has become normalized and…made respectable through formal and informal partnerships of government with media, institutional, and professional actors. (Poynting & Briskman, 2018, p. 13)

This study tracks the growth of Islamophobic hate speech within Australia by showcasing the confluence between politicians that endorse and promote bigotry and the willingness of corporate media to distribute such vitriol (Poynting & Briskman, 2018). Australian political elites and corporate media have assisted in establishing a discourse within Australia that declares all Muslims to be “illiberal” and “fundamentalist” (Poynting & Briskman, 2018, p. 4). So, in their effort for viewers, the Australian mainstream media has helped amplify the Australian “far-right”
by airing and distributing their hateful rhetoric (Poynting & Briskman, 2018). While Poynting and Briskman’s (2018) study cannot confirm the degree to which the mainstream media are culpable, they show that distributing “far-right” narratives has helped normalize such opinions being held and promoted by elected officials.

Similarly, Schmuck and Matthes (2019) examined “populist right-wing” campaign ads from European countries and then created an experiment to assess their effectiveness. They established a “quota-based online experiment” to see how 174 individuals presented with Islamophobic, stereotypical, and racist campaign ads were impacted (Schmuck & Matthes, 2019, p. 741). To assess the potential impact and how individual attitudes may have shifted, Schmuck & Matthes created two groups, one exposed to benign ads and another to mock “far-right” campaign ads (2019). Following this division, they implemented an “automatic affective associations” test for participants about Muslims (Schmuck & Matthes, 2019, p. 739). The authors conclude, “[o]ur findings show for the first time that right-wing, populist political campaign poster ads may not only perpetuate resentments against Muslims, but may also contribute to the electoral success of right-wing populist parties” (Schmuck & Matthes, 2019, p. 753). In their test, bigotry promoted by the “populist right-wing” political parties had a measured impact on the perceptions of the audience presented with such discriminatory misinformation (Schmuck & Matthes, 2019).

Other academics have identified several countries that have maintained a bigoted design with how laws and government policies establish an inequitable legal definition of terrorism. For instance, Singh (2019) discusses how “Islamic terror” is normalized in mainstream discussions by politicians within India. However, when Hindu Nationalists engage in terrorism, the usage of the term “Hindu terrorism” experiences significant pushback (Singh, 2019). This pushback is
from political parties such as “Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)…who claim that Hinduism can never be associated with terrorism….” “because Hindus are peaceful” (Singh, 2019, p. 282). The RSS and the BJP have no issue using the term “Islamic terrorism” but will not use the term “Hindu terrorism” or any designation suggesting that Hindus may be engaging in religious-inspired terrorism (Singh, 2019). While the unequal application of the term “terrorist” has been studied in-depth, such unequal application in the ever-evolving definitions of “terrorists” and “terrorism” have impacted globally the way Islam and Muslims are targeted is mainly (if not singularly) problematic (Heath-Kelly, 2013; Karim, 2003; Karim, 2014).

The approaches from academics to investigating racist, white-supremacist, and rightist ideologies by examining governments and laws often showcase government hypocrisy, inequality, and outright bigotry towards non-dominant groups (especially Muslims). We can see that many governments benefit from such bigotry, but there are also clear instances where they deliberately encourage it (Heath-Kelly, 2013; Karim, 2014). Other examples show that governments deliberately fail to acknowledge violence from majority groups as acts of terrorism due to the Islamophobic beliefs they promote (Singh, 2019). A significant difficulty in assessing racist, white-supremacist, and rightist actions from governments is seeking a definition that can encompass standard conservative parties that may not endorse the extreme-right but can benefit from such “activists” (Schmuck & Matthes, 2019). Similarly, we see issues with other forms of “culture wars” that gain prominence through “banal activism” and “banal nationalism” (Barendregt & Schneider, 2020; Billig, 1995; McCauley, 2021). Essentially, issues of religion, women’s rights, and contraception are a way to foment a nationalist discourse that plays a significant role in populist politics.
When examining right-wing extremism at the government level, this evidence of governments stoking and benefiting from discriminatory policies and beliefs raises questions about the consequences of such action for informally organized hate groups and individuals. Do governments merely recirculate and capitalize on such extremism, which originates elsewhere, or do they play a more active role in its growth and legitimation?

2.2.2. Organized Hatred: Groups, Gangs, and Criminal Enterprises

Other instances of identifying what drives online and offline behaviour are academics that seek to identify the values, belief systems, and ideologies motivating informal or voluntary groups, such as gangs. Academics focusing on this area tend to focus on identity/ideology, rewards, beliefs, proselytization, criminality, and costs/benefits to membership. This section will detail how academics conceptualize gang members and how ideologically extreme groups negotiate their identities and membership in this analysis area.

A common element of racist, white supremacist and rightist gangs is a mythological past that only white people and those with European ancestry can access (Fangen, 1998). For instance, Fangen describes how many forms of “Skinhead gangs” embrace a “mythical” understanding of the past (1998, p. 34). Specifically, many extreme-right gangs proselytize a “fantasy world” of “working-class culture and the values of the Viking era” (Fangen, 1998, pp. 35-36). While focusing on Norwegian Skinhead gangs, Fangen writes, “Both anti-racists and immigrants serve to define the negations of the right-wing skinhead: they are the anti-poles of what right-wing skinheads want to be…For right-wing skinheads anti-racism and its ideal, multiculturalism, represent chaos…” (1998, p. 39). By identifying their enemies and articulating the threat these groups pose, many extreme-right gangs (and the variety of forms they take) regard themselves as heroic figures and present themselves as contemporary “Vikings” and
“Crusaders” (Belew, 2018; Elliot, 2019; Fangen, 2003; Jewett & Lawrence, 2003; Kim, 2019; Koch, 2017). This idealized image of the past and the strong affinity for Crusaders, Vikings, and “the values of the Viking era” are prominent and often harkened back to by adherents in varying degrees (Belew, 2018; Fangen, 1998, p. 36; Jewett & Lawrence, 2003; Koch, 2017).

Some scholars stress the importance of understanding the unique icons, beliefs, and value systems of “right-wing extremist” gangs, whereas others look to demystify them and examine them as “standard” racialized criminal gangs without treating them as unique. Reid and Valasik (2018) use the latter approach in their investigation of street gangs to understand Skinheads, often omitted from standard crime analysis or treated as anomalies. Reid and Valasik argue that “[e]xcluding skinheads from gang studies has aggravated the lack of knowledge about these groups, with scholars being just as uninformed about the risk factors and behavioural outcomes impacting skinhead youth as they were thirty years ago” (2018, p. 1306). While street gangs made up of non-white members receive disproportionate attention, the cost of relatively little scholarship on white gangs is that contemporary scholars have fewer sources to draw upon (Reid & Valasik, 2018).

While Skinheads in some studies are said to be comparable to other racialized street gangs, other academics stress the importance of religion. Some white supremacists and neo-Nazis embrace a militant Christianity and find inspiration exclusively from the Crusades and Crusaders (Belew, 2018; Elliot, 2019; Hartleb, 2020; Kim, 2019; Koch, 2017; Lamoureux, 2017). Specifically, some white supremacists are so anti-Semitic and Islamophobic that they eschew all potential connections they may have with the Middle East, non-white deities, and non-white-created religions (McCoy, Jones, & Hastings 2019). As McCoy, Jones, and Hastings (2019) write:
Growing out of the uncomfortable recognition of some white supremacists that Jesus Christ was of Jewish origin and the adoration of Nordic, Celtic and Germanic cultural and religious traditions, white supremacist groups have turned to ancient polytheistic traditions contained in Paganism and religious beliefs that loosely draw on Norse beliefs—such as Odinism. Similar to what was seen among neo-Nazi groups in previous generations, these adherents heavily draw on symbolism (both Nordic and Celtic) and ideas of racial purity as grounds for opposition to modern liberal and multicultural political cultures. This symbolism has become particularly popular among new generations of white supremacists, nationalists and the “alt-right” who have sought to move away from the historical baggage associated with neo-Nazi imagery. (p. 114)

McCoy, Jones, and Hastings (2019) illustrate how white supremacist gangs can stress racial and religious purity in varying degrees based on the symbolism used to promote their gang.

Scholars focusing on the gang area of analysis examine the motivations behind people joining such gangs. Using the English Defence League\(^{13}\) (EDL) as a case study, Meadowcroft and Morrow (2017) conducted an ethnographic study to examine how the EDL retains membership despite many social pressures working against their group’s objectives. Summarizing the costs and benefits of being an EDL member, Meadowcroft and Morrow writes, “the EDL exclusively supplied…access to violent conflict, increased self-worth and group solidarity to members. These benefits of EDL membership were offset against the costs of membership, notably stigma, time, money and unwelcome police attention” (2017, p. 374). Further costs are “the stigma they encounter…from the perception that the group is racist” (Meadowcroft & Morrow, 2017, p. 384). Due to the social harm of being considered a “racist,” “[m]any EDL members…[try to] portray themselves as anti-racist and tolerant of ethnic minorities” (Meadowcroft & Morrow, 2017, p. 384). While being aware that many outsiders label their activism as racist due to the bigoted views held by the group and its leadership, some members try to maintain their connection to “polite society” by presenting themselves as mere

\(^{13}\) Although the EDL is not strictly a gang, and is likely to be compared to a network, the scholarship of Meadowcroft and Morrow (2017) focuses on the gang-like interactions members have from in person contact.
activists that are not bigoted but just “concerned” about their country (Meadowcroft & Morrow, 2017). In this respect, the language of social movements, activism, and protest are adopted by right extremists to protect themselves and gain broader legitimacy.

Scholarship on gangs has long asked how like-minded individuals find ways to express their collective grievances through a racist, white supremacist, and rightist identity. Many gangs appear to offer a clear sense of group identity, as one is affiliated with or outside a gang. The question remains whether such groups can encourage or legitimate the actions of those not associated with them (whether of political institutions or individuals). Many individuals may harbour similar views and opinions without joining a group to espouse and reinforce their beliefs. Individuals often engage with numerous platforms’ news sources and otherwise share the views espoused by gangs but may never commit to one. The following section will focus on scholarship that examines the particular area of analysis amid growing fears of lone-wolf forms of extremist violence.

2.2.3. Going it Alone: The Danger of the Individual

Studies of individuals with racist, white supremacist, or rightist sympathies typically are assessed through a “security” lens. Law enforcement and intelligence agencies often identify individuals not connected to a gang or a far-right government as a security threat that might engage in “lone wolf” terrorism or kill for their ideology. Studies often investigate socioeconomic status, personality, psychology, and educational attainment as a starting point. While much of the literature is North American and European-centric, many scholars seek to assess how white people as individuals express their fears and embrace different races, cultures, and creeds (Belew, 2018; Jardina, 2019; Kaufmann, 2019). For instance, Jardina (2019) and Kaufmann (2019) examine white people’s reactions to demographic and economic changes
throughout North America and select European countries. Kaufmann (2019) discusses the options that individual white people have for the current demographic changes within countries such as Canada and the US. There are four possible reactions from white individuals, and they can “fight, repress, flee, or join” (Kaufmann, 2019, p. 17). Kaufmann explains:

Whites can fight ethnic change by voting for right-wing populists or committing terrorist acts. They may repress anxieties in the name of ‘politically correct’ anti-racism, but cracks in this moral edifice are appearing. Many opt to flee by avoiding diverse neighbourhoods, schools and social networks. And other whites may choose to join the newcomers, first in friendship, subsequently in marriage. (2019, p. 17)

Such options and choices are reflected in political preferences that fall into the right-wing or left-wing divide that is becoming more prevalent in Canada and the US (Kaufmann, 2019). Jardina (2019) investigates what may be a precursor for adopting right-wing extremist beliefs in some instances by documenting politics rooted in “white racial solidarity” (p. 261). Jardina writes:

The results here suggest, to some extent, that this identity is rooted in personality. Individuals who prefer a more hierarchical arrangement to the world and who prefer order seem more disposed to adopt a group attachment. Education is also a distinguishing factor. Whites who adopt a racial identity are less likely to have gone to college…Whites high on racial solidarity are more likely to adopt exclusionary views about what it means to be American…“True” Americans, in their minds, are not just more likely to feel American, have American citizenship, or respect America’s institutions; they are also those that are English-speaking, Christian, and white. (2019, pp. 261-262)

Kaufmann (2019) provides a similar analysis to Jardina (2019, p. 261) but believes economics has less to do with individuals that adopt “white racial solidarity.” Kaufmann writes: “Right-wing populism has little to do with economics, but arises largely from ethnic change, caused by immigration, which unsettles the existential security of conservative and order-seeking whites” (2019, p. 516).

Scholarship on white identity, educational attainment, and class is used to identify patterns among individuals that embrace racist views. A common focus for academics studying racist, white supremacist, or rightist individuals is linking ideological commitment to a
willingness to engage in violence (Johnson, 2018). Often, scholars and social commentators depict social media as something that “radicalizes” through conspiracies and makes violence permissible for would-be “lone wolves” (Johnson, 2018). Johnson (2018) describes many social media spaces as a “paranoid” landscape where white men, in particular, are susceptible to “self-radicalization” (2018, p. 100). Johnson (2018) showcases the targets of white men to “affectively network” amongst their fellow travellers. He locates specific instances of how reactions to mainstream media from commentators such as Alex Jones, the owner of the conspiracy theory show “Info Wars,” are embraced by individual adherents of “paranoid” conspiracy theories (Johnson, 2018). Johnson argues:

Media coverage of national tragedies such as the attacks on 9/11 serve to promote not only conspiracy theories by the likes of Jones, but also the notion that the United States is exceptional: the only free nation equipped to combat evil during an endless war on terror and prolonged end times on Earth. Over the years, Jones has used traumatic events and national tragedies to spin conspiracy theories. He calls these terrorist acts ‘false flag’ attacks staged by the government to curtail citizens’ freedom: the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing; the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing; the 2015 San Bernadino shooting; and the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre, which Jones proclaimed a hoax fabricated by gun control advocates. The parents of the children murdered continue to endure harassment over Jones’ declaration that, rather than real losses, their children were ‘crisis actors’ playing roles. (2018, p. 111)

Regardless of how outlandish his views may seem, Alex Jones and others like him reach millions of people daily with content that frames all news as conspiratorial power grabs that will result in their imprisonment or erasure (Johnson, 2018). Hartleb (2020) describes content from individuals like Jones:

There is supposedly a plan behind everything that happens, and nothing takes place as a pure coincidence. At present, conspiracy theories are undergoing a renaissance and are spreading wildly via the Internet and are being received by broad sections of society. (p. 136)

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14 Johnson (2018) argues that “self-radicalization is a misnomer… rather than pathology relegated to a specific subject or a particular form of extremism, radicalization is a social process of affective networking” (p. 101).
Conspiratorial thinking coupled with racism and bigotry is why with relative ease, “birtherism” took off and “treated Barack Obama as of dubious origin, and…in cahoots with liberals, intellectuals, environmentalists, feminists, George Soros, and the United Nations, all bent on chipping away at American freedoms” (Polletta & Callahan, 2017, p. 396). The individuals in Johnson’s case study are not willing (or perhaps capable) of seeing anything but the conspiratorial landscape they have individually embraced (Johnson, 2018). Often, the individuals that engage in such conspiracies believe they have access to the truth, and any attempts to dismiss their views are met with attacks and labels of being corrupting actors designed to distract while the free world falls (Johnson, 2018; Polletta & Callahan, 2017).

Given the dire worldview that individuals may have, it is not unreasonable to see how they embrace “paranoid” views of white erasure or become supportive of violence. While the term “lone wolf” is problematic due to the need for engagement with others to acquire an extremist belief system, there is a broad usage of the term to highlight individuals that engage in violence on behalf of an ideology or through networks of weak ties (Gartenstein-Ross & Barr, 2016; Granovetter, 1973; Johnson, 2018). As Johnson (2018) says, affective networking (discussed in the next section) offers a better explanation. Still, Hartleb describes the lone wolf in the following manner, “[u]nlke with other terrorist violence, he is not concerned with following collective goals, but with fulfilling personal fantasies of violence and revenge” (2020, p. 44). Given the distorted worldview such individuals come to embrace, the “lone wolf” will carry out violence for personal reasons that links to a more significant movement or ideology (Bouhana, Corner, Gill, & Schuurman, 2018; Hartleb, 2020). A few prominent examples of “lone wolves” are Anders Breivik, Dylan Roof, Brenton Tarrant, and Alexandre Bissonnette (Bouhana, Corner, Gill, & Schuurman, 2018; Hartleb, 2020).
Other studies that focus on individuals examine how police and intelligence services can detect and prevent such individuals from being able to carry out attacks (Bouhana, Corner, Gill, & Schuurman, 2018; Feldman, 2013; Hartleb, 2020). Individual adherents of “right-wing extremism” with no apparent signs of violent ideation are exponentially more difficult for security services to detect when planning to carry out an attack (Feldman, 2013). As Feldman details using Anders Breivik as a case study:

Moreover, in addition to concluding that a lone wolf attack was most likely to succeed against the state…. Just as revealing—frightening, even—is Breivik’s conclusion that self-activating terrorism is both the least complicated to logistically undertake while also holding the greatest prospect of success for terrorist actions. (2013, p. 278)

Feldman (2013) describes in detail the awareness that individuals (such as Breivik) have of being undetectable by security forces when they orchestrate an attack on their own, compared to the likelihood of detection when they coordinate violence with small to large groups. Therefore, if an individual that embraces “right-wing extremism” is considering violence, there is a concern that they will enact violence on their own and be less detectable by police and intelligence services (Feldman, 2013). While most researchers agree that no one is truly a “lone wolf” in that there are always inspirations that encourage one to act out violently, there is an apparent attempt amongst these “lone wolves” to speak to each other and potential future “lone wolves” through social media posts, videos, and manifestos all published prior to, or during, their attacks (Hamm & Spaaij, 2017; Hartleb, 2020; Schuurman et al., 2019). At the same time, the influence between individuals, group affiliations, and broader networks is complicated by the desire of violent people to disguise themselves from detection by erasing the primary forms of connection to groups.

Due to the threat imposed by potentially violent individuals that support an “extremist” worldview, many researchers seek to develop psychological and sociological profiles to ascertain
similarities and “warning signs” for violence (Fredholm, 2016; Mareš & Stojar, 2016; Roy van Zuijdewijn & Bakker, 2016). Such profiles have thus far proven to be unreliable, as Fredholm writes:

The lack of consistent profile is also evident for the examples of lone actor terrorism presented here. Most, but not all, lone actors are young. Most, but not all, are men. Some, but not all, have a history of social or family-related problems. Some, but far from all, suffer from mental disturbances. Some have a socio-psychological condition that includes identity issues or even mental illness or suicidal tendencies. Indeed, the borderline between politically motivated attackers and those who are mentally disturbed may be a blurred one. Such individuals may find it difficult to be accepted in established groups, even if they find them. On the other hand, others revel in their group identity. (2016, p. 249)

While Fredholm (2016) lists other statistically insignificant similarities in behaviour and actions, the main takeaway he professes is that those interested in stopping potentially violent individuals should “[f]ocus on deeds, not thoughts” (Fredholm, 2016, p. 255), demonstrating that should an individual be acquiring weapons or chemicals, they are a likelier threat than someone just posting extremist content (Fredholm, 2016; Mareš & Stojar, 2016).

The reality of researching individuals is the focus on motivations, which requires unprecedented access to current and former violent and non-violent extremists, and a host of psychological and sociological metrics to comprehend what made (or may make) someone engages with an extremist ideology initially (Fredholm, 2016; Mareš & Stojar, 2016; Roy van Zuijdewijn & Bakker, 2016). Even with such information, the conclusions are speculative at best.

2.2.4. Social Movements and Digital Networks: Technological Affordances

The previous three sites of inquiry stand alone in what they aim to address. However, the site of inquiry that binds the previous three together is this section that addresses how technological affordances have and continue to shape the evolution of hate and violence
exhibited by racist, white supremacist, and rightist movements and networks. Scholars studying any form of extremism, whether government-level, gang-level, or individual-level, must reckon with the affordance of the internet and social media platforms.

Throughout the 20th Century, terrorists, extremists, hate groups, and political movements proselytized using various media technologies that incorporated “posters,” “murals,” “newspapers,” “film,” “television,” “magazines,” “radio,” and “tabloids” to spread their narratives (Scrivens & Conway, 2019, pp. 290-297). Some of the earliest and most pernicious adopters of these methods in the 19th and 20th Centuries were the KKK and Nazi Germany, who used communication technologies to recruit and dehumanize communities they viewed as undesirable (Scrivens & Conway, 2019). The latter half of the 20th Century and the first quarter of the 21st Century have seen similar “violent extremists” promoting hatred and violence through the Internet and digital social media (Scrivens & Conway, 2019). While focusing on terrorists and their internet use, Weimann (2015) summarizes the shift towards digital social media.

Weimann (2015) argues:

> The interactive capabilities of the Internet, such as social networking sites, video-sharing sites, and online communities, allow terrorists to assume a proactive position. Instead of waiting for websurfers to come across their websites and propaganda materials, terrorists can now lure targeted individuals to the sites. Online social networking provides terrorists with an ideal platform to attract and seduce, teach and train, radicalize and activate individuals all over the world. The Internet has provided terrorists with a…virtual realm to conduct their most sinister transactions. (p. 19)

Weimann’s (2015) summary shows how terrorist groups can utilize the internet has broader applicability than the coordinating activities of such terrorist groups (Conway, 2006). Weimann (2015) argues that the affordances of the internet, as outlined in the quotation above, are the reason why racist and progressive movements have sought to utilize such technology to foster a digital community.
Aside from technological affordances making the broadcasting of discriminatory ideologies easier, there are commonalities that social movements and digital networks utilize. Seeking to capture the way “far-right authoritarian movements” interact with their base and opponents alike, Pascale (2019) writes, “[f]ar-right authoritarian movements are produced through weaponized language that demeans, demoralizes, and confuses” (p. 899). Pascale (2019) elaborates by indicating that, “[w]eaponized language exploits cultural vulnerabilities. It is used to attack people perceived to be disloyal, to dehumanize minority groups in the service of a mythological homogeneous nation-state, to discredit known facts, and to strategically manipulate public emotional response” (p. 900). Pascale (2019) argues that the way “far-right authoritarian movements” are formed and sustained is through fear tactics that isolate minority communities and rile the anxiety of majority populations.

Interestingly, the same form of “far-right” connections rooted in calls for violence and genocide have been vociferous in their attempts at fomenting an international audience and movement. Many far-right posters across Twitter “comedically” call for genocide through their use of the hashtag “#removekebab,” a reference to the Serbian genocide of Muslims in Bosnia during the 1990s (Mirrlees, 2021). The hashtag “#removekebab” is a prime example of the digital networking done by the “far-right” calling “…for genocide against Muslims, and [the “far-right’] rationalize this terror by stereotyping Muslims as a collective threat to the West” (Mirrlees, 2021, p. 855). Mirrlees finds that the:

…study of #removekebab exemplifies how the far right’s digital ecosystem of Islamophobic hate exists in Canada, even when it is not exclusively made by territorially defined ‘Canadian’ far-right groups and when it does not contain what might be traditionally classified or perceived as ‘Canadian content.’ (p. 869)

While not a movement, we see, based on the findings and international appeal of the hashtag #removekabob studied by Mirrlees (2021), that the hashtag activism feeds the digital ecosystem
that lends itself to “movements” fomented around familiar rhetoric. While not explicitly stated by Mirrlees (2021), his work fits within the broader digital ecosystem of “extreme-right” movements identified by Lee (2016). Lee (2016) examines the English Defence League and other forms of the “Counter-Jihad-Movement15” (CJM) within England. As Lee writes:

The CJM is a strain of extreme political thought that has tentatively begun to acquire a semblance of legitimacy. In addition, the common CJM narrative is positioned to take advantage of ongoing debates within wider civil society on security, immigration terrorism and the status of Muslim populations. (2016, p. 257)

Lee (2016) argues that the objective of the CJM is to popularize “…what is (in many cases) an exclusionary narrative predicated on a conspiratorial and homogenized view of both the Muslim world and the West” (p. 263). Lee (2016) captures a UK-centric movement vilifying Muslims and Middle Easterners from “extreme right” movements. Rather than being a singular narrative or hashtag, a broader “extreme-right” digital ecosystem is established through the CJM that lends itself to specific instances of hashtag activism like the #removekebab tweets identified by Mirrlees (2021). Furthermore, the literature reveals a pattern identifying strategic uses of far-right slogans (i.e., #removekebab) amongst broader disparate networks to feed the hateful climate they seek to establish.

One of the most popular “right-wing extremist” tactics is to insert their discourse into mainstream discussions on Twitter and Facebook (Scrivens & Conway, 2019). While “violent” and “non-violent” extremists have globally used Twitter and Facebook specifically to showcase themselves, there have also been concerted efforts to broaden their audience and appeal. Focusing exclusively on Twitter, Graham (2016) discusses how “white extremist ideologies” insert themselves into unrelated conversations. He writes of 5 main strategies: “Joining,

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15 The self-moniker of “counter-jihad movement” is racist and acts as a cloak to hide rampant Islamophobia within this “movement.”
Blending, Piggybacking, Backstaging, and Narrating\textsuperscript{16} (pp. 32-33). All these terms speak to a different strategy of manipulating conversations on Twitter. This strategy means that “white extremists” are interested in preaching to like-minded individuals, but they also want to expose and recruit unaffiliated individuals while jamming and disrupting their opponents.

Another aspect of the communication strategy “right-wing extremists” relied upon is providing counterarguments to mainstream media reports. Baugut and Neumann (2019, p. 698) observed this behaviour from “right-wing extremists” within Germany who deliberately frame news stories to make them “personal” for their fellow compatriots. Baugut & Neumann (2019) find that individuals provoked responses from fellow members within “right-wing extremist” digital and offline spaces (Baugut & Neumann, 2019). They argue:

Concerning media use, three factors played an important role: (a) Hierarchy level: Higher-ranking activists screened news media coverage to identify topics which could be used ideologically, whereas lower-level activists were instructed to avoid news media content; (b) Social identity triggered a feeling of being personally affected by media coverage of right-wing extremism, which led to close attention being given to these reports; and (c) The ideological orientation of the group influenced whether they preferred rather new or traditional media. (Baugut & Neumann, 2019, p. 711)

The findings from Baugut and Neumann (2019) indicate that online spaces where “right-wing extremists” mobilize are far from a neutral process where all members contribute equally. The leaders of the groups examined curate which sources are appropriate for viewing and discussing (Baugut & Neumann, 2019). These stories are also framed and presented in a manner that personally affects the group’s members to maintain their interest and anger (Baugut & Neumann, 2019).

\textsuperscript{16} Graham (2016, pp. 32-33) defines in detail “Joining” – “the user brings together hashtags that seem to have little commonality into the same tweet” (p. 32). “Blending is the cohesive integration of hashtags in a tweet.” (p. 32). “Piggybacking…recognizes the event driven nature of Twitter, and links a specific extremist interest to a wider mainstream event” (p. 32). “[B]ackstaging is used to signify the directing of the audience to a context different than that of Twitter. A tweet can link the user to a different space, a backstage, where different norms and conventions apply” (p. 33). And “Narrating… is the blending of hashtags in such a way that a distinct, novel narrative is produced” (p. 33).
More important than providing counterarguments to mainstream new stories within their respective groups, many “right-wing extremists” create their publications and utilize digital social media platforms to provide their analyses. A few case studies have identified the contemporary (2010-present) strategies of “right-wing extremists.” Focusing on “right-wing extremists” within Australia, Dean, Bell, and Vakhitova (2016) identify “six (6) core … fundamental elements of RWE [right-wing extremist] discourse” (p. 123). They identify: “1. Anti-Immigrant,” “2. Anti-establishment,” “3. Protection of western values,” “4. Commitment to democratic reform,” “5. Traditional values,” and “6. Strong state” (Dean, Bell, & Vakhitova, 2016, p. 123). Essentially, these “6 elements” categorize the breadth of rhetoric present on “right-wing extremist” channels within Australia (Dean, Bell, & Vakhitova, 2016). In a similar study, Kassimeris and Jackson (2015) analyze how the EDL (English Defence League) uses social media to engage the public by identifying their methods for disparaging Islam. Kassimeris & Jackson (2015) find there to be three critical methods for degrading Muslims found in EDL discourse: “1. Muslims as Uniquely Problematic,” “2. The Problematic Nature of ‘Islamic Ideology,’” and “3. Muslims as Responsible for Reforming their Religion” (pp. 177-180). These three “talking points” are used strategically to recruit and maintain followers while also trying to present bigotry in a “logical” manner to avoid the label of being racist, bigoted, or Islamophobic (Kassimeris & Jackson, 2015).

While Lewis (2018) identified the “alternative influence network (AIN)” to describe how digital networks establish spaces for ideologically constructed interpretation of films and pop-cultural events, many other commentators rely on more broadly adopted terminology such as “echo chambers.” When examining research that situates social media configurations as “echo chambers,” the academic literature makes clear that far from only being exposed to “selective”
information, individuals within them, whether they are online or offline, are in some way trapped in these thought patterns that “bears a striking resemblance to some accounts of cult indoctrination” (Nguyen, 2020, p. 142). Further academic interpretations of “echo chambers” describe them as a place where individuals are provided with so many one-sided interpretations of events that they become “trapped” or “caught” within a space that resembles the confines of a “chamber” (Dubois & Blank, 2018; Nguyen, 2020). As Nguyen details:

Echo chambers prey on our epistemic interdependence. Thus, in some circumstances, echo chamber members do not have full epistemic responsibility for their beliefs. Once one is trapped in an echo chamber, one might follow good epistemic practices and still be led further astray. And some people can be trapped in echo chambers because of circumstances beyond their control — for example, they can be raised in them. (2020, p. 142)

For Nguyen (2020), the echo chamber limits one’s ability to think as they are “trapped” in some form within these thought patterns. Even if an individual within an echo chamber is a critical thinker, they cannot see beyond the views they are being presented with and will embrace them as a result (Nguyen, 2020). Similarly, Karlsen, Steen-Johnson, Wollebæk, and Enjolras (2017) are interested in how individual behaviours are shaped by being trapped in an echo chamber. They state that while there are individuals who rarely encounter disparate opinions when those inhabiting an echo chamber do, it is only to ready them for debate. Karlsen et al. (2017) argue:

The result of this situation can be trench warfare dynamics: people will interact and engage in debate with others who hold opposing political views, but this will only serve to strengthen their initial beliefs. Hence, the notion of trench warfare does not refute echo chamber dynamics, but differs from the concept of echo chambers in highlighting the interaction between individuals who hold different basic values and opinions. (pp. 260-261)

When one is thought to be in an echo chamber, the term “chamber” is paramount to understanding how the authors view this social engagement. Individuals within any chamber are not free-thinking or moving and are trapped (Karlsen, Steen-Johnson, Wollebæk, and Enjolras,
The echo chamber literature articulates an online space that becomes an ideological indoctrinating prison for individuals who engage in such spaces (Karlsen et al., 2017; Nguyen, 2020). Such scholarship often highlights the deliberate ignorance individuals within an echo chamber have of the “other side,” so that the reinforcement of ideas makes the views held by others seem so outlandish that they will refuse to venture beyond their echo chamber to receive information (Boulianne, Koc-Michalska, Bimber, 2020). What the literature on echo chambers assumes is that the limited interaction of those with similar views leads to an “intensification,” “polarization,” and “radicalization” (depending on the scholar) (Boulianne, Koc-Michalska, Bimber, 2020; Karlsen et al., 2017).

Other studies of the “reactionary Right” trace the leading and most influential figures that inspire audiences through an “alternative influence network (AIN)” (Lewis, 2018, p. 1). Lewis (2018) writes that the AIN is:

an assortment of scholars, media pundits, and internet celebrities who use YouTube to promote a range of political positions, from mainstream versions of libertarianism and conservatism, all the way to overt white nationalism. Content creators in the AIN claim to provide an alternative media source for news and political commentary…. When viewers engage with this content, it is framed as lighthearted, entertaining, rebellious, and fun. This fundamentally obscures the impact that issues have on vulnerable and underrepresented populations—the LGBTQ community, women, immigrants, and people of color. And in many ways, YouTube is built to incentivize this behavior. (p. 1)

While the AIN generates connections through interviews and links to other podcasters and YouTube channels through guest appearances, the network seeks to “replace… consumption of mainstream news entirely” (Lewis, 2018, p. 15). They demonstrate that the AIN as a network facilitates the “reactionary right” through a network that insulates itself and generates its news (Lewis, 2018). Lewis’ (2018) description of the AIN shows how YouTube, a platform for video sharing, can create a network where discriminatory views are circulated and shared amongst like-minded YouTube hosts. Other analyses borrowing from Lewis’s (2018) discussion of AINs
focus on how “far-right” and “alt-right” interpretations of the Marvel film *The Black Panther* (2018) were used to argue that the film was supportive of Donald Trump in the 2016 American election against Hilary Clinton (Varda & Hahner, 2020). Varda and Hahner (2020) write:

> Far-right and conservative paratexts, or discourses and practices about *Black Panther*, collectively operate as a mutually reinforcing system through which understandings of race and racism converge and are given meaning… Far-right reviews of Black Panther fashion a lens through which the film might be understood as Trumpian fairy-tale—a standpoint advancing white supremacy. (p. 135)

While the film was celebrated as historic for its positive representation of Africa and Africans, the AIN was motivated to interpret the film and draw parallels to Donald Trump, MAGA (“Make America Great Again”) views, strict border security, and nativism (Varda & Hahner, 2020). The AIN successfully showcases how digital networks allow problematic ideas to spread rapidly across mainstream social media platforms like YouTube (Lewis, 2018; Varda & Hahner, 2020). However, research focusing solely on transmitting right-wing extremist ideas through movements and networks through a topographical lens is established when formal memberships blend individual and group identities.

Another term used to situate similar individuals (e.g., religion, race, ethnicity, etc.) is enclaves. Scholars of enclaves focus primarily on their formation by ethnic, religious, and racial minorities within a particular society, such as a “ghetto or a walled enclave” (Zaban, 2015, p. 1009). Enclaves can serve a positive purpose in a society (or online) where minority communities (religious, racial, gender/sexuality) navigate ways to be included or to share their everyday experiences with similar people (Pavia, 2020; Sunstein, 2017; Zaban, 2015). Enclaves are exclusive spaces where individuals with shared interests and purposes can come together to affectively escalate their grievances (Pavia, 2020; Sunstein, 2017; Zaban, 2015). Due to the purposeful demarcation within an enclave, individual members produce a specific type of
conversation intended for a like-minded or equally interested audience (Sunstein, 2017).

Sunstein refers to such conversations as “enclave deliberation,” which is a “form of deliberation that occurs within insulated groups, in which like-minded people speak mostly to one another” (2017, p. 86, emphasis in original). This form of deliberation is not necessarily problematic as religious and cultural communities do this frequently, both online and in-person, to celebrate, contemplate, pray, and provide a space where people can speak freely (Pavia, 2020; Sunstein, 2017; Zaban, 2015).

While social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter can be celebrated for providing innovative technologies that allow for intimate communication of individuals through personal messages and enclaves, it is essential to note that the same processes are used by hateful, discriminatory, and violent ideologies (Lim, 2017). As Lim (2017) writes, apart from bringing people together, “…social media also encourages users to practice their freedom to hate, where individuals exercise their right to voice their opinions while actively silencing others ….” (p. 424). The spaces Lim (2017) identifies as susceptible to providing the “freedom to hate” are “algorithmic enclaves” (p. 422). Lim writes:

> “algorithmic enclaves,”… are formed whenever a group of individuals, facilitated by their constant interactions with algorithms, attempt to create a (perceived) shared identity online for defending their beliefs and protecting their resources from both real and perceived threats…. The algorithm itself does not predetermine the formation of enclaves. Users and algorithms mutually shape each other in the sorting, classifying, and hierarchizing of people, information and political preferences. (2017, p. 422)

> “Algorithmic enclaves” draw attention to global communication flows and the individuals actively choosing to operate within them (Lim, 2017, p. 422). While amenable to affective

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17 The history of enclaves will be discussed in-depth in Chapter 3.
reactions and ideological conformity, platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are not erasing individual choices (Lim, 2017). Individuals have engaged with the material, and their digital trail has (potentially) established an environment where their “recommended pages” correspond to their digital behaviour (Lim, 2017). While studying the 2017 Jakarta Gubernational election, Lim (2020) notes there were two distinct Indonesian political camps centred around the Governor of Indonesia (colloquially known as “Ahok”) that were “pro-Ahok” and “anti-Ahok” (p. 194). Lim (2020) argues that these “largely affective communities” decreased “plurality” of conversation through “the aggressiveness and dominance of the anti and pro enclaves…” (p. 196). Lim (2020) demonstrates that such enclaves are sustained by the “centrality of affect as the currency of human transactions” (p. 196).

2.2.5. The Internet as a Grafted Technology

Much of the literature discussing white supremacy and racism prior to the uptake of digital media by right-wing extremists is pressed to contextualize how this technology has altered these ideologies. Are the “old forms” of racism and hate that were prominent still prevalent and made more visible today, or has such violence been fundamentally altered by the kinds of distribution afforded by the internet? Communication scholars have often emphasized the new possibilities that have emerged from technological transformations, whether for democratic forms of social movement or violent hate and inflated the significance of social media over the other forms of communication social media embeds. In my opinion, what we struggle to label as “new” or “old” is best answered by drawing upon Hu (2015) and his notion of “graft.” Hu (2015) writes that:

the structure of the Internet resembles a graft: a newer network grafted on top of an older, more established network. In this metaphor, preexisting infrastructures, such as the rail network, are like rootstock, while the newer fiber-optic cables resemble the uppermost portion, known in
horticulture as the scion. Neither half, rootstock or scion, describes the full story; yet it is almost impossible to look at the whole. (p. 7)

Understood as a graft, “the Internet is always already a historical object and the next stage of its development is never a complete rupture from its past” (Hu, 2015, p. 8). Social media platforms fold into their previous foundation in additive ways rather than a rupture or revolution with past practices. This grafting process is how I contextualize the evolution of racist, white supremacist, and rightist content on social media. For instance, beginning with the methods used by right-wing extremists, such as pamphlets and posters, to now encompassing the internet and social media does not replace the use of posters or pamphlets, as both are still used to occupy space and demonstrate presence (Hu, 2015; Scrivens & Conway, 2019). Instead, we see old methods of communicating hate, such as pamphlets and posters, grafted onto newer digital communication networks to broaden their reach, appeal, presence, and prominence (Graham, 2016; Mirrlees, 2021; Scrivens & Conway, 2019; Weimann, 2015). In Chapter 3, I will take up this question in the context of a specific graft between old and new, the digital enclave, as it reorganizes and amplifies right-wing extremist forms of hate and violence.
Chapter 3: Right-Wing Extremists Online: An Introduction to Malicious Enclaves

The chapter provides a conceptual background for the study of malicious enclaves. Seeking to contribute to the growing body of literature on right-wing extremism across Canada, this chapter reviews the literature of scholars studying social movements and digital networks, specifically social media platforms and affect as a form of communication. Given that my area of interest is the networked organization of right-wing extremism, I examine hate and affect are studied and explore framing as a method for articulating hatred.

3.1. Theoretical and Disciplinary Influences: Identifying and Unpacking Digital Enclaves

While social movements were discussed in Chapter 2 through the work of Veilleux-Lepage and Archambault (2019), Carter (2018), and Mudde (1995), we are left with a far less precise understanding of what digital networks entail. If we examine digital configurations through the lens of social movements, this is limiting and risks allowing organizations committed to racist violence to present themselves as civic or social movements. Given the shortcomings of echo chambers and silos discussed in Chapter 2, the site of inquiry that offers the most significant understanding and lends itself to my study is the analysis of enclaves. Rather than reiterate the work of Baum and Potter (2019), Bhatia (2019), Karlsen et al. (2017) and Nguyen’s (2020) discussion of echo chambers, I examine enclaves and the way authors use this term. This section will articulate the evolution of the term enclave and how it became associated with digital social media.

The term enclave has been used “… in European diplomatic relations…since the 13th century… [where] [o]ne of the early mentions of enclave was in the Treaty of Madrid (January
Enclave “came from the Latin inclavatus (shut in, locked up) in which the prefix in (en) means ‘inside,’ and the root clavis means ‘key’” (Rozhkov-Yuryevsky, 2013, p. 114, emphasis in original). This definition was then “…borrowed into English and German in the 19th century” (Rozhkov-Yuryevsky, 2013, p. 114). Most users of the term enclave adopt it as a geopolitical term denoting sovereignty of a nation or independent territory in part or surrounded by another sovereign nation or independent territory (Rozhkov-Yuryevsky, 2013; Vinokurov, 2007). Vinokurov (2007, pp. 13-14) distinguishes between types of enclaves. He defines “enclaved states” such as “Lesotho, San Marino, and the Vatican,” which are landlocked states that are surrounded by a singular nation (Vinokurov, 2007, p. 13). San Marino and Vatican City are entirely enclaved by Italy, whereas Lesotho is entirely enclaved by South Africa (Vinokurov, 2007). Vinokurov (2007) further distinguishes between types of enclaves by defining “semi enclaved states” (p. 13). “Semi-enclaved state is a state enclosed within the land territory of another state, yet in possession of a sea coastline (that is, not fully surrounded)” (Vinokurov, 2007, p. 13). An example of a semi-enclave state is Monaco, which is surrounded by France but is located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea (Vinokurov, 2007). To distinguish from countries that only border one nation but are not “enclaved” by them (such as Canada and Portugal), Vinokurov (2007) argues that “a state is classified as a sovereign semi-enclave if it borders on just one state, and its land boundary is longer than its sea coastline” (p. 14). Lastly is Vinokurov’s (2007) use of “true enclave.” A “true enclave” (or enclave, depending on the author, see, Catudal, 1974; Gelbman & Timothy, 2011) “… is a part of the country’s land, surrounded by alien territories” (Rozhkov-Yuryevsky, 2013, p. 116). An example of “True enclaves” are places such as “LLlivia, Spain, … which is completely surrounded by France, … [and] Campione, Italy (surrounded entirely by Switzerland)” (Gelbman & Timothy, 2011, p.
110; Vinokurov, 2007). The point is that the initial application of the term enclave has been used to denote sovereignty of a geographical space that does not appear to be a logical extension of the territory of one nation (Catudal, 1974; Gelbman & Timothy, 2011).

Terms that predate the application of enclave to describe forms of segregation within a particular country or territory often denote forceful exclusion of groups into neighbourhoods such as “ghettos” (Marcuse, 1997b, 2005; Turner, 2010). The difference is that ghettos refer to historically segregated neighbourhoods such as Jewish “slums” in Italy, where identifiable minorities were forced to live and experience “racial enclavement” (Turner, 2010, p. 250). Later, the term “ghetto” would evolve and apply to poorer, racialized, and non-majority population neighbourhoods associated with poverty and lack of opportunity (Marcuse, 1997a, 1997b, 2005; Turner, 2010). Whether it was through policy (such as not providing mortgages to Black Americans), landlords refusing to rent to certain identifiable groups, or other deliberately established structures aimed at containment, the “ghetto” is a neighbourhood and location that is being imposed upon a group (Marcuse, 1997a, 1997b, 2005; Turner, 2010). In contrast to the ghetto is the citadel. According to Marcuse (1997a, 2005), the citadel is another form of cultural, religious, racial, and economic neighbourhood demarcation for higher classes, those in positions of power, and social elites. Contemporarily, citadels are often described similarly or replaced by “gated community” and are distinguished not by an imagined superiority but a demonstrable economic advantage (Turner, 2010). The demarcation is often cost and the inability to enter unless one is part of an elite social and economic standing. Therefore, the ghetto is an impoverished neighbourhood that is forcefully and politically imposed upon a minority population, whereas the citadel is an elite neighbourhood that is protected from the lower classes through physical, social, and financial barriers (Marcuse, 1997a, 1997b, 2005; Turner, 2010).
While immigration increased in North America and many Western European nations in the 1960s, social commentators began seeking a term that could describe neighbourhoods formed and sustained around minority populations that were often new arrivals. Separated tangentially from the ghetto and the citadel is the term enclave. Although the enclave can (and sometimes is, depending on the author) be used interchangeably with the terms ghetto and citadel, due to the barriers of entry and exit, many scholars see the benefit in keeping ghetto and citadel (or similar labels) as terms to denote the vastly different social forces that result in these arrangements of like-demographics occupying demarcated neighbourhoods (Marcuse, 1997b, 2005; Turner, 2010). As a result, the initial use of enclaves to discuss social arrangements was often described as a middle ground between forceful segregation (as in a ghetto) and willful exclusion of others (as in a citadel) (Marcuse, 1997a, 2005; Turner, 2010). Rightly or wrongly, the assumption was that residing within an (ethnic, religious, or cultural) enclave results from some form of agency being exercised (Marcuse, 1997b, 2005; Turner, 2010). The definition of the enclave, therefore, evolved further to a demographic (often recent immigrants) that wished to congregate in areas together such as a “China Town,” “Little Italy,” “Little Havana,” and other such neighbourhoods (Pow, 2007; Turner, 2010). Many scholars studying this form of enclave argue that while there is no social arrangement where a particular minority group can be said to experience no barriers, there is a nuance between official economic, policy and social barriers that are stressed in juxtaposition to a choice to congregate with like-individuals (Marcuse, 1997a, 1997b, 2005; Pow, 2007; Turner, 2010).

Following the establishment of cities across North American and European countries, such as “Chinatowns” and multiple “Little Italy” formations, came questions regarding the economic stability of these enclaves. Examining how culturally distinct enclaves sustain
themselves, the term enclave was taken up by economists. Economists became interested in ethnic enclave economies within developed nations (Sanders & Nee, 1987). During the 1980s to mid-1990s, economists investigated the businesses that thrived within these enclaves and the formation of “enclave economies” (Light, Sabagh, Bozorgmehr, & Der-Martirosian, 1994; Waldinger, 1993). Such niche economies that were formed within these enclaves were looked upon by many as “enclave economies” operating within, but maintaining a separation from, the more extensive economic system (Light, Sabagh, Bozorgmehr, & Der-Martirosian, 1994; Waldinger, 1993). Economists and social scientists attempted to identify the benefits and harms that come to individuals who live and work within “enclave economies” (Clark & Drinkwater, 2002; Light, Sabagh, Bozorgmehr, & Der-Martirosian, 1994; Waldinger, 1993). They wondered, where are members of these enclaves likelier to flourish: the mainstream economy or working for someone within their fellow enclave? (Clark & Drinkwater, 2002; Light, Sabagh, Bozorgmehr, & Der-Martirosian, 1994; Waldinger, 1993). While there are competing findings, the point is that the use of the term “enclave” was further expanded on applied for discussions of the economy and social welfare associated with those that congregate in enclaves (Clark & Drinkwater, 2002; Light, Sabagh, Bozorgmehr, & Der-Martirosian, 1994; Waldinger, 1993). A significant issue that economists interested in analyzing enclave economies found as they entered the 1990s and largely hindered the simplistic division between mainstream economy and “enclave economy,” was the introduction of the internet and the affordances this brought for international business (Valenzuela-Garcia, Parella, & Güell, 2017). Economies increasingly became globally situated, and the demarcations between the dominant and minority economies became complicated by international commerce (Valenzuela-Garcia, Parella, & Güell, 2017).
While the idea of ethnic economy is still used by scholars as recently as 2017, the term has largely fallen out of favour with economists (Valenzuela-García, Parella, & Güell, 2017).

Coinciding with the use of enclaves to study “enclave economies” was the push to label spaces on the internet as digital enclaves. As has been explored, enclaves are an inherently spatial concept (Lim, 2017). It is easy to interpret enclaves as being defined by an inherent physicality given the terms origin being used to describe a geographical space (Light, Sabagh, Bozorgmehr, & Der-Martirosian, 1994; Waldinger, 1993). However, enclaves are a spatial manifestation of a like-group or community that are choosing to occupy a space regardless of it being physical or digital (Lim, 2017; Light, Sabagh, Bozorgmehr, & Der-Martirosian, 1994; Waldinger, 1993. In fact, Lim (2015) asks us to reflect on how we exist spatially through our communication and technological devices (smart phones, computers, and affordance of the internet) and simultaneously our physical selves in the “real world,” or offline. Lim (2015) writes:

Rather than oppose the ‘real,’ the ‘virtual’ has become part of it—of our ‘real’ lives. Hence, the cyberurban space is a fluid hybrid within which we live and our social practices take place. Online and offline, digital and physical, virtual and material: no one of these experiences is any more real than the other. (p.118)

What Lim (2015) discusses is the problematic divide imposed by researchers to suggest people exist entirely off or online when it is both simultaneously.

In a study examining the hybridity of online and offline identities, Graham (2014) examines how dominant, weak, and counter-publics online act as potential precursors to digital enclaves. Graham (2014) reconciles using the term digital enclave to describe the African American website, The Root, by drawing upon the work of Fraser (1990). Fraser writes, “The public sphere, in short, is not the state; it is rather the informally mobilized body of nongovernmental discursive opinion that can serve as a counterweight to the state” (1990, p. 75).
Embedded within this understanding of the public sphere is the idea that the state will be challenged by various actors that disagree with policies and perhaps the ideology being professed (Fraser, 1990). Many of such actors constitute what Fraser (1990) describes as “weak publics,” which are “publics whose deliberative practice consists exclusively in opinion-formation and does not also encompass decision-making” (p. 75). Another understanding of “weak publics” is expressed as “counter publics.” Warner (2002) describes “counter publics” as “…a scene where a dominated group aspires to re-create itself as a public and in doing so finds itself in conflict not only with the dominant social group but…the norms that constitute the dominant culture as a public” (p. 112). Most authors utilize the term counter public to showcase disenfranchised groups mobilizing either in person or digitally to challenge the dominant public and norms within a particular social setting (Loehwing & Motter, 2009; Fraser, 1990; Warner, 2002).

In contrast to “weak publics” and “counter publics,” are “strong publics” (and often “dominant publics” depending on the author) that are typically state governments or legal bodies that contain decision-making power (Fraser, 1990). Fraser (1990) states that a strong public’s “…discourse encompasses both opinion-formation and decision-making. As a locus of public deliberation culminating in legally binding decisions (or laws), parliament was to be the site for the discursive authorization of the use of state power” (p. 75). For Graham (2014), he is interested in understanding how a “counter public” can manifest online and describes this as a digital enclave. While the evolution of the digital enclaves operating within the digital public sphere was initially studied to trace how disenfranchised digital enclaves congregated online to contemplate, there was a further addition to this inquiry by studying how privileged groups and those of relative privilege manifest their own digital enclaves (Campbell & Golan, 2011; Graham, 2014).
In the case studies of Campbell and Golan (2011) and Graham (2014), we see the term “digital enclave” applied to groups from the Jewish and African American communities and the deliberate separation they have established for themselves to discuss and be isolated from dominant groups while online. The key to understanding the enclave in terms of the Jewish and African American communities that often contain a strong sense of physicality when offline, is that the digital enclaves being accessed are not designed to supplant the physical or even lead to a new physical offline arrangement at all and instead exist within the new spatial and physical manifestations outlined by Lim (2015). Essentially, the digital enclave exists as a space unto themselves and may or may not work with offline initiatives (Campbell & Golan, 2011; Graham, 2014). By drawing on the work of Campbell and Golan (2011) and Graham (2014), we see that, as is the case with offline conglomerations of people, there is a counter-public sphere in online digital enclaves. Campbell and Golan (2011) discuss websites designed for Orthodox Jewish people who, out of necessity, needed access to the internet (for work, bills, information, etc.) but wanted to be in a safe, demarcated space of the internet where outside influence would be limited. At the same time, Graham (2014) shows how African Americans have utilized websites such as “The Root” to discuss issues in a safe space that shelters members from the dominant public and allows them to express themselves. While both are similarly situated as a safe space for minority populations, the term enclave further evolves from solely representing a deliberate demarcation between racial and religious communities (as in the studies of Campbell & Golan, 2011; Graham, 2014) and their extension of offline struggle for equitable access, to Lim’s (2017) concept of “algorithmic enclaves”. In summation of how scholars understand enclaves, we can see a variety of interpretations. The term enclave is used to describe something as large as a territory (part of a country, a neighbourhood, etc.) and as minuscule as a website (such as a
blog). For researchers using the term enclave, the scale seems less critical as it connotes a similarity and familiarity of some form (sometimes discussed in reductive fashion by network scientists as homophily). The primary theme binding all the definitions of enclaves is a connection (whether forced or embraced) with similar people (racially, culturally, religiously, economically, politically, etc.), and the clear demarcation with those that are not a part of this grouping (Campbell & Golan, 2011; Graham, 2014; Lim, 2017). Further, membership in an enclave does not require formal admittance like entering an established political party. Enclaves allow for identity, affect, and beliefs to assume a connection and an alliance between varying groups and individuals based on these characteristics alone. This assumed connection through identity, affect, and shared beliefs will be necessary for labelling what I view as hate-fuelled malicious enclaves, which I will develop in the upcoming sections. In particular, individual agency is involved with inhabiting an enclave, especially a digital one (Campbell & Golan, 2011; Graham, 2014; Lim, 2017).

3.1.1. The Affective Playground of Facebook: Communicating Viscerally

Although technology and corporate interests have changed the speed and quality of news in the 21st century, there are identifiable ways that individuals have also been affected given the high-paced, spectacle-driven mediascape of digital social media selves (Drotner, 2005). At a personal level, individuals engage in personalized spectacles for their online selves (Drotner, 2005). Livingstone writes that the global adoption of communication technology such as cellphones and laptops leads to the “mediation of identity and social relationships” (2009, p. 7). Instead of only having to work on one’s appearance in the non-digital world, the result of being constantly connected forces individuals to continuously work on their digital identities (Livingstone, 2009). In other words, a great deal of time and energy for individuals now goes
into crafting social media profiles and self-assessing how they portray themselves to many potential audiences, including family, friends, colleagues, and strangers (Livingstone, 2009). As a result of constant connectivity, the lines between public and private, online and offline, have blurred (Drotner, 2005). This blurring, brought about by constant connectivity, has made it possible for an acceleration of “intimate” connections with other like-minded individuals to find each other with ease (Cerulo, 1997, p. 53; Drotner, 2005). Therefore, people can speedily form intimate connections with people online based on increasingly superficial similarities.

While Dean (2010) argues that social media platforms are designed to keep people engaging with content that makes them experience a variety of emotions through the various “affective attachments” they encounter, Han, Hwang, and Lee (2017) assess how these platforms and their affordances “affectively trigger” individual users into engaging. Whether cat pictures, war stories, political controversies, or gossip blogs, the tie that binds them all together is the continuous attempts to keep people affectively enthralled (Dean, 2010; Han, Hwang, & Lee, 2017; Papacharissi, 2014; Papacharissi, 2010). In this regard, “affect” has been understood by many social media scholars as a stimulus that changes one’s emotional state (Han, Hwang, & Lee, 2017; Papacharissi, 2014). As Papacharissi (2014) summarizes, “Our experience of an emotion is defined by affect, by a variation in a mind/body state” (2014, p.14). There is a change occurring within an individual because of something they have engaged with, and this is the affective change that social media scholars are interested in identifying. At the most basic level, social media researchers approach understanding affect to measure the speed at which emotional states change based on the stimuli (or “affective trigger” to borrow from Han, Hwang, & Lee, 2017) one interacts with while online.
Seeking to detail how an individual becomes part of the digital infrastructure of a platform such as Facebook, Karppi (2015) explains how Facebook’s design contributes to its success as a platform. Karppi (2015) writes:

Hence a typical Facebook user does not actively search for information but instead is affected by things shared on the Facebook platform. Such serendipity clearly differs from, for example, the way in which Google’s platform constructs a user’s profile. Google positions the user as an actor who actively searches for information. What Google’s platform fails to offer, however, is the affective feeling of the randomness of discovery, the happy accident upon which Facebook relies. (p. 225)

While not arguing that Facebook dictates the behaviour of users, we see that Karppi (2015) identifies that there is a structure of “randomness” that entices users to come across news, stories, and groups/communities that feels like a “discovery” that was not influenced by algorithms. Describing the process by which affect shapes users’ experiences on Facebook, he writes, “It is present in every situation as potentiality, as the virtual possibility of encountering and experiencing something that only later can be manifested in words and emotions, or, in the language of Facebook, in clicks and recommendations” (Karppi, 2015, p. 226). This process explains how Facebook has established itself as the preeminent social media platform and why it has been accused of fueling endless political upheavals and social discord (Robinson, 2022; Tufecki, 2014).

Like Lim (2017), I concur that individual agency is affirmed even online, whereby “[u]sers and algorithms mutually shape each other in the sorting, classifying, and hierarchizing of people, information and political preferences” (p. 422). The algorithm learns based on users' behaviours and makes its recommendations and insights astute (Hillis, Paasonen, & Petit, 2015; Karppi, 2015). As a platform, Facebook is incredibly attuned to each user experience and makes every interaction with one’s profile a unique experience. This process, for most users, is relatively benign in terms of what it can encourage or facilitate. A key reason for understanding
affect for digital media scholars is to question the “real world” and “offline” consequences of multiple platforms that are primed with affective “triggers” and that encourage individuals to interact with content (Han, Hwang, & Lee, 2017; Papacharissi, 2014). While platforms try to encourage individuals to engage more frequently by providing as many “affective triggers” as possible, it is essential to acknowledge the agency individuals engaging with social media platforms still have (Han, Hwang, & Lee, 2017; Lim, 2017).

An extension of the affective climate that privileges feelings and hateful content is the sense of “digital intimacy” established by those individuals who engage in such malicious enclaves (Ley & Rambukkana, 2021). Ley and Rambukkana (2021) write, “…digital intimacy…drives transformative change in how people develop and express intimate relationships using technology” (p. 63). Furthermore, while studying groups that engage in non-monogamous relationships, fandoms, and other online communities that often challenge dominant norms and ideals, Rambukkana (2015) addresses how such spaces may, through ever-increasing exclusiveness, become isolated. Rambukkana (2015) uses the term “enclave” as a way for those “with marginalized intimate identities” to establish isolated communities (p. 114). Rambukkana (2015) writes, “In setting itself apart as a revolutionary space of intimacy, it misses an opportunity to critically engage with aspects of its own formulation that risk creating it as an exclusive space of intimacy: an enclave” (p. 117, emphasis theirs). Essentially, the “digitally intimate” communities tracked are gathering to share an interest that is immodest, counter-hegemonic, not worthwhile, or in the case of the malicious enclaves, hateful (Ley & Rambukkana, 2021; Rambukkana, 2015). This context for reaching out and forming digitally intimate communities, coupled with stigma, shame, and fear that can come from membership within such communities, easily lends to those well-intentioned fandoms becoming more
exclusive in terms of membership and recreating some of the problematic frameworks trying to be countered (Rambukkana, 2015). Regardless of the intentions behind digital intimacy leading to the formation of exclusive enclaves, we can get a sense of identifying with a cause or community deemed offensive or problematic. At the same time, sharing online relationships are conducive to creating and perhaps increasing the way such connections and relationships transform into increasingly trusted confidants, and those members are willing to share their innermost desires, fears, and concerns through affective deliberation (Ley & Rambukkana, 2021; Rambukkana, 2015). Far from being a fandom or championing a non-typical sexual lifestyle, there are apparent attempts to establish digitally intimate connections (see Rambukkana, 2015) by the four malicious enclaves examined.

3.1.2. Hatred and its Justifications

Given my interest in right-wing extremism, hate is a particular form of affect that plays a significant role in understanding the content I examine. This section will identify the diverse ways scholars have investigated and identified hate. While becoming a “multidisciplinary” endeavour, there are a few key areas we have seen hate defined and utilized in recent academic publications (Tsai, 2012). For many scholars, hate remains a loaded yet ill-defined term. Hall (2013) writes that we have a sense of what hate entails, but there is no immediate definition that scholars would all agree with. This definitional confusion is further complicated by the designation of acts labelled as “hate crimes” (Hall, 2013). As Hall (2013) distinguishes:

Therefore, to allow a distinction to be made between crime and hate crime, we necessarily have to identify and select the prejudices we wish to challenge. In other words, the ‘boundaries’ of hate crime have to be established. The question is, then, what prejudices are we going to take action against? Or put another way, what characteristics are we going to protect? (2013, p. 10, emphasis in original)
From a legal scholar's perspective, the complication is how we are to not only define hate but determine when it is also a motivating factor for a crime. However, as the term has become more broadly used in legalese, we see the way cultural, racial, social, and class-based “prejudices” that may have motivated one’s criminal behaviour become an aggravating factor in terms of criminal charges and punishments (Hall, 2013; Levin & Rabrenovic, 2009). Essentially, the moniker of a “hate crime” is a legal way of denouncing, within a particular jurisdiction, crimes that are more heinous because of the motivation of targeting an identifiable demographic for nothing other than their membership in said demographic (Hall, 2013; Levin & Rabrenovic, 2009).

Aside from legal definitions of hate crime, sociologists and criminologists often look at the reasoning behind hate crimes from the perpetrator’s perspective. For Perry (2009), hate crimes are primarily “used to sustain the privilege of the dominant group and to police the boundaries between groups by reminding the Other of his or her place” (p. 71). Similarly, Blazak (2009) looks to identify the strategies of groups that Perry (2009) identified and how they defend and justify their actions. Blazak (2009) writes that such groups often “see themselves as defending legality and protecting jobs, wages, crime victims, and national security, not as hating immigrants” (p. 153). Given the social circumstances by which sociologists identify the emergence of hatred, we see this identified as a “cultural” phenomenon. Levin & Rabrenovic (2009) write:

The cultural element of hate can be seen in its amazing ability to sweep across broad areas of a nation. Individuals separated by region, age, social class, and ethnic background all tend to share roughly the same hostile images of and feelings about various groups. (p. 43)

Essentially, much of the hate witnessed as being endemic to a particular society is frequently successful at uniting vast swathes of that same society in perpetuating their collective disdain towards a particular identifiable group. As Levin and Rabrenovic (2009) further detail:
Hate provides a cultural justification in two ways. First, it identifies the enemy. Groups of youngsters who go out looking for an appropriate victim to bash or assault already know—based on accumulated immersion in the culture—exactly which groups are off limits and which groups can be attacked with moral impunity. Second, hate reemerges after the fact to excuse a perpetrator’s infliction of pain and suffering. The cultural images and feelings again come into play to justify engaging in criminal behavior without suffering pangs of conscience, with moral impunity. (p. 46)

Ultimately, the cultural justifications of hatred can take on a specific manifestation depending on the country or district where such hate is being encouraged. However, it is essential to address hate based on the cultural definition because it requires maintenance and works to keep it alive (Levin & Rabrenovic, 2009).

While cultural justifications make hate crimes permissible, Ahmed (2004) examines how a particular subset of hate criminals, white supremacists, justify their actions. Here we see the affective interpretation of hatred by Ahmed (2004) becomes essential to understand how racism and white supremacy act as the inverse of the positive emotional appeals identified by Papacharissi (2014). As Ahmed (2004) writes, “[t]he ordinary white subject is a fantasy that comes into being through the mobilization of hate,” elaborating, “[t]he emotion of hate works to animate the ordinary subject, to bring that fantasy to life, precisely by constituting the ordinary as in crisis, and the ordinary person as the real victim” (p. 118). According to Hall (1991), the only way to overcome the object of hate (e.g., identifiable groups) is through a collective response whereby interests align to address the identified threat. Hatred is not only about labelling a definable group's negative qualities but also identifying how the group targeted with hatred is the perpetrator of absolute cruelty and wickedness (Ahmed, 2004). Taken together, I situate my understanding of hatred between Ahmed (2004) and Levin and Rabrenovic (2009), as they provide a nuanced interpretation of hate that allows me to unpack how it operates, is justified, and is sustained.
3.1.3. Framing: Context and Inquiry

Building off Ahmed (2004), Hall (1991), and Levin and Rabrenovic (2009), I seek a method for identifying hatred at the digital enclave level. In Ahmed’s (2004) work, the method utilized is mapping emotions such as hate, fear, and disgust to foment political movements and even provide structure for how nations define themselves. Broadly, emotion is key to understanding groups of people that come together for a political or cultural endeavour, and this is especially prominent when hatred is the motivating emotion (Ahmed, 2004). Similarly, Levin and Rabrenovic (2009) trace “hate as cultural justifications for violence” (p. 41). The methodology drawn upon is a historical reflection on how hatred was manifested at the cultural level through “laws and norms that prohibit intimate contact between different groups of people” (Levin & Rabrenovic, 2009, p. 44). Levin and Rabrenovic (2009) specifically detail the separation between white and black people through Jim Crow laws and how “generationally”, hatred of Jewish people was ingrained in German culture prior to the Holocaust. While both works have inspired me, I ultimately have a different task: looking at the primary forms of hatred that do not have the same historical hindsight afforded to Levin & Rabrenovic (2009) for interpretation. Focusing on a more immediate level of interaction, I seek to understand how individuals utilize hatred. I seek to identify hatred as it is manifested in Facebook posts. Therefore, the following section will provide a literature review of how various disciplines articulate what frames are, how they work, and how they can be identified. To begin this section, I draw on the work of scholars to identify the multiple ways frames are understood, narrowing the analysis down to social movements, agenda-setting, and sociological interpretations of frames. Ultimately, I will finish this subsection by situating myself and adopting a pre-established description of frames.
To begin this section, I draw on the work of social movement scholars to address how they discuss frames. Benford (1997) writes that the framing approach to studying social movements begins by analyzing varied “grievance construction and interpretation, attributions of blame/causality, movement participation, the mobilization of popular support for a movement cause, resource acquisition, strategic interaction, and the selection of movement tactics and targets” (p. 410). For Benford (1997), many dimensions are considered relevant for how movements unfold. Further, social movement theorists seek to interpret movements' strategies by examining how they “frame” themselves and the cause they are fighting for. To draw attention to a cause and a group requires people. Much like advertising a product, when movements attempt to sell their narrative, they do so in a way that appeals to a broad audience (Zald, 1996). A group or movement’s sales pitch and rationale are done through “frames” (Zald, 1996). Zald (1996) writes, “[f]rames help interpret…problems for action and suggest action pathways to remedy the problem” (p. 265). In a similar assessment, Benford and Snow (2000) write, “[f]rames help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action. Collective action frames also perform this interpretive function by simplifying and condensing aspects of the “world out there” (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 614). The frame acts as a method for signifying a problem, identifying a solution, and mobilizing followers (Benford & Snow, 2000; Zald, 1996).

Snow and Benford (1988) define frames’ different objectives to dissect further how frames are used. Snow and Benford (1988) identify three distinct types of frames: “diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational” (pp. 200-202). Each term identifies what the frame is meant to accomplish when in use. Firstly, “diagnostic framing involves identification of a problem and the attribution of blame or causality” (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 200, emphasis in original).
Secondly, “prognostic framing…not only…suggest solutions to the problem but also…identify strategies, tactics, and targets. What is to be done is thereby specified” (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 201, emphasis in original). Lastly, “motivational framing” is “…the elaboration of a call to arms or rationale for action that goes beyond the diagnosis and prognosis” (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 202). By proposing this classification of framing, Snow and Benford (1998) provide other researchers with the tools to classify a movement’s frame based on its objective.

According to Benford and Snow (2000) and Zald (1996), the primary function of frames is to either form alliances amongst separate movements and groups or contest the narrative of other movements and groups. When movements have competing narratives, Zald (1996) identifies this process as “framing contests,” and they occur whenever two or more groups have a divergent view on a situation (p. 270). Framing contests can occur between any divergent viewpoint on an event, or set of affairs within a society, whether between a government and a social movement or oppositional social movements (Zald, 1996). This distinction is where terms such as “protest” and “counter protests” or “movement” and “counter movement” become necessary and beneficial to identify all actors involved (Benford & Snow, 2000; Zald, 1996). Identifying “framing contests” between right-wing extremist enclaves and their political, ideological, and cultural opponents is critical to comprehensively understanding how these collectives operate. The literature that focuses on frames in the context of social movement guides my research by identifying how groups present and define themselves to other members and outsiders. Addressing such social dynamics is essential to uncover how framing is used to sell and sustain a particular form of right-wing extremism.

Looking to understand frames from a social policy and narrative standpoint, Schön (1979) examines how governments articulate problems they seek to remedy. Schön is
specifically interested in how specific policies are presented through “problem setting” (1979).

He writes:

Problem settings are mediated, I believe, by the “stories” people tell about troublesome situations – stories in which they describe what is wrong and what needs fixing. When we examine the problem-setting stories told by the analysts and practitioners of social policy, it becomes apparent that the framing of problems often depends upon metaphors underlyng [sic]the stories which generate problem setting and set the directions of problem solving”. (Schön, 1979, p. 261)

Schön (1979) describes how social problems become identified through framed stories and how this identification lends itself to particular remedies. Similar to Schön (1979) in analyzing political frames, Edelman (1993) examines how “political beliefs” are formed and manipulated by politicians and those with the power and ability to set frames (p. 232). For Edelman (1993), political thought begins with “categorization.” He writes:

Categorization is, in fact, the necessary condition of abstract thought…With alternative categorizations, meanings change, often radically. But in statements about politics the choice of categories is typically driven by ideology and prejudice rather than by rigorous analysis or the aspiration to solve social problems. (Edelman, 1993, p. 232)

As Edelman articulates, belief and ideology are typically the impetus for social policy, not an attempt to ameliorate issues (1993). For Edelman (1993), much of social policy and political discourse is propaganda promoted through a tactic of word choice and framing. As such, the findings from this specific field of framing ask us to consider how a government or group is asking others to interpret their specific policies and positions. In particular, this work inspires me to consider how particular groups advocate “remedies” to the social ills they have defined.

To understand frames from a more sociological perspective, I turn to Entman's (1993) and Pan and Kosicki's (1993) work. Entman (1993) is concerned with providing an analysis of frames that defines precisely what they are and how they are used. Entman (1993) writes:

Frames, then, define problems—determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of common cultural values; diagnose
causes—identify the forces creating the problem; make moral judgements—evaluate causal agents and their effects; and suggest remedies—offer and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects. A single sentence may perform more than one of these four framing functions, although many sentences in a text may perform none of them. And a frame in any particular text may not necessarily include all four functions. (p. 52, emphasis in original)

Entman (1993) is interested in defining how frames are used at the most basic level without necessarily singling out a particular intention behind the frame. Entman (1993) further defines how frames are transmitted through communication:

Communicators make conscious or unconscious framing judgements in deciding what to say, guided by frames (often called schemata) that organize their belief systems. The text contains frames, which are manifested by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgements. The frames that guide the receiver’s thinking and conclusion may or may not reflect the frames in the text and the framing intention of the communicator. The culture is the stock of commonly invoked frames; in fact, culture might be defined as the empirically demonstrable set of common frames exhibited in the discourse and thinking of most people in a social grouping. Framing in all four locations includes similar functions: selection and highlighting, and use of highlighted elements to construct an argument about problems and their causation, evaluation, and/or solution. (pp. 52-53, emphasis in original)

Entman (1993) describes the process of how a frame is transmitted from a communicator and the “conscious” and “unconscious” values that are transmitted to elicit particular reactions from the receiver (Entman, 1993). Depending on their function, frames are often designed in a specific manner to guide receivers in a unique manner (Entman, 1993). As Pan and Kosicki (1993) write:

Framing analysis pays close attention to the systematic study of political language, the coin of the realm in political communication that is often ignored or only dealt with in a highly abstract manner. Framing ought to sensitize researchers to examine political language as used at various stages of the political communication process: statements from policymakers, media content, and representations in audiences’ minds as well as the operation of the political system. Choices of words and their organization into news stories are not trivial matters. They hold great power in setting the context for debate, defining issues under consideration, summoning a variety of mental representations, and providing the basic tools to discuss the issues at hand. (p. 70)
While Pan and Kosicki (1993, p. 70) relegate framing entirely to “political communication” and “news stories,” we can see how the broader sociological consideration they draw upon, such as the representation of individuals and agencies, plays a critical role in their understanding of frames. We learn about the culture of a group, communicators, written text, and how a receiver is meant to interpret and understand what is being communicated.

By drawing on the three approaches mentioned above to studying frames, I am interested in discussing framing as a method for justifying hatred and exploring how hate is propagated. This approach to framing is valuable for examining and understanding statements from leadership within the malicious enclaves, as these messages are highly curated and designed to achieve an objective in line with government talking points. It allows me to consider not only the individuals engaging with a particular malicious enclave but also how the leadership of groups has perhaps primed followers to behave a certain way. When reviewing the sociological approach to frames and the work of Pan and Kosicki (1993) and Entman (1993, pp. 52-53), I find the focus of frames being centred around “communicators,” “text,” “receivers,” and “culture,” as helping to illuminate my study of hatred as outlined by Ahmed (2004) and Levin and Rabrenovic (2009). While not using the same terminology as Entman (1993), both Ahmed (2004) and Levin and Rabrenovic (2009) similarly argue that hatred is in the culture of a group, society, country, etc., and it is by acknowledging these trends that we better comprehend hatred.

Therefore, I draw inspiration from framing and will use this literature to demonstrate how posting on Facebook involves framing news events and stories of cultural significance to a malicious enclave. This approach will aid in demonstrating the circulating hatred within a malicious enclave and forcing us to consider how this practice lends itself to creating a climate for violence to emerge.
3.1.4. Situating Frames and Frame Analysis

While the above section discusses the broad manner by which academics define frames, I will now delve into a series of studies that practically examine how frames are identified and studied and what the research that utilizes frame analysis often reveals. As can be seen, the previous section deals with the theoretical aspects of engaging with frames and frame analysis, juxtaposed with the application of such research that critically evaluates frames in action. I now chart how this can be practically applied to a study.

The most common form of framing analysis looks to unpack the agenda setting commonly employed by mainstream media outlets to situate and maintain dominant discourses (Reese, 2007; Terkildsen & Schnell, 1997). In his study on mainstream media discourses of Muslims and terrorism, Karim (2003) argues there to be a “jihad mode of journalism,” which allows for “Mainstream journalists…to view the religious conflict script as self-evident, not requiring explanation of why a particular war should be considered religious” (p. 158). The taken-for-granted, often discriminatory assumptions about Muslims and Islam can be repackaged into an easy headline and story that viewers will broadly accept (Karim, 2003). Moreover, Karim (2003) asks readers to pay attention to dominant discourses. He writes:

Dominant discourses… refer…to the broader process of communication. In so far as the bulk of a society subscribes in a particular historical period to a set of fundamental myths, one can speak of a dominant discourse that serves as a matrix for its members’ discussions on various issues. The dominant discourses of a society are not manifestations of a monolithic or static set of ideological and cultural currents: their complexities, which reflect the ever-changing structures of power, are shaped by continually evolving and often contradictory combinations of the assumptions, hypotheses, and world views of socio-economic and intellectual elites. (Karim, 2003, p. 5)

While not explicitly using the term “frames,” the “fundamental myths” described by Karim (2003) are like the account of “culture” promoted by Entman (1993, p. 53), who argues that culture often provides the bedrocks from which “most people in as social grouping” produce
frames that are easily consumed by the audience. In a similar study examining how dominant media narratives are framed using pre-established and “taken for granted” assumptions, Terkildsen and Schnell (1997) examine media frames of the “women’s movement” across the middle to the latter part of the twentieth century. What they found was that rather than engage in the complex work of addressing what feminist protesters were advocating from the 1950s to the 1990s, American mainstream media resorted to “… packaging the women’s movement and related gender issues by employing five unique frames over the course of forty-five years—political and economic rights, feminism, anti-feminism, and gender roles” (Terkildsen & Schnell, 1997, p. 893). They argue that “media frames become a potent source of public opinion orchestration either directly by the media itself or via interest groups and other political players” (Terkildsen & Schnell, 1997, p. 894). Both studies demonstrate mainstream media’s power in establishing and sustaining problematic frames that work actively against equitable aims.

However, we can begin to expand upon these works by examining how news has become saturated to the point where we can no longer assume people are consuming the same media. While corporate media still plays a critical role in agenda setting and promoting dominant discourses (often at the expense of minority populations), there is a far greater opportunity to be more selective with the news one consumes (Karim, 2003; Reese, 2007; Terkildsen & Schnell, 1997). If one wants to consume nothing but conservative, liberal, libertarian, etc., news, one can access such news due to the affordances of social media and actively eschew all others.

Moreover, even if they are receiving the news they disagree with, I argue that communication scholars must be prepared to examine how such content is processed through the culture of the individual and the digital or malicious enclaves they inhabit to make such reporting palatable (Entman, 1993).
Further, I wish to expand on how frames are utilized as a methodology when studying the news. However, what also needs to be identified is how those who engage with news frame their responses to circulated articles since digital social media has allowed individuals to “speak back” to the publications. Surprisingly, little research engages how individual users respond to news articles and “speak back” to the promoted mainstream narratives. A study I draw inspiration from is Holton, Lee, & Coleman (2014), which examines how individuals engaging with mainstream American news outlets (such as CNN, New York Times, the Washington Post, the Huffington Post, and USA Today) by responding in comment sections regarding articles promoting healthy living advice. What they found was:

This study shows people are not lemmings who pick up indiscriminately on journalists’ frames and repeat them in their comments. In many cases, the frame in the stories was not associated with more of the same frame in the comments in this study. While journalists are including more thematic frames in their health coverage, that effort is not necessarily resulting in similar frames in readers’ comments. In fact, thematically framed articles may be driving down gain-oriented comments, as evidenced by the results here. While such a finding could indicate thematic coverage casts gloom onto health issues, exploring issues that leave little room for positive responses from readers, it also may indicate the need to consider the role of subject matter in future research. (Holton, Lee, & Coleman, 2014, p. 9)

Holton, Lee, and Coleman (2014) detail that rather than communication being a one-way flow from speaker to receiver, we can now see people speaking back to the mainstream media and other news publications in real time. What this study sets up nicely is my intention of using Entman’s (1993) understanding of frames to determine how individuals are responding through posts “define problems,” “diagnose causes,” “make moral judgements,” and “suggest remedies” (p. 52). I am establishing a methodology that examines how comments online can be a framed reaction to a news story from mainstream or alternative media publications. Essentially, I examine framing through posting as an additive in both the generation and sustentation of hate.
3.2. Summary of Theoretical Position

While enclaves have a history denoting a geographical space, we can see by drawing on Graham (2014), Campbell and Golan (2011), and Lim (2017) that digital social media has played a vital role in allowing for the formation of digital enclaves. While the affordances of digital social media have allowed for unprecedented connection and communication, we see by drawing on Han, Hwang, and Lee (2017) and Papacharissi (2014) that platforms establish an affective environment that is meant to enthrall individual users and keep them interacting with the platform. While this interaction is often benign, we can see how a digital enclave that promotes hate (a malicious enclave) would be well primed to encourage racist and bigoted views. I coined the term “malicious enclaves” to describe a facade of a politically oriented group that establishes a veil of legitimacy to facilitate hateful and violence-endorsing views primarily on digital social media. Further, the affordances of digital social media not only allow members of the malicious enclave to share views they appreciate, but it also provides a mechanism for members to track and report to each other on the news events and popular grievances of their opponents, in which they are acutely attuned. This process of maintaining legitimacy, tracking opponents, and regular interaction from members allows the malicious enclave manifest on digital social media to nourish their affective climate of hate. In the following chapters, I identify the relationship of posting in digital networks and how the act of posting, especially when compounded by multiple individuals expressing similar sentiments in a malicious enclave, leads to the circulation and maintenance of hatred—ultimately providing an ideal space for “slow violence”, namely, “...a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all” (Nixon, 2011, p. 78).
Chapter 4: Methodology and Ethical Considerations

This dissertation seeks to unpack events like the Christchurch Mosque attack and ascertain the broader social networks of hate, harm, and violence that celebrate such an act. This dissertation also questions the process by which a (self-) filmed terrorist attack like the Christchurch Mosque attack escalates dehumanization of the targeted Muslim population. The broader questions are: how do acts of violence committed by someone belonging to a particular identity get repurposed to vilify a global community? How are political and cultural news events utilized to support, sustain, and promote dehumanizing hateful convictions? To answer the above questions, this dissertation is guided by multiple methods. Firstly, I use social network analyses to provide a broader picture of the right-wing extremist enclaves I am studying. Secondly, I use a frame analysis to examine six news events that capture nuance with the posters’ frames. Lastly, I identify how frames shift as posters react to news events that challenge their outlook. To establish how I use such methods and to outline the ethical steps I took in finishing this research, the following sections of this chapter discuss: 1) investigating Facebook; 2) selecting case studies; 3) social network analysis; and finally, 4) Facebook posts and frame analysis.

4.1. Investigating Facebook

While numerous social media platforms allow for like-minded individuals to meet and share common points of view, such as Twitter, Reddit, and 4Chan, Facebook has an affordance that encourages people to connect through the “group” function the platform offers, and this often leads to the formation of what I have identified as a digital enclave. Facebook defines their group function as follows: “[g]roups are a place to communicate about shared interests with certain people. You can create a group for anything — your family reunion, your after-work sports team or your book club” (Facebook Help Center, 2020, n.p.). Though the intention seems
to have been to allow family, friends, and fandoms to communicate with one another, it is apparent that this function is readily amenable to hate-fuelled digital enclaves. Therefore, I view the Facebook group as a space where individuals with a range of “shared interests” communicate with a predefined set of topics and often intentionally or unintentionally form enclaves. I further draw on Graham (2014) and Campbell and Golan (2011), and Lim (2017) to contextualize how Facebook group spaces can take the form of digital enclaves. Graham (2014), Campbell and Golan (2011), and Lim (2017) identify websites and digital social media platforms as spaces that are utilized as an enclave. While this does not mean every website or Facebook group page is a digital enclave, it suggests that people often willingly segregate themselves online, like self-segregation seen in neighbourhood enclaves. Through a rigorous analysis of the RWE malicious enclaves, I demonstrate that there is an enclave nature to their formation.

4.1.1. Selecting Case Studies

I initially set out to track domestically established right-wing extremist groups within Canada; however, it became apparent that Canadians tend to import from abroad much of the right-wing extremist monikers that become popular. I drew on internationally recognized right-wing extremist Facebook group pages (i.e., digital/malicious enclaves) that Canadians embrace. During my data selection, a conservative estimate of total English-speaking Facebook group pages representing multiple nationalities that can be described as right-wing extremists would be ~450 Facebook group pages. An actual number is impossible to ascertain due to the constantly changing names of pages and those that fail to generate interest. Still, such pages are created daily and are either taken down by Facebook administrators or deleted by group creators. Therefore, I tracked and followed several right-wing extremist Facebook pages before settling on
my selected ones. Groups considered alongside these were Soldiers of Odin, the Proud Boys, and Yellow Vests Canada. I detail in-depth the process by which a Facebook page becomes a digital enclave and, ultimately, a malicious one in Chapter 5.

I sought well-known pages that did not receive takedowns during my collection period and selected four right-wing extremist groups: Act4America, the English Defence League, the Three Percenters, and Pegida. These four group pages are examined to understand how they identify themselves, the types of “activism” they engage in, and their organization’s overall objective and purpose. Following this broad overview assessment, I then study the Canadian iterations of these groups: Act4Canada, the Canadian Defence League, the Canadian Three Percenters, and Pegida Canada. To unpack how these Facebook digital enclaves and individuals engage with the platform, I am guided by qualitative analysis as my methodological approach. Qualitative analysis is an ideal approach to researching topics that deal with social phenomena (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011; Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). According to Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, “[q]ualitative research is useful for exploring new topics or understanding complex issues; for explaining people’s beliefs and behaviour; and for identifying the social or cultural norms of a culture or society” (2011, p. 10). To further triangulate my findings, I use case studies to narrow my focus and improve the quality of my qualitative analysis. Using case studies, I establish specific assessment materials, guiding my research parameters (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011; Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). Choosing case studies accompanied by qualitative

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18 See Appendix 2 for a full list of groups that were excluded and the rationales for why.
19 It is easier to identify what a Canadian right-wing extremist group page is choosing to adopt by locating the platform and purpose of the original group they are identifying with. For instance, PEGIDA within Germany (where it was established) and across Europe identifies as being “against Islam”, and is widely labelled as Islamophobic, xenophobic, and racist (Berntzen & Weisskircher, 2016; Matusitz, 2015). Despite this notoriety, Pegida has resonated with many international followers while being widely condemned (Berntzen & Weisskircher, 2016). Choosing to identify with this the way “Pegida Canada” has, makes it easier to uncover what group leaders and members are hoping to promote within Canada before examining individual members’ posts in their unique Facebook group pages. These groups and their histories are examined in Chapter 5.
data analysis allowed me to pay attention to nuance and respect the iterative nature of qualitative analyses (Bernard & Wutich, & Ryan, 2017). Following the approach to qualitative research I chose, my methods outlined below pay attention to the complex “beliefs and behaviour” of the RWE enclaves I studied, and the findings are illuminated by the methodological decisions I chose (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011, p. 10). Below, I unpack the specific methods utilized in this dissertation: social network analysis and frame analysis (Bernard & Wutich, & Ryan, 2017).

4.1.2. Social Network Analysis: Locating the Network

Social network analysis provides a broad idea of the interactions these Facebook RWE malicious enclaves have based on their connections (Fu, Boos, & Luo, 2017; McCulloh, Armstrong, & Johnson, 2013). According to McCulloh, Armstrong, and Johnson (2013), “[n]etwork analysis has the advantages of being able to analyze entire networks such as organizations, as opposed to traditional analysis that concentrates on analyzing the significance of individual factors” (p. 18). These networks can “link people together via a common interest and/or other kinds of interdependencies” (Fu, Luo, & Boos 2017, p. 4). Interdependencies of digital social networks, such as the ubiquitous linking, sharing of information, allyship, and awareness raising, lead to a more reified network and help demarcate digital boundaries between friend and foe, which defy national boundaries, are established in this digital space (Esteve-Del-Valle, 2022; Kim & Altmann, 2017; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). Without the interdependent nature of digital social networks, the fervour to continue whatever social quest is being fought for dwindles (Esteve-Del-Valle, 2022; Kim & Altmann, 2017; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001).

Utilizing social network analysis, I demonstrate how these Canadian right-wing extremists are situated domestically and internationally by generating one unique digital network
for each Facebook group page. To do this, I use Netvizz to establish a social network of specific
group pages on Facebook. Rieder (2013), the app’s creator, writes that Netvizz is “a data
collection and extraction application that allows researchers to export data … from different
sections of the Facebook networking service” (p. 346). By inputting the unique page ID for the
four Canadian Facebook malicious enclaves into Netvizz, this function allows researchers to
“analyze networks of pages connected through the likes between them” (Netvizz, n.d., n.p.).
Using Netvizz, I extract the unique page IDs\(^{20}\) from Facebook belonging to the four right-wing
extremist “Facebook groups”\(^{21}\) I study. I input each unique ID separately into Netvizz for the
four Facebook digital enclaves. After receiving the page ID and the prompt to create a social
network analysis between the page and those regularly interacted with through the “page like”
function, Netvizz generates the graph (Netvizz, n.d., n.p.). This means that likes between the
pages create a connection node, showing what pages (run by their administrators) are being
endorsed or engaged with based on the “likes” and “shares” of content between the central node
and the network. This allows for the data between digital enclaves that regularly interact to
generate and establish intricate social network graphs. To create a more precise graph than
Netvizz can provide, I export the data from Netvizz to Gephi, which is a “visualization and
exploration software for all kinds of graphs and networks” (“Gephi homepage,” n.d., n.p.,).
Gephi allows me to generate social network graphs to organize and edit nodes’ size and shape to
make more accessible visuals.

\(^{20}\) The following contains the individual URLS and the source code of the four right-wing extremist pages:

\(^{21}\) By “groups” I am referencing the specific moniker that Facebook has given these pages. For my purposes, the
“groups” in question are defined as digital/malicious enclaves for the way they behave and the clear demarcation
between the specified enclaves and “others” unlike them.
4.1.3. Facebook Posts and Frame Analysis

The form of communication that predominates on Facebook is “posts” (Dean, 2010). As Dean (2010) argues, posts are communicative practices encouraged to demonstrate one’s presence and ability to mark their contributions in whatever format one wishes. Posts primarily adhere to the platform’s affective climate, and while facts may be conveyed, they rarely supersede the affective nature of the post itself (Dean, 2010). While it is simple to argue that this is the case, there needs to be some methodology to unpack and examine the posts shared on Facebook group pages and assess the content. Both Pan and Kosicki (1993) and Entman (1993) provide a guideline for how framing analysis can be a systematic study that pays close attention to political language and judgements. Since I have established that the online content can be affective in sections 3.1.2 and 3.1.3, the collected posts are sorted and studied individually. Although I cannot meaningfully assume what a post from 6 months of data collection looks like, I set up parameters to help identify the types of posts found within my data and pinpoint what they are interested in promoting.

I argue that all forms of debate and discussion across social media (classified as political or something else) can be assessed through framing analysis. As Reese argues:

I still think of frames as structures that draw boundaries, set up categories, define some ideas as out and others in, and generally operate to snag related ideas in their net in an active process. For me, that captures the way meaning can be embedded across stories, media, and time. (2007, p. 150)

Framing is a way to comprehend the purpose of a particular communication while setting up classifications to comprehend and thus identify the broader picture of the data that frames are being created to interpret.

To perform frame analysis effectively, I use a standard coding procedure using NVivo (2018). By establishing codes, “[t]he co-occurrence of particular words, or the incidence of
particular phrases characteristic of particular writing genres, could be reported objectively” (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008, pp. 233-234). Having no codes before engaging with the data, I utilized an inductive “grounded approach” to code the data generated from the four Facebook malicious enclaves (Charmaz, 2014; Dey, 2007; Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011). Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2011) write, “Grounded theory is…an approach to qualitative research that may embrace the rigour of ‘science’ and procedure and the ‘creative’ elements of emergent discovery” (p. 207). Further, “Grounded theory offers an implicitly inductive approach to data analysis, whereby codes, concepts and theory are derived from the data” (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011, p. 209). Elaborating on code production (see Appendix 1 for a list of codes), I created grounded codes/categories using an inductive approach. The logic for identifying inductive codes is as follows:

[i]dentifying inductive codes essentially involves ‘seeing’ the issues raised by participants themselves…. Active reading therefore requires several careful readings of the data, perhaps focusing on different tasks each time to gain a detailed understanding of the data….The validity of an initial code may be checked by identifying whether it is repeated across different interviews in the study, or whether it is highlighted by participants themselves as an important issue. (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011, p. 220)

Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2011) argue that inductive coding allows data to “speak for itself” and is not directed by the researchers’ preconceived notions of what they expect to find.

Following the inductive approach, as summarized by Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2011), requires a large sample to cover the diverse forms of posts by the four malicious Facebook enclaves I am studying.

The data that I code is the individual posts located on the four Facebook pages. To collect this data from Facebook, I used Netlytic\textsuperscript{22} to gather publicly available data from each RWE

\textsuperscript{22} Netlytic is “a cloud-based text and social networks analyzer that can automatically summarize and discover communication networks from publicly available social media posts from Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook (public pages). It also supports the analyses of your own datasets” (Netlytic, n.d., n.p.). Every public Facebook group page
malicious enclave, and this allowed for a digital record of posts to be compiled and used for
analysis. Relying on textual data and having no interaction with the participants, meaningful
codes were established by interacting with the entire datasets combined with the six news event
analyses (elaborated upon in the coming paragraphs) to introduce myself to the data.

While I wanted to study the four RWE malicious enclaves for at least a year, Facebook,
while trying to prevent another data breach like Cambridge Analytica, blocked access to their
Application Programming Interface (API) from apps such as Netlytic and Netvizz on December
11, 2018, with increasingly limited access in the final quarter of 2018 (Constine, 2018;
O’Donnell, 2019). As a result, researchers interested in studying and halting the proliferation of
hateful and violent content on Facebook were severely limited in their ability to identify and
understand such content openly operating on the platform. Therefore, my window of data
collection was limited. For each malicious enclave, I collected the following number of posts
from Netlytic: Act for Canada (2,929 posts), the Canadian Defence League (1,492 posts), Pegida
Canada (14,734 posts), and lastly, the Three Percenters Canada (3,047 posts). These numbers do
not represent the total posts being coded for, as I only examine the posts in the reaction analysis
from the date range of March 8, 2019, to March 23, 2019, and the two days corresponding to the
six news events analyses dated February 8, 2019, to June 29, 2019.

My inquiry is based on determining what “news events” are considered “post-worthy” by
the four RWE malicious enclaves by measuring the frequency and type of contribution for each
timeframe I selected. As part of my analysis, I began combing through thousands of posts. What
I discovered were regular allusions to news stories that triggered conversations. Instead of

(like the four I’m studying) have a unique page ID. What Netlytic does is it uses these unique page ID’s to compile
messages posted by members to these pages every 15 minutes for whatever date duration the user of Netlytic pleases
(Netlytic, n.d.).
picking entirely random dates to assess data, I began a search on Google Trends for “news events,” to familiarize myself with stories during the data-collection timeline and as a hypothesis selected news events which I believed would trigger an uptick in posts based on the four RWE malicious enclaves’ proclivities (see Appendix 2 for a list of events considered and explanation for their exclusion). The choice of news events was driven dually by curiosity and necessity. I wanted to unpack how many topics self-proclaimed to be important for these RWE malicious enclaves (as evident in Chapter 5 when I examine the four RWE malicious enclaves’ “about us” sections) such as admiration for conservative politicians, disdain for leftist politicians, and disdain for immigration. Further, I wanted to unpack how the groups and individuals the RWE malicious enclaves define as perpetrators of terrorism is discussed and assess how race, religion, country of origin, and other identity markers impact posting patterns and reactions. My thinking process behind focusing on acts of terrorism (as evident in the “about us” sections) is because it is almost the sole focus of the RWE malicious enclave concerns. This interest is not inspired by any wholesale effort detected within the data examined to mobilize a terrorist campaign by the RWE malicious enclaves themselves, but to understand how the supposed threat of terrorism from racialized people and various religious people have been used by the RWE malicious enclaves to justify their views and to defend against accusations of racism or bigotry.

Initially, I was solely interested in examining how terrorist attacks, both global and domestic, were discussed within the malicious enclaves. However, there were no terrorist attacks in Canada when I captured data from February 2019 to August 2019. I examined prominent Canadian news events through this period and found multiple adjacent events and concerns that met their self-proclaimed interests. Rather than focus solely on terrorist attacks as they happened and were being reported on, I expanded my search briefly and decided to add another three news
events dealing with adjacent interests. While the news events I have chosen were not guaranteed to elicit any reactions, for my purposes, lack of conversation, or divergent interests, are just as informative as selectively combing the data to locate specific instances when conversations emerge. Therefore, I determine what generates conversations within the malicious enclaves that I study by unpacking what they respond to and how they respond to news events and each other. As evident in chapters 6 and 7, examining news events is highly laborious and requires considerable time to unpack; thus, I settled on six news events to keep my analysis manageable. To assess the initial reactions to the following news events, I examine the date of the event and the day following it — two days per news event.\textsuperscript{23} The news events\textsuperscript{24} were split into terrorist attacks (which looked at terrorist attacks outside of Canada) and domestic news (which looked at domestic Canadian political news events and the sentencing of Alexandre Bissonnette). The news events are numbered according to chronological dates. News events I analyzed are: 1) Alexander Bissonnette Sentencing\textsuperscript{25} (February 8, 2019), 2) Christchurch Mosque attack in New Zealand (March 15, 2019), 3) the Sri Lankan Easter attack (April 21, 2019), 4) Poway Synagogue attack in San Diego, USA (April 27, 2019), 5) Conservative politician Jason Kenney becoming premier of Alberta (April 30, 2019), and 6) Conservative politician Doug Ford assuming office as premier of Ontario (June 29, 2019).

Given the obsession of these RWE malicious enclaves with terrorism, I chose three news events covering three separate terrorist offences (the Christchurch Mosque attack in New Zealand, the Sri Lankan Easter attack, and the Poway Synagogue attack). From these three terrorist attacks, I wanted to capture the immediate snapshots of reactions enclave members had and for feasibility as there are potentially hundreds of posts to be manually examined during what appears to be a short data inclusion parameter.

\textsuperscript{23} This time frame was designed to capture the immediate snapshots of reactions enclave members had and for feasibility as there are potentially hundreds of posts to be manually examined during what appears to be a short data inclusion parameter.

\textsuperscript{24} Please see Appendix 2 for a list of other events considered and a conversation regarding the lack of coverage of racialized politicians like Jagmeet Singh, Annamie Paul, and right-wing politicians like Maxime Bernier.

\textsuperscript{25} Bissonnette was responsible for one of the most horrific attacks in Canadian history and he targeted the Muslim population of Québec City. As will be discussed, Muslims are hated by the enclaves studied and measuring their immediate reaction to such a violent event may reveal how they assess violent attacks.
Zealand, the Sri Lankan Easter attack, and the Poway Synagogue attack). First, all three news events garnered significant media attention in international and domestic Canadian news outlets. Second, each attack was directed towards a different religious group, making it possible to document the potential disparity in content generated by members of these digital enclaves following attacks aimed at different religions. Third, due to the widespread preoccupation with terrorism amongst the four selected RWE malicious enclaves, it stands to reason that these international news events would generate conversation. Fourth, there were no high-profile attacks within Canada during my collection period, meaning commentary on terrorist attacks had to be international cases.

These three domestic Canadian news events (Alexandre Bissonnette, Jason Kenney, and Doug Ford) were picked for the attention they garnered across Canada. Specifically, the perceived importance they would have for the RWE malicious enclaves that vociferously champion conservativism in their “about us” statements (see Chapter 5), and their open disparagement of leftist and Liberal Party of Canada politicians. News Event 4 was chosen to see how a white domestic Canadian being sentenced for murdering Muslims in Quebec would be addressed, given the four RWE enclaves’ hatred towards Muslims. Lastly, News Events 5 and 6 cover the elections of Alberta’s Premier Jason Kenney and Ontario’s Premier Doug Ford assuming office. The posters across the datasets mentioned both Jason Kenney and Doug Ford as politicians against Muslims and Al-Quds day. They would be restorers of conservativism across Canada — even going as far as labelling Kenney and Ford’s conservative politics as a “Reconquista” for Canada (Csillag, 2018). The staunch conservative support from these four RWE malicious enclaves and the religious and conservative fervour attached to these two

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26 “The founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, created the al-Quds Day in 1979 as a worldwide demonstration to protest Israel’s existence.” (Weinthal, 2018, para. 3).
premiers made these political victories an interesting site of inquiry. I then randomly assigned one of the four selected RWE malicious enclaves to three of the news events. Act for Canada is used to examine News Events 1, 5, 3; Canada Defence League is used to examine News Events 4, 2, 6; Pegida Canada is used to examine News Events 2, 6, 4; and Three Percenters Canada are used to examine news events 3, 1, 5. This division allows for each news event to be assessed using two of four RWE malicious enclaves and for each RWE malicious enclave to be utilized to examine three randomly assigned news events.

Initially, I was only interested in examining three news events to grasp how, if at all, these RWE malicious enclaves were responding to and comprehending mainstream news events that discussed stories they self-professed (see Chapter 5) interest in, such as terrorism-related stories. However, rather than focus solely on stories dealing with Muslim terrorist attacks, or stories that legislated discrimination against Muslims (e.g., Bill 21 in Quebec), which would be a more obvious form of inspiration for posting, given the four RWE enclaves unabashed Islamophobia, I sought a broader array of terrorist attacks from multiple faiths including, the sentencing of a far-right Canadian attacker, Alexandre Bissonnette, and two widely championed Canadian conservative politicians’ victories. I am interested in unpacking how news events publicized widely and narrowly, depending on the source, can be used as fodder for hateful posting that generates further posting.

Although I will elaborate on how a Facebook page becomes a digital enclave in Chapter 5 (section 5.1.5.), here I will summarize what a malicious enclave entails to situate my methodological choices. In brief, the process resembles a mirroring of the connections and relationships formed, as listed by Campbell and Golan (2011) and Graham (2014), whereby a group wishes to express themselves in relative privacy. However, unlike these digital enclaves
that seek spaces for their faith or an opportunity to discuss social injustice, the primary purpose behind a malicious enclave is to express, sustain, and fuel hatred through a guise mimicking faith or injustice as the driver of their interactions. The ultimate objective is to vilify, ridicule, and degrade populations of people deemed to be real victimizers worthy of derision. The public-facing persona may be equitable and charitable, but what the individual adherents of the digital platform, website, Facebook group page, etc., (that has turned into a malicious enclave) return for is the comfortability of expressing hateful views while presenting themselves as the “real victims” by identifying news events and stories that add weight to their claims. Accompanying this comfortability and sense of victimhood are the assurances that they can defend their views to potential critics because of the pre-emptive shield constructed to persuade outsiders and posters themselves that their views are potentially hurtful but ultimately justified. This comfortability and entrenched justification, backed by a sense of victimhood, serves a twofold purpose. First, it allows individual posters to showcase their real identities because they are not fringe voices, as the views they hold are backed by others within the malicious enclave. Second, the cost of being associated or becoming associated with the malicious enclave is reduced because individual adherents can point to the “about us” sections and label the most extreme voices in their midst as not representative of the more expansive enclave. It is the process by which a façade of legitimacy, a sense of victimhood, and hatred coalesce to navigate the fine line between being an open hate group and an enclave that merely presents uncomfortable political opinions while hoping to maintain a connection to mainstream politics that we identify when a chatroom, website, or social media space has become a malicious enclave.

To demonstrate how RWE malicious enclaves behave in practice, I ask the following: how does talking back to news events and stories sustain and generate further discussion
amongst members of RWE malicious enclaves? What does this process look like in real-time? For instance, if news event 2 – the Christchurch Mosque attacks – is an accurate assumption as to what would generate a response, how do the four RWE enclaves interpret this event, and how are posts on Facebook being framed to interpret this attack? If this assumption is wrong, and the Christchurch Mosque attack is not discussed, what other news events took precedence over this story when they self-proclaim (as seen in Chapter 5) to be highly attuned to national security threats with a specific emphasis on terrorism? All these news events were examined by identifying broad frames within the posts taken from Facebook. Initially, the attempt is to categorize the posts in a meaningful way, often done with framing analysis to show the multitude of responses like Holton, Lee, and Coleman (2014) did in their analysis of comments on mainstream media publications. However, due to the enclave dynamics at work, I can further unpack frames more concisely to understand how these specific RWE malicious enclaves frame their reactions to news events and further address what news events they deem worthy of responding to in the first place. Therefore, Chapters 6 and 7 showcase the framing of Facebook posts that appeared on the four specific RWE malicious enclaves.

Lastly, I conduct a frame shift analysis using all four RWE malicious enclaves on the Christchurch attack (March 15, 2019). This attack was chosen for the in-depth study due to the widespread international attention it received, the particularly horrific manner of attack, and the viral video depicting the live-streamed attack to the world, leaving no room for doubt that Muslims, which all four RWE malicious enclaves despise, were the victims of a terrorist attack. I assess how these four RWE malicious enclaves react to the religion they hate most, singularly targeted for their faith. The frame shift analysis provides a more comprehensive overview of how malicious enclaves operate in response to a news event that has caught their attention. Whereas
the news event analysis captures immediacy, we are not provided with insight into what types of posts appeared prior. Therefore, to provide insight into how the four RWE malicious enclaves react in real-time to a news event and measure their coordinated deliberative shift in frames, the dates for data inclusion range from March 8, 2019, to March 23, 2019. This division gives a sense of Facebook posts pre-attack (8th-14th) and post-attack (15th-23rd) and helps determine how the utilized frames change within these RWE malicious enclaves following an attack against Muslims. I provide charts in Chapter 7 detailing the percentage difference between posting codes before and after the Christchurch Mosque attack. Using Excel’s standard function, I calculate the percentage difference between pre-attack and post-attack datasets.

Following each frame, analyses demonstrate how the posters responded to the content circulating on the RWE malicious enclaves and the type of affective reaction they may or may not be displaying. This format is standard for all frame analyses in this dissertation.

4.2. Ethical Framework Guiding my Dissertation

One of the challenges that academics dealing with social media data have grappled with is the unprecedented access to personal data (Beninger, 2016; Williams, Burnap, & Sloan, 2017). Academics can collect, using a variety of software, thousands of posts, tweets, comments, location information, and personal identification (e.g., pictures, family, and friendships) within a few seconds. Such information is gathered from public platforms that academics can use at their discretion while requiring far less ethical scrutiny from universities than an alternative method of obtaining data (Beninger, 2016; Williams, Burnap, & Sloan, 2017). Seeing the ethical issues that may arise by granting access to such sensitive and personal information has resulted in numerous considerations as to when academics should go beyond what is required to satisfy a university ethics board and what should be considered good practice (Beninger, 2016; Williams, Burnap, &
Sloan, 2017). For instance, the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) and their 2020 publication, *Internet Research: Ethical Guidelines 3.0*, provides a framework they recommend academics follow to safeguard individuals that have shared personal information on social media platforms and may not understand the data collection they have consented to through “terms and services” by joining these platforms (Beninger, 2016; Franzke, Bechmann, Zimmer, Ess, and AoIR, 2020; Robinson, 2022; Williams, Burnap, & Sloan, 2017). Even though informed consent is not technically required for academics using data from public domains such as social media platforms, the AoIR still recommends seeking informed consent in most circumstances (Franzke, Bechmann, Zimmer, Ess, and AoIR, 2020). Therefore, academics should provide individuals online with the same protections as other research subjects (Franzke, Bechmann, Zimmer, Ess, and AoIR, 2020). Further, Williams, Burnap, and Sloan (2017) stress that using data collection tools without taking privacy and informed consent seriously may harm individuals being quoted. Affordances that corporations and advertising companies take advantage of with unprecedented access to personal data should not be replicated by academics (Beninger, 2016; Williams, Burnap, & Sloan, 2017).

However, the AoIR does provide caveats when informed consent may not be possible or safe to obtain. While acknowledging harms that can come to research subjects, the AoIR also acknowledges the harms researchers may experience from subjects depending on their area of research. Specifically, the AoIR warns researchers of the backlash they may receive from contacting subjects when researching politically charged phenomena (Franzke, Bechmann, Zimmer, Ess, and AoIR, 2020). “Phenomena such as ‘Gamergate’ and similar events highlight comparatively new risks and levels of risk posed to researchers whose work – and/or simply their public identity (e.g., ethnicity, minority identity, sexual identity, political activism, etc.) triggers
[a] strong ideological reaction…” (Franzke, Bechmann, Zimmer, Ess, and AoIR, 2020, p. 11). The AoIR discusses how certain demographics of researchers, due to their race, gender, politics, and sexual identity, are susceptible to violence and harassment from bigots and opponents alike for simply studying a subject. Researchers interested in crime, terrorism, and other forms of deviance may be targeted by the group they are studying (Franzke, Bechmann, Zimmer, Ess, and AoIR, 2020). Drawing on examples of when researchers are at greater risk, the AoIR writes, “[s]imilarly, research on violent online and offline political extremists…risks direct threats and retaliation should researchers’ identities become known” (Franzke, Bechmann, Zimmer, Ess, and AoIR, 2020, p. 11). The point is that there are numerous instances where seeking informed consent from certain subjects would be unsafe. Due to the nature of my dissertation, it would be unsafe for me to contact any individuals within these four Facebook malicious enclaves to receive consent for their post(s).

Regarding my dissertation, Carleton University’s Ethics Board determined on October 24, 2019, that I do not require a formal ethics review because all the information utilized is public, and there could be no reasonable expectation of privacy. However, despite not requiring a formal ethics review, I followed the ethical guidelines for internet researchers set out by the Association of Internet Researchers (Franzke, Bechmann, Zimmer, Ess, & AoIR, 2020), Beninger (2016), and Williams, Burnap, and Sloan (2017). When examining Facebook posts, I cite them only by providing the date and the RWE malicious enclave the individual was posting on because I never collected personal identifiers such as names. This decision was not made lightly, but it serves multiple purposes. First, I protect the posters and myself from any retaliation. Second, I allow the reader to appreciate the vastness of these issues without getting tied up with the individual behind the post. For the true impact of the harm promoted and created
by malicious enclaves, it is necessary to move beyond the identity of the individual posters and appreciate the hate-fueled space they have established.

While most of the content pulled from the Facebook pages is highly offensive, to illustrate my points, I have tried my best not to highlight posts that are significantly degrading to targeted groups and only rely on those that allow the broader picture to be revealed. For instance, racist and discriminatory rhetoric is used constantly, and I cannot avoid including such source material. However, there are, unfortunately, degrees to racist material, and when quoting, or highlighting such material becomes necessary, I have attempted to choose the least offensive examples where possible. However, when posts deliberately try to defame religious figures, I have chosen not to include these to respect the targeted faiths.

4.3. Chapter Conclusion

My theoretical focus is on RWE malicious enclaves, affective engagement with social media, how hatred is established and justified, and how frames are drawn to curate a specific form of communication. Specifically, I track how individuals within Facebook group pages (which I identify as digital/malicious enclaves) respond to news events. Following Campbell and Golan (2011) and Graham (2014), I detail how these Facebook group pages resemble digital enclaves. However, unlike Campbell and Golan (2011) and Graham (2014), I argue they resemble more closely the findings of Lim (2017), as these digital enclaves are not interested in countering the dominant public or prejudice and instead seek to promote harm, often on behalf of the majority towards racialized and minority citizens in a malicious manner. I draw attention to the importance of compounding widespread posts with RWE malicious enclaves that “double down” on the hateful rhetoric to demonstrate the appropriateness of such views. This chapter demonstrates the importance of utilizing social network analysis and qualitative methods (such
as frame analysis) to uncover Canadian right-wing extremist malicious enclaves. Next, I begin the first of three analysis chapters, starting with Chapter 5, which examines social networks; Chapter 6 examines six news event analyses; Chapter 7 is a frame shift analysis.
Chapter 5: Social Network Analysis and Four RWE Malicious Enclaves

This chapter will ask the following questions: how can we identify malicious enclaves as a distinct manifestation? How do affect and intimacy factor into the formation and substantiation of RWE malicious enclaves? How do foreign-established RWE malicious enclaves become adopted by Canadians? What are we to make of the distinctiveness of the social network graphs? In this chapter, I attempt to answer these questions and examine the background of the four RWE malicious enclaves being studied by providing details about the leaders, the origins of the original RWE malicious enclave and the Canadian offshoots, and what messages were used to galvanize and sustain support from members. The second half of the chapter will provide social network analyses of the Canadian RWE malicious enclaves and discuss what can be discerned from such information. The second half is highly influenced by both Campbell and Golan (2011) and Graham (2014), all of whom demonstrated vast digital networks that helped feed information for deliberation within the respective digital enclaves they studied. The chapter concludes by describing how I interpret and identify these RWE malicious enclaves based on their social networks, and this will inform the subsequent analysis chapters.

5.1. In their Own Words: the Four RWE Malicious Enclaves studied

To begin my analysis, I introduce the four RWE malicious enclaves being studied and provide background on each. Then, I engage with material that groups have posted about themselves, drawing specific attention to how these RWE malicious enclaves describe themselves, their objectives, rationales for why they feel the way they do, and how they plan (if at all) to accomplish their desired political objectives. Answers to these questions are found by examining their websites and the various “about us” content they have published and made available on Facebook. The background information will be presented in the following manner:
first, I discuss the specific RWE malicious enclave’s origin, the key leaders, when and where the
groups were founded, membership numbers, and what they promote(d). Second, I discuss the
Canadian variant of the RWE malicious enclaves and analyze publicly available information
about their objectives and opinions. I intend to provide a greater sense of how they view
themselves, situate their purposes, and how this may help explain the type of content that they
generate. Finally, locating a well-curated public façade is the initial step to locating a malicious
enclave. Numerous Facebook pages promote hateful ideas and rhetoric, as examined in Chapters
6 and 7. However, the malicious enclave’s members attempt to portray themselves as legitimate,
politically minded individuals. This deception and public-facing persona are the initial stages of
uncovering a malicious enclave. In the following paragraphs, it will become apparent that this
public-facing persona attempts to legitimatize the hateful views that will be presented and
encouraged.

5.1.1. Act for America and Act for Canada

Brigitte Gabriel created Act for America in 2007 (SPLC, n.d.). Gabriel has a long history
of what she would refer to as “anti-radical Muslim” / “creeping shariah law” activism
(ActforAmerica, 2019a, n.p.). Gabriel has authored three books on the “threat” of Islam: Because
They Hate: A Survivor of Islamic Terror Warns America (2006); They Must Be Stopped: Why We
Must Defeat Radical Islam and How We Can Do It (2010); and Rise: In Defense of Judeo-
Christian Values and Freedom (2018). Gabriel’s Act for America claims to be “the nation’s
premier national security grassroots organization” (ActforAmerica, 2019a, n.p.). Act for
America’s website boasts of having more than one million members and generating “2.3 million
impressions per day on social media” (ActforAmerica, 2019d, n.p.). Act for America is so
profusive with activism that they claim to maintain close ties with former President Donald
Trump and (supposedly) contributed to 102 bills being passed in the US (ActforAmerica, 2019d). Act for America’s members view themselves (as indicated in their “About Us” section on their website) as standing “for the protection of the United States of America, and the Western values upon which our nation was built” (ActforAmerica, 2019d, n.p.). Act for America articulate its main concerns:

Terrorism derived from radical Islamic ideology has exploded across the Western world, and unfortunately, is now better equipped to carry out deadly terrorist attacks against the West than ever before. From the terrorist state of Iran pursuing nuclear destruction capabilities, to the Islamic State, to Hezbollah, to Hamas, to terrorist front groups such as the Council of American Islamic Relations, Islamic terrorism remains a worldwide pandemic. (ActforAmerica, 2019b, n.p.)

Act for America further writes:

Through our advocacy and activism, we will continue to address the threat presented by those who seek to destroy our Western way of life through advocating violence or radical religious discrimination through hate groups, such as those represented by movements like radical Islam. (ActforAmerica, 2019c, n.p.)

Despite arguing that there is an “imminent threat” posed by “radical Islam” and “unfettered refugees,” Act for America claims to be against discrimination and violence. Under the heading “Non-Discrimination and Anti-Violence Policy” on their website, they write, “[a]nyone who traffics in prejudice, or advocates violence in any way towards anyone does not speak on behalf of ACT for America….we will terminate any relationship with such person, group or entity, and disavow them” (ActforAmerica, 2019c, n.p.). They further write, “ACT for America is not responsible for statements by any volunteer, chapter leader, employee or member who advocates a position contrary to our Official Non-Discrimination and Anti-Violence Policy” (ActforAmerica, 2019c, n.p.). The way Act for America positions itself, based on a close reading of their main website, is a pro-Western cultural patriot group, defenders of America, fighters for their nation’s “survival” while (in their view being non-discriminatory) protecting everything
they love from the “imminent” threat posed by “radical Muslims” and refugees (ActforAmerica, 2019c, n.p.; ActforAmerica, 2019e, n.p.).

The Canadian variant, “Act for Canada,” was created in 2009 by Valeria Price, who argues that the group’s establishment was to “create a forum for citizens concerned about the triumphalist brand of Islam that seeks to erode our cherished western principles of free speech and equality...” (Act!ForCanada, 2019a, n.p.). While the Canadian variant is not nearly as popular as the American version, they are motivated by the same concerns. Key concerns for Act for Canada, as articulated by Price, include: not being able to criticize Islam, Motion M-103, Sharia Law, FGM (female genital mutilation), honour killings, child marriages, and Halal food (Act!ForCanada, 2019a). Directly beneath this list of concerns under the label of “Disclaimer,” Act for Canada writes:

Muslims are people who follow Islam. It is the doctrine of Islam, and those Muslims who follow practices prescribed in the Quran, the Hadiths, and the Sira that is a danger to Canada. These religious practices include strict adherence to Sharia law which permits female genital mutilation, allowing husbands to beat their wives, child marriage, “honor killings” and almost no human rights for women and children; all of which are antithetical to our way of life. In Islamic countries Sharia law is included in the constitution and enforced by the government. The majority of Muslims in Canada do not follow these practices (we hope) as they do in Islamic countries. Many are here to escape Sharia. It is our job to understand the differences and educate all citizens in a winsome, peaceful, and loving manner. We are a nation that welcomes all people who are willing to embrace our laws and assimilate into our society. (Act!ForCanada, 2019b, n.p.“Disclaimer”)

The strategy Act for Canada advocates, as articulated through the websites “Action” button (accessed through a sub-link titled, “How do we stop Islam?”), is through a list of 7 key points:
1) “Stop believing what Muslims tell us about Islam,” 2) “Reject the unwarranted accusations of “Islamophobia!”; 3) “Close or block all Jihadist websites, blogs, video, photo and social media accounts,” 4) “Stop the army of young Muslim men flooding into the West,” 5) “Block Muslim
imams’ access to our public schools, college campuses, armed forces and prisons” 6) “Outlaw the seditious Sharia law and prosecute for sedition all groups that promote it,” 7) “Require reciprocity of religious freedom from Islamic governments” (Act!ForCanada, 2019c, n.p.). The website asks members to engage in “Monitoring Radical Islamic Activity” at “Regional City and Town Halls,” “District School Boards,” and “Local Mosques” and provides surveillance tips for detecting “suspicious” or “radicalized Muslims” (Act!ForCanada, 2019d, n.p.). Portraying themselves as defenders of “the West,” what is being advocated is a public-led surveillance campaign in all places where Muslims congregate.

The claims and content of Act for America and Act for Canada should not be taken lightly or viewed as on the fringe. The Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League argue that Act for America is “undoubtedly…the largest anti-Muslim group in America” (SPLC, “ActforAmerica,” n.d., n.p.; ADL “ACT for America,” n.d.). Other commentators, such as Beinart (2017, n.p.), have referred to Brigitte Gabriel as “America’s Most Prominent Anti-Muslim Activist” and even note how Gabriel has visited the White House at the invitation of Donald Trump. While there has been no academic or media discussion of Act for Canada, plenty of journalist reports regarding Act for America allow researchers to understand why an offshoot such as Act for Canada and its adherents would be inspired to emulate their “activism.”

5.1.2. English Defence League and the Canadian Defence League

The English Defence League (EDL) was formed in 2009 and popularized by leader Tommy Robinson. The EDL argue on their website that the group was established by the “English working class… [to halt] global Islamification” (English Defence League, 2016a, n.p.). The most recognizable leader of the group, Robinson, has a history of arrests for assault, threatening behaviour, mortgage fraud, and contempt of court (Busby, 2019). Most of
Robinson’s charges stem from his role in the EDL (Busby, 2019). Aside from being the EDL’s former leader, Robinson has published two books discussing his attempts to halt “radical Islam” and the adversity he has faced from the UK government in their attempt to protect what Robinson perceives as radical Muslims. His two books documenting his efforts are *Tommy Robinson: Enemy of the State* (2015) and a co-authored book titled *Mohammed’s Koran: Why Muslims Kill For Islam* (McLaughlin & Robinson, 2017). According to Bartlett and Littler (2011), the early years of the EDL saw “the total size of the active membership to be at least 25,000–35,000 people” (p. 4). Busher (2018) writes that “Facebook followers” surpassed “100,000 at several points” (p. 326). Despite losing “momentum in 2011,” the group remained prominent until 2013 when Robinson left, and other concerns, such as Brexit and new movements in the UK, arose (Busher, 2018, p. 327). Despite the EDL and its various offshoots being responsible for bigoted rhetoric, Facebook only disabled the EDL’s main page on April 18, 2019 (English Defence League, 2016b, n.p.). However, many of its Facebook offshoots remain intact as of April 2022.

While Facebook has removed the EDL’s main page, the EDL actively maintained an independent website, which was no longer accessible in late 2020 (the website is archived), that offers a discussion space for members and active links on how individuals can contribute to the EDL. Further, the EDL has posted on their website what they hope their efforts will accomplish with their six-point mission statement. EDL’s mission statements are:

1) “We have risen from the English working class to act, lead and inspire in the struggle against global Islamification” (English Defence League, 2016a, n.p.).
2) “The English Defence League stands for human rights” (which includes “free speech,” “protection of English citizens first,” “protection for British Muslims to speak freely about problems deriving from Islam,” and “[n]on-violence”), (English Defence League, 2016a, n.p.).
3) “The English Defence League stands for democracy and the rule of law,” which includes opposition to “distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims (kuffar),” “[e]ffective action...against terrorism in the UK’)” (English Defence League, 2016a, n.p.).

4) “The English Defence League educates the British public about Islam” (which includes, rejection of “politically correct depictions of Islam in Britain,” and calls for an “open debate about Islam in British life,” and “a balanced depiction of Islam as a religion and ideology”) (English Defence League, 2016a, n.p.).

5) “The English Defence League respects English tradition” (which includes, being “proud of English culture”, and expectation of “migrants to the UK to live in harmony with English culture”, “We refuse to tolerate the intolerant”, and “We support our armed forces”) (English Defence League, 2016a, n.p.).

6) “The English Defence League is international in outlook,” specifying that, “[t]he time for tolerating intolerance has come to an end: it is time for the civilised world to unite against a truly Global Jihad, in all its forms”) (English Defence League, 2016a, n.p.).

Further, the EDL provides a succinct summary of their objectives in their “leaflet.” In this leaflet, the EDL writes:

We’re here to defend our culture, our traditions and our children. Why? There is a tide of Islamisation rolling over our country. We’ve had enough! We want our country back! Here are 12 attacks on our culture. You will know others: Muslim rape gangs… Islamic murders… [h]ate preachers on our streets and on the internet… Jihadists returning to Britain… Muslim penetration of our schools…[d]isrespecting British servicemen and women…Sharia law…[t]reating women as second class…[u]ncontrolled mass immigration…[u]ncontrolled spread of mosques… Muslim special privileges… Islamic teachings of superiority over us ‘infidels’....” (English Defence League, 2016c, n.p.)

Finally, the EDL declares, “[w]e are a human rights organisation dedicated to saving our country from Muslim extremists and their enablers: politically correct politicians, Lefties, academics and media” (English Defence League, 2016c, n.p.). Despite arguing that their country is under duress and the need to “defend” England from “Sharia,” the EDL claims to “oppose extremism, racism and violence” (English Defence League, 2016c, n.p.).

The Canadian variant of the EDL has no identifiable leader or unique website. However, the Canadian Defence League (hereafter “CDL”) itself sprung up after Tommy Robinson and
Pamela Geller\textsuperscript{27} visited Toronto in 2011 (Bell, 2011; DiMatteo, 2017; The Sputnik, 2011). The expansion in Canada is arguably due to pressure the EDL experienced within the UK and “may explain why EDL…now set its sights on Canada” (Bell, 2011; Sputnik, 2011, n.p.). According to Bell, during this meeting, Tommy Robinson could be heard saying, “‘Canadians wake up. The Islamicization of your country is on its way’” (2011, para. 3). Despite no central Canadian website, many offshoots of the Canadian Defence Leagues appeared on social media following this visit. However, given the well-developed EDL webpage, numerous defence leagues were able to connect and find representation while boasting of their international presence. Therefore, the CDL and its members found a formal avenue to express their political views using EDL’s infrastructure. Such patterns of EDL expansion were replicated across Europe with groups such as “Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, UK, Germany and Russia” (“Hope Not Hate,” n.d., para. 1). Despite no longer being as successful as they may have been, the variants remain active, including the Canadian Defence League (“Hope Not Hate,” n.d., para. 1).

5.1.3. The Three Percenters and the Canadian Three Percenters.

The Three Percenters are a “10,000” member strong militia out of the United States (Vice Staff, 2017, para. 1). The group defines their origins in a downloadable guide as beginning in the 1700s for people to fight the British Empire:

Eventually, an idea was coined of having ‘Minutemen’ available at a moment’s notice should the ‘King’s tyranny’ show up in their town, on their streets, or at their door. These Minutemen would meet, train, prepare to defend themselves, their family, and their townships from an ever encroaching empire. It is a rough estimate that only 3% of the colonists were actively fighting in the field against British forces at any given time. (Three Percenters, 2016a, pp. 8-9)

\textsuperscript{27} Geller has been labelled by many as “the world’s top Islamophobe” (see, Bell, 2011; DiMatteo, 2017; The Sputnik, 2011).
Despite this history of the Minutemen being a militia, the current Three Percenters argue they are “NOT a militia” (Three Percenters, 2016a, p. 8, emphasis in original). However, they encourage members “to acquire the following basic skills…[such as] firearm safety…Marksmanship training…Advanced tactics/shooting…knowledge of radio operations and Comms…physical fitness/physical preparedness plan…First Aid…understanding of land navigation/GPS/Topographical maps and…a compass” (Three Percenters, 2016b, pp. 36-37).

Further, members of the Three Percenters must take the following oath:

> I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same. I swear (or affirm) to uphold the three principles of a Three Percenter: have moral strength, be physically ready, and no first use of force. (Three Percenters, 2016b, p. 9, emphasis in original)

Although they espouse the need for military skills and the need to be prepared to use defensive force, the Three Percenters are resolute that they are not a militia. A key piece of evidence they provide as to why they are not a militia is how their group’s hierarchy does not adopt military terminology for their members:

> Since we are not a militia we do not have titles such as General, Major, Captain, Executive Officer, Lieutenant, etc. However, as with any organization there are primary points of contacts…These are what we refer to as our Leaders and Officers. Officers in this construct are not the same as a military, civil service, or law enforcement type organizations. They are the people with the knowledge to guide their members in their role. (Three Percenters, 2016b, p. 15)

While being organized with a hierarchical structure, requiring members to be ready to employ violence should it be “necessary,” the Three Percenters deny being a militia and state they are “focused on creating a national network that strengthens and aids communities and individuals, and helps shape the future by preserving, protecting, and defending our country’s founding
principles, including our God-given rights to Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” (Three Percenters, 2016b, p. 7).

Prior to being designated a terrorist entity by the Canadian Government on June 25, 2021 (see Tunney, 2021), the Canadian version, “Three Percenters Canada,” is said to have had “around 3,000 members” online (Hutter, 2018, para. 10) and “about 150 to 200 active members” that met in-person to train (Lamoureux, 2017, para 14). This training lent credence to their legitimacy and separated the supposed “keyboard warriors” from the real patriots (Lamoureux, 2017). Three Percenters Canada was “created on Facebook in 2016 following Justin Trudeau’s election win” (Lamoureux, 2018, para. 7). The group’s first leader was Robert Welling, followed by Kazimir Nowlin (Lamoureux, 2018). Both leaders are reserved, and little is known about their personal lives (Lamoureux, 2018). Despite looking like a paramilitary force, the Canadian Three Percenters claimed not to be a militia (Hutter, 2018; Lamoureux, 2017, 2018). However, Three Percenters Canada required individual members to own airsoft weaponry\footnote{Airsoft is a game like paintball in that it is meant to be a sport that mimics real-life combat and only results in bruising of those hit with pellets.} and regularly engage in military-style training; they “describe the training as just a group of people who just really wanted to get good at the game of airsoft” (Lamoureux, 2018, para. 14). Although, this supposed fascination with “the game of airsoft” is arguably undermined by the Three Percenters Canada’s “fixation on Muslims” and that “a Muslim takeover of Canada is seconds away at any time…” (Lamoureux, 2018, para. 26-30). This obsession with a Muslim invasion, coupled with their airsoft training, is why “Nowlin expressed the fact that threepers may need to utilize their training sooner than later” (Lamoureux, 2018, para. 32).
The Three Percenters of Canada’s obsession with defending against a Muslim invasion made their code of ethics more dubious. According to the Three Percenters’ Alberta chapter, their Facebook page defines the need for training and proper conduct in the following way:

Members shall use their training and capabilities to protect the public at all times, both on and off duty. In case of a situation involving a violent act, members of III% will not partake in first use of force – “No First Strike”. We are not the aggressor nor antagonist. We are purely defensive and only as a last resort shall a member use appropriate force. No Targeting of Innocents shall be tolerated by our members or anyone else. A prospective member must be a patriot and possess a sense of the concept of Judeo-Christian values in an ethical (rather than theological or liturgical) sense. These values have been emphasized primarily by political conservatives. (Alberta III %, March 20, 2019, para. 8-10)

Despite claiming they are not planning offensive violence, Three Percenters Canada readily admits that “defensive force” is permissible. For this reason, Lamoureux defines the group as “a nationwide anti-Islam, far-right militia that conducts paramilitary style training and prepping in preparation [sic] for a (perceived) incoming Islamic invasion of a left-wing government take over” (2019, para. 2). Many activists asked the Canadian Federal Government to list the Canadian Three Percenters as a “terrorist organization” to halt what they perceive as violent training aimed at the Muslim community within Canada (Lamoureux, 2019). On July 25th, 2021, 5 years following the beginning of the Three Percenters Canada’s “airsoft training” to halt a potential Islamic invasion, they were listed as a terrorist entity (Tunney, 2021).

5.1.4. Pegida and Pegida Canada

_Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes_ (i.e., Pegida) was established by Lutz Bachmann in Dresden, Germany in 2014 (Popp & Wassermann, 2015). Pegida translates to English as the “Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West” (Coury, 2016; Stier et al., 2017, p. 1366). Bachmann claims to have founded the group in response to witnessing a demonstration in Dresden that advocated on behalf of the PKK and
Kurdish people in their war against Daesh (Coury, 2016; Popp & Wassermann, 2015; Stier et al., 2017). By Bachmann’s admission, he was troubled by “Islamic problems” making their way into Western countries like Germany, which motivated him to create Pegida on Facebook (Coury, 2016; Popp & Wassermann, 2015; Stier et al., 2017). This Facebook page generated a great deal of traction with various supporters such as nationalists, open racists, and hooligans (typically soccer fans that engage in violence with other groups) (Coury, 2016; Popp & Wassermann, 2015; Stier et al., 2017). The broad support for Pegida led to 100,000 online followers internationally, and the establishment of variations such as: Pegida Canada, Pegida UK, Pegida USA, and Pegida Europe, among others (Berntzen & Weisskircher, 2016, p. 558; Stier et al., 2017). Such broad international support helped Pegida mobilize “crowds of approximately 20,000” supporters at their marches within Germany (Berntzen & Weisskircher, 2016, p. 558; Stier et al., 2017).

According to Pegida’s main website, www.pegida.de29, the group has a ten-point manifesto titled the Dresden Theses (Pegida, 2017a). They are for:

1) “protection and preservation of our German identity….Stop[ing] political …[and] religious fanaticism, radicalism, Islamization, genderization and early sexualization of children” (Pegida, 2017a, n.p.).
2) “The careful handling of taxpayers’ money and the effort to relieve the burden on the citizens must be a government obligation! Wasting taxpayers’ money must become a criminal offense” (Pegida, 2017a, n.p.).
3) “Germany must create and implement an immigration law: from a demographic, economic and cultural point of view. Qualitative immigration instead of unregulated mass immigration must be guaranteed!” (Pegida, 2017a, n.p.).
4) “The…asylum crisis must be regulated! - The decision in the actual asylum procedure must be made within 3 months. This decision is binding and legal remedies have no suspensive effect. Appropriate infrastructural and personnel capacities must be created. Border controls must be reintroduced until further notice. Only persecution based on political conviction, religion or personal characteristics as well as war, sudden catastrophes should be considered as reasons for fleeing. Agreements with neighboring countries on the cost of repatriation must be made; if this is not possible, all asylum seekers at the relevant borders must be rejected or returned immediately…” (Pegida, 2017a, n.p.).

29 This website was translated from German to English using Google Translate.
“Family policies, the education system and the pension system need to be reformed and made fairer. Promoting sustainable family policies in particular must be given priority in order to stop or even reverse demographic change. The desire to have children should not be suppressed due to economic fears. Every effort must be made to bring the German education system forward again. Pensions must not go down but must go up (there must be more in your wallet)” (Pegida, 2017a, n.p.).

“Referendums must be introduced at federal level! Modeled on Switzerland to install a second pillar of democracy parallel to the party system” (Pegida, 2017a, n.p.).

“Law must be applied consistently! Regardless of political, ethnic, cultural or religious aspects of the person concerned.” (Pegida, 2017a, n.p.).

“End of job cuts at the police, public prosecutor’s office and at courts. The police need to be better adapted to the new challenges, equipped and trained” (Pegida, 2017a, n.p.).

“Friendly relations with all countries in the world! Immediate normalization of relations with the Russian Federation and the end of all warmongering. Stop all arms sales in crisis areas! Germany must stay out of all armed conflicts and should strive for neutral status” (Pegida, 2017a, n.p.).

“There should be a European Confederation! A federation of strong, sovereign nation states and father countries should emerge, amicably linked in free political and economic self-determination and committed to mutual respect and support. Regulations from Brussels are not necessary” (Pegida, 2017a, n.p.).

For his propagation of xenophobic views on immigrants and Muslims in particular, Lutz Bachmann was convicted of incitement for racist conversations online and growing a “Hitler moustache” with the added caption, “He’s Back” (Brady, 2016; Connolly, 2015). Despite Bachmann’s criminal conviction and the relationship between Pegida and groups that have used violence like “Hooligans against Salafists” (“Hogesa”), Pegida maintains that they are not racist, Islamophobic, or supportive of violence (Popp & Wassermann, 2015; Stier et al., 2017).

The Canadian version, Pegida Canada, writes that they were established on January 13, 2015 (Pegida Canada, n.d.a). The leader or creator has not publicly declared who they are. The Pegida Canada Facebook page writes that they adopted the Pegida acronym to “show solidarity” with the German movement and to express their fear of “Islamization of…western cultures.” (Pegida Canada, n.d.a, para. 2). Pegida Canada states on their website what they stand for:
PEGIDA is FOR the admission of war refugees and political refugees or those who suffer religious persecution. PEGIDA is FOR the INTEGRATION of refugees into our land and culture. PEGIDA is FOR the utilization and implementation of existing laws on asylum and deportation! PEGIDA is FOR a zero-tolerance policy against delinquent asylum seekers and migrants. PEGIDA is FOR resistance to misogyny and violent political ideology. PEGIDA is FOR preserving and protecting our Christian-Judeo based culture. (Pegida Canada, n.d.a, para. 4, emphasis in original)

Pegida Canada further lists what they are against:

PEGIDA is AGAINST arms sales to unconstitutional, illegal or terrorist organizations. PEGIDA is AGAINST allowing parallel societies in our midst, such as Sharia law, Sharia police, etc. PEGIDA is AGAINST radicalism whether religious or politically motivated! PEGIDA is AGAINST preachers of hate, no matter what religion you belong to. (Pegida Canada, n.d.a, para. 4, emphasis in original)

This list of what Pegida Canada is for and against is further elaborated in the group’s downloadable pamphlet, Our Principles. The pamphlet is mainly about the threat from Muslims to Canada and “the West,” Pegida Canada argues these concerns by drawing quotes from the Quran and Muslim religious leaders to disparage Islam. Additionally, a eight-bullet point list describing the dangers of Sharia Law being established within Canada is provided to warn readers what to expect when Sharia is implemented:

- “Criticizing or denying any part of the Quran is punishable by death.” (Pegida Canada, n.d.b, n.p, emphasis in original)
- “Criticizing or denying Muhammad is a prophet is punishable by death.”(Pegida Canada, n.d.b, n.p, emphasis in original)
- “A man can unilaterally divorce his wife but a woman needs her husband’s consent to divorce.” (Pegida Canada, n.d.b, n.p, emphasis in original)
- “A woman who has been raped cannot testify in court against her rapist(s).” (Pegida Canada, n.d.b, n.p, emphasis in original)
- “A woman cannot speak alone to a man who is not her husband or relative. Meat to be eaten must come from animals that have been sacrificed to Allah – i.e., be Halal.” (Pegida Canada, n.d.b, n.p, emphasis in original)
- “Criticizing or denying Allah, the god of Islam, is punishable by death.”
- “Theft is punishable by amputation of the hand.” (Pegida Canada, n.d.b, n.p, emphasis in original)
- “A woman’s testimony in Sharia court is worth only half of that of a man’s.” Sharia courts will punish a woman for being raped.” (Pegida Canada, n.d.b, n.p, emphasis in original)
Pegida Canada focuses on raising awareness of what they believe to be an Islamic invasion of Canada and the West. Pegida Canada believes that this invasion begins by allowing things like serving Halal foods or Islamic clothing to be openly adorned as gestures that will slowly erode Canadian and Western values.

5.1.5. Summary of Background on Four RWE Malicious Enclaves

The four RWE malicious enclaves have origin stories that begin outside Canada. Interestingly, despite having geographically specific histories like the Three Percenters, with a historical legacy of fighting off the British from an American perspective, the Three Percenters were still able to branch out and resonate with a Canadian audience that in no way shares this history (The Three Percenters, 2016a). Language barriers are also overcome when examining Pegida and Pegida Canada, demonstrating a visceral and affective connection formed by people who do not necessarily communicate with the same spoken and written language (see Ahmed, 2004, 2014; Papacharissi, 2014). Arguably, what makes these four RWE malicious enclaves’ namesakes ideal to adopt is the exclusiveness of participating in their activism and momentum. Such RWE malicious enclaves provide opportunities for various bigotries to flourish and gain traction due to a broad coalition of support. All four RWE malicious enclaves being studied isolate Islam as a threat to Western civilization and advocate various approaches to address this issue. Act for Canada seems to employ a more litigious approach to “defending” against Islam and seeks to promote activism at a lobbying level. English Defence League and Pegida have similar approaches to street-level advocacy, protests, and marches to show solidarity against their identified threats. Three Percenters actively engage in military-style training with weapons to readily engage in a “defensive” martial response to their identified threat. Also, every one of these four RWE malicious enclaves has some leadership, whether an activist like Tommy
Robinson or a Facebook group page curator that acts as a purveyor of information (Baugut & Neumann, 2019). While the curators of these Facebook pages claim to be against racism, hatred, and violence, they have designed a space that encourages racist and hateful interactions.

The four RWE malicious enclaves investigated present themselves differently depending on the platform they interact with. When examining their web pages and “About Us” sections on Facebook, there is an apparent attempt to appear as an ideologically and politically driven group worried about the fabric of their respective countries being eroded by too many cultural, religious, and ethnic changes. From a close reading of the four RWE malicious enclaves’ manifestos are shells of a political position that never moves beyond slogans, followed by a call to arms to deal with encroachment from liberals, leftists, and Muslims. The broad emphasis of the various manifestos is to articulate discriminatory viewpoints that encourage fellow members to feel equally compelled to react to the “call to arms” as a defensive measure due to encroachment from their enemies. This call is predicated on all four of these RWE malicious enclaves positioning themselves and their members as victims of a violent and discriminatory agenda imposed on them (Ahmed, 2004, 2014). This sense of victimization is the justification that allows individuals to go on the offensive with their attacks against liberals, leftists, and Muslims. The key takeaway is that, unlike any other Facebook pages that engage in hateful content, an established façade has been created to enable the controversial content because the members wish to be seen as legitimate political movements that maintain their appeal to current members and an attempt to lower the cost of becoming a member for the uninitiated. It is no longer just hateful content; it is uncomfortable truths about domestic and global political affairs. However, I cannot comment on how individuals within these groups communicate until Chapters 6 and 7, where posts are assessed.
This attempt to foment intimate connections digitally by speaking “truth” for members within the four RWE malicious enclaves is evident in their attempt to situate themselves as the exclusive few willing to stand up to injustice and act bravely in the face of such adversity. Following the theoretical approach to digital intimacy laid out by Ley & Rambukkana (2021) and Rambukkana (2015), we see that in comparison to non-monogamous relationships, fandoms, and other online communities, there is a similar attempt to foment a digitally intimate connection within the “about us” and “who we are” narratives being promulgated by the four RWE malicious enclaves. In contrast to the works of Rambukkana (2015), in particular, where he warns about the potential for digitally intimate communities to become exclusive enclaves, we see deliberate attempts to foment such enclaves through the demarcation between the enclave’s outlook, “activism,” and unwavering opposition to their enemies. The initial stage of digitally intimate exclusivity allows the malicious enclave to form.

Next, I will investigate the social networks generated by these four RWE malicious enclaves based on the content they engage with across Facebook. The objective is to understand what pages are meaningful to the four Canadian RWE malicious enclaves. Moreover, it will also demonstrate the potential disparity between them as well. What do the communication channels of these RWE malicious enclaves look like? What relationships can be revealed between the four RWE malicious enclaves and the international efforts they identify with?

5.2. Social Network Analysis: Connections and Interests

Due to the lack of literature studying such connections between RWE malicious enclaves and their interests, it is likely assumed that there is little discernable difference between them or an abundance of differences that makes nuance challenging to assess. Social network analysis is a solid approach to capturing the breadth of interests and connections. These network graphs
allow for a clear picture of the different interests between the four RWE malicious enclaves based on their interactions with content from other RWE malicious enclaves, hateful Facebook pages, individuals and other pages that provide fodder for posting on Facebook. The qualitative approach I have chosen to illuminate findings instructs that “multiple sources of evidence…[need] to converge in a triangulating fashion” (Yin, 2009, p. 18). For my insights to be as comprehensive as possible when I conduct both forms of frame analyses (both news event analysis and reaction analysis) within the following two chapters, the ability to look back at the networks and connections may prove helpful. For instance, when it comes to RWE malicious enclaves with members indicating support for violence, such connections and interests may prove helpful in explaining this phenomenon. The following social network analyses should be viewed as one of the “multiple sources of evidence” I use to illuminate my compiled data (Yin, 2009, p. 18) and demonstrate that although these malicious enclaves espouse similar worldviews, they are insulated from each other. This exclusivity is critical for establishing a malicious enclave.

5.2.1. Act for Canada’s Social Network Analysis

Figure 1, Act for Canada, is connected to multiple (25+) ACT chapters across the United States, Canada, Britain, Egypt, and Israel. However, it is difficult to determine whether someone created a Facebook group page for numerous countries to demonstrate global support or whether all these pages are home-grown. Act for Canada’s page is also connected to numerous American right-wing/conservative politicians and pundits such as Donald Trump, Ted Cruz, Sean Hannity, Rush Limbaugh, Glenn Beck, Brigette Gabriel, Pamela Geller, Michelle Malkin, and Bill O’Reilly, demonstrating a strong interest in Fox News and Fox News pundits. Act for Canada’s page is also connected to anti-Muslim and anti-refugee pages such as: “American
Women Against Socialism and Islam/Sharia Law,” “Women of the world united against Islamic/Muslim Sharia Law,” “Women Against Islam,” “Infidel Task force,” “Refugee Resettlement Watch,” “3% of Idaho,” and “An Inquiry into Islam.” Additionally, ACT for Canada’s page is connected to numerous Israel related pages. Pages such as: “Christians United for Israel,” “The Israel Project,” “Israel Now – Who’s Next?”, “The Jewish Agency for Israel,” “Israel Memes,” and “Israel Life.” Pages of two American democrat politicians, Joe Biden and Adam Schiff, are also regularly interacted with by Act for Canada’s Facebook page. Most connections have an Islamophobic and xenophobic narrative aside from the right-wing/conservative politicians/pundits and support for Israel pages. The various ACT chapters overwhelmingly disparage Islam and focus on discussing how Islam is an “invasive” religion.

Figure 1: Act for Canada Social Network Graph generated with Netvizz and Gephi
5.2.2. Canadian Defence League’s Social Network

Figure 2 shows that the Canadian Defence League is mainly connected with 24 other countries’ “defence leagues” such as Nigeria, Iraq, England, Philippines, Nordic nations, Romania, Spain, France, Ireland, Greece, Denmark, Finland, Siberia, India, Norway, Mexico, and Zion30. Aside from connections to other nations’ Defence Leagues, many right-wing/conservative politicians and pundits are linked to the CDL, such as Nigel Farage, Ezra Levant, Brian Lilley, Geert Wilders, Stephen Harper, UKIP, and the Rebel. The second most popular page connections are anti-Islam pages such as: “Islam is a cult,” “Jihad Watch,” “Stop Islamization of the world,” “Islam: What the West Needs to Know,” “North American Infidels,” and “Latin-American Alliance Against the Islamization of the West.” There are Canadian-specific pages such as “Royal Canadian Air Force,” “The Canadian Soldier,” “Canadian concealed carry Association,” and “Kingsville Municipal Heritage Advisor Committee.” There are also minor connections to concerns with Israel, such as: “we stand with Israel” and “Israel and stuff.” Given that the various Defence Leagues are devoted entirely to defending their countries from “Islam,” Muslims, and refugees, the content being interacted with is predominately anti-Muslim and xenophobic. However, a notable distinction is a deliberate engagement with patriotic Canadian and individual rights pages that seek to celebrate Canadian soldiers, promote gun rights, and “preserve” Canadian culture.

30 The Zion Defense League is a pro-Israeli Facebook page that promotes the removal of Palestinians from Israel.
5.2.3. Pegida Canada’s Social Network

**Figure 3: Pegida Canada** demonstrates multiple Canadian chapters of Pegida in British Columbia and Alberta. Nevertheless, Pegida Canada mainly connects with other Pegida pages and German/European right-wing political parties. The Pegida Facebook pages with which Pegida Canada is connected are in France, Scotland, Europe, the USA, and specific German city branches in Bayern, Hamburg, Berlin, Bautzen, and Niedersachsen. German and European politicians that Pegida Canada are connected to are: Björn Höcke, Dr. Christina Baum, Michael Sturzenberger, Heiko Hessenkemper, Jens Maier, Wesitz Bachmann, and Matteo Salvini. Political pages followed are: AfD L.O, *Ein Prozent fur Unserland, Baden Wurttemberg freiheitlich-patrotisch-truditons bewususst*, and *Kassel sagt nein zur Frühsexualisierung*. Most of the content connected with Pegida Canada are other Pegida pages. It is important to note that...
most of the news and conversations generated by Pegida Canada are anti-Islam, as Pegida’s primary initiative is to prevent Muslims from “taking over” the West. The difference here is a stronger connection to European politics and politicians than in the other examined pages.

![Pegida Canada Social Network Graph](image)

Figure 3: Pegida Canada Social Network Graph generated with Netvizz and Gephi

Specifically, the Canadian group has a solid connection to German domestic concerns. An example of this German domestic connection is *Ein Prozent fur Unserland* (which translates to “one percent for our country”), which has a solid connection to the “Identitarian\(^{31}\)” movement and argues for the need to mobilize just 1% of the German public to halt what they see as a refugee invasion that will result in non-Germans taking over their country (Wilson, 2019a,

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\(^{31}\) Although the Identitarian movement is beyond the purview of this dissertation, it has been described as a movement that believes white populations must be concerned with “the great replacement” whereby non-white races will soon take over European and North American countries if nothing is done to halt immigration (Wilson, 2019c, para. 1).
2019b, 2019c). The German-centric connections are notable and speak to the German Pegida movement’s lasting influence on shaping and speaking to Canadian Pegida members.

5.2.4. Three Percenters Canada’s Social Network

Figure 4: Three Percenters Canada demonstrates very few pages connected to the Canadian Three Percenter’s Facebook page. Three Percenters Canada differs from other groups because of their sole emphasis on firearms and anti-leftist interests. The lack of connection is deduced from the two pages connected with the Three Percenters’ main page. Also, this main page has the least connections of all the pages under analysis and demonstrates a lack of “shares” and “likes” between the page and others.\(^{32}\)

![Three Percenters Canada Social Network Graph](image)

Figure 4: Three Percenters Canada Social Network Graph generated with Netvizz and Gephi

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\(^{32}\) It is important to note that The Three Percenters Canada are still engaging with outside content. However, they have chosen to do so without “liking” or “following” other Facebook pages. This graph does not mean they are isolated. Please see section 4.1.3. to comprehend how graphs were established.
5.3. Social Network Analysis: Findings and Analysis

The social network analyses helped locate individuals, relationships, and causes of the four RWE malicious enclaves and their members. Nevertheless, the graphs demonstrate vastly different connections each RWE malicious enclave has on Facebook. The distinct relationships of each group are evident upon examining Figures 1-4. It can be determined that all these RWE malicious enclaves have virtually no overlap in the pages they communicate with. The four RWE malicious enclaves have unique social networks. Based on the four social network graphs, it is accurate to argue that these malicious enclaves have little commonality regarding their formed connections. Building off the findings of Veilleux-Lepage and Archambault (2019), it is clear now that there are multiple right-wing extremist groups “founded on a connection to European extreme-right groups, seeking to mobilize on the basis of this transitional link” (p. 24). Although Veilleux-Lepage and Archambault (2019) study the Soldiers of Odin Canadian chapters and their connection to those in Europe, we see multiple examples of transnational connections being formed not solely with European groups but American ones as well. The affordances of digital social media and the ability to easily replicate imagery, “talking points,” and communicate with large audiences across platforms like Twitter and Facebook have played a significant role in the four Canadian RWE malicious enclaves’ choices to adopt the namesake of their international allies (Robinson, 2022; Scrivens & Conway, 2019; Scrivens & Amarasingham, 2020; Veilleux-Lepage & Archambault, 2019; Weimann, 2015). The multitude of connections demonstrates that malicious enclaves can find sources of material that likely fit their worldview and feed their collective outlook.

However, considerable divergent interests also showcase a set of connections for each group. This interest divergence means that the groups and members may interact with these four pages differently. Given that Act for Canada is more interested in Israeli affairs, it tends to
reason that there will be more conversations about Israel. This assumption also applies to the Canadian Defence League and the many interactions with pages that look to promote Canadian patriotism and preserve Canadian culture. Likewise, Pegida Canada has numerous interactions with German politics and politicians, suggesting there is a likelihood that German interests would be considered paramount. Finally, Canada’s Three Percenters are singularly interested in firearms and anti-left-wing pages. It would be reasonable to argue that these RWE malicious enclaves’ concerns are entirely different as they have demonstrable differences in page connections. Important to note that these RWE malicious enclaves are still able to and likely are accessing other pages, and this method solely measures the “likes” of other pages (see section 4.1.3).

When examining the infrastructure and networks of these four RWE malicious enclaves, we are presented with a geographically dispersed yet protected boundary. Rather than these being silos or echo chambers, none of the four RWE malicious enclaves being studied are insular. They all have different connections, demonstrating that these RWE malicious enclaves and the pages they connect with are part of a demarcated boundary that we see in other digital enclaves (Hall, 1991; Graham, 2014; Campbell & Golan, 2011). I argue that the emphasis of many online spaces (regardless of their beliefs, identities, or values) is to establish a demarcated border for a particular digital enclave of people that is not intended for consumption by individuals outside said digital enclave (Graham, 2014; Campbell & Golan, 2011). In this respect, we begin to see the purpose of social networks as they provide a method for network coordination between various Facebook pages and potential malicious enclaves to circulate material conducive to strengthening their resolve. This strengthening of resolve is based on the ability to connect with and see others that share the same or similar opinions. Ultimately, “digital
intimacy” is critical in establishing these networks and creates comfortability in expressing controversial views despite how similar the space may be (Rambukkana, 2019).

When examining the four RWE malicious enclaves’ social network pages, we see that most of the discussions that each had with those outside the Facebook RWE malicious enclaves are other branches of the digital enclaves (e.g., the various defence leagues); further, they are interacting with other Facebook pages that share material that speaks to the narrative of the malicious enclave. Further demonstrating that we are witnessing a digital enclave is the “little connection, or a desire for connection, between the digital enclave and other communities” (Graham, 2014, p. 102). Karppi (2015) and Hillis, Paasonen, and Petit (2015) draw attention to the unintentional discoveries of content that appear on Facebook through algorithms that dictate what appears on newsfeeds; however, we see there is a deliberate attempt to cultivate an atmosphere where the group space will only interact with like-minded opinions through the connections they formulate. While the networks look vast, they are pages that would encourage and reinforce the same type of engagement as their respective digital enclave (Kim & Altmann, 2017; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). When we do see the odd page or individual that relates to and does not “fit in,” such as Joe Biden or other democratic politicians, such pages are likely being interacted with to fuel the conversation that is taking place. They are deliberately tagging a progressive essay, policy, or viewpoint that may work to strengthen the enclave’s collective intimacy further.

The social network analysis helps to demonstrate that the four RWE malicious enclaves actively engage with like-minded pages and eschew dissimilar ones (Graham, 2014; Campbell & Golan, 2011). Based on this chapter’s analysis, what cannot be determined is how these Facebook digital enclaves, and the RWE malicious enclaves they form, facilitate conversation or
input (however it may manifest on Facebook) from individual adherents. While the review of the four RWE malicious enclaves demonstrated a highly emotional plea on their websites, it is yet to be determined how such publications impact (if at all) the contributions of individual members. However, analyzing the actual posts individual members produce on these pages makes it possible to track and note the disparity and similarity of concerns raised by each RWE malicious enclave. While there is a noticeable difference in sites of interest and concerns, discerning differences between individual interactions with these pages would be possible by further triangulating my data with more qualitative methods.

5.4. Conclusion

This chapter has provided a background on the four RWE malicious enclaves investigated in this dissertation. I have traced the origins of the four enclaves being studied, the original leader’s political disposition, and examined the history of each enclave. I then followed the same strategy for understanding the Canadian leadership of the RWE malicious enclaves and detailed how they identify themselves based on self-descriptions of their origins, leadership, talking points, and slogans.

My findings reveal that by examining the outward-facing facades each group has established, we begin to identify a malicious enclave as a distinct manifestation. To court enough attention to their views, they must be public facing. In conjunction with this public-facing persona, I find that they utilize legalese-styled descriptions of themselves and their enclaves to avoid being labelled a hate group or criminal by providing pre-emptive defences for their views. The findings reveal that every one of the four RWE malicious enclaves has built-in defences to explain their beliefs and actions and provides justifications for why they and other like-minded members are firm in their resolve. This public-facing façade has showcased—coupled with the
insular networks— that they are interested in protecting their curated image and want to court attention, but also seek the exclusiveness afforded to other digital enclaves. This curated image allows these RWE malicious enclaves to set up international chapters to lend weight to their views. It is not just an aggressively hateful Facebook page but a network of globally situated thinkers presenting “uncomfortable truths” to the world in a universalist tone (see Hall 1991). The ability to present themselves as “unsung heroes” strengthens the digital intimacy that such malicious enclaves depend upon for continued involvement (Rambukkana, 2015). Understanding this logic and the work establishing these façades is the first stage of locating a malicious enclave.

What became evident is, like the works of Campbell and Golan (2011) and Graham (2014), these malicious enclaves use the language of injustice, victimhood, and the need for privacy to rally support. I found that the claims of injustice and victimhood that the leadership of these enclaves are supposedly fighting against are a thinly veiled attempt to justify hatred and racist expression from current or would-be members of the enclave. This outlook was determined based on the ample attempts to provide “evidence” as to why Muslims and Islam, leftists and liberalism as political ideologies, are inherently evil and need to be stopped. The review of the “about us” sections promote a dire scenario whereby the victimized patriots and would-be members will likely have to go on the attack or, at the very least, be willing to defend themselves from the insufferable presence of their enemies. It is in identifying this façade, framing hatred as victimhood, and the continued fostering and encouragement of hatred that distinguishes the malicious enclave from other Facebook group pages and digital platforms. To delve deeper into analyses, the following two analysis chapters reveal how individual members of the identified RWE malicious enclaves interact with each other.
Chapter 6: What is Worth Hating? Examining Six News Events

What does ‘hateful’ conversation within RWE malicious enclaves look like? What do individual members of RWE malicious enclaves discuss with each other? What kind of content do they prefer to share and distribute? How do they differ from those conversations in ‘ordinary’ enclaves? What are the most common or popular topics discussed in these RWE malicious enclaves? All or some of these questions may cross our minds as we learn more about the existence of the Canadian RWE networks discussed in Chapter 5. While in the previous chapter we learned about the structure and platform of the Canadian RWE malicious enclaves, this chapter offers a deeper look into the internal interaction and communication within and between these enclaves.

As discussed earlier (see Chapter 3), hate is the currency of the RWE malicious enclave. Consequently, exploring how ‘hate’ is communicated within these enclaves is essential. In other words, I am analyzing how members of these enclaves discuss ‘hateful’ content that otherwise would be unacceptable in any ordinary conversation. I argue that RWE malicious enclaves flourish by employing the frames that make their hateful posts palatable. In this chapter, I will demonstrate that RWE malicious enclaves make abhorrent views acceptable, and typical. In answering the above questions I draw on theoretical materials regarding hate, violence, and communication.

My analysis is unpacking the expression and communication of hatred within malicious enclaves. Sunstein (2017) refers to this as “enclave deliberation,” a “form of deliberation that occurs within more or less insulated groups, in which like-minded people speak mostly to one another” (p. 86). While Sunstein’s (2017) definition is compelling, I explore the types of posts
accumulated within the data compiled prior to adopting his notion of “enclave deliberation” and juxtapose the idea of deliberation against the notion of “banal nationalism” and “banal activism”. Hence, I argue that what we see in these posts is surface-level rhetoric akin to “culture wars” rhetoric and patriotism, that is the antithesis of deliberation (Barendregt & Schneider, 2020; Billig, 1995; McCauley, 2021).

To comprehend how the RWE malicious enclaves interact, we must first understand what topics encourage discussion and generate posting. The digital enclave is mainly interested in current affairs, such as news stories directly related to the digital enclave (Graham, 2014). For example, as Graham (2014) notes, in the context of The Root, an African American news magazine, the digital enclave discussed current affairs about African Americans that were being taken up in mainstream media to further their discussion or their “enclave deliberation” (Sunstein, 2017). In the case of the four RWE enclaves studied, I have selected six news events likely to speak to their interests (see Chapter 4.4.4 for a detailed description of the method for this selection). The following chapter will identify immediate reactions toward a predefined list of news events identified in Chapter 4. Using frame analysis, I examine and answer the questions posed above in the remainder of this chapter. The six news events are:

1) Alexander Bissonnette sentencing (February 8, 2019)
2) Christchurch Mosque attack in New Zealand (March 15, 2019)
3) The Sri Lankan Easter attack (April 21, 2019)
4) Poway Synagogue attack in San Diego, USA (April 27, 2019)
5) Conservative politician Jason Kenney becoming premier of Alberta (April 30, 2019)

33 Following my analyses, in Section 6.7., I will summarize where and when my hypotheses were inaccurate.
34 Due to posts being organized into frames, the natural flow of the conversation that appeared on Facebook is not always immediately available. As such, the deliberative nature of the posts is not always apparent.
6) Conservative politician Doug Ford assuming office as premier of Ontario (June 29, 2019)


The first news event focuses on the sentencing of Alexander Bissonnette. On January 29, 2017, Bissonnette entered the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City and opened fire on those present, ultimately killing six people and injuring five others (Bilefsky, 2019). While the attack was outside the data collection parameters, he ultimately pled guilty to first-degree murder on February 8, 2019. Unlike the other news events that captured reactions to terrorist attacks as they happened, this news event focuses on the sentencing of Canada’s most recent mass killer. Given the proximity of this being a Canadian case that targeted Muslims (which are demonstrably hated by the four malicious enclaves studied), it was an ideal news event to see how the posts would respond, if at all. Surprisingly, there were very few posts during the 2-day data collection period.
Table 1: Alexander Bissonnette Sentencing

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Table 1: Alexander Bissonnette News Event

Rather than discussing Bissonnette, the entirety of the dataset discussed a meeting between Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad el-Tayeb\(^{35}\) (Tornielli, 2019).

The sit-down between the two religious leaders was meant to denounce violence between Christians and Muslims globally and make a concerted effort to promote peace between the two faiths. Rather than being discussed positively, the posters viewed this as a collaboration between two evil faiths. There were only 18 posts from the Canadian Defence League and two from the Canadian Three Percenters. The most popular topic with seven posts (26%) was discussions of Pope Francis and the Catholic faith (see Appendix 1 – 25: “the Pope and the Vatican”). Here is the first time we witness schisms in Christian denominations as the posts discuss the illegitimacy of Pope Francis and the superiority of other Christian denominations.

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\(^{35}\) According to Tabikha (2022, para. 1), “Egypt’s highest authority on Sunni Islam.”
We also witness the Pope being threatened with violence and declared illegitimate as he is seen as friendly with Muslims. Posts included:

- If the Pope is so stupid to sign away all Catholics and consign us to death then he MUST be replaced a.s.a.p. Catholics and Christians the world over have a mind and they will NOT stand for this!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- rope a pope
- I will now ask my catholic friends if they still think I am wrong in calling Francis the worst bishop of Rome in living memory. He has forgotten or forsaken his faith, his vows, his faith and his flock. He is a disaster and the Cardinals should convene to correct the huge mistake they made.

The second most popular frame with six posts (22%) was on Muslims (see Appendix 1 – 29: Muslims). A representative post is:

- I cannot imagine more horrid bedfellows than Catholicism and Islam. Both are Totalitarian dictatorships! One sends you to hell when you disagree or trip up, the other send you to the gallows or the sword!

Here we see that standard Islamophobic rhetoric involves declaring Islam and Muslims as an inherently violent and dictatorial faith. However, in tandem with the denigration of Islam, we see Catholicism as equally problematic, as shown in the reaction to Pope Francis’s meeting with the Grand Imam, Ahmad el-Tayeb.

While no other frame has a significant quantity of posts, the remaining four posts (15%) promote “true” Christianity (see Appendix 1 – 3: “Christian teachings…”).

- Let all of them go for one faith...I will follow my one God and Jesus...Anglican faith...I have followed all my 65 years and was Baptised in said church 😊

The posts within this classification discuss denominations other than Catholicism as the preeminent form of Christianity. Although the dataset was meant to capture the reaction to Alexander Bissonnette being sentenced for his crimes in Quebec City, there was no mention of him from either of the RWE malicious enclaves studied. Instead, Pope Francis’s meeting with Grand Imam Ahmad el-Tayeb was labelled a traitorous action against Christians globally. The
posts within this news event reveal the extent to which hatred, paranoia, and feelings of encroachments play in the stories deemed worthy of responding to. Rather than celebrate a clear sign of solidarity against violence from two major religions, we witness the posts from Three Percenters Canada and the Canadian Defence League became increasingly hostile to Catholicism more than they were towards Muslims in this news event. The only call for violence within this dataset was towards Pope Francis, who one poster stated needed to be “roped.” While I did not expect the poster to necessarily celebrate Bissonnette, I was shocked that there were no attempts to defend or deflect his actions by drawing upon a “whataboutism” and then attack one of the groups they despise.

We witness how “paranoid nationalism” allows hatred to cause schisms to form within those groups and individuals that would make for an otherwise assumed alliance with the malicious enclaves (Hage, 2003). As will be seen, Catholics do not get denigrated in any other news event to the extent they do here. To unpack the reasoning behind this attack on Pope Francis and the Catholic faith, Hage (2003) reminds us, “The dilemma of the nation, and of every other community for that matter, is that there is always a danger that the aggressive politics of the border will affect the loving interior” (p. 31). We witness that Muslims are so detestable to these two malicious enclaves that they are willing to attack fellow Christians and Christian denominations to reify the boundary against tolerance and acceptance of Muslims. Catholics have become tainted because their Church’s leader formed this pact with Muslims. Instead of being capable of seeing the benefit in the symbolic gesture of peace between two religions, what this gesture was interpreted as was Pope Francis capitulating to the Islamic faith.

The fear of capitulation to Islam and Muslims generally is shown here to be rooted in hatred. While Pope Francis met with Grand Imam Ahmad el-Tayeb, the true motive behind these
malicious enclaves is that they viciously slander and verbally denigrate those who do not share their discriminatory outlook. As such, those seeking to foment peace and cross-faith dialogue become the hateful individuals attacking the “honest patriots” within the malicious enclaves (from their perspective). Essentially, Pope Francis and Catholics globally are immediately labelled as traitors to Christianity for this transgression. Curiously, at a time when the Canadian courts are punishing Bissonnette for his murderous violence against Muslims in Quebec, and broadcasting across the country the harms of Islamophobia, these two RWE malicious enclaves focused their attention on denigrating Catholics and Muslims for demonstrating a mutual respect for each other’s faiths. Finding a suitable target to maintain derision of Muslims is a skill these RWE malicious enclaves are most adept at given the challenge of defending Bissonnette when he is being charged for murder. This form of hatred is further unpacked when we examine it through the lens of it being, as Ahmed (2004) argues, a “communal” activity at work with the reaction to Pope Francis transgressing the border of whiteness (p. 118). Religion, in the case of these RWE malicious enclaves, seems to be respected only when it fits their hateful worldview.


The Christchurch news event examines the Christchurch Mosque attacks, which occurred on March 15, 2019. Although this will be assessed further in the next chapter, I am interested in capturing what the Three Percenters Canada and Canada Defence League RWE malicious enclaves’ immediate reactions look like following an attack that solely targeted Muslims.
For this reason, I have included this case in the news event frame analyses.

While declaring support for Anders Breivik and Alexander Bissonnette (other mass shooters), Brenton Tarrant filmed himself entering a Mosque and executing Muslims during their prayers (Riga, 2019). The attack went viral due to the video footage being shared on every major social media platform.

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Given that every RWE malicious enclave I have selected has been accused of Islamophobia, the Christchurch attack news event is meant to capture the immediate reaction from Three Percenters Canada and the Canada Defence League to an attack that targets Muslims (Bartlett & Littler 2011; Lamoureux, 2017; Popp & Wassermann, 2015; SPLC “ActforAmerica” n.d., n.p.). The first observation was the lack of immediate posts following the Christchurch attack. The total amount of combined posts for the Canada Defence League and the Three Percenters Canada was 29. The most popular frame with six combined posts (21%) was around international leftist conspiracies (see Appendix 1 – 19: Denigrating International Far-Left Politicians…).

The following posts provide an overview of what was captured:

- The most recent New Zealand shooter has the same twisted AOC-type ideology. His ideology was the work of some crazy green new deal eco-nazi. And it all comes from the left’s idea of climate change and we’ll all be dead in 12 years as a result of the climate change...His Manifesto is a testament of his twisted mind and hateful rhetoric against capitalism, individualism on behalf of collective government and green new deal rhetoric. His twisted mind supports many liberals who believe in the same ideology. Needless to say, the US liberals are creators of green new deal, climate change pseudo science which was debunked by the Norwegian Nobel prize physicist. Idiots who follow this cataclysmic ideology may flip like this dude and many of you who refuse to see the sickness of the Globalists agenda. The results are appalling!
- Many new Canadians recognize the factors described in the article. Compounding the decline of Canadian society is the depravity of gender identity politics and excessive feminization of institutional policy making.
- makes you wonder if it was a false flag for them to take the firearms. I put nothing past politicians these days and esp globalists – doing everything they can to push their stinky agenda.

Two themes capture the immediate and most prevalent type of reaction to the Christchurch Mosque attack. The first is the conspiracy theory of a leftist “globalist agenda” and the attack being a “false flag”36. These theories represent a belief that there is an international cabal of elites trying to disarm all of humanity so that people can easily be enslaved (Wade, 2020). The posters claim that most mass shootings are government operations (“false flags”)

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36 According to Zappone (2019, para. 2), “A ‘false flag’ is an act, often a terrorist act, which is committed by one group with the intention of discrediting another group, which is blamed for it.”
designed to make it look like guns are a social issue to disarm all citizens (Owen, 2020). The second key theme is the fear of “gender identity politics.” Many posters within Three Percenters Canada and the Canada Defence League’s malicious enclaves believe that gender politics, specifically trans-activism, is how globalists seek to control humanity. The argument peddled by the Three Percenters Canada and the Canada Defence League is that globalists seek to limit potential opposition to their global enslavement by encouraging men to be weak. These posters argue that a critical method of weakening masculinity encourages men and boys to become transgendered. Then, once enough men are emasculated, it will make enslaving humanity easier for the globalists because no one will be able to fight back due to the destruction of masculinity (Higgins, 2018).

The conspiratorial belief system of leftists plotting against individuals (within these RWE malicious enclaves) is the most prominent immediate reaction by posters that utilize this frame. Rather than endorse multiculturalism, which is a principle of Canadian governance, we are seeing a continuation of old patterns like ramped-up nationalism and its racist and discriminatory targeting of newcomer groups like people from Muslim-majority countries and their supposed leftist, liberal, and mainstream-media enablers (for information on such racism see Karim, 2002; Karim & Hirji, 2008). Alongside the discrimination of racial and religious minority groups are attacks on individuals who are racially similar but ideologically dissimilar to the dominant white Christian majority. Like Hage’s (2003) analysis of paranoia from white settlers in Australia, we see similar concerns from these Canadian RWE malicious enclaves regarding the “multicultural lobby,” “elitist intellectuals,” and leftist political parties as “…all working at undermining…[the] core culture” (p. 65). We can see from these posts that Democrats (within the US) and Liberals (within Canada) are framed as fanatical traitors to their
country for continuing to enable groups the Canadian Three Percenters and the Canada Defence League despise. Rather than there being any cogent argument or deliberation against “identity politics,” “trans-genderism,” “feminism,” or “environmentalism” (all of which are singled out as harmful within the posts), we see a criticism that these progressive ideologies make people “weak,” “effeminate,” and traitorous to the Christian and white status quo.

The second most prominent frame with four posts (14%) was the Canadian Three Percenters’ discussion of protecting firearms (see Appendix 1 – 6: Defence or Promotion of Firearms). As discovered in the first frame, there was immediate skepticism that the attack was legitimate as individuals began posting that it was a staged event to justify a government crackdown. The following post captures the fear and perceived persecution that they will experience following the “false flag” they believe the New Zealand Mosque attack to be:

- I saw an article all the libertards are sharing stating the government plans to ban all semi-auto rifles

As can be seen, the discussion of firearms mainly expresses the fear of guns being taken away by liberals from law-abiding citizens. No posts speak about the harm such weapons caused, only that the people who did nothing wrong (gun owners) are being persecuted.

The third most prominent frame is the Canada Defence League’s discussion (with three posts, 11%) of Canada being harmed by immigration (see Appendix 1 – 4: Defence of “real” Canada). The posts identify through a historical reflection how Canada and Canadians have continuously been harmed by allowing too much immigration, for examples:

- Saw this happening way back in the 80’s. Chinese were pouring into Vancouver. They were buying up everything in sight. A friend of ours who is now passed, said pretty soon Canadians will be a foreigner in their own country.

37 The reason the Three Percenters Canada and Canada Defence League will be assessed separately in this section is due to the lack of posts. There was so little commentary that it was necessary to approach the Christchurch news event this way.
Looks like it came to pass. Europe is being taken over by middle easterners and the US is being taken over by Mexican, and central Americans…

- and the liberals are doing just that in Canada, and the Democrats are doing just that in America. It is dangerous!

How is it, we all lived together peacefully, BEFORE Turdump and his liberal trash bags…. and over the last 3 years, people do not trust, they are suspicious, etc. etc…. Trudump is dangerous to the peace and harmony of Canada because he is “Identity politics” …. Do I believe that Christianity is under attack, absolutely...

The posts collected within this frame speak to the fear of Canada declining due to immigration and identity politics. Immigration is seen to be detrimental because it makes “Canadians” (presumably white Canadians) share space with groups like “Asians” and “Mexicans.” Secondly, “gender identity politics” and “feminized policy” promote a weak immigration policy that allows non-white people to be admitted into Canada. This fear of gender roles being challenged is further conveyed in posts that speak of Canada as a safer place for Christians prior to Trudeau and his lenient approach to immigration. To interpret why the initial reaction to the Christchurch news event was so limited, I draw attention to the multifaceted edifice of hate and “paranoid nationalism” as it manifests within these RWE malicious enclaves (Ahmed, 2004; Hage, 2003). The Christchurch news event is the only news event not immediately resulting in Islamophobic comments and active calls for violence against Muslims. The only posts not mentioning Muslims disguise the hate for Muslims within Three Percenters Canada and the Canada Defence League by attacking peripheral targets that are the supposed allies of Muslims (leftists, liberals, and mainstream media) and another celebrating Viktor Orbán.38 The news event analysis reveals a complex shift from outright Islamophobia to an immediate nationalism rooted in a distrust of non-white newcomers, non-conservatives, and non-Christians to maintain the circulation of hate-filled posts (Ahmed, 2004; Dean, 2010; Hage, 2003). Therefore, we see a two-pronged transition from outright bigotry towards Muslims within Canada to other historically “undesirable groups” and a more nationalistic-based attack on

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38 Orbán, has referred to all refugees entering Europe as “Muslim invaders” and stated that Multiculturalism was “an illusion” (Viktor Orbán as cited in Schultheis, 2018, para. 3).
(according to Three Percenters Canada and the Canada Defence Leagues’ members) their domestic allies. This historical recap by the posters posits that Muslims are not the only problematic group. However, bigotries that were once the prominent target for hatred amongst this dominant white-Christian majority within Canada begin to resurface due to what can only be described as a temporary moratorium on attacking Muslims within this space. Therefore, we begin to see other “undesirable groups” (according to these posters), such as the Chinese, Mexicans, Central Americans, and Middle Easterners, become framed as invasive and detrimental to the countries they emigrate to. Targeting racialized and religious minorities for their mere presence is not a novel insight. However, the turn reveals a strategic shift in posts to avoid uttering death wishes and threats towards a group that suffered an incredibly heinous and violent attack when the data demonstrates that Muslims are their primary target in every other news event.

The final prevalent frames, both of which had two individual posts each (7%), were supportive of far-right politicians (see Appendix 1 – 8: Support for International Far-Right Politicians or Figureheads) and the harms of mainstream media (see Appendix 1 – 13: (defunding) Mainstream Media, Fake News, Forcing a Narrative, Hollywood, Censorship, or being Deplatformed). The two frames contained the following types of messages:

- Muslim victims of murder are not more tragic than Christian, Jewish, Hindu or any other. Western liberal media obsessively under-report Islamist violence in Africa and Asia, while giving full coverage for any presumed offence to Muslims In the West. This is a disturbing double-standard.
- Orban is the only smart European president!!!

The data assessed for the final frame reveals a continuation of the same conspiratorial thinking that posits global powers and mainstream media favour Muslims. More evidence that the Three Percenters Canada and the Canada Defence League blame Muslims for the Christchurch attack
can be witnessed by the celebration of far-right figureheads such as Viktor Orbán, Hungary’s prime minister. The posters within the Three Percenters Canada and the Canada Defence League chose to celebrate a leader known for anti-Muslim bigotry and preventing Muslim immigration immediately following the Christchurch Mosque attacks.

The Three Percenters Canada and Canada Defence League’s immediate reaction was that the Christchurch Mosque attack was a ploy from the UN to disarm citizens while making Muslim “aggressors” look like victims of crimes. The second most prominent frame was criticism of non-European immigration, which leftists and liberals promulgate through “identity politics” and multiculturalism. The third most prominent frame for interacting with the Christchurch Mosque attack was that Muslims receive special treatment from the media that other religious groups do not receive when attacked. Far-right figures such as Viktor Orbán are argued to be the only individuals who speak truthfully about Muslims’ incompatibility within “Christian nations.” Moreover, the Three Percenters Canada and the Canada Defence League posters seem to operate with the assumption that being sympathetic to the victims of the Christchurch terrorist attack would shift the narrative from demonizing “Muslim terrorists” to sympathizing with the “rare” occasion when Muslims are the victims. No posts provided condolences for the victims or condemned the attacker without a caveat that blamed Muslim provocation.

6.3. News Event 3: Sri Lankan Easter attack, April 21, 2019, using Act for Canada and Pegida Canada

The third news event is the Sri Lankan Easter attack, which took place on April 21, 2019. The two groups used to investigate this news event are: Act for Canada and Pegida Canada. The

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39 Orbán has referred to all refugees entering Europe as “Muslim invaders” and stated that Multiculturalism was “an illusion” (Viktor Orbán as cited in Schultheis, 2018, para. 3).
attack was coordinated by a group known as the National Thowheed Jamath (NTJ), an organization that ISIS has taken responsibility for forming (Griffiths, 2019; Handunnetti, 2022). The attack targeted three separate buildings in Sri Lanka, two hotels and a church on Easter, by suicide attackers that utilized explosives (Griffiths, 2019; Handunnetti, 2022). There were 250 fatalities and 500 injuries (Griffiths, 2019; Handunnetti, 2022). The Sri Lankan Easter attack is of significance to my case study as the attack was widely publicized, and the target of the attacks was Christians. The targeting of Christians as a particular identifiable group may provide insight into how individuals posting in Act for Canada and Pegida Canada’s RWE malicious enclaves respond to an attack against a group they identify with religiously. The total amount of combined posts was 580 for this news event. Islam is central to all conversations in the following five most popular frames within the dataset. 95% of the commentary in the Sri Lankan Easter attack dataset is about Muslims and the Islamic faith. The only key differentiation is the targeted adjacent groups, such as liberals, leftists, and the media.
The most prominent discussion was centred on Muslims (see Appendix 1 – 29: Muslims), with 124 posts (21%). The following posts are indicative of the breadth of commentary discussing Muslims during this news event:

- These cretins, want to overpopulate and take over the world. They will succeed if left unchecked. Western Civilization must never allow followers of islam into their countries. Western Civilization must STOP GIVING THEM AID!
- Yes islam is an inherently barbaric ideology.

The posts discussing Muslims are diverse with the type of Islamophobia being spread. Conversations range from referring to all Muslims as “barbarians” and mocking Islam for being “a religion of peace,” to fears that Muslims are overpopulating the world. As depicted below, such concerns are not unique to posts identified using this frame within the frame analysis.
Christianity against Muslims were surprising in these posts. Concerns surrounding “Christianophobia” led to many posters explicitly calling for Christians to defend themselves with a new form of the Knights Templar and a Christian-led crusade. There is a significant overlap between these posts and those that call for violence. However, the following are representative of most posts found using this frame:

- Yes! Christianaphobia is on the rise wake up!
- Hate has nothing to do with Christians fighting back. It is if Christians get to be the minority then it will be too late to fight back. We also need to stop western governments imposing special laws on none Muslims and prosecute us for just saying we don't like Islam and their Sharia Law.
- This is not accidental fire! Its a terrorist act against Christianity of Europe! Our submitted politicians are pushing for the eradication of our values, culture and faith to make place to the New World order ideology! Raise a crusade to save our civilization.

The most prominent reaction is fear of Christians becoming a minority population and, in their view, at the mercy of Muslims. An example drawn aside from the Sri Lankan church attacks is the Notre Dame Cathedral fire on April 15, 2019. Despite no evidence to support such accusations, many posts argue that Muslims deliberately set the fires, or at the very least, the fires and the plight of Christians were celebrated by Muslims (Brown, 2020). There is also a repeated argument among posters that Christians and other “non-Muslims” are not granted the same rights and privileges as Muslims. The posters argue that all of Europe is under siege, and Christians must fight back before Christian populations decline. The main fear is that Christian populations are declining, and Muslims will be able to take their countries over and impose Sharia Law violently. What is also apparent is the deliberate invocation of a militaristic Christian history being drawn upon in the form of calling for a return of crusaders and, subsequently, a new crusade. As MacMillan (2008) argues, much of the historical narratives drawn upon by nationalists, fundamentalists, and both racially/religiously disenfranchised groups alike is to draw on histories that “keeps followers angry and motivated and attracts new recruits” (p. 68). Rather than appealing to an individual’s personal/group identity or ideological convictions, the
“lost golden ages” and historical injustices seek to trigger an affective impetus to maintain the circulation of hate and anger (MacMillan, 2008, p. 62; Ahmed, 2004, 2014). The weaponization of Christianity and history in News Event 3 is clear; Christians are reluctant warriors once again being forced to fight against a tyrannical Islamic force (in their view). Nevertheless, hate is framed here by ratcheting up a warmongering “call to arms” by invoking a sense of might across the RWE malicious enclaves.

Such a “call to arms” reflects the possibility of these RWE malicious enclaves being a social movement or seeking to become one. I argue that the invocation of history and militarism alone does not lend itself to these RWE malicious enclaves, or their members, being or becoming a social movement. However, these RWE malicious enclaves could serve as a platform for a group of individuals to mobilize and become a more coherent movement (Lim, 2013a, 2013b, 2018). For instance, the Tea Party was similarly created by a group that framed themselves as “real patriots” and galvanized enough individuals to elect people to political office (Haltinner & Sarathchandra, 2017; Rohlinger & Bunnage, 2017). Some argue that the Tea Party’s ability to shift the Overton window paved the way for Donald Trump’s presidency (Haltinner & Sarathchandra, 2017; Rohlinger & Bunnage, 2017). Although, the critical distinction here is evident mobilization from groups like the Tea Party to affect political change and focus their collective effort on achieving an identifiable goal (Haltinner & Sarathchandra, 2017; Lim, 2013a, 2013b, 2018; Rohlinger & Bunnage, 2017). The RWE malicious enclaves inhabited by Act for Canada and Pegida Canada members could provide the “spark” for a movement to begin (Lim, 2018, p. 97). Nevertheless, it remains part of a malicious enclave that survives off the input of individuals motivated to circulate hatred that primarily targets Muslims rather than coalesce a clear political goal.
The third most popular frame within the Sri Lankan Easter attack dataset, with 56 posts (10%), calls for, justifies, or celebrates violence (see Appendix 1 – 10: Violence Support). Every single post using this frame singles out Muslims or Islam for violence. The following posts are indicative of the standard violent commentary:

- Muslims kill Christians in churches around the world and political leaders are silent............BUT YOU DARE HARM, THREATEN OR KILL A GROUP OF MUSLIMS IN A MOSQUE. .....and universal hell breaks loose from every leader of the western democracies THERE ARE NONE SO BLIND AS THOSE THAT REFUSE TO SEE. ARE THEY THAT IGNORANT AND STUPID OR ARE THEY ALL ON THE TAKE FROM ISLAMIC LEADERS.
- the only way we can win is an Eye for an Eye. let's burn a few mosques
- Hey muslims, Keep poking and prodding the people who perfected the concentration camp

As the posts demonstrate, there are numerous crossovers between Christian victimization and the justification for violence against Muslims. Many posts profess that Muslims are getting away with constant violence, and due to the indifference of contemporary European and North American leaders, they are not being held accountable. They argue that the only time leaders supposedly care when Muslims are victimized, and the attack is on a Mosque or against Muslims, as Muslims are seen to be worthier victims. The posts then turn to “holding Muslims accountable” for attacks on Christians. The posters suggest that just accountability takes form by starting a crusade, bringing back the Knights Templar, burning Mosques, and deliberately referencing or endorsing internment and concentration camps.

The fourth most popular frame with 55 posts (9%) within the Sri Lankan Easter attack dataset is directed at the media (see Appendix 1 – 13: (defunding) Mainstream Media, Fake News, Forcing a Narrative, Hollywood, Censorship, or being Deplatformed). As with other content revealed throughout the frame analysis of this news event, the primary focus of concern is Muslims not being held accountable and being enabled by significant institutions such as politicians and mainstream media. The following posts capture the breadth of opinion within posts detected using this frame:
• CBC is a pro-jihadi media outlet! Always minimizing extremists' errances they impute to errors from few deranged individuals and have nothing to do with an essentially peaceful doctrine! CBC is the VOICE OF TRUDEAU and will be watered down with their mentor next september! I never understood CBC’s obsessively paranoid hatred towards Donald Trump it criticizes negatively day in and day out?
• Imagine if anyone dared to shut down social media after the Christchurch shooting in order to protect the ideology of the shooter. Every deadly Islamic attack is followed by more sharia, more proselytizing, more taqiyya shoved down our throats, while all other attacks are blamed on the right without any connection whatsoever. People are going to rise up against this war against truth and freedom.

There is a belief that mainstream media ranges from only providing Liberal talking points to being “pro-jihad.” The facts presented to sustain these accusations from posters are the disparaging comments from CBC reporters towards Donald Trump, whom they celebrate for naming terrorist attacks as “Islamic.” The criticism extends to the mainstream media being another avenue for Muslims to practice “Taqiyya⁴⁰,” which is used as a talking point for these malicious enclaves to assume that every action taken by Muslims is deceptive as they will always lie to invade and spread their faith (Ismail & Bloomer, 2018). The belief that every Muslim act is based on deception emboldens the assumption that Muslims can “shut down the media”; the only time mainstream media is allowed to report on terrorism or criminality is when it vilifies “white people.”

The final most popular frame revealed during this news event with 51 posts (9%) discussed Justin Trudeau and other Canadian Liberal politicians (see Appendix 1–15: Canadian Liberal Party or leaders, current government). As with the previous four most popular frames, the main target of conversation is Muslims, followed by a secondary concern. In this case, the

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⁴⁰ Taqiyya is typically understood to be the ability to conceal one’s faith usually when there is a threat (Daro, 2018). However, the right-wing extremists and Islamophobes have latched on to this term to suggest every action by Muslims is deceptive and that they can never be trusted because they are religiously instructed to lie (Daro, 2018).
Liberal Party of Canada is viewed as an enabler of a Muslim invasion. Critical examples of commentary within this news event are as follows:

- Want to BET Justin does not decry this act of unmitigated terror against CHRISTIANS! What a complete SHAME! No global out cry no nation and international out Cry! Christians are now dreamed DISPOSABLE! This is the UN (United Nazi party) New Worold Order At its undeniable WORST!
- Trudeau signed an agreement with the UN to bring in 100000 Somalians. We must vote him out with a majority government, our only choice is Conservatives.
- Well people what do you think time to fight back fuck our government's let's take our country's back my hatred is growing and I have to blame our government for it

The overall narrative that is being advanced (revealing a pattern) is that the only concern the Liberal Government, the United Nations, and the New World Order have is the progression of Islam at the expense of Christians and white people.

As the previous three most popular frames reveal while examining the Sri Lankan Easter attack, the primary concern from posters are Muslims, Liberal politicians, and global institutions that allow for an invasion that takes the shape of demographic change. The fear is that the currently dominant group, white Christians, will be replaced if immigration is not halted. We are left with similar findings to the Poway Synagogue attack (see next section), except Islamophobia and calls for violence towards Muslims have increased and makeup 95% of the 580 posts within the Sri Lankan Easter attack dataset. The Sri Lankan Easter attack dataset demonstrates an increase in espoused hatred that justifies itself by labelling Muslims, the mainstream media, leftists, and the Liberal Party of Canada as being unified with the spread of Islam at the expense of Christians.

While all these posters seek to justify their hatred towards Muslims, liberals, and the mainstream media, the most significant finding from the Sri Lankan Easter attack dataset is that it contains the most prominent calls for violence from any news event. To explain why calls for violence are numerous within the Sri Lankan Easter attack dataset, I draw on Ahmed’s (2004, p. 132) understanding of hate and hate’s manifestation as it relates to “border anxiety” and
“transgression of the border.” As Ahmed (2004, 2014) details, anxiety around the viciousness or backwardness of a racialized or minority group, coupled with hatred (depicted as) stemming from their enemies’ behaviour, helps serve as a defensive mechanism from any accusations of being the aggressor. If the posters within Act for Canada and Pegida Canada attempt to demonstrate that they are the victims of violence and abuse and the individuals that the “global cabal” of liberalism and Islam are coordinating against, victimization, as identified by Ahmed (2004), is a robust tactical frame that can and is used to justify a violent defence in the form of an attack. As the previous paragraph clarifies, the weaponization of Christianity is presented as a “reluctant” but necessary event prompted by the violence and aggression of Muslims, leftists/liberals, and the mainstream media. They demonstrate that given the hate-fuelled climate of these RWE malicious enclaves, there is a desire to see others enact violence on their behalf. However, they have not taken a step towards organizing and planning it themselves. Nevertheless, the cheerleading of violence, however “slow” it may be (disguised as retribution), towards Muslims is unabashedly blatant (Nixon, 2011). Specifically, it remains slow violence (as opposed to actual threats) because goading others or celebrating violent fantasies is not the same as articulating, planning, and carrying out violent plans (Nixon, 2011). Slow violence is the permissibility of these malicious enclaves freely communicating their heinous opinions no matter how dehumanizing they are (Nixon, 2011).

The Sri Lankan Easter attack dataset drew disproportionate attention with 580 posts, 228 more posts than the second-highest, 352 posts during the Poway Synagogue attack (see next section). Whereas the Poway Synagogue attack revealed the disdain for naming white supremacy as a motivation for a terrorist attack rather than condemning the attacker, the Sri Lankan Easter attack dataset showcases posts naming Muslims and the Islamic faith as the inspiration for the
Sri Lankan attacks. 95% of the posts within the Sri Lankan Easter attack dataset singled out and framed Islam and Muslims as violent and collectively culpable for the Sri Lankan attacks. Not only was all of Islam and every Muslim to blame for the Sri Lankan attacks, the posters within Pegida Canada and Act for Canada made it clear that they believed Muslims were behind the Notre Dame Cathedral fire in Paris. The response was supposedly motivated by the fear that Christians globally are under attack. However, a key distinction revealed in News Event 3 is the breadth of events aside from the Sri Lankan attack piled on by the posters to the supposed list of global crimes against Christians facilitated by Muslims. These posts ranged from Trudeau allowing Somali refugees into Canada and the mainstream media’s “pro-Jihad” agenda that only criticizes white people to global elites endorsing the murder of Christians. The Sri Lankan Easter attack also revealed the collective desire for quick retribution against Muslims. The imagined, desired retribution sees members endorse a weaponized Christianity ranging from multiple calls for a crusade and the return of crusaders to individuals advocating the burning of Mosques to “get even” for the attack on the three Sri Lankan churches and the burning of the Notre Dame Cathedral. The Sri Lankan Easter attack dataset was the most commented on and contained the most active calls for violence. The findings from the previous two news events indicate the reluctance of the RWE malicious enclaves and the individuals within to comment when the perpetrator(s) are not Muslim. The hate for Islam that emanates from these posters makes terrorist attacks by Muslims a bizarrely welcoming and perhaps exciting prospect for them. This attack allows the posters to express their most hateful beliefs with the added protection of being able to claim victimhood.

The Poway Synagogue attack occurred in San Diego, California, on April 27, 2019. The attacker was 19-year-old John Earnest, was found guilty of killing one person and injuring three Jewish worshippers during Passover in 2021 (Figueroa, 2021; Nelson & Gage, 2019). Earnest was further accused of setting fire to a Mosque in the Californian Escondido Islamic Centre a few weeks prior to his Poway Synagogue attack, as well as posting to 8chan a bigoted, racist, and anti-Semitic manifesto that praised the New Zealand Mosque shooter, Brenton Tarrant (Figueroa, 2021; Nelson & Gage, 2019). According to Nelson and Gage (2019), Earnest’s attack on the Poway Synagogue was six months removed from “the Tree of Life Poway Synagogue attack in Pittsburgh, Pa,” where “a gunman killed 11 people” (para. 13). Earnest is also believed to have attempted to livestream his attack similarly to Brenton Tarrant during the New Zealand Mosque attack one month prior (Collins & Blankstein, 2019).

Given the high-profile nature of the attack, the apparent link to an avowed white supremacist attacker, and the targeting of a Jewish place of worship, I initially assumed that the Poway Synagogue attack likely is heavily discussed in two of the RWE malicious enclaves being studied, namely Act for Canada and Pegida Canada. First, my finding surprisingly shows how little attention was paid to this attack. There was only one related post, and it was the only acknowledgment of the Poway Synagogue attack. It says:

- It seems if it's not a mass murder committed by White Supremacist, it's not even worthy of acknowledgement by Hakeem Jeffries who blamed the latest synagogue shooting along with the NZ Muslim shooting and Pittsburgh synagogue killings on WHITE SUPREMACIST but seems to have forgotten 290 "EASTER WORSHIPPERS " killed by Islamist in Sri Lanka or the 120 Christians killed by Islamist in Nigeria the week of the NZ shootings, if it doesn't DEMONIZE white people just don't mention it, and if it makes Muslims look bad do not mention it after all it was the AR 15 rifle that killed 49 at the Pulse in Orlando the Afghan guy was just holding the rifle.
The post concerned Hakeem Jeffries, an American Democrat politician who publicly condemned white supremacist motivations behind recent attacks on Mosques and Synagogues. The poster implied the only intention of Jeffries was to blame white people and not hold Muslims accountable for similar attacks. Instead, the conversation for most of the posts in the entire Poway Synagogue attack dataset was focused on the April 21, Sri Lankan Easter attack. By breaking it down into a succinct summary of what was discussed within the two-day window during the Poway Synagogue attack, we begin to see the role of these malicious enclaves and the types of hateful frames they encourage. As shown in Table 8, most of the Poway Synagogue attack dataset posts were Islamophobic and supportive of violence against Muslims.
Out of 352 posts collected within the Poway Synagogue attack dataset, 55 (or 16%) of the posts were categorized as supportive of violence (see Appendix 1 – 10: Violence Support), and all were solely directed toward Muslims. The calls for violence ranged from the harshest forms, such as physical beatings and nuclear attacks, to the milder forms that expressed that Muslims only understand military reactions and peaceful solutions with Muslims and Muslim countries need to end. Instead of there being any actual “enclave deliberation,” where people “deliberate” and intend to formulate a political or ideological pathway for their views, what we are witnessing is a form of “affective escalation” whereby the interaction and deliberation are meant to demonstrate involvement. However, the established views and opinions are already known to members (Barendregt & Schneider, 2020). As Barendregt and Schneider (2020) describe, “banal activism,” which “consists of everyday forms of engagement, with sometimes seemingly vulgar contents and often familiar routines and natural forms…” we similarly see “everyday engagement” transpiring through posts and one-upmanship taking place within malicious enclaves “deliberating” on how to address Muslims (p. 5). Here, the desired objective is the propensity for the most extreme rhetoric and the individual with the most egregious form of “sabre-rattling.” Essentially, the most heinous forms of posturing are what we are witnessing; as with the findings of Ahmed (2014) and Lim (2017), to hate the most is conducive to loving the most.

Following the above commentary, we can see what I call “affective escalation” as the “affectively” driven one-upmanship to indicate one’s resolve is present. The following comments are examples of posts that support violence within the Poway Synagogue attack dataset and are indicative of “affective escalation”:
Blowup every mosque
Protect the terrorists mosques!!! how fucked is that!!! That side of the planet needs to be nuked

The above indicates the one-upmanship of posts within the support for violence category. The posts mainly focus on the need to “halt” what the posters feel is Muslim aggression towards the rest of the world. However, calls for violence against Muslims became increasingly hostile in tone as the “affective escalation” progressed. For instance, posts suggest Muslims provoke attacks against themselves (by their actions). Posts then suggest that all Muslims should be collectively held accountable for terrorism. The more heinous calls for violence move from burning mosques to dropping nuclear bombs on Muslim countries.

The comments within the Poway Synagogue attack dataset that were not celebrating the idea of violence inflicted on Muslims discussed the “backwardness” of Islam and its followers with 51 posts (14%) (see Appendix 1 –29: Muslims). For instance, the following comment was standard:

No surprise another Muslim following the Koran to execute or convert non believers!

The comments that disparage Islam and Muslims without also calling for violence often frame the religion and its practitioners as “barbaric,” “totalitarian,” “brain-washing,” “child molesting,” and “violent.” Variations of these words and themes make up most of the commentary on Muslims within the Poway Synagogue attack dataset.

The third most common frame within the Poway Synagogue attack dataset focuses on protecting Canada (see Appendix 1 – 4. Defence of “real” Canada) with 50 unique posts (14%). The posts categorized using the “protecting Canada” frame are mainly reposts of petitions that call to ban Muslims from Canada and have Islam listed as a terrorist ideology. The post below shows one version of two posts (each reposted ten times, for a total of 20) connected to the same petition calling for Islam as a faith to be listed as a terrorist entity to defend Canada and “real
Canadians.”. One of the petitions shared was:

- I am a proud Canadian who believes in all that Canada stands for and that it is worth making a stand over. That is why it perplexes me why so many of my fellow Canadians won't make a stand and their voices heard even with a simple petition. If you have been a Canadian long enough, then chances are you have relatives who have served, or fought and died for the very freedoms we are loosing. Is it that you think that being nice or pretending that there isn't a problem that it will simply go away? Make no mistake, this problem isn't going to go away from doing nothing. The infestation of Islam into the fabric of our peaceful society, if left unchecked will tear us apart. It has been shown that this political cult hidden behind the false flag of religion has been tearing civilizations apart around the world since it's inception in 610AD. With their population of 1.8B they have an estimated 300M minions who are considered extremist. That's roughly the same population of the USA who wants to kill all of us Infidels. To put that into perspective, on 911 it only took 9 terrorists to kill 3000 innocent people just trying to do their jobs. In Canada, we have a list of terrorist organizations that we consider to be extremely dangerous. There are 55 groups currently on that list, and out of those 43 (82%) are Islamic. That means that one of the main common denominators of terrorism is Islam. The purpose of the petition is to list all of Islam as one organization, and until they can evolve to fit into modern western society then they should simply remain outside of Canada. So from one proud Canadian to another, please do your duty to help protect our great Nation before it's too late. Please sign and share.


The post links to a petition, which as of January 16, 2023, has 1,553 signatures. Other posts within this category discussed the incompatibility of Islam within Canada. Such as:

- Wtf do they have a Canadian leaf there. There's nothing Canadian about islam
- Come on this is Canada lets close the dam borders send people back and save whats left! To mush bs going on in Canadas politics that is to destructive in this day and age go back and rebuild your own country! This is not rasisits this is the truth our government are the problems!

The tallied posts using this frame also discuss how immigration is deteriorating Canada and that people from war-torn countries must return and solve their problems.

The fourth most popular frame in the Poway Synagogue attack dataset was celebrating, promoting, and defending Christianity (see Appendix 1 – 3. Christian Teachings, Promotion, and Victimization). The total posts categorized using this frame are 31 (9%). These posts discuss Muslims’ “threat” towards Christians and churches and a global conspiracy against Christianity. The following posts summarize the breadth of commentary:
Because Christianophobia is on the rise! We must wake up Christians and Jews they are coming for us!

Because of political correctness Muslims are being promoted and Christians dont matter now because of globalization and the new world order we are ignoring history and it will be repeated, remember lest we forget history will it be repeated!

This frame captures the most conspiratorial beliefs articulated by Act for Canada and Pegida Canada and is centred around the idea of global powers orchestrating the persecution of Christians. The comments expressed ideas of a Muslim-UN conspiracy predicated on the belief that both are fighting to overthrow Christianity in Western countries and their Judeo-Christian underpinnings. Following Entman’s (1993) description of frames (discussed in Chapter 3.1.4.), we see how Act for Canada and Pegida Canada are using their posts to “define problems,” “diagnose causes,” “make moral judgments,” and “suggest remedies” (p. 52). Using this standard framing procedure allows Act for Canada and Pegida Canada to argue through a façade of intellectualism that the most persecuted group in the world is Christians, yet the only group, those with power care about, are Muslims. To remedy this situation, closing mosques, removing Muslim immigrants, and only allowing Christianity to be practiced within Canada are considered worthy objectives.

While tempting to view the Facebook group function where Act for Canada and Pegida Canada are posting as a perverse ideological or identity-driven space, we see, based on the findings of the third and fourth most popular frames in the Poway Synagogue attack dataset, that the posts are hateful racist, xenophobic, and violence-endorsing frames. According to Papacharissi (2014), such posts can be “labelled affective because they blend opinion, fact, and emotions into expressions verbalized in anticipation of events that have not yet gained (mainstream) mediality” (p. 63). Furthermore, Entman (1993) describes frames by describing the “text” like that “…which are manifested by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically
reinforcing clusters of facts or judgements” (p. 52). The affective text being promulgated through posts is part of an established set of frames that rely on judgements that can be classified as affective. The point is that the above posts shared from Act for Canada and Pegida Canada are affective because they are rapid responses to the content shared in a specific context (Papacharissi, 2014).

The fifth most popular frame within the Poway Synagogue attack dataset focuses on the Canadian Liberal party (see Appendix 1 – 15: Canadian Liberal party or leaders), with 25 posts (7%). Like the previous paragraph, the posts captured using this frame blend Christian persecution with a conspiratorial belief system of Justin Trudeau’s government working to make Canada an Islamic nation. Trudeau is believed to have created a special budget to promote Islam within Canada because he is a secret Muslim. Trudeau has managed (according to these theories) to hide his Islamic beliefs by operating through the Islamic practice of Taqiyya to disguise his actions. The following posts cover the range of comments within the frame:

- In Canada our federal media and prime minister turn an isis terrorist into a hero and millionaire.
- That is part of what Trudeau is doing in Canada, he provides subsidies to protect mosques; he does not shut down churches but at the rate it is going, he is certainly not the friend of christians. DO NOT VOTE FOR TRUDEAU the destroyer of Canada.

It is apparent that during the Poway Synagogue attack, the posts from Act for Canada and Pegida Canada regularly intersect amongst three other frames (i.e., depicting fears of Islam, Christian victimization, and Canadian liberals). Trudeau41 is (according to the RWE malicious enclaves) an enemy of Christians and Canada for bringing Muslims to Canada. Demonstrating similar

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41 Justin Trudeau and the Liberal party of Canada provided a $10 million payout and apology to Omar Khadr for the injustice he faced as a minor being brought to a warzone by his father and later imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay by the United States when he was 15. This sum of money was seen by posters within these groups as Trudeau openly funding terrorism (Platt, 2019). In fact, it was the previous conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper that agreed to this settlement with Khadr (Wherry, 2017).
findings to frames three and four, we see Islam as a favoured religion and Christianity as being discarded as part of the description behind why Justin Trudeau is particularly harmful.

The discussion within the Poway Synagogue attack dataset was used by the individuals within Act for Canada and Pegida Canada to frame all Muslims as responsible for the Sri Lankan Easter attack and claim Muslims were responsible for provoking the Christchurch Mosque attacks. This chapter's support for violence against Muslims was the second highest (behind the Sri Lankan Easter attack dataset). The calls for violence gained traction and impetus from a petition that sought to label Islam as a terrorist ideology, rebuking Trudeau for paying Omar Khadr and the aftermath of the Sri Lankan Easter attacks. It is apparent due to the singular acknowledgment that posters were aware of the shooting at the Poway Synagogue attack. However, violence perpetrated by a white man was not the violence Act for Canada, and Pegida Canada members were interested in condemning.

Further demonstrating the previous point is that the singular acknowledgment of the Poway Synagogue attack was a criticism of Hakeem Jeffries for arguing that there was a white supremacist motivation. While affective can describe many emotions, based on the posts examined thus far, I argue that the key affective driver of these RWE malicious enclaves is hate substantiated by white and Christian norms (Ahmed, 2004; Jardina, 2019; Kaufmann, 2019). As Ahmed (2004) details, “[t]he ordinary white subject is a fantasy that comes into being through the mobilization of hate,” elaborating, “[t]he emotion of hate works to animate the ordinary subject, to bring that fantasy to life, precisely by constituting the ordinary as in crisis, and the ordinary person as the real victim” (p.118). These posts confirm earlier research on hate-driven enclaves, where no coherent political positions or claims are being promoted that one would expect with an ideological or identity-based discussion (see Lim, 2017). Instead, we see reactions
supported by identity, racial, religious, historical, and ideological frames designed to generate and circulate hate-fueled discourse through their posts, where the RWE malicious enclaves frame themselves as victims to justify their views.

With the Poway Synagogue attack, the target of Act for Canada and Pegida Canada’s hatred is mainly toward Muslims and Liberals for enabling them. While both RWE malicious enclaves share pro-Israel sentiments, Act for Canada are staunch defenders of Israel. While I cannot prove why they were disinterested in commenting on Jewish people being targeted with violence within the United States, there is previous research demonstrating that many supporters of Israel in the far-right are more anti-Palestinian in nature (Gries, 2015). Demonstrating that Jewish lives are important when they are seen to be fighting Muslims, but discardable when they are not (Gries, 2015). As such, we see Muslims described by members of these RWE malicious enclaves as “warmingongering,” “overpopulating,” and “culturally backward” people who are singularly focused on destroying white civilizations and Christianity. Echoing the findings of Ahmed (2004) and Hage (2003), this supposed assault on white people and Christians justifies and explains their hatred as a logical conclusion from Muslims' supposed behaviour and actions.

6.5. News Event 5: Jason Kenney becoming Premier of Alberta, April 30, 2019, using Act for Canada and Canada Defence League

The fifth news event examines the election of Jason Kenney, who became Alberta's Premier on April 20, 2019 (Ramsay, 2019). Kenney’s United Conservative Party ran on a platform of creating jobs, reinvigorating the oil sector, and giving tax breaks to corporations. Further, Kenney has been a political favourite of many right-wing extremists due to his strict immigration policies, calls to remove “illegal immigration,” and attacks on the human-rights group Amnesty International (Freeman, 2019; Markusoff, 2017; Neve, 2019). I chose this news event to understand the posts used when a conservative politician (those favoured by these RWE
The most popular topic was Muslims, with ten posts (16%) (see Appendix 1 – 29).

Representative posts using this frame are:

- Read there evil book Koran there plan for future domination and control and the lies they will spread to protect Allah or Mohammad that calls for sharia law after they become the majority and give non believers the choice to convert to Islam or he executed as written in the unholy book the Koran!
- If you want Islam go back to your own Country and back in your Country you can do as you please but not in our Canada.

While conservative politicians are all touted as emblematic of the values these RWE malicious enclaves stand for, this news event received little attention relative to others, with 61 posts. Like other news events, the belief in a Muslim takeover is apparent.

These posters from Act for Canada and the Canada Defence League believe that the Quran has key phrases that all Muslims abide by uniformly.
This supposed takeover includes Sharia Law and forced-conversions of non-Muslims. However, many posts identified within this frame clearly express disdain for Islam within Canada. Post #2 illustrates the belief that if someone wishes to be a Muslim and practice their faith, they should leave Canada. They stress the collective view of posters in the Act for Canada and the Canada Defence League and the incompatibility between being Muslim and Canadian. Overall, the posts illustrate common themes such as Muslims being invaders and Islam being incompatible with Canadian values.

The second most popular frame, with nine posts (15%), focuses on Islam and left-wing ideologues (see Appendix 1 – 19: Denigrating International Far-Left Politicians). Posts that cover the scope of opinion using this frame are:

- Awe the left!! When true it slut shaming you, theyre promoting womens rights regression and oppression lol its like when they march for feminism and Islam lol, cant make that shit up
- The Left r nothing more than Fascists and Commies
- Remember, Nazis were left-wing socialists!

The most prominent theme is tying left-wing politicians and parties to ideologies associated with violence, such as fascism and communism. These posters believe that opponents of the supporters of Act for Canada and the Canada Defence League are the same individuals that supported gulags and the holocaust (Beauchamp, 2019; Longman, 2018). The posters argue that the same forms of orchestrated human suffering are actively being sought by their current opponents. This supposed historical trajectory from fascism and communism to present-day leftist thinking is why these posters believe their opponents can justify aligning themselves with Muslims. The argument is that the “fascist/communist left” is well-positioned to form a relationship with Islam, a religion they view to be on par with those violent and totalitarian
ideologies. The third most prominent frame used with eight posts (13%) focuses on the mainstream media (see Appendix 1 – 13: (defunding) Mainstream Media, Fake News, Forcing a Narrative, Hollywood, Censorship, or being Deplatformed). Posts tallied using this frame are:

- Boycott Sports Illustrated.
- Just keep shoving them down our throats everyday in a hundred different ways. I dont find theyre clothing appealing nor proper!!I wouldnt go to the beach wearing a touque or a balaclava

The criticism of the mainstream media was a response to an April 29, 2019, Sports Illustrated cover that featured Halima Aden, a model wearing a “burkini” (LeSavage, 2019). The criticism suggests that Sports Illustrated has capitulated to Islam by allowing a Muslim woman to adorn what is viewed as a “Muslim swimsuit” on the cover. They accuse the publication of being cowardly because they have never shared images of Charlie Hebdo cartoons that mocked Islam and instead have featured a celebratory cover of a Muslim woman. The Jason Kenney news event reveals how intensely attuned these RWE malicious enclaves are to multiple media sources that help them locate material to maintain the circulation of hate. While there is no indication that these RWE malicious enclaves have any interest in sports, through their social networks, they can cover much space to locate many publications, groups, and individuals that discuss a topic that can simultaneously strengthen their sense of victimhood and serve as hateful fuel for their convictions (see, Ahmed, 2004, 2014; Baum & Potter, 2019; Bhatia 2019; Lim, 2017).

During the news event’s two-day window, there was no interest in Jason Kenney winning an election. The story deemed important to Act for Canada and Canada Defence League is a discussion about the harms inflicted on them and other “real Canadians” from having to view a Muslim woman on the cover of Sports Illustrated. While the most popular topic of the posts was a general attack on Muslims and the social harm Muslims (according to these RWE malicious enclaves) cause, there is a notable shift from just vilifying Muslims and their beliefs to an attack

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on Muslim clothing and “practices.” To comprehend why Act for Canada and Canada Defence League members react to a photo so harshly, I draw attention to the affectively driven space they have established for themselves. Again, we see a pattern of heightened anxiety about the dangers of Muslims and their enablers, coupled with an old Islamophobic tactic, described by Karim (2003), of labelling all Muslim men as abusive and Muslim women and girls being forced into subservience. The posts are a visceral reaction to Muslims and Islam being treated as anything other than a maniacal force that may challenge the Act for Canada and Canada Defence League members’ “anxious” self-depiction, which frames themselves under siege (Ahmed, 2004, 2014; Entman, 1993). At best, these posts showcase an ideological and identity-based shell to conceal the real impetus behind the posts, which is hatred of Muslims, leftists, and the mainstream media.

The final two most prominent frames were seldom used and will therefore be assessed together. These frames are the need to defend Canada with three posts (5%) (category 4: Defence of ‘real’ Canada) and to save women and children, two posts (3%) (see Appendix 1 – 5: Defence of Women and Children). The continuation of xenophobia and Islamophobia that sustained this news event have continued through the defence of Canada posts. The following is a post utilizing this frame:

- This is Canada and we are not Islam and never will be ! Sorry not are couture !

Intermingling with the frame of defending Canada are posts captured with the frame of defending women and children from Islam. The posts focus on the backward thinking the burkini represents, along with other Muslim women’s clothing. The posters articulate that they view the model’s clothes as an attempt to impose Islam on Canadians. The final, most prominent frame used by posters within News Event 5 focuses on the need to protect women and children. Like
other frames within News Event 5, the discussion focuses entirely on Islam and Halima Aden. The posts are:

- control than idk what is. Its not the womens body that needs to be hidden its the MANS MENTALITY that needs to be eradicated. WOMEN DO NOT NEED TO COVER THEIR BODIES IF WE ARE TO CONSIDER OURSELVES EQAUL TO MEN!!!
- Because nothing says "female empowerment" more than clothes your husband forces you to wear.

Again, the conversation was centred around Halima Aden. The posts suggest that Muslim “men” and “husbands” are responsible for inequality toward Muslim women. However, given that the burkini (a perceived form of Islamic clothing) is at the centre of the debate, it is clear common stereotypes of an abusive Muslim man deciding what his wife and daughters wear are discussed (for discussion on Muslim stereotypes, see Karim, 2003).

The hateful posts of mainstream media within this news event depict publications like Sports Illustrated as cowardly for not republishing the Charlie Hebdo cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed (Mannix, 2019). Their quest to be viewed as victims of totalitarianism describes publications celebrating any Muslim individual as a capitulation. The capitulation is proven by not circulating photos that may (in their view) encourage Muslims to be aggressive. These posters seem to relish the thought of having the ability to post material that could cause an immediate and violent uproar from the “Muslim community.” The posts reveal a desire to relentlessly provoke Muslims to reveal their “true nature” to the world. Essentially, they frame any publication that is not Islamophobic as kowtowing to Muslims. If a publication does not frame Muslims as the enemy or part of a wave of demographic shifting forces, they overlook the coming violence resulting from Muslim immigration (according to these two RWE malicious enclaves).

While no political party or politician is mentioned, we see those individuals within these RWE malicious enclaves draw a connection from “leftists” to Fascism, Nazism, and
Communism while reminding themselves of how violent and corrupt these ideologies are. Act for Canada and Canada Defence League members further attack the convictions of their leftist opponents by suggesting that if they cared about liberating women, they would condemn Islam as “misogynistic.” By drawing on well-established racist tropes of Muslim men and supposed ideological fanaticism of leftists, we see hateful framing of evil forces (Muslims, leftists, and the mainstream media) coalescing to intentionally harm “peaceful” individuals like members of Act for Canada and the Canada Defence League (see, Karim, 2002). While most people are probably unaware of the Sports Illustrated cover that caused this uproar, Act for Canada and the Canada Defence League were able to not only draw attention to the image but reinterpret a celebration of a Muslim woman as indicative of broader and more detrimental changes sweeping across Canada and similar countries from this type of support for Islam. Their hate-fuelled response shows identity and ideologically shelled Islamophobic assault on Halima Alden, Muslims, and Sports Illustrated.


The sixth news event focuses on Conservative politician Doug Ford's swearing-in as Premier of Ontario. While the Jason Kenney news event focused on the election date of Jason Kenney, this news event examines the date when Doug Ford became the Premier of Ontario. While being a successful businessman and politician, before his rise to the premier, Doug Ford was best known for being the brother of controversial Toronto mayor Rob Ford (Berlinger & Johnston, 2016). While Doug Ford was not known for polemics, he ran a typical conservative platform of decreasing spending and “balancing the budget” (Rodriguez, Kirby, & Taylor-Vaisey, 2018). Although Ford does not have the same history of offensive comments or celebrating individuals like Viktor Orbán, he was still the candidate that many of the posters in
Three Percenters Canada and Pegida Canada celebrated, likely given their ardent support of conservatives and disdain for Liberal politicians like then outgoing Liberal Premier of Ontario, Kathleen Wynne. For this reason, the posts I examined before selecting news events demonstrated support for Ford as one of the politicians that would help lead the Reconquista of Canada against Muslims. This event was chosen for the crusader linkages between Ford and these four malicious enclaves.

The timeframe for the Doug Ford news event drew considerable attention from the two RWE malicious enclaves being studied for various reasons apart from Doug Ford. Of interest to these RWE, malicious enclaves were three other news events within the two-day data collection window. They are Bill 21 (“religious symbols ban”) in Quebec, which passed June 16, 2019, Antifa altercations with journalists, and attacks against Justin Trudeau for allowing Syrians into Canada (Oliver, 2019). Like the election of Jason Kenney, Doug Ford is not mentioned once. However, a straightforward narrative is being promoted with the 230 posts collected and examined.

The most prominent frame within the Doug Ford news event focuses on Muslims, with 45 posts making up 20% of the conversation (see Appendix 1 - 19: Muslims). Vitriol towards Muslims in this news event is broad, ranging from a general disdain for Muslims and Islam to specific instances of singling out particular Muslim organizations. General hatred toward Muslims and Islam was most of the content circulating during this news event. General statements with no key source of animosity were evident. Statements such as:

- Islam needs to be continually mocked and never accommodated or tolerated!
- In Africa especially, islam is the religion of the slaver.
- After reading this I'm going for lunch and have Mohammed Special, pulled pork sandwich and a beer.
The general disdain for Islam is apparent. Islam's common association with Satanism, slavery, and evil is invoked. There are also calls to regularly mock and treat intolerantly Islam and Muslims. While making up the bulk of the commentary of Pegida Canada and Three Percenters Canada, these posts were undoubtedly encouraged by specific stories of Muslims. A specific instance that encouraged Islamophobia in News Event 6 was a story shared on the page about the Council of American Islamic Relations (CAIR) (Emerson, 2019). A video was released on July 23, 2019, of a regional director of CAIR named Dawud Walid, allegedly giving an anti-Semitic speech where he described Jewish people as “cursed by God” (Emerson, 2019). While the alleged speech quoted was incredibly offensive and anti-Semitic, the collective accountability directed at all of Islam and Muslims is what transpired from the video (Emerson, 2019).

Posters within Three Percenters Canada and Pegida Canada accuse organizations like CAIR and any Islamic centre of supporting terrorism and policies that harm civil liberties (like freedom of speech). When there is evidence of an individual connected to one of these organizations being bigoted, it is then seen as an opportunity for the posters to attack all members of the organization and Muslims in general. Hatred is still evident and a dominant affective reaction within News Event 6. Again, we see the hate-fuelled strategy of claiming victimhood from Three Percenters Canada and Pegida Canada members. The most typical posts utilizing hate to sustain their beliefs identify all Muslim community organizations and civil rights groups such as CAIR (Council on Islamic American Relations), NCCM (National Council of Canadian Muslims), and CCMW (the Canadian Council of Muslim Women) as “fronts” or connected to terrorist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas. Such connection to violent groups is reinforced by the argument that Muslims within Canada have access to firearms while the rest of the country has their “rights” to weapons revoked (Keener, 2017). In many
ways, the Doug Ford news event presents an opposite affective reaction witnessed in the Jason Kenney news event. As we see, rather than calling out “fake news” channels such as the CBC and CNN, what makes these posts “credible” for Three Percenters Canada and Pegida Canada members, is the repetition of similar content and the allusion to evidence from credible sources to support such claims (Barrera, Guriev, Henry, & Zhuravskaya, 2020; Garrett, Weeks, & Neo, 2016; McIntyre, 2018). For instance, the CBN (Christian Broadcasting Network, whose journalists have been described as “Trump propagandists”) is regularly cited and discussed (Burton, 2017). The CBN has repeatedly reported on the alleged connection between CAIR and the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, and as such, their articles are considered accurate and trustworthy (CBN News, 2012a; CBN News, 2012b; CBN News, 2012c). What we see is a distinction between “real news” that presents facts, such as CBN and Breitbart, and fake news networks, such as the CBC and CNN, that report “fake news” (McIntyre, 2018, p. 116, 173).

Such deliberate attempts to find these articles are typical in affectively driven digital spaces (Papacharissi, 2014). As Papacharissi (2014) writes while examining social media-generated news, “…news streams generated…function as affect modulators for people using them to connect with others and express their understanding of a particular issue” (p. 118). Like other social media platforms and news streams, Facebook’s group function is perhaps more egregious, where news is purposefully shared by individuals (without an algorithm) to confirm their biases and bigotries (Papacharissi, 2014).

By examining the news articles from sources and articles deemed credible, what we see is that the articles they share and find insight from are those that confirm the assumptions and bigotry of the group and the broader enclaves they are connected with (see Barrera, Guriev, Henry, & Zhuravskaya, 2020; Garrett, Weeks, & Neo, 2016; McIntyre, 2018; Papacharissi,
Due to the disdain for advocacy groups, “fake news” publications, and deliberate references to specific articles from the CBC and CNN, it is evident that these posters within Three Percenters Canada and Pegida Canada are aware of other news outlets and information. However, the ones they enjoy are those that allow for the affective climate they have established to be emboldened (Dean, 2010; Lim, 2017). They know about the information opposing their views but are more interested in sustaining their hatred framed through historical antecedents, identity-based claims, and ideological shells. As is the case with many political and ideological organizations operation in what McIntyre refers to as a “post-truth” environment, for Three Percenters Canada and Pegida Canada, “facts are less important than feelings…” (2018, p. xiv).

With 25 posts (11%) within the Doug Ford news event, the second most prominent frame focuses on defending Canada (see Appendix 1 - 4: Defence of 'real' Canada). The posts captured with this frame respond to the passage of Bill 21\(^{42}\) within Quebec. Despite the bill being passed on June 16, 2019, a lawsuit was filed by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the National Council of Canadian Muslims to challenge the discriminatory aspects of the bill (Oliver, 2019). However, on July 18, 2019, a Superior Court in Quebec struck down the challenge from the two organizations (Olivier, 2019). Many religious and racialized individuals and communities within Quebec and Canada expressed their dismay with Bill 21 (Olivier, 2019). As a result of publications where Muslims within Quebec shared how they felt mainly targeted and harmed by Bill 21’s passage, posters from Pegida Canada and the Three Percenters Canada responded with Islamophobic and xenophobic posts. Typical posts targeting those that “complain” and are not “grateful” were common:

\(^{42}\) Bill-21 is Quebec’s ban on religious symbols (Oliver, 2019).
• Only ashamed of being called a Canadian because you're not a Canadian. A piece of paper stating you are a Canadian doesn't make you a Canadian. Being proud of letting the world know you are a Canadian makes you a Canadian.
• Why the hell are you even in my country, you and the others are welcome to go back where you came from. I promise we won't miss any of you.

The response to non-white and non-Christian concerns being raised provoked an incredibly hostile response from the posters. Derogatory comments about Muslims not being “real” Canadians were typical. Pegida Canada and the Three Percenters of Canada’s RWE malicious enclaves argue that Muslims and immigrants should leave if they are unhappy with Canada's culture. These findings are nearly identical to the same frame utilized in the Christchurch and Sri Lankan news events. This similarity shows longevity and willingness to draw upon such frames and “stock phrases,” as Entman (1993) identifies.

The third most popular frame captured 16 posts (7%) focusing on the backwardness of Antifa (see Appendix 1 – 19: Denigrating International Far-Left Politicians…). The posts respond to a violent assault on controversial reporter Andy Ngo in Portland, Oregon, by Antifa members. Ngo was assaulted on camera and was left with numerous injuries while covering a Proud Boys demonstration (Bernstein, 2019). As a result, numerous posts condemned what was presented as Antifa attacking the Proud Boys and free speech by disrupting the legal and peaceful event. Typical posts using this frame include:

• I really have mixed feelings about this. On one hand I really dislike these Violent Antifa groups but on the other hand these main stream media Liberal lapdogs could use a good whooping!
• Antifa is a terrorist group they need to be thrown in jail if u have to cover your face u r a criminal

The constant theme of this frame is the need to engage Antifa and other anti-fascist groups in a hostile manner. The posts range from imprisonment to having the organization and its members labelled terrorists. Other significant comments highlight the humour they find in assaults on
journalists. While the posters openly despise Antifa and anti-fascist groups, they are happy to watch them, harm journalists.

The final two most popular frames utilized by posters within New-Event 6 that garnered 14 posts each (6%) are disparaging comments about Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (see Appendix 1 – 15: Canadian Liberal Party or leaders, current government) and comments that are openly supportive of violence (see Appendix 1 – 10: Violence support). Comments disparaging Trudeau range from being an embarrassment to Canada to a closeted Muslim seeking to destroy Canada. Posts include:

- What a disgrace to Canada  Trudeau is a freaken idiot that no one wants to associate with stonings and honour killings don't qualify as barbaric trudeau said after visiting a gender segregated mosque.
- islamization by Trudeau has been steady..did you vote for that?
- Of course the Liberal funded Media won't report it. These unvetted Syrians are going to cost us billions in taxpayer money and lives of Canadian Citizens. The 20,000 plus will have the majority on Welfare, recieving free medical and dental. Subsidized housing and will of course be allowed to bring their relatives over to continue their parasitic lifestyle. Turdeau has royally f%cked us...almost all can not speak English or French. And it is a fact that none has any skills that would allow them to be productive members of Society.  But of course any white people that want to come here from Europe or South Africa are denied. It's a f%cking joke! If that shiteball gets voted in again in the next Election, that will certainly mean the Separation of Western Canada, if only Alberta and Saskatchewan. I live in BC and if and when it happens, if BC decides to stay, I am moving to Alberta to go...enough is enough...

As the first post indicates, commentary discusses how Trudeau has brought shame to Canada for his political policies and behaviour and the bulk of the posts using this frame speaks to Trudeau’s adoption and support of an “Islamised” Canada. Standard bigotry equates Muslims with violence, barbarism, and sexism (Karim, 2003). In conjunction with such bigotry are mentions of how Trudeau deliberately seeks to undermine Canada’s white, Christian majority by only allowing “parasitic” Syrians in at the expense of white immigrants from “Europe or South Africa.” While there is a clear continuation of patterns whereby the evils (according to these RWE malicious enclaves) of Muslims and Islam as a religion are articulated by members of
Three Percenters Canada and Pegida Canada, we see a clear divergence from this as well. Rather than post-hate-fuelled commentary (which identifies the violence and evil of the other to position the “hater” as the victim subsequently, see Ahmed 2004, 2014), we witness a shift of hate-fuelled posts to a similar process of disgust-fuelled posts (Ahmed, 2014). Articulating this process of how an identifiable group becomes an object of disgust, Ahmed (2014) writes, “they are constructed as being hateful and sickening only insofar as they have got too close. They are constructed as non-human, as beneath and below the bodies of the disgusted” (p. 97, emphasis in original). The relevance of unpacking the use of disgust is how it reveals an assumed “superiority” over “the disgusted” (Ahmed, 2014, p. 97).

Given the disgust felt by members of Three Percenters Canada and Pegida Canada towards Muslims within Canada asserting their rights as Canadians, greater effort is witnessed during this timeframe (January to August 2019) to frame Muslims as “non-human” through explicit references to Muslims being “parasitic” on the Canadian lifestyle and likening this identifiable group to “leeches” on the Canadian taxpayer and “real Canadians.” While disgust and hate towards Muslims are evident in almost every news event, what we are seeing is a response to the “religious symbols ban” that is motivating posters in Three Percenters Canada and Pegida Canada to describe Muslim women with civil-rights objections as ungrateful parasites to Canada because of their open activism (Ahmed, 2004, 2014). Such dehumanization tactics in this news event from members of Three Percenters Canada and Pegida Canada frame Muslims in the same language that insects and other invasive species are described. The examples drawn upon to “support” these claims are the accusations of “living off taxpayers’ money,” “bringing their entire families,” “ungrateful,” and groups of people that live off and take advantage of “real Canadians.” Further, this is the only dataset where we see members actively calling for “Wexit” (Western Canadian separation).
because Syrian refugees were granted access to Canada over white refugees from Europe and South Africa, coupled with Muslim women advocating for their religious rights (Joannou, 2020; von Scheel, 2020). This anger demonstrates that a call for Muslim civil rights and refugees from Syria settling within Canada has provoked such a disgusted reaction that the solution, according to some posters, is the need to recoil and demarcate boundaries by separating from the rest of Canada and establishing a new country or becoming a new state in the USA.

While the criticism of Trudeau and his immigration policy was racist, some posters moved beyond simply writing offensive posts and actively called for violence to address their concerns. Typical calls for violence in News Event 6 ranged from mass deportation to threats of firearm usage. Standard posts include:

- Deport every last one!
- Bet shes not ashamed to receive welfare, obtain free healthcare. Live in a peaceful neighborhood. Take more government handouts. I'll be happy to throw her in the damn ocean.
- And we have the right to kill them back!
- Concealed Carry Permits are needed asap!!

Calls for violence are directed toward the protestors of Quebec’s Bill 21. The calls for mass deportation of individuals in Canada “to receive welfare” are the target of derision. Discussions were dealing with protestors against Bill-21, ranging from permitting concealed firearms to “killing” their opposition.


While News Event 6 was designed to capture a conservative political victory celebration, there is no discussion of Doug Ford becoming Premier of Ontario. What is discussed are challengers to Bill 21 in Quebec, Antifa, and Trudeau’s supposed culpability in allowing individuals that are non-white and Muslim into Canada. The data reveals that rather than celebrate a conservative politician’s victory, there are attempts to vilify Muslims within Canada and Islam universally as a violent religion. These posts highlight how Muslims within Canada have harmed “real Canadians.” By examining the posts, we see a concerted effort to vilify Islam by framing all Muslims as violent, anti-Semitic slaveholders and a universal source of an evil ideology.

Table 6: Doug Ford News Event

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Brand Promotion, Defence, and Victimization</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Canadian Political Conservative or Right-Wing Promotion and Victimization</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Christian Teachings, Promotion, and Victimization</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Defence of ‘real’ Canada</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Defence of Women and Children</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Defence or Promotion of Firearms</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Free Speech and Speaking Truth</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Support for International Far-Right Politicians or Figureheads</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The ‘West,’ ‘Western World,’ Non-Canadian Western Countries, Free world, Being Victimized, Open Borders</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Violence support</td>
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<td>Western Provinces or anti-EU separation</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>White victimization</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>(defunding) Mainstream Media, Fake News, forcing a Narrative, Hollywood, Censorship, or being Deplatformed</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Anti-Canada and Provinces</td>
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<td>Canadian Liberal Party or leaders, the current government</td>
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<td>China</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Complicit Courts, Military, and Police</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Conservatives or PPC criticism</td>
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<td>Denigrating International Far-Left Politicians, Leftists, Liberalism, Elites, United Nations, Globalists, Deep State, New World Order or Soros</td>
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6.7. Summarizing the Six News Event Analyses

In this section, key findings from the news events will be recapped. Here I will illustrate what we can infer from RWE malicious enclaves and why viewing right-wing extremists through the scope of malicious enclaves aids with comprehending their views.

A key finding was the accurate assumption that news influences posts that, in turn, influence hateful content. Based on the frame analysis from the six news events, we can see that whenever possible, Muslims and the harmful impacts of Islam (according to all four RWE malicious enclaves and posters) were advanced. Each News Event (except for the Christchurch news event) was virulently Islamophobic and hostile to leftist politicians. The only time I accurately predicted the discussion was the Sri Lankan Easter attack, as the Muslim terrorist group backed by ISIS, the National Thowheed Jamath, targeted Christians with violence. Christians, Hindus, Jews, and Buddhists are all considered worthy of compassion when they can be used as a cudgel to attack Muslims and Islam. For instance, Christians are worthy victims in the Sri Lankan news event but worthy of derision in the Poway Synagogue news event. While my hypothesis, as informed by the work of Graham (2014), led me to choose news events as the focal point of what drove discussion within digital enclaves generally, I narrowed my analysis to broad news events that spoke to terrorism and conservative political victories. Immediately as my analysis revealed, the RWE malicious enclaves target, and as McCauley (2021) identified, “culture wars” content as opposed to serious political commentary. However, it was not simply a deliberation about ethics and values that specific cultural contested sites indicate (such as being supportive of welfare, abortion, and LGBTQ marriage). Instead, by drawing on Ahmed (2004, 2014) and Papacharissi...
(2014), I unpacked the nuance of hateful content circulating in these four RWE malicious enclaves that use culture wars to foment posting.

In particular, the self-victimhood apparent in most posts is used as a cudgel to attack their enemies. Rather than hate manifesting in a format where a poster blatantly says, “I hate group X,” it is often presented as “group X is attacking my family and me; therefore, I hate them because of what they are doing.” Therefore, the stories of importance are those that fit the bigoted viewpoint of these posters and justify their discriminatory and hateful outlook. By looking to Papacharissi (2014), I can state following the news event frame analyses that, like their analysis of Twitter, we see that Facebook group pages that act as malicious enclaves are similarly run by “[t]he connective and expressive affordances …[that] invites particular forms or textures of affective attunement” (p. 118). The Facebook groups “…sustain and transmit affect, and so a developing discourse … can sustain and transmit that form of intensity …” (Papacharissi, 2014, p. 118). What this means is that given the “affective attunement,” individual posters within these four RWE malicious enclaves can match each other’s “intensity” and perhaps escalate each other’s responses given that their encounters are affectively driven (see Ahmed, 2004, 2014; Papacharissi, 2014, p. 118). While Papacharissi (2014) labels digital spaces “affective publics,” I contend that such an assessment is accurate when examining Facebook and Twitter and the large audiences deliberately being connected with through hashtags and more of a chance encounter. Following the news event analyses, what is clear is the deliberate attempts to eschew outsider opinions to maintain the integrity of their malicious enclaves (which are semi-private and much more selective with whom they interact) (Campbell & Golan, 2011; Graham, 2014; Papacharissi, 2014). While the conversations are equally affective, there is a crucial distinction between an affective public and an enclave that interacts affectively. This distinction
is critical to understanding the type of communication as the frame analyses revealed no
deliberation to be found in any of the datasets. While there is no scientific measurement of when
violence will follow an onslaught of bigotry, many academics have tried to identify if promoting
bigotry is a prerequisite for enacting violence (Fredholm, 2016; Mareš & Stojar, 2016).
However, meeting the criteria for the “slow violence” thesis, affective escalation in the form of
members of malicious enclaves promoting and justifying violent actions is the closest one can
get to actively calling for violent actions without doing so (Nixon, 2011). The “affective
escalation” forms were akin to “sabre-rattling” and bravado. Affective escalation reveals the
extent to which pseudo-conversation is had by individuals within malicious enclaves looking for
an outlet to express their most hateful comments amongst safe companies that share similar
views. This affective escalation signifies that these are the rants of racist and hateful individuals
rather than any coherent political outlook.

As revealed by the six news events, hate was disguised and framed using history,
whiteness, nationalism, and group-identity-based posts. Christianity was weaponized in these
posts drawing on historical examples of how Christians were forced into militarism because of
Muslim aggression – shoring up religious and historically ordained animosity (MacMillan,
2008). Nationalism, as it pertains to whiteness, is drawn upon when it suits these RWE malicious
enclaves to define who is a rightful citizen and who is not (Jardina, 2019; Kaufmann, 2019). This
white, Christian, RWE malicious enclave is further utilized to attack individuals who ought to
support their cause (i.e., other white people who are ideologically leftist and those who promote
the rights and inclusion of “undesirable groups” such as Muslims and immigrants). There is also
a clear indication of “paranoid nationalism,” as Hage (2003) identified. Hage’s assertion that:
'Paranoia' denotes here a pathological form of fear based on a conception of the self as excessively fragile, and constantly threatened. It also describes a tendency to perceive a threat where none exists or, if one exists, to inflate its capacity to harm the self. The core element of...paranoia is a fear of loss of Europeanness or Whiteness and of the lifestyle and privileges that are seen to emanate directly from that. (p. 49)

What becomes apparent with this news event frame analysis is how “whiteness” and “Europeanness” are threatened by various liberal and leftist politicians, but primarily immigrants and Muslims in particular. While these four RWE malicious enclaves are not behaving like a social movement due to having no articulable goals and constantly drawing upon “culture wars” content (as identified by McCauley, 2021), the groundwork has been laid for these malicious enclaves, or those that are similar, to be turned into a successful movement with the right “spark” (Lim, 2013b, 2018, p. 97).
Chapter 7: The Christchurch Mosque Attack and Frame Shift Analysis

Is there a way to detect the time when violence, racism, and hateful rhetoric become more prominent within a RWE malicious enclave? How does “affective escalation” change regarding novel news events? Further, what frames are likeliest to be drawn upon in reaction to a news event that challenges a RWE malicious enclave’s outlook? Moreover, what is illuminated when members of RWE malicious enclaves begin to utilize frames in unison while reacting to a novel news event? Many of these questions are likely to have arisen as one examined the findings of the news event analysis in Chapter 6. Although illuminating, the stricture of two-day date parameters in Chapter 6 news event analysis could not provide context for how the introduction of novel news events sways affective escalation. Expanding upon Chapter 6 and identifying the hateful rhetoric and how it begins to emerge is critical to my analysis within this chapter. Therefore, this frame shift analysis will provide baseline data to track the percentage of RWE malicious enclaves’ members’ posts. I argue that RWE malicious enclaves strengthen their collective resolve by compounding and reiterating hateful content. This “doubling down” effect signifies an agreement and necessary defensive posturing whereby the RWE malicious enclave demonstrates that their content is not the thoughts of a singular hateful individual—but the accumulation of well-thought-out uncomfortable facts from honest patriots.

Central to my frame shift analysis is unpacking the establishment and justification of hateful views as content is introduced to a RWE malicious enclave. While Chapter 6 demonstrates that affective escalation within RWE malicious enclaves relies on culture war rhetoric and patriotism, I now examine the collective nature that permits and encourages such posting. I draw on the work of Hage (2003) and his arguments on social paranoia. Hage (2003)
demonstrates how ill-conceived views are championed; he writes, “Because forms of social paranoia refuse inter-subjectivity and have to feed narcissistically on their own ‘truth’ to survive, they are not something one argues with, especially when they are positioned prominently within the public sphere” (p. 66). Hage (2003) describes the process by which social paranoia allows for conspiratorial and unfounded claims to gain credence by the way right-wing extremists draw on “their own ‘truth’ to survive” (p. 66). Like the findings of Ahmed (2014), the “facts” and evidence one uses to justify hateful and racist content are often defensively positioned against challenging views. With Hage (2003), we see a more offensive-minded approach to introducing hateful interpretations of a news event or situation.

To identify how RWE malicious enclaves promote and introduce their “own truth” in real-time, this chapter focuses on New Zealand’s Al-Noor Mosque and the Linwood Islamic Centre (i.e., Christchurch Mosques) attack to answer the above questions, which occurred on March 15, 2019. There was a considerable lack of posts in my previous news event analysis from the Canada Defence League and Pegida Canada during News Event 2 (Christchurch Mosque attack) in Chapter 6. The lack of data may have been a methodological issue but expanding my analysis period from 2 days (as in the news event analysis) to 15 days within this frame shift analysis and including all four RWE malicious enclaves provides greater insight into this news event. I will first examine the empirical findings of each of the four RWE malicious enclaves by conducting a frame analysis like the ones in Chapter 6 (see sections 7.2.1 – 7.2.7). The tables list the statistical difference between the pre/post-attack datasets and are displayed following the pre-attack dataset for every RWE malicious enclave. However, to theoretically unpack the empirical data, I compile the five most prominent clusters of frames in section 7.3 – based on post disparity between the two datasets (pre-attack and post-attack) per RWE malicious enclave.
7.1. Background: the Christchurch Mosque Attacks

On March 15, 2019, Brenton Tarrant launched the Christchurch Mosque attack. Tarrant was a self-avowed “fascist” with an affinity for British National Socialist leader Oswald Mosley (Ward, 2019). Further, he was directly corresponding with European Identitarian leader Martin Sellner. Sellner, a “former” neo-Nazi who has admitted to defacing a Synagogue with a swastika, formed the Identitarian movement, which aims to address declining white birth rates, attacks against Christianity, and the harms of non-white and Muslim immigration across Europe (Wilson, 2019a). While immersing himself in white supremacism and neo-Nazism, Tarrant is said to have discovered Sellner’s movement and not only corresponded with him but became a strong supporter (ideologically and financially) of the Identitarian cause (Satherley, 2019; Wilson, 2019a). Tarrant had a history of financially and ideologically supporting white supremacists, Islamophobes, and mass shooters (Satherley, 2019; Wilson, 2019b). According to Tarrant’s posts on 4chan, the website where he acknowledged his murderous plot and links to his manifesto, he hoped to be celebrated for preventing white populations’ “great replacement” (Wilson, 2019b).

Tarrant has been an active member of a local gun range where he trained his marksmanship in preparation for his attack. It has been revealed that Tarrant’s target practising and attack planning took around three months (Wilson, 2019ab). Tarrant saw himself as one of few “brave” individuals striving to halt the erasure of white and Christian populations (Wilson, 2019ab). Before his attack, Tarrant paid homage to other mass shooters and military history, where violence was directed toward Muslims by etching key names on his assault rifle (Perry, 2019). Specifically, he wrote the names of other terrorists and mass shooters such as Alexandre Bissonnette, Anders Breivik, Anton Lundin Pettersson, and Dylan Roof on his assault rifle (Al
Jazeera, 2019; Arsenault, 2019; Narayanan, 2019). Also, Tarrant wrote the names of historical military leaders known for fighting Muslim forces, such as Skanderberg, Antonio Bragadin, Milos Obilic, Bajo Pivljanin, and Charles Martel (Al Jazeera, 2019; Arsenault, 2019; Narayanan, 2019). Tarrant also showed an affinity for contemporary military leaders who enacted violence toward Muslims, such as Serbian leaders who fought in the Bosnian War (1992-1995). Tarrant paid tribute to Serbian war criminals while carrying out his attack by playing a Serbian war song that celebrated the genocidal war criminal Radovan Karadžić (who targeted Muslims in Bosnia) (Al Jazeera, 2019; Arsenault, 2019). Further homage was paid to Serbian war criminals by etching the words “kebab removed” on their assault rifles, similar to how Serbian forces wrote “remove kebab” to describe their genocidal plan against Muslims (Coalson, 2019). Lastly, Tarrant also expressed an interest in reclaiming Istanbul from Turkey, which he still views as Constantinople (Coalson, 2019). Tarrant’s intention seems to have been deliberately linking himself to as many contemporary and historical individuals that targeted Muslims with violence as possible (Coalson, 2019). The inspiration for Tarrant seems to be anyone that was homicidal and genocidal toward Muslims.

The devastation from Tarrant’s attacks on the Al-Noor Mosque and the Linwood Islamic Centre killed 51 people and injured 49 (Roy & Graham-McLay, 2020). Tarrant pleaded not guilty to every charge he was accused of (Roy & Graham-McLay, 2020). However, on March 26, 2020, Tarrant changed this earlier decision and pleaded guilty to “51 [charges] of murder, 40 of attempted murder and one charge under the Terrorism Suppression Act” (Roy & Graham-McLay, 2020, para. 6). Motivated by a host of historical and contemporary anti-Muslim wars, anti-Muslim violence, and Muslim-hating individuals, Tarrant was responsible for the largest terrorist attack in New Zealand’s history (Roy & Graham-McLay, 2020). While world leaders,
mainstream news publications, NGOs, and many everyday citizens expressed sympathy and support for the victims, there have been no systematic scholarly analyses of the RWE malicious enclaves and how they responded to a terrorist attack against Muslims. Such revelations may identify the collective resolve of the RWE malicious enclaves. For instance, what will a reaction of sorrow and grief for the victims reveal versus a celebratory reaction? Will intricacies of hatred be revealed when a group regularly vilified by a RWE malicious enclave is now being met with an outpouring of support and sympathy?

7.2. Measuring the Shifting of Frames

Based on post quantity and analysis of frame, the news event analyses immediately demonstrated that when Christians are attacked, and a Muslim group is responsible (i.e., The Sri Lankan Easter attack), the commentary from posters denouncing the attack is immediately numerous. In comparison, the news event analysis of the Christchurch Mosque attacks demonstrates that there was no immediate conversation from members of the Canada Defence League or Pegida Canada. The following frame shift analysis will increase the length of data inclusion parameters and provide information about posting quantity and conversation topics, both pre-and post-Christchurch Mosque attack from all four RWE malicious enclaves being investigated. The format of this section will be divided into two parts per RWE malicious enclave. I will provide an analysis that spans March 7, 2019 – and March 23, 2019. These data parameters produced a pre-attack dataset (March 7th-14th, 2019) and a post-attack dataset (March 15th-23rd, 2019). For simplicity, March 15, 2019, is included in the post-attack analysis. Rather than unpack the findings within the actual post breakdowns, the theoretical analysis will take place after examining all eight datasets (four pre-attack and four post-attack). The analysis will
examine the top 5 statistically demonstrable differences between the datasets. Drawing on the five most significant frame shifts in terms of greatest statistical frame shifts will showcase how posting behaviours change in real-time, given the reaction of the RWE malicious enclaves to the Christchurch Mosque attack.


The total number of posts captured in the pre-attack dataset for Act for Canada was 135. I will now analyze the most popular frames to understand what was discussed. During this timeframe, the most prominent frame with 19 posts focuses on liberalism and the American Democratic party (Frame 19: Denigrating International Far-Left Politicians, Leftists, Liberalism, Elites United Nations, Globalists, Deep State, New World Order or Soros). The following are posts indicative of this frame:

- They’re coming for him now but soon these commies will be coming for us. Revolution is the only answer.
- The Hungarians got rid of the Communist and now of the Muslim invasion, Great People.

The posts captured using this frame are mainly directed at “leftist” politicians and their social policies’ broader detrimental impact on Western nations. From men being less masculine across “the West” to the general populace of many countries being brainwashed into voting for leftists, the posters feel that for Western countries to survive the influx of communism, socialism, and Muslims, a leader like Victor Orbán of Hungary is required to address the ideological threats affecting Christians and the West. There is also a clear discussion of a totalitarian left that will supposedly not be content until they have destroyed the fabric of the countries (specific countries mentioned are: Canada, the USA, Germany, Sweden, and France) they currently rule. By
“destroy,” the posts reveal this to be taking effect through the further admittance of Muslims, increased social welfare, and loosening gender norms.

The second most popular frame used with 17 posts was discussions of Muslims (Frame 29: Muslims):

- They do NOT wish to be part of any Western country just live off the country infiltrate highest levels of Govt breed like mad & then gradually but surely preach via Imams their EVIL & Sharia laws in other words TAKE OVER & DESTROY us !! All their so called countries NO ONE wants to live in that’s why they are here

Posters using this frame express their fears of the “West” and the Canadian government explicitly being “infiltrated” by Muslims that wish to implement Sharia law. The posters believe that Muslims are secretly entering non-Muslim majority countries, and when the time is advantageous, they will begin a wholesale attack against the “true” inhabitants of the nation they are occupying. Until this time, the posters argue that Muslims will coordinate their efforts to destroy the cornerstones of Western civilization with the financial support Muslims receive from the Muslim Brotherhood. The typical frame is likening Muslims to “blood suckers” that feed on the “West” that will inevitably turn to violence.

The third most popular frames used will be assessed together due to the overlap in themes. They will be the 19 combined discussions that (with nine posts) support international far-right politicians (Frame 8: Support for International Far-Right Politicians or Figureheads) and (with ten posts) the victimization of the “Western world” (frame 9: The ‘West,’ ‘Western World,’ Non-Canadian Western Countries, Free world, Being Victimized, Open Borders). Typical posts within these two frames are:

- Yes Enoch warned the West years ago but NOONE listened now they have over run Europe & are doing the same here with Turdeaus blessing imagine Canadians having to tolerate these blood suckers
• Viktoria Orbán has shown us all the way, keep ur country Christian, right-wing, remove all Muslim immigrants, stand up to the unelected top brass of the EU and be prepared to fight for ur country, President Putin backs Hungary for its Christian stance, Hungary, Poland, Italy have started many East-European countries to say, “NO IMMIGRANTS HERE,” and really mean it. They have had no trouble, bombings, no mass rapes, etc, countries not to take their way of saving their country and people up I’m afraid they are doomed.

The breadth of conversation within relatively few posts is noteworthy. Historical examples of politicians such as Enoch Powell⁴³ are acknowledged as those who knew the “truth” about immigration and what would become of Christian nations should white populations be replaced as the majority in their nations. The authoritarian and populist leaders in countries like Hungary, Poland, and Italy are ideal examples of Christian nations defending themselves from Muslims. In contrast, countries such as the UK and Canada are not adequately responding to the threats of Muslim immigration. This dataset contained standard xenophobic posts that targeted Muslims for supposedly harming the social fabric of non-Muslim majority countries. The posters argue that politicians like Enoch Powell ought to be emulated. Viktor Orbán and Vladimir Putin are leaders who stand up for Christianity and Christian nations from the threat of Muslims and Islam.

⁴³ One of the most vociferous voices for anti-multicultural sentiment and pro-white identity of Britain, and heard across the British Commonwealth, was Conservative politician, Enoch Powell (Schofield, 2013; Tomlinson, 2018). In 1968, Enoch Powell, emboldened the political countermovement to broad anti-racism legislation in what became known as the “Rivers of Blood” speech (Schofield, 2013; Tomlinson, 2018).
### Table 7: Act for Canada pre/post-attack datasets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame</th>
<th>A: ACT4CANADA PRE ATTACK</th>
<th>B: ACT4CANADA POST ATTACK</th>
<th>Percentage Difference Pre vs Post</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Brand Promotion, Defence, and Victimization</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Canadian Political Conservative or Right-Wing Promotion, and Victimization</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Christian Teachings, Promotion, and Victimization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Defence of 'real' Canada</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Defence of Women and Children</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Defence or Promotion of Firearms</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Free Speech and Speaking Truth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Support for International Far-Right Politicians or Figureheads</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 The ‘West’, Western World, Non-Canadian Western Countries, Free world, Being Victimized, Open Borders</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Violence support</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Western Provinces or anti Eu separation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 White victimization</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 [defunding] Mainstream Media, Fake News, Forcing a Narrative, Hollywood, Censorship, or being Deplatformed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Anti-Canada and Provinces</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Canadian Liberal Party or leaders, current government</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 China</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Complicit Courts, Military, and Police</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Conservatives or PPC criticism</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Environmentalism or eco-fascists</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Israel and Zionism</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Muslim countries or Arabs or Middle easterners</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Student Groups and Younger Generation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Terrorism or Terrorist Organizations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 The Pope and Vatican</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Defence of identity group, anti violence, criticism of groups</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Israel and Zionism</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 LGBTQI+ (homophobia sexual discrimination)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Muslims</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 non-Abrahamic faiths, fake religions, satan, and cults</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Refugees, Immigrants, Immigration, and migrants</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 Sub-human monikers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 Unclassified</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


There are 162 posts in the post-attack dataset for Act for Canada. I will now assess the five most popular frames used within this dataset. The first frame (with 27 posts) focuses on Muslims and Islam (Frame 29: Muslims). The discussion of Muslims and Islam in this dataset discourages multiculturalism and disregards the Christchurch Mosque attack as a fictional ploy to spread Sharia law further. Posts that capture the range of commentary are as follows:
• All Mosques that have Korans and practice Sharia Laws are tied to Terror .thank you
• The New Zealand mosque shooting is a faked HOAX. This brief examination of the supposed “Live Video” CLEARLY shows and proves it to be a bullshit False Flag event and a hoax. Watch, copy, and share this before it magically disappears ... https://www.bitchute.com/video/VRRZI8Pre7oa/

The main discussion within this dataset was the framing of Muslims as culpable for provoking the Christchurch Mosque attack. While there is no overt support for Tarrant, numerous posts argue that the targeted Mosque and Islamic centre were chosen for their supposed connection to terrorism and not because they hosted Muslims at prayer. A key concern within this frame detected those who believe the attack is a “false flag” that never actually occurred. This type of conspiratorial thinking, coupled with the argument that all Muslims are potential terrorists, captures the most popular framing following the attack from ACT for Canada’s posters.

The second most popular frame following the attack (23 posts) focused on the role international far-left politicians and the UN have played in allowing Muslims to invade Christian and Western countries (Frame 19: Denigrating International Far-Left Politicians, Leftists, Liberalism, Elites United Nations, Globalists, Deep State, New World Order or Soros). Posts that are emblematic of this framing strategy within this dataset are as follows:

• If the (USA/Canada/World) does not remove ALL of Islam from its soil, and soul, it is doomed; and the rest of the world with it. 1400 years does not lie. 270 Mill + and counting Murders by Islam do not lie, the west is with its socialist pandering to Islam, thus bent on Suicide.
• What the hell gives them the right to dictate this evil bullshit the Eu the UN And the I need to be taken down and dismantled before its too late these globalist evil bastards are all part of a worldwide Islamic invasion and takeover and it needs to be stopped now before its to late and we are all slaughtered or put into slavery

The main targets of posts using this frame are the political ideologies and parties that enable Muslims “to take over the world.” As seen above, there is a variation in some political/ideological entities that supposedly allow Muslims to benefit at the expense of Christians and Western countries. The entities and ideologies identified are socialism, Agenda
21, globalists, the UN, the New World Order (NWO), multiculturalism, and “leftists” (EndTheFed2011, 2013; Harman, 2015). Many posts using this frame explicitly draw the connection between the EU, the UN, and the NWO and their intentions to promote Islam through global murder campaigns and enslavement of all who do not convert. Many posts share concerns about “Western suicide” guided by a “socialist” ideology that allows murders from Muslim perpetrators to go unchecked. Points made within these posts summarize that Muslims are uniquely violent and manipulative.

The third most popular frame used within the post-attack dataset (with 13 posts) promotes violence (Frame: 10 Violence Support). The posts within this frame explicitly call for violent solutions to the “Muslim invasion” and greater access to weapons to oppose Islam. A selection of posts promoting violence are:

- Many of us started learning this 20 years ago and evil enjoyed this because they had the upper hand to keep the masses ignorant but then got to greedy in the end to where now we’re fucked unless world war 3 actually happens civilly.
- I’d suggest for them to carry a knife and to twist it into their stomach and send them to see Allah if they try any of their bullshit, but I feel like based on how ass backwards feminism is these days they’d likely allow the assault happen and then take out their aggression on a dude who holds a door open for them or accidentally makes eye contact or something.

The posts utilizing this frame are fatalistic, and the overall theme is the necessity for violence on individual and global levels between the forces of “good and evil.” Many posts argue that WW3 needs to happen, and (supposedly), as revealed in the Bible, everyone will have to decide which side they are on. This final battle is supposedly going to take place between Christians and Muslims. The belief is that Christians are under imminent threat, and global war is the only solution to halt Muslims. Other forms of violence that (especially in Europe) are shared using
this frame are discussions of how to respond to refugees within Christian/Western countries that seek to harm “European women.”

The final two most prominent frames contain ten posts each. They focus on the “western world” being attacked (Frame 9: The ‘West,’ ‘Western World,’ Non-Canadian Western Countries, Free world, Being Victimized, Open Borders) and the culpability of mainstream media for not criticizing Islam (Frame 13: (defunding) Mainstream Media, Fake News, Forcing a Narrative, Hollywood, Censorship, or being Deplatformed). I will begin with frames utilized by posters describing the assault on the “Western world.” Posts indicative of the range of commentary include:

- Whose country is it anyway? If strict laws were enforced, criminals immediately deported, and warnings given and enforced, from arrival, this probably would not be the problem it has become worldwide. Time to quit feeling sorry for them, they ruined their own country, and, are doing the same everywhere else!

Broad concerns are expressed about what will transpire if Muslims and “illegals” are not deported. Many posts argue that refugees should not be given aid as they are responsible for their own countries falling apart. By allowing refugees to settle outside their home countries (the posters argue), such destruction can be expected to spread.

The next most common frame (Frame #13) focuses on the mainstream media’s supposed collusion with Islam to depict Muslims as victims. Posts that capture the breadth of commentary are:

- Muslim victims of murder are not more tragic than Christian, Jewish, Hindu or any other. Western liberal media obsessively under-report Islamist violence in Africa and Asia, while giving full coverage for any presumed offence to Muslims In the West. This is a disturbing double-standard.
- CLOSE DOWN THE CBC
The discussion of the media within this frame argues that the mainstream media treats Muslims that are victimized (such as those in the Christchurch Mosque attack) as more deserving of sympathy than the victims of Muslim terrorism as it may “offend” Muslims that live in “Western” countries.

What has been discovered within this dataset is an increasingly violent hostility toward Muslims, left-leaning politicians, and the mainstream media. The fears that the “Western world” is under a constant violent threat requiring a wholesale military response are also articulated. Muslims are depicted as “playing the victim” to bring about global domination rather than denounce Tarrant or the Christchurch Mosque attack, support for violence, and apocalyptic discussion of Biblically ordained war were promoted.

7.2.3. Canada Defence League: Pre-Christchurch Mosque Attack (Data inclusion March 7, 2019-March 14, 2019).

The Canada Defence League has 62 posts within their pre-attack dataset. This dataset is the smallest of all four RWE malicious enclaves in the frame shift analysis. As such, little has been discussed within these seven days. The most prominent frame (with 15 posts) is the discussion of Muslims (Frame: 29 Muslims). The discussion within this frame promotes an anti-halal food campaign that began on March 11, 2019, against a small restaurant owner in Windsor, Ontario (CTV Windsor, 2019). The restaurant was attacked online because it offered Halal options, and many who ate there felt their religious rights violated for not being “warned” and offered an alternative. This discussion of Halal food resulted in negative online reviews targeting this restaurant to harm his business (CTV Windsor, 2019). Atypical post was:

- MUSLIM HALAL FOOD: CBN News discovered that the money made from Muslim halal food sales is funneled to fund terrorist activities.
The overall discussion is that Halal foods reflect Sharia Law “creeping” into Christian countries like Canada. Therefore, if Muslim food is tolerated, it will lead to more overt forms of an Islamic takeover. Aside from this conversation, nothing else was noted in this dataset.


The Canada Defence League’s post-attack dataset has 85 posts. Like the previous Canada Defence League dataset, the post-attack discussion is almost entirely focused on Muslims; however, the posters now stress engaging Muslims with violence. Twelve posts discuss Muslims
(frame: 29 Muslims), and eight posts actively endorse violence (Frame 10: Violence support).

Furthermore, all eight specifically single out Muslims and are included in Frame 29. This clarification is essential due to the increased support for violence toward Muslims following the Christchurch attack. Standard posts within these two frames are:

- WHY BRITAIN VOTED TO LEAVE THE EU: Canada is at risk by our politicians and security forces who have like the Nazis partnered with Isl’m and it's ideology. The Canadian Public are left to fight aga’nst what's coming.
- Through all those corrupt treasonist political hack shits into Gitmo with their friends and see how loving they are getting their throats slashed with a spork. Templars the day of justice is on.

The posts using these frames depict increased calls for violence against Muslims and liberal politicians. What can be seen in the identified posts is the belief that current left-wing and liberal politicians (whom they describe as “traitors”) have decided to fight against those that they refer to as “racists” and “white supremacists” instead of joining them in removing Muslims from non-Muslim majority countries. By denouncing individuals that refer to Islam as incompatible within European and North American countries, the posters believe this demonstrates an alliance with (what they see as) Muslim invaders.

This dataset reveals an increasingly violent hostility towards Muslims, leftists, liberal politicians, and any group that may oppose the Canada Defence League. The posters argue that due to the “government” and the “security forces” not doing their jobs properly, the Christian group members (“Templars”) of the Canada Defence League will have to stand up for themselves. No sympathy was expressed in this dataset for the victims of the Christchurch Mosque attacks or any denunciation of the attacker or attack itself. Furthermore, only posts depicted the victims as having provoked the attack. Lastly, numerous calls were made to increase aggression towards Muslims globally by harkening back to crusader forces.
7.2.5. Pegida Canada: Pre-Christchurch Mosque Attack (Data inclusion March 7, 2019-March 14, 2019).

The total posts tallied in Pegida Canada’s pre-Christchurch Mosque attack dataset was 432. The top 5 frames will now be analyzed. The most prominent frame (with 57 posts) discusses Muslims (Frame 29: Muslims). Posts that capture the breadth of commentary are:

- Absolutely correct: allow me to share one of my notes on this subject: THE MASSACRE ‘THEY DON'T TELL US ABOUT...Amidst all the self-righteous hoopla being spread by islamic apologists about the alleged genocide of Rohingyas Muslims in Myanmar, they neglect to tell you of the reasons why the Myanmar government and people want the Rohingyas out...this massacre of 99 villagers for refusing to convert to islam is only one example!44
- UK: ANOTHER MUSLIM RAPE GANG IS CHARGED45

Wide posts of current affairs about Muslim populations and activists are found throughout this dataset. Extensive coverage of the Rohingya crisis was gaining international media attention in 2019, and numerous posts argue that the Rohingyas are manipulating the world through coordinated “Taqiyya.” Another discussion that had lots of traction in this dataset was conversations surrounding what these digital enclaves refer to as “Muslim rape gangs” or “Muslim grooming gangs” (Malik, 2018). Right-wing extremists use both terms to describe the behaviour of Muslim and South Asian men; they argue deliberately target white women in the UK and across Europe and force them into prostitution (Malik, 2018).

The second most popular frame (with 40 individual posts) within this dataset are posts that argue for the need to protect the historical and authentic Canada (Frame‘4: Defence of ‘real’ Canada). Typical posts include:

- Those of us that have been here for more than 200 years, these are the real Canadians they're families for generations have built and died for this Country,
- They weren't able to promote Islam in Rohingyas, got pushed out, so they come to Canada.

44 https://creepingsharia.wordpress.com/rohingya-massacred/
45 https://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/273135/uk-yet-another-muslim-rape-gang-charged-robert-spencer?fbclid=IwAR2JXcmC5vfuXWDn660DIOJ6OuGMP5jRHiE5fklC8FgBH9wxzv7FTcs
The breadth of commentary using this frame ranges from defining the population that declares themselves as “real Canadians” to the “spiritual battle” being waged across Canada against Muslims and immigrants. The posts that utilize this frame fall under two primary categories: a “true” Canadian and the incompatibility of Muslims and particular immigrants within Canada. This historical dimension of “real” Canadians presents the argument that the views these posters hold of Canada ought to outweigh the input of newer Canadians. Such posts are accompanied by claims that Christianity is under attack within Canada, and if the real Canadians do not stand up, they will lose their country to imposter Canadians.

The second significant finding utilizing this frame is the “detrimental” impacts Muslims have on Canada. There is a shared belief that the Rohingya could not convert the Burmese population to Islam, and now they have changed their tactics to convert Canadians. Some posters argue the “Islamic invasion” has already begun, and similar to cities across Europe, Ottawa is experiencing (the conspiracy of) Muslim enforced “no go zones” (Graham, 2015). This argument posits that Muslims control specific neighbourhoods and do not allow non-Muslims to enter the vicinity (Graham, 2015). While there is no evidence of this, the posters cite news sources such as creepingshariah.com and jihadwatch.com to promote the view that the Muslim takeover of Canada is happening and will succeed without a drastic and immediate response.

The third most popular frame used within this dataset is active calls for violence (Frame 11: violence support), with 33 posts. The typical posts solely call for violence against Muslims:

- So, these are the same people that started the whole mess by attacking first and provoking the backlash in the first place. People seem to forget that. What the Rohingya did was the “equivalent of poking the bear”.
- Only total worldwide nuclear war can save humanity from this evil cult that is being packaged for consumption as the religion of peace by the elites who control the world as nothing else explains why
everywhere you turn we are getting this bullshit fed to us day and night while covering up the atrocities that are now the norm around the world committed in the name of Islam, Nigeria church death toll since February 120 and counting

Posts endorsing violence are primarily centred around three topics: the Rohingya, Muslim militants killing Christians in Nigeria, and the need to close Mosques that are open within Canada. As in the discussion above, the discussion of the Rohingya argues that the Muslim population within Burma brought upon the violence they experienced themselves, and the calls for violence are directed entirely at Muslims.

The fourth most popular frame used within this dataset focuses on the culpability of international leftist politicians (Frame 19: Denigrating International Far-Left Politicians…) for (supposedly) allowing Muslims to gain a strong foothold across Europe and North American countries. In total, 26 posts were using this frame. A representative sample is:

- Trudeau uses groups like antifa to shut us up, not happening
- It really is scary how many of them have drunk the kool aid of diversity and multiculturalism. I don't have a problem with much of that; however, I do have a problem when it involves accepting people whose values are inconsistent with our democratic values. I believe very strongly that fundamentalist islam is one of the greatest, if not the greatest threat to our western world that exists at this time.

The discussion using this frame ranges from Antifa being a militant wing of the Canadian Liberal party that takes direction from Justin Trudeau to Muslims “playing the victim” when they are “invaders.” The post also suggests that due to the UN Migration Compact, unprecedented levels of Muslims are entering the non-Muslim majority countries. Many Muslims describe what they feel is discrimination, and the response is aimed at “sending them back” to where they can no longer be “victimized.” The commentary frames members of Pegida as the victims of a global conspiracy against non-Muslim populations.

The fifth most popular frame used (with 24 posts) is discussions of Christianity (Frame 3: Christian Teachings, Promotion, and Victimization). The posts identified using this frame range
from the supposed favouritism Islam as a faith receives within Canada to the Canadian
government’s decision to turn its back on Christian refugees and immigrants. Posts that capture
the breadth of comments are:

- Hand out a Bible and they lose their friggin minds on Campus so NO this trash, which produces more
  extremists and causes more death and suffering around the world than any other book in history has no
  place on a College campus where Parents pay a lot of money’ for their Kid's to be Educated not
  tempted, manipulated, indoctrinated and some radicalized by radical uncivilized ideologies.
- Great civilizations tend to commit suicide. This is why we are in the fix we are in. We have lost our
  rock, our Judeo/Christian anchor.

“Benevolent Christianity” is constantly being juxtaposed with “violent Islam.” Most posts using
this frame juxtapose the unfair treatment of would-be Christian immigrants to Canada that have
(supposedly) been ignored in favour of Muslim immigrants. The belief is that the Government of
Canada is only interested in Muslim refugees from Syria and Iraq while deliberately ignoring the
minority Christian populations living there. The posts within this dataset are extensive. However,
the common theme that binds them is that Muslims are violent, anti-democratic, and
misogynistic.

The post-Christchurch Mosque attack dataset from Pegida has a total of 1568 posts. Making it the largest single dataset in the dissertation. The most popular frame used (with 290 posts) discusses the global “threat” of Muslims and Islam (frame 29: Muslims). Due to the quantity, there is a broad range of discussion. Key examples are:

Table 9: Pegida Canada pre/post-attack datasets
• Don't forget all other religions https://www.breitbart.com/africa/2019/03/16/nigerian-muslim-militants-kill-120-christians-three-weeks/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social
• there children males of course actually were caught throwing stones at little girls on the beach in Ontario cuz they were whores (not wearing clothes on the beach) I would love to get then to understand this is OUR COUNTRY go the hell HOME, WE DONT WANT YOU HERE there has to be some controll put on them they preach hate and murder and kill the infedel and wonder why there mosques get attacked people are afraid of them.

The commentary using this frame captures the breadth of Islamophobic posts. However, unlike Pegida’s previous dataset, the “post-attack” dataset primarily focuses on the violent nature of Islam by drawing on “evidence” from the Quran. They argue that Muslims are so uniquely violent that they cannot live peacefully. The posts using this frame are broadly Islamophobic and repeatedly blame Muslim people as the cause for the Christchurch attacks.

The second most popular frame within this dataset is (with 115 posts) focused on the media’s supposed collusion with Islam (frame 13: (defunding) Mainstream Media, Fake News, Forcing a Narrative, Hollywood, Censorship, or being Deplatformed). Posts that capture the discussion are:

• The CBC won’t be sending a roving reporter like they did for the NZ event.. no cute pics of Haka and weeping white people to interview.
• WHERE IS THE MEDIA? WHY IS THIS NOT SOWN ALL OVER THE WORLD? WHY ISNT THE 120 CHRISTIANS KILLED IN NIGERIA PASSED FEW WEEKS NOT MAKE WORLD NEWS, LIKE THE SHOOTING OF MOSQUES?

While many posts disparage the media, the most common criticism is the lack of attention to Christian victims in Nigeria (Williams, 2019). On March 17, 2019, Breitbart reporter Thomas Williams argues in an article that was widely shared in this dataset that “Political leaders and public figures were falling over themselves this weekend to condemn the mosque attacks in New Zealand, while dozens of Christians were slaughtered by Muslims in Nigeria to the sound of crickets” (Williams, 2019, para. 1). In response to Williams’ article, numerous posters argue that this is because it is acceptable to be bigoted, violent, and genocidal toward Christians. While
most posts argue that the lack of attention to Nigeria is because they are Christian, others believe the media does not care because there are no sad white people. The most common theme within this frame is mainstream media's indifference to the plight of Christians globally, and Nigeria is a case and point for this belief.

The third most popular frame in the dataset, with 110 posts, are those that focus on Christians and Christianity (3: Christian Teachings, Promotion, and Victimization). Posts that capture the variety of commentary are:

- This is the reason for New Zealand attack and again u do this, for it to happen in the soonest in Canada. May God help u guys. Those who live by the sword will die by the sword. God is a righteous.
- An eye for eye thats all i got to say
- ...sow the wind and reap the whirlwind...

Most posts within this section quote the Bible to state that the Christchurch Mosque attack was justified or brought about by the actions of Muslims. The most retributivist verses from the Bible suggest the attack was divine intervention. Overall, the discussion advances the argument that the Muslim victims in New Zealand received their just deserts and that justification for such violence is revealed in the Bible.

The fourth most popular frame, with 95 posts, are arguments from activists and concerned citizens or, perhaps, some of Pegida who wish to thwart calls for violence that challenge Pegida’s views (frame 26: Defence of identity group, anti-violence, criticism of groups). Typical posts within this frame include:

- Killing is wrong, be it muslim, Christian or anybody. So all should come to together and condemn this brutality
- Holy crap Pegida you really are messed up. We need to deal with the christian terrorists you idiots.

---

Some posts quote verses from the Bible, such as Hosea 8:7. “They that sow the wind shall reap the whirlwind.” (Hosea 8:7., the New International Version), to promote their views of defending Canada. This spiritual battle is supposedly the Muslims “sowing the wind” by (in their view) invading Canada and the inevitable “vengeance” from terrorists like Tarrant are the resulting “whirlwind.”
A considerable discussion pushes back against Pegida supporters within this dataset. The most typical comments challenge Pegida members over the claims they have made. The activists argue there is no evidence to substantiate any of the claims made by Pegida’s members in their attempt to justify the Christchurch attack. Overall, the main pushback from within this dataset is an attempt to challenge the belief that this attack was brought on by the behaviour of New Zealand’s Muslim community.

This dataset's fifth most popular frame (82 posts) criticizes international leftists (frame 19: Denigrating International Far-Left Politicians, Leftists, Liberalism, Elites, United Nations, Globalists, Deep State, New World Order or Soros). Typical posts within this frame include:

- Extremely simple answer. They can't call you "izlamophobic" if they are the ones giving you the reasons to fear islam. Telling the truth destroys ‘their own posts. The GLAZIS don't want you to know the truth.
- Probably the thousands of victims by the Muslim terrorism are not humans as much as the 50 victims in New Zeland.SIMPLY IT IS CALLED NEW ORDER VIA ISLAMIZATION !!!!BACK TO THE STONE AGE OF SHARIA !!!!
- The UN is the Cause of the problem. Please read The UN Agenda 2021 2030 Decoded by Mike Adams of Natural News. It explains what is happening.

Criticism of international leftists within this dataset is highly conspiratorial. The discussion is centred around Glazis (“globalist Nazis”), the globalists, the New World Order, and the UN (Zimmer, 2018). It is important to stress these various measures: admitting Muslim refugees, following the UN, and believing in global warming, are all seen as instruments used to bring about an NWO where everyone will be expected to be a socialist Muslim and part with their Judeo-Christian upbringing. “Global Islamization” is viewed to be part of the “agenda” behind the Christchurch Mosque attacks because the posters believe the global reaction to a “minor attack” only detracts from paying attention to the crimes of Muslims. The belief is that globalists and “Islamists” further their agenda by making people feel sorry for Muslim victims of terrorism.
rather than viewing them as perpetrators. Any international body (such as the UN) accused of conspiring with “Islam” is the main discussion in this dataset.

7.2.7. The Three Percenters Canada: Pre-Christchurch Mosque Attack (Data inclusion March 7, 2019-March 14, 2019).

The pre-attack dataset for the Canadian Three Percenters had 29 posts. Due to the lack of posts, I will summarize the key concerns by analyzing the three most popular frames and analyzing them. The entirety of the posts within this dataset are focused on Justin Trudeau (frame 15: Canadian Liberal Party or leaders, current government), the threat of Islam (frame 29: Muslims) and defining “real” Canadians (frame 4: Defence of 'real' Canada). The posts primarily centre around Omar Khadr, receiving $10 million from the Canadian government and Canadians that joined Daesh and wish to return (Platt, 2019). Key posts include:

- All best buddies of Jihadi Justin, just waiting for their 10 million dollar handouts of Canadian tax payer dollars, fucking insanity.
- Catch all of them and deport them all including all of their family members to their homeland they love so much They are willing to commit crimes against us here in our country. Deport them all

The standard frames that posters advance are Justin Trudeau secretly funds and endorse Muslim terrorists and Canadians who fought for Daesh should not be allowed to repatriate. Further, all family members of Daesh fighters ought to be deported as well because they are depicted as a terrorist in waiting. The posts seek to damage the reputation of Justin Trudeau because of his perceived complicit policies that allow Muslims to enter en masse into Canada.
### Table 10: Three Percenters Canada pre/post-attack datasets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Brand Promotion, Defense, and Victimization</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack &amp; No Activity Pre Attack</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack &amp; No Activity Post Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack &amp; No Activity Post Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Defence of ‘real’ Canada</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Defence of Women and Children</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack &amp; Post Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Defence or Promotion of Firearms</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>800.00%</td>
<td>800.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack &amp; Post Attack</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Free Speech and Speaking Truth</td>
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<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack &amp; Post Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Support for International Far-Right Politicians or Figureheads</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack &amp; Post Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The ‘West’, Western World, Non-Canadian Western Countries, Free world, Being Victimized, Open Borders</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack &amp; Post Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Violence support</td>
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<td>6.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
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<td>0.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack and Post Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Western Provinces or anti Eu separation</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack and Post Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>[Defunding] Mainstream Media, Fake News, Forcing a Narrative, Hollywood, Censorship, or being Deplatformed</td>
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<td>3.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack</td>
</tr>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
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</tr>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Canadian Liberal Party or leaders, current government</td>
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<td>24.1%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
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</tr>
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<td>16</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack and Post Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Complicit Courts, Military, and Police</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
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<td>0.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack &amp; No Activity Pre Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Denigrating International Far-Left Politicians, Leftists, Liberation, Elitist/Globalized Nations, Globalists, Deep State, New World Order or Soros</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>300.00%</td>
<td>300.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack and Post Attack</td>
</tr>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Environmentalism or eco-fascists</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack and Post Attack</td>
</tr>
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<td>Israel and Zionism</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack and Post Attack</td>
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<td>Muslim countries or Arabs or Middle easterners</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack and Post Attack</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Student Groups and Younger Generation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack and Post Attack</td>
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<td>Terrorists or Terrorist Organizations</td>
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<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack and Post Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>The Pope and Vatican</td>
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<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack and Post Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Defence of identity group, anti violence, criticism of groups</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack and Post Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Jews</td>
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<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack and Post Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>LGBTQA+ (homophobia sexual discrimination)</td>
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<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack and Post Attack</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6.9%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack and Post Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>non-Abrahamic faiths, fake religions, satan, and cults</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack and Post Attack</td>
</tr>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Refugees, Immigrants, Immigration, and migrants</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack and Post Attack</td>
</tr>
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<td>Sub human monikers</td>
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<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>-100.00%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack and Post Attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>133.33%</td>
<td>133.33%</td>
<td>Top 10 Pre Attack and Post Attack</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7.2.8. Three Percenters Canada: Post-Christchurch Mosque Attack (Data inclusion March 15, 2019–March 23, 2019)

The Canadian Three Percenters post-Christchurch Mosque attack dataset had 51 posts.

Like the first dataset, not a single frame met the ten post criteria for inclusion. Therefore, I combine the three most popular frames and capture the conversation. The most popular posts within this dataset spoke of firearms being taken away from law-abiding citizens (frame 6: Defence or Promotion of Firearms) and how the Liberal Government led by Justin Trudeau has...
ruined Canada (frame 15: Canadian Liberal Party or leaders, current government). Posts that capture the breadth of conversation are:

- After the shooting, New Zealand plans to punish everyone who didn’t commit a crime by taking their firearms. This is a great alternative!
- I will never give my firearms away, if this is needed they will be hide and only me will know where to get them!!
- The shooter posted online that he used guns specifically to cause social discourse. Basically the terrorists won this round.

The posts using these frames are almost entirely focused on gun rights and leftist politicians, supposedly seeking to politicize the Christchurch Mosque attack. The belief that New Zealanders would allow their gun rights to be infringed upon because of one attack infuriates these posters.

Overall, the conversation within this dataset is minimal. The frames utilized were primarily around gun rights being infringed upon based on the actions of Brenton Tarrant. No comments argued that the attack was wrong, just that the fallout would harm gun owners. Further, more commentary was based on the scale and intensity of attacks “regularly” carried out by Muslims than the Christchurch attack.

7.3. Christchurch Mosque Attack: Frame Shift Analysis Findings

Upon compiling the datasets from the four RWE malicious enclaves, it is clear that there was no immediate reaction in the news event analysis discussing the Christchurch attacks, the frame shift analysis datasets had vastly more content. Further, there were substantially more posts in the post-attack datasets for every malicious enclave than in the pre-attack datasets. There was a significant increase in posting following the Christchurch attack. I will discuss the top five most prominent findings based on a statistical increase or decrease in posts between the two datasets per RWE malicious enclave to keep the findings manageable. To do this, I will assess frames that were often categorized together based on the content of the posts. Therefore, posts
may be included in multiple frames (as discussed in the Methodology). Therefore, the frames that were categorized together will be examined together.

7.3.1. Top 5 Frame Shifts

While digital social media platforms are notorious for allowing racist, discriminatory, and other bigoted commentaries, we witness by examining what I have identified as RWE malicious enclaves how such speech is allowed and expected. Below I will recount the top 5 most statistically significant findings based on posting disparity within the RWE malicious enclaves. As will become apparent, the RWE malicious enclave can manoeuvre posting commentary to fit the worldview held by the members. In a sense, this concerted effort allows the individuals involved to (almost) never experience a challenge to their worldview as everything is altered to demonstrate their rightness. I posit that the findings within the following five sections are only possible because the RWE malicious enclaves are established. It is important to stress that the discrepancy between the comments will provide less insight into the study if I examine a broader swathe of any social media platform. Therefore, it is necessary to reflect on the importance of the malicious enclave as providing a space where the views expressed through posts are enabled.

1. Pre vs. Post Discussion of Globalists, the NWO, Leftists, and Liberals (frames 15 and 19)

While frames 15 and 19 were used to categorize different findings regarding international leftist politicians (Frame: 19) versus the domestic Canadian leftists and liberals (Frame: 15), both speak to a similar disdain for non-conservative politicians, as is evident in the frame shift analysis. Frame 19, which examined international leftists, was the only frame in the post-attack

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47 Using Excel and a standard function, I calculate the percentage difference between the datasets with the post attack datasets by using the following function for each code: post attack − pre attack ÷ post attack. This function allows for relevant findings based on the two datasets to be revealed in the “percentage difference” columns of the four charts.
datasets to receive increased attention from all four RWE malicious enclaves following the Christchurch attack: Act for Canada increased 21%, Canada Defence League increased 500%, Pegida Canada increased 215%, and Three Percenters Canada increased 300%. As revealed in Chapter 6, the discussion regarding international leftists, the NWO, and the UN was always conspiratorial and full of unfounded accusations. However, the post-attack datasets have a variety of arguments that accuse “the left” of planning, promoting, and profiting from the attacks at Christchurch. Further, the post-attack datasets (and Frame 19 in particular) almost exclusively describe organizations like the UN as a “Caliphate” that is focused on bringing about global Sharia law (Islam will be discussed in the third finding). While Islamophobic comments were present in the pre-attack datasets, the accusations of leftists promoting Islam at the expense of the “Western world” are rampant in the post-attack datasets. There is also a notable increase in determination to “expose” the UN and the NWO for promoting Islam in the post-attack datasets.

The primary frames advanced by the RWE malicious enclaves via individual posters are the UN and “Islam,” attempting to convert and enslave all humanity. Fears of being replaced by Muslims are the main difference in the posts. Rather than voicing critiques of liberalism or the UN rooted in facts or even ideology, the data reveals a hate-fuelled frame to an anticipated backlash against “honest” and “truth-seeking” individuals like those who make up these four RWE malicious enclaves. In the seven days following the Christchurch attack, there is an exponential increase across all four RWE malicious enclaves against all potential allies of Muslims and Islam. A universal reaction from all four RWE malicious enclaves is an attack against all political and ideological opponents that may come to the aid of Muslims. What I witness is like Ahmed (2004, 2014) and the prominence of victimhood by identifying the conspiring forces that are colluding to attack them. While “evidence” to support their claims are rarely drawn upon, when it is,
approved news sources such as the CBN and Breitbart are used to assist with the accusation against leftists and institutions that aid Muslims as “traitors” (for historical references of similar rhetoric see, Barrett, 1987; George, 2004; Lensmire, 2017; Moon & Flores, 2000).

The second was Frame 15, which looked at the domestic Canadian leftists and liberals. The discussion of Canadian leftists following the Christchurch attack also increased in three of the digital enclaves’ conversations: Act for Canada increased by 25%, Canada Defence League remained static at 0% increase, Pegida Canada increased 250%, and Three Percenters Canada increased 14%. The pre-attack frame from all four RWE malicious enclaves accuses Justin Trudeau and the Liberal party of wanting to impose Sharia law and forcing Canada to embrace Islam as their faith. Justin Trudeau is regularly accused of funding terrorism with Canadian taxpayer dollars to implement this demographic and legal change. He is also accused of making it impossible to criticize the “Islamic invasion” from numerous pre-attack posts by the defensive stance of labelling “justifiable” criticism as racist and discriminatory. To further prevent Canadians from defending themselves, Trudeau is also accused of taking away gun rights so that when the “Islamic invasion” begins, Canadians cannot defend themselves verbally or physically from the constraints he has implemented.

The notable difference between the datasets is the increased accusations in the post-attack datasets that Justin Trudeau is himself a Muslim. While he was referenced as “Jihadi Justin” throughout both pre/post datasets, this was often in conjunction with the argument that he favoured immigrants and Muslims over “real Canadians.” The post-attack discussion of Trudeau argues that he is explicitly a Muslim, which is why he is (according to the posters) intentionally harming Christians and Canadians. The posters make clear across the four RWE malicious enclaves that Trudeau, Muslims, and “Muslim lovers” will use the Christchurch attacks to
promote Islam globally and harm individuals in these RWE malicious enclaves and similar “patriots.” While historically, politicians in Canada were accused of being “race traitors” when not immediately siding with white/Christian interests, the tone is similar to “Muslim/Islam lover,” “secret Muslim,” and “Muslim Traitor” used to describe Trudeau in the post-attack datasets (Fleras, 2014, p. 249; MacMillan, 2008; Moon & Flores, 2020). This label is used to juxtapose Trudeau’s supposed preferences between “citizens of the host country” and “his new Muslim friends.” I believe that accusations of Trudeau and Liberals as “lovers of Islam” are the same sentiment white supremacists and racists historically expressed to harm inter-faith and inter-racial coordination to create a wedge between white people, Christians, and Muslims (Fleras, 2014; MacMillan, 2008). When examining the domestic and international leftist organizations criticized by these four RWE malicious enclaves, it is apparent that the “threat” to racial and religious dominance is expressed.

2. Pre vs. Post Discussion of Violence (Frame 10)

Given the diversity and nuance of what was determined to support violence, Frame 10: violence support will be analyzed independently. Frame 10 classified violence-support as ranging from wholesale removal of a particular faith, race, or political group from a country or geographical boundary, justifying assaults against a group (i.e., Muslims), and endorsing nuclear attacks. Following the frame shift analysis, it was discovered that posts meeting the criteria to be included in frame ten increased in three of the RWE malicious enclaves and remained static in one. Act for Canada increased by 116%, Pegida Canada increased by 109%, and Three Percenters Canada’s discussion of violence remained static. Canada Defence League only had activity in the post-attack datasets, so a percentage difference cannot be calculated. Based on the posts categorized in pre/post-attack datasets, the type of violence support and endorsement
remained similar in tone throughout both datasets for each RWE malicious enclave. However, one notable difference was the calls for “Crusaders,” “Templars,” and a “holy war” to defend the Christians in Nigeria, destroy the UN, and quell what they believed to be an Islamic threat following the Christchurch attacks. There was no single post calling for Christian military forces in the pre-attack datasets for any RWE malicious enclave. Historical Christian militaries, such as the Templars and the Crusaders that battled heavily against Muslim armies, are argued to need a revival (Baron, 2011). This aggression has two possible sources and explanations that are not mutually exclusive. Firstly, a Breitbart story by Williams (2019) discussed Nigerian Christians being killed and the lack of mainstream media coverage, juxtaposed with the overwhelming media attention paid to the Christchurch attack. Such reactions to the Nigerian attacks mirror those following the Sri Lankan attack coverage in News Event 3, demonstrating that when Christians are harmed anywhere, the RWE malicious enclaves seek historically embraced Christian-ordained retribution through calls for Crusaders and Templars against Muslims everywhere. Second is the fight for victimhood, which is crucial for maintaining and justifying the continuation of hateful posts from these four RWE malicious enclaves. Seeing that Muslims are being globally recognized as victims of a heinous attack will (following the justification of these four RWE malicious enclaves) take away from the atmosphere of victimhood they have established that places Muslims and Islam in the role of perpetual aggressors and victimizers. Therefore, we see a nearly unanimous reaction where the posts shift and almost immediately begin framing Muslims derogatorily as “terrorists,” “criminals,” “culturally backwards,” and “violent.” This immediate transition in framing is part of the strategy of maintaining a sense of victimhood to challenge what most mainstream media outlets deemed a horrific terrorist attack.
What remained static throughout pre/post-attack datasets across the RWE malicious enclaves were posters blaming Muslims for the violence that Muslims themselves experience. Across both datasets, the Rohingya and the “inevitable” increase in violence that will transpire in Europe (posters argue) following Muslim immigration were blamed on Muslim behaviour. We see an increased effort to blame Muslims for the Christchurch Mosque attacks in the post-attack datasets. Accompanying this standard accusation was an effort to label the UN and leftist politicians as enabling the “crimes of Muslims” against white, European, Western, and Christian countries and individuals, justifying leftist politicians and the UN as targets of violence as well.

Despite the widespread justification and endorsement of violence, no singular poster across the RWE malicious enclaves shows a willingness to engage in violent acts. The rest of the posts are calls for violence from other organizations (such as the police, agents of the Church, and the military) they believe should act violently on behalf of the RWE malicious enclaves’ interests. The violence discussed is generally called for, perhaps hoping to provoke a fellow member to act on their behalf. Posts that call for violence or suggest violent recourse to Muslim and leftist provocation are ambiguous regarding who should carry out the violent acts; however, it is clear that they are the real victims (Ahmed, 2004). For instance, there is no singular call for the RWE malicious enclave (Act for Canada, Canada Defence League, etc.) to carry out violence. However, as the posts indicate, ample ambiguous forms of violent support are written. Perhaps this is to prevent being designated as violent by Facebook or the authorities. Despite what I find to be deliberate attempts to skirt open calls for violence against Muslims and leftists, within a 15-day window across 4 RWE malicious enclaves, 133 posts explicitly call for and justify some form of violence. Particularly troubling was that the calls for violence skyrocketed following the Christchurch attacks. Rather than condemn the attack, the posters discredited it as a
fake attempt to harm Christians and white people. The Christchurch attack was used as a rallying cry to prepare themselves against the violence and injustices they would experience (see Ahmed, 2004, 2014).

3. Pre vs. Post Discussion of Muslims, Muslim-majority countries, women and children, Refugees/Immigrants, Satanists, and Sub-Human Monikers (Frames 5, 22, 29, 30, 31, and 32)

Given the obsession with Muslims and Islam, most of the content across the four RWE malicious enclaves almost always ties back to Islam somehow. Frame 5: Defence of women and Children, and Frame 30: non-Abrahamic faiths, fake religions, Satanism, and cults, were almost exclusively about the “crimes” and “cultural waywardness” of Muslims. The main challenge with such frames is detecting the nuance of the labels the four RWE malicious enclaves applied to Muslims and Islam following the Christchurch Mosque attacks and the culture of the space where they are occurring (Entman, 1993). Every dataset contained a constant barrage of insults and bigotry directed toward Muslims. I discovered that although Muslims were regularly discussed and demeaned by the four RWE malicious enclaves, there was a near-universal increase in discussing Muslims (Frame 29) in the post-attack datasets. While the conversation's tone and content are virtually indistinguishable, the key difference seems to be the volume. The statistical post difference per digital enclave is Act for Canada’s 58% increase, Canada Defence League’s decrease by 20%, Pegida Canada’s 408% increase, and Three Percenters’ 100% increase. A relatively static discussion of Muslim-majority countries accompanied the standard Islamophobic posts seen across datasets. Act for Canada and Canada Defence League had a static number of posts in both datasets with no statistical difference, Pegida Canada had a 287% increase in posts, and the Three Percenters Canada never acknowledged Muslim-majority countries. Like the standard discussion of Muslims, the discussion of Muslim-majority countries
did not show any noticeable shift in posts in either the pre- or post-attack datasets. Discussions of Muslim-majority countries revealed that the RWE malicious enclaves constantly need to frame all the imagined ills associated with these nations and the dangers of these policies expanding beyond their borders into other non-Muslim majority countries. The posters spoke to the inhospitable nature of Muslim-majority countries to other faiths and the detriment such countries have to the rest of the world.

Similarly, the imagined attack from Muslims against white/Christian nations is the findings from Frame 31: refugees, immigrants, immigration, and migrants. The belief in the deliberate erasure of white and Christian populations is strengthened by the notion that liberals and leftists are admitting “fake refugees” and “dangerous immigrants” to help bring about a demographic shift. Frame 31 experienced a slight increase in three out of four malicious enclaves, while one decreased. Act for Canada decreased by 75%, Canada Defence League only had a single post in the post-attack dataset, Pegida Canada increased by 85.71%, and the Canadian Three Percenters only had a single post in the post-attack dataset. Although the findings are not robust, given that there is no noticeable change in the discussion, when examining the posts, like other frames, Muslims have been associated with terms such as “illegal/dangerous immigrants” and “violent/fake refugees.” To unpack this fear of Muslim countries and refugees spreading across North American and European countries, it is essential to reflect on Ahmed’s (2004) understanding of “border anxiety” (p. 132). Unlike News Event 3: The Sri Lankan Easter Attack discussed in Chapter 6, we see that “border anxieties” can be drivers of hate about their enemy’s home nation (supposed) expansion (Ahmed, 2004, p. 132). Demonstrating that the posters within these four RWE malicious enclaves feel that no matter how much time Muslims spend away from Muslim countries (even if they are born in non-
Muslim majority countries), they must have a connection to an imagined monolithic Muslim state that is working to transgress the border of white and Christian nations (Ahmed, 2004). Like News Event 3, I observed similar tactics of framing Muslims and individuals from Muslim-majority countries as violent and culturally backward.

Further, there was a popular accusation from posters that accused refugees (commonly framed as “rape-fugees”) from Muslim countries deliberately move into Christian nations to sexually assault and exploit “western,” “Christian,” and “white” women. A common finding was that news articles being hyperlinked showcased accusations against an immigrant, refugee, or person from a Muslim-majority country being accused of sexually assaulting women. The standard frame is that the words within this frame (“refugees, immigrants, immigration, and migrants”) are almost always associated with Muslims trying to gain access to a white and Christian-majority country. A key distinction found in the discussions surrounding Muslims in the post-attack datasets was in Act for Canada and Pegida Canada’s linking of Muslims to other topics. For instance, Frame 5: defence of women and children received a 20% increase in posts from Act for Canada, a 170% increase for Pegida Canada, and no discussion from the Canada Defence League or the Canadian Three Percenters. While neither frame produced enough attention in the top 5 frames for the post summaries, it is essential to acknowledge that they exclusively discussed women and children (Christian and Muslims alike) as victims of Muslim men. It echoed Islamophobic discourses where Muslim men are framed as inherently violent, barbaric, and dangerous to all non-Muslims and white populations (see Karim, 2003).

Another frame that captured Islamophobia was Frame 30, “non-Abrahamic faiths, fake religions, Satanists, and cults.” While the posts within this frame were not significant enough to be included in the top 5, some findings are valuable. Firstly, half of the malicious enclaves
experienced an increase in posts, and 2/4 experienced a decrease in activity. Act for Canada decreased by 66.7%, Canada Defence League only had posts in the post-attack dataset, Pegida Canada increased by 375%, and the Canadian Three Percenters posts decreased by 100%. While there is no cross-group significance, the language used in this frame is telling. The posters in the pre-attack datasets discuss Buddhists removing the Rohingya from Burma. The point is to mention that Buddhists also hate Muslims, which is significant from the RWE malicious enclaves’ perspective because of the peaceful image of Buddhism. The post-attack datasets shift in tone (for 3/4 digital enclaves, including Act for Canada and the Three Percenters Canada despite losing popularity) showcase more individuals likening Muslims to Satanists, devil worshippers, and “cultists.” While this language is found throughout those datasets, there is a notable increase following the attack.

Lastly, another frame that captured Islamophobic sentiment was Frame 32, “subhuman monikers.” While there is no real statistical difference in posts using this frame, it is essential to acknowledge that of the 40 combined posts in both pre/post attack datasets, 26 of them occurred in the post-attack dataset. Further, all the posts are about Muslims. The comments include themes suggesting Muslims “infest” the world, “are like vermin,” are “blood-sucking monsters,” are an “infection,” “cancer to the planet,” “fiendish,” and that they “over breed.” All subhuman monikers and language in this section were directed solely at Muslims. Such vociferous dehumanization is part of the recipe of hate described by Ahmed (2014), whereby there is not only a straightforward narrative as to why Muslims and refugees are “disgusting” but clear evidence of feelings of superiority by the ease by which these RWE malicious enclaves defame and discriminate against them (p. 97). Posts used to express disgust are essential for these
individuals as they provide justifications and reminders that their enemies are not *real* civilized people like themselves (Ahmed, 2004, 2014).

4. **Pre vs. Post Discussion of Christian, Western, and White Victimization (frames 3, 9, and 12)**

A typical grouping of frames spoke to the collective victimhood the posters felt they and their fellow malicious enclave members experienced. Victimhood was captured in three separate frames and included being white, Christian, or from a “western” country as under siege identities (for theoretical discussion, see Ahmed, 2014; Kaufmann, 2019). Posts captured within these three separate frames were the diverse ways the malicious enclaves positioned themselves as victims of another’s (mainly Muslims and leftists) naked aggression. To begin, Frame 3 identified the entire discussions of Christianity from the malicious enclave members. Following the Christchurch attacks, discussion of Christian victimization increased for 3/4 malicious enclaves. Act for Canada increased 400%, Canada Defence League had four posts in the post-attack only, Pegida Canada increased 358.3%, and there was no discussion for the Canadian Three Percenters. The discussion of Christianity increased, but the tone changed as well. In the pre-attack datasets, creating churches was proposed to halt the establishment of mosques within Canada.

Also, within the pre-attack datasets, the posters often suggest that Bibles should be distributed to Muslims within Canada as this may decrease their interest in violence. The values of Christianity are presented as a panacea to the problems of Islam. Following the Christchurch attack there was a shift in concern from promoting Christianity within Canada through distributing Bibles and establishing churches to condemning the mainstream media for not covering the crimes against Christians in countries like Nigeria. There is a notable increase in
arguments that Christian lives are not crucial to leftists,’ mainstream media, or the NWO cabal. Comments also juxtapose the death toll of Christians in Nigeria versus those in the Christchurch attack. These numbers are “evidence” of disproportionate coverage of crimes against Muslims and concern for Christian victims. Based on the discussion, the Christchurch attacks solidified the views of the RWE malicious enclave members that Christians do not matter and that only tragedies involving Muslims are worthy of coverage. These members form a suspicious alliance and supposedly aim to protect Christians within Nigeria. I say “suspicious” because while discussing the violence experienced by Christians in Nigeria, there are no calls to permit them into Canada as “real refugees,” only Europeans and South Africans. By this, I mean that while technically, the Nigerians being sided with are Christians (like the posters within these RWE malicious enclaves), their suffering serves more as a function to shore up a sense of victimhood by the four malicious enclaves being studied by drawing connections between themselves and the Nigerian Christians (see Ahmed, 2014; Keener, 2017). This victimhood allows Christians within these four RWE malicious enclaves to draw on the suffering of Nigerian Christians and subsequently provide evidence for their conviction that Muslims are violent, and the global community of Christians is under siege and in need of defence.

Coupled with the sense of Christian victimhood was Frame 9 (“the west” -i.e., Christian homeland) being under siege alongside Frame 12 (white people as victims). Posts decrying the loss of the Christian homeland increased in 2/4 RWE malicious enclaves and maintained a static level of conversation for one. Act for Canada maintained the same post input across the datasets; the Canada Defence League increased by 3.5%, Pegida Canada increased by 76.92%, and there were no posts from the Canadian Three Percenters. The frames in the pre- vs. post-attack datasets for the 3 RWE malicious enclaves with activity showed no noticeable change. Across
the three malicious enclaves where these conversations were located, there are numerous examples provided by individual posters of crimes involving Muslims across countries such as Australia, Canada, Sweden, and the United States in both the pre-attack and post-attack datasets. Such points are made by posters to “demonstrate” the threat of Muslims to Christians and non-Muslim majority countries. Lastly, the third form of victimization that increased in 2/4 malicious enclaves was Frame 12, which captured posts that described white people as being victimized.

Surprisingly, there was relatively little overt discussion of disadvantaged white populations in any dataset. However, Act for Canada increased by 2.5%, Pegida Canada only had posts in the post-attack dataset, and the Canada Defence League and the Canadian Three Percenters had zero posts in either dataset. The posters that addressed whiteness overtly were interested in countering (what they perceived) to be the growing trend of white people being “ashamed” and “afraid” to speak up for their rights because they are white. The conversation in the post-attack datasets claimed that white people are too afraid of being labelled racist and bigoted. White populations will continuously be replaced because few are willing to “speak up” and “defend themselves.” Such findings echo the results from Kaufmann (2019), who discusses the four potential responses of white populations to racial minorities. The impetus for the posters here is to “fight” the change rather than “join,” “flee,” or “repress” (Kaufmann, 2019, p. 17). While other white Canadians may choose the other three options, the individuals within these RWE malicious enclaves are actively trying to halt demographic change to maintain a white and Christian majority population within Canada (Kaufmann, 2019). Other posts within these datasets discuss some posters’ issues with the notion of “white privilege.” Statistics on white homelessness and other negative statistics surrounding white populations are utilized to demonstrate how difficult life is for white people, yet the mainstream attention is only on non-
white populations suffering. The findings in this section capture the breadth of topics these four RWE malicious enclaves have used to portray themselves as being victimized across pre-attack and post-attack datasets. We see affective drivers of this hatred at work and victimhood’s role in its continuation. As Keener (2017) writes:

The affective response of fear and hatred operate not only as excesses of affect subject to a nonlinear logic of threat and threat potential, but demonstrate that the affective target is malleable, corresponding to the next potential crisis in the animation of the ‘ordinary’ subject which perpetuates their (imagined) victim status. The capacity for an affective fact to spread is as much dependent on threat potential and the activation and mediation of (the excess of) affects, as it is on the proliferation of ‘news’ sources and media outlets, which can never fully address or contain the totality of the story. (p. 147)

What Keener (2017) has described is not only the reliance malicious enclaves like the ones I study have on news events to continue their circulation of affective escalation, hate, and victimhood, but how such stories serve to frame the impending violence and crises that will follow if the target of the hate can continue without being confronted (Entman, 1993). Affective motivators behind these posts provide a semblance of informed justification for their views and feel the affective surge that continues their discriminatory posting (Keener, 2017).

5. Pre vs. Post Discussion of Free Speech, Support for International far-right figures, and the detriment of mainstream media (Frames 7, 8, and 13)

Using Frames 7, 8, and 13, posts address the right to speak the truth, champion “the few” honest politicians, and call out the mainstream media’s aversion to honesty. There was an increase in 3/4 RWE malicious enclaves and a static interest in one discussing the mainstream media following the Christchurch Mosque attacks. Act for Canada increased by 233.3%, Canada Defence league had four posts solely in the post-attack dataset, Pegida Canada increased by 576.47%, and the Canadian Three Percenters maintained a static interest across both datasets. There was a notable shift across the datasets in the accusations against the mainstream media.
The pre-attack datasets range from accusations of the mainstream media being leftist shills, censors of right-wing commentary, and pro-Islam. The shift in post-attack datasets details how the mainstream media has supposedly decided to “celebrate” the New Zealand attack victims solely because it fits the narrative of vilifying heterosexual, Christian, white men. The conversation and arguments from the posters suggest that the attack's attention is a ploy to frame white men as all being problematic. Other notable posts include accusing the media of helping stage the Christchurch attack and covering up the crimes committed against Christians. The main finding is that the coverage of the attack in New Zealand from mainstream media was viewed as having “an agenda.” The evidence provided was the lack of attention directed toward the crimes against Christians in Nigeria and the lack of emphasis on crimes committed by Muslims rather than against them. The posts focus on freedom of speech and mainstream media bias—standard posts from these malicious enclaves. We see the impulse to coalesce around accurate news sources versus fake news. However, the attack on fake news is driven by an objective beyond attacking sources they dislike. Highlighting “alternative data” or “real news” serves the purpose of amplifying sources where articles are regularly produced that correspond to these malicious enclaves and their members’ sense of victimhood (see Ahmed, 2014; Barrera et al., 2020; Keener, 2017). Therefore, “real news” such as Breitbart and CBN regularly produces content that meshes with the affective atmosphere established by malicious enclaves like the four I am studying and is easily included in spaces where they are used as fodder for further posting.

Another finding was that posts identified using Frame 7 isolated content interested in “free speech and speaking the truth.” This frame saw no common reaction across any of the four RWE malicious enclaves. Act for Canada remained static with the same number of posts, Canada Defence League saw a 25% decrease, Pegida Canada experienced a 1500% increase, and the
Canadian Three Percenters had no posts included in this category. The two pages with considerable input were Act for Canada and Pegida Canada. When examining the pre-attack posts using this frame, the comments about free speech condemn counter protestors at “patriot” rallies and those seeking to deplatform such individuals and their RWE malicious enclaves for being “truthful” about Muslims, immigrants, and leftists. However, following the post-attack dataset, the transition from the three RWE malicious enclaves (even Canada Defence League) shifted to defending those who criticized and blamed Muslims for inspiring violence against themselves. The increase within the Pegida posts were those that celebrated Fraser Anning for “speaking the truth” or being “truthful.” Other comments spoke about the negative impact of the Christchurch attack on individuals such as those who are members of these RWE malicious enclaves because they will ultimately be held accountable. The concern from across the posters in the post-attack datasets was for free speech, speaking truthfully about Islam and Muslims, and celebrating openly individuals like Fraser Anning that address “real” issues associated with Muslims. Following Keener’s (2017) analysis, we can observe that a common tactic of RWE malicious enclaves is the need to present themselves as victims, as this allows hate to be logical and defensively presented (Ahmed, 2004, 2014). The discussion of free speech as a right being under siege is an affectively driven tactic used by these four RWE malicious enclaves to make their critics look like authoritarian opponents that do not want free and open debate. Essentially, the objective following heinous positions such as Fraser Anning suggesting Muslims provoked the Christchurch Mosque attack is to use his critics as examples of those that act as silencers of free speech and actively promote Islam and mass-immigration above values and policies that

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48 Australian politician Fraser Anning was celebrated for his interpretation of the Christchurch Mosque attack. He said, “The real cause of bloodshed on New Zealand streets today is the immigration program which allowed Muslim fanatics to migrate to New Zealand in the first place” (Fraser Anning as cited in Noack, 2019, para. 5).
would benefit “real” citizens (Ahmed, 2014; Barrera et al., 2020; Hage, 2003; Keener, 2017). Therefore, it is not that the individuals within these four RWE malicious enclaves are problematic; they are (according to themselves) the truth-tellers in a world of fake news that is more interested in being seen as progressive than defending their home countries (for similar findings see, Ahmed, 2014; Barrera et al., 2020; Hage, 2003; Keener, 2017).

Surprisingly, there were no posts discussing Canadian right-wing politicians in either dataset (Frame 2). However, a frame that showed increased discussion in the post-attack datasets was Frame 8: support for far-right politicians or figureheads. Although neither frame accumulated enough posts in the top 5 frames for any of the four RWE malicious enclaves, there were apparent attempts to side with far-right politicians following the Christchurch attacks. Act for Canada experienced a 33.3% increase, Pegida Canada experienced a 600% increase, and the Canada Defence League and the Canadian Three Percenters have no posters discussing the international far-right in either pre/post-attack datasets. As introduced in Chapter 6, Fraser Anning was highlighted by posters within these datasets for the “bravery” and “courage” he displayed by arguing that Muslims were the cause of the New Zealand Mosque attack (Fraser Anning as cited in Noack, 2019, para. 5). The prominent individuals celebrated in these two datasets (mentioned multiple times) were Donald Trump, Enoch Powell, Geert Wilders, Fraser Anning, and Viktor Orbán, all contemporary and historical figures celebrated for taking the threat of Islam and non-white immigration seriously. Such commentary was the mark of a great leader that cared for their constituents.
As we can see from this chapter, the RWE malicious enclave enables posters to process news events like the Christchurch Mosque attack immediately and filter them by allowing individual posters to reframe news events that are antithetical to their worldview (Entman, 1993; Sunstein, 2017). The RWE malicious enclave, when inhabited and run by and for right-wing extremists, is not simply a place to comfortably share discriminatory views, but it helps justify them through strategic framing. Their commentary makes use of frames to situate those they despise as oppressors. This framing is critical as they justify their views as not racist or discriminatory because they are under siege (for similar insights, see Ahmed, 2004; Hage, 2003; Keener, 2017). Rather than seeing well-articulated positions that attempt to provide a modicum of evidence, the posts circulated in these RWE malicious enclaves are affective. The key affective driver of posting is hatred, which is drawn upon to frame themselves as defensive with their views (Ahmed, 2004; Hall, 1991; Hage, 2003). The “affective public” that is established foments a stronger sense of “digital intimacy” (Papacharissi, 2014; Rambukkana, 2015). We witness a “digital intimacy” that allows for a justified form of racism within the RWE malicious enclaves that openly champion bigotry by situating it within victimhood (Rambukkana, 2015; Rambukkana, 2019; Ley & Rambukkana, 2021).

Further, the data produced within this chapter demonstrates that these RWE malicious enclaves are highly attuned to mainstream media and any presentations of news they disagree with. Unlike filter bubbles and silos, which advance the notion of selectively choosing news, stories, data, and information that adhere to a said outlook and ideology, the malicious enclave demonstrates that some particularly hateful communities thrive off of interacting with material of their opposition. Essentially, the most notable distinction is the deliberate circulation of news
disagreed with to increase conversation. This observation directly challenges the notion of filter bubbles and echo chambers as it suggests a group of individuals actively seek to rebuke those points they disagree with and may increase interaction more than simply posting material they find agreeable. The malicious enclave more closely resembles the findings of Lim (2017) that individuals impact algorithms by their behaviour which in turn shapes the news they receive. The coverage of Muslims being labelled as victims of a terrorist attack made the four RWE malicious enclaves irate. They shifted their “affective escalation” to incidents where Muslims were perpetrators of violence, such as in Nigeria. However, we can view this supposed concern over Nigerian Christian suffering as suspicious, as it was not until after the Christchurch Mosque attacks that we saw posts about the Christians in Nigeria become prominent. These deflections and ample “whataboutisms” dedicated to shifting the focus away from Muslim victimhood is a strategic and deliberate way to situate Muslims as perpetrators of terrorism, and white Christian westerners, as real victims.

Moreover, this shift in tone was not only used to challenge the labelling of Muslims as victims of terrorism, but we also see the four RWE malicious enclaves argue that there must be a global conspiracy behind this attempt to humanize Muslims (Johnson, 2018). Due to their blind hatred, we see what many commentators have referred to as “paranoia” take hold, and this is apparent in their posts that suggest there is “a plan behind everything that happens” (Hartleb, 2020, p. 136; Hage, 2003). As such, we see the “paranoid” view that the UN, the Liberal Party of Canada, the Democratic Party of America, and globalists, are all (supposedly) working in tandem to bring about a global Caliphate (Hage, 2003). While these views are constantly being shared, this line of affective escalation rapidly increases following the Christchurch Mosque attack. It is inconceivable to these individuals that anyone could have empathy for the victims of
Christchurch because they view all Muslims as culpable and actively planning a global takeover that leftist politicians are enabling (see Hartleb, 2018; Johnson, 2018; Polletta & Callahan, 2017; Sunstein, 2017).

While it is easy to label these posts as problematic from an outsider’s perspective, the RWE malicious enclave allows for these claims to be substantiated by the barrage of support the posters receive from others in their RWE malicious enclave and the “love” they have for themselves and like-others (see Lim 2017). As such, this support and agreeability of those within the four RWE malicious enclaves were exacerbated by coverage of Christchurch that prompted an exponential rise in posts calling for and justifying violence. We see a notable shift in tone where posters provide Christian justifications to support violence. Moreover, we see the most punitive verses from the Old Testament while actively harkening back to the Knights Templar and the Crusaders to call for and encourage violence against Muslims. It is no longer a fond memory of the “lost golden ages,” as discussed in Chapter 6, but a clear call to revive a military sect that battled almost exclusively against non-Christians and Muslims specifically (MacMillan, 2008, p. 62). In tandem with supporting each other for their violent and hateful views, we see posters discuss what a good politician looks like and who can actively help quell the “Islamic takeover” of the world. The “slow-violence” that pervades these affective escalations quickens its pace as the posters discuss politicians, they believe share the same violent outlooks towards Islam and leftists (Nixon, 2011). Politicians like Fraser Anning, Donald Trump, Enoch Powell, Geert Wilders, and Viktor Orbán are those they align themselves with politically. While all have spoken out against immigration, and most have discussed Islam and Muslims as problematic, these politicians are of importance to RWE malicious enclave deliberations because of the credit they give to otherwise widely debunked claims.
Further, the controversy they cause and the backlash they receive are not interpreted or framed as problematic. Instead, the backlash from the media, leftist politicians, denunciations from immigrant advocacy groups and other special interests are seen as these politicians not being part of the “new world order,” the “globalist cabal,” or the “great replacement.” The anger and derision these politicians receive from commentators is a testament to their bravery and sincerity – much like how the posters view themselves.
Chapter 8: Conclusion: Contributions, Limitations, and Future Research

This chapter will identify key theoretical and empirical contributions made by this dissertation and attempt to discuss their implications in a wider context. In this respect, a crucial question is the relationship of online posting to instances of physical violence and the significance of RWE malicious enclaves in events where this question becomes crucial to answer. As such, I discuss some recent events before moving to the theoretical contributions my dissertation has made to the study of RWE and malicious enclaves.

Then, I examine the empirical contribution of this dissertation based on the data revealed through the multiple analyses coupled with the theories utilized. I will follow these two sections by examining the limitations of this dissertation from the data examined, the methods used, and the assumptions I made. Finally, I conclude with an afterword discussing the literature of countering and preventing extremism and how I believe methods and our collective approach to this field can be improved.

8.1. Tracking escalation: when the maliciousness migrates from online to offline

While not the focus of my dissertation, on January 6, 2021, the Capitol Hill attacks in the United States demonstrated how digitally connected groups and their respective malicious enclaves came together offline when prompted by the right “spark” (Lim, 2013a; Lim, 2013b). Following months of false claims of election fraud from the Trump administration and his political allies, on January 6, 2021, Trump supporters coalesced offline through “The March to Save America,” widely touted by Trump, his family, and his supporters prior to devolving into the Capitol Hill attacks (Levin, 2021). At the rally, Trump said to “the March to Save America” protestors that the world was against his plans and that he and his honest, patriotic supporters
were being victimized by “leftist politicians,” “weak Republicans,” “the mainstream media,” “big tech,” “voter fraud,” “illegal immigrants,” and the “radical left” (Jacobo, 2021). While clearly articulating who the enemies of himself and his fellow patriots were, Trump also listed why he and his supporters were special. Trump said:

As this enormous crowd shows, we have truth and justice on our side. We have a deep and enduring love for America in our hearts. We love our country. We have overwhelming pride in this great country. We have it deep in our souls. Together we are determined to defend and preserve government of the people, by the people, and for the people. (Donald Trump, as cited in Wall Street Journal, 2021, para. 22)

Following a plea to their patriotism and resoluteness as “real patriots,” Trump said to his crowd of followers:

Our brightest days are before us. Our greatest achievements still wait. I think one of our great achievements will be election security because nobody until I came along had any idea how corrupt our elections were, and again most people would stand there at 9 o’clock in the evening and say I want to thank you very much, and they go off to some other life, but I said something is wrong here, something is really wrong, can’t have happened and we fight, we fight like hell, and if you don’t fight like hell you’re not going to have a country anymore.... (Donald Trump, as cited in Wall Street Journal, 2021, para. 23)

After Trump’s announcement that America would soon cease to be a country because of Joe Biden’s victory, he and his family ordered thousands of protestors at the “The March to Save America” to head to Capitol Hill without clearly stating what they were to do when they arrived (Jacobo, 2021).

The broad coalition of support united by “The March to Save America” was an online endeavour by Women for America First. Run by a Tea Party member, Amy Kremer, Women for America First tapped into the right-wing digital enclaves primarily across Facebook, consisting of a broad coalition of Trump supporters (Schwartz, 2021). The people that attended the “The March to Save America” were not just concerned citizens that had questions regarding the
legality of the election. They were Proud Boys, various Odinists, Neo-Nazis, militias such as Oath Keepers and the Three Percenters, and other “patriots” connected using Facebook to distribute content in the US (Schwartz, 2021). While all those that attended did not need to disclose their group affiliations as they were gathered under the banner of “The March to Save America,” plenty of individuals proudly adorned their group allegiances (Schwartz, 2021). More disconcerting is that the many individuals openly displaying their allegiances (such as Three Percenters, Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, etc.) that attended the “The March to Save America” and resulted in an attack on Capitol Hill were also members of the RWE malicious enclaves captured in Chapter 5. Many at Capitol Hill were members in the malicious enclaves connected to the four Canadian malicious enclaves being studied that coalesced and ultimately marched on Washington DC’s Capitol Hill together. Like the posts examined within Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, we witnessed many people during the “The March to Save America” claim victimhood to justify their violent tactics that left five dead (including a police officer) (Levin, 2021; Schwartz, 2021). Aside from clear ties to militias, patriot parties, and neo-Nazis, there were individuals armed with weaponry ranging from a noose and various others with ties that were all meant to be used to hold the “traitor” politicians accountable and to prevent further victimization to “real” and “patriotic” Americans.

While the attack on Capitol Hill was made possible by the “spark” provided by Trump and his supporters, there are similar, although far less popular, attempts to mobilize the RWE malicious enclaves across Canada by “sparking” supporters into action (Lim, 2013a; Lim, 2013b; Lim, 2018). As can be seen by comparing the malicious Canadian enclaves within Chapter 4, there are clear connections to those that attacked Capitol Hill. Of the RWE malicious enclaves connected to the four RWE malicious enclaves being studied in this dissertation, there have been
attempts to “slowly” escalate political, racial, and religious violence for many years now (Nixon, 2011).

Numerous Canadian “patriots” have attempted similar actions, such as trying to perform a citizen’s arrest of Justin Trudeau for his “betrayal” of Canadians, while various actors have targeted the CBC and various journalists for being “traitors” and “betraying Canada” with their “fake news” (Ljunggren, 2020; Lamoureux, 2022). I have witnessed numerous malicious enclaves within Canada like Canadian and North American Infidels (see the Canadian Defence League social network in Chapter 4) openly share videos of themselves conducting “surveillance” (more accurately described as harassment and intimidation) of Mosques across Canada and the murder of Mosque attendees in Toronto (Gadzo, 2020; Lamoureux, 2019; Richmond, Carruthers, Juha, 2021). Further targeting of Muslims with violence can be seen with the June 6, 2021, London, Ontario, van attack that saw 20-year-old Nathaniel Veltman accused of targeting a visibly Muslim family with his vehicle, leaving four dead and one surviving 9-year-old child (Richmond, Carruthers, & Juha, 2021). It is said that while likely participating in a game of air-soft the night prior, Veltman, according to one witness, was supposedly dressed in a military vest and helmet that contained swastikas while being arrested (Richmond, Carruthers, Juha, 2021).

Coinciding with the open acts of violence toward Canadian Muslims, Canadian military personnel have been seen in Proud Boy uniforms on their days off. This is supposedly a more significant issue currently being addressed by the Canadian military, and military personnel have been connected to neo-Nazism (Berthiaume, 2021; Haig, 2019). While the military is addressing such issues, we have seen swathes of the Canadian public advocate for secession from Canada through Wexit (“Western Annexation”). Now known as the “Maverick Party,” they are inspired
by the United Kingdom’s successful movement to leave the European Union to maintain and preserve the “real” Canadian landscape before it is ruined by immigration and multiculturalism like other provinces such as Ontario (Dryden, 2020; Joannou, 2020; von Scheel, 2020). Similarly, the Yellow Vest Movement, inspired by French protests of the same name (“gilets jaunes”), while not being violent or advocating an overthrow of the country, was adopted and fuelled in part by bigotry and racism (Abedi, 2018; Lichfield, 2019). The above examples show how hate, often resulting in violence, however slowly it manifests, materialized offline, free flowing through Canada.

Finally, as I conclude my dissertation, Ottawa, Ontario, where I live and attend Carleton University, recently experienced an anti-COVID lockdown convoy protest occupying and disrupting the downtown core of Ottawa on January 29, 2022, to February 23, 2022. Since the onset of the pandemic, there has been ample evidence of a variety of far-right groups, ideologues, and motivated citizens who are angered by government measures aimed at COVID-19 vaccinations and mandates that coalesced on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Commentators quickly realized that locating a singular form of extremism, ideology, or organizer to label and identify this gathering is increasingly difficult, given the diversity of groups and opinions in attendance. What we are witnessing is the congregation of predominantly RWE malicious enclaves tapping into digital networks to increase their reach and finding ways to resonate with individuals outside their immediate enclaves. While I do not believe everyone that attended the anti-covid protest initially held in Ottawa, Ontario, are racists, white nationalists, or right-wing extremists, it would be disingenuous to say that such individuals have not played key leadership roles and provided some of the most fervent supporters of the convoy. For instance, Pat King
was one of the convoy’s most motivated leaders and organizers.\(^4\) King has promoted racist conspiracies behind the COVID-19 vaccine. King specifically argued that the objective of the COVID-19 vaccine was the “depopulation of the Caucasian race, or the Anglo Saxon and that’s what the goal is to depopulate because they are the one’s with the strongest bloodlines…” (Helwig, 2022; YellowVestCanadaExposed, 2019). King further shared his grievances regarding Justin Trudeau and his fellow Liberal politicians by arguing, “Trudeau, someone’s gonna make you catch a bullet someday…For the rest of this government someone’s gonna do’s you’s in you’s sons of bitches” (YoungesterJoeey, 2022, *sic*). Further demonstrating his resolve, King argues, “The only way this is gonna be solved is with bullets” (YoungesterJoeey, 2022, *sic*). Other members of the convoy have been accused (none have been found guilty during the time of writing) of racially harassing citizens of Ottawa and deliberately trying to intimidate people that choose to wear a mask outside (Lord, 2022). Furthermore, numerous convoy members have argued they were present in Ottawa to overthrow the Canadian government and imprison Justin Trudeau and other Liberal Members of Parliament (Patel & Ballingall, 2022).

Many protestors have demonstrated their international connections and were seen with confederate flags, Gadsden flags, *Patriote* flags, swastikas, and the *Molon Labe*. While predominantly harking back to American history (confederate flags, Gadsden flag, and the *Molon Labe*\(^5\)), we see the emergence of Canadian counter-colonial flags such as the *Patriote*

\(^4\) King is also one of the previous organizers of the 2019 “United We Roll” convoy that sought to counter Justin Trudeau’s “green energy” initiatives that they argue harmed Alberta’s Oil sector jobs and laid the foundation for the contemporary “Freedom Convoy” (Dormer, 2019; Lim & Rigato, 2022; Moore, 2019).

\(^5\) The Gadsden flag was used to argue that the Americans holding it were willing to resort to violence if provoked (Nicholson, 2022). The Molon Labe is a pro-gun symbol in the United States. (Nicholson, 2022).
flags\textsuperscript{51}, as well as swastikas and defaced Canadian flags\textsuperscript{52} (Nicholson, 2022). So far, 150 arrests have been made in Ottawa, Ontario, resulting from the “Freedom Convoy.” Recently, at one of three border blockades, 13 people were arrested on weapons charges (four for supposedly conspiring to murder police officers), while two were adorned with a Diagaolon patch (a far-right militia-styled organization like the Three Percenters and the Oath Keepers) (Lamoureux, 2022). Such threats and a seeming escalation toward violent tactics led to the Liberal Party of Canada invoking the Emergency Act (the replacement for Canada’s War Measures Act) for the first time in Canadian history. The Emergency Act granted police far more leeway in arresting and responding to threats as they arose and included freezing bank accounts of those financially supporting the convoy (Blatchford, 2022; Osman, Taylor, & Rabson, 2022). To address security concerns, the Ottawa police force issued warnings on February 17, 2022, that anyone continuing to form blockades or supporting the convoy financially with supplies (such as diesel) would be arrested for aiding an illegal protest (Connolly & Stober, 2022). Although the convoy seemingly ended on February 21, 2022, there has been a clear escalation of populist uprisings across Canada that are aided and abetted by right-wing extremist elements, particularly online through social media platforms like Facebook (Lim & Rigato, 2022). RWE malicious enclaves have been identified by motivated actors as a pool of people to promote popular grievances such as the COVID-19 lockdowns to tap into networks of anger that paved the way for the “Freedom

\textsuperscript{51} The \textit{Patriote} flag was initially flown in the 1830’s from the \textit{Patriote} movement, which sought to create a distance between parts of “Upper Canada” from the British (Nicholson, 2022). Contemporarily the \textit{Patriote} flag is used by ultra nationalist Canadian groups such as \textit{La Meute} (“the wolf pack”), Storm Alliance, Canadian Combat Coalition, and the Three Percenters to position themselves as patriots fighting against the supposed overreach of Ottawa (Nicholson, 2022; Patriquin, 2017).

\textsuperscript{52} All the flags suggest a willingness to use violence should the flag bearers’ enemy not back down from their supposed encroachment (Nicholson, 2022).
Convoy;” a similar process will likely foment the next major populist threat to Canadian security.

8.2. Theoretical Contributions

The following section will trace the theoretical contributions made during this dissertation and identify what can be utilized by researchers going forward. I will discuss how RWE malicious enclaves differ from other digital conglomerations and how RWE malicious enclaves are located, accessed, formed, and sustained. I will accomplish this by reflecting on the theoretical scholarship drawn on during this dissertation by delving into the affective drivers behind many of the behaviours transpiring in the RWE malicious enclaves.

How are digital enclaves and malicious enclaves different from echo chambers and silos? Chapter 2.2.4 discusses the multitude of ways right-wing extremism can emerge online. The most similar concept resembling what I identify as the RWE malicious enclaves are Nguyen’s (2020) description of the “echo chamber.” However, I resist this terminology for a multitude of reasons. Firstly, the term “chamber” depicts willing participants victimized by limited exposure. They are caught within a chamber, which conjures a sense of hopelessness. Secondly, such descriptions deny the agency of these participants occupying a hateful or conspiratorial digital space. Silos similarly situate individuals within a context of being confined and hidden from accurate information that would otherwise enlighten them. The term enclave successfully depicts a place where individuals choose to participate by identifying with the content and established climate (Campbell & Golan, 2011; Graham, 2014; Lim, 2017). These are willing and motivated individuals that seek out and contribute to the digital enclave they choose to inhabit. The
willingness to contribute is why posts are the primary source of data analysis. The findings reveal that regularly, members add ample commentary that fuels the discourse.

The RWE malicious enclaves I study are accessed by locating the group page(s) where like-minded individuals share their views. Typically, these groups have an external communication platform to accompany and lend credence to their legitimacy as a space to discuss political or cultural views. For instance, RWE malicious enclaves like Pegida and Act for Canada have their own websites. At the same time, the Canadian Defence League and The Canadian Three Percenters have offline meetings to establish their legitimacy as an organization. There is an attempt to establish a connection or a presence to something beyond the Facebook page. This dynamic is at work with other digital enclaves where the connection is a larger black-American community, an Orthodox Jewish community, or a political party (Campbell & Golan, 2011; Graham, 2014; Lim, 2017). Essentially, the commonality between a digital and RWE malicious enclave is the “digital intimacy” one can expect (Ley & Rambukkana, 2021; Rambukkana, 2015). The similarities are pronounced in that the dynamics sustaining them are almost identical. However, one key distinction is the affective climate encouraged by individuals within these distinct types of enclaves. While the digital enclaves discussed address religious and racial minorities seeking to navigate a world that is hostile to their lives, the RWE malicious enclaves seek to counter those trying to disrupt their racial and cultural supremacism.

It is important to note that the task of countering those challenging their cultural and racial supremacism is not framed in this manner. These individuals situate themselves as victims. This victimhood warrants hateful posting and establishes a “digital intimacy” beyond a less homogenous digital space provided by a mainstream media publication forum where the identity of others cannot be readily assumed (Ley & Rambukkana, 2021; Rambukkana, 2015). Digital
intimacy allows individuals to post freely. As Rambukkana (2015, p. 29) writes and bears repeating, “the deep structural relations of intimacy are arranged using logics of privilege.” This means, for RWE malicious enclaves, steeped in cultural and racial privilege, an evident ability to foment their enclaves with their worldview. However, the discrepancy between their worldview and facts requires these RWE malicious enclaves to locate content to sustain their convictions.

Beginning with Chapter 5, I address the importance of social network analysis for the broader project of understanding RWE malicious enclaves. While the social network analyses provide a rich overview of the origins of the four RWE malicious enclaves, their concerns, and the strategic objectives, the main strength was locating the disparate connections they all maintained. Though the concerns and targets of derision were revealed to be virtually identical in Chapters 6 and 7, there is no overlap with pages connected with any of the four RWE malicious enclaves examined. Although social networks are entirely different, they have found a way to locate similar topics simultaneously without being interconnected. As such, the social network’s importance for members is the ability to locate enough information to sustain the affective environment conducive to a malicious enclave. We can observe that each RWE malicious enclave’s social network acts more like a spiderweb. The spiderweb dynamic is designed to capture content while not being so large that they would lose the ability to effectively pinpoint areas of tension (news events and stories that act as the life force for the hateful climate) and sacrifice the exclusivity of the RWE malicious enclave and making them more open to criticism and takedowns. This spider web dynamic is important because it establishes a method for catching content to fuel affective fodder, often in the form of news events. This act of capturing affective fodder is the beginning of enclave dynamics as the malicious enclave cannot exist in isolation (Han, Hwang, & Lee, 2017). Malicious enclaves require linkages to locate information
that allows for continuous feeding of the affective climate of hate. Understanding these linkages contributes to an understanding that not only are malicious enclaves disparate, but they provide a surplus of connections for those individuals only interested in feeding their already established convictions.

In Chapter 6, I began to delve deeper into the content captured by the RWE malicious enclaves through their social network. Drawing on Ahmed (2004, 2014), Papacharissi (2014), and Rambukkana (2015), I was able to reveal the nuance of hateful content that circulates in these four RWE malicious enclaves. In particular, the self-victimhood that is apparent in most posts is used as a cudgel to attack their enemies. Rather than hate manifesting in a format where a poster would blatantly say, “I hate group X,” it is often presented as, “group X is attacking my family and me; therefore, I hate them because of what they are doing.” Following Ahmed’s (2004, 2014) definition, hatred is the main impetus for the four RWE malicious enclaves’ posting behaviours. As revealed by the six news events, hate was disguised and framed using history, whiteness, nationalism, and group-identity-based posts.

However, we see the evolution of the affective impulse driving the four RWE malicious enclaves more clearly following Chapter 7’s analysis of post disparity between the pre-and post-attack datasets. The dichotomy identified by Lim (2017) between “love” and “hate” is revealed in a very troubling manner. Though, the dichotomy cannot be understated as it appears within these RWE malicious enclaves; there are elements of love for one’s race, religion, country, and history that, although distasteful, cannot be overlooked (Lim, 2017). For instance, Christianity is weaponized in posts (in Chapters 6 and 7) drawing on historical examples of how Christians were forced into militarism because of Muslim aggression – shoring up religious and historically ordained animosity (MacMillan, 2008). We also see nationalism and its connection to whiteness
drawn upon when it suited these RWE malicious enclaves as means to define who is a rightful citizen and who is not (Jardina, 2019; Kaufmann, 2019). Echoing the findings of Mirrlees (2021), the white, Christian, RWE malicious enclave is further utilized to attack individuals that ought to be supporters of their cause (i.e., other white people that are ideologically leftist and those that promote the rights and inclusion of “undesirable groups” such as Muslims and immigrants). Such hateful claims are situated with love for whiteness and Christianity, and while hate is paramount, these individuals love and care about their race and culture. Although incredibly hateful, they share a sense of bondedness and love for those like them, whether racially, religiously, culturally, or ideologically.

Therefore, the stories of importance are those that fit the bigoted viewpoint of these RWE malicious enclaves and the posters that justify their discriminatory and hateful outlook and misguided sense of love (Lim, 2017). By looking to Papacharissi (2014), I can state following the frame analyses that, like their analysis of Twitter, we see that Facebook is similarly run by “[t]he connective and expressive affordances …[that] invites particular forms or textures of affective attunement.” (p. 118). As such, the Facebook groups that I identify as malicious enclaves “…sustain and transmit affect, and so a developing discourse … can sustain and transmit that form of intensity …” (Papacharissi, 2014, p. 118). What this means is that given the “affective attunement,” individual posters within these four RWE malicious enclaves can match each other’s “intensity” and perhaps escalate off each other’s responses given their encounters are affectively driven (Ahmed, 2004; 2014; Papacharissi, 2014, p. 118; Rambukkana, 2015). While Papacharissi (2014) labels digital spaces “affective publics,” I contend that such an assessment is accurate when examining RWE malicious enclaves on Facebook.
“Affective attunement” lends itself to another theoretical development highlighted by this dissertation regarding the use of violent expression within RWE malicious enclaves (Papacharissi, 2014, p. 118). “Affective attunement,” as Papacharissi (2014) described, is achieved through strategic framing of content. Taking news events and repurposing them through strategic framing furthers the hateful climate they establish. Specifically, it is not enough to draw attention to a news event; it must be prefaced and supported by a volley of posts framed appropriately to drive a particular narrative. The sheer volume of posts, all primed to further the hateful narrative, situates other theoretical findings related to violence. Borrowing from Nixon (2011) and the concept of “slow violence,” this dissertation has argued in Chapters 6 and 7 that despite the lack of individuals stating they were willing to enact violence themselves, there is an atmosphere established by the RWE malicious enclave conducive to justifying, supporting, and celebrating violence enacted to hated groups and individuals. The findings in Chapter 6 reveal a continuous attempt to champion violent actors and dismiss those part of hated groups. Chapter 6’s findings demonstrated that rather than open calls for an all-out race war or wholesale terroristic violence, individuals inhabiting the RWE malicious enclave revel in the “affective attunement” that makes for the celebration of violence to be “slowly” more tolerable (Nixon, 2011; Papacharissi, 2014). Beyond this celebration is an increasing push for championing violent actions, making the climate conducive to individuals enacting violence themselves. As I identify in Chapter 6, the posts classified as “supportive of violence” seem to bait other members to enact violence. This support and “egging-on” is what I mean by “slow violence” taking place within RWE malicious enclaves (Nixon, 2011). The RWE malicious enclave engages in “slow violence” by continuously attempting to justify violence to themselves. Most disturbingly, as
revealed in Chapters 6 and 7, these members hope to encourage others to do their violent bidding.

8.3. Empirical Contributions

This section of the conclusion will trace the empirical contributions made by this dissertation. To begin this section, I will recap the methodologies used, the findings of each chapter, and what can be used by other researchers going forward. I will recap each analysis chapter by starting with Chapter 5’s social network analyses (SNA), Chapter 6’s news event analyses, and Chapter 7’s frame shift analysis.

Beginning with Chapter 5, we can see that the networks established are independently supported and have little to no overlap despite the common concerns that sustain them. The SNA reveals that the RWE malicious enclave is not a bastion of every hate group and movement but is selective with whom and what they interact. The SNA empirically demonstrates a disconnect between many Facebook pages that one would imagine being connected based on ideological similarities. Surprisingly, there is no overlap amongst the SNA graphs captured in Chapter 5, demonstrating similar findings to Neville and Langlois (2021) regarding the disconnect between right-wing extremist groups and movements.

Following the social network analyses, this dissertation demonstrated the need to assess further what material fuels posting through news event analysis in Chapter 6. The frames created (and outlined in Appendix 1) were not meant to capture nuance per se; instead, they were meant to document what topics were being referenced at a given time and based entirely on what posters were posting within their RWE malicious enclaves. Moreover, when discussing the top
five codes per news event, representative posts were displayed for the reader to understand how such topics were being framed by members of the RWE malicious enclaves (Entman, 1993).

Further, we see posters “speaking back” to the news stories being shared and posted. The news influences posts that, in turn, influence hateful content. Based on the frame analysis from the six news events, we can see that Muslims and the harmful impacts of Islam (according to all four RWE malicious enclaves) were advanced whenever possible. Each News Event (except for News Event 2) was virulently Islamophobic and hostile to leftist politicians. I was only able to accurately predict discussion during News Event 3, the Sri Lankan Easter attack, as a Muslim terrorist group carried out the attack targeting Christians. Christians, Hindus, Jews, and Buddhists are all considered worthwhile if their victimhood provides useful examples for the further targetting of Muslims and Islam, echoing similar findings to Lee (2016) and Mirrlees (2021).

Lastly, we see the framing process in the frame shift analyses. Framing serves an essential function within the RWE malicious enclave, allowing for the conversation to shift within the enclaves. Regardless of the affective nature of the posts, we see that the individuals within RWE malicious enclaves can frame a talking point in a manner conducive to their worldview. Chapter 7 reveals how frames shift in real-time by individuals occupying the four RWE malicious enclaves studied. The frame shift analysis can be classified into two broad frames: those who should be revered, and those who should be reviled, unpacking a dichotomous outlook similar to the dynamic identified by Lim (2017). Initially, we see evidence of RWE malicious enclave dynamics at work and the ability for a news event to be framed in real-time. As revealed through the posts I analyzed, the frame shift demonstrates how affective escalation transpires in real-time and depicts a Manichean framework to interpret the world.
Following the Christchurch Mosque attack, the first empirical finding showed the collective effort of RWE malicious enclave members to distance themselves from the attacker. Multiple frames detect an increase in usage following the attack. The most popular and immediate frame shift was the reliance on conspiracy theories by all four RWE malicious enclaves. The (“New World Order”) NWO, globalists, and leftists/liberals were accused of orchestrating or capitalizing on the Christchurch Mosque attack. Pointing to an amorphous elite that cannot be detected or challenged proves to be a popular rallying cry and a manner for framing news events. It gives an air of intelligence and sophistication to the RWE malicious enclave as they detect what is “really going on” (Hage, 2003). In this example, we also see violence celebrated as well. While presenting themselves as non-violent, calls for violence skyrocketed following the Christchurch Mosque attack. Therefore, while discussing those they revile, they argue in favour of violent acts directed towards these groups.

We also see, coupled with the blame of leftist-backed conspiracies, a push from the RWE malicious enclaves to sustain their hate and surety of convictions by drawing upon revered right-wing politicians and Christian values. These findings reveal strategic manoeuvring amidst groups deemed culpable for terrorist attacks and social discord. We witnessed politicians like Donald Trump, and Geert Wilders celebrated for their respectable, “non-PC” approach to politics. This celebration of Christianity and right-wing politicians is indicated amidst posts pointing blame at groups such as leftists, Muslims, and refugees, as there is an apparent attempt to frame values and individuals as emulating their worldview. This tactic is critical as it lends credence to individuals within RWE malicious enclaves (for similar findings, see Schmuck & Matthes, 2019; Singh, 2019). They are no longer fringe political actors but adjacent to maverick politicians.
Key takeaways are that while RWE malicious enclaves attempt to depict their views’ complexity through the abundance of posting, we can see that their posts have clustered by assuming a Manichean mindset of “good” and “bad,” or who should be revered and reviled.

8.4. Future Research and Limitations

While I have detailed what this dissertation has allowed us to understand regarding RWE malicious enclaves and how this facilitates bigoted views, I will now list what this dissertation did not accomplish and invite other researchers to expand on these findings. To begin, I want to acknowledge the difficulty of term choice. As evident in Chapter 2, I cite the various ways scholars define and label what I call right-wing extremism. I broadly capture the breadth of these labels through a non-exhaustive list as “racist,” “white supremacist,” and “rightist.” I chose to avoid labels right-wing extremists choose for themselves, such as “alt-right,” “Identitarian,” “nationalists,” and “patriots.” This decision was because I felt it was wrong to allow individuals that promote hatred and violence to use euphemisms to situate themselves. However, upon reflection, I realize this decision needs to be unpacked further for the benefit of the field. Such terminological disparity has not been thoroughly unpacked, and these choices need to be examined in detail.

The “About Us” sections of the four RWE malicious enclaves leads viewers to believe (see Chapter 5) that these are individuals invested in conservatism and politics. They speak on concerns such as federal and provincial budgets, political alliances, and how national security was impacted by immigration and refugee claimants – with a particular fear of terrorism. I took them at their word and chose six news events based on their supposed interests that spoke to conservative political successes across Canada and paid attention to international terrorist attacks.
(a key concern and basis for many of their views). However, when I assumed a political event would be discussed, the posters within the enclaves resorted to stories to fuel culture wars (McCauley, 2021). Instead of engaging with policy, they found news events and stories to sustain culture wars discussing “racial & cultural supremacy” (McCauley, 2021). Concerns about what should be culturally acceptable and what should be opposed and treated as threatening to the white, Christian way of life were discussed.

The objective of the news event analyses was to select six dates that I believed would generate discussion based on the assumed newsworthiness of the stories that would likely resonate with the individuals occupying these RWE malicious enclaves. Due to the complexity and onerous process of sorting through considerable amounts of data, I narrowed post inclusion from the day of the news event to the day immediately following it. This two-day window was my attempt to capture immediate reactions. However, my analysis revealed that I often could not predict what news stories these RWE malicious enclaves viewed as worthy of discussion. Instead, I captured adjacent news stories I was unaware of before examining whom and what the posters referenced. For instance, stories discussing Halima Aden wearing a burkini on the cover of Sports Illustrated was not a story I was aware of or would have assumed to be meaningful to them. I also did not anticipate stories such as the Notre Dame Cathedral fire and wildfires (wherever they appeared) as topics these RWE malicious enclaves would discuss, nor did I expect these occurrences to be blamed on Muslims and “taqiyya.” I also did not anticipate a relatively unknown leader from CAIR, who supposedly made an anti-Semitic comment, and Bill-21 in Quebec to take precedence over the story of Doug Ford assuming office due to the posts I saw claiming he and Jason Kenney were leading a Canadian Reconquista. Therefore, I was not sufficiently attuned to the RWE malicious enclaves’ ability to unearth stories that allowed them
to continuously express and reaffirm their bigotry through their primary site of struggle, which was fought through culture war dynamics outlined by McCauley (2021). While I could not pinpoint what news events mattered, the inaccuracy has led to substantial insights into the purpose and posting habits of the RWE malicious enclaves examined. Given the inability to effectively pinpoint what news events would gain attention, it is advisable for those seeking to replicate my approach to rely more heavily on the data to determine what news events are discussed.

Another site of inquiry that would be ideal for exploring as a counter to RWE malicious enclaves is the outsiders to Pegida Canada inserting themselves into the malicious enclave’s space to disrupt their celebratory and hateful reactions to the Christchurch Mosque attack. Given the drastic tone condoning and justifying the Christchurch Mosque attack, blaming children and the entire Muslim community for all supposedly (according to Pegida members) taking part in terrorism, we saw non-enclave members get seriously distressed by the open blame attached to those that were murdered. In no other news event or time in my datasets did non-enclave members insert themselves into one of the four RWE malicious enclave spaces to counter their hate actively. The sheer volume of posts and higher membership of Pegida likely means they are less private, and this jeopardizes their enclave’s exclusivity. We witnessed enclave members struggle to be sensitive to the casualties of the attack while still attempting to justify their views that the terrorist attack was likely brought about because of the Muslim community in New Zealand’s actions. However, the key finding is that the outrage was passionately expressed by outsiders and provides an opportunity to assess when broader circulation of such hateful messaging can begin to harm the facades established by the RWE malicious enclaves.
A glaring observation was the lack of any real mention of Maxime Bernier and the People’s Party of Canada, which was established on September 14, 2018, and began as a more populist spinoff of the Conservative Party of Canada (Aiello, 2018). Possibly due to the party’s novelty, only a few comments mentioned Bernier, and they were all critical of him splitting the conservative vote in Canada and gifting the next Federal election to Justin Trudeau. The disdain towards Bernier and the People’s Party of Canada would be interesting to track as the pandemic progressed, and many found the Conservative Party of Canada to be inadequately conservative. However, no data I collected could trace this transformation, but future research would benefit from watching the PPCs rise to prominence.

Other logistical findings were that the volume of posts per group varied considerably. Pegida Canada’s members interact more regularly than any of the other three malicious enclaves. This relatively higher engagement was surprising due to the attention they garnered and the bigotry they produced on a social media platform claiming to be taking action against such pages. Despite Facebook banning a few alt-right and other openly racist and discriminatory pages, it is clear based on the sample of small news events that these four RWE malicious enclaves have violated every policy of Facebook’s “Community Standards” and have been free to do so without repercussions (Facebook, 2020). Every news event was assessed solely with Facebook posts. Therefore, the chosen news events may have elicited a different reaction on other social media platforms such as Twitter, Reddit, or BitChute. A cross-platform analysis would provide a more holistic picture of how such RWE malicious enclaves reacted to these news events. Further, assessing whether specific platforms encourage or allow bigotry more readily than others would be valuable. Also, I only assessed English-speaking pages, which limits the insight to other RWE malicious enclaves and movements that influence Canadian
right-wing extremists the way; for instance, the main German Pegida page influences Pegida Canada. Only focusing on English pages also limited my ability to assess French pages being run by and for Quebecois which is missing from my analysis. The window of data inclusion at two days may have been too short. Going forward, I would extend my news events to a minimum of five days to give individual posters a chance to react to chosen news events.

This dissertation could not address how the four RWE malicious enclaves’ posting behaviour changed in a year or two because the data was compiled in 2019. Further, this dissertation did not examine other extremist ideologies to see how enclave dynamics unfold within different forms of extremism. While Facebook banned access to its API in early September 2019, this was four months before the first confirmed COVID-19 case emerged in Canada. Given that the COVID-19 pandemic hit Canada roughly four months later, on January 23, 2020, following my ability to collect data from Facebook, I am wondering if this would have exacerbated the conspiratorial thinking that was increasingly evident following the Christchurch Mosque attacks (Perkel, 2021). Perhaps the virus, vaccine, and lockdowns all took precedence over hatred of Muslims. Also, I only examined RWE malicious enclaves that were active and regularly posting and deliberately eschewed pages that were not. Could there be a life cycle to the RWE malicious enclave that I missed by solely focusing on those that were successful with encouraging posting? I am left wondering, will the targets of hate change within these four RWE malicious enclaves? Are Muslims still despised by these four RWE malicious enclaves, or have they changed targets? Further, Canada began labelling many groups associated with right-wing extremism as terrorist entities (including the Canadian Three Percenters) in 2021 (Coletta, 2021). Could this dissuade such open posting about hatred towards targets like Muslims and leftists that we witnessed in Chapters 6 and 7? I am also wondering if this impacted open discussions of
violence. While most posts discussed violence in a supportive tone (in effect, condoning others for being violent or suggesting that violence would be desirable). Given the pandemic, the defeat of Donald Trump, and the electoral victories of Justin Trudeau, since 2019, are there more calls for violence accompanying conspiratorial claims? Further, how will RWE malicious enclaves navigate the increased scrutiny they face on platforms like Facebook? Will they migrate to a different platform?

8.5. De-escalation, Deradicalization, and Preventing Extremism: Policy and Practical Implications

A further area of interest not examined in this dissertation are the efforts aimed at preventing and countering violent and non-violent extremism. Individuals that advocate for violence and embrace extremist ideals have relatively recently been addressed through government sponsored deradicalization programs. Much of the literature I have drawn on examining extremism and terrorism tries to determine the diversity and heterogeneity of cases where individuals or groups have radicalized to violent extremism. Specifically, scholars seek to unpack, what are risk factors, as well as push and pull factors that contribute to pathways of radicalization to violence? Where will violence likely occur? Why will it occur? As such, we have seen numerous essays documenting the threat and trajectory of lone wolves (Parent & Ellis, 2014; Johnson, 2018), groups, gangs, and terrorist cells (Belew, 2018; Fangen, 1998; Jewett & Lawrence, 2003; Koch, 2017) and social movements that ultimately lead to violence (Veilleux-Lepage & Archambault, 2019; Carter, 2018; Mudde, 1995). There are also novel internet policing strategies being implemented in countries like Germanys through the “Network Enforcement Act” (Satariano & Schuetze, 2022). This act is novel and seeks to punish citizens within Germany for hate-speech and not allow for the internet to be a safe haven for such
material (Satariano & Schuetze, 2022). While the effectiveness of the “Network Enforcement Act” is still being examined, and civil-rights issues such as free speech are being weighed, there are novel strategies aimed at halting hateful and racist rhetoric (Satariano & Schuetze, 2022). My dissertation has not sought to answer these questions directly nor to examine the efficacy of such policies. Instead, I ask the reader to consider the implications of malicious enclaves that allow for a space where like-minded individuals can share their most reprehensible views in a justifiable manner and to an audience that will appreciate what they have to say and likely lead to hateful affective escalation in response to the news stories or events used as prompts. As a site of inquiry, the malicious enclave is worthy of study, regardless of what may come from it or its members as it shows when and how a large geographically dispersed group of people are able to escalate their hateful views online.

Although I have not focused on what many governments and national security agencies are interested in, such as preventing and counteracting violent extremism or tactics to counter the individuals I have studied, I wish to impart some practical implications due to my experience having studied a violent extremist campaign and the work I have now completed on escalation and what could become a broader effort of de-escalation (see, Wilner & Rigato, 2017). I was a member of the 60 Days of PVE campaign, which ran in 2017 for 60 days from Carleton University (Wilner & Rigato, 2017). This campaign aimed at raising awareness of violent and non-violent forms of extremism to as broad an audience as possible. In the Canadian context, this year marked the development of programming to prevent and counter violent extremism with funding from the Federal Government of Canada. Similarly, the US Department of Homeland Security began funding organizations like EdVenture (2022) (and currently still are) by asking students to craft policies, programs, and narratives that could eschew interest in violent
extremism from others in their age group and demographic (EdVenture, 2022; Wilner & Rigato, 2017). The 60 Days of PVE provided a building ground for other researchers to learn from our trials and tribulations regarding the practical issues regarding any program designed to prevent an individual or group of individuals from engaging in violence (Wilner & Rigato, 2017). For instance, one of the most significant difficulties was wondering assessing if we reached individuals with violent and extremist views in the first place. Moreover, if we did, how did our efforts change an individual’s outlook regarding a particular race, religion, or ideology? (Wilner & Rigato, 2017). Namely, how could we measure success?

Since our PVE program ran, funding within Canada and abroad has increased exponentially for such efforts (Kubicek & King, 2020). There has been tremendous work done globally by researchers from various disciplines, all seeking to understand better how we can prevent terroristic violence through non-punitive, including civil society-led, and innovative measures (Hassan et al., 2021; Horgan, Meredith, & Papatheodorou, 2020; Thompson & Leroux, 2022). Programs often employ methodologies from disciplines such as mental health, social work, and also focus on addressing social inequality, racism and structural injustices (Stephens, Sieckelinck & Boutellier, 2021; Yuzva Clement et al., 2022). Researchers have also examined where such approaches for preventing extremism are most effective: in-person, local, national, international, or online (Horgan, Meredith, & Papatheodorou, 2020; Yuzva Clement et al., 2022). Others have found that it is essential not to over-provide preventative measures as it can lead to discriminatory assumptions of why a particular demographic is being targeted (Middleton, 2016). All of this is to say there have been tremendous strides made in the field of prevention, and even those studies that have not yielded their intended outcome have played a pivotal role in furthering the collective knowledge (Horgan, Meredith, & Papatheodorou, 2020; Stephens,
Sieckelinck & Boutellier, 2021). However, as with all programs involving humans, there has yet to be a perfect model accompanied by rigorous program evaluation (Horgan, Meredith, & Papatheodorou, 2020).

For my dissertation, I chose not to focus on preventing and countering violent extremism in Canada for several reasons. Mainly, in 2016 when I began my dissertation, examining profiles of right-wing extremists in Canada was seriously limited, and an effort to counter some group or ideology I could not know seemed impossible. The difficulty was only expanded when trying to understand the digital communication channels on that right-wing extremists thrive. Private servers, secret websites, text channels, comment boards — the sites of inquiry of right-wing extremists are endless (Scrivens & Conway, 2019). Furthermore, of all these sites and spaces, regardless of how disturbing the content may have been, I had no real grasp of basic information about various groups and individuals that established themselves digitally. To share my trajectory that led to the completion of my dissertation and what I believe to be the most significant takeaways from it for policymakers and researchers, I will now lay out the policy and practical findings of how I approached studying online extremist content:

1. **Oversimplified Understandings Of Extremists Are Not Helping**

Before implementing any online study, or preventative campaign targeting a specific extremist group, the following questions need to be answered as best as possible. Where are extremists interacting? How are the extremists interacting? What is the frequency of their interactions? What generates conversations? What generates disagreements? Do they disclose or disguise their identity? Are they adopting a collective identity? What promotes the adoption of this collective identity? Are they using the platform they operate on to recruit for offline
activities, or is the platform an end unto itself? How successful are they in generating offline followers if they are interested in offline activities? These questions that I asked of my datasets are ultimately what the first stages of a P/CVE campaign ought to look like as it follows the best practices as laid out by Horgan, Meredith, & Papatheodorou (2020) that a “… the best recipe for deradicalization is limited and must surely be tailored to specific audiences in particular times and contexts” (Horgan, Meredith, & Papatheodorou, 2020, p. 17). Therefore, examining extremists’ motives, behaviors, and histories is the groundwork needed to develop any preventative or deradicalization program to adhere to a “tailored” approach (Horgan, Meredith, & Papatheodorou, 2020). This list can and ought to be expanded because it arms researchers with meaningful background data that can help explain and unpack what is happening from a bird’s-eye level for a distinct group and ideology. After such questions are answered, determining what triggers affective escalation can begin to be examined as the researchers will understand what “sparks” the group, movement, or malicious enclave into vociferous hate-fueled posting. Unpacking affective escalation also gives researchers a separate set of tools that allows us to move past determining if an individual is dangerous, and begin examining when a group is most amenable to violence.

2. Researchers Must Own Their Biases and Inaccurate Hypotheses

It is often uncomfortable to present a piece of data to the world where one’s faulty hypotheses are revealed. However, it is even more problematic to present oneself as neutral to a subject and not own faulty assumptions. Many great pieces of PVE own their limitations, but what an individual or group of researchers expected to find is missing from the field (Horgan & Altier, 2012; Horgan, Meredith, & Papatheodorou, 2020; Thompson & Leroux, 2022). By
owning what we expect to find and reporting on our mistakes, we can elevate collective knowledge and prevent others from following our faulty assumptions. Following de Veen and Thomas (2022) regarding the need to address bias in news reports on terrorism, we too ought to own our biases with research on extremism and terrorism. As de Veen and Thomas (2022) argue, “The key point is that potentially neutral practices can…generate bias. Journalism is difficult, and our objective has been to identify tendencies within news reports. Only when such tendencies are identified can responsibility to change them be taken.” (de Veen & Thomas, 2022, p. 161). Within my dissertation, I have discussed how my assumptions regarding the “about us” sections of the four RWE malicious enclaves I studied led me to the faulty assumption regarding content I believed would generate conversation. As such, I and others that read this will ask themselves what happened instead? Why did they claim to be interested in one area and instead focus on content to fuel their vitriolic reactions? While I have answered these questions, it is the best example I can provide of why researchers need to own their biases and erroneous assumptions. Setting such parameters increases the yield and potential explanatory power of the data captured. Questions that should be used to help guide reflexivity are: What do I believe beforehand about these extremists as both individuals and groups and the values they stand for before, during, and after my work? How can such assumptions skew (or have skewed) my findings?

3. **On Spatiality vs. Physicality: Complicating The Separation Of Online And Offline**

Embedded within the difficulty of understanding extremists is taking time to reflect on spatiality and physicality and how it is erroneous to separate the two (Lim, 2015). For my purposes, the malicious enclave is a spatial concept like all communication technology.
Therefore, one can engage in online hatred and, due to the complexity of individuals, be disinterested in interacting in such activity offline (Lim, 2015). The assumption of separation or even a distinction between the two is problematic as individuals are connected to the internet and engage online while living their offline lives (Lim, 2015). Therefore, we should appreciate that individuals posting hate online might disguise hatred and present a relatively “non-political” life offline. The point is that an individual sharing extremist content, does not have to advance to joining a movement, promoting, or engaging in violence — like most people they, like other people, exist in “hybrid” forms (Khalil, 2014; Lim, 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to view the extremist use of the internet as inseparable from their offline lives instead of creating a false dichotomy. The same can be said for the fourth point regarding online to offline group behavior, which will be discussed below.

4. **Online to Offline Group Activity: Coalitions Pulling From Multiple Sources**

Rightly, much academic literature that examines extremism online tries to unpack how to prevent a particular group or ideology from escalating to direct acts of violence. As is the case with most social collectives and social movements that begin online, many individuals posting and talking will not ever engage in offline collective activity (Lim 2013a; Lim 2013b). The data that demonstrates to us that most individuals or social collectives are not successful in drawing others. This is because coalitions are formed and erupt offline as a method of demonstrating both presence and power amongst otherwise disconnected individuals whose only commonality is often discontent with a particular source (Lim 2013a; Lim 2013b). Recent examples of coalitions formed online that tapped effectively into previously established networks and malicious enclaves are the January 6, 2021, Capitol Hill attacks and the January 22, 2022 - February 23,
2022, Ottawa Convoy, due to their organizers and participants’ ability to draw on multiple grievances at once and pull people from multiple online areas (Lim 2013a; Lim 2013b; Lim & Rigato, 2022).

However, the potential coalitions or mobilization of grievances offline are not the only concerns researchers should focus on. The RWE malicious enclave is a hotbed of hate that organizes the collective expression of vitriol and escalates attacks on opponents that are not able to respond. This is a phenomenon that needs to be reckoned with. However, the malicious enclave is not a causal environment that ensures progression to any further activity. It does, however, create an ambient sense of dehumanization of others it considers as enemies or threats to the nation. What motivates individuals to stay connected and engage with such rage-fueled discourse? What is it doing for them? The scraping of posts and data will only take us so far absent a conceptual and theoretical understanding of the digital networks and enclaves discussed above.
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Appendix

Appendix 1: Codes Used for Frame Analyses

Defence of Traditional Western and Canadian Values

1. Brand Promotion, Defence, and Victimization
   This classification refers to content that speaks to brand-specific promotion, defence, and/or victimization. All content explicitly mentions brands: Pegida Canada, Three Percenters Canada, Canadian Defence League, and Act for Canada.

2. Canadian Political Conservative or Right-Wing Promotion and Victimization
   This classification refers to any content that speaks favourably of any Canadian Conservative politician, policy, and/or far-right initiative. Further, any content that speaks to the victimization of Conservatives will also be listed here.

3. Christian Teachings, Promotion, and Victimization
   This classification refers to content that speaks to Christian promotion, defence, and/or victimization. All content that explicitly mentions Christianity, Christian teachings, or Christian suffering will be classified in this node.

4. Defence of “real” Canada
   This classification refers to any content where posters discuss what “real” Canada is and who “real” Canadians are. This node captures content where “real” Canadians (or “old stock Canadians”) are identified by their familial lineage of living in Canada. This familial legacy is used to dismiss the concerns and changes advocated for by newer and non-white Canadians.

5. Defence of Women and Children
   This classification refers to any content that speaks of the need to protect women and children from all threats defined by the posters.

6. Defence or Promotion of Firearms
   This classification refers to any content that promotes firearms ownership, whether for personal defence, group defence, or country defence.

7. Free Speech and Speaking Truth
   This classification refers to any content highlighting the importance of free speech and the need to defend this right from any Identity Groups or Harmful Political Groups and Formal Institutions.
8. **Support for International Far-Right Politicians or Figureheads**
   This classification refers to any content that speaks favourably of non-Canadian far-right politicians or figureheads.

9. **The 'West,' 'Western World,' Non-Canadian Western Countries, Free world, Being Victimized, Open Borders**
   This classification refers to any content that speaks of harm happening to broadly the “West,” “Western World,” or any “Non-Canadian Western Country.”

10. **Violence support**
    This classification refers to any content that openly expresses the need, support, or acts of violence against any Identity Groups or Harmful Political Groups and Formal Institutions.

11. **Western Provinces or anti-EU separation**
    This classification refers to any content that speaks of separatism. Posts that speak for the need for individual Provinces to separate from Canada, individual states to separate from the USA, or European countries to separate from the European Union.

12. **White victimization**
    This classification refers to any content that speaks to white people being victimized by any Identity Groups or Harmful Political Groups and Formal Institutions.

*Harmful Political Groups - Formal institutions*

13. **(defunding) Mainstream Media, Fake News, forcing a Narrative, Hollywood, Censorship, or being Deplatformed**
    This classification refers to any comment that criticizes the following groups and/or practices: Mainstream Media, Fake News, Hollywood, Censorship, or Being Deplatformed

14. **Anti-Canada and Provinces**
    This classification refers to comments criticizing Canada, Individual Canadian provinces, or Canadians.

15. **Canadian Liberal Party or leaders, the current government**
    This classification refers to any comments criticizing the Canadian Liberal Government, Its members, or any reference to the “current government” which was a majority Liberal government led by Justin Trudeau at the time of collection.

16. **China**
    This classification refers to any comments that criticize China or Chinese people.
17. **Complicit Courts, Military, and Police**
   This classification refers to any comments that suggest courts, military, or police within Canada have conspired with any Identity Group or Harmful Political Groups and Formal Institutions.

18. **Conservatives or PPC criticism**
   This classification refers to comments criticizing the Conservative Party of Canada or the Peoples Party of Canada.

   This classification refers to any criticism of the plots to take over and/or harm the Western world, Canada, or the planet by the following groups: United Nations, Globalists, Deep State, New World Order, and George Soros.

20. **Environmentalism or eco-fascists**
   This classification refers to the criticism of environmentalism, environmentalists, and the moniker “eco-fascists,” as they are often referred to.

21. **Israel and Zionism**
   This classification refers to any comments that criticize Israel or Israeli citizens.

22. **Muslim-majority countries, Arabs, or Middle Easterners**
   This classification refers to comments criticizing Muslim majority countries, Arab people, or Middle Easterners.

23. **Student Groups and Younger Generation**
   This classification refers to any criticism of Campus student groups or “younger” generations.

24. **Terrorists or Terrorist Organizations**
   This classification refers to any comments that specifically list terrorist entities by name.

25. **The Pope and Vatican**
   This classification refers to any comments that criticize the Pope or the Vatican

*Identity Groups*

26. **Defence of identity group, anti-violence, criticism of groups**
   This classification refers to any content criticizing the bigotry within the Facebook pages. Any content that seeks to challenge the racism, bigotry and sexist assumptions that may be shared on these pages will be included here.
27. Jews
This classification includes all anti-Semitic content or negative portrayals of Jewish people.

28. LGBTQA+ (homophobia sexual discrimination)
This classification is to include content that negatively discusses Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Asexual, and other sexualities.

29. Muslims, Islam, Islamism (and variations singling out Islam)
This classification includes all Islamophobic content or negative portrayals of Muslim people.

30. non-Abrahamic faiths, fake religions, Satan, and cults
This classification refers to posts that mention non-Abrahamic faiths, “fake religions,” Satanists, or cults.

31. Refugees, Immigrants, Immigration, and migrants
This classification criticizes refugees, immigrants, and migrants as fake, illegitimate, and/or dangerous.

32. Subhuman monikers
This classification refers to any comments that specifically use terms to dehumanize an individual or a group of people as being like vermin, insects, or a disease that will be classified here.

Unclassified
This category is used to classify multiple forms of comments that do not overtly fit into any of the classifications from the previous three categories. Comments that are one-worded, indecipherable, or do not immediately fit into the above categories will be classified here. Examples are single-word comments such as “yes,” “no,” “whatever,” etc. Links that do not work or are no longer active. Phrases that require me to “read into” the comment do not have an apparent meaning.
Appendix 2: News Events and other Groups Considered

News Events Considered:

Using a Google Trends\textsuperscript{53} tracker, I looked at the top stories across Canada for the period I obtained data. While the stories and possibilities were many, I favoured those that spoke to the four RWE malicious enclaves’ overall concerns but would not be an obvious example of something encouraging hateful responses. For instance, these four RWE malicious enclaves actively hate Justin Trudeau and liberal politicians. One of the news events I initially considered was the SNC-Lavalin Affair, whereby Justin Trudeau was criticized widely by the opposition and then Liberal politician Jody Wilson-Raybould. While the event was widely discussed, I realized that such a story would produce a hateful reaction, and there was less to gain from viewing it.

Surprisingly Maxime Bernier and his People’s Party of Canada were scarcely mentioned in any of the datasets. At the time of my data collection, Bernier was widely disliked by these RWE malicious enclaves because he was viewed as splitting the conservative vote and gifting the federal election to Justin Trudeau. Given the lack of data, I chose not to focus on Bernier or the PPC because they were not discussed. Another major surprise was the overall lack of disparagement of racialized politicians that were not part of the Federal Liberal Party. Jagmeet Singh and Annamie Paul were two popular racialized politicians that would have fit the profile of individuals the RWE malicious enclaves hated. However, Singh was scarcely mentioned, and neither was Paul. However, Ahmed Hussen of the Canadian Liberal Party was attacked for being

\textsuperscript{53} https://trends.google.ca/trends/?geo=CA
So, there does seem to be a clear targeting of racialized politicians that ascend to positions of power and authority with the political system as opposed to being leaders with no real clout (Singh being the leader of the New Democrat Party, and Paul the Green Party leader). I identified the six news events I chose because they were diverse enough and were stories, I believed would be of interest based on an overview of the data collected. However, the accuracy of my choices that Google Trends guided bared little resemblance to what the RWE malicious enclaves themselves focused their attention on.

**Other Facebook Pages Considered:**

Alongside the four Facebook pages I ultimately chose were other Facebook pages that were being tracked on Facebook as well. I was following the Sons of Odin Canada, the Soldiers of Odin Canada, Yellow Vests Canada, Yellow Vests Ontario, free Canadian militia, Cultural Action Party and Say No to Refugees Canada. Not one of these other pages tracked was able to maintain the level of interest and nuance to hateful presentations that the four pages I studied were able to. What this means was Facebook pages like Soldiers and Sons of Odin were too unabashedly bigoted and were subjected to Facebook takedowns and broader derision from the public due to their actions. Similarly, the Yellow Vest Movement, which ultimately culminated in the United WE Roll, and the March on Ottawa was a disconnected movement. Ultimately the Facebook pages regularly changed their names and dozens of Yellow Vest offshoots were established to maintain supporters while Facebook was actively trying to halt their activities.

Both the Free Canadian Militia and Cultural Action Party had minimal interaction and at the time of analysis it was mainly a few individual engaging with the pages trying to gain an audience. Lastly, Say No to Refugees Canada acted as a hub for a few individuals to share
memes but engagement was very sporadic. The four pages I ultimately selected were the only ones that maintained consisted interaction across the time of data collection.