

THE NATURE OF THE ALT-RIGHT

BY

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Abstract

The presidential campaign and eventual election of president Donald Trump emboldened and highlighted the existence of a fringe group known as the alt-right, short for alternative right. While the term was coined in 2008 by white nationalist Richard Spencer, it was the campaign rhetoric of Trump which brought national and global attention to an internet fringe group which ideologically aligned with the president's often racist and hyper-nationalist agenda. This study aims to explain the nature of the alt-right and ask to what degree it can be considered as fascist. An ideal type of fascism has been constructed drawing on authors such as Michael Mann, Robert Paxton and Roger Eatwell and I aim to use this to explore the connections between twentieth century fascism and the alt-right. I argue that the alt-right should be viewed as fascist, acting within a period of history which is reminiscent of the proto-fascist era of interwar Europe. Although independent of Trump, the alt-right's white nationalist/neo-Nazi agenda is explicitly and implicitly supported and encouraged by the new president.

Introduction: Background

The presidential campaign of Donald Trump galvanised and drew attention to a fringe internet group of white supremacists, racists and anti-Semites. This internet-based group is known as the alt-right, short for alternative right. The Southern Poverty Law Centre, which tracks hate groups, has defined the alt-right as “a set of far-right ideologies, groups and individuals whose core belief is that ‘white identity’ is under attack by multicultural forces using ‘political correctness’ and ‘social justice’ to undermine white people and ‘their’ civilization” (www.splcenter.org, N.D). This thesis will aim however, to represent the alt-right in their own words while providing an analysis of the group’s importance. The alt-right’s racist and white supremacist ideologies became intertwined with Trump’s campaign rhetoric. Highlighted by disapproval and presumed connections to then-candidate Trump, the alt-right moved from relative anonymity, to a group with a public face (through affiliates such as Steve Bannon, Milo Yiannopoulos and Richard Spencer). Consequently, the alt-right gained a platform for their rhetoric. Although far-right wing parties and populists has been common throughout Europe (see Wodak, 2015 and Mudde, 2002), Trump’s right-wing narratives of anti-immigration, hyper-nationalism and anti-globalisation gained international attention, prompting questions to explain the Trumpian phenomenon and the white supremacism that re-emerged in American society.

I became interested in the alt-right mainly because of what felt like a sudden re-emergence of ‘out in the open’, acceptable racism. Throughout the presidential race for the 45th presidency of the United States, racially inflammatory statements made by candidate Donald Trump seemed to have emboldened the alt-right. Unintentionally, candidate Hillary Clinton, drew further attention to them and they became known as Donald Trump’s deplorables, but, people wanted to know who they were and what they stood for. As information began to emerge and images surfaced, questions regarding what the nature of this group arose. Attempting to gain an accurate explanation of the alt-right, they have been described as fascist, angry white men and a resurgence of old American white supremacism. To understand the group, there have been multiple news media articles written and three

books called *Alt-America* by David Neiwert, *Making sense of the Alt-right* by George Hawley and *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars From 4Chan And Tumblr To Trump And The Alt-Right* by Angela Nagle. These books attempt to understand the phenomenon of the alt-right; they serve as good journalistic work, unearthing the emergence, style and actions of the alt-right.

The purpose of this study is to uncover the nature of the alt-right. I argue that the alt-right is a fascist group, acting within a period of history which is reminiscent of the proto-fascist era of interwar Europe. Although independent of Trump, the alt-right's white nationalist/neo-Nazi agenda is explicitly and implicitly supported by the now president. This argument will be explored through an ideal-type model based on various fascist scholars, including Michael Mann, Robert Paxton, Roger Eatwell and Roger Griffin. The ideal-type model is as follows:

- Nationalism
- Paramilitarist masculinities
- Charismatic leadership
- Transcendental utopianism (cleansing)

The thesis will illustrate its argument using this model to compare the alt-right to fascism. In the first chapter of analysis, nationalism will be explored through examining how it was displayed within fascism. Nationalism within fascism was an escalation of modern statist nationalist pride and narratives; it stressed an organic population, worshipped the state and was extremely aggressive toward enemies and those that perverted the 'purity' of the state. These characteristics will be explored to address if and how they exist within the alt-right. I also argue that the racial doctrine incorporated into the alt-right has been borrowed from fascists, specifically Nazism. The argument of a battle of supremacy between the races and the inherent superiority of Europeans (as expressed by Nazis) found itself very attractive to the alt-right. The racial doctrine should not be viewed as the exclusive reason for the alt-right's racism as white supremacism has been a constant factor of American society. The explicit anti-Semitism however, is reminiscent of Hitler himself. The 'Jewish spirit' of internationalism, materialism and egalitarianism is argued by Hitler to be part of a Jewish conspiracy to control the world (Blamires, 2006). The alt-right have adopted this perspective and accused the Jews of being the perpetrators of a crusade to eradicate the white race

through multiculturalism, globalisation and egalitarianism. This chapter argues organic nationalism was an intrinsic part of fascism and appears within the alt-right for their own reasons.

Within the second chapter, I argue that although the alt-right lack a physical paramilitary, they value militant ideologies. They glorify violence, but view it as defensive, (like fascism) and this is manifested in a militant hyper-masculinity founded in anti-feminism. Like fascism, it adores aggression and violence, viewing it as a masculine pursuit. The alt-right encourage men to be strong physically and possess the ability to inflict pain upon others. The alt-right do not regularly engage in violent acts as part of their paradigm, instead it is a regular feature of their language, imagery and is viewed as a sign of strength. Paramilitarism within fascism allowed “members to act out their frustrations in a violent manner” (Reichardt, 2006, p. 507). Although the alt-right have loose formal organisations, they regularly engage in the language of violence, perhaps to inspire individuals to take action and attack their ‘enemies’. The justification for violence within the alt-right is frustration from the supposed attack on white men. I argue that the imagery of militarism results in hyper-masculinist attitudes, which is a consequence of the supposed attack on masculinity; the alt-right believe there is a deliberate attempt to destroy masculinity. This has resulted in aggressive masculinity, a criticism of feminism and an attack against modern society which has created emasculated men (these men are also criticised). I will explore these arguments by explaining what paramilitarism is and how this is relevant to fascism. This will be followed by an analysis of how paramilitarist masculinity is expressed within the alt-right. Finally, I will explore how violence is relevant to the alt-right and how this ideologically links it to fascism.

The next chapter will be dedicated to the Weberian model of charisma. Donald Trump is a charismatic leader, but not necessarily for the alt-right. Trump has gained mass support within America due to his portrayal as a strong charismatic leader, able to transcend the frustrations of American citizens. While radical and revolutionary, Trump’s rhetoric has been simplistic and often relied on demonization and scapegoating to explain the problems within society; positing contemporary America to be in crisis. These portrayals of strength, scapegoating and racism has resulted in the alt-right adoption of Trump as their pseudo-leader to gain public legitimacy. Trump’s radical rhetoric has normalised alt-right

ideologies. While Trump will be examined, I argue that the leadership style within the alt-right is complex. Due to their main online existence, leadership structures are strained; this has likely contributed to Trump being viewed as their saviour; a public, legitimised figurehead for white identity politics. Trump's 'leadership' of the alt-right will be explored in relation to fascism. I argue that the leadership style within fascism is characterised public dedication to the vision of a Weberian charismatic leader, positing himself as a Christ like figure, being the only person capable of changing society. I will address these arguments firstly by explaining what charismatic authority is within the Weberian model and how this will be applied in the analysis. Secondly, I will argue how this was the leadership style incorporated in fascism. This will be followed by an explanation of the leadership style of the alt-right and how this has led to the adoption of Trump as a public figurehead. I argue that Trump is a charismatic leader and that this has made a complex relationship with the alt-right; the nature of this relationship will be explored.

In the final chapter, I observe the alt-right and fascism to be utopic in similar ways. They both desire a transcendence of the current world, are extremely critical of their contemporary societies and both approach it in an ideological cleansing manner (fascists more physically). Fascism is regularly viewed as a negative ideology that existed only in opposition to other ideologies. For example, anti-Marxist, anti-liberalist and anti-individualist. However, within its negative dispositions, there was a revolutionary desire for utopia. It occurred through the desire to transform the spirit of the individual which would then create a spirit which made the nation, creating a fascist utopia centred upon the nation-state. Nazism desired to recreate society according to race, ushering in a society which was for the Aryan people, existing without those that perverted it. Italian Fascism found its utopia harkening back to the Roman Empire. Attempts at recreation were to be committed by the fascist 'new man' who would be strong and powerful and capable of maintaining an empire. Like fascism, the alt-right is extremely critical and nihilistic, making it difficult to attach it to a utopia. However, it is from these negations that a vision for a utopia arises. Transcending dystopia, the alt-right will arrive at their utopia; a white ethno-state. it would be based upon race, like Nazism, free from those that would pervert their ethno-state. I will argue this by explaining utopia and how the concept will be used. I will then

contend that fascism is definitely utopic, despite arguments otherwise. I will then explore what a fascist utopia looks like, followed by an analysis of an alt-right utopia.

This study is placed within an academic understanding of the alt-right. While the literature that I have consulted has addressed fascism throughout its many forms throughout inter-war Europe and around the globe, the models that have informed my ideal-type have been Mussolini's Italian Fascism and Hitler's Nazism. It shall be demonstrated throughout that the alt-right possess various traits of these two models through its exclusionary and racist language, arguments of societal deterioration, obsessions with the rebirth of the state and the development of a 'new man' and its revolutionary rhetoric which informed its cleansing ideology and actions. The literature addressed with reveal the noticeable similarities between Nazism, Italian Fascism and the alt-right. It should be noted however, that this undertaking is made with a certain hesitation due to the major differences between the Hitler and Mussolini regimes and the modern, internet-based context the alt-right is in. The alt-right have benefitted from remaining a loosely knit group understood as an ambiguous set of ideologies, loosely understood connections and a sudden emergence into the mainstream. This study however, aims to flesh out this group and provide a specific understanding of them within an ideological and political framework.

Literature Review

The literature that was used for this thesis included work written on fascism, right-wing populism and small pockets on the alt-right. Since the alt-right is still a relatively new phenomenon it was difficult to gain information; however, information emerged as the year continued and Trump's presidency solidified itself (especially regarding his reaction to the Charlottesville Unite the Right rally). Fascism was observed throughout this study through specific lenses; the relevant literature address definitions and definitional difficulties, situational arguments regarding the emergence of fascism and whether fascism was revolutionary or reactionary.

It has been difficult to gain a generic definition of fascism. Different authors have different interpretations, some stating that it is too difficult to understand fascism as a generic phenomenon and that it should be understood in its specific circumstances, (some

even stating fascism is a purely Italian invention). Others, however, point to a fascism minimum, or an essence of fascism (such as Umberto Eco) implying that it was not a specifically Italian or German phenomenon, existing in many countries, under many circumstances. Roger Griffin explains this conundrum well when he speaks of the “dilemma faced by someone who is drawn sufficiently into the semantics of the debate over fascism to feel frustrated by the maze of conflicting definitional pathways to follow” (Griffin, 1991, p. 8). Griffin therefore implies that models adopted to understand fascism usually occurs in an ideal-typical way. It is within this ideal-typical theme that this study finds itself; adopting a model of fascism which acts as an ideal-type with borrowed features from various authors.

There are interpretations, however, that fit into certain paradigms to explain fascism; for example, there is a Marxist perspective of what fascism was, why it emerged and its purpose (Passmore, 2014). Despite the reluctance of authors such as Passmore and Paxton, to give a finite worded definition, Mann offers a definition of classical fascism in his book ‘Fascists’. His definition spans all four sources of his “sources of power” and concerns itself with the “key values, actions, and power organisations” of fascism (Mann, 2004, p. 13). Mann defines classical inter-war fascism as the “pursuit of a transcendent and cleansing nation-statism through paramilitarism” (Mann, 2004, pg.2). The definition contains five key terms; these are nationalism, statism, transcendence, cleansing and paramilitarism. What I think is useful in this definition is that fascism is explained through features or elements which explain the definition. Paxton explains fascism through a series of stages; in his book *The Anatomy of Fascism* (2004), the stages are as follows: (1) the initial creation of fascist movements; (2) their rooting as parties in a political system; (3) the acquisition of power; (4) the exercise of power; and, finally, in the longer term, (5) radicalization or entropy (Paxton, 2004) (Paxton, 1998). The definition of fascism is to be understood here as a view of a set of beliefs, values and goals which bring the interpreter to an understanding of what fascism is, what it looked like and how it acted (including goals). These three elements act as traits of an ideology; consequently, the beliefs, values and goals can be applied across various movements, creating a view of generic fascism.

There has also been an interpretation by authors to explain fascism in its specific circumstances. I think this argument is expressed to display the differences between fascist movements of different countries. For example, Italian Fascism and Nazism had some

significant differences; the overt anti-Semitism present throughout Nazism was not always present in Italian Fascism. The application of the racial doctrine within Nazism also highlighted points of difference. This has led authors such as Paxton and Eatwell to explain parts of fascism in their specificity. It is not their overall argument that fascisms should be separate and viewed 'only' in their contexts, but this approach highlights the importance of circumstance because it contributes to how fascism flourished or failed in certain areas of the world. Circumstances do matter, and these affect the goals and ideologies of certain fascisms. Past European fascism had specific histories that were products of their time and circumstances. For example, Eatwell (2003) dedicates pieces of his writing to explaining why fascism appealed to half of Europe while the other largely embraced liberal democracies. Within the literature there is a theme regarding who did fascists appeal to; what demographic of voters swayed toward fascism and why did certain countries approve of fascism. Eatwell hints at an historical explanation, implying that the historical myths and values of a country informed the ideologies that were prominent within political culture. For example, the French revolution became mythologised in French political culture, encouraging libertarian and individualistic political ideas (Eatwell, 2003). WWI and its consequences also played a significant role in the emergence of fascism. Paxton for example, views WWI as the biggest reason for the rise of fascism, but his analysis is not purely historical in that he explains that WWI allowed the opportunities and circumstances for fascism to rise in post-war Europe (Paxton, 2004). The war left many individuals, especially war time soldiers, feeling bitter and "torn between an old world that could not be revived and a new world about which they disagreed bitterly" (Paxton, 2004, p. 30). Paxton approaches fascism within its specific contexts; he highlights the differences between Hitler's fascist Nazi regime from Mussolini's in Italy. Paxton often differentiates due to the difficulties of gaining a universal definition. For example, Paxton questions, "how can we lump together Mussolini and Hitler, the one surrounded by Jewish henchmen and a Jewish mistress, and the other an obsessed anti-Semite?" (Paxton, 1998, p.2). Paxton is representative of an approach taken that highlights the difficulty in analysing the trends that are considered to be fascist. Despite the care taken by Paxton to not apply loose definitions to the word fascism, the isolated view is not the only analysis Paxton employs. This method highlights the similarities but draws also from the differences. Most authors that I have

encountered discuss fascism as a generic movement but also dedicate chapters to discussing Italy and Germany, while dedicating other chapters to fascism as a global movement. For example, Stanley Payne's chapter headings include "what do we mean by fascism", "the Mussolini and Hitler regimes" and "fascism outside Europe?" (Payne, 1980). The importance of understanding specific circumstances of fascism is that as a movement, the historical situations are important to understand the nature of each movement deemed fascist, but, these movements can be tied together as a family group understood through goals, ideas, beliefs and style.

It is easy to view fascism as a nihilistic reaction to modernity; based on their negativity toward every other ideology and the cleansing violence employed by fascists. However, authors such as Stanley Payne and Roger Griffin argue their negations are part of a revolutionary desire to transcend. Griffin explains that despite the nihilistic messages of fascists, "the commitment of a significant percentage of fascist activists is intensely idealistic, rooted as it is in a profound urge to transcend the existing state of society" (Griffin, 1991, p. 47). Payne adds that critical negations are part of fascism's definition, aiming to overcome these through revolutionary action. However, Griffin (1991) explains that fascists were explained by Marxists to be reactionary due to Marxists belief that fascists were preserving the status quo, consequently preventing the real revolutions of the left. Kevin Passmore elaborates by explaining that fascists "were reactionary insofar as they were opposed to the left, socialism, feminism, and liberalism" (Passmore, 2014, p. 16). These critical negations gave it an image of being reactionary to modernity and leftist progress, appearing to preserve the conservative ideologies of society (even though they were anti-conservative also). These issues make fascism a difficult ideology to place on a spectrum; they were, in their own way, revolutionary in their scope. A radically different society is what they desired (although this differed in practice). Mann explains transcendence as 'imperfect', as it was "never accomplished" (Mann, 2004, p. 2). For example, Mann explains "when fascists seized power, they encountered a unique problem. Though they hoped to subordinate capitalists to their own goals, as authoritarians they believed in managerial powers yet lacked the skills to run industry themselves" (ibid). Regardless of their practices, the revolutionary rhetoric placed fascism as a genuine movement attempting to dramatically shift the political and social sphere. The constant negations and nihilism

however, make it difficult to associate fascism with a possible revolution, optimism or utopia.

Like fascism, political parties in general are studied through their connectivity to a larger ideological group and also in their specificity (Mudde, 2000). Far-right political parties have been located within a family group, similar in approach, style and rhetoric. In Ruth Wodak's *The Politics of Fear* (2015), she explains that right-wing populism has adopted a specific form and content which has "gained an electoral lead position in current media democracy" (Wodak, 2015, p. 3). Wodak takes a bold step and argues for two main features of all right-wing populist parties. She argues that

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*'

And,

all right-wing populist parties seem to endorse what can be recognized as the '*arrogance of ignorance*'; appeals to common-sense and anti-intellectualism make a return to pre-modernist or pre-enlightenment thinking

(Wodak, 2015, p. 2).

Wodak is emphasising the usage of scapegoats and conspiracy theories. Conspiracies are a more common feature of the American political scene and consequently, have a long history within American right-wing politics. Demonization and scapegoating is discussed by Chip Berlet. Arguing that it is nothing new, he details how such scapegoating has been perpetrated by contemporary right-wing extremists. However, his argument is that the same demonising and scapegoating is carefully engineered by right-wing parties. Berlet explains that "demonization of an enemy often begins with marginalization, the ideological process in which targeting individuals or groups are placed outside the circle of wholesome mainstream society" (Berlet, 2000, p. 7). For American right-wing extremists, those outside the wholesomeness of society are Jews, who are "in league with Satan and that blacks and other people of colour are subhuman" (Ibid). The propaganda of this demonization and scapegoating is communicated, and at times of economic and social hardship, often becomes widely held. As this is part of the ideological themes within right-wing parties, propaganda and grievances will feature as a motif throughout this study.

As Wodak has mentioned, right-wing parties encompass party similarities. This is further explored by Cass Mudde when he states, “one of the most popular classifications is that of the so-called party family, in which political parties are grouped across countries predominantly on the basis of their ideology” (Mudde, 2000, p. 2). There is a definitional struggle, but it appears that there is not nearly as much debate about who fits into the category. There is a significant form of irony here in that although the definition is debated, with some authors reluctant to give one, most authors and analysers are quite clear on who they consider to be parties that are on the extreme right spectrum. Mudde (2000) elaborates; “notwithstanding these political disputes, there is a rather broad consensus in the field that the term right-wing extremism describes primarily an ideology in one form or another” (p. 10). Common themes and ideological goals bring far-right parties together. Mudde (2000) emphasises this by expressing

most of the authors involved define right-wing extremism as a political ideology that is constituted of a combination of several different features. The number of features mentioned in the various definitions varies from one or two to more than ten. Examples of short definitions are from Macridis, who defines right-wing extremism as an ‘ideology [that] revolves around the same old staples: racism, xenophobia, and nationalism’ (1989: 231), and Backes and Jesse, who define it as ‘a collective term for anti-democratic dispositions and attempts, that are traditionally positioned at the extreme ‘right’ of the left-right spectre’ (1993: 474)

(pg. 10).

Mudde’s analysis of a family party transitions into the next major block of literature: the possibility of ideological ties between fascism and right-wing extremism. Nigel Copsey argues for the continuation of fascism post 1945 in contemporary right-wing parties. He does not argue that fascism exists now as it did during inter-war Europe, but rather, for the ability of fascism to change and develop to be suitable for the era.

Copsey wants to draw attention to “fascism’s inherent protean quality” (Copsey, 2012, p. 55). He implies that political scientists have become students of right-wing populism and downplay its relationship with fascism. Through Copsey’s claim of the protean quality of fascism, he places himself within the area of fascist studies, without being limited to an inter-war framework. Rather, he observes the ability for fascism to evolve and adapt, changing narratives and adjusting versions of racism, anti-immigration, anti-left and violent ideologies to exist post-1945. This perspective however, should not detract from the reality

of those that suffered under the Hitler and Mussolini regimes, and the specific contexts that made them so radical. The issue of danger of conflating fascism with other modern nationalist narratives has risen in relation to Donald Trump's presidency. Gianni Riotta, writing for *The Atlantic* stated,

having grown up in the birthplace of fascism and lived through its aftereffects, I am dead sure: Trump is not a fascist. Using the label not only belittles past tragedies and obscures future dangers, but also indicts his supporters, who have real grievances that mainstream politicians ignore at their peril

(Riotta, 2016).

Riotta is making a point about the evident differences between Trump and his right-wing rhetoric and the actions of fascists which saw the March on Rome, a genocide and the strong desire for violence. While the modern far-right are nowhere near as violent as inter-war fascists, their rhetoric has been diluted to be suitable for the era. Additionally, perhaps the lack of violence increases Copsey's point regarding the adjustable nature of fascism. Inter-war fascism resulted in a widespread condemnation of war and political violence, a lesson learnt by modern fascists. Copsey's argument of fascism existing in various forms post-1945 is the area in which this study is placed. The alt-right have adopted forms of fascism while strategically avoiding the term. In this thesis, I will use Copsey's framework and draw upon inter-war fascism to demonstrate the adoption and adaptation of fascist ideologies within the alt-right.

As mentioned, there have been major works of left-wing journalism to investigate the alt-right. These works generally delve into what the alt-right is and how Trump emboldened them. Since the phenomenon is still so new (in the mainstream), detailing what the alt-right is has been the purpose of these texts. Nancy S. Love (2017) does a good job of detailing the white supremacist reasons for Trump's presidency; she states that Trump "was reaffirming the history of white supremacy in American politics and culture, or the racial formation of the United States (US) as a white nation" (Love, 2017, p. 264). Love uses music to understand white supremacist ideals, making fascist 'trendy' as an expression of self through racism. Love's work is interesting as it analyses the power of music in relation to white supremacy, specifically, what Love calls 'white power music' which incorporates a lot of racism and sexism (Love, 2017). This is not a new phenomenon; it has been explored by Graham Macklin (2006), who explains "white power rock 'n' roll" (p. 569). The music serves

to “reflect and reproduce the violent racist subculture in which band and listeners alike are immersed” (ibid). Love explores how this has occurred within the alt-right and why it increased through Trump’s racially inflammatory rhetoric (Love, 2017). Love, however, does not ground her analysis of the alt-right and fascism within a fascist theoretical framework. It is the work of this study to analyse the alt-right in a theoretical framework encompassing an ideal-typical model of fascism.

Philippe-Joseph Salazar observes the alt-right in a theoretical framework. He does not relate it to fascism, but instead uses “Michel Foucault’s notion that discourse is marked by external procedures of prohibition, division and will to truth, and it shows how the Alt-Right owes its powerful emergence in the public sphere to these procedures” (Salazar, 2018, p. 135). Academic literature on the alt-right is relatively scarce. Understanding the nature of this movement can be done in a variety of ways. This is difficult however, due to the fragmented and modern aspects of its existence (the internet, no leader and relative anonymity). This study demonstrates how fascism presents itself within the alt-right and manifested itself in a very modern context, away from politics but appropriating traits of right-wing populism. Trump has emboldened their racist and conspiracist rhetoric, normalising it in a period of American history that is extremely divided.

The inability to gain a specific understanding of the alt-right is partly due to the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon. For example, historical American white nationalism, paleo-conservatism, internet troll culture (nihilism for the sake of it), conspiracy theorism and a general attack on conservatism all make up features present within the alt-right. George Hawley’s book *Making Sense of the Alt-Right* comes closest, in my opinion, to capturing the meaningful elements of the alt-right (although he is relatively weak on the internet aspect). Delving into the alt-right predecessors, to the differences between alt-right and alt-light, through to the 2016 presidential election, Hawley explains a wide but brief understanding of what the alt-right is within the contemporary context. His work has informed this study by providing good background information. Angela Nagle’s work delves deeply into the internet-based nature of the alt-right. Addressing their existence on the internet is integral to understanding their vulgarity, language, style and view of the world. Nagle delves into their online leaderless nature, the vulgar language and its function, its consistent bad-taste humour and the online political activism. Nagle allows

the reader to gain a view of how the internet has allowed ideas to flow freely with few consequences, regardless of what that ideology is. Niewert writes a similar analysis to Hawley in that he attempts to understand the alt-right in a more physical sense. Niewert however, views the alt-right in a broader American context, analysing the ideologies that have informed the alt-right; the far-right historical norms, conspiracy theories and racism that grew further entrenched into pockets of American society due to an African-American president.

It is within this work that my study is placed. This study aims to understand the nature of the alt-right. So, the context, history and Trumpism all play a vital role, however, the argument throughout is that the nature of the alt-right is that it is a fascistic movement, borrowing the highly racist, anti-liberal, anti-left, anti-feminist, exclusionary and anti-Semitic themes of fascism. This study narrows the view of the alt-right and applies an ideal-type fascist model based upon fascist academics. To conduct it, I frequented various alt-right websites; this will be discussed in the following section.

Methodology

For this study, I looked at four alt-right websites as my main sources of data while using Bre Fauchaux's YouTube podcast *Introduction to the alt-right* as a supplement. The websites visited were *altright.com*, *therightstuff.biz*, *breitbart.com* and *thedailystormer.com*. I used these websites as a source of data because I felt these represented the views of the alt-right in a manageable way. Additionally, these websites represented the alt-right directly. On the internet, there are many websites which incorporate racist ideology. Some websites are dedicated specifically to anti-globalism and white supremacy, while others are dedicated to American conservatism, not necessarily racist, but are anti-immigration and oppose the federal government (especially due to the Obama presidency). The four websites examined were more suitable due to their direct link to the alt-right and their use of race-realist 'intellectualism'. The contemporary nature of the alt-right however, provided some difficulties within this study. Throughout the study, the alt-right have gone through various stages. By this, I mean that they have gone through, and are continuing to go through, various stages in their relationship with Trump. The alt-right

have also gone through periods of empowerment and decline during this study. The Charlottesville Unite the right rally occurred due to embodiment, while the alt-right also went through a decline.¹ I will now discuss why I chose each website individually.

Websites *dailystormer.com* and *breitbart.com* were chosen because I felt they represented two elements within the alt-right; alt-right and alt-light. Although *breitbart.com* has been described as the platform of the alt-right, it is much milder in its expression of hatred, anti-Semitism and racism (displayed mostly as anti-immigration and European chauvinism). It does incorporate a lot of typical alt-right ideological traits but almost attempts to remain within the mainstream of right-wing conservative representation. This website allows individuals sympathetic to the alt-right to gain an introduction without delving directly into the harsher, hyper-racist and aggressive elements of the alt-right. *Breitbart.com* assists in gaining an analysis of the alt-right and alt-light concepts which have been analysed by George Hawley. According to Hunter Stuart, writing for *dose.com*,

Breitbart is a far-right media company that defines itself as a 'conservative news and opinion website' with 45 million readers a month. It is, far and away, the most popular conservative news outlet in America. Since getting its start in 2007, Breitbart has forced government officials and congressman from office, brought liberal non-profit groups to their knees, given a platform to America's most hateful groups and helped get Trump elected to the most powerful office in the Western world
(Stuart, N.D).

Stuart adds, that *Breitbart.com* was "started in 2007 by the charismatic entrepreneur Andrew Breitbart as a simple Drudge Report-style news aggregator, pulling in stories reported by other outlets" (ibid). While *Breitbart.com* has contributed to spreading the alt-right agenda, in my opinion, it does not constitute the 'harder' elements present in other alt-right websites. For example, its sections demonstrate a conservative view of society which often delves into alt-right ideology but does not outright express it. It is demonstrated in figure 1:

¹ See <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/19/the-alt-right-is-in-decline-has-antifa-activism-worked>.

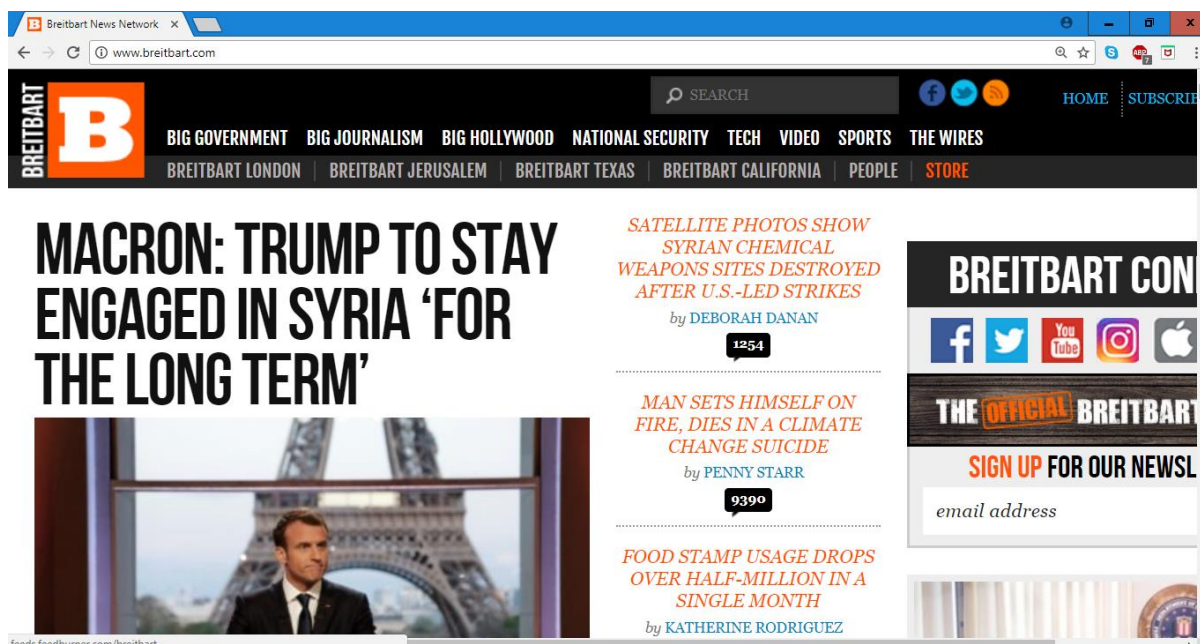


Fig. 1 <http://www.breitbart.com/> (accessed 16/04/18).

The sections of 'Big Government', 'Big Journalism', 'national security' and others, indicate a conservative view with a hard right-wing, nationalist agenda concerned mainly with 'issues' affecting (white) American citizens, however, does not push this in an overtly aggressive manner.

The website *dailystormer.com* is at times the 'holy grail' of the alt-right. It is extreme in its ideology (which is seen in other websites), but it is extremely vulgar. Owner and creator Andrew Anglin, advocates for the alt-right and views his website as a significant addition to social and political debates, often believing he is revealing the 'truth' (this argument is common within the alt-right in general). This website was chosen because it represents the vulgar, harshly racist (especially anti-black) and anti-Semitic aspects of the alt-right. Andrew Anglin is heavily involved with this website, often writing blogs. The Southern Poverty Law Centre explains that "the Daily Stormer is dedicated to spreading anti-Semitism, neo-Nazism, and white nationalism, primarily through guttural hyperbole and epithet-laden stories about topics like alleged Jewish world control and black-on-white crime" (www.splcenter.org, N.D). ²This website was chosen because it is a good self-description of what the alt-right is.

² See <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/andrew-anglin> for a brief view of Andrew Anglin.

The vulgar sections and aggressive racism, anti-Semitism and sexism are demonstrated in figure 2 and 3:

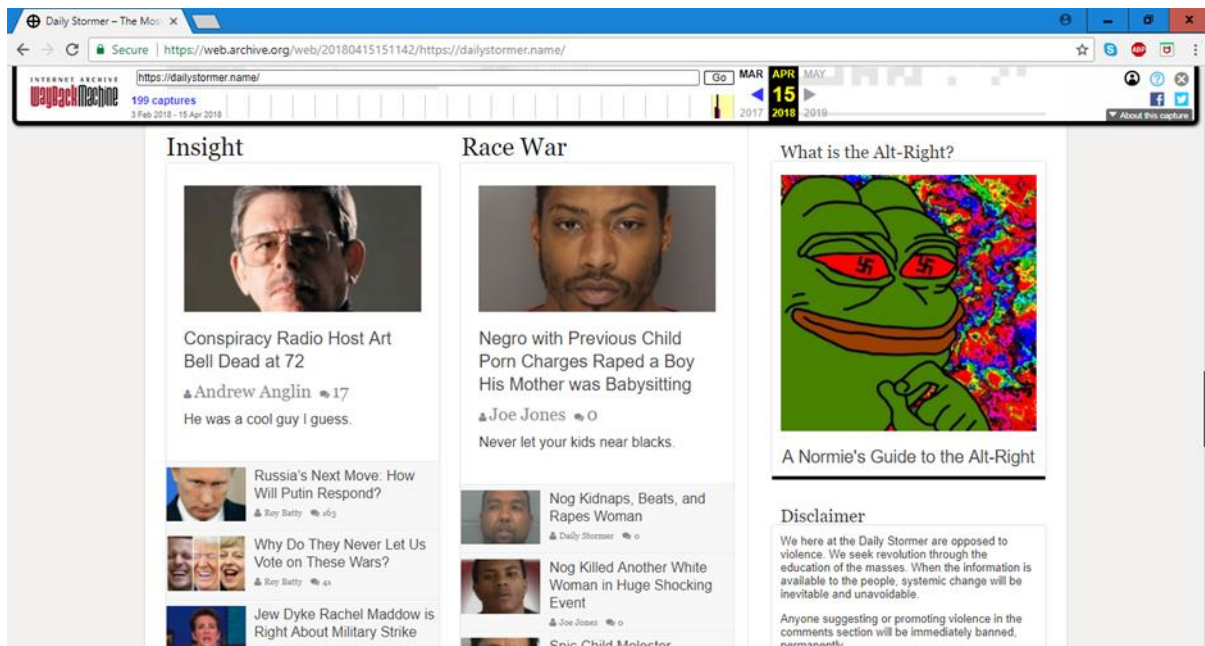


Fig. 2 <https://web.archive.org/web/20180415151142/https://dailystormer.name/> (accessed 16/04/18).

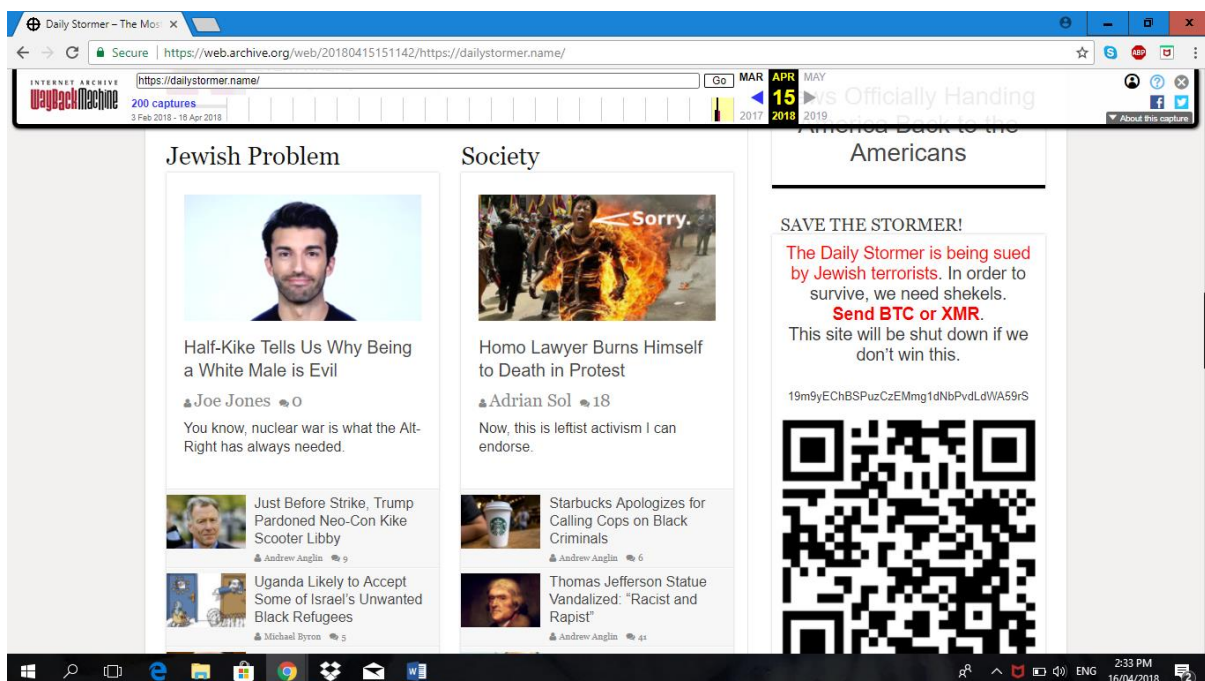


Fig. 3 <https://web.archive.org/web/20180415151142/https://dailystormer.name/> (accessed 16/04/18).

TheDailyStormer.com represents the harder, more vulgar, aggressive and nihilistic aspects of the alt-right and has been involved with informing its 'members' on actions to take, such as voting for Donald Trump and how to approach the Unite the Right rally. This website has been censored multiple times throughout the study, which added to my motivation for the addition of this website to this study. This may also have been contributed to by the on-going lawsuit filed against owner and founder Andrew Anglin.³ The website is much harsher than the others and brings in the vulgar style of the alt-right.

TheRightStuff.biz was chosen because it incorporates various internet podcasts and blogs which represents the ideological views of the alt-right. It is a website which attempts to point fun at the liberal left while simultaneously offering an 'intellectual' approach to the concerns of the alt-right such as race realism, white genocide and the decline of masculinity. The podcast serves as an alt-right 'intellectual' approach to current events; these podcasts are usually very racist and sexist. This website was founded by Michael Peinovich. He is described by *The Southern Poverty Law Centre* (SPCL) as "a principal voice on the Alt-Right, Mike Peinovich is a white nationalist blogger and founder of The Right Stuff and cohost of the Daily Shoah" (www.splcenter.org/, N.D). Enoch has expressed various ideas regarding race and society; for example, Enoch has been quoted as saying: "diversity means you're next white people. Your heads are on the chopping block" and "white privilege is an anti-white conspiracy theory that is meant to facilitate white genocide" (ibid). The website incorporates the heavy use of podcasts, as well as blogs. Although the research mainly addressed blogs, the podcasts were an interesting addition to the website, as they represent the way in which many people interact with information on the internet (podcasts are widely listened to). Some of the podcasts are demonstrated in figure 4:

³ See <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/03/lawsuit-neo-nazi-andrew-anglin-move-180322151837162.html> for more.

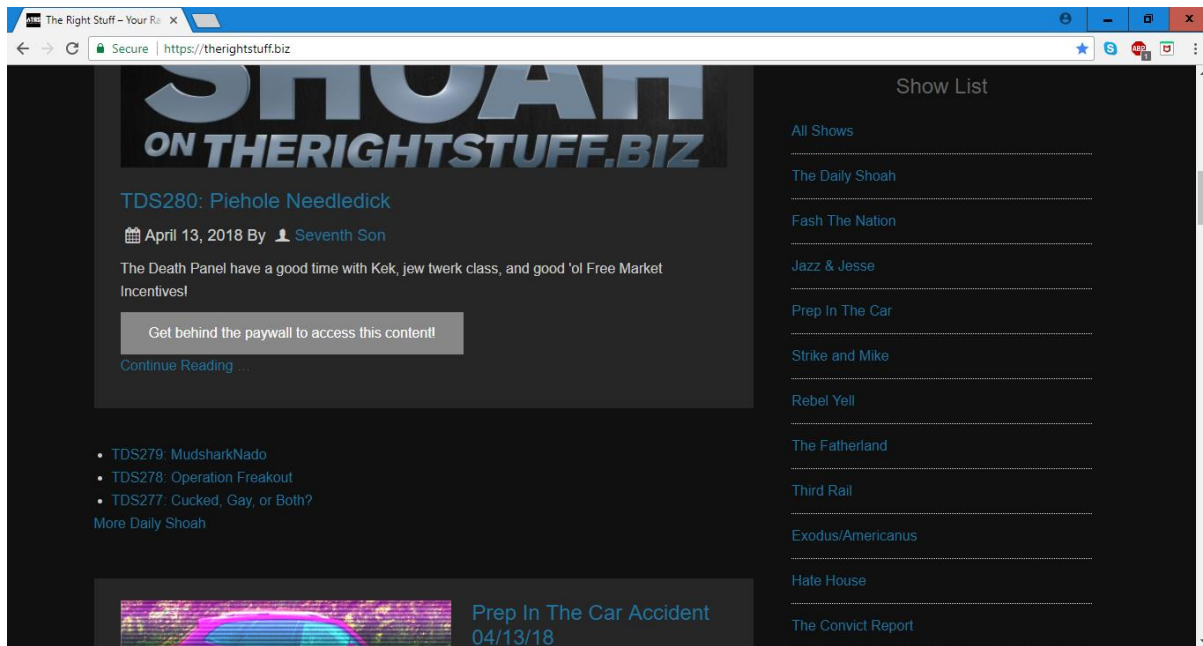


Fig 4. <https://therightstuff.biz/> (accessed 16/04/18).

The 'show list' comprises the names of some of the podcasts available on the website. These podcasts discuss social issues ranging from feminism, ethnicity, sport and conspiracies; all from the alt-right perspective.

The last website under discussion is *altright.com*. This was chosen because of its links to Richard Spencer, the man who coined the term 'alt-right' and has been an advocate for white supremacy.⁴ The website also has a dedication to viewing the world from an alt-right perspective with issues ranging from the Jewish question, to white genocide, through to feminism in modern society. I think this website, due to being under the guidance of Richard Spencer, has some of the most widespread perspectives of the alt-right; it is pseudo-intellectual, highly controversial and incorporates a white nationalist ideology of attempting to make the white 'race' aware of themselves, their plight, superiority. All this means is that *altright.com* as an alt-right tool is very purpose built; aimed toward the development of an alt-right 'uprising' against contemporary society. Although the website has recently undergone an update, resulting in an 'altright plus' area which requires members to sign up to gain 'further access' to website material, *altright.com* was readily available to anyone

⁴ See <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/richard-bertrand-spencer-0> for more on Spencer.

throughout 2017 (in which most of my research was conducted). Heavily influenced by Spencer, *altright.com* desires to 'expose' society and bring its readers to the truth of society.

Initially, I observed many websites that represented the ideologies of the alt-right. Throughout the internet there are many websites that align themselves with the alt-right (as well as YouTube channels). There are also those that are white nationalist, anti-Islamic and generally racist, but not necessarily part of the alt-right. I visited many of these but eventually narrowed it down to the four discussed as it was a good representation of the alt-right and using only four as data was a lot more manageable. When first visiting these websites, I randomly select articles; I would choose five articles from each website, dating roughly from 2013 till the present. As I progressed through these, I began to observe themes. As more of these themes occurred, I started to search for them within the websites; racism, anti-Semitism, sexism and social decay were the most common. However, as my research into fascism developed, the observation of these websites turned into a search for similarities within the alt-right to the ideal-type model. In addition to this though, I would continue to randomly select articles. As the study continued, both methods were undertaken; finding themes that matched the fascist model, while also sifting through the articles viewing what ideas occur within the alt-right. The elements that make up the fascist model used occur within the alt-right. It is the purpose of this study to display these themes within the alt-right and consequently demonstrate how the alt-right represents fascism.

Ultra-nationalism as a fascistic motif

Introduction: The model of nationalism

Michael Mann (2004) uses five elements to explain his definition of fascism. This definition being, “fascism is the pursuit of a transcendent and cleansing nation-statism through paramilitarism” (Mann, 2004, p. 13). The first element Mann discusses is nationalism, which is the topic of this chapter. Mann’s approach to nationalism will guide this chapter, but will fuse with different authors. Therefore, the model used throughout incorporates various other interpretations of fascist nationalism and will not be exclusive to Mann’s interpretation.

Mann explains nationalism within fascism as a commitment to achieving an integral or organic nation. Nazis placed a heavy emphasis on nationalism and race, seeking an ethnic understanding of the nation. Fascists were intolerant of ethnic or cultural diversity and therefore, only the ethnically or politically (in the Italian case) pure were legitimate members of the nation. Fascists theorised that other ethnic or racial identities could not be unlearned, implying these cultures could not live in harmony. The differences were irreconcilable and one ethnic group would have to be deemed the ‘loser’. Often leaning on physical removal, fascists theorised that these ethnic groups perverted the purity of the nation. A second part, which complements the other within Mann’s interpretation of nationalism, was the recognition and deep animosity toward enemies, at home or abroad (usually incorporating violence as a means of ridding themselves of enemies) (Mann, 2004). Enemies existed in terms of ideological, cultural and ethnic differences. This ideology became combined with the viewpoint that the organic nation was being overwhelmed or controlled by other ethnic groups. A sense of social decay was argued to be in effect, committed by malicious, powerful groups directly responsible (for Nazis it was a conspiracy addressing the Jews). These groups represented a threat that had to be eliminated for the sake of the nation.

Despite Mann's useful interpretation of nationalism, there are elements to nationalism that I feel Mann neglects or downplays. Roger Griffin (1991) will be used as a supplement to Mann. He posits the idea of a palingenetic ultra-nationalism in which, through ideas of decadence, decay and humiliation, fascists would remake the nation. Griffin defines palingenesis as,

deriving from palin (again, anew) and genesis (creation, birth), refers to the sense of a new start or of regeneration after a phase of crisis or decline which can be associated just as much with mystical (for example the Second Coming) as secular realities (for example the New Germany)

(Griffin, 1991, p. 32-3).

Griffin explains that fascism was interlocked with an ideology that emphasised two myths. The first is that the "nation conceived as an organism that is 'dying,' 'decadent' or 'martyred'" (Griffin, 2006, p. 499). Fascists viewed contemporary society as decaying the power and autonomy of the nation; enemies were committing this atrocity and it was a sin. This leads to the second myth; that the nation can be reborn and transformed to be better. Fascist grievances played a role in the feelings of decay and will be discussed later as a motivating factor for aggressive defence of the nation.

As a palingenetic rebirth, Mussolini looked backward to the past glories of the Roman Empire and assessed that the current struggles of Italy did not fit the legacy deserved by Italians (Eatwell, 2003). The goal was then to solve the current crisis and use these myths of a golden Roman age to restructure society through fascism. While Griffin emphasises this idea within an interpretation of fascism, Mann does not agree, stating that a national rebirth is part of nationalism in general and not exclusive to fascist nationalism. Despite this general disagreement, I think that a palingenetic view of nationalism is essential to fascism due to the aggressive actions taken to recreate a Roman Italy and the German Empire. Fascists rejected liberal principles that emerged out of the Enlightenment and sought a revolution, using the new fascist nation as a point of genesis. Griffin's view of fascist nationalism will only enrich Mann's interpretations, especially when using these models to analyse groups and individuals in relation to fascism.

This chapter will use the above model of nationalism as the guide to analysing the nationalism within the alt-right. First, I will discuss the nature of alt-right nationalism,

discussing where it is displayed and what it looks like. Secondly, I will analyse how the alt-right address white nationalism and, like fascism, argue that contemporary society is characterised by decay and an attack on the wider white race is perpetrated by enemies. Lastly, I will address the Mannian observation of a nationalist attack on enemies by the alt-right.

The nature of alt-right nationalism

The alt-right is a hyper-nationalist movement. Their nationalism often expresses itself as racism and it is the websites of the alt-right that will be explored to locate this nationalism. The approaches to this nationalism varies; some alt-right followers have an overtly racist, white nationalist and anti-Semitic approach, while others have a subtler form of white nationalism existing as European chauvinism, avoiding overt anti-Semitism and other forms of racism, while still advocating for the preservation and superiority of the white race. Despite these differences, the websites share the theme of white tribal identity, that this identity is under threat and that the white race is superior. *Breitbart.com* is characterised by an awareness of its viewers; it knows that the audience it will receive are far-right ideologues, therefore, the website does not attempt to convince anyone explicitly, rather, it is used to highlight and emphasise ideas that already exist. For example, Breitbart has many articles detailing the attacks on white culture to demonstrate that it is widespread, reinforcing an already existing belief of the audience. The website encompasses articles with titles such as, 'Migrants Threaten Swedish Migration Board Employees with Rape, Violence' (Breitbart, 2017). While this article does not use explicit derogatory terms for immigrants, (such as *The Daily Stormer*) it is divisive and racist in its purpose; implying immigrants are naturally a threat to a local population and are inherently a source of crime. Attempting to appear as intellectuals, *Breitbart.com* tries to stay legitimate in the mainstream; viewed more favourably than more extreme websites. Its nationalism is located through providing a specific view of immigrants as negative to 'western countries' and whiteness as an inherent positive. What *Breitbart.com* does is emphasise an imaginary enemy that is the source of social decay without using explicit racism; the argument becomes rather about a threat to their society, than an overt hatred of the 'Other'. Breitbart argues for a defensive nationalism, staying away from overt racism, but delving rather into

an argument of moral panic regarding immigrants. The defensive nationalism is characterised by arguments of the danger immigrants bring to the host nation. Often assuming they will not assimilate (this is viewed as an inherently negative thing), they change the host nations culture, immigrants bring crime and abuse the welfare system. In this case, that racist nationalism of the alt-right becomes an argument of defending the host nation from alien invaders that are hostile toward the nation. This argument is also posited by Griffin (1991) in relation to fascism; the motivation for their racist nationalism was the desire for a strong state to act as a “protector of the national community” (p. 48), so its “distinctive culture can flower once more” (ibid). *Breitbart.com* employs defensive nationalism and avoids overt racism. This makes it appear more mainstream, moderate and patriotic in nature, rather than a racist xenophobic force, attempting to keep the nation ‘pure’.

An example of a more extreme (and explicit) white nationalist website is *The Daily Stormer*. It contains overtly racist and anti-Semitic themes. For example, there is a “race war” section which details exclusively the attacks committed by ‘black’ individuals on white individuals. The titles of these articles are explicit and harshly racist, for example titles include ‘Feral Negro shot two white men’ and ‘Wild Beast Murders 19-Year-Old Sloppy Fat White Girl’, which includes the subheading, ‘Why are Blacks allowed anywhere near White girls? Why are White girls allowed near trans-fats?’ (*The Daily Stormer*, N.D). Within these titles are implications of the natural violence of African men, and that this violence is deliberately aimed at the white ‘race’. Within these more aggressive alt-right sites, the kind of nationalism that is expressed is a white nationalism that emphasises the differences and superiority of whites. The overt racism demonstrates the belief in black inferiority and its apparent animalistic nature. *The Daily Stormer* borrows from Nazism’s Aryan belief in its superiority. According to Markus Hattstein, “Hitler and the early Nazi ideologues believed in an Aryan Master Race that had the mission to dominate all other peoples and races” (Hattstein, 2006, p. 61). The articles found on this website imply a white supremacy that is justified through defence of the white race and the self-evident arguments of white superiority.

The differences between *The Daily Stormer* and *Breitbart.com* can be explained through the terms ‘alt-light’ and the ‘alt-right’. *Al Jazeera.com* defines ‘alt-light’ as “a term

used to describe far-right nationalists who share many opinions of white supremacists and neo-Nazis, while often eschewing or rejecting labelling themselves as such or promoting openly anti-Semitic rhetoric” (Al Jazeera, 2017). The term is further explored by author George Hawley (2017). Hawley discusses members associated with the alt-right and how this relationship can be dubious at times. Hawley explains;

So I should clarify that, although Yiannopoulos is not truly part of the Alt-Right, he is radical and offensive in a way that is often reminiscent of the Alt-Right. Perhaps this description is what the alt-right considers alt-light. The ideas are approaching a strict and far-right ideology but does not delve necessarily into white nationalism. More, nihilistic sarcasm about fears and anxieties, attempting to get at (or spread) a surface deep, superficial ‘truth’ that their opponents just can’t see. But are not explicitly approaching cleansing like racism. I think we should remember the trolling, fun, just for sh**s and gigs sort of behaviour of the alt-right, so if a group or someone is part of the alt-right but is not as extreme or disagrees, the more radical just want to make fun of them because they can. Alt-light may be a label in a similar vein as ‘cuckservative’

(Hawley, 2017, p. 141).

In this case, *Breitbart.com* represents the ‘alt-light’/softer approach to spreading white nationalism and *The Daily Stormer* represents the aggressive and overt portion of the ‘alt-right’. The alt-light is often used as a form of mockery by those who are deemed truly alt-right. The more vulgar and racist, the better. Regardless, both are a form of conservative racism, emphasising organicism of the white race within white countries. Organicism, racism and white supremacy are the ideologies of alt-right nationalism. These link to key terms found within fascist nationalism; an integral organic nation (whites), the state as important (anti-globalist) and the superiority of their race (Aryanism). The anti-globalist feature is vital to understanding the nationalist emphasis of fascism and the alt-right. It is intrinsically linked to anti-Semitism and should not be separated. Italian Fascism and Nazism were anti-global and pro-state. They believed in an organic state, incorporating a socialist approach aimed only for the prosperity of the organic nation. However, fascists ‘interpretation’ of socialism is complex as it rejected and planned to transcend it. A major point of difference from socialism was the rejection of the universalist aspects. According to Blamires (2006), “mainstream socialism has always regarded itself as a universal doctrine transcending national boundaries and proclaiming the shared interests of workers in every part of the world” (p. 610). This ideology went “hand in hand with a proclaimed pursuit of the ideal of

equality” (ibid). These elements were rejected by fascists in favour of a nationalist approach. Mussolini himself preferred nationalism over internationalism. It proved to be effective because, as Blamires states, “Hitler and Mussolini realised, and what the Left failed to realise, was that for many people the cosmopolitan ideal pursued by traditional socialism remained an abstraction” (Blamires, 2006., p. 610). Universalist approaches to society were viewed by Hitler as a Jewish conspiracy to destroy the nation and control the world. For example,

Adolf Hitler was convinced that Marxism – which he carefully separated from his own ‘socialism’ – was an ideology invented by the Jews in order to transfer the whole world to Jewish power

(Blamires & Jackson, 2006, p. 612).

The alt-right also view a ‘globalist’ and ‘universalist’ approach as a Jewish conspiracy to control the world. Globalism is explained by Emanuel Spraguer, writing for *altright.com*. He explains;

A ‘globalist’ is not a Jew. This is not to say there is not some correlation between being a rootless, cabalistic, nomadic tribal elitist and being a globalist, because surely there is, but this does not make globalism synonymous with Jewry. Jews were drawn in staggering numbers to that other internationalist ideology (communism) as well, but ‘Bolshevik’ is not an anti-semitic slur/term, even if some might interpret it that way, and even if, as with ‘globalist’, ethnic animus may sometimes factor into the decision to use the term

(Spraguer, 2018).

While Spraguer says ‘Jewry’ and ‘globalism’ are not the same, his tone and description suggests otherwise. Ann Coulter has used the term globalist to refer directly to Jews, implying Jewish control of governments, advocating for an anti-nationalist/ pro-globalist agenda. According to Ali Feldman,

Ann Coulter, the arch-conservative talking head who frequently complains about Jews and has white nationalist sympathies took to Twitter Thursday night to call Jews ‘globalists.’ Her remarks came after Donald Trump referred to outgoing economic adviser Gary Cohn as a ‘globalist,’ using a moniker that many see as an anti-Semitic slur

(Feldman, 2018).

Coulter uses the term globalist to directly refer to Jews, especially Jews in positions of influence.⁵ This was celebrated by the alt-right. Jared Holt writes that Ann Coulter

tweeted out the names of various Jewish people last night and labeled them 'globalists' as she mocked the idea that the term 'globalist' is secretly an anti-Semitic slur. While Coulter framed the tweets as a joke, her fans on the racist alt-right saw them as a message to them, and proof that Coulter had finally revealed her secret anti-Semitic beliefs

(Holt, 2018).

The argument of the globalist attack is intertwined with the alt-right's version of statist nationalism. Globalism, to them, is an attack on their white tribal identity.

White tribal identity

While fascists were concerned with a form of nationalism that prioritised the state, and an ethnic group within sovereign borders, the alt-right is concerned with the white world beyond borders, connected through whiteness. I call this nationalism white tribal identity. This is explained by an author on *altright.com*, who argues

on this continent of ours, only ethnically European populations are related to each other and enjoy 'brotherly' relations, regardless of their nationality and regional origin. The presence of other nationalities is perfectly acceptable, as long as their members are temporary guests and not permanent occupants

(Faye, 2017).

Here, Faye is arguing for the collective unity of all white peoples, regardless of where specifically they are from; by being white, they are connected. White tribal identity is further explained through a YouTube video presented by Richard Spencer on the 'about' section of *altright.com*. The video starts with Spencer asking, "who are you?", he continues to say, "I'm talking about something bigger, something deeper. I'm talking about your connection to a culture, a history, a destiny, an identity that stretches back and flows forward for centuries" (*altright.com*, N.D.). Here, the alt-right borrows from organicism within Nazism. Nazi ideology pushed an agenda which believed that "an authentic community of people or a nation is an organic whole reflecting some kind of inner identity

⁵ Coulter's tweets: <https://forward.com/fast-forward/396255/ann-coulter-fires-off-tweetstorm-at-globalist-jews/>.

or spirit” (Gasman, 2006, p. 487). Alt-right and Nazi organicism emphasise a connectedness to a grand narrative of ancestry, history and a rootedness to the land. This is displayed through the words of Richard Spencer, who advocates for a connectedness to the American soil because, as Spencer argues, “the United States was built by white people” (Mindock, 2017). Spencer is stating the ownership and right white people have to America, implying that his biology and blood links him to the land; the ‘building’ of modern America by the white man makes him more entitled to it than others. However, as I mentioned above, the alt-right extend this organicism to the white race at large, arguing for a deep-rooted connection beyond borders due to ancestry, achievement and whiteness. Andrew Anglin describes this White identity as central to alt-right nationalism. In his words:

the Alt-Right celebrates the greatness of our ancestors and the glory of our historical achievements. Rejecting revisionist arguments by modern social scientists which portray Whites as having wrought evil on the planet, we view Whites as the creators and maintainers of Western civilization. We pride ourselves in doing the best we can to pick-up the ball that the baby boomers dropped when they sold-out the entire history of our people for feel-good nonsense

(Anglin, 2016).

The sentiment of white identification nationalism is accompanied by a sense of white superiority. As part of alt-right goals, white people must become awakened to this superiority, increase white privilege, limit or eliminate the presence of non-whites, and proclaim loudly their pride in whiteness.

Although alt-right figureheads prefer the term race realist, or white ‘identitarian’, to express their ideology as simply being advocates for white people just as Martin Luther King is for African-Americans, there is a sense of white superiority within the ideas and language expressed throughout alt-right websites. This is seen in an *altright.com* (2017) article titled ‘top 5 Ways to Embrace And Express Your White Privilege’, which includes sub-headings such as “talk down to people of colour” and “talk about the white race” which should be done in a way that emphasises the greatness of white history. While European history should be a topic of discussion generally, the alt-right argue for this while proclaiming non-white inferiority, for example, the anti-immigration rhetoric which explains the need to keep white nations white, and that immigrants bring crime, poverty and disrupt the ethnic purity of said nations. The idea is that these immigrants bring with them the backwardness of their

home countries and denigrate European culture and norms by refusing to assimilate. For example, this comment is expressed within *therightstuff.biz* (2017): “the browner this place gets, the shittier it becomes”. These ideas create a sense of ‘white pride’ and pride in difference. For the alt-right, being white is inherently better; their pride in difference is expressed through stating that whites are better than other races, implying that the world is better under white rule and control. For example, Red Ice (far-right YouTube channel) is joined by Paul Kersey, “author of the blog *Stuff Black People Don’t Like*, and has published many books on race, multiculturalism” (*altright.com*, 2017), discuss topics on this podcast, including “the growing divide in America, and how Rhodesia, South Africa, and Haiti serve as examples of what will happen if we lose” (Red Ice, 2017). The argument of the alt-right is that whiteness is better, and the world is better through white domination, supremacy and control, hence, pride in their difference to other races; because to them, non-whites are not capable of what they can achieve as whites (in a biological/natural sense). The carriers of this ideology often prefer the term ‘identitarian’ to represent their belief in identity politics for the white race. The term ‘identitarian’ is explained in the following:

Identitarianism is a metapolitical framework within which Identitarians work to influence political and socio-economic activity in an effort to protect and preserve racial, ethnic, and cultural identity. Identitarians share a traditional worldview of the historical development of the various and differing peoples of the world. Our primary ideological principle maintains that every race, ethnic group, and culture have immeasurable inherent value and should be afforded the right to live and develop themselves as they see fit through the cardinal principle of self-determination, remaining steadfastly against adverse influence from imposing forces that wish to destroy them

(Surtson, 2017).

Identitarians value the belief that each group should look out for themselves, prioritise themselves and should encourage the prosperity of only their group. While this has a hint of an emancipatory nationalist movement, *altright.com* speaks from a white perspective and thus implies that European civilisation is distinct (which is normal for an identitarian) but distinct in a superior way. The alt-right use the ‘self-determination’ and traditionalist argument to legitimise calls for immigration reform to maintain the dominant whiteness of apparently ‘white countries’. For example, as the article continues it details that “the cultural institutions that set European culture apart from others, the very institutions that built and maintain European civilization and European values, are crumbling under the

weight of a relatively new enemy” (ibid). White/European culture and values are viewed as superior, while maintaining a disconnection from the historical circumstances as well as the deliberate attempts throughout that history to marginalise ethnic minorities socially and economically. However, white identity is argued by the alt-right to be under attack.

Victimisation through genocide

“White genocide” is a term that is used frequently by the alt-right. It is viewed as a Jewish conspiracy that is deliberately destroying white culture. However, the perpetrators are not exclusively Jewish. To the alt-right, there are a multitude of reasons and ways in which it is perpetrated. One of these is the apparent disconnection white people have for the preservation of ‘their own’ people. Guillaume Faye (2017), writing for *altright.com* states “whites, with a few exceptions, are the only people who are not concerned about their collective future, who do not possess a racial consciousness, so guilty and complex-ridden have they become”. In the belief of white genocide, the white race is undergoing a genocide through feminism, white-guilt, immigration/multiculturalism, low white birth rates (due in part to feminism taking women out the home) and white people betraying themselves by denying their history. The term though, needs greater exploration.

Jezebel.com describes the term as the following;

the threat of ‘white genocide’ is a conspiracy theory, promoted by elements of the so-called alt-right and fuelled by anxiety over fertility and immigration trends, that was popularized by South Carolina segregationist Bob Whitaker

(O’Connor, 2016).

White genocide is characterised as a movement of the elites (often viewed as Jewish conspirators) to destroy and replace the white race. In this case, the elites are the enemies that are creating a multicultural society that will replace and marginalise the white race and enrich themselves. While there is a definition given above, I think it is important to demonstrate the theory from a far-right, or alt-right perspective. Alex Jones, a conspiracy theorist and host of *infowars*, has his argument for white genocide used by *altright.com* and it is explained as this,

the elites are using the migrants to undermine the cohesion and solidarity of the lumpenproles in the destination country. By creating a Tower of Babel in their

countries, the elites can divide and conquer by keeping the different groups at each other's throats while they enrich themselves and diddle children. Meanwhile, they keep their boots on the neck of the White population who would reject their policies of White replacement if given a vote

(Law, 2017).

This argument attaches a sense of victimhood perpetrated by powerful enemies. Rik Storey, writing for *altright.com* details varying motivations for white genocide. Storey expresses his ideas as this,

because whites created modern capitalism, developed successful natural orders with hierarchies and have come to dominate the world culturally and otherwise. By completely subverting everything, and I mean everything, about European civilization, worldwide, *then* a leftist social order can rise from the ashes

(Storey, 2017).

White genocide, ideologically, is an understanding of a deliberate attack against whiteness; a decay of white supremacy. Griffin explains that fascists saw contemporary society as a 'crisis' which necessitated "a new phase of civilisation based on a revitalising vision of reality that would enable morality and the social order to be regenerated" (Griffin, 2006, p. 168). Like fascists, the alt-right believe in a "degenerate state of contemporary society" (ibid). For the alt-right, this is viewed as 'The Great Replacement'. The alt-right do not argue necessarily that the white race is being killed en masse (although they do argue that when a white individual is killed by an ethnic minority it is part of a race war; and the individual was a victim only because they were white). The genocide is viewed as a cultural devaluing or replacement. The alt-right describe the replacement occurring now and like this; "it consists of a minimum of four chronological, often overlapping, phases: the critique of organic culture, the corruption of traditional values, the introduction of alternative artificial values, and finally the outright destruction of the culture bearers" (Surtson, 2017). In this case, the idea of the attack on white culture is evident. The alt-right believe that the European values are under attack and the goal is to replace it with a leftist ideology (which to the alt-right is often a Jewish ideology that supports diversity in multiple forms; gender, ethnicity and sexuality). Leftist ideology has created low birth-rates among the local population, growth of immigration, devaluing of the white culture and self-hatred. Within these ideas, there is a strong sense of victimhood for the white race. This analysis is further illustrated by *altright.com*,

the indigenous European populations of their respective countries are now threatened with minority status within 40 years or sooner. The European American population has dwindled from 90% to just 63% from 1950 to 2012 due to low birth rates, miscegenation, and ever-increasing mass immigration of non-European peoples. Since the European Migrant Crisis began in 2015, Europe has seen millions of non-European peoples, consisting primarily of military-aged, Muslim males, freely strolling over their borders. They have been deemed refugees attempting to escape the outbreak of war in Syria, however, rather than seek refuge in neighboring Islamic countries, they headed straight for Continental Europe and are soon to be welcomed in the United States. Since 2015 we have seen a multitude of terrorist attacks by these alleged 'asylum seekers.' What is worse is that due to Cultural Marxist inculcation, the victims of these atrocities have received more blame than the perpetrators

(Surtson, 2017).

The term "white genocide" is largely a reaction to the dampened power of white supremacy. Despite the dominance of white culture, norms and power that continues to exist, the continued progressive ideas and empowerment of current and historical minority groups acts as a threat to white supremacy.

The alt-right desire, much like fascism did, that the national community will rise "phoenix-like after a period of encroaching decadence which all but destroyed it" (Griffin, 1991, p. 38). The 'crisis' within contemporary society is the decay of the white race due to an attack perpetrated by enemies. This form of nationalism is what fuels the anti-immigration rhetoric, the cultural racism and white supremacist rhetoric. The belief in decay is intrinsically linked to palingenetic nationalism; the alt-right seek to reinvent society through attacking enemies that are apparently destroying it.

Targeting of enemies

Like fascists, nationalism in the alt-right also exists through hatred and targeting of enemies. Ethnically impure groups and ideological enemies disturb the social fabric of an alt-right pure society. The alt-right simply hate different groups and it is expressed through racism, anti-feminism, anti-leftism and conspiracy theories. Nationalism is expressed by targeting enemies of white nationalism. However, it is not just enemies of white nationalism that are the problem. Sometimes, the targeting of their enemies does not necessarily serve a 'higher' purpose other than simple hate. Sexism and racism is expressed sometimes

because members just hate non-whites, and some of these men think women are beneath them and that should be maintained; feminist women are simply hated by the alt-right. Additionally, the alt-right have adopted an anti-Semitism that is similar in nature to Nazism. The enemies that will be discussed are ethnic minorities, left-wing ideologies (which can include other white individuals) and Jewish conspirators.

Racism in the alt-right: ethnic minorities

The alt-right manifests its recognition of 'enemies' as racism. As Michael Mann (2004) argues, fascists, especially Nazis, were intolerant of difference and this demonstrated itself in harsh forms of racism. Nazism claimed their racism was based on scientific foundations (Kallis, 2006). It should be stated here that Nazism was different to Italian Fascism in its application of the racial doctrine which emphasised enemies through racist attitudes and racial cleansing (Koller, 2006). Kallis (2006) explains that Nazism's "most dominant – and definitely its most widely shared – form (of racism) was anti-Semitism" (p. 552). Christian Koller (2006) argues that since racism was not necessarily a part of Italian Fascism, it is not part of a generic fascism. I will not debate this position; however, it does add to my view that the racism and anti-Semitism within the alt-right borrows directly from Nazism and older white supremacist groups. The hatred of other ethnic groups as demonstrated by the alt-right is like fascism, and a continuation of American and European white supremacy.

Nazism relied on the concept of 'scientific' racism (Kallis, 2006). Nazis adopted ideologies regarding race from the nineteenth century which "interpreted history and society as a function of human 'races' and their rivalry for supremacy" (Koller, 2006, p. 551). The modern interpretation used by the alt-right, which is essentially a rebranding of scientific racism, is a term called 'race realism', known also as 'human biodiversity' (Faucheux, 2018). This is not exclusively the form of racism expressed by the alt-right (they also use cultural racism), however, the racism that I will discuss right now is the rebranding of nineteenth century biological racism to exist in the 2010's. Bre Faucheux explains in her YouTube podcast *alt-right 101* that race realism is "the controversial, yet factual truth, that the various races within the human race are biologically different and therefore incapable of

reaching the same, universal result in life outcome” (2018). Faucheux’s guest speaker Mark Collet continues to explain (and emphasises this is for a ‘beginner’ audience) Collet states, “race realism, that’s a term many people use to describe the scientific understanding of race and racial differences” (Collet, 2018). The term is a mask for scientific racism and employs a Darwinian justification for common sense, surface deep observations of race. For example, Collet (2018) uses the example of Europeans needing forward planning to survive harsh winters, while those in Africa had better climates to continually provide what they needed all year round; consequently, not needing to use their brain to plan. Collet uses this argument to justify the observation that Europeans have higher IQ’s than Africans. The alt-right have repackaged scientific racism to maintain its racism in the 21st century.

The alt-right also incorporate cultural racism. This is done by explaining the incompatibility of African, African American and Muslim norms and ‘culture’ to coexist alongside ‘western’ culture. Within *therightstuff.biz* there are many blogs that explain the differences in culture that makes cohabitation impossible. A blog explains it like this,

okay, so it is now a moral imperative to take into consideration the east African community when we recognize the differences in culture and the incapability these literal savages exhibit when it comes to basic societal interactions? Get fucked. This is the white mans country. We owe you no explanations as to why we notice the incompatibility and feel animosity towards your community

(therightstuff.biz, 2017).

In this text, racism is a common feature. It demonstrates a belief in the inherent incompatibility of different cultures, which, to the author, is common sense, as demonstrated by his belief that this opinion needs no justification. In this case, African communities are an enemy perverting the purity of the ‘white man’s country’. Nazis desired an ethnically pure society in which ethnic diversity was not tolerated. In the same way, the alt-right are harshly racist and intolerant of ethnic differences; basically, heavily intolerant of non-whites. This is expressed in a blog written on *therightstuff.biz* called, ‘Minneapolis: A Response to a Chimp’, in which the author states “So on July 15th, Justine Ruszczyk, 40, was gunned down by Mohamed Noor, a Somali immigrant ‘cop’ (fucking diversity hire)” (therightstuff.biz, 2017). This starts with the idea of a Somali person not being able to be an American citizen. It is mentioned throughout, that he is in fact an American citizen, but the author refutes that fact based on the idea that a document does not certify him as a

citizen. The quotation indicates that skin colour plays a definitive role in designating one's connection and belonging to a country (white skin colour ironically belongs in America). In this case, Mohamed Noor's skin colour eliminates his ability to be considered American. The basic premise of this logic is that whiteness acts as the organic national standard. With this being the case, whiteness is prized as being part of the pure American nation. Within this also, is the backlash to diversity and multiculturalism. The alt-right generally believes that races cannot exist together, and that races are equivalent to species', different from each other. This is seen through the "fucking diversity hire" quote. What is visible here is the intolerance of Africans. It escalates from a general annoyance however, as the alt-right here are arguing for a savage nature inherent to Africans. The intolerance of Africans is coupled with a cleansing desire to purify America, because it is, to the alt-right, a white nation. As Mann argues, Nazis had racially tinged nationalism and this proved to be "even more extreme, since race is an ascribed characteristic. We are born with it, and only death can eliminate it" (Mann, 2004, p. 13). Racial intolerance is also a feature of the alt-right and is amplified in their race realist perspective of the world. Biological differences for the alt-right, explain the undesirable actions of non-whites and justify their cleansing language.

Race realism has been used to avoid explanations regarding historical circumstances and abuses caused by historical and systemic oppression. The alt-right uses the term, much like Nazis did, to explain racial differences in a simplistic, understandable way. The alt-right deem their view as correct and any other explanation as wrong, or as an excuse used to explain trends of 'underachievement' in non-white communities (mostly aimed at African-Americans and Hispanics). For example, alt-right author Malcom Jagers writes,

white privilege mongers and 'African American studies' professors are involved in an elaborate attempt to explain racial differences which persist regardless of time, place or any other type of socio-political arrangement. The more evidence that mounts with regard to their underachievement, the more outlandish their theories to explain their failure becomes. This vicious cycle of Black underachievement and recrimination of Whites for their failures becomes more and more toxic, all encouraged by our cosmopolitan elites, who enjoy and benefit from the process (Jagers, 2017).

The alt-right used historical pseudo-scientific arguments to justify their racism, and it has continued to manifest itself in harsher forms of racism, in a very similar fashion to Nazism.

Anti-Semitism in the alt-right: following a big brother

Another form of racism (which acts as part of the targeting of enemies) is the anti-Semitism within the alt-right. The anti-Semitism in the alt-right has been borrowed directly from Nazism. The Jewish population is seen as a separate race from whites, often viewed as existing within European nations, but not of them. The Jewish population is viewed as being hostile toward 'hosts', resistant to assimilation and globalist in their nature (altright.com, 2017). I argue that the alt-right have adopted a Nazi version of anti-Semitism which has been combined with a conspiracy theory addressing Jewish control argued by the American far-right and Aryan nations in the 1990's (Blamires, 2006). Nazism, as part of a fascism, displayed harsh cleansing anti-Semitism. The kind of anti-Semitism is similar in that both groups argue for the removal of the Jews, as well as attach a conspiracy theory to the Jews. In these versions, problems of said race (whites and Germans) were caused by Jews. Their anti-Semitism is justified by their view of the Jewish population conducting a liberal agenda. The Zionist Occupation Government (ZOG) is a conspiracy theory used by far-right Americans to argue that 'Zionists' are controlling the federal government, intentionally destroying the American way of life. Cyprian Blamires explains it as this,

the concept embodied in this particular conspiracy theory illustrates a specifically U.S. far-right preoccupation – that of the perceived threat to traditional rugged individualism of rural America, viewed as the backbone of the nation, from a remote and centralised power-hungry metropolitan elite corrupted by 'alien' influences (Blamires, 2006, p. 749).

In similar fashion, the alt-right have argued that the Jews control the federal government, the media and universities, among other institutions. While there is obvious aggressive racism with terms such as 'kike' or referring to Harvey Weinstein as a 'Jew Fuck', the belief that the Jewish population is a threat to the world is the strongest narrative. For example, Town, writing for *therightstuff.biz* details Jewish power in this explanation;

how does the Jewish Identity (the *Jl* for future reference) manifest itself? One strong aspect is within the media. As many respected and well established but unspecified people within well respected but unspecified fields people have remarked, the *Jl* results in non-Jews being discriminated against in the field of media (Town, 2016).

Hitler argued that the Jews were involved in a conspiracy to transfer “the whole world to Jewish power” (Koller, 2006, p. 612). I argue that the alt-right have adopted their anti-Semitism from Nazism, but have added to their perspective that the Jewish people are targeting the white race and committing genocide. The alt-right perspective is explained by Andrew Anglin:

the defining value of the (alt-right) movement and the foundation of its ideology is that the Jews are fundamentally opposed to the White race and Western civilization and so must be confronted and ultimately removed from White societies completely. Jews are behind all of the things which we are against, the diametric opposite of everything that we stand for. In a very real sense, defeating and physically removing the Jews will solve every other problem. None of this would be happening if it were not for the Jews. It is now fully-documented that Jews are behind mass-immigration, feminism, the news media and Hollywood, pornography, the global banking system, global communism, the homosexual political agenda, the wars in the Middle East and virtually everything else the Alt-Right is opposed to. This is, to a shocking extent, simply admitted by the Jews themselves. As such, the only way to end these problems is to strike the root and remove the Jews from our societies

(Anglin, 2016).

Anglin approaches an ideology of cleansing within his statements. His words are reminiscent of Nazi propaganda and provides a strong link between the alt-right and neo-Nazi ideology. Anglin uses the Jewish population as a scapegoat for the apparent decline of white America and the ‘problems’ facing the white race, especially young white men. Similarly, within Nazi Germany, propaganda was used to spread an anti-Semitic message which framed the Jews as being ‘globalist’ and thus anti-state, anti-nationalist and fundamentally against the purity of the nation (Eatwell, 2003). I think the nature of the anti-Semitism is inspired by Nazism and Hitler himself. Since Hitler appears as an admirable leader within extreme and radical right ideology, his arguments regarding the Jewish population are viewed as self-evident, and existing today. The apparent plight of the white race (especially young white men) needs an explanation and therefore, the Jewish population is used as this scapegoat.

Anti-Leftism: the weak control the world

A significant enemy to the alt-right is the political left. To the alt-right, the left is responsible for the decaying of Western Civilisation, the feminisation of men, and society at

large, and destructive ideologies such as equality and diversity (the left is seen as a tool of the Jews). The left is anathema to the alt-right, spreading ideologies that are corrosive. The alt-right's opinion regarding the left is that it is a dominant force, infiltrating mainstream media, dominating schools and public opinion, but at the same time is a stupid and illogical enemy. The left is in a way, everywhere but nowhere, powerful but easily overcome. Richard Spencer argues that "leftism is an ideology of death and must be confronted and defeated. 'Losing gracefully' will eventuate in the destruction of our people and civilization" (Spencer, 2017). The art of 'red pilling' is used as an attempt to defeat the left. Referencing the movie, *The Matrix*, the alt-right show individuals the truth and enlighten them through ideology. *Al Jazeera.com* explains red-pilling: "in far-right online communities, this phrase is used to describe what they view as being politically and racially aware" (*Al Jazeera.com*, 2017). Red pilling is often believed to convert individuals through the truth value of alt-right ideology; enlightening people to the leftist agenda of 'Cultural Marxism'. Cultural Marxism is a difficult term to describe within alt-right websites. A Swedish alt-right sympathiser explains his 'win-at-all-costs' mentality and that society has fostered a lazy, anti-masculine, beta mentality. This sympathiser, Marcus Follin, explains the beta mentality as a leftist ideology that consistently softens society. He writes "the Cultural Marxist mindset tricks them into believing that they (the left) are entitled to the same results without putting in the same work, this then leads to them being bitter and jealous" (Follin, 2017). Due to the uncertainty of the term, I have turned to the urban dictionary for a definition, but even this is fluffy and unclear:

A social and political movement that promotes unreason and irrationality through the guise of various 'causes', often promoted by so-called 'social justice warriors'. These causes and their proponents are often contradictory and are almost never rooted in fact. Indeed, true argument or discussion with proponents of these causes is almost impossible, as most attempts at discourse descend quickly into shouting, name-calling and chanting of slogans.

Otherwise known as the 'regressive Left' - a play on their contradictory nature, specifically on how SJWs describe themselves as 'progressive' yet display strong authoritarian, 'regressive' tendencies. This term is even often used by members of the true Left who take reasonable stances based on logic and evidence, and are eager to distance themselves from the fanatics who have effectively hijacked their side of the political spectrum

(www.urbandictionary.com, N.D).

Al Jazeera.com manages to capture the essence of the term by describing it as a 'catch all term' used to describe things the alt-right do not like. These include, gender equality, anti-racism, support for Muslims' civil rights and Affirmative Action (*Al Jazeera.com*, 2017). However, the definitions given by members themselves often serve as an insight to the way ideologies are expressed and understood within the alt-right. Author, Jossur Surttrson explains it as this;

Cultural Marxism is a culturally toxic worldview that was popularized by the Baby-Boomer generation. Their willful rejection of cultural institutions resulted in political correctness and societal entropy. The Boomers effectively turned their backs on thousands of years of positive cultural development, divested themselves of their identity, and introduced this poison into the minds of their children so that they no longer know who they are, where they come from, and thus have no sense of direction. Today's youth are simply taught to consume and be satisfied with their lot in life and to never question the authority of their anti-nature multiculturalist society. The crushing tide of Cultural Marxism has given rise to the Nine False Values. These so-called values malign traditional Western cultural values and corrupt the minds of those who embrace them. They are Liberalism Modernism, Ignorance, Individualism, Egalitarianism, Moral Relativism, Universalism, Multiculturalism, Materialism, and Miscegenation. Through the adoption of these values, the left has successfully ushered in the age of the Great Replacement, the plan to cripple and utterly destroy civilization beyond repair

(Surttrson, 2017).

Cultural Marxism is viewed as the most significant and destructive ideological enemy within the political left. The alt-right argue that the left is attacking whiteness, traditional gender roles, tradition and promotes multiculturalism, a political ideology that is deemed to have failed by the alt-right. The viewpoint of the left is further illustrated in the alt-right. Daniel Friberg, co-founder of *altright.com* instructs all men to free themselves from a leftist worldview. The basis of which is explained;

Do not even consider it as anything other than a product of insane people who want to hurt you. And do not, under any circumstances, refer to yourself as a 'men's rights activist'. Doing so signals weakness, and also lacks any logical basis. Any such 'rights' are myths and rank alongside the rest of the Leftist ideological debris. Once again: if you do not have a special proclivity for deconstructing nonsense or some perverse interest in dumb political ideologies, do not even waste your time thinking about the ideas of the Left

(Friberg, 2017).

Interestingly, the alt-right reject mainstream right-wing politics and mainstream conservatism and seek to break it down and replace it. With this in mind, the left is the true ideological enemy of the alt-right and must be destroyed. Often, the alt-right attach names to display their distaste of the left, these include libtard, lefty, sensitive 'snowflake' and social justice warrior (implying negative connotations). Leftist ideology is resented so much, that it transcends even white unity. If whites display leftist ideology and oppose the alt-right views, they are deemed as traitors to their race and considered enemies. A commenter on *altright.com* explained it like this,

I agree with all of these points. Just one point of contention on brother wars. While I don't want to see European nations going to war with each other again, the reality is that many of our enemies do happen to be white. The vast majority of those Antifa that are going to be counter-protesting tomorrow are going to be white. The Berkeley riot was almost exclusively white on white violence. Worldview and values matters, and these scum are not my 'brothers' just because they also have white skin (altright.com, 2017).

The left is hated so much that those in the alt-right are willing to fight against other whites if they are not 'red-pilled'. The alt-right here, display a non-racial Italian Fascist cleansing mission. Mussolini did not target and attack enemies purely because of race, but rather due to their ideologies and political stances. The alt-right have managed to borrow racism and anti-Semitism from Nazism but also the political and ideological cleansing of Italian Fascism.

Conclusion

The alt-right encompasses a form of ultra-nationalism that emphasises European chauvinism and white tribal identity. This form of identity ties together the 'white world' which is represented by whiteness, European ancestry and the superiority of a history that has thrust whiteness to a position of social and cultural dominance. The dominance is viewed as a sign of superiority which manifests itself in the creation of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand as white nations, despite the historical realities of indigenous cultures. The alt-right is less concerned with Americanism itself, and focuses its attention to the preservation and promotion of whiteness generally. The white tribal nationalism is represented within *altright.com* by the images of ancient Rome, Greece and the British Islands. These images demonstrate the sense of collective whiteness, regardless of national

borders. As Michael Mann explains, the nationalism demonstrated within fascism was characterised by a strong sense of animosity toward enemies. The enemies often serve as a scapegoat for the problems plaguing a certain ethnic group. The alt-right have a very strong sense of their enemies, and these are encompassed as the Jewish population, ethnic minorities with many attacks on the African American population, and the left. The nationalism is similar to that of fascism in terms of the belief in solidarity of a certain race, the superiority of that race, while attempting to recreate a glory era and the persecuting of enemies that encourages a separatist ideology. Since white nationalism is viewed to be under threat, there is a desire within the alt-right to re-create a white world through either a creation of the white ethno-state, cleansing the current “white nations” of their non-white populations or re-establishing the dominance of white culture and peoples. Regardless of the desired method (the alt-right is fragmented in their ideas), the idea is that of a conservative rebirth which prioritises the white race. According to Mann, fascist nationalism prioritised the organic population, while desiring to cleanse society of ‘undesirables’. Both Italian Fascism and Nazism had aggressive attitudes toward pursuing nation-statism through cleansing society to produce fertile ground for fascism to grow. The March on Rome and the Holocaust were extreme demonstrations of fascist violence which had the purpose of cleansing society for a fascist world. Similar to fascism, the alt-right are hyper-nationalist with the goals to cleanse society for their version of a better future.

Paramilitarist Masculinity

Paramilitarism was a key tenet of fascism. Michael Mann (2004) explains that “paramilitarism was both a key value and the key organisational form of fascism” (p. 16). Functioning as an aesthetic, it normalised imageries of power and violence. It was tied together through hyper-masculine themes of comradeship which were reinforced through disgruntled battle-hardened veterans using violence as defence against the tyranny of inter-war political and social systems. The emphasis placed on violent paramilitarism creates difficulty in linking fascist violence and the alt-right directly. However, this chapter will argue that what has occurred is an adoption, by the alt-right, of fascist styled militant hyper-masculinity deriving from a rejection of the feminisation of society and an obsession with violence and power. This argument will be explored through a discussion of paramilitarism within fascism. This will be followed by an analysis of how this creates a superficial definitional difference between fascism and the alt-right. I will then explore the alt-right argument of the societal attack on masculinity which has resulted in overt displays of militant hyper-masculinity viewed in contrast to so-called ‘beta males’. This analysis will also incorporate the strong anti-women and anti-feminism within the alt-right. Finally, I will discuss the adoption of a fascist styled spirit of violence which encourages an anti-politically correct violent crusade, while arguing the alt-right themselves are the victim of militant left-wing ideologies; creating their violence as defensive.

Paramilitarism; form and function of fascism

Michael Mann adds paramilitarism to his five-part definition of fascism. Dictionary.com (N.D) defines a paramilitary as, “noting or pertaining to an organization operating as, in place of, or as a supplement to a regular military force: a paramilitary police unit”. In accordance with this definition, the paramilitaries of fascism were an informal band of militaristic individuals operating separate from the government. As explained by Mann

(2004), fascist paramilitaries were different from many military and monarchical dictatorships because of their incorporation of the 'everyday citizen' (bottom-up quality) and its sheer violence. Fascist paramilitarism had three important functions. Firstly, it functioned as a key aesthetic, creating an image of an always "uniformed, marching, armed, dangerous" fascism (Mann, 2004, p. 16). Secondly, it served fascist society through further normalising hyper-masculinity, creating a breeding ground for the 'new-man' of fascism. Third, paramilitaries would perpetrate violence for political purposes. Mann (2004) argues that violence was the 'radicalism' of fascism; violence and killings would be the key political tool to overturn legal forms. Of the above-mentioned functions, violence was the stand-out; it became definitional to fascism. It also developed a mentality of violent desires to cleanse society of its enemies. Paramilitarism was popular to elites, as well as 'ordinary' members of the nation. It represented a 'bottom-up' vanguard of the people, which became "an exemplar of the organic nation and the 'new man'" (Mann, 2004, p. 16). It was hierarchical, involving extreme forms of discipline and training. Fascists portrayed their violence, however, as defensive, claiming to expose the perpetrators of the 'real' violence; their enemies. This portrayal, though not always believed, painted fascists as a representation of the people, adding further to their popularity. Paramilitaries and a culture of militarism may have occurred as a consequence of the time; post WWI meant that a norm of militarism had infiltrated every day society, holding military aesthetic and values in high regard. Paramilitaries represented masculinity, power and discipline, all features that young men were looking to attain and display. The obvious fascist paramilitarism is explained also by Robert Paxton. Common images of fascism are characterised by militants beating up a demonized minority, and soldiers parading through the street (Paxton, 2004). Although Paxton explains paramilitarism as being just one of the many explanations of fascism, it is difficult to view fascism away from the violence that defined it. Modern far-right groups, that may be ideologically linked to fascism, often avoid the term 'fascist' due to an absence of an organised paramilitary and regular displays of organised violence (the Golden Dawn far-right party in Greece is a notable exception; they are still called Neo-Nazi however and avoid directly being referred to as fascist).

Fascist paramilitarism and violence creates a superficial definitional difference between fascism and the alt-right. The alt-right obviously do not possess an organised

paramilitary and are not seen in military attire parading through the street. The alt-right is not characterised by thugs and militants perpetrating violence against their 'enemies'. With the exception of the Unite the Right rally, far-right militant acts have generally been viewed as 'lone-wolf' attacks, incorrectly perceived as limited in ideological motivation.⁶ The alt-right, like other far-right groups, have been careful to distance themselves from overt displays of violence, which has complicated the argument regarding far-right groups and fascism. This is partly due to one of the abuses of the term fascism; it is simply attached to any group that is violent for a political cause. This societal abuse of fascism has resulted in a devaluing of similarities in ideology, prioritising relations based upon physical violence. The alt-right have therefore avoided the term conclusively due to a lack of demonstrative violence. However, I argue that the alt-right have a much darker, malicious ideology which links them to fascism. They view themselves as victims, justifying their violence (this was seen in Charlottesville). They are militantly opposed to political correctness and ideologically pursue the cleansing of feminism, 'emasculated' men, minority ethnic groups, immigrants and enemies in general. While overt violence is not perpetrated, the alt-right often speak in the language of violence, celebrate that language and want to cleanse society of their enemies.

I further argue that throughout the modern far-right era, there has been a prizing of masculine militaristic themes, which are deemed to be in decline. Militias have been popular within American history (Berlet, 2000) and there has been growth of right-wing militia groups during the Obama era of America (www.splcenter.org, 2016). Due to a lack of legitimacy for modern militia groups (which are often branded as anti-government), the masculinity under discussion incorporates themes of Michael Mann's paramilitary aspect but is combined with a militaristic form of masculinity that is anti-feminist, prizes masculinity as a source of strength, exalts battle and military values, idolises strength, violence, power, loyalty, speed, courage and youth, desires the re-regulation of women's bodies and seeks to reinforce gender norms (through male superiority), sex realism, prizes hyper-masculine retro imagery (beards, cigars, protection) and incorporates derogatory slurs to those deemed as enemies of said masculinity. Through combining Mann's work with

⁶ See <https://www.splcenter.org/20180205/alt-right-killing-people> for alt-right inspired violence.

this form of hyper-masculinity, the term used to capture these themes within the alt-right will be known as 'paramilitarist masculinity'.

Paramilitarist masculinity; a glimpse of the militant nostalgia of the alt-right

The alt-right believe there has been an attack on masculinity which is perpetrated by the Jewish controlled government and media. The attack is on more than masculinity however, as it is viewed as attacking the larger white population through the creation of a "socially constructed apparatus designed to benefit one group at the expense of another" (McNabb, 2017). In this supposed attack, masculinity is being destroyed because it is useful to white people; the destruction of masculinity is characterised by blaming men for minority groups problems, constant arguments of toxic masculinity, the 'taking away' of men's spaces, incorporating women into men's areas such as politics, businesses and powerful positions and constantly critiquing men's behaviours as being oppressive. To the alt-right, the attack has resulted in confused gender identities, the loss of masculinity as a commodity, unnatural gender roles, emasculated men, over-masculine women, and the consistent blaming of white men for minority problems. I argue that the hyper-masculinity displayed by the alt-right is partly a reaction to the perceived attack and consequent decline of masculinity as a powerful social commodity, as well as a conservative attempt to preserve a 'traditional' understanding of gender roles. The attack is viewed to have resulted in a systemic feminisation of society, creating 'soy-filled' beta males, taking women out of their rightful and desired places (as mothers and wives) and contributed to the overall decline of society. Therefore, the alt-right has attempted to reclaim and reassert masculinity, consequently adopting a violent, cleansing and hyper-aggressive militarist ideology toward enemies, but also a general celebration of violence and domination. Demonstrations of this are found in terms of a desire for a time in which men could be men; images of past male military prowess and masculine images of men with muscles, beards, women (as a possession) and physical superiority over adversaries. For example, images like figure 5 occur within an alt-right musical genre known as 'fashwave', which is, according to *knowyourmeme.com*, "an electronic music genre combining synthwave or vaporwave music,

1980s visual aesthetics and alt-right, white nationalist-themed messages, often referencing United States President Donald Trump” (knowyourmeme.com, N.D).



Fig 5. <https://www.deviantart.com/tag/trumpwave> (accessed 10/04/18).

The alt-right portray images which combine the ideas of a gentleman warrior, the superiority of the white race and seem to emphasize a legacy that is demonstrative of violent domination for building a better future for their own race. Figure 6 is also a common image with multiple meanings within the alt-right.



Fig. 6 <http://knowyourmeme.com/photos/1219840-fashwave-trumpwave> (accessed 9/04/18).

This image captures the alt-right perspective of power. Power, to the alt-right is achieved through the domination of others. Within this image is a nostalgia for a European past of normalised violence in which the powerful achieved status, and the weak were killed. For the alt-right, this is a competitive Darwinian norm, survival of the fittest. The appropriation of Darwinian competition is believed to be the only way to live, because, according to the alt-right, natural white superiority would prevail. The image is also a demonstration of the desire to dominate and perhaps cleanse society of their enemies. In addition to the cleansing implications, the alt-right attack and critique men who are deemed emasculated and, within online forums, troll these men and other minority communities, especially those belonging to the LGBTQ community. The analysis of fascist paramilitarism is suitable to assessing alt-right hyper masculinity because the expression of it is highly militant and hyper-critical, bordering on the belief that feminism should be destroyed. This argument will be demonstrated as the chapter continues.

Since men have supposedly become weak, the alt-right offer a perspective on what it looks like to be a man, and its opposite; a beta male (which is the target of harsh criticism). The ideal male within the alt-right is an alpha male who, as Collet (2017) emphasises, takes control of his life and his immediate circumstances. To demonstrate, *Breitbart.com* has written an article titled ‘Why Masculinity matters: 59 year old Liam Neeson is actions most bankable star’. This article argues that Liam Neeson’s character in the movie *The Grey* is “never smooth or calculated” but rather settles “scores and survive in a way that hearkens back to how male movie stars used to behave on screen. He’s a man’s man, and that makes him a rarity in today’s Hollywood” (Toto, 2012). The author Christian Toto continues, “the soon to be 60-year-old Neeson matters because he’s bringing something fresh to theaters, the sense of a fully capable alpha male who doesn’t regret taking decisive action” (ibid). According to Toto, a real man takes charge, does not think but is rather driven by action and confronts challenges with aggressive fervour. Adding to the exploration of the alt-right man, Daniel Friberg, co-founder of *altright.com* and occasional author, features this image in an article titled, ‘5 Steps to Become a Real Man’:



Fig. 7 <https://altright.com/2017/09/30/5-steps-to-become-a-real-man/> (accessed 12/11/17).

These sorts of images are commonly found on *altright.com*. The image demonstrates a soldier from the middle-ages, splattered with blood and carrying a sword. The image is

actually featured as a poster from a movie called *Ironclad* (IMDb, N.D). To the alt-right, it represents daring, skill, violence and the conquering of enemies. It is a deliberate image with the intent of spurring emotional ties to past strength and what it genuinely means to be a man. The sword represents power and conquest; the armour is a uniform of valour and honour; encouraging the viewer to adopt a uniform which represents a fight for something larger than themselves. The blood demonstrates the ideology of violence; indicating that is necessary to kill for alt-right beliefs. The soldier is a white male, demonstrating the definition of masculinity for the alt-right; white men are the strongest, noblest and should be idolised. The images are not insignificant or benign. They are a deliberate act of propaganda to develop a specific mindset, in this case, the idea of strong martial men.

This is the kind of man that the alt-right idolises, seeks to develop and reinvent. The hyper-masculine interpretation of masculinity is a reaction to the attack on masculinity. The alt-right argues that the destruction of masculinity has been a deliberate movement, which has created numerous problems for society, such as “confused gender identities; a society where young men achieve less and less in education, suffer from completely irrational insecurities and even have reduced testosterone levels” (Friberg, 2017). Interestingly, this demise is argued to have occurred due to a lack of military involvement. Friberg explains: “the reduction of the military’s role in society (in the case of Sweden, the abolishing of the general draft, which thus depriving young Swedish men of an essential rite of passage)” (ibid). The feeling of attack is countered by an alt-right view of what a man is and should be. Daniel Friberg describes the current condition as this, “the West today faces a number of serious problems. Finding solutions to these problems requires real men. Unfortunately, one of our greatest problems at this time is precisely the lack of them” (Friberg, 2017). It is the second part of the quote that must be noted. According to the alt-right, the current world has developed a significant lack of ‘proper’ men which has been the consequence of a continual feminisation of society which has bred men incapable of taking charge, weak and undesirable to the alt-right.

Authors within the alt-right are also happy to explain what a real man is and looks like. Like Collet, Friberg implies that a healthy society will develop this kind of man. Similar to fascism, the alt-right man is a ‘new man’ that would develop their ideal society and continue to produce it. Like the new man of fascism, the alt-right man has been built within

'hard man' hyper-masculine environments and is consequently, a leader and superior to women. Daniel Friberg offers a perspective of what this new man looks like. According to Friberg, there are five steps to be a man. Firstly, physical training; however, Friberg encourages 'real training', avoiding "golf, badminton, or African dance" and preferring "actual weight training" (Friberg, 2017). Additionally, Friberg suggests the practicing of martial arts, specifically mentioning Mixed Martial Arts or kickboxing, so long as it incorporates real sparring to "get used to the idea of defending yourself against and inflicting violence" (Friberg, 2017). Secondly, a man is to free himself from the world view of the political left. Left-wing ideology is poisoning and damaging to the development of a man; additionally, the left is there only to hurt manhood. According to the alt-right, left-wing ideology has contributed to the dismantling of manliness and has encouraged the growth of the so-called 'beta male'. The alt-right believe these males have become the norm, and this is due in large part to exposure (or brainwashing) of the left. I will discuss the argument around beta males in a following section. Third on the list is the development of gentlemanly virtues. Friberg explains:

this is especially important for those of us who live in the decadent postmodern West, for two reasons: firstly, because these virtues are worth preserving and passing on to coming generations; and secondly, because internalising these virtues will give you a massive competitive advantage over other modern men – spoiled and feminised as they are

(Friberg, 2017).

This is especially interesting because much of what defines a man to the alt-right, is what a man is not. Gender roles are important and being a feminised man is not what a man should be; 'traditional' masculinity serves as the model for men to follow. However, Friberg does not explicitly state what 'gentlemanly' values are, but rather expects a certain degree of presupposition. One must assume these values are those of Western chivalry. Fourth, Friberg explains that a man should "develop a healthy attitude to women in our segment of the political sphere" (Friberg, 2017). Friberg explains the desired relationship between men and women, explaining that men must "realise that, in general, they (women) do constitute the 'weaker sex', that they are in need of protection" (ibid). In this section of Friberg's instructions of how to be a man, he encourages gender norms in which men are protector, provider and the face of society, while women are lesser and exist in different positions and

roles, often viewed as subordinate to men. The article continues and details the way in which men and women should behave in society. This is an excerpt:

European men, conservative nationalists being no exception, are unfortunately products of our corrupted modern culture and the Leftist indoctrination which we were subjected to during our upbringing. As a consequence, we often make the mistake of viewing women as absolute equals, with the same responsibilities and abilities as men. From this point of departure, many are shocked when faced with the low percentage of women who are active in our circles, and believe this to be a problem which could be solved if only we were to 'adapt our message', 'convey a softer image', or something similar, whereupon women would flock to us and eventually come to constitute half of our ranks. These are of course erroneous conclusions, founded on completely maniacal premises, and the sooner you dispense with this delusion, the better

(Friberg, 2017).

Within this ideology, the overrepresentation of men in public jobs, powerful positions and high earning roles is the natural norm of society. To shift this then, is a misunderstanding of how society is supposed to function. Adopting leftist ideology is to go against the natural law which places men and women not as equals, but as different, encompassing narrow views of responsibilities. If men allow themselves to fall into female responsibilities and vice versa, that is a misunderstanding of humanity and natural law. Friberg explains that "women have as a rule always been underrepresented in political matters, with feminism as the sole exception. This exception not only proves the rule but also demonstrates that the rule is probably both natural and desirable" (Friberg, 2017). Men and women should acknowledge their naturally desired roles and stay 'within their lanes' so to speak. As a man, one should acknowledge this relationship between men and women and work to reinforce it. If a man is seen to be engaging in women's work or roles, he is no man at all. The fifth element on this list addresses a man and relationships. These encompass sub steps which are, to never make finding a woman your primary goal, think of your male circle of friends as a "Munnerbund" and do not fall for the myth of equality. These three address gender roles but further that a man should exhibit traits which demonstrate the 'manliness' of old. For example, a man should be autonomous and not search for a woman to define him, hence not making a woman the main priority. The "Munnerbund" is to be conducted under a 'code of honour', encompassing a 'bro's before hoe's' like rule. Friberg explains it like this, (a Munnerbund):

where certain principles of honour pertain. One important such principle is to avoid competition over the same women, and not least staying away from friends' daughters and former girlfriends. Such issues are constant sources of conflict in male circles, and in the long run, it is never worth it

(Friberg, 2017).

To go against this is to betray brotherhood and give women too much power. Men and women are not seen as equal; a man must rule, provide for and protect the house. The idea within the alt-right is that modern left-wing ideology has stripped the world of real masculinity and the alt-right are reclaiming it. The alt-right also desire to cleanse those feminised men who would not otherwise survive in a healthy society guided by natural law.

The alt-right have a specific name for those males they deem to have fallen victim to this leftist attack. Despite the implications of victimisation, the alt-right also argue that these men have willingly chosen this feminine path and are consequently their enemy. These men are known to the alt-right as beta males; as opposed to the alpha. On the alt-right radio show *27Crows Radio*, host Bre Fauchaux discusses this with Mark Collett. Collett has a YouTube channel which is dedicated to exposing white genocide, explaining concerns of the alt-right and is a white nationalist who has featured on David Duke's YouTube radio channel (YouTube, N.D). Fauchaux and Collett discuss the issue of masculinity in a segment titled 'Alt Right 101 | The Attack on Masculinity | #5'. The topics of discussion in this interview are as follows: *In This Episode We Discuss:*

- 1:27 What is a beta male?
- 4:37 The problem with an age of convenience
- 8:49 How men have become emasculated without role models
- 17:55 The loss of the male retreats and past times
- 25:03 The loss of male industries
- 28:17 The important of masculine physicality
- 30:22 The damage of social media/networks (Alt Lite rant included)
- 45:25 MGTOW and why it's toxic
- 50:06 What many women seek and what men should aspire to become
- 57:31 What men of the past endured

According to Mark Collett, a beta male is

someone who isn't in charge of his own life. That's the fundamental thing. He's someone who is always second best, he has no confidence, he is weak, physically, but most importantly, he's weak mentally. He has very little self-belief. He panders to people around him; he often jumps on any bandwagon that is left-wing, or SJW (social justice warrior) in nature. He is someone who doesn't take charge, someone who is happy to be second place in every way; he doesn't pursue manly pursuits. In fact, he rejects masculinity; he'll often wear things like "I'm a feminist" t-shirts, or clothes that look feminine, or skinny jeans; clothes that would suit a girl more than they would suit a man. He doesn't partake in sport or physical fitness. He is sometimes skinny and weedy, sometimes fat, unshaven, like a neck beard. But the thing that unites these beta males is, as I said earlier, they don't take charge of their lives, or anything in their lives. They are men who wouldn't even be in the pack, let alone be an alpha who would lead the pack

(27 Crows Radio, 2017).

Collet argues that men such as these cannot exist in a healthy society; in fact, according to Collet, healthy societies create strong men. Within Collet's description of a beta male, a number of core arguments are made. Firstly, it uses social Darwinian 'survival of the fittest' language. Referring to male groupings existing as a 'pack' brings in animalistic and 'natural' language. Within the sub-heading 'the problem with an age of convenience', Collett and Faucheux argue that men are soft because life has become too easy. Men are no longer required to be strong through struggle. This is Darwinian in nature and is closely related to Hitler's perspective of Darwinian struggle. Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf* "struggle is the father of all things" (Spielvogel, 1988, p. 90). The second noticeable element is the hyper-masculine themes throughout. Masculinity is defined through rejections in that a man is only a man if one possesses certain traits. However, the absence of these masculine traits is more defining and condemning. This is the case because not possessing these traits is the easiest way to understand a man not fit to be a man; masculinity is antagonistic to femininity. A 'beta male' is described by Collet as wearing women's clothing or being physically weaker. In this understanding, Collet is attributing characteristics he views as feminine to describe the lack of masculinity. Linked to this, is the implication that having a left-wing ideology or an interest in social justice creates beta males. This is part of a larger anti-left crusade which argues that left-wing ideology is weak and brainwashes people to fit into their ideology. Collet makes references to a 'healthy' society which creates strong masculine men. What is extremely striking about this element is the similarities it has to the Fascist new man and the organicism that was present within Nazism. Within a 'healthy'

society, men assume their role as protector, leader and the public face of family and society. Meanwhile, women stay within the home to raise the children and love the husband. What is argued to be destroying these roles is feminism and the consequent feminisation of society. The alt-right are opposed to femininity as being deemed equal to masculinity and the destruction of traditional values due to feminism.

Anti-Feminine (ism)

One part of the defining features of the alt-right are displays of masculinity in opposition to the idea of the equality of women. The opposition to female equality has resulted in an aggressive anti-feminist agenda. The alt-right is opposed to feminism because to them, it perverts natural gender roles and feminises men and society at large. These are explained by Andrew Anglin:

as with the claim that ‘all races are equal’, the claim that ‘men and women are equal’ is looked at as entirely ridiculous by the Alt-Right. We believe in abolishing feminism and reestablishing traditional gender roles in society, a process which would involve sending women back to the home to produce and raise children, largely removing them from the workplace. The Alt-Right is opposed to homosexuality, as well as the emasculation of men through denying them their traditional role in society

(Anglin, 2016).

In this case, the empowerment of women is unnatural. To explain their perspective on gender, the alt-right give preference to a term ‘sex-realism’. Author George Hawley explains that “the Alt-Right promotes what it calls ‘sex realism’—that men and women have biological differences that make them suited to different social roles” (Hawley, 2017). Men are in positions of power because it is natural, not because of historical power relations, oppression and control. The analysis is also driven by aggressive social Darwinist beliefs. The attack on masculinity is also understood as an attack on tradition; attacking their identity. Feminism is attacking traditional understandings of gender relations, and since the alt-right believe in traditionalist conservatism, they do not view themselves as sexists, but rather victims of Jewish feminism, attempting to defend themselves.

Another point made by Anglin is that the alt-right is opposed to homosexuality. Sometimes, this is because the alt-right prioritises a traditional view of the family, other

times it is malicious homophobia. For the alt-right, to form a 'proper' family requires a man and a woman, often joined together through marriage (which is seen by the alt-right to only be legitimate as male and female). To engage in a homosexual relationship then is to disrupt the conservative norms that the alt-right often abide by. Additionally, homosexuality for men is not only unnatural but it is a feminine trait, and a violation of masculinity. In this sense, masculinity becomes intertwined with homophobia, an idea expressed by Michael Kimmel (2005). Masculinity as flight from the feminine is a theme that occurs throughout Kimmel's understanding of masculinity. For example, Kimmel uses Freud throughout his analysis as a general understanding of a male identifying with the father and consequently rejecting the mother; wanting a woman like mother, "but not to be *like* her" (Kimmel, 2005). Traits that are seen to be 'like mother' or associated as feminine are harshly rejected. Consequently, there is a hostility toward minorities that are seen to embody feminine traits, such as homosexuals or transgender individuals. The alt-right's position on homosexuality is interesting as it is seen as part of the larger conspiracy involving the feminisation of men, and worse, the feminisation of white men, both of which are seen as an epidemic to the alt-right (Friberg, 2017). Men cannot be men, and if they try, they are rebuked as being oppressive or offensive. For the alt-right, the supposed feminisation of society is a degradation from the glorious past which saw men with beards, muscles and loud, fast cars.

Feminism is viewed as anathema to the alt-right and its values. *Altright.com* describes their perspective like this, "make no mistake, feminism's end goal has always been to destroy the family and the natural differences between genders so that humans are reduced to replaceable, State-dependent cogs in a corporate machine" (Friberg, 2017). The opposition here borders on a conspiracy theory that does not engage with the complexity and deeper arguments of feminism. Feminism is held in contempt because it is blamed for the decline of traditional conservative society. The article continues by stating, "It (feminism) has not liberated women at all, but created a society of barren, emotionally distant cubicle shrews brainwashed into dismantling their one true source of happiness and lasting contentment — that of supporting a strong family and husband" (Friberg, 2017). Feminism is not only viewed as negatively affecting men and women, it is viewed by the alt-right as being contradictory, illogical and unnatural (as are most of the alt-right's enemies). Author Daria Andreeva explains, "the concept of 'feminism,' formed from the Latin femina

(woman), in its essence is directed against all that it traditionally means to be a woman. Consequently, it is directed against the family, entire society, and civilization in general” (Andreeva, 2017). In this case, feminism is negative for society at large, but is ultimately backward and contradictory because it is theorised by the alt-right to have betrayed its original purpose; to help women by reinforcing what it means to be a woman. The current state of women, for the alt-right, has been tainted and become unnatural, viewed to be a consequence of the spreading of feminism.

Within the alt-right’s perspective of feminism, male supremacism structures the norms and roles of men and women. Since feminism is dismantling these, it has dismantled values that ‘should’ be important to women. *Altright.com* expresses this in suggesting that the current goal of feminism is “a woman’s right not to meet the standards of beauty (even though beauty is the main traditional value)” (Andreeva, 2017). The sentiment that women should value and meet beauty standards is echoed by *Breitbart.com* when it explores the question ‘Does Feminism Make Women Ugly?’ This article, written by Milo Yiannopoulos, explains this question like this:

Everyone knows that becoming a feminist makes a woman less marriageable, more crass and generally just unpleasant to be around. But does it also make them uglier? Readers have been asking, so I delved into the science to find out.

Certainly, feminists in the public sphere have acquired a reputation for being brazen about their unconventional looks. The cult of ‘body positivity’ has encouraged many young women to embrace excess weight. Feminist writers like Lindy West celebrate their fatness, while Lena Dunham has made a career out of looking wobbly and horrible.

While the sisterhood might not condemn women for piling on the pounds, men definitely do. But the weight gain, bizarre hair colour, piercings and ‘genderqueer’ fashion trends in feminism aren’t, it seems to me, enough on their own to explain why women who strongly identify as feminists are so often either physically unappealing or mistaken for men

(MILO, 2015).

One of the core issues for the alt-right is the feminisation of men and the devaluing of male ‘culture’. Men have become ‘soft’ and ‘unmanly’ and the alt-right desire a time in which ‘men could be men’. Modern men have been tainted by feminism and feminine norms. According to this ideology men are brainwashed by a feminist (and Jewish) agenda. The

argument of a Jewish conspiracy perpetrating feminism is a concept borrowed from fascism. According to Martin Durham, “Hitler declared that women’s revolt had brought about a situation that went against nature. The slogan of women’s emancipation, he held, was the product of Jewish intellect” (Durham, 2006, p. 232). Durham adds “Mussolini, likewise, declared himself opposed to feminism, arguing that women must obey” (ibid). The alt-right have also argued feminism to be a result of the Jewish control of the world. This idea is very visible in thinkers such as Anglin and Friberg. Feminism is viewed by the alt-right and fascism to be a false ideology perpetrated by the Jews to disenfranchise and dismantle white society.

Within the alt-right, there is a strong underlying belief in the linkages between the Jews and the degradation of society. Within this argument is the educated Jewish elite creating feminism which, to the alt-right, has decreased white women’s birth rates (through women’s liberation) and feminised men. This is demonstrated within the comment section of an article titled ‘Millennial Women Are Starting To Hit The Wall: And it’s not going to be pretty’ by Vincent Law: “the whole college thing is a joke. All it does if feminize males. If a woman wants a guy who is not bisexual, she has to hook up with a blue collar guy or an outlaw” (Law, 2017). Riddled within this is a distrust of the educated that are deemed to be elites. These elites are supposedly breaking-down traditional, moral society through equality and egalitarianism which break-down the family and traditional social structures. All these serve to destroy the masculine white male, which is in power due to the natural structures of male and white superiority.

Donald Trump and the alt-right will ‘make violence great again’

While there is not necessarily a direct and overt demonstration of violence, alt-right language and narrative is filled with malice. This explains a deeper sentiment of hatred and desire to cleanse society. See figure 8 below:



Fig. 8 <http://knowyourmeme.com/photos/1219817-fashwave-trumpwave> (accessed 30/03/18).

Such images demonstrate the normalisation of violence within the alt-right and their desire to violently cleanse society of enemies. The imagery is also noteworthy in the sense that it is aggressive; it is not demonstrating a noble warrior acting out of self-defence. This norm is very much like fascism, in which Michael Mann mentions, “violence would knock heads together” (Mann, 2004), cleansing enemies to ‘purify’ society. Although the alt-right do not engage in violence in the streets in a similar fashion to inter-war fascism, it has engaged in the language of violence, criticising non-violence and on occasion, encouraging violence. For example, in an article on *altright.com*, Gregory hood encourages Trump to embrace a presidential style like Andrew Jackson, who was “a leader comfortable with violence... and fiercely proud of his country” (Hood, 2017). This sentiment of a normalcy of violence and an embracing of his country (Hood most likely means of white America), is captured within

another fashwave image:

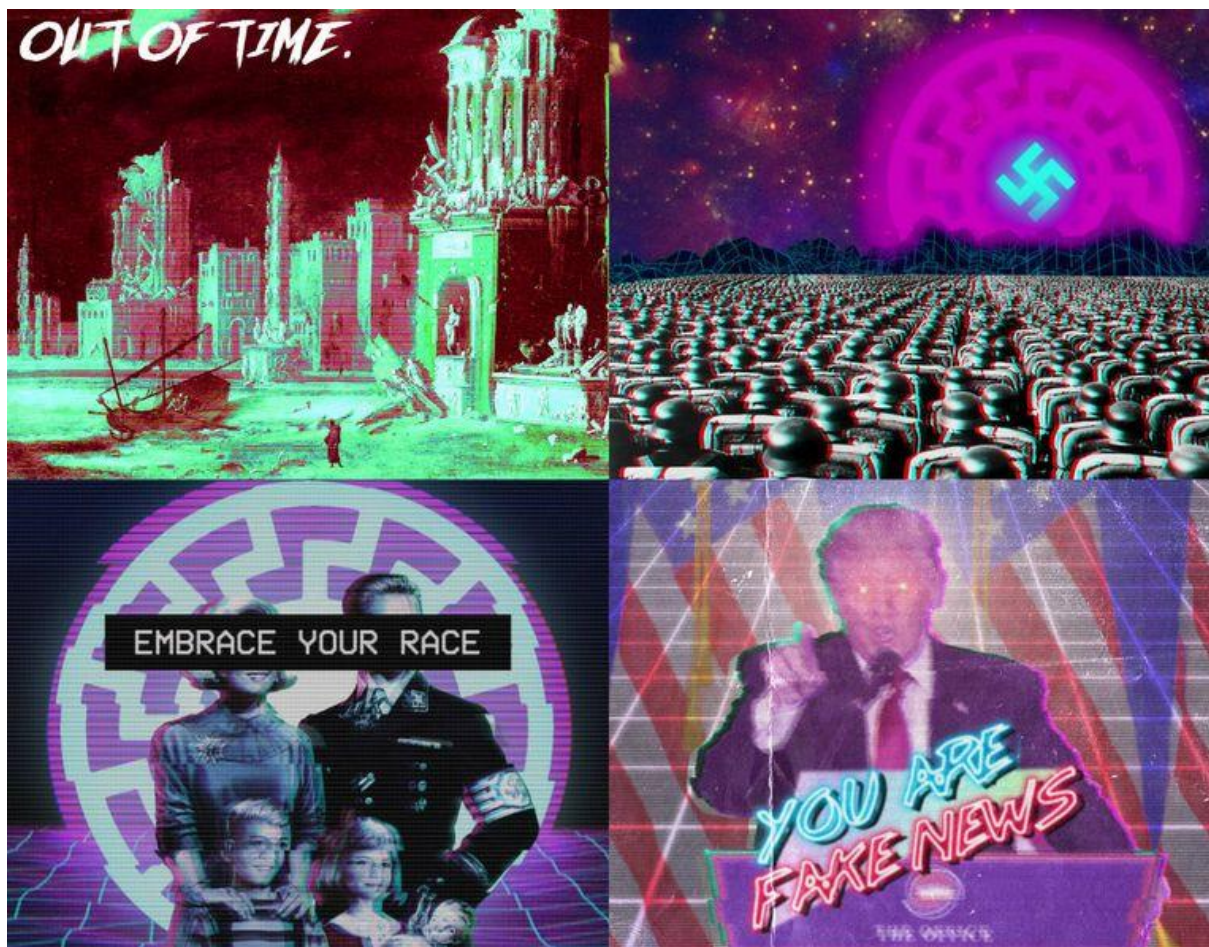


Fig. 9 <https://mic.com/articles/187379/this-is-fashwave-the-suicidal-retro-futurist-art-of-the-alt-right#.7TwjAn9vS> (accessed 9/04/18).

The alt-right want a strong, racist leader, unapologetic in his (the leader must be a man) belief in violence to achieve their goals. Ideologically, I argue this is where fascism shakes hands with the alt-right. Wartime is viewed by the alt-right as the ultimate proving ground for masculinity. Fascism proclaims itself as being a rejection of pacifism, praising war. Fascism,

discards pacifism as a cloak for cowardly supine renunciation in contradistinction to self-sacrifice. War alone keys up all human energies to their maximum tension and sets the seal of nobility on those peoples who have the courage to face it. All other tests are substitutes which never place a man face to face with himself before the alternative of life or death... Fascism carries this anti-pacifistic attitude into the life of the individual. I don't care a damn „ (me ne frego) - the proud motto of the fighting squads scrawled by a wounded man on his bandages, is not only an act of philosophic stoicism, it sums up a doctrine which is not merely political: it is evidence of a fighting spirit which accepts all risks

(Mussolini, 1932).

Very similar to fascism, the alt-right reject pacifism and advocate for the inevitability of war (the glory and beauty of war). Fashwave imagery again demonstrates this well:



Fig. 10 <https://twitter.com/peterno0ne/status/925450107813634048> (accessed 10/04/18).

Fascism expresses an ideology of violent action which demonstrates a manly nature powered by will. To the fascist, violence is the legitimate way to get things done; violence is only for those willing to be strong enough to take what they want. Fascism had within it a conquering desire of dominance and the alt-right possess a similar desire for violent aggression.

The disdain for the lack of violence in society is demonstrated by the article 'The Sick Glorification of Non-violence' written by Adam Selene for *The rightstuff.biz*. Although this article may not represent the whole alt-right's opinion regarding violence, it does engage with violent ideology that represents strands within the alt-right. Selene questions the adherence to the non-violent norms of society, expressing the idea that there may be times in which violence is the appropriate or even desired action. The alt-right feel there is a

softening of society and a move away from violence through promoting the ideals of non-aggression and non-violence. This is seen as soft, feminising behaviour. The alt-right have come to question non-aggression due to assuming violence and war is part of natural human behaviour; part of what they deem to be natural law. Titled 'The Sick Glorification of Non-violence', Selene explains,

Why is non-violence considered to be a virtue in the first place? Why is a lack of confrontation and a hesitancy to engage in conflict seen as progress?

It's because modern humans are domesticated livestock. Strip away the nonsense about a man being nonviolent because God, his moral compass, or some abstract philosophical construct convinced him that pacifism was the enlightened path. These window dressings are a distraction from the truth, which is that like any domesticated animal, repression of normal aggressive urges is necessary to keep these dumb cattle from killing each other in their pens, or worse, injuring their masters

(Selene, 2012)

What should be noted here, is the desire to describe violence as a legitimate option, possibly to achieve goals, although that is not explicitly expressed here. Selene explains; "Wouldn't a true 'free thinker' ponder whether or not violence might be an appropriate response to many situations, particularly given the long history of violence in human and animal evolution?" (Selene, 2012). There are a few things occurring here. Firstly, Selene is detailing violence as an appropriate 'response'. This automatically assumes the alt-right's (or far-right) existence as a victim, assuming that this group will be attacked first, only retaliating in a form of self-defence. This fits in to the earlier discussion of alt-right nationalism and the notion of white genocide. Secondly, what is being suggested here is the desire to dismantle establishment norms through encouraging violence. Here, we see, a direct link to fascism because fascists valued violence and war. Selene appears to share the ideas argued by Mussolini in his *The Doctrine of Fascism*. Within this article, violence appears to be for the brave, and non-violence is part of a degeneration of society. For example, Selene states, "the glory of a warrior's death epitomized by Homer's 'The Iliad' has gradually been replaced with 'Do unto others' and 'Do not initiate aggression' (Selene, 2012). What is desired here is a return to the glory of those willing to engage in something as dangerous and beautiful as warfare. This is seen within the desire to find glory and social

favour through battles. There is almost a sense of guaranteed victory which will be seen as 'booty'; social power used as a commodity.

Eliminationism, that is, the desire to eliminate enemies, is a part of right-wing rhetoric. Both moderate and extreme right-wing ideology engage in this language to certain extents. What I think occurs within these sentiments is a strong hatred which inspires the conversation of violent removal which in turn, convinces at least one ideologue to take up arms and remove these enemies. In this context, violence is used as a legitimate means of carrying out ideology. The violence is also used as an attempt to inspire more violence. As Adkisson wrote in his manifesto, "I'd like to encourage other like-minded people to do what I've done" (Neiwert, 2017, p. 89). Jim David Adkisson was a conservative Tennessee man, who was "enraged by the looming nomination of a black man as the Democratic candidate for the presidency" (Neiwert, 2017). Neiwert, writing for *The Guardian* adds,

In July 2008, Adkisson walked into a Unitarian Universalist church in downtown Knoxville during a performance of a children's musical, armed with a 12-gauge shotgun. He opened fire, killing two people and wounding seven more

(Neiwert, 2017).

Adkisson wrote a manifesto to explain his motivation. Within it was a description of his resentments; Neiwert writes,

I'm protesting the DNC running such a radical leftist candidate, Adkisson wrote. 'Osama Hussein Obama, yo mama. No experience, no brains, a joke. Dangerous to America, he looks like Curious George!' He was appalled by the race-mixing mores of modern times as exemplified by Obama's mother: How is a white woman having a niger [sic] baby progress?

(Neiwert, 2017).

This is one factor in the attempt to create more violence. The other is to bait enemies, be it leftists or other racial groups, to retaliate in an act of aggression, possibly leading to a race, or ideological war. Within the realm in which the far-right and alt-right exist, there is a constant undertone of violence. While there are accusations of far-left violence and violence from groups such as Antifa, the far-right often engage in the language of violence. They create an atmosphere of violence while consistently displaying acts of deliberate intimidation. However, they argue their violence is defensive. They argue their enemies are destroying America, and thus, deserve to have this violence perpetrated against them.

I think the language of violence is important. Before people engage in violence, they generally engage in the language of violence. Donald Trump has contributed to this language, and the normalisation of it. There have been several occasions in which candidate Trump specifically normalised the language around violence and implied a return to normalised violence. For instance, on February 23rd 2016 Trump was recorded as saying (after the removal of a protester), “I’d like to punch him in the face” (snopes.com, 2016). Trump told his supporters that if they see someone throwing a tomato, “knock the crap out of him would you, seriously? Okay? Just knock the hell out of him. I promise you, I will pay your legal fees. I promise. I promise” (Tiefenthaler, 2016). A particularly interesting moment for Trump was during a rally in St. Louis, Missouri in March 2016. Following the apparently slow removal of a protestor, Trump proclaimed:

you know, part of the problem, and part of the reason it takes so long, is nobody wants to hurt each other anymore, right? And they’re being politically correct the way they take them out, so it takes a little bit longer. And honestly, protesters, they realize it. They realize that there are no consequences to protesting anymore. There used to be consequences, there are none anymore

(snopes.com, 2016).

Trump here coalesces with the alt-right; that society has become soft and that political correctness is becoming rampant, eliminating any sort of order. It also highlights a law and order approach to society which would allow Draconian violence to be applied to those deemed a hindrance to an ideal society. Trump has managed to convey the alt-right desire to normalise violence. It is part of the larger anti- ‘soft’, anti-PC crusade within the alt-right. Conservatism generally opposes PC culture, but the alt-right takes it a step further through their violent language and imagery. Violence is desired because it creates a sense of domination; those who win the fight are superior and therefore deserving of victory. Similar to fascists, the alt-right deem the person ‘brave’ enough to engage in violence as a masculine hero.

Conclusion

The alt-right ideological approach to violence seems strongly reminiscent of fascism. To the alt-right, violence is viewed as a dominating force which only ‘real’ men engage in;

and to the victor goes the spoils. To the alt-right however, white men are the strongest and would consequently prevail; as only alt-right men are 'real' men. Society has supposedly feminised all other men. For example, Christopher Cantwell, a white nationalist that attended the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville stated in a Vice documentary, "of course we're (white people) capable. I'm carrying a pistol, I go to the gym all the time; I'm trying to make myself more capable of violence" (YouTube, 2017). Through these words, an idolisation of violence become evident; the pride in 'making oneself more capable of violence' is a desire which is motivated by the apparent power and beauty of violence. Mussolini similarly viewed violence and war through its beauty and glory; viewing war as glorifying for those 'brave' enough to engage in it. For inter-war fascists and the alt-right, the honour of violence should carry social wealth.

The alt-right and fascism are also connected with respect to violence through their rejection of pacifism or the culture of non-violence. Both fascism and the alt-right portrayed their violence as a defence against the 'real' perpetrators of violence. However, that the alt-right have perpetrated violence against non-violent protestors (Charlottesville saw the death of a non-violent protestor by a white supremacist) but was attempted to be framed as a lone-wolf attack. The appearance the alt-right seek to uphold though, preserves themselves as the just victim, falling prey to violence against their ideas and an attack on their freedom of speech. For example, their use of shields at the Charlottesville rally is a deliberate image to pose their violence as defensive (Vice, 2017).

The alt-right's attack on minorities and the left is hyper-aggressive. While there is no formal alt-right military or paramilitary, it adopts a violent, cleansing and hyper-aggressive militarist ideology toward enemies. This is expressed constantly in alt-right forums. Like fascism, it adores aggression and violence, viewing it as a masculine pursuit. Despite the absence of a formal paramilitary, the alt-right, like fascism, adores violence and prizes a militant and toxic hyper-masculinity founded on oppressive attitudes toward women.

Charismatic leadership; dedication to the deity

Fascism has become associated with certain individuals. Nazism is intrinsically linked to Adolf Hitler and Italian Fascism cannot be discussed without reference to Benito Mussolini. This implies that their leadership was a central tenet to the guiding ideologies of fascism as well as its devotional violence. Roger Eatwell (2006) has argued that without Hitler, there would have been no Holocaust. The leadership style that I am arguing to have existed within fascism, is charismatic authority. The movement gained wide appeal partly due to the charisma of the leader which motivated supporters. As a social phenomenon, charisma was observed by sociologist Max Weber. It exists within his understanding of authority regarding domination and legitimacy in which commands are obeyed (domination) without the use of force (legitimacy). Charisma is observed as one of Weber's three 'types of leadership'; it exists in relation to rational-legal and traditional forms of leadership (Weber, 2013). The leader is seen to possess specific qualities that inspire devotion to the individual. For example, Breuilly explains that "Hitler was the unrivalled national leader of the extreme right, believing in and projecting himself as an extraordinary person" (Breuilly, 2011, p. 485). The leader is presented as possessing certain qualities, accompanied by a vision that only they can enact. The leadership, however, is fragile due to its dependency on the followers as they must accept the charisma for it to be legitimate. Weber explains that the leader is obeyed so far as the qualities displayed by said leader fall "within the scope of the individual's belief in his charisma" (Weber, 2013, p. 90). In the Weberian sense, charisma is understood almost as a supernatural entity in which the leader possesses qualities that are not deemed to be shared by many individuals. Fascist leaders were projected, by themselves and followers, as leaders with extraordinary ability to achieve the radical ideological goals that were expressed. While fear and intimidation were definitely factors in gaining mass support, charisma is observed to be the motivation behind the radicalism of fascist action. Therefore, this chapter will examine Weberian charisma. Historical fascism

will be observed to view how charisma functioned within it, how important it was to Mussolini and Hitler, and how they wielded it. This will be followed by a brief explanation of leadership within the alt-right and how its internet-based existence created an opportunistic adoption of Trump. Finally, I will observe how charisma can be related to Trump and how this has influenced the alt-right's relationship with him.

Domination and authority, the Weberian model of charisma

The Weberian social phenomenon of charisma is explained as “resting on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person” (Weber, 2013, p. 90). Within charismatic authority, followers obey commands and accept leadership because an individual is viewed to possess extraordinary gifts exclusive to them. Weber's description of ‘devotion’ is very important because the leader represents the followers and their ideals; becoming a larger demonstration of the masses' views. By this I mean that the leader has the power to bring their message to a larger stage and therefore, dedication becomes absolute due to the leader becoming a manifestation of themselves and their beliefs. Charisma often allows the followers to live vicariously through the leader which creates an intense emotional connection between leader and followers. Devotion to the leader is what has allowed followers to commit atrocities and view it as moral; the greatest example being the Nazi Holocaust.

Weber's analysis of charisma was centred within an attempt to understand rulership, domination and legitimacy. As Joshua Derman writes, “Weber sought to identify patterns of rulership (Herrschaft) in religious, economic, and political associations” (Derman, 2011, p. 55). Charisma is extremely interesting in that followers become attached to an individual that claimed themselves to be like a deity. Derman continues to explain that “this kind of rulership (charisma) derived its legitimacy from an exceptional individual's personal claim to be followed. In the face of such heroism, people would feel ethically compelled to follow and help fulfil the leader's goal's” (ibid, p. 56). Charisma claims its legitimacy by a leader consistently demonstrating their extraordinary abilities as proof; their claim must be proven through acts such as a miracle, political power or an extraordinary vision. The legitimacy is further entrenched by an administrative staff that is an extension of the leader's charisma.

Charisma is also legitimised through sustaining a communalistic relationship between leader and followers. There is a desire to maintain an appearance of being close to the people and easily accessible. This is often manifested as a distancing from traditional forms of leadership as these are considered tools of the elites. By creating an aesthetic of accessibility, the leader is attempting to be a representation of the 'common person'. However, the leader presents themselves as both part of the 'people' and above them. Regardless of the validity of this claim, the communalistic relationship increases legitimacy through the dedication this relationship motivates.

Weber viewed charisma as being temporary and transitional when compared to rational-legal and traditional leadership (Weber, 2013). The temporary nature arises due to charisma usually assuming a role during crisis. This is important because charismatic leaders often (though not always) 'hijack' the political stage and use simplistic explanations of the world to explain crisis, while offering solutions, usually through scapegoating. Charisma often occurs as supplement until rational-legal or traditional leadership can be restored (I argue that the leaders themselves did not see their leadership as such). These leaders often do not have 'normal' ascension to leadership positions in the sense that they do not inherit the positions, are not incumbents or do not necessarily possess the expertise for the leadership role but assume legitimacy of the position through charismatic qualities. They do so by being "natural leaders in distress" that hold "specific gifts of the body and spirit; and these gifts have been believed to be supernatural, not accessible to everybody" (Weber, 1968, p. 19).

Charismatic authority sometimes occurred due to weak institutional leadership, or perhaps the growth of distrust for established political situations. Regardless, circumstances may have created opportunities for these leaders to rise. The nature of charisma is unstable but can often be powerful and long-lasting due to complete dedication coupled with the absence of institutions acting as restrictions. If a leader manages to maintain a charismatic aesthetic, these regimes may also be represented by brutality due to narrow-minded dedication. Charisma is not exclusive to oppressive regimes; it can be used as a positive force. However, I will explain how leaders have used charisma to form their fascist regimes.

Charismatic authority and fascism

When fascism is observed from the 21st century, images concerning the brutality of the regime are prevalent, most notably a Nazi holocaust and violence in the street perpetrated by the 'thugs' following Mussolini. These images conjure up feelings of disgust and resentment, perhaps curious as to the motivation for the followers of an ideology that motivated violence and racism. Explanations concerning economic hardship, relative decline and rising nationalism related to the norms of militarism have been explored (Paxton, 2004) (Mann, 2004). However, the element I will address concerns the promise of a transcending of the current social circumstances, guaranteed by an individual viewed to possess god-like traits. Fascism had a leader that possessed charismatic qualities. Charisma, in relation to fascism has been observed by Roger Eatwell (2006) to have been essential. Eatwell expresses this idea when he states:

fascism's syncretic ideology is crucial to understanding its rise and support. So too is the *coterie* charisma exerted by leaders like Hitler over an inner core even in the wilderness years; his *centripetal* charisma went on to help attract the masses to the 'Führer party' (Eatwell, 2006, p. 263).

Breuilly argues that charisma captures the leadership style within fascism. For example,

the concept of charisma appears to apply with uncanny accuracy to the case of Hitler and the Third Reich and has been used to enable detailed analysis of how the regime worked and its dynamics of change – especially the radicalisation (rather than stabilisation) of the regime (Breuilly, 2011, p. 487).

Fascist leaders motivated intense dedication through the charismatic tools of storytelling, propaganda, education and myth creation; leaders became the embodiment of the movement and goals. Eatwell (2006) addresses the topic in an article arguing Michael Mann had incorrectly overlooked the influence of charisma within fascism. Eatwell (2006) argues that "Hitler's charisma is especially important in helping to explain the strong attraction of the Nazis to those with low levels of interest in politics, including former non-voters and women" (p. 267). Here, Eatwell explains that through a charismatic leader, fascism found power and appeal among the population. For Eatwell, leaders are as important as ideas, creating a complex amalgamation of leader and ideology. Eatwell (2006) makes a bold claim

that without Hitler there would have been no Holocaust. His argument is based on Hitler's ability to create an ideological goal, inspire intense dedication and then express that goal as essential through charisma, which would have otherwise been hindered by a system of checks and balances had traditional or rational-legal forms of authority been in existence.

Eatwell (2006) explains it as this,

However, while it is important not to create a teleology running backwards from Auschwitz, it is also important to underline that Hitler had been obsessively racist from at least as far back as the end of the First World War. This was also true of many members of his inner coterie and, as Mann notes, of Nazis like Eichmann who planned and took part in the Holocaust. An excellent brief insight into the decisions which led to the Holocaust is given by Ian Kershaw via his phrase 'working towards the Führer'. This points to the charismatic hold which Hitler exerted over an inner core, who at times almost competed to anticipate the will of the Führer. Thus, the kind of internal personal 'checks and balances', which might have restrained dictatorial power, were removed in a system dominated by the Führer and his identification with Germany's mission. While important questions remain unclear about Hitler's precise role, and the extent to which the Hitler factor drove lower-level actions, there seems little doubt that without the charismatic Führer there would have been no major programme of genocide

(p. 268).

Hitler was able to, through his charisma, convince individuals to carry out his mission due to dedication.

Charismatic leaders were called upon in moments of crisis. Fascists took advantage of the resentments and disillusionments felt by the population. For example, constituencies voting for fascists felt unheard by politicians. Paxton explains that early fascists had young men as one of the constituencies who had grown unhappy with "white-bearded men" who had started the war and "understood nothing of their concerns" (Paxton, 2004, p. 50). Politics had become bland, unemotional and bureaucratic, which created dissatisfaction among young men who were drawn to "fascism's brand of antipolitical politics" (ibid). Breuilly explains that part of the legitimacy of charismatic fascist authority came through the

weakness of traditional and legal-rational authority. War and revolution destroyed or weakened hereditary monarchy, especially in developed societies like Germany and Italy. Legal-rational forms of authority lacked legitimacy. Many Germans regarded the Weimar Republic as the imposed result of military defeat, at best a practical arrangement for the time being

(Breuilly, 2011, p. 486).

Arguing for an alternative to traditional parliamentary politics, early fascism expressed an ideology of an “intense fraternity of emotion and effort” (ibid). A moment of political crisis was hijacked by an intense emotional promise of something different. Charismatic leaders generally appeal to the frustrations of their political constituencies, often exclaiming they are the ones to overcome these. Fascists carefully engineered themselves to be perceived as the embodiment of lower-middle-class resentments. For example, Paxton (2004) explains that a third of the members of the British Union of Fascists were from “rundown East London” and were unskilled and semi-skilled workers. These workers held resentment toward recent Jewish immigrants, were disillusioned with the Labour Party and held anger toward communist and Jewish assaults on fascist parades. Charismatic leaders promised to address these resentments, but often expressed these through highly emotional promises of transcendence, rather than detailing explicit plans to fix the problems. Leaders incorporating charisma took advantage of moments of crisis; demonstrating themselves as a god-like figure to overcome it. For example, Takis Pappas (2006) explains that

overwhelmed by a general crisis and having lost faith in the old liberal ideal and the leaders associated with it, many European peoples turned to fascist and quasi-fascist leaders who promised to confront the crisis with both workable solutions and new ideological visions

(p. 381).

The crises encouraged people to lose faith in the institutions and in the specific circumstance of fascism, leaders posited themselves and fascism as the answer to the crises plaguing their nations.

Fascist leaders used charisma to elevate themselves to the status of infallible deities. The above paragraph explained that charismatic leaders displayed themselves as the answer to the problems plaguing the masses. Beyond that however, Hitler and Mussolini used propaganda, education and myths to develop an image of themselves as god-like to reinforce their image as proof of possessing traits attributed only to them. Italian propaganda was used specifically to portray Mussolini as infallible. Pappas (2006) explains that Italian propaganda explicitly expressed the idea that “*Il duce ha sempre ragione*”, translated “Mussolini is always right” (p. 381). Fascist leaders understood that “propaganda is all about the communication of images and symbols and the exploitation of emotions”

(Blamires, 2006, p. 536). Deliberate use of newsreels, radio and newspaper were ways to demonstrate the grandeur of the regime and their leaders. However, beyond this, the use of propaganda was to develop a deep psychological dedication to the leader. For example, “the enforcement of gestures used daily, such as (the) *Heil Hitler!* greeting” meant that Hitler’s name was on the lips of supporters many times during the day (ibid, p. 537). The idea was, according to Spielvogel (1988), to mould a German population into a unit that would follow Hitler under any circumstances. The use of propaganda for Hitler was aimed at the masses, deliberately turned away from intellectuals; emphasising attention of the masses to ‘certain facts’ (Spielvogel, 1988). Mass meetings and rallies, reinforced by certain facts, gave the followers a sense of community and a connection to something larger than themselves, consequently, creating a feeling of spiritual connection to those around them and the leader. For fascist followers, the leader became part of their identity, motivating intense dedication. Charisma within fascism was used as a specific tool to motivate dedication, posit the leader as near god-like and motivate followers to obey their leader under any circumstances.

Fascism appears to have been reliant on leaders. Since liberal democratic institutions and capitalism had not prevented crisis, these modes of leadership and societal function had come under scrutiny. Opting for a strong leader with nationalist goals, followers were entranced by promises of recompense. The power of fascism is related to the leaders, so, a question surfaces as to how movements displaying similar ideologies can be effective without a powerful leader.

The Alt-Right and their conundrum of leadership

Due to the historical delegitimising of racism and fascism, the alt-right’s ideological basis of hate speech and racism has found itself condemned to certain corners of the globe; specifically, online. Consequently, leadership structures are strained, leaving the alt-right without an official figurehead. The ‘nature’ of the alt-right is founded upon an intense libertarian dedication to freedom over the internet. Formal leadership is generally frowned upon because those identifying as alt-right thrive within environments which offer few restrictions and a freedom which allows them to do whatever they want if it is a practical

possibility. Due to the decentralised nature of the internet, people can say what they want with a lot of anonymity and few consequences; the online forum 4chan which includes vulgar trolling is a good example. The alt-right can scarcely be identified as a movement due to its inconsistent real-world presence. Essentially, the alt-right are leaderless. George Hawley demonstrates their 'leadership style':

the Alt-Right can scarcely be called an organized movement. It has no formal institutions or a leadership caste issuing orders to loyal followers. There is no Alt-Right equivalent of The Communist Manifesto. Different people who describe themselves as part of the Alt-Right want different things

(Hawley, 2017, p. 11).

Due to the lack of direct leadership there is a sense of contradictory ideas connected only through a common goal, with varying ideas of how to achieve it. Anglin describes the alt-right as "a lot of different people saying a lot of different things" (Anglin, 2016). However, their overall goal does involve the guiding of certain influential figures. Anglin explains it as this,

the end goal of the Alt-Right is to first solidify a stable and self-sustaining counter-culture, and then eventually push this into becoming the dominant culture, in the same way that the Jewish-led revolutionary counter-culture of the 1960s has now become the dominant culture of the West

(Anglin, 2016).

It is, within this case, that the alt-right rely on guiding 'intellectuals' to be actively involved online. Members such as Richard Spencer and Andrew Anglin, act as social figureheads who provide a guide on what the alt-right is and influence the thoughts of their readers to establish a counter-culture with a unified ideology. For example, Anglin writes a piece titled 'A Normies guide to the Alt-right' and Spencer authored an article titled 'What it means to be Alt-Right'. These serve as examples of attempts to steer the narrative of the alt-right. Authors on alt-right websites function in an almost 'intellectual' role; they guide the way those that identify as alt-right think. For example, *TheRightStuff.biz* include articles with titles such as 'Book Review: Dr. David Duke's 'The Secret Behind Communism' (Reynolds, 2017) and 'Immigration and the Left: Even More Related than You Thought' (Scum, 2015). Reynold's article addressing Duke's argument encourages the belief in communist infiltration and control, and belief in the ills of immigration and positing the left as the

enemy. The role of these authors is Gramscian in nature when regarding the function of intellectuals and hegemonic power. Antonio Gramsci explains,

intellectuals have a social function like everyone else, in that what they have to say, write, and advocate always serves the practical and worldly purposes of specific social groups or classes, who feed off what intellectuals offer them for the purpose of erecting a structure or framework of ideas capable of winning the loyalty of the masses of people

(Gramsci, 2014, p. 138).

I argue that the alt-right observe the authors on alt-right websites not as leaders, but as intellectuals. These authors serve the purpose of expressing the world view of the alt-right in a supposedly researched, intellectual manner. The power which these authors have is the belief, of themselves and by alt-right users, that they are exposing the truth of power dynamics in society. They believe they are, in a Gramscian way, observing the powerful class, and intellectually dismantling it, consequently 'enlightening' the audiences to the abuses of hegemonic powers. These intellectuals are apparently exposing the anti-white, leftist and Jewish agenda. The alt-right 'intellectuals' will spread alt-right information which will guide the minds of the alt-right. This is viewed as liberating people to expose what is truly happening; to, as the alt-right would say, red-pill them.

Despite these figures, there is not necessarily a leader who sanctions orders or codes of conduct. Those who identify as alt-right are better characterised as online trolls, engaging in alt-right online activity for different reasons, often arguing among themselves (this is seen in the comment sections of various websites). Anglin explains that the alt-right "was a situation of different online subcultures (some of which were influenced by older offline movements) coming together. These groups collided, based on their having reached common conclusions, and the result is what is now called the Alt-Right" (Anglin, 2016). He is referring to identitarian movements, troll culture, the old white nationalist movement, #Gamergate, the manosphere, libertarianism/paleoconservatives and conspiracy theorism (Anglin, 2016). Online anonymity and trolling is a style, not specific to, but of the alt-right. Aggressive trolling originated from 4chan's /pol/ blog. Andrew Anglin deems this blog to be extremely important to the growth, style and purpose of the alt-right. Anglin explains,

/pol/ became a haven for virulent anti-Semites and aggressive racists, and tone of the Alt-Right is drawn directly from these roots on 4chan. On 4chan, the Jewish

problem was analyzed by news junkies and history buffs, feminism was deconstructed by sexually frustrated young men, and race was considered based on the actual data on the issue. The rehabilitation of Adolf Hitler and the NSDAP largely took place on 4chan

(Anglin, 2016).

An article by *lifewire.com* offers two definitions I find appropriate to explain trolling. Author Elise Moreau writes a troll is the action of “being a prick on the internet because you can. Typically unleashing one or more cynical or sarcastic remarks on an innocent by-stander, because it's the internet and, hey, you can”. Secondly, she adds, "someone who posts inflammatory, extraneous, or off-topic messages in an online community, such as a forum, chat room, or blog, with the primary intent of provoking readers into an emotional response or of otherwise disrupting normal on-topic discussion” (Moreau, 2018). Trolling occurs, I argue, for two reasons, firstly, there is no leader to disallow it, and secondly, to attract people to the alt-right without a formal leader. Only those that agree or are as playfully vulgar will be attracted by aggressive trolling, consequently, it deters the ‘wrong’ kind of people.

The nature of the alt-right makes leadership difficult. It has thrived online which has provided a safe space for these mostly young men. However, the benefits of their online presence also have serious drawbacks, and this is that there is no figurehead seen as their definitive leader. Some members disagree with figureheads such as Spencer. Perhaps, in a way, the alt-right do not want a leader; their fundamentalist view of freedom is appealing to their audience. Regardless of this, I think that what the alt-right do want is a presence in the mainstream. This will be accepted through a public leader as the alt-right desire to normalise their rhetoric and legitimise their presence.

Adopting Trump as a quasi-leader

There have been signs that the alt-right’s white nationalist and neo-Nazi agenda is starting to make an impact off the internet which was demonstrated during the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville. Richard Spencer feels that the alt-right is characterised as having emerged from the internet, however, for him, it is now making its way off;

attempting to have a 'real-world' presence (Vice, 2016). I think this is due, in large part, to the normalization of far-right politics through Donald Trump and far-right movements throughout Europe (See Wodak, Rydgren & Mudde). Spencer claims that, even if Trump had lost, the interest and growth of the alt-right would have continued (Vice, 2016). I think that he is incorrect because Trump has emboldened those sympathetic to alt-right ideology, encouraging those who would have otherwise been unaware of the alt-right. Consequently, the alt-right appear to be moving off the internet. In Trump they saw an opportunity and were encouraged to believe that since he is in power, there are many more people who will be sympathetic to white identity politics. David Duke, former grand wizard of the KKK, explains it like this:

this (rally) represents a turning point, for the people of this country, we are determined to take our country back. We're gonna fulfil the promises of Donald Trump. That's what we believed in, that's why we voted for Donald Trump. Because he said he's going to take our country back, and that's what we gotta do

(Wolf, 2017).

The movement from the internet into a real-life space was preceded by the adoption of Trump as the alt-right quasi-leader.

The reasons for the adoption of Trump as the alt-right quasi-leader is a result of having no formal leader, his alignment with alt-right ideology and internet interaction. As alignment with far-right ideology expressed by Trump became normalised, attention from far-right online personalities grew. Although sceptical at first, members of the alt-right grew further impressed by the narrative expressed by Trump. For example, Richard Spencer was impressed by a tweet shared by Trump which suggested that black Americans were responsible for most of the crime in the country (Neiwert, 2017, p. 278). The first sign of Trump's white identity politics, however, came through his adoption of the far-right conspiracy regarding the legitimacy of Barack Obama's presidency through questioning his birth certificate. By Trump arguing that Obama's presidency may be in violation of the constitution, he managed to gain attention from far-right conspiracy theorists and alt-right figureheads. For example, Trump was featured on Michael Savage's (anti-liberal host) radio show and was initially described by Andrew Anglin as interesting but clearly not one of them (Neiwert, 2017). Interest continued to grow however as Trump continued to communicate his exclusionary nationalist immigration views. Trump's relationship with the alt-right is not

direct, however, he did something for them that is captured expertly by George Hawley; he explains that,

Most of the Alt-Right realized from the beginning that Trump was not really one of them, but they still loved him, and not just because of his comments about immigrants and Muslims. Trump changed the tone of American politics. He regularly violated conventions and helped normalize nativist rhetoric. Perhaps most importantly and exciting for those in the Alt-Right, Trump dealt the organized conservative movement a devastating blow, creating an opening for right-wing alternatives

(p. 116).

It is Trump's alignment with racist views regarding immigrants that gained the most attention from the alt-right. Changing the political landscape, Trump became a crusader in the alt-right's white identity political 'war'. Trump's sympathies with far-right ideologies continued in the form of retweets of far-right websites, hashtags of 'white genocide' and continued islamophobia and anti-immigration stances. Trump was soon crowned as an alt-right champion, described by Anglin as "our glorious leader and ULTIMATE SAVIOUR" (Neiwert, 2017, p. 279). The public support for Trump came from online sources (barring David Duke). Spencer and Anglin have publicly expressed their support online for Trump, which encourages online alt-right users to support Trump and eventually to vote for him. As mentioned above, the alt-right do not believe in equality, and generally desire a strong leader to share their vision. Trump was encouraged to be a leader and saviour. Alt-right 'intellectuals' saw him as a significant step toward the alt-right vision of further entrenched white supremacy. Trump has become a charismatic leader for his followers, especially those sympathetic towards far-right ideologies. His relationship with the alt-right is complicated and is often difficult to capture, but he has been adopted as a powerful, masculine figurehead.

Is Trump a charismatic leader?

In this section, I will address the question of whether Trump is a charismatic leader and secondly, what that means for the alt-right. I argue that yes, Trump is charismatic in the Weberian sense. Trump is charismatic in some important senses; the opportunistic nature

of Trump's candidacy, and his scapegoating and conspiracist racial rhetoric. Firstly, it should be noted that the period in which a charismatic leader operates is important; Weber argues that these leaders usually rise in a time of crisis (real or imagined). Traditional and rational-legal forms of leadership have grown unfavourable; the population, usually having grown disillusioned by the political, economic and social systems express their grievances, to which, charismatic leaders take advantage, and this was a tactic used by Trump. My argument is that Trump and the alt-right are operating in a period of American (arguably the Western world) history that is reminiscent of inter-war Europe. Remaining with this argument, since Trump's rhetoric has resonated with many Americans (though not all), I argue that is in part, a result of a growing dissatisfaction with an unemotional bureaucracy, career politicians, potential economic downturn, and a sense of moral and social decay.

It should first be stated that, although the period of modern American politics has allowed Trump to 'hijack' the political arena, the inter-war period has some significant differences from contemporary American politics. Eatwell (2003) explains that the rise of fascism was assisted by the lingering effects of WWI (many countries felt humiliation through loss of territories and military defeat), the growth of the Marxist left and the onset of an economic depression. Eatwell (2003) also argues for the existence of two Europes, one in which liberal democracies thrived, and the other which saw the rise of authoritarian alternatives, fascism included. As democracy was unable to temper these crises, charismatic leaders argued themselves as an answer. While the crises are different in contemporary western politics, the similarity between the eras is a disillusionment with democratic institutions to overcome the crises, a distrust of abstract political and academic 'elites' and a charismatic leader taking advantage of crises and mass dissatisfaction.

Like Mussolini and Hitler, Trump expressed that there were problems within society, highlighted a scapegoat and claimed himself as the hero to overcome crises. For example, within Trump's presidential announcement speech, he stated:

Our country is in serious trouble. We don't have victories anymore. We used to have victories, but we don't have them. When was the last time anybody saw us beating, let's say, China in a trade deal? They kill us. I beat China all the time. All the time.

When did we beat Japan at anything? They send their cars over by the millions, and what do we do? When was the last time you saw a Chevrolet in Tokyo? It doesn't exist, folks. They beat us all the time.

When do we beat Mexico at the border? They're laughing at us, at our stupidity. And now they are beating us economically. They are not our friend, believe me. But they're killing us economically

(Time, 2015).

During the inter-war period, the growth of fascism was aided by an economic downturn, resulting in a distrust of the effectiveness of democracy, which had been associated with prosperity during the 1920s. The dramatic change created a "crisis of legitimacy" (Lyttelton, 1987) regarding democratic institutions within Germany and Italy specifically. Trump, similarly, noticed the dissatisfaction of certain groups regarding the political status quo. Current America will not turn away from democracy, but that does not guarantee an immunity to democratic backsliding and the delegitimization of democratic institutions such as the media and courts. Trump argued the political system was broken, career politicians were causing economic hardship and that these politicians were out of touch with middle America. Consequently, Trump posited himself as the solution.

So I've watched the politicians. I've dealt with them all my life. If you can't make a good deal with a politician, then there's something wrong with you. You're certainly not very good. And that's what we have representing us. They will never make America great again. They don't even have a chance. They're controlled fully—they're controlled fully by the lobbyists, by the donors, and by the special interests, fully

(Time, 2015).

Trump is taking advantage of the growing disillusionment with career politicians, while simultaneously implying that he is a break from this; that he is the one to 'make America great again' and succeed where politicians have failed. The charismatic tools Trump makes use of are incorporated in a sinister fashion. While charisma is not exclusively used for populist and right-wing purposes (for example, one can argue Nelson Mandela was a charismatic leader), Trump has used it in a way that scapegoats minorities, claims problems within society which may be exaggerated while explaining simple solutions (building a wall) and presenting himself as a strong-man capable of overcoming crisis.

Charisma has played a significant role in Trump's politics generally, but there were certain elements which were particularly important for the alt-right. The first of these addresses Trump's presentation of himself as a 'strongman' promising to transcend the ills the alt-right found present in society. The alt-right view Hitler as a strong leader from the

past which they gain a lot of ideological inspiration from. Trump is portrayed in a Hitlerian theme; portrayed as a strong man displaying as unapologetic and unafraid to do anything for 'his people'. Being a strongman is important to the alt-right, because as has been stated in the previous chapter, there is a belief that 'real men' have disappeared from modern society, and it is strong men that will save the white race. Trump's aggressive rhetoric and anti-immigrant narrative has inspired an alt-right trend known as Trumpwave. Figure 7 demonstrates:



Fig 7. <https://twitter.com/tuanssm/status/861826538634977280> (accessed 10/04/18).

Trump is the strongman the alt-right desired as he represents what a man 'should' be. Additionally, Trump hates the left almost as much as the alt-right do. As Daniel Friberg made clear, real men do not identify with the left. Trump's depiction of hyper-masculinity and right-wing, nationalist politics has made him an alt-right saviour.

The second element that makes Trump's charisma important for the alt-right is his scapegoating which connects with conspiracy theories. Chip Berlet gives a definition of conspiracy theory which is important to Trump's alt-right leadership. Berlet (2000) explains

that “conspiracism is a particular narrative form of scapegoating that frames the enemy as part of a vast insidious plot against the common good, while it valorises the scapegoater as a hero for sounding the alarm” (p. 9). The alt-right have revelled in the fact that Trump has used scapegoats and minority groups to explain the problems of white America; to them, Trump is the whistle-blower revered for telling the truth. This is significant for the alt-right because what Trump is saying is not new, but simply revealing the truth they have known for a long time and Trump is making it public, consequently, normalising conspiracies and scapegoating. This is demonstrated by David Duke. Following Trump’s controversial Islamophobic retweets, the former KKK leader tweeted,

Trump retweets video of crippled white kid in Europe being beaten by migrants, and white people being thrown off a roof and then beaten to death, He's condemned for showing us what the fake news media WON'T. Thank God for Trump! That's why we love him!

(Perez, 2017).

This tweet was shortly followed by another:

This is why WE LOVE TRUMP and WHY the FAKE NEWS MEDIA HATES TRUMP. He brings to light what the lying, Fake News Media Won't. The truth is the media covers up horrific numbers of racist hate crimes against White people!

(Perez, 2017).

Duke explains a common interpretation of Trump within the alt-right; he is normalising racist white identity politics, further stigmatising Islam and emphasising America as a country made for whites. Scapegoating, racially charged politics and simple solutions have been significant for the alt-right, leading them to view Trump’s victory as their victory. For example, at a conference at the ‘National Policy Institute’, which is self-described as “an independent organization dedicated to the heritage, identity, and future of people of European descent in the United States, and around the world” (Lombroso & Appelbaum, 2016), Richard Spencer, after giving his speech, shouted “hail Trump, hail our people, hail victory!” (ibid) which was followed by Nazi salutes given by the crowd. For the alt-right, Trump’s victory was their victory; a significant step towards greater white privilege, a limitation on immigration, a cleansing of illegal (all) immigration and a strong leader who shared their agenda. However, as Trump’s presidency has progressed, the relationship the alt-right has had with Trump has shifted and changed.

Trump's relationship with the alt-right (disillusionment and hope)

Disillusionment, but also a sense of identification with Donald Trump will be explored through three articles written on *altright.com*. These are titled, 'How The Alt-Right Broke Up With Donald Trump' (Wallace, 2017), 'The Alt-Right Cuts Ties With Donald Trump', (Wallace, 2017) and 'When They Come For Trump They Come For You, White Man' (Knickerbocker, 2017). Within the alt-right, there has grown a sense of disillusionment with the Trump presidency. Simultaneously however, there is still an understanding that Trump represents something greater than themselves; a vision for the white race that the alt-right desire. Trump is still the best chance of creating a utopian future, and when attacks occur upon him, it is viewed by the alt-right as an attack on white men in power, white men in society and white culture. First, I will address Hunter Wallace's article 'How the alt-right broke up with Donald Trump'. It can be summarised by his last section:

The attack on Syria was the final straw.

It was a stunning turn of events. Donald Trump ripped up his 'America First' foreign policy and threw it in the garbage in order to appease the political establishment. In doing so, he severely undermined our confidence in his character, cast doubt on every other promise he made on the campaign trail and sawed off the leg of his appeal that comes from a non-interventionist foreign policy.

For the Alt-Right, Donald Trump was an attractive candidate to us primarily because he was an 'America First' candidate on trade, immigration and foreign policy. So far, the Deep State, Lügenpresse⁷ and the federal courts have defeated him on all three fronts. It started when he disavowed the Alt-Right. Then he overreacted and fired Michael Flynn. It culminated in abandoning his entire foreign policy. We now have ample proof that President Trump isn't the strong leader we imagined him to be

We gave Trump's America almost a hundred days. It only took 76 days to be revealed as false paradise

(Wallace, 2017).

From this passage, the dissatisfaction with a Trump presidency is evident. Trump's charisma had created an image of ideological alignment and the possibility of a deliverance of 'America first', low to no immigration and a further entrenching of white dominance in

⁷ German for 'lying press' or 'press of lies'.

American society. However, when charisma fails, what is left are broken promises and false hope. It should be noted that Trump's extremism is also halted by democratic checks and balances. For the alt-right, this appears as a lack of commitment to the extremist agenda that Trump preached. All this considered however, there is still a sense of power felt by Trump being in the oval office; he is considered to be much better than an African American president. These two conflicting elements of broken promises, victimisation and a desire for utopia combine to form an uncertain future relationship between Trump and the alt-right. He has been a charismatic king who might bring a new alt-right era but has also been considered weak regarding the more extreme ideas of the alt-right. The support ebbs and flows depending on what Trump does and says.

Although the relationship between Trump and the alt-right is complex, perhaps the relationship should be analysed through the manifestation of Richard Spencer's interactions with the idea of Trump as a leader. Trump is not the best ideological representation or consistent representation, but he is part of the larger goal to dismantle the established political order, cast doubt on the state of conservatism in America, and to encourage and normalise far-right ideas. Spencer himself has stated this of Trump:

Trump is worth supporting... because we need a troll. We need someone who can expose the system that rules us as the malevolent and worthless entity it is. We need someone who can break open the public debate. We need someone who can expose and heighten the contradictions within the system. And we need someone who can call out the press, the politicians, and the pseudo-intellectuals as the empty shells they are. The fact that Trump himself is part of this same farce is utterly irrelevant"

(Neiwert, 2017, p. 271).

Spencer manages to neatly summarise the relationship and viewpoint of Trump among the alt-right; Trump is part of the establishment, full of inconsistencies, but ultimately, he is the figurehead needed to achieve their goals of normalisation, visibility and legitimisation. For example, following the Unite the Right Rally, Trump stated, "we're closely following the terrible events unfolding in Charlottesville, Virginia. We condemn in the strongest possible terms this egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides, on many sides" (Lind, 2017). In this one statement Trump equated hate and far-right ideology with those wanting to oppose them. Through this, Trump managed to give the alt-right a public platform by adding racism and Nazism to the list of legitimate world-views. It managed to

explain the ideological power the president has, but further, the change in society that Trump represents. This act did not go unnoticed by Spencer. Spencer tweeted in response to Trump's reactions, "I'm proud of him for speaking the truth" (Greenwood, 2017). For Spencer, Trump represents the best opportunity to encourage identitarianism and white nationalism among white Americans, but also to send a message to non-whites that this is a white country and if you cannot conform, get out. Spencer is aware of the contradictions, but the possibility of their desired future outweighs these. This understanding of where Trump's position in alt-right thought is explained by Spencer's National Policy Institute speech following Trump's electoral victory: his victory is their victory. The alt-right view of Trump is expressed vicariously by Spencer: uncertain, angry, aware of contradictions but supportive as they believe he is the saviour to bring further white privilege and domination as well as a norm of alt-right ideology. The alt-right feel, at least for now, Donald Trump is a representation of their victory.

Conclusion

Charisma and dedication were significant factors within historical fascism. Absolute commitment to fascist leaders developed intense emotion which motivated violent action in the name of the leader. Weber illustrated an image which largely concerned charisma as being used to usurp leadership positions through specific tools which dislodged traditional and legal-rational forms of leadership. Charisma can also be used in positive forms, such as emancipatory leaders. However, in the sense it has been used in this chapter, leaders scapegoat, highlight problems and portray themselves as deities to demonstrate their charismatic ability to lead. The presence of Trump as a far-right demagogue with fascist sympathies emboldened the alt-right. Trump's rhetoric was accommodated by the alt-right, and even commended by Duke and Spencer. While Trump may not be a direct leader of the alt-right, his charismatic tools have allowed their language to be normalised and be placed alongside other ideologies. Trump has legitimised and allowed public space for racist white identity politics within the political conversation, for which the alt-right can be very grateful.

Utopia and transcendence in destructive ideologies

Since violence and explicit racism were notable characteristics of fascism, it has been easy to view them as an irrational group reacting to modernity. However, I posit that the grievances and crises of inter-war Europe and the vision for a better world combine to produce the phenomenon termed 'transcendental utopianism'. Utopia, I argue, is the most important aspect of inter-war fascism and the alt-right. Utopian transcendence is what motivates racism, hyper-nationalism, ideological anti-immigration, hatred and acts taken toward 'purification'. Michael Mann argued that transcendence was "the most ideologically powerful part of their appeal, for it offered a plausible, practical vision of movement toward a better society" (Mann, 2004, p. 15). Mann continues to explain that fascism "offered a revolutionary and supposedly achievable solution" to the various inter-war crises (Mann, 2004, p. 15). The violence and cleansing ideologies displayed by fascism and the alt-right are simply the route toward utopia; steps taken toward a vision presented by both groups. Mann (2004) states that fascists would take steps toward making society 'better' by repressing those that caused strife.

To analyse fascist utopianism, I have placed Michael Mann's analysis of fascist transcendence alongside utopia and dystopia. This is because the elements of transcendence that fascists desired often overlapped with elements of utopia. Gordin et al (2010) explains that "utopias and dystopias by definition seek to alter the social order on a fundamental, systemic level" (p. 2). Mann's argument of transcendence explains that fascists rejected the existing social order and sought to fundamentally change it through transcendental cleansing. According to Mann (2004), fascists rejected the notion that the social order was harmonious, they argued against liberal notions that conflict between different interest groups was inevitable, and disagreed with socialist ideologies arguing harmony could occur through overthrowing capitalism. Fascism theorised that by cleansing certain social and ethnic groups, the state would be comprised of only the politically and

ethnically 'pure'. The goal for both Mannian transcendence and utopianism was to recreate a novel fascist society.

Stanley Payne views fascism as "a radical force seeking to create a new social order" (Eatwell, 1998). In this sense, fascism was a 'revolution' of sorts; a movement that, through its critical analysis of society, possessed a vision of something 'better'. Like fascism, the alt-right can also easily be dismissed as an irrational cult, vulgar for the sake of it, and harshly racist. However, this chapter will explore the utopic elements of the alt-right, and how this vision is demonstrated. I argue that both fascism and the alt-right, through critical negations of society, articulate a utopic vision for the future. I will explore this argument first by discussing Ruth Levitas' interpretation of utopia. Levitas' model will be adopted to analyse utopia within fascism and the alt-right. Following that, I will briefly demonstrate why I argue that fascism is a utopic movement. Next, I will analyse what a fascist utopia would look like. I will then consider the utopic links between fascism and the alt-right based within their critical negations of society. Lastly, I will discuss the alt-right goal for the future; a utopia through a white ethno-state.

Levitas' model of utopia

Ruth Levitas explains that utopia has been a common feature within human civilisation. It includes visions of what a good life would and should be. Utopian understandings of the world can be characterised by a knowledge of how the world is, and then how it can be better. Levitas introduces the idea of utopia as:

the term 'utopia,' coined by Thomas More in 1516, is a pun on eutopia/outopia—the good place that is also no place. The lay meaning of 'utopia' has come to be a perfect but impossible society, and the term 'utopian' to refer to an unrealistic dream or dreamer

(Levitas, 2008, p. 19).

However, despite the abstract Thomas More-based definition, Levitas (2010) views utopia as encompassing the 'desire' to transcend while also stating that "Karl Mannheim defined utopia as that which brings change about" (p. 540). Utopia is not just a dream, but a vision to be pursued. Additionally, Levitas states that "utopias, then, are blueprints of the good (or

even perfect) society, imagined elsewhere and intended as prescriptions for the near future” (Levitas, 2003, p. 3). Utopia can exist in the past in terms of a golden age or viewed as a world beyond death (secular or religious). The understanding of utopia as a happy society that is “ordered, stable and secure” (ibid), manages to fit well within the understanding of fascist transcendence. Fascists were in part, a reaction to modernity (Levitas argued utopia is linked to modernity), fascists were reacting, like many other groups, to the condition of modernity which had provided crises and precarity to the nation-state.

Levitas’ work seems to point to an ‘essence’ of utopia, and this essence is desire. As Levitas explains; “the desire for a different, better way of being” is the essence found within utopia (Levitas, 2011, p. 209). The model that will be used in this chapter is centred around the desire to make change. The desire motivates action and steps taken toward utopia; it will be demonstrated that fascism was littered with desire for a better world and this resulted in destructive actions taken to achieve it. The alt-right is similarly filtered with the desire to transcend the contemporary world and create their own utopia.

The utopic aspects of fascism; destructive motivation

Fascists were utopic in their desire to form a different and revolutionary future. Coupland explains that “fascism claimed to be inaugurating a new time, a new era of history, to be creating a ‘new man’ and a dynamic and harmonious organic state-society” (Coupland, 2006, p. 693). Fascism was seen to be so revolutionary by its leaders, that Mussolini himself believed fascism would replace earlier ideologies. Mussolini writes:

if it is admitted that the nineteenth century has been the century of Socialism, Liberalism and Democracy, it does not follow that the twentieth must also be the century of Liberalism, Socialism and Democracy. Political doctrines pass; peoples remain. It is to be expected that this century may be that of authority, a century of the ‘Right’, a Fascist century

(Mussolini, 1932).

Fascists communicated a revolutionary vision which would replace other ideologies. The complicated view of fascist utopianism is expressed by Griffin. Griffin states: “fascism will exhibit a utopian revolutionary aspect when attempting to overthrow the existing order but

proceed to assume a reactionary, oppressive one if ever installed in power” (Griffin, 1991, p. 26-7). This explanation demonstrates the complicated nature of fascist utopianism; Griffin explains that fascism undoubtedly possessed utopic aspects but has easily been viewed as oppressive and dystopic due to its actions in power. Therefore, it is the ideological utopian aspect that will be analysed in fascism. I argue this is more important as the communication of utopia was important to a significant portion of fascist constituents. Additionally, the actions taken by fascists were still guided by the ideological goal of transcendental utopianism.

When observing fascism’s utopic features however, it is necessary to note that fascists did not intend to cause a socio-economic revolution. Griffin states it is a misconception that a ‘true’ revolution “involves first and foremost the transformation of the socioeconomic basis of society, the emancipation of all oppressed sectors of humanity” (Griffin, 2006, p. 563). It is true that fascists were highly critical, and their revolutionary elements were partly a reaction to crises. So, instead of desiring to reform injustice or emancipate the oppressed, fascism presented itself as a solution to economic, military, political and ideological crises, often relying on scapegoating, conspiracy theories and cleansing. Therefore, fascist revolutionary rhetoric was rather characterised by national rebirth and purification, for example, Hitler’s mass Jewish cleansing and Italy’s ‘cult of Rome’. Considering these crises, fascists did desire a specific kind of revolution. According to Paxton, fascists wanted

a revolution of the soul, and a revolution in the world power position of their people. They meant to unify and invigorate and empower their decadent nation – to reassert the prestige of *Romanita* or the German *Volk* or Hungarism or other group destiny (Paxton, 2004, p. 142).

This kind of revolution would develop the ‘new man’ to enact change. Paxton explains further that their revolution would change the nature of citizenship established in the revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; the individual would be subordinate to the community, national destiny would be a priority, and schools would be established to develop the ‘new’ men and women of fascist society (Paxton, 2004, pp. 142-3). Through this goal to transform society, fascism was utopic in vision and action. Fascist ideology encompassed the *desire* to transcend and the actions, although contradictory at times, were

steps toward utopia. Actions such as denying property rights to enemies and foreigners (Paxton, 2004) were deliberate steps toward cleansing the nation. My argument is therefore summarised by the view of Phillip M. Coupland: “the scope of its ambitions, and ruthlessness with which it pursued them, mark out fascism as one of the most utopian movements of the modern period” (Coupland, 1998, p. 692). The vision shared by fascism, the cleansing actions taken to ‘purify’ society and the careful engineering of art, social psychology and propaganda all contribute to the argument of fascisms utopian aspects.

What does a fascist utopia look like?

I will explore fascist utopianism by focussing on two elements. The first being revolutionary nationalism, and the second, purification to create the ideal state. The state was central to both these elements as the usage of the state, in terms of a utopian idea, is encompassed by the words of Stanley Payne. Payne explains that Italian Fascism wanted “the basis for an alternate political system” (Payne, 1980, p. 69). The basis, I argue, is the state. More specifically however, a rebirth of the state; Italian Fascists believed they “must do away with the old state”, and their ‘new’ state would “overcome the weaknesses of the prevailing democratic systems” (Hattstein, 2006, p. 638-639). Mussolini himself wrote in his *The Doctrine of Fascism* that “the State is an absolute before which individuals and groups are relative. Individuals and groups are ‘conceivable’ inasmuch as they are in the state” (1932). The future vision for fascism is the dream of a unified state, handing control of the economy, society, information and government to a ruling elite. As Payne (1980) elaborates, “the new state was to achieve total representation of the nation but would also exercise total guidance of national goals” (p. 73). Within Italian Fascism, the state, as an ideological goal was to act as a guiding force, providing for the nation and ruled by a charismatic leader, often likened to a deity or prophet.

Nazi Germany had similar priorities placed upon the state but was based heavily upon the ‘pure’ and ‘organic’ peoples that made up the state. The approach taken by Nazism combined revolutionary nationalism and biologically racist cleansing. Nazi utopianism “made considerable progress toward its aim of transforming a class society into one stratified according to race” (Coupland, 2006, p. 692). The state was the people, and the

people had to be made up from the 'blood' and soil' of the land; the mythical belonging to the land. Nazi Germany's utopian goals related to the state incorporated an organic view of the peoples that made up the nation, and consequently involved the removal of those that did not meet the criteria. The state would be the enforcer of a eugenics program that would purify the state.

National rebirth and displays of that rebirth are the manifestations of fascists' dedication to their statist utopia. This ultra-nationalism occurs in terms of a recall to a mythic core; a grand mythic core that has always been there but may need to be reignited. Fascism, according to Griffin (1991), exists as encompassing a political myth which mobilises its activists and supporters. Fascism developed a version of utopia that made references to a romanticized, nostalgic view of the past. For example, Italian Fascism had strong references to the past glory of the Roman Empire. According to John Pollard (2006), "Italian Fascism claimed to be inspired by *Romanita*, Roman values of order, discipline, and hierarchy" (p. 575). The Empire served as a model of Italian glory and perfection and Fascists desired to re-create it. Mussolini viewed the Roman tradition as "an idea of power" (ibid) and this motivated Mussolini to create a modern Italian empire based on the Roman image. The idea saw the attempts to expand in Ethiopia. Rome was essentially Italian Fascism's ultra-national palingenesis. Due to the Roman empire, Mussolini made territorial claims to Malta, Nice, Corsica, Tunisia, Palestine, Albania and others; these were once part of the Roman Empire and Mussolini felt these were rightfully Italy's (ibid).

Charles Burdett refers to this obsession with the past as the "cult of Rome" and it became the symbolic language of Fascism (Burdett, 2003, p. 93). Pollard (2006) explains,

Fascist rhetoric was saturated with Roman imagery and Latin words. Even Mussolini's own title, Duce, was a translation of the Latin Dux ('leader'), and the very symbol of Fascism, the fasces, was taken from the bundle of rods borne before the Roman lictors

(p. 575).

For Italian Fascism, the cult of Rome was a specific view of the Roman Empire which represented strength and power, but conveniently ignored losses in battle and its eventual collapse. Fascists felt that Italy had since regressed from the deserved glory. Individualism also meant that pride in one's nation had become a past reality, therefore, Fascism desired

that Italians to reclaim a sense of pride and superiority. Fascism “was represented as having recovered the powerful utopia of the ancient past” (ibid). Burdett addresses the usage of Roman utopianism as a model to emulate, as well as a past to return to. He explains that

the symbolic role that ancient Rome served within various discourses of the 1920s and 1930s was thus essentially double. On the one hand, the Roman Empire functioned as a kind of earthly paradise, the surviving remnants of which could be seen and visited. The lost empire could be evoked for various purposes including that of a mirror in which Italian Fascism could see an idealized portrait of itself. On the other hand, the vision of a militarized society, organized along strictly hierarchical lines that achieved massive territorial expansion, acted as a model that the regime was keen to emulate

(Burdett, 2003, p.99).

Demonstrations to regenerate the dream of the Roman Empire were characterised by the belief that Italy should take a role as the guiding nation of the world as the Roman Empire had once (Burdett, 2003). Part of this demonstration was the projection of the grandeur innate to Italian culture. As Rome had once done, Italian Fascists sought to share their culture with the rest of the world. This resulted in the Ethiopian campaign of 1935 (ibid). The growth of an empire would provide Italian utopias abroad and would “transform Italy itself into a hugely prosperous nation” (Burdett, 2003, p. 102), and would act as propaganda to demonstrate the glory of Italy, recreated in the image of Rome. The imagery of Rome created a sense of superiority in relation to Italians and their culture; believing that Italian Ethiopia improved the land and the lives of native Ethiopians by introducing them to a higher form of living. Fascist Italy was trying to recreate an empire which was held up by a narcissistic sense of superiority.

Architecture, within Italian Fascism, served the function of recreating the grandiose image of Rome. This was deliberate propaganda by Mussolini to inspire feelings of patriotism among Italians and to remind them of the past glory that was owed to them. Under Mussolini, “gigantic architectural projects that were accomplished during the ‘ventennio nero’ in the capital were intended, in the words of Mussolini, to rid Roman monuments of the evidence of centuries of decadence” (Burdett, 2003, p. 97). Distractions from Roman historical architecture was removed to allow direct visual access to these monuments. For example, “in order to free the Colosseum from the buildings that had risen in the centuries following the decline of the Roman Empire, an entire housing district was

pulled down” (ibid). The purpose of revamping these monuments and building in this architectural style was so “Italians could meditate on the achievements of their ancestors” (ibid). Architecture acted as a symbolic revitalisation of the Roman Empire which in turn, served as propaganda to promote a nationalist ideal with palingenesis as the ultimate goal. The aesthetic of Fascist power was attempted to be linked to Roman power. For example, “Fascist military parades and other public ceremonies were choreographed against a genuine classical Roman backdrop” (Pollard, 2006, p. 576). Italian Fascism mirrored itself against its past and consequently developed a spirit that attempted to emulate it. A Fascist utopia would have Roman and Italian glory at the forefront of citizens minds. Italian society would be saturated with Roman motifs, architecture and daily reminders of Italian superiority and history. National rebirth would be modelled after the Roman empire.

As I have mentioned, a fascist utopia was also characterised by cleansing to ‘purify’ the nation. This is demonstrated explicitly by Nazism’s harsh anti-Semitism which contributed to a mass genocide. Capturing the Holocaust with accuracy, however, presents many challenges, and the analysis of how anti-Semitism, Hitler, historical anti-Semitism and Nazi ideology played a role is an issue that is often debated (see Jocelyn Hellig (2003) for a short history). However, Hellig explains that the murder of one-third of the world’s Jewish population was “the ultimate manifestation of antisemitism in action” (Hellig, 2003, p. 18). Nazism incorporated large forms of cleansing and purification; while the murder of Jews was the most pronounced, there were still many other people that were “subjugated, tortured, enslaved and killed” (Hellig, 2003, p. 20). Observing the hatred Nazis had for many social groups is to understand that they were trying to establish a ‘pure’ utopian society which prioritised the German people. This utopic cleansing is explained aptly by Hellig:

the Nazis were attempting to create an ‘ideal’ social order, by remodelling the pure and noble race of Germans on the basis of new values such as racial purity, racial hygiene, and ‘good’ ‘clean’ living. Some members of ‘inferior’ races had to become slaves to establish and maintain German superiority in Germany’s new, expanded domain, and others, who threatened the ‘wholesomeness’ of German life, were deemed ‘unworthy of life’ (*unwertes Leben*) altogether. These – among whom Jews were the prime victims – were targeted for death

(Hellig, 2003, p. 20).

Targets, additional to Jews, were “Soviet prisoners of war, Jehovah’s witnesses, mentally retarded, physically handicapped or emotionally unstable German Gypsies (the Roma and

Sinti), German male homosexuals, trade unionists, political dissidents, and clergymen who dared to speak out against Nazi policy” (ibid). Nazism pursued utopia through transcendental cleansing which incorporated an ideology of deep hatred of enemies and a dedication to the purity of the state.

Both elements of a fascist utopic vision were motivated by the state and the pure population of said state. Regeneration was viewed in terms of a dystopic understanding of the state; for Mussolini, Italy had regressed from its previous Roman glory, and this had to be revitalised. For Nazism, a dystopia was apparent due to the perversion of a pure society through Jews and others that degraded the sanctity of Germany. Dedication to the state encouraged a mass effort to regenerate it as well as destroy enemies that did not belong. However, it is this aggressive expression of statist loyalty that has brought questions upon the utopic nature of fascism; through observing fascism, it should be questioned whether the movement was utopic, or simply an over-critical irrational reaction. The alt-right can be observed to arouse the same question as they appear aggressively critical.

Angry critical observations; fascism, the alt-right and a ‘better’ world

Author Nigel Copsey (2013) observes radical right-wing parties to have emerged out of a history of neo-fascism. The contribution Copsey makes to this study is the argument that contemporary far-right groups not only carry the lineage of fascism but maintain its existence post 1945. For example, Copsey states,

why speak of the ‘return of fascism’ when fascism never left us in the first place? This is not to say that radical right-wing populist parties are a repetition of old fascisms – they are clearly not. Like classic fascisms, they may well seek to roll back as far as possible the libertarian spirit of the contemporary democratic order and to replace it with an ethnically homogeneous authoritarian state

(Copsey, 2013, p. 11).

Copsey makes a valid point in stating that these groups are not the *same* as the inter-war fascists of the 20th century, however, they do capture the spirit of fascism and, as Copsey points out, seek to undermine democracy and modern libertarian ideas in favour of authoritarian, statist and ethno-centric norms. Using this analysis, I observe there to be

connections between the alt-right and fascism. The similarity under discussion is the hyper-critical worldview possessed by both which inform their desire for a utopia.

Stanley Payne places fascist negations as part of his definition. The negations include ideologies and groups that fascism simply hated. For example, fascists were anti-Marxist, anti-liberalist, anti-capitalist, anti-conservative and anti-individualist, among others. Since Gordin et al (2010) posit that “every utopia always comes with its implied dystopia” (p. 2), the fascist utopia depended on the existence of their understanding of a dystopia. Fascists believed their enemies were causing the decay of society and argued they were “tackling the underlying causes of the decay of healthy values through the creation of a radically new type of national order led by a heroic elite” (Griffin, 1991, p. 47). This is important to understand the violence, aggression and oppression of fascism. Fascism incorporated many criticisms and negations of the contemporary order. Another way to analyse the utopic outlook of fascism is to understand its negations. I argue that fascism’s utopia exists in opposition to its negations, for example, fascists rejected individualism, therefore, a utopia would be characterised by a community based political and social system. The idea of utopic and dystopic dichotomies is taken from the work of Enzo Traverso (2003), in which he explains modern anti-Semitism in a binary schema:

| Community | Society |
|-------------|---------------------|
| Aryans | Jews |
| Spirit | Abstract reason |
| Agriculture | Industry |
| Aristocracy | Bourgeoise |
| The soil | Rootlessness |
| Country | Town |
| Honour | A utilitarian ethic |
| Quality | Quantity |
| Concrete | Abstract |

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Wisdom | Intellectualism |
| Religion | Science |
| Myths, metaphysics | Calculating rationalism |
| Community | Individualism |
| People | Masses |
| Creation | Standardisation |
| Hero | Merchant |
| Nation | Citizenship |
| Nationalism | Cosmopolitanism |
| Traditional values | Abstract reason |

(Traverso, 2003., p. 135-6).

It is evident here that through the criticisms of the Jews, anti-Semites were able to find their opposing ideals. Nazism was critical of what it referred to as “Jewish values”. Cleansing these ‘values’ would allow a Nazi utopia to take form. Using Traverso’s understanding of binary dichotomies, an analysis of fascism’s negations will open a view of its utopic ideals. Nazism was able to find its identity through acknowledging and despising its opposite. Since Nazism adopted this form of anti-Semitism, it posited its utopic vision in opposition to what the Jews represented; this consequently, informed its general view of utopic negations. Firstly, it addresses the Aryan race; the Aryans are superior to the Jews and are connected to the land, to the people and to the soil, unlike the Jewish population that was rootless and cosmopolitan, believed by the Nazis to have no connection to the land they were on, consequently, disloyal to their ‘hosts’. According to Blamires (2006), “rootless persons were those regarded as lacking in connectedness to a specific nation” (p. 577) and these people were viewed as enemies. The Jews were people “who were present everywhere but who seemed to belong to nowhere” (ibid). The Germans contrastingly were rooted to the soil of the German land. This rootedness within the soil had a mystical quality, tying German blood to German soil. Myths, spirit and country have specific ideals attached to them. They

oppose rationalism, reason and the town because these lack 'spirit'; rationality and reason are cold bureaucratic machines without a human face. Fascists, contrastingly, wanted a society that was rich in spirit, with a human face (usually the leader). The town was rejected because fascists craved a nostalgia of the country which developed hard working men and was characterised by a local, communal population. The city, or town, removed humans from themselves, almost alienating them from the Nazi understanding of the 'human essence', which, similar to the Italian Fascists was related to a spirit of the nation. Through the dichotomy, stories connected to the grandeur of the past would replace abstract reason and science while the spirit of the individual would only be relevant to the nation. The dichotomy created by Traverso expresses an idealism sought by the Nazis. The idealism however, is found within identity and identity is linked to the opposition of the Jews. Through anti-Semitism, Nazism is able to find an identity through what it is opposed to, seeking a utopia which manifests itself in opposition to what it viewed as Jewish values.

The alt-right also incorporate many criticisms of contemporary society. They are racist (harshly anti-non-white), against the supposed feminisation of society, strongly opposed to political correctness and hate left-wing ideology. Arguing for an alt-right utopic vision is difficult because to analyse this, one must swim through the negativity and decipher whether it is purely critical-negative, if they are simply aggressive internet trolls or if there is a genuine vision for a transcendent society. Like fascism, the alt-right is critical of almost everything seen within mainstream society. They also view the current western world as a degradation of a glorious past; the 'downfall' has been committed by their enemies which have brought upon them multiculturalism and has resulted in the death of the white race and its dominance. Consequently, they seek to transcend these problems and take white countries back. Their cleansing is not violent by nature, rather it is characterised by an aggressive worldview which is allowed due to western ideas of freedom of speech. The argument for an alt-right utopia is complex and complicated but I do argue that it is there within their rhetoric; it is intrinsically linked to their negations of society.

What does an alt-right utopia look like?

Two aspects of alt-right utopianism will be addressed. These are a fundamentalist view of freedom which emphasises the ability to be openly racist and sexist. Second is the desire to reclaim 'white' countries to further increase white domination which is reminiscent of Italian Fascism's national rebirth regarding the Roman empire.

Within an alt-right utopian future, controversial, racist and insensitive remarks are coveted. However, this only applies for the views that the alt-right agree with. Under what the alt-right consider the politically correct crusade, free speech has been curbed and they are living in a hyper sensitive age. Their vision would encompass a dismantling of political correctness and allow a freer expression of racism, anti-Semitism and generally more vulgar attitudes and ideas such as referring to Africans as 'creatures' (Anglin, 2018). Again, this kind of liberty is only desired to allow their ideas to flow freely; those with contrasting ideas would not be afforded the same privilege (demonstrated by the constant trolling of those with contrasting ideas, and the term 'cuckservative', given to conservatives who do not share their views). Most of this sentiment stems from the anti-PC culture among the right-wing populace. It also seems to be taken from a fundamentalist approach to 'freedom of speech'. To demonstrate, Gary Graham writing for *Breitbart.com* addresses the issue of the right to hold certain beliefs. He states,

the owner of the Clippers basketball team is under siege for making racist remarks in private to his alleged mistress. All hell is breaking loose as the entire world apparently demanded he divest himself of the team and be banished from basketball for eternity. I can't wait to see the eBay reserve auction. But in a supposedly free country, aren't you afforded the prerogative to not like someone? For whatever reason? Apparently not, in this racially-hypersensitive world

(Graham, 2014).

These are the alt-right's utopic ideals of liberty. The utopia desired by the alt-right will most likely allow a society in which criticism, aggressive competition and hate will be free to be expressed. The purpose of this is to eliminate the soft, 'snowflake' and hyper-sensitive society. In this sense, the alt-right also engage in a cleansing mentality; but rather than desiring physical removal, it is manifested more in an aggression toward other views, deeming them insignificant to the societal narrative. The perspectives they oppose are expressed within the *Daily Stormer* website. Andrew Anglin writing in an article titled

‘Professional Overwatch Player Suspended and Fined for Telling Other Player ‘Suck a Fat Dick’ on Stream’. Anglin explains this as the following,

if the Jews and the faggots want to shove this analism stuff down people’s throats this hard, there is going to be a backlash. How many young guys into video games do you think give a shit about ‘homophobic insults’? All of this puritanical political correctness is boomerism, which has trickled down to Xers and Millennials, but Generation Z doesn’t give a shit. All they are doing by trying for force this PC tyranny on kids is stirring up hate and resentment for Jews, women, homosexuals, etc. They’re really doing our work for us

(Anglin, 2018).

In their ideal world, a free-for-all, aggressive, vulgar and generally rude society would occur. As ‘enemies’ are pushed out, members would find more individuals they agree with. However, I think there would be a constant search for an almost unachievable utopia as members argue within themselves, and this would result in anger and aggressiveness toward those members who dampen their extremist ideology. I think part of the ‘essence’ of the alt-right is the desire to critique and troll people for, as Hawley has stated, “just for sh**s and gigs” (Hawley, 2017, p. 141).

The utopia that the alt-right envision, in relation to race, is a domination of European ideals and control. To the alt-right, non-European nations are better under European control and they generally view non-white ethnic groups as inferior. For example, following Donald Trump referring to majority African and Latino countries as ‘shitholes’, alt-right member Richard Spencer demonstrated the alt-right view of race relations on Twitter. Spencer tweeted,

I must come to the defense of [#Haiti](#)! It's a potentially beautiful and productive country. The problem is that it's filled with shithole people. If the French dominated, they could make it great again. [#MakeHaitiGreatAgain](#)

(Spencer, 2018).

Spencer demonstrates a prioritisation of white cultures. Through the view of the alt-right, a future that is whiter is better because it desires a future that recognises European history as the dominant theme; even more than it is currently. The current argument within the alt-right is that contemporary society makes Europeans feel embarrassed or shameful about its history and argue that guilt has been a popular narrative. In an article titled ‘The Left

Alienates Whites From Our History And Culture', author Everitt Foster, writing for *altright.com* states,

in the words of George Santayana, those who do not study history are doomed to repeat it. And so we proceed throughout our schooling living under a blanket of fear. Fear not only for the immediate ramifications of making bad grades, but also a larger and less obvious fear, the fear of failing to become dutiful, loyal, and patriotic citizens. We're often told that whites have no culture

(Foster, 2017).

This supposed reality is a dystopia that requires radical change. In this dystopia, white culture is consistently under attack; the utopia would reawaken white superiority and make whites 'aware' of themselves. The idea of European culture as expressed by the alt-right is an intangible abstract idea based in racism. European culture and its apparent superiority is difficult to explain and express without referring to colonialism which is why it is difficult to define (especially since European cultures vary) but within the alt-right it is a dog whistle for racism regarding the white supremacist idea of non-white inferiority. I argue that the alt-right struggle to define what European culture is because they are aware of the differences between European cultures. For example, the resentment held by the Republic of Ireland against the English royal family highlights a contradiction in their belief in all white solidarity. European culture also becomes an abstract concept because the alt-right know the way they use it is racist; however, it is complex, because they cannot appear as a colonial resurgence (as was white supremacy previously). The alt-right must appear as the victims of modernity and multiculturalism. The way in which the alt-right view European culture is like the Nazis; superior and needed to be kept separate and pure. The alt-right however, have learnt from previous white supremacist movements and therefore hide behind a cloak of victimization and a false narrative of the attempts to destroy white culture. The narrative of European culture is linked to their superiority, and the victimhood expressed through a story of supposed modern white suppression. The calls to defend European culture is also steeped in a disengagement with history. Non-white nations have been negatively affected by colonialism which have repercussions to this day. However, the alt-right view these nations and argue that their condition is a result of themselves and their natural inability to work for themselves. This argument is posited alongside white

supremacy which then justifies the argument of the superiority of a European culture.

Foster explains,

Why would anyone believe whites have no culture? Oh because young white American and European children are taught from an early age that they do not. It's not uncommon to hear talk of black culture, Hispanics, or Asian culture, gay culture. But what if white or European culture is celebrated in the lands of our forefathers?

Saint Patrick's Day even comes under fire for being a parade for white pride, and in The Current Year, we cannot have white pride. Black pride, gay pride, and virtually every minority in America gets a history or heritage month. But if Europeans express pride in the accomplishments of our ancestors we are chastised and told we are immoral and blamed for the root of all the world's problems. Stripping us of our sense of history is imperative for the anti-whites

(Foster, 2017).

This is an interesting combination of a dystopia and a utopia. Foster is engaging in a conspiracy theory that has displayed itself previously, the white genocide theory, perpetrated by anti-white powers. There is a sense of a double standard felt by the alt-right; all cultures can claim pride in theirs, but not whites. This is the current dystopian reality that the alt-right feel they are living in, and there are plans to transcend this.

Foster makes references to European forefathers; he is detailing a strong sentiment within the alt-right. It is the connection to their ancestors and to the alt-right, their ancestors represent greatness. Conquering enemies, creating technology and developing and improving lands are what the alt-right harken back to when referring to European ancestry. The alt-right view, however, is also characterised by the prioritisation of this ancestry, and the demoting of others (as has been demonstrated within the nationalism section). However, the alt-right utopia is characterised by the rebirth of the glory of their ancestors; envisioning a time in history when European history and culture dominated more so than in the 21st century. To rectify this dystopia however, Foster suggests that

you must read, absorb, and understand the lives of those great men and women who created our civilization and who have passed on to their posterity the achievements that led us to conquer the seas, the skies, and will one day lead us to the stars

(Foster, 2017).

However, Foster also posits that "history and literature together are not sufficient to carry forth the European understanding of the world. To truly understand who you are, and

where you are going, you will need to learn the philosophy of your people” (Foster, 2017). The desired effect, is to make white people “feel a rebirth of pride not just in your family, but in your people” (Foster, 2017). The utopian vision encompasses the rebirth of the greatness of European culture. Within the new society European culture is everywhere and above others (even more than now). Other cultures are made to feel inferior, if they co-exist at all.

Utopia through a white ethno-state

I argue that the alt-right pursue utopia through a rejection of a current dystopia, characterised by the power of minorities and multiculturalism. The result is a ‘vision’ of a white ‘ethno-state’ and has been described by the alt-right as their ultimate goal; the ethno-state is the culmination of alt-right ideology. It is a utopic vision of a better world for members of the alt-right. Anglin explains that “the end goal of the movement is to establish pure White racial states in all formerly White countries” (Anglin, 2016). Additionally, Spencer explains that “the ethno-state is an ideal that would be a state for all people of the white race. It would be our homeland, our safe space” (The Guardian, 2017). The ethno-state is characterised by a desire to return to a past which was dominated by conservative ideals, strict gender roles and a powerful white majority. It is founded upon a racist ideology of separatism and supremacy. Since the alt-right are a group of ‘many people saying different things’, the ethno-state is desired in various forms. It is seen as either reclaiming white nations for white people and expelling or cleansing non-whites or as a society built upon the ‘western’ image, separating whites and non-whites, but prioritising the white population (much like an apartheid system).

The alt-right theorise the need for an ethno-state due to the decline of white European society and dominance. The alt-right argue that the European existence, culture, history and dominance is under threat, and a white ethno-state is required to preserve it. An emphasis on white genocide has already been discussed, so I will use it only in relevance to the ethno-state. As Spencer mentioned, white people need a ‘safe space’ to escape the attack against them. Lawrence Murray writing for *therightstuff.biz* explains in an article titled ‘Amerikaner free state’ that,

over the last few decades, the [US government](#) has facilitated White minoritization—there are less of us as a share of the population each year as a result of mass non-White immigration. The United States may have a population of over 300 million people, but Whites only number about 200 million, and most population growth since 1965 has come from immigration, an overwhelmingly non-white process

(Murray, 2016).

Within this excerpt, it is evident that the alt-right have developed a world-view in which the white race is under threat within the contemporary societal framework. Their belief is that through interaction with other races in forms of multiculturalism the white race loses. The growing emancipation of minority ethnic groups has allowed these groups to proclaim pride in their history and culture. Liberation movements have generally been viewed as progress toward equality and egalitarianism; however, to the alt-right, these are viewed as anti-white attacks to destroy Europeans. Writing for *altright.com*, Spencer argues that an ethno-state is essential for preserving and prioritising white culture, which he believes to be the right of every race. Spencer explains it as this,

nations must secure their existence and uniqueness and promote their own development and flourishing. The state is an existential entity, and, at its best, a physical manifestation of a people's being, order, and will to survive. Racially or ethnically defined states are legitimate and necessary

(Spencer, 2017).

Spencer believes that the white race cannot thrive within a state which requires various ethnic groups to co-exist under an egalitarian principle. Notable in Spencer's words is the striking resemblance to Mussolini. The spirit of Italian Fascism manages to weave itself into Spencer's concept of the state existing as a physical manifestation of the people. The statement carries with it the notion of cohesiveness of the people; there must be a connecting factor because difference breeds conflict. Mussolini states that "the nation is created by the state, which gives the people, conscious of their own moral unity, the will, and thereby an effective existence" (Mussolini, 1932). While Mussolini did not necessarily tie his understanding of nationhood to race, a spirit of collectivity is emphasised. For Spencer, a desirable future is characterised by an organic population with a collective ancestry, history and pride in this heritage. Spencer's reference to a "racially or ethnically defined state" (Spencer, 2017) is linked to a Nazi-style view of the world; it is in line with the spirit of Nazi organicism. Nazism made references to a biologically organic state which

reflected an inner identity through connectedness to the land and ancestry. The feeling of decay and superiority motivates both Nazism and the alt-right idea of an ethno-state. Spencer argues that the contemporary 'condition' of the white race is the decay of their superiority. White supremacy in terms of superiority and racism co-exist in the alt-right's perspective of an ethno-state; ethnic groups are inferior and consequently cannot co-exist.

The ethno-state is a mix of racism and historical nostalgia. Lawrence Murray writing for *therightstuff.biz* views the vision as what America used to be. In a lengthy article, Murray explains a separatist state, existing in the past, that should guide the alt-right's utopia. The ethno-state would reinstate policy that holds European culture as superior. An excerpt will demonstrate,

Why do we need a new state? Our original state on this continent was founded in 1776 on the basis of protecting 'the rights of Englishmen,' who were unable to secure these rights living as divided colonial subjects of the king of Britain. For better or worse, the colonists banded together and opted to sever their political ties with the European metropolis. But what they did not do was renounce their identity as a European people, nor did their new state seek to undo this. Among our earliest laws passed within a generation of independence were statutes limiting citizenship and immigration to 'free White persons of good character'. And so the Amerikaner was born, melding the liberty of the English, the strength of the Scots, the homesteading of the Germans, the luck of the Irish, the labor of the Italian, and so forth. A free White nation was brought forth into the world.

For generations, the Americans at home and abroad were understood to be a European people speaking a common English language. This identity formed the foundation of our Anglo-American culture until 1965, when the infamous (((Hart-Celler Act))) was passed by Congress. An act of racial treason against the historical American nation, the native-born English-speaking White majority. It opened the floodgates and continues to threaten us and our posterity with the loss of our homeland and culture

(Murray, 2016).

The alt-right feel that the ideals of a past America have been lost and through an ethno-state, the American-European culture can flourish again. Murray made references to the divisions of people under the king. Fascists similarly viewed class struggle as unnecessary divisions; by emphasising ethnicity, Nazis claimed this would negate conflict. Citizens would be tied together through rootedness of the land; connected through ancestry and a common spirit. An ethno-state is similar in spirit to the Nazi idea of a German pure state which emphasises the rootedness of the people to the land which deliberately removes

other impure ethnic groups. The ethno-state is open to Europeans of all 'denominations' but aggressively excludes all non-whites. The ethno-state however, is utopic due to its existence as a vision. In reality, it may be difficult to implement, and it appears as though the alt-right do not have a distinct plan to get there.

Regardless, the ethno-state is rooted in a nostalgic view of the past; a time that was dominated by Europeans and was much more racist. Marshall, writing for *altright.com* expresses it using the past model of Australia,

but, until recent decades, the island nation of Australia was pretty close to being a Western nationalist's paradise. Successive Prime Ministers (including the very first, Sir Edmund Barton) maintained a 'White Australia' immigration policy, effectively forming an ethnostate. This proves to the cucks that such a thing is possible in the modern age (for reviving the idea, Mr. Spencer, we salute you)

(Marshall, 2018).

Australia's past serves as a model to base the ethno-state upon. This aspect of utopia is reminiscent of fascism in the sense that a nation should exist as a separate state with borders, while providing a government which serves the purpose of creating a prosperous organic population. Australia (in the past specifically) is presented as a utopic white nation, providing financial opportunity, separation from non-whites and traditional gender roles; that is what an ethno-state is for the alt-right. What an alt-right ethno-state would look like is explicitly explained by Marshall:

culturally more British than Britain, more conservative than most other Western nations, Australia was where Europeans came to find success and freedom. Seemingly inexhaustible mines, booming businesses, a vastly productive manufacturing industry, and a prosperous agriculture, meant full employment and a flourishing economy. Australia was almost an autarky. Railways and steam boats transported people and goods across the massive nation. In this idyllic, historic Australia, the Aboriginal people mostly lived in peaceful, voluntary seclusion from the wider community, while able to reap the benefits of the European geopolitical paradigm (benefits such as the rule of law, Western technology, and an end to centuries of inter-tribal conflict). Men were real men, and women were raised to be ladies. For the entire nineteenth century and for most of the twentieth, this was the reality

(Marshall, 2018).

Demonstrations of the ethno-state as explained by members of the alt-right indicates a desire for a racist, gender traditional and white dominated reality. Spencer explains the overall idea of the alt-right regarding the ethno-state by stating,

the founding population of the United States was primarily Anglo-Saxon and Protestant. By the Great War, a coherent American nation emerged that was European and Christian. Other races inhabited the continent and were often set in conflict or subservience to Whites. Whites alone defined America as a European society and political order

(Spencer, 2017).

Spencer demonstrates the alt-right belief in white supremacy and white ownership of 'white countries'. The ethno-state, for the alt-right, would correct the contemporary liberal and left-leaning lies and re-establish a world in its rightful order; whites and men dominating the world and all others subservient or dead. To the alt-right, that is the natural order of the world; the ethno-state is the ultimate manifestation of their white male dominance.⁸

The ethno-state argument is important in the contemporary context because I believe the pursuit of it has become more aggressive under the presidency of Donald Trump. Trump's rhetoric, which has targeted African-Americans, Asians, Mexicans and generally non-whites, is coupled with the slogan 'make America great again'. These Trumpian elements have emboldened the alt-right and this is evidenced by Duke's words mentioned earlier. Trump's slogan implies a return to a racist period in which minorities were subjugated, separated and seen as inferior while their white counterparts were provided with financial and social privileges. I do think that Trump is referring to a past period of economic prosperity, less competition for jobs and US domination, perhaps a period resembling that of post WWII America. However, this period was assisted through the destruction of Europe and Japan in the East, racism and sexism which meant less job competition and a society which was dominated by male Europeans. It is difficult to reconcile the past with a prosperous period for everyone. This slogan, when coupled with racist rhetoric, expresses an idea that implies that a greater America encompasses a racist attitude toward non-whites and prioritises the white population. While it is difficult in a

⁸ See <http://www.returnofkings.com/143382/the-case-for-gendo-nationalism> for gendo-state.

pragmatic sense to achieve an ethno-state, genocide or mass immigrant removal, Trump has normalised the cleansing language of the alt-right. The empowerment received from Trump resulted in the Charlottesville Unite the Right rally. While it has been argued that this rally resulted in a dampening of alt-right power⁹, I argue that Trump's rhetoric has motivated a belief in the possibility of an ethno-state; Trump's anti-immigration rhetoric is only the beginning for them. Desires to increase whiteness, white 'values' and demonise or diminish ethnic minorities have become a normal rhetoric within the public discourse and not only within the alt-right. This is what has made Trump's role as the president dangerous for democracy, egalitarianism and 'western' society.

Conclusion

Utopianism is the most powerful element of the alt-right's extremism. Utopian elements within fascism has been explored previously by authors such as Stanley Payne and Roger Griffin. Consequently, it has been possible to locate revolutionary rhetoric and cleansing action within fascism to transcend their critical negations. By demonstrating how dystopia existed in their contemporary society, fascism and the alt-right preached a transcendence and promised the deliverance of a better world. This better world was and is promised for certain demographics. The idea of utopia has often been understood as an unrealistic dream, however, this has worked for the alt-right and fascism as their revolutionary rhetoric. Fascist supporters and alt-right members believe their groups are different; better than the others and the only ones to commit their revolutionary vision. The promise of an idealistic society feels like salvation for their supporters. This has not stopped arguments regarding the irrationality of fascists. The same argument has been, and is easily, attributed to the alt-right. However, the alt-right are similarly critical, cleansing in their language and in pursuit of Mannian transcendence to re-create society in the shape of a utopia. The alt-right incorporate a norm of heavily cleansing language to 'purify' society of the Left, feminists, Jews and ethnic minorities and have a revolutionary vision through their

⁹ See <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/09/alt-weakened-dead-charlottesville-170920081948414.html> and <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/09/alt-survive-divisions-backlash-170927150529249.html>.

ethno-state. These aspects combine to understand the alt-right as a series of fragmented critical negations tied together by a call for an ethno-state.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis has been to communicate the nature of the alt-right. This nature, as I have argued, is fascistic through the various themes that have been discussed within the chapters. A strong sense of their enemies is a common trait within fascism and the alt-right. More disturbingly however, these have been common features within the Trump candidacy and presidency which has resulted in the labelling of the media as corrupt enemies and a delegitimization of democratic institutions. The alt-right's rejection of feminism has resulted in a form of hyper-masculinity that is extremely sexist and values violence like fascist paramilitarism. Fascism was strongly hyper-masculine, favouring war as a constant and glorious activity for men; this has ideological approach has been adopted by the alt-right. Originating online, the alt-right has found itself coming from obscurity, fragmentation and uncertainty, to the mainstream because of Donald Trump's presidency. While they have gone through various stages of success and failure throughout this study, the alt-right have been emboldened by Trump and the group have felt it necessary to make its presence felt in the real world. This resulted in the ugly events of the Charlottesville Unite the Right rally. Hyper-nationalism, paramilitarist masculinity and charismatic leadership has resulted in a unique approach to pursuing utopia. This is seen in both fascism and the alt-right; their critical interpretations of dystopia have resulted in ideologies of transcending contemporary society. While fascists sought these through various forms of cleansing, the alt-right have emphasised this through a desire for a separatist white ethno-state. Utopia is one of the most significant aspects of fascism and the alt-right because for both groups as it was a driving factor for support and action. Believing in the possibility of their perfect world has been a destructive force of action, and I think the alt-right's utopian visions have been strengthened under Trump's presidency. Interrogation into Trumpian fascism has been addressed by concerned journalists and discussed by academics. However, this thesis has argued that fascism is more appropriately applied to the alt-right. Trump has however, reinforced and encouraged fascist ideological tropes. The difficulty of relating Trump to fascism is that he inspires it, without directly being a fascist. For the alt-right, strong leadership, racism, white supremacism and nationalistic rhetoric has combined with a charisma that the alt-right have not been able to ignore. Charismatic leadership, denial of the media and delegitimising of opposing views have led to a normalisation of scapegoating,

demonization, nationalist border control, violent rhetoric and racism. The alt-right, without a doubt, needs further research as their nature of fragmentation and internet activity means a constant shift in ideas and membership characterised by fragmentation. While they have a goal, members enjoy trolling and saying controversial statements because they can.

Locating an 'essence' of the alt-right is as difficult as it is to gain an understanding of the essence of fascism. This should not discourage future study of the alt-right however. While I argue the alt-right is fascist, it is understood through an ideal-typical model which has the possibility of missing important features. Additionally, understanding the alt-right as fascist does not mean that it exists exclusively as fascism. Since the group is so bizarre and amazingly modern, it is difficult to understand it through one lens. Regardless, their ideological racism and cleansing language does tie them to fascism and makes them a significant danger to modern politics. If Trump is to secure a second term in The White House, the alt-right, assisted by Trump, may change the social narrative of politics, nationalism and racism. Considering this, it is important to remember that inter-war fascists did not solidify power immediately. Paxton explains a long process of fascist inception, its rise to power, and exercising power. Lyttelton (1987), additionally explains the crisis of the liberal state, leading to Italian Fascism developing from 1919-1929 and Fascist rule from 1922-1943. Hitler, also had a complicated rise to power, coming to be Chancellor in 1933, eventually entering a world war and committing genocide. The emergence of fascism was not immediately met with mass approval; a slow complicated build of normalisation (assisted by social circumstances and a lack of democracy) led to one of the most destructive political forces in history. That is not to say that Trump and the alt-right represent this threat, however, the threat they pose to modern western democracy, a free press and liberal ideologies should be taken seriously.

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