



Copyright © 2022 *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*
All rights reserved.
ISSN: 1070-8286

Hegemony of the Right: A Prager University Case Study

Adrienne L. McCarthy

Kansas State University

Christopher G. Brewer

Kansas State University

Abstract

Wealthy conservative philanthropies have been investing in organizations to help shift policy in their favor. Using the pseudo-university "Prager University" as a case study, this ethnography investigated the link between wealthy conservative philanthropies and the production of ideology. This study found that PragerU has been successful in promoting a particular neo-conservative ideology that thrives on a foundation of neoliberalism. Additionally, it was found that these ideologies put forth by PragerU have similar, fundamental overlaps with extreme-right ideology. The context PragerU draws on mimics much of the extreme right-wing ideology in a way that is more readily digestible by 'normal' society and may ultimately make a person more receptive to extreme right-wing ideology.

Keywords: right-wing extremism, social media, ideology, Prager University, online ethnography

Introduction

The successful efforts by wealthy elites to shift public opinion and policy toward the right have been well documented (e.g., Exoo, 2010; Greenberg, 2008). With the recent emergence of far-right groups into the public sphere, there may be a connection between the normalization of right-wing ideology and the growth of right-wing extremism. It has been easy to blame Donald Trump, who promotes and is often a megaphone for extreme right-wing groups, as evidenced by (but not limited to) his appointment of Steve Bannon, the former executive of a right-wing extremist news source *Breitbart*, as the White House Chief Strategist (Anti-Defamation League, n.d.a). Rather than perceiving Trump as the primary factor for leading right-wing extremism into the public realm, it is argued here that the public realm had already taken a right-wing shift that allows the normalization of right-wing extremist values. In other words, Trump and groups like the Alt-Right are a symptom rather than a cause: they emerged from a background of over 15 years of rising hate and with the financial and institutional help of wealthy right-wing elites. A portion of the money contributing to shifting tides to the right has been allocated to funding conservative organizations with the imperative to inject right-wing ideology into the public sphere via social media platforms and educational institutions (Exoo, 2010; Greenberg, 2008; Neuman, 2008).

One of these organizations is Prager University (PragerU), a collective that tries to interject conservative ideology not only in the public realm using platforms like YouTube to provide "educational" videos, but also targets educational institutions by providing materials and resources for students to begin university chapters, self-educate using their content, partake in university student body politics, promote content in the classrooms, challenge instructors, and recruit other students (Prager U, 2019a, 2019b; Turning Point USA, 2018). Some groups like PragerU and Turning Point USA have been censored by college campuses and YouTube indicating a "toeing" into extremism. While there are no universally agreed-upon criteria that define far or extremist right-wing groups, these groups generally adhere to varying degrees of some if not all of the following ideologies: white supremacy, patriarchy, anti-Semitism, nationalism, xenophobia, and "traditional Christian" values (Berlet, 2013; Berlet & Vysotsky, 2006; Blee, 2007; Blee & Creasap, 2010; Carter, 2017; Lyons, 2017; Mudde, 2018; Nagle, 2017; Neiwert, 2017; Wendling, 2018). Thus, normalizing extreme right-wing ideology has important social and cultural implications in both culture, politics, crime, and crime control. While a single group such as PragerU cannot change the entire course of US politics and normative belief systems, a collective of organizations can pose a substantive threat especially if combined with wealthy financial supporters. Hence, PragerU is used here as a case study to understand how right-wing organizations are potentially normalizing right-wing values and how those values then compare with right-wing extremist groups. The following builds a generalized definition of right-wing and extremist right-wing ideology for the purposes of this paper from the respective collective literature such that they can be compared to PragerU, followed by the theoretical explanation of the power of ideology in its hegemonic form.

Literature Review

Right-wing extremism has traditionally been treated as external to or deviant from "normal" right-wing values. Hence, it would be expected that even right-wing organizations not perceived as extremists such as PragerU would condemn extremism; yet, despite this, they may share fundamental beliefs. There is no universally accepted definition of the right nor how to distinguish it from the extremist right. Blee and Creasap (2010) distinguish conservative movements from right-wing movements: conservative movements "support patriotism, free enterprise capitalism, and/or a traditional moral order...for which violence is not a frequent tactic or goal" and right-wing for "movements that focus specifically on race/ethnicity and/or that promote violence as a primary tactic or goal" (pp. 270-271). Mudde (2018), largely in congruence with Carter (2017),

argues that not all far-right groups are racists. Rather, extremist right-wing groups differ from “radical” right-wing groups by their core perceptions of democracy: the former reject democracy often in favor of authoritarianism, whereas the latter accept a selective democracy for nativist groups, often popular amongst right-wing populist groups. The variety of ideologies of right-wing groups that flavor the aforementioned categories have been well studied (Berlet, 2013; Berlet & Vysotsky, 2006; Blee, 2007; Blee & Creasap, 2010; Carter, 2017; Mudde, 2018). Much of the right-wing extremism literature focuses on the emergence of specific groups and the contexts from which they emerge, identifying extremist groups as isolated in their predominately online safe spaces in the contemporary world (Berlet, 2013; Futrell & Simi, 2004; Simi, 2013; Simi & Futrell, 2009). The contemporary movements of right-wing extremism, however, are diffuse and amorphous (Bhatt, 2020; Griffin, 2003; Lyons, 2017; Nagle, 2017; Neiwert, 2017; Wendling, 2018).

The Alt-Right was created through the online chat forum named 4chan, a public online forum that touches on any topic imaginable, but out of its political forum has blended various political opinions who have united in their discontent with the perceived increasing “liberal” world (Anglin, 2016; Nagle, 2017; Neiwert, 2017; Wendling, 2018). Their discontent is shared using dark humor and the exchange of “memes” and other cultural icons, which eventually lead to the awkward formation of the Alt-Right. Yet, there is no unified ideology. For example, while some reject feminism outright, others may begrudgingly agree with second-wave feminism. Likewise, while some believe in a white ethnostate, others may intentionally distance themselves from the idea of an ethnostate (Anglin, 2016; Wendling, 2018). In sum, while there is no universally agreed upon criteria that defines a far or extremist right-wing group, they tend to come in varying degrees of some if not all of the following ideologies: (1) white supremacism: the belief that those from European descent (particularly countries that housed Aryan races) are superior intellectually, morally, physically, and spiritually from others, often including anti-Semitism; (2) nationalism: the heightened sense of patriotism of their nation that support the State’s needs over others; (3) anti-multiculturalism: often if not blatantly white supremacist, many groups reject white supremacism but still condemn the blending of cultures and the hardening of borders, nationalism; (4) similarly, xenophobia, which is a fear of people perceived to be not native to one’s nation; (5) patriarchy: based in their understanding of traditional family organization, strict gender roles that place the men in a superior position are embraced; (6) homophobia: linked to their sense of traditional values and patriarchy, they perceive homophobia as sinful and a threat to these values; and (7) “traditional” values: a likening to their sense of the “good ol’ days” which often may value, for example, a nuclear family of Christian values (Berlet & Vysotsky, 2006, Berlet, 2013; Blee, 2007; Blee & Creasap, 2010; Carter, 2017; Lyons, 2017; Mudde, 2018; Nagle, 2017; Neiwert, 2017; Neuman, 2008; Wendling, 2018). These ideologies exist as a subset or complementary to their core perceptions of nativism, authoritarianism, and democracy (Mudde, 2018; Carter, 2017). This paper seeks to compare the fundamental ideologies of PragerU to those of right-wing extremist groups to see if PragerU may be assisting in normalizing extremist values.

What is often missed in the analyses of the Right is the potential relationship between conservative organizations and extremist groups and leaders such as Richard Spencer that are a part of a larger network of organizations such as the National Policy Institute (President), Collegiate Network, American Conservative Union, Heritage Foundation, Leadership Institute, Fund for American Studies, Traditionalist Youth Network, etc. (Anti-Defamation League, n.d.a; PragerU, n.d.; SPLC, 2018; Turning Point USA, 2018). Wealthy conservatives have dumped money into think tank organizations such as the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute, and the Manhattan Institute since the 1960s to spread ideology that supports free markets by government deregulation (Neuman, 2008). More recently, wealthy conservatives have also created pseudo educational institutions aimed at indoctrinating college youth such as Turning Point USA and Prager University who are interconnected with the same neoliberal think tank organizations listed above (Anti-Defamation League, n.d.b; PragerU, n.d.; SPLC, 2018; Turning Point USA, 2018). In turn, Turning Point USA has collaborated with neo-Nazi Richard Spencer and Prager University associates for their YouTube channel with

Breitbart News (PragerU, n.d.; SPLC, 2018; Anti-Defamation League, n.d.b). These efforts have infiltrated a variety of news sources that have successfully shifted attitudes of opinion leaders, public opinions, and attitudes of elites, and inevitably, “conservative social ideology was wed to neoliberal economic policy and the symbolic use of race, religion, and region to reorient politics” (Neuman, 2008, p. 566). These groups are cunning about maintaining a façade of espousing “normal” conservative beliefs. PragerU actively tries to interject conservative ideology not only in the public realm using platforms like YouTube to provide “educational” videos, but also targets educational institutions by providing materials and resources for students to begin university chapters, self-educate using their content, partake in university student body politics, promote content in the classrooms, challenge instructors, and recruit other students (PragerU, 2019; Turning Point USA, 2018).

These organizational tactics are a militant operation of historically Leftist tactics that use Gramscian organic intellectualism to create hegemony and strengthen resistance movements (Gramsci, 1999; Nagle, 2017). Gramsci saw that in the capitalist society, the dominating class (defined as the owners of the means of production) maintained a status quo by using the media and government apparatuses to promote ideologies that served their interests. In this regard, the dominating class also owns the *mental* means of production. The ideas and values put forth - anywhere from promoting capitalist consumption to more sinister ideas of equating crime with people of color and as a lower-class issue - become hegemonic or "common sense" as they cement into normalcy. The danger of "common sense" ideologies for Gramsci is that they prevent critical thinking and recognizing oppression, ergo obstructing the ability for the oppressed classes to form resistances and ultimately social change. To change "common sense" then to a new definition that is favorable for the working class, organized groups must be educated to become "organic intellectuals." Organic intellectuals are educated with enough information that a single leader for a formal organization is no longer needed as each individual in the organization is educated enough to be a leader themselves and thus have the capacity to carry forth movements independently. They in essence create solidarity through hegemony within their group and then actively try and recruit others to spread their hegemonic narrative against the power elites' "common sense" hegemony. It has already been identified that extremist groups such as the Alt-Right are actively using and are aware of Gramscian tactics (Nagle, 2017; Neiwert, 2017). It is not as plainly stated amongst organizations such as PragerU and TPUSA, however, their methods are clearly a mimicry of Gramscian tactics.

While clearly, a single group such as PragerU cannot change the entire course of US politics and normative belief systems, collective organizations as a whole can pose a substantive threat especially if combined with wealthy financial supporters. For decades now, conservative elites have been consolidating institutions and property while dumping money into organizations that support their ideologies. As Exoo (2010) delineates in his book, *The Pen and the Sword*, the ownership of media companies in the US has been merged into a mere five corporate entities. Philanthropy groups and think tanks such as the National Policy Institute and the Cato Institute are financed and/or operated by conservative corporate giants that churn out conservative data used nationally. PragerU itself is owned by Dennis Prager, a conservative, multi-millionaire radio talk show host who is affiliated with fossil fuel giants and who boasts a multi-million-dollar annual budget for just PragerU (IRS, 2016; Prager U, 2019b). It would thus not be surprising if organizations such as PragerU indeed have been successful at shifting the "common sense" to be more sympathetic to right-wing ideologies. The ultimate question, then, is how "far" right is the common-sense shift? To answer this, presented here is a case study to understand how right-wing organizations are potentially normalizing right-wing values and how those values then compare with right-wing extremist groups.

Methods

PragerU was used as a case study to identify ideologies that may be connecting mainstream conservatives to more extremist right-wing groups. Specifically, this study investigated PragerU's YouTube

channel as this was their main way to disseminate their content. This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the underlying ideologies that are driving PragerU's content?
2. Are these ideologies catalyzing the normalization of extreme right-wing values in the general public sphere?

PragerU is a non-profit entity that curates videos for its YouTube channel, commenting on a range of social, political, economic, and philosophical issues. According to their "About" page on their channel, PragerU is a:

resource promoting knowledge and clarity on life's biggest and most interesting topics. We gather some of the world's best thinkers and distill their best ideas into free, 5-minute videos on things ranging from history and economics to science and happiness.

At the time of writing, PragerU's channel has over 2.4 million subscribers with over 900,000,000 total views since its inception in 2009. Additionally, PragerU represents just one node within a virtual conservative web, subscribing to other like-minded channels such as the Rubin Report, Turning Point USA, Breitbart News, and The Daily Wire, among others. Lastly, it should be clarified that Prager "University" is strictly for marketing purposes and is neither an academic nor accredited institution. They are primarily funded by Dennis Prager, YouTube, memberships, and donors (PragerU, 2019b).

There exist several reasons why PragerU warrants further sociological investigation. According to survey data displayed in their annual reports (even though they do not reveal how this data was obtained), their videos seem to be influential to those who consume their videos (PragerU, 2019b). For example, 86% of watchers say that they referred to PragerU videos when engaged in political discussions with others. Likewise, 70% of viewers stated that PragerU had changed their minds on at least one subject. Lastly, the majority of watchers were under the age of 35, which is important considering that some of their videos encourage their audience, particularly college students, to use PragerU materials to engage and combat more "liberal" social, political, and economic topics addressed "in the classroom." Due to PragerU's influence and sizable organization, they could be a significant contributor to shifting hegemony towards the right. For instance, outside of the YouTube sphere, PragerU is one of the most followed *conservative* organizations, sitting at over 3.5 million Facebook followers at the time of writing (PragerU, 2019a).

Data Sampling and Collection Procedures

Since the purpose of this study is to identify the underlying values driving PragerU's content, the best approach was determined to be a qualitative one, specifically with the use of grounded theory techniques. The researchers watched the entire collection of PragerU's YouTube videos available at the time on a variety of social, economic, and political topics. On the final day of collection, 31 December 2018, there were 323 videos presented in their "5-minute" segments. It should be noted that since the collection period, their videos have exploded to roughly 900 items due to their merging with other YouTube channels such as the Candice Owens Show and Will Witt, which are not representative of PragerU's core messages.

For data collection, the researchers browsed PragerU's YouTube channel under their "Playlists" tab. Here, the researchers used third-party software to download all 323 videos from their channel. Their playlist topics were originally organized as follows: Welcome to PragerU ($n = 12$), Political Science ($n = 103$), History ($n = 42$), Life Studies ($n = 39$), Environmental Science ($n = 17$), Economics ($n = 54$), Foreign Affairs ($n = 27$), Race and Religion ($n = 24$), and Left and Right Differences ($n = 5$). After downloading all the videos from these

playlists, a descriptive spreadsheet was created noting several of the videos' characteristics, including the date it was posted, the title, the total number of views, the "Likes" and "Dislikes," the number of comments, and each video's description. Lastly, analytic memos were written to help keep track of our procedures, construct codes, find emerging patterns, and take note of themes that developed over the period of our analysis.

Data Analysis Procedures

The qualitative analytic software Atlas.ti 9 was used to perform a content analysis of PragerU videos merged with grounded theory procedures. Grounded theory is a strategic approach to data collection and analysis that allows researchers to develop a conceptual understanding of the material (Charmaz, 2014). Specifically, this multi-level coding approach emphasizes inductively developing themes and categories that emerge from the data, ultimately resulting in a comprehensive theoretical explanation unique to the analysis (Charmaz, 2014). In terms of the organization of the data, the researchers kept the videos under their original playlists established by PragerU. In terms of the analysis, however, the researchers did not let the playlists restrict our coding processes nor our analytic framing of those codes (i.e., we did not code strictly for content about "history" when watching PragerU's "History" playlist) as this would violate grounded theory logic. As stated by Charmaz (2014): "Make your codes fit the data you have rather than forcing the data to fit them" (p. 120).

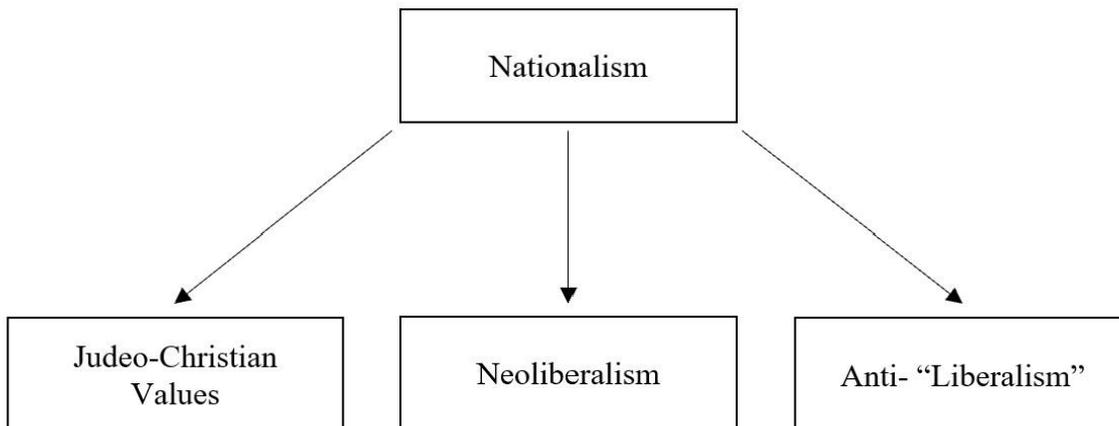
The researchers engaged in three cycles of coding: focused/open, axial, and theoretical/selective coding (Charmaz, 2014; Saldana, 2016; Strauss, 1987). This initial cycle of open coding involved watching each video and coding through what Saldana (2016) calls "Elemental Methods" (p. 67) These initial methods involved both Descriptive Coding (i.e., coding documents, videos, and other artifacts and taking a detailed inventory of each document's contents) and In Vivo Coding (i.e. recording exactly what a subject states/says as to attune oneself to the perspectives of your sample). Specifically, the initial coding was used for identifying any content along the right-wing ideological spectrum and was recorded accordingly. At the end of the first cycle of coding, and after the second wave, the total number of initial codes came to 71. Next, the second cycle of coding involved axial coding, which was used to review our existing codes wherein the researchers began to draw linkages between them. This stage involved taking the initial codes and clustering them into categories where themes began to emerge. With the last cycle of coding (i.e. theoretical coding), the researchers further refined the categories to draw out central or core themes that were identified from the data.

Results

As stated, the researchers used three cycles of coding to draw out the core themes of PragerU. After the end of the first cycle, 71 codes were compiled from the data. Once the second cycle was reached, the researchers grouped codes based on co-occurrences wherein the researchers arrived at 41 total categories. Once the third cycle of coding was complete, the categories that were compiled emerged as three meta-themes, or core messages, based on more than 300 PragerU videos, as shown in Figure 1.0: Judeo-Christian values, neoliberalism, and anti-"liberalism." These three meta-themes were housed under the larger umbrella of nationalism and often overlapped with each other.

Figure 1

Metathemes of PragerU via Thematic/Selective Coding



Themes

These primary values overlap considerably with extremist right-wing ideology: to wit, they emphasize nationalism embedded in "traditional" Christian values that reinforce strict gender roles, nuclear families, and heterosexuality. Whereas their sense of limited government would be an antithesis to fascist groups who desire over-reaching authoritarian states, many new movements seek to create a libertarian state that hardens borders and rejects multiculturalism. These concepts are elaborated on below.

Theme 1 - "Judeo-Christian" Values

A key theme evident in the data is an espoused adherence to "Judeo-Christian" values. As their "About Us" page claims, "we make exceptional video content that advances Judeo-Christian values" (PragerU, 2019a). PragerU doesn't appear to define what is meant by Judeo-Christian values. Instead, the YouTube channel appears to use the term to refer to a particularly regressive understanding of gender politics rooted in a binary view of gender rooted in biological differences and heteronormative, nuclear family structures. They lay the foundations of their values in the Ten Commandments where they argue that "without God, morals are just personal opinions. You do not really know what is right and wrong without God" (PragerU, 2014a) and "rationality by itself is not moral, you need belief to make it moral" (PragerU, 2013b). According to the co-occurring codes, their sense of Judeo-Christian values overlaps with their perspectives on gender and family, sexuality, and the protestant work ethic.

In terms of gender, PragerU embraces the hegemonic construction of binary gender and traditional nuclear families. Using Tammy Bruce, a former member of the board of directors of the National Organization for Women to explain gender, they make the argument that the feminist movement has eroded gender relationships, causing unnecessary strife by pushing the idea that women need to abandon family rearing roles (i.e., reject family for career) and become more masculine (i.e., desire more casual sex) to resolve gender

oppression (PragerU, 2014b). Similarly, Allie Stuckey argues that feminism has demonized masculinity and pushed men to become more feminine, which will ultimately create more violence as this will frustrate men's inherent qualities such as strength, assertiveness, etc. (PragerU, 2018f). Additionally, PragerU argues that there is a biological and indisputable gendered nature of men and women that, if tampered with, leads to poor behavior. As reiterated in "Men and the Power of the Visual" (PragerU, 2016d): women purportedly will never understand a man's desire for visual stimulation and thus should not be angry with their male partners for looking at other women because these are innate characteristics.

With regards to family, traditional gender roles influence family dynamics, which is expected to be a nuclear family. Not only do they attribute women's characteristics to motherhood (i.e. identifying women's "innate" traits as nurturing and caregivers), they also see the marital union between men and women as a core function in a moral, productive society. For example, they provide a fictional scenario where a juvenile delinquent (indicated by an anarchy shirt) has poor aspirations and thus suffers financially. Upon marrying a female partner and having a child, the juvenile's proper values are restored, and is no longer delinquent, working harder for the sake of his family. This theme is also reiterated in "Black Fathers Matter," justifying the abolishment of welfare as it enables women to be "married to the government," relieving "men of their traditional, moral, and financial responsibility" (PragerU, 2016b), thus cementing a binary family unit on which the economy and moral society rest upon. The Judeo-Christian values are also apparent in their construction of family based on their anti-abortion videos, which are not only immorally wrong to PragerU due to violations of their interpretations of the Ten Commandments, but because it also violates their sense of family, which is centered around reproduction.

Theme 2 - "Neoliberalism"

The neoliberal take on the state-economic relationship posits "the idea of a 'natural market' governed by an 'invisible hand'" (Neuman, 2008, p. 446) in which businesses maximize gains at every opportunity, spurring innovation and market efficiency. The State is perceived as "a distinct sphere with separate logic from that of the market, and it is outside the 'natural' processes of business development and private economic activity...its role is minimal" (Neuman, 2008, p. 446). These same core beliefs appear to resonate with PragerU. For example, they argue that the government should not compete with other institutions and only be large enough to ensure "absolute necessities such as national defense and to being the resource of last resort to help citizens" (PragerU, 2015b). The larger the government, they proffer, the greater the corruption, the greater decline in individual liberty (i.e. unrestricted abortions), taxes will increase leading to fewer hires and pushing business out of the country, debt will increase, and inevitably resulting in economic collapse. Specifically, PragerU uses the survival of small businesses as their justification behind reducing taxes as "... small business is the engine of the US economy" (PragerU, 2017b) who are "America's most important job creators" (PragerU, 2017b). Taxes are identified as the ball and chain of small business growth; small businesses are the rosy entrepreneurs who embody the bootstraps dream. Larger businesses are not necessarily seen as evil but are recognized as being able to "afford to comply with red tape in a way that small businesses just starting out cannot" (PragerU, 2017b). They refer to red tape in the greater context of taxes, but "red tape" typically refers to perceived wasteful bureaucratic procedures as a byproduct of regulation. Interestingly, PragerU conflates these ideas together even though taxes are not regulations themselves. This indicates a misunderstanding of government behavior or perhaps an intentional conflating of regulations with the government to further their argument that big government impedes small businesses. The protection of small businesses is crucial for PragerU to remain ideologically consistent as they justify neoliberal principles on the Calvinist protestant spirit of independent hard workers to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps" through such small business channels. Notably, however, they flagrantly neglect the greater dangers that large business competitors hold for small businesses.

A small government also means a reduction—or in PragerU's case, a rejection—of the welfare state. Removing welfare services means reducing "unnecessary" State spending ergo "fixing" the economy. Medicare, Medicaid, social security, and notably "ObamaCare" during the time of Obama's presidency, are a central target for reducing spending on "unnecessary" expenditures (PragerU, 2014c). Taxing the wealthy to address debt and pay for these programs for PragerU is not an option as they argue that there is not enough money and that the wealthy worked hard for their money. This was captured most readily in their video on three fictional brothers: each brother and their spouse moved into a cul-de-sac and represented the lower, middle, and upper class (PragerU, 2014d). When it came time to discuss improvements to their cul-de-sac, the lower-class brother was portrayed as the victimized liberal by unfairly asking for the richest brother to pay the majority, the middle brother to pay little, and himself to contribute none to the improvements because of their discrepancy in income. The poorest brother is portrayed as absurd as they had not worked hard and saved money like his richer brother. Here the protestant ethic is intertwined with economic policy.

Neoliberalism is thus more than just an economic philosophy; it is also a rationality that leaks into all aspects of society that problems will be resolved if operated at optimal "market efficiency." PragerU was very much characterized by this kind of economic rationality by explaining away social problems as individual losses or larger economic and political issues as a product of too much government interference. A consistent theme amongst PragerU is the notion to explain away social issues by individual failures. For PragerU, a prominent value in the US is the "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" mentality—that if you work hard enough, you will overcome all obstacles from racism to poverty and become successful. This perspective is central to the protestant work ethic, a foundational zeitgeist of capitalism, which is necessary for workers to adhere to for the rationality of capitalism and, in particular, a neoliberalist take on capitalism. In other words, free-market capitalism, if left alone, will allow individual workers to achieve the American Dream if they are disciplined and work hard enough. This becomes particularly evident in PragerU's complaints that liberals are too soft and sensitive; their "softness" erodes the socialization of disciplined self-sufficiency that is central to the protestant work ethic. Such economic embeddedness in institutions has been theorized as Institutional Anomie Theory by Messner and Rosenfeld (1994), who argue that economic institutions dominate all other institutions, creating an institutional manifold that is economically centralized. All institutions then become measured by material success (per the American Dream) that results in a devaluation of anything not related to the production of profits, individualism, measures success and efficacy by economic criteria, and applies economic logic to all problems/situations. For example, PragerU complains in "Trophies are for Winning" (PragerU, 2018h) that liberal teachers give out trophies and awards readily for just trying rather than excellence at a competition, which creates a culture of victimization. Their take on "victim mentality" is that opportunity is given to people rather than worked hard for, which stands diametrically to the protestant work ethic. Instead, PragerU offers that individuals should be rewarded based on how hard they worked, thereby assuming everyone begins on an equal playing field—the same mentality that lays the foundation for colorblindness. For example, in a video narrated by a Black female speaker, Candace Owens, they argue that her parents "didn't need to use the 'Black card' and neither did she due to proper discipline" (PragerU, 2018g). While they still faced difficulties growing up, they claim that they did not dissolve these issues by claiming victimhood but through perseverance and hard work. Similarly, the "welfare queen" trope of the poor (and often Black) woman overly dependent on the state is a victim of their laziness, ergo PragerU argues for the elimination of systems that support dependency.

Theme 3 - *Anti- "Liberalism"*

Anti-left-wing sentiments were a prolific theme. The codes were predominately identified as "anti-x" due to the tendency for PragerU to set themselves as diametrically opposed to liberalism and leftists that they conflate. Hence, the broader theme of anti-left-wing sentiments included the following coded perspectives: anti-

feminism, anti-big government (including welfare), anti-socialism/communism, anti-Black Lives Matter, anti-European Union, anti-Obama, anti-social sciences, anti-liberal media, and anti-union. Due to their Manichaeic polemics, anti-liberal/leftist themes coincided with pro-conservative ideals, which included the coded themes of traditional gender/sex roles, pro-Judeo-Christian values, pro-neoliberalism, pro-neoliberalist ideology, colorblindness, and pro-Brexit. These grievances are accompanied by an explanation that PragerU does not have a problem against “liberals,” per se, but “leftists.” Despite often denouncing liberalism, they do try to appeal to conservative liberals by specifying that a certain definition of liberalism is acceptable. For example, in “Left or Liberal” (PragerU, 2018e), Dennis Prager delineates the ideological differences between “Left” and “Liberal” by differentiating their views on race, capitalism, nationalism, original intents of the founding fathers, free speech, and Western Civilization. Liberals, they argue, are colorblind, pro-capitalist, pro-government, patriotic, supportive of free enterprise and free speech, and celebrate the achievements of the Western, *Christian* civilization. The Left, on the other hand, supports “racial segregation” (e.g., all Black dorms, separate Black graduation ceremonies), oppose capitalism with their advocacy of socialism, supports divisive identity politics, suppresses free speech, and sees the US as racist, sexist, homophobic, and xenophobic, purporting that Western civilization is a euphemism for white supremacy.

In terms of the entertainment industry, PragerU is steadfast in their beliefs that both Hollywood and the media broadly has become highly skewed to “leftist” politics. In “Hollywood Wants Your Money... and Your Mind,” Ben Shapiro states: “... most Americans don’t think about the toxic politics in the television they watch. But those who create that content do. They spin out hour after hour of slickly produced, left-wing propaganda, and they give themselves awards for doing it...” (PragerU, 2017d). Shapiro claims that not only is Hollywood for entertainment, but they tend to accept more “marginal” ideas such as abortion, same-sex marriage, and transgender persons, among others. News organizations, they claim, operate under a similar framework. For example, they assert that certain news outlets, such as CNN, push “conspiracies” such as the Trump-Russia collusion to interfere with the 2016 election to increase their ratings while under additional financial pressure to do so. These stories, as described in their video, “What is Fake News,” show how “mainstream American news is all fake” (PragerU, 2017g). They claim that overall trust in the press has eroded, and the news industry has become politically polarized (to the left) where standards have drastically declined.

Likewise, in the classroom (according to PragerU), modern universities are cesspools of left-wing indoctrination: “Today’s higher education is about teaching you what a terrible country America is, social activism, and binge drinking” (PragerU, 2015a). In another video, Jordan Peterson states that tax-payers are currently funding “dangerous” people who are indoctrinating college students with “resentment-ridden ideology” and “undermining Western civilization as corrupt, oppressive, and patriarchal” (PragerU, 2018b). Furthermore, the intersectional perspective pushed forth by liberal professors is teaching students that the “more membership you can claim in ‘oppressed’ groups, the more aggrieved you are, and the higher you rank” in the “oppression Olympics” (PragerU, 2018i). PragerU believes that this intersectional “leftist orthodoxy” is merely a form of competitive “oppression Olympics” where judgment is conferred based on one’s *group* identity instead of *individual* opinion. Within this same victimhood context, PragerU also claims that there is no evidence that sexual violence is a problem on college campuses while concurrently denying the existence of rape culture. According to Charlie Kirk, racial, religious, and/or gender diversity is not a problem; rather, diversity of *thought* has become non-existent on college campuses, labeling them as the “least diverse place in America,” giving them almost a “cult”-like status (PragerU, 2017e).

Umbrella theme - Nationalism

The world is on fire. The Middle East is being torn up by war and terrorism...Syria looks like the disaster of a generation. Iran seeks to dominate the region... A resurgent Russia has seized Ukrainian

territory by force of arms. China is flexing its muscles against its neighbors...There is only one nation in the world capable of putting out these fires. That nation is, of course, the United States. (PragerU, 2017h)

Nationalism broadly speaking is defined as “a mode of discourse, a movement, and an emotional sentiment about the nation” (Neuman, 2008, p. 596). The two specific forms of political and cultural nationalism, however, are more relevant for political groups. Political nationalism “defends national interests and strengthens institutions of national sovereignty, including the military” (Neuman, 2008, p. 598), and cultural nationalism “defends and strengthens the cultural identity and institutions of a nation” (Neuman, 2008, p. 593). Political nationalist groups promote State interests often framed with a strong sense of patriotism. For PragerU, the US, guided by Hamilton, was organized around the idea of a (unified) nationalist state rather than warring independent states (PragerU, 2018c). PragerU regularly promotes its content across categories against a background of patriotic themes, whether literally with an American flag (PragerU, 2016c) or by framing their reasoning within a nationalistic framework (i.e. we are to support Israel because they share the *American* values, which are an expression of freedom and democracy) (PragerU, 2013a). Despite advocating for a small government, PragerU's political nationalism is apparent in its support of many State functions, particularly in the realm of policing and international relationships as harbingers of peace and democracy. Their videos related to policing are generally themed around the defense of policing in response to the “liberal” accusation of racist and brutal policing tactics (PragerU, 2016a, 2017c, 2018a). Not coincidentally, they use Black former sheriff David Clarke to explain policing behavior as non-racist, emphasizing the danger that officers face to maintain peace and order (PragerU 2016a, 2018a). Rather than the State being problematic, the problem is returned to the individual as they argue that the individual will be safe so long as they follow orders.

Clearly, in support of conservative policing methods, PragerU goes so far as to advocate for a broken windows approach to international relations, placing the United States as the central state to maintain peace and order globally (PragerU, 2017h). Not only is the US placed as a center for global social control, but they are also identified as the center of importance within the global economic sphere such that other countries' success is dependent on their ability to sell to the US (PragerU, 2015d). Yet, despite their wealthy success, the US has involved itself in wars and humanitarian crises purportedly without much to gain economically and thus should keep separate from the socialism of Europe and “victim status” instead of being independent and self-sufficient. If the US follows in their footsteps and fails, then freedom for the rest of the world will be threatened (PragerU, 2015d). America as a State is thus portrayed as the epicenter of Judeo-Christian values and free-market capitalism. The idea that the US is a savior figure and an icon of morality in the global context is a perpetual theme (PragerU, 2015c).

Thus, PragerU nationalism is also a cultural nationalism where patriotism of the state is truly a *Judeo-Christian moral* State preserved only by conservative values, reflecting a cultural nationalism as well. They go so far as to claim that morality is not seen as possible without Judeo-Christian values; otherwise, morals would just be “personal opinion” (PragerU, 2014a). The aforementioned core themes of anti-“liberalism,” neoliberalism, and Judeo-Christian values are often rationalized through a meta-theme of patriotism and nationalism. Their perspectives on Judeo-Christian values, small government, and free-market capitalism are argued not as something derived from political perspectives but rather as a non-negotiable and obvious value of the founding fathers, ergo the explanatory reasons as to why America is so exceptional. PragerU links Judeo-Christian values to the values of the founding fathers that cemented morality and values within the constitution (PragerU, 2016g, 2017f). For example, one of the three pillars of American values that make the US “exceptional” is “in God we Trust. America is founded on the notion that God is the source of values” (PragerU, 2013c). These values, of course, are the guiding moral character that has set the US on the trajectory to its exceptional global success (PragerU, 2016g). Because the American and Judeo-Christian values are seen as inseparable, embracing Judeo-Christian values indicates that you support your country, and to reject them

implies your rejection of US values. The protestant work ethic ties religious values with capitalism; thus, they see this as a primary reason why the US has excelled as discussed previously. For PragerU, the notion that capitalism breeds selfishness has been intentionally reversed as they argue that free-market capitalism creates moral choices whereas other systems, such as socialism, breed laziness (which ultimately makes one selfish by not contributing to society), which is an antithesis to the protestant work ethic and "good Judeo-Christian values" (PragerU, 2016e).

What makes PragerU's cultural nationalism particularly appealing is its utilization of war motifs to motivate individuals. Conservative foreign or domestic policies are not just a patriotic, economic choice, it is the *moral* choice to which one has a moral imperative to fulfill. For example:

Conservative values based on the Judeo-Christian worldview that has made America great are under attack like never before by the hostile, anti-American, anti-god, forces on the Left... We can't afford to sit back and watch as our country slips away, we have to fight and we need to fight on the front lines where the war is in the minds of young people on the new battlefield of social media (PragerU, 2016f)

Recall that they situate themselves in a polemic opposite to what they see as leftist values (often conflated with liberalism), and thus to be Leftist is to be *un-American, anti-Christian*, and immoral. They identify the Left as not just an oppositional force that needs to be addressed, but actively fought against in a battle of good versus evil going so far as to identify the Left as "a nonviolent Taliban...blowing up America and its history" (PragerU, 2016c).

Discussion

Initially, this article was inspired by the fact that Donald Trump and the Alt-Right did not appear out of a vacuum: they emerged from a background of over 15 years of rising hate and with the financial and institutional help of wealthy right-wing elites. A portion of the money contributing to shifting tides to the right has been allocated to funding conservative organizations such as PragerU who have an imperative to inject rightwing ideology into the public sphere via social media platforms and educational institutions. These efforts assist in shifting hegemonic "common sense" norms towards the right, making right-wing "extremism" appear not so extreme anymore, hence the proliferation of extremist right-wing ideology in the public sphere. Prager University (PragerU) was used here as a case study to understand how right-wing organizations are potentially normalizing right-wing values and how those values then compare with right-wing extremist groups. Indeed, this study found that fundamental ideologies of PragerU overlap with extremist right-wing ideologies. The ideologies extracted from the videos capture PragerU as embracing small government, laissez-faire capitalism (or neoliberalism), Judeo-Christian values, traditional families and gender/sex roles, anti-immigration/globalism/xenophobia, patriotism, and anti-socialism/communism. Their sense of nationalism is fundamentally linked to Judeo-Christian values and capitalism.

There is, however, one major caveat. Traditionally, neoliberalism and nationalism are incompatible concepts as the former generally advocates for a small state and open borders to facilitate free-market capitalism (Harmes, 2012). PragerU also advocates for a small government with regard to economic policy; however, they advocate for an authoritarian-style state concerning policing and international affairs. This is largely resolved by placing PragerU as a neoconservative group. Neoconservatives embrace free-market economic policy but tend to endorse a strong and authoritarian State (Harmes, 2012). It cannot be said with complete certainty that PragerU is one or the other without more information. It is clear from PragerU's market ideology above that neoliberal tendencies exist and they do actively work with neoliberal organizations such as the Cato Institute

and the American Enterprise Institute, but ultimately, from these authors, the distinction between the two may be a moot point.

Both Adam Harmes (2012) and Wendy Brown (2006) recognize that the relationship between neoconservatism and neoliberalism is very important. Brown (2006) argues that the neoliberal creates a certain neoliberal nationalism where a neoliberal state pursues a tendency to advocate for a “fiscal and regulatory sovereignty within the context of international capital mobility” (p. 61). These strategic tendencies make a nation competitive in the global markets, encouraging a latent nationalism to form. The burgeoning sense of nationalism and economic dominance is thus not only completely compatible with neoconservatism, but the market subjugation of the state is also a necessary step for it to exist and successfully compete. This then lays the platform for neoconservatives to imbue nationalism with religious and patriotic overtones that promote their agenda (Brown, 2006). According to Brown (2006), this is a kind of authoritarian state nationalism: one that promotes intervention combined with the neoliberal tendency to shave domestic institutions and state policy down to economic market production, thereby creating de-democratizing forces in the US. It is from these conditions that authoritarian governance becomes normalized and opens opportunities for authoritarian groups and beliefs to further develop.

It is thus not surprising that extreme right-wing groups may be flourishing from the efforts of neoconservative and neoliberal groups alike. While extreme right-wing groups are not uniform and tend to have a much greater variety of beliefs, they do generally revolve around a sense of nationalism. This is particularly important in the production of hegemony as many who identify strongly with their country will feel obligated to endorse other seemingly natural ideologies that are attached to the sense of nationalism. For PragerU, nationalism is embedded in their sense of religion and economic theory; likewise, many white supremacist groups, for example, embed their sense of nationality with Christian fundamentalism and race (Berlet & Vysotsky, 2006). Failing to identify with these co-occurring ideologies will jeopardize one's nationalism. Both extremist right-wing groups and PragerU share a general sense of anti-government sentiment (except the authoritarian Nazis who embrace a strong state of their creation) and anti-leftist economic theory of communism and often socialism as well. In the US in particular, "traditional values" of male and female differences/roles, nuclear family (e.g., heterosexual, two-married parent household with children), and a protestant ethic entwined with various Christian religious forms are strongly held amongst white nationalist groups and PragerU (Berlet & Vysotsky, 2006; Kimmel & Ferber, 2000). Additionally, PragerU espouses a sense of xenophobia in the regard that they advocate against multiculturalism and for nation-states to retain their own "traditional" values and cultures that would otherwise be lost. For example, PragerU advocates that building walls and drawing boundaries are “natural” as people are more loyal to people like themselves (PragerU, 2018j). They proffer that not all cultures are equal, placing the Judeo-Christian western culture as the greatest and thus we are morally obligated to preserve it (PragerU, 2017a). Concerning immigration, they argue that immigrants should be kept out by building a wall, increasing security, and allowing current immigrants to remain residing as non-citizens until they eventually die out (PragerU, 2018d). By closing borders and retaining a "monocultural" society, values are retained as well as providing protection against people who take advantage of taxpayers and eroding US society. Ultimately, they advocate for using the State to carry out their political agendas that may inevitably exclude anyone who does not meet their understanding of national identity.

PragerU's efforts are mobilized by a symbolic war—a consistent war motif embedded in their videos, particularly their recruitment videos. They often reference that there is a war of ideas that conservatives are losing and must battle back to preserve morality and America (see quotes in the nationalist section above). The framing of their arguments as a war of good versus evil and of an oncoming apocalypse that will be a product of a conspiracy (i.e. the “liberal” domination of the US leading to the degradation of the US and ultimate disruption of the world in general) are very familiar. The same three frames are used amongst white supremacist groups as documented by Benford and Snow (2000), Berlet and Vysotsky (2006), and Vysotksy

and McCarthy (2016). Combined with the strong sense of nationalism, these frames are used as a technique to embolden and rally individuals towards a "cause" on behalf of their country and moral rights, creating an effective sense of belonging and worth which is effective for indoctrinating new members or maintaining current members. Indeed, PragerU boasts of changing 70% of their audiences' minds, directly influencing 17% of their audiences' behaviors, and where 85% of them have mentioned PragerU in their ideological discussions (PragerU, 2019a). This is consistent with the general observation of a rise in both conservative and right-wing ideology in the current political climate of the US.

Thus far, it has been described how PragerU has fundamental overlapping ideologies to the extreme right. The content they draw on not only mimics much of the extreme right-wing ideology in a way that is more readily digestible by "normal" society that may ultimately make a person more receptive to extreme right-wing ideology but their content is also linked to extremist groups (i.e. "alt-lite" Breitbart). They employ several tactics to persuade consumers that their material is legitimate: they use selective speakers (i.e. a black police officer to discuss police brutality), avoid slurs and epitaphs, use short videos that require less commitment from the viewer and thus are more likely to be watched, and spend \$25,000-\$30,000 to produce high-quality videos (PragerU, 2017). These efforts combine in a way that reflects "information laundering" (Klein, 2012) and persuasion techniques used on online platforms by white supremacists who similarly hide racist propaganda behind more politically correct wording and professional-looking websites (Klein, 2012; Weatherby & Scoggins, 2005). The success of such laundering techniques may be also due to their tendency to create fear and othering, creating a sense of what Jock Young (2007) calls "vertigo." Vertigo "is the malaise of late modernity: a sense of insecurity of insubstantiality, and of uncertainty, a whiff of chaos and a fear of falling" (Young, 2007, p. 12), creating disembeddedness at both the societal and individual level. Vertigo stems from economic insecurities (i.e. decline of the primary labor market) and insecurities of one's position in the greater social hierarchy (disturbances in the status quo), which may lead to individuals grasping for stability:

The disembeddedness of late modern society, the shock of pluralism, and the fear of the ever possible loss of status or downward mobility generate a vertigo of insecurity. One solution to such a loss of firm identity is nationalism, fundamentalism, racism (and for men, hypermasculinity) - that is to construct...a fixed identity based on the notion of a cultural essence which is reaffirmed, rediscovered and elaborated upon" (Young, 2007, p. 141).

It is no surprise then, that much of PragerU focuses on the demonization of what they see as leftist politics that threaten to change the status quo, whether that be increased taxes or a Black president. People will create folk devils in this process, creating an "us versus them" dichotomy to rally disembedded bodies to "their side." PragerU thus creates or exacerbates such insecurities and then provides the individual with security in their sense of nationalism, fundamentalism, etc. From this research, "their side" includes the aforementioned ideologies, which become "laundered" or what Adam Klein (2002) calls "information laundering." Information laundering refers to persuasion techniques used on online platforms by white supremacists who similarly hide racist propaganda behind more politically correct wording and professional-looking websites (Klein, 2012; Weatherby & Scoggins, 2005). The same techniques, both rhetorical and visual, are employed by PragerU and are discussed in further detail later in the discussion.

This demonstrates that collective monetary efforts by wealthy conservative giants have an effect on creating content that is effective in spreading ideology, or rather, laundering extreme right-wing ideology. It is thus not too much of a leap to think it is plausible that groups like PragerU may be contributing to "common sense" hegemony collectively, thereby assisting in the increase in hate crimes and extremism. In a Gramscian sense, the creation of "common sense" hegemony is particularly dangerous because it is difficult to change. Due to its "common sense" nature, people rarely question ideology if not actively resist changes to such ideology,

thus making social change difficult. Further research, however, would be necessary to determine the extent of influence on hegemony. Regardless of the extent that which greater hegemony is affected, perpetuating such ideologies is dangerous. Not only does it permit right-wing extremists to persist, but it may also permit violence. As Jock Young (2007) argues, these kinds of "othering" rhetorical techniques combined in a grander narrative of war and peace can permit violence:

to create a 'good enemy,' we must be able to convince ourselves that (1) they are the cause of a large part of our problems; (2) they are essentially different from us - inherently evil, intrinsically wicked, etc. This process of resentment and dehumanisation allows us to separate them off from the rest of humanity (us) but it also permits us to harden ourselves to deal with the special instance of a threat. We can act *temporarily* outside of our human instincts because we are dealing with those who are acting inhumanely. (p. 35-36)

Future research should test this hypothesis and the extent of hegemonic influence further by investigating other similar organizations like Turning Point USA. Additionally, one could also use software to follow social media users on what pages, accounts, and other media by certain organizations and groups they go to from these borderline groups to determine if there is a flow of users from the "normative" realm to extremism through the gateways. These collective efforts strengthen the limitations of this research by further testing the extent of ideological influence as well as testing our conclusions here. While employing grounded theory negates many of the common issues of ethnography as it relies on the data to inform the theory, the greatest foreseeable limitation of this study is human error in the coding process. Since the initial codes were coded "in vivo" or as close to the original content as possible to preserve its intended meaning, this bias has been reduced as much as possible. Continuous, collaborative research will inherently cross-examine the conclusions made in this research. Other foreseeable limitations include the fact that PragerU has continued to produce and collaborate with other content producers and thus new themes and codes may have developed since the time of this study. Finally, two videos were removed/privatized during the analysis that the authors could not review but will not likely affect the results and interpretation of this study.

References

- Anglin, A. (2016). *A normies guide to the Alt-Right*. Andrew Anglin.
- Anti-Defamation League. (n.d.a). *Steve Bannon: Five things to know*. ADL.
<https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/steve-bannon-five-things-to-know>
- Anti-Defamation League. (n.d.b). *Turning Point USA*. ADL.
<https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/turning-point-usa>
- Benford, R. D., & Snow, D. A. (2000). Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26, 611–639.
- Berlet, C. (2013). From Tea Parties to militias. In S.V. Mering & T.W. Mccarty (Eds.), *Right wing radicalism today: Perspectives from Europe and the US* (pp. 124-143). Routledge.
- Berlet, C., & Vysotsky, S. (2006). Overview of U.S. White Supremacist groups. *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 34, 11-48.
- Bhatt, C. (2020). White extinction: Metaphysical elements of contemporary western fascism. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 0(0), 1-26.
- Blee, K. M. (2007). Ethnographies of the far right. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 36(2), 119-128.
- Blee, K. M., & Creasap, K. A. (2010). Conservative and right-wing movements. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 36, 269-286.
- Brown, W. (2006). American nightmare: Neoliberalism, neoconservatism, and de-democratization. *Political Theory*, 34(6), 690-714.
- Carter, E. (2017). Party ideology. In C. Mudde (Eds.), *The populist Radical Right: A Reader* (pp. 28-67). Routledge.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory*. SAGE.
- Ekman, M. (2014). The dark side of online activism: Swedish right-wing extremist video Activism on YouTube. *Media and Civic Engagement*, 30(56), 79-99.
- Exoo, C. (2010). *The pen and the sword: Press, war, and terror in the 21st century*. SAGE.
- Futrell, R., & Simi, P. (2004). Free spaces, collective identity, and the persistence of U.S. White power activism. *Social Problems*, 51, 16–42.
- Gramsci, A (1999) *The Antonio Gramsci reader: Selected writings, 1916-1935* (D. Forgacs, Ed.). New York University Press Classics.
- Greenberg, D. (2008). The idea of “the liberal media” and its roots in the civil rights movement. *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics and Culture*, 1(2), 167-186.
- Griffin, R. (2003). From slime mould to rhizome: An introduction to the groupuscule right. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 37(1), 27-50.
- Harmes, A. (2012). The rise of neoliberal nationalism. *Review of International Political Economy*, 19(1), 59-86.
- IRS. (2016). Prager University Foundation IRS Form 990 - Return of organization exempt from income tax.
<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/271763901/201703199349312220/IRS990>
- Kimmel, M., & Ferber, A. L. (2000). ‘White men are this nation’: Right-wing militias and the restoration of rural American masculinity. *Rural Sociology*, 65, 582-604.
- Klein, A. (2012). Slipping racism into the mainstream: A theory of information laundering. *Communication Theory*, 22, 427-448.
- Lyons, M. N. (2017). *Ctrl-alt-delete: The origins and ideology of the alternative*. Political Research Associates.
- Messner, S., Rosenfeld, R. (1994). *Crime and the American Dream*. Wadsworth.
- Mudde, C. (2018). *The far right in America*. Routledge Focus.
- Nagle, A. (2017). *Kill All Normies*. Zero Books.
- Neiwert, D. A. (2017). *Alt-America: The rise of the radical right in the age of Trump*. Verso.

- Neuman, W. L. (2008). *Power, state, and society: An introduction to political sociology*. Waveland Press.
- PragerU. (n.d). PragerU international subscriptions. YouTube.
<https://www.youtube.com/c/prageruniversity/channels>
- PragerU. (2017). *Frequently asked questions*. Prager University.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20160107193636/https://www.prageru.com/frequently-asked-questions>
- PragerU. (2019a) About us. Prager University.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20190330100740/https://www.prageru.com/about/>
- PragerU. (2019b). PragerU 2019 annual report. <https://www.prageru.com/prager2019annual-report.pdf>
- PragerU v. Google, Volume 18-15712 F. Supp. 1-16 (2020).
<http://cdn.ca9.uscourts.gov/datastore/opinions/2020/02/26/18-15712.pdf>
- Saldana, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. SAGE.
- Schmitt, J. B., Rieger, D., Rutkowski, O., & Ernst, J. L. (2018). Counter-messages as prevention or promotion of extremism?! The potential role of YouTube: Recommendation algorithms. *Journal of Communication*, 68(4), 780-808.
- Simi, P. (2013). Cycles of right-wing terror in the US. In S.V. Mering and T.W. McCarty (Eds.), *Right-Wing Radicalism Today* (pp. 144-160). Routledge.
- Simi, P. & Futrell, R. (2009). Negotiating white power activist stigma. *Social Problems*, 56, 89-110.
- SPLC. (2018). *Turning Point USA's blooming romance with the alt-right*. SPLC Southern Poverty Law Center.
<https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2018/02/16/turning-point-usas-blooming-romance-alt-right>
- SPLC. (2019). *Hate groups reach a record high*. SPLC Southern Poverty Law Center.
<https://www.splcenter.org/news/2019/02/19/hate-groups-reach-record-high>
- Strauss, A. L. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. Cambridge University Press.
- Turning Point USA. (2018). *TPUSA 2018-2019 chapter handbook*. Turning Point USA.
- Vysotsky, S., & McCarthy, A.L. (2016). Normalizing cyberracism: A neutralization theory analysis. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 40(4), 1-16.
- Weatherby, G., & Scoggins, B. (2005). A content analysis of persuasion techniques used on White supremacist websites. *Journal of Hate Studies*, 4(1), 9-31.
- Wendling, M. (2018). *Alt-Right: From 4chan to the White House*. Pluto Press.
- Young, J. (2007). *The vertigo of late modernity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Video Citations

- PragerU (2013a) Aznar on Europe, America and Israel. Available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=muXcAW9aPe8> (accessed 24 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2013b) Is evil rational. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryA8PafooQ4> (accessed 12 Aug 2018).
- PragerU (2013c) The American Trinity. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8OPWOKWZsMo> (accessed 10 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2014a) The ten commandments what you should know. Available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TK57RiMqTdk&t=8s> (accessed 24 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2014b) Feminism 2.0. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZR9FHKKbMZo> (accessed 13 Aug 2018).
- PragerU (2014c) How to solve America's spending problem. Available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ti8RQPh7IE&t=2s> (accessed 10 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2014d) The progressive income tax: A tale of three brothers. Available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6HEH23W_bM&t=1s (accessed 10 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2015a) Game of loans. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrd72UtczMg> (accessed 3 Oct 2018).
- PragerU (2015b) How big should government be? Left vs Right #. Available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxe5GcMH5yA&t=1s> (accessed 10 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2015c) Should America be the World's Policeman? Available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=176KRhEAgUs> (accessed 13 Aug 2018).
- PragerU (2015d) What Makes America Different? Available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TiJIYdgkF9M> (accessed 13 Aug 2018).
- PragerU (2016a) Are The Police Racist? Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQCQFH5wOJo> (accessed 13 Aug 2018).
- PragerU (2016b) Black fathers matter. Available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FszQeIEQ2KY&t=192s> (accessed 10 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2016c) Dennis Prager on Fighting for America (2016 PragerU Dinner). Available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7x0TzZQMmo&t=18s> (accessed 10 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2016d) Men and the power of the visual. Available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9WZFeA4FzI> (accessed 10 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2016e) Socialism Makes People Selfish. Available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3GfCmbPDN0> (accessed 24 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2016f) The Most Important Thing You Can Do for America Today. Available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yh9DJqP600A> (accessed 24 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2016g) Were the Founders Religious? Available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDFsG4xzfDw> (accessed 24 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2017a) Are Some Cultures Better than Others? Available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9vBJCMD69w> (accessed 28 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2017b) Big government kills small businesses. Available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HIJHY2pSJV4&t=37s> (accessed 10 Sept 2018).

- PragerU (2017c) Everyone Should Stand for the National Anthem. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EuymzkaPagM> (accessed 14 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2017d). Hollywood wants your money... and your mind. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjMYCnI5kz0> (accessed 24 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2017e) The least diverse place in America. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0HKgs-0zDY> (accessed 4 Oct 2018).
- PragerU (2017f) Was America Founded to Be Secular? Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sm8oGUXomHc> (accessed 22 Oct 2018).
- PragerU (2017g) What is fake news? Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOZ0irgLwxU> (accessed 26 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2017h) Why America Must Lead. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSvWH-Y8eeY> (accessed 8 Nov 2018).
- PragerU (2018a) Cops Are the Good Guys. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F0chi9zD4Zo> (accessed 9 Nov 2018).
- PragerU (2018b) Dangerous people are teaching your kids. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LquIQisaZFU&t=102s> (accessed 3 Oct 2018).
- PragerU (2018c) Hamilton: The Man Who Invented America. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNWX7hgTK4c> (accessed 12 Oct 2018).
- PragerU (2018d) How to Solve Illegal Immigration: Build the Wall. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YL-Q4-bpWzY> (accessed 4 Dec 2018).
- PragerU (2018e) Left or liberal. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIjMJBSnRE&t=95s> (accessed 23 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2018f) Make men masculine again. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-kxdyJs6y8> (accessed 5 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2018g) Playing the Black card. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKpEl9jJ4dA&t=1s> (accessed 11 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2018h) Trophies are for winning. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4E0LaFRt19E> (accessed 10 Sept 2018).
- PragerU (2018i) What is Intersectionality. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rc7VUoytoU4> (accessed 3 Oct 2018).
- PragerU (2018j) Why You Should Be a Nationalist. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BfJ25LXtLTg> (accessed 2 Oct 2018).