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**A Threat Assessment of Radicalized Extremist Right-Wing White Nationalist Subcultures
in Canada: A Social Media Analysis**

By

Dylon Groom

B.A. (Honours), Wilfrid Laurier University, 2017

THESIS

**Submitted to the Department of Criminology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
Master of Arts (Criminology)**

Wilfrid Laurier University

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ABSTRACT

As literature and media findings suggest, right-wing extremism has been a growing threat to the security of Canada. This qualitative research study seeks to develop a better understanding of the way Canadian right-wing white nationalists develop online in order to aid future radicalization research. After the tragic attacks on September 11th, 2001, radicalization research has largely been focused on Islamist extremism. By utilizing a conventional content analysis approach to the open-sourced white nationalist discussion forum, stormfront.org, this thesis bridges the gap between the understanding of Islamist extremism and right-wing white nationalists. Ten Canadian white nationalists active on the stormfront forums were examined from the 2008 to 2018 period in order to understand the impact of online radicalization on Canadian white nationalists. The results provided a six-stage Canadian white nationalist development path. Findings from the content analysis were analyzed in comparison to the four-stage al Qaeda inspired radicalization pathway presented by Marc Sageman (2008) in order to aid future radicalization pathway research. Results from this study suggest that similar group dynamics and social processes of Islamist extremists that were identified by Marc Sageman may also help to explain the development of Canadian white nationalists given the similarities in themes found between Marc Sageman's radicalization pathway and that of the Canadian white nationalist pathway developed in this thesis. The findings suggest that future research could benefit from the parallel radicalization themes by having a greater focus on the interpersonal social processes of radicalization to violence rather than the type of ideology.

Keywords: White Nationalism, Canada, Stormfront, Radicalization, Terrorism, Extremism, Radicalization pathway, Race, Racism, Xenophobia

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude towards everyone who has helped me in this research endeavor. Without their guidance and encouragement, this project would not have been possible.

To My Committee:

Raymond Izarali, thank you for being my supervisor and being instrumental in the completion of this project. Your advice, feedback, and support were crucial in making this research endeavor a reality. Thank you for challenging me to become a better writer and critical thinker with your expertise and insight.

James Popham, thank you for being an invaluable resource during this entire experience. Your knowledge of research methods was indispensable while completing this thesis. Your perspective and experience with research methods and the internet were crucial in my ability to follow this work through to completion.

Dr. Tanya Narozhna, thank you for being my external reader. I am beyond grateful for your profound insight and expertise that you shared with me. Your ideas were a great contribution to both my thesis and my own knowledge.

To Educational Support:

A special thank you to Nicole Zarazua for all the administrative support throughout this process. Your quick responses and the information you provided was pivotal in the completion of this project.

Jennifer Lavoie, thank you for your help in preparing for the defense of this thesis and setting my mind at ease. Thank you for taking the time to help me prepare everything for an online video thesis defense. Your reassurance allowed me to prepare for an online thesis defense and eased my worries.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1.Introduction:

On January 29, 2017, Alexandre Bissonnette shot and killed six Muslim worshippers at a Mosque in Quebec City and injured 19 others. Prior to the attack, Bissonnette had expressed pro-(United States President Donald) Trump, anti-immigration, and anti-feminist ideologies online. He also legally acquired six firearms prior to the shooting. Yet he escaped the attention of the local and national authorities prior to launching his deadly attack (Hétu, 2019). During questioning, Bissonnette cited attacks committed by Muslims in Europe as the motivation for his atrocities. He intimated that his personal actions to enforce his own “Muslim Ban” were done to protect Canada, presumably from a Muslim invasion. Bissonnette searched online and found 819 remarks by President Trump used to justify his (Trump’s) so-called Muslim ban.

President Trump issued Executive Order 13769 in a failed attempt to curb terrorist entry from the United States. The Executive Order — officially titled “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States” — was later found by multiple courts of jurisdiction to be unlawful, unconstitutional and, therefore, unenforceable. The Order was in effect for only a few short weeks, from January 27 to March 16, 2017 (Fullerton, 2017). Bissonnette averred that he was also spurred into action by a remark by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as PM Trudeau welcomed additional refugees into Canada. Despite having all the characteristics of a terrorist attack, a specific target, and utilizing violence to intimidate for political change, this attack was not identified as a terrorist attack (Hamilton, 2018). It marked a clear double standard. If a Muslim walked into a Catholic church and opened fire with the same motivation and results, the action would undoubtedly be classified as an act of terrorism.

Wayne Hanniman (2008) suggests that racialization may explain the tendency to identify Muslims or Arabs as terrorists. A double standard based on media representations of the “typical terrorist” fails to protect Canadians and in the case of Alexandre Bissonnette, the double standard was utilized as fuel to justify his extremist outlook. Alexandre Bissonnette believes his actions protected Canadians from terrorists. The failure to properly label Bissonnette as a terrorist suggests that there is a racial and/or religious component required to be a terrorist. Bissonnette had ideological and political motivations behind his attack, with a specific target to terrorize, and rationalized that he was doing something good by committing the attack on Muslims. So, it may be asked, why is this attack not considered an act of terrorism? Is it because he used a gun instead of a bomb? What truly separates a mass murder from a terrorist attack? By labeling Alexandre Bissonnette’s act as a mass shooting rather than a terrorist act, it fortifies the misconception that there is a racial or religious component to be a terrorist.

The mis-classification of terrorism is not only a product of the general media, but it is also present in terrorism research as well. Alex Schmid (2004), when examining statistical inconsistencies surrounding terrorism, found that terrorism databases vary greatly in what is deemed terrorism, and how violent incidents lack a uniform standard of classification and/or tallying. Some databases included acts as banal as vandalism as acts of terrorism, while other data bases tallied each individual victim rather than the entire act itself (Schmid, 2004). This creates a problem when trying to monitor and prevent terrorism, as there is lacking a scholarly consensus on what constitutes terrorism and how it should be recorded. This thesis attempts to bridge that gap by examining a white nationalist web forum through the lens of radicalization. By examining an alternative extremist subculture through the same lens as Islamist terrorists, this

study provides an additional perspective in which to understand how radicalization and terrorism is to be labeled and understood.

1.2. Background:

White nationalism comprises groups or individuals that believe in an amalgamation of right-wing beliefs. Their main goal, however, is to ensure a Western, predominantly white, society (SPLcenter, 2019). White nationalists frequently act violently to uphold these beliefs, as exemplified by the actions of, for example, Alexandre Bissonette. Recently there have been incidents that illustrate the pervasiveness of white nationalist and supremacist violence in Canada. An elementary school in Newmarket, Ontario was covered with hate motivated graffiti in the form of anti-Semitic and anti-Black symbols and messages (Katawazi, 2020). Similarly, in 2016 at the University of Alberta campus there were racist posters depicting a man in a turban with hate speech printed in bold lettering (Mertz, 2016). In 2018, there was an assault on a First Nations man in Thunder Bay Ontario that was deemed a hate crime and left him battered and bloodied at a bus stop (Canadian Press, 2018). In 2017, a trailer hitch was thrown from a truck and struck a First Nations woman named Barb Kentner in Thunder Bay Ontario (Macdonald, 2017). One of the assailants was alleged to have yelled “I got one” as the car peeled away (Macdonald, 2017). Barb Kentner suffered liver failure from the attack and succumbed to her injuries in July of 2017 (Macdonald, 2017). These incidents are only scratching the surface of the problem of race motivated violence in Canada.

There has been a commensurate increase in documented Canadian statistics of hate crimes from 2016-2017. The statistics represent a 32% increase in racially motivated hate violence and a drastic increase of 83% in violence motivated by religious differences. Violence against Muslims increased by 151% and violence against the Jewish population rose 63% (Stats

Canada, 2019). Despite the substantial increase in racially motivated violence targeting minority groups, the bulk of radicalization research still focuses on Islamist (i.e., religious) extremism.

When scholars attempt to understand the radicalization of domestic terrorists, they often focus on why a middle-to-high class, young, Western-born citizen would become a Jihadist extremist (Sageman, 2008; Gill, 2008; Christmann, 2012; Silber & Bhatt, 2007; Moghaddam, 2005; Wiktorowicz, 2004). Why is it that right-wing extremists are overlooked in radicalization research despite historically posing deadly threats to either their native or adopted homeland?

Consider US citizen Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing. McVeigh, similar to Alexandre Bissonette, committed mass violence and murder in the country of his birth. Each was motivated by a belief that he was aiding his respective country. Timothy McVeigh credits the Turner Diaries, which is outlined in detail in Chapter 2, as an ideological motivator. The Turner Diaries is a work of fiction. Timothy McVeigh considered himself a patriot, as he had served in the US Army during the war in Kuwait and was decorated with five combat medals during an active war campaign (Ward & Pilat, 2016). He received an honorable discharge from the army. So how did he come to believe his terrorist bomb attack against the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, in the US state of Oklahoma was for the benefit of his country? The bombing killed 168 persons (19 of whom were children attending daycare) and wounded another 684-innocent people (Ward & Pilat, 2016).

With a narrow focus on Islamist extremism, researchers often fail to address a dangerous and existential threat to domestic security by right-wing extremists. This thesis helps to bridge that knowledge gap and develop a better understanding of Canadian white nationalists by tracing their behaviours over time in order to assess their radicalization toward the white nationalist movement.

1.3.Introduction to The Stormfront Forum:

Stormfront.org hosts a publicly viewable web forum that targets and attracts white nationalists globally. It has a large and diverse membership base. There are over one million threads, 13 million posts, and over 340,000 members on its web pages (stormfront.org, 2019). The website is open-sourced and has a Welcome banner on the main page that reads: “[Y]ou are welcome to browse any of our thirteen million posts.” The banner seems to cordially invite outside scrutiny and viewership. The forum contains a plethora of subforums that encompasses a wide range of ideologies and philosophies that include everything from white supremacy, to dating, racism, white pride, health, self-victimization, and even fitness. There is a sub-forum, it seems, for everyone.

The Stormfront forum was formed by well-known white supremacist Don Black. The forum advertises a live radio show with Don Black, and another hosted by white supremacist David Duke on its splash page (stormfront.org, 2019). Both Don Black and David Duke are long-time Ku Klux Klan leaders with extensive reach and notoriety in the movement (splcenter.org, 2019).

The Stormfront web forum contains a unique international section consisting of regional discussion threads pertaining to issues relevant to each respective area. The forum has 16 regional subsections, including Britain, South Africa, Russia, Canada, and more. This thesis focuses on the subforum that highlights Canada. Within the Canadian subforum, there are discussion threads and users who avidly discuss Canadian issues surrounding white nationalism. This provides a unique opportunity to observe years of posted content by Canadian white nationalists and create new insights into the progressive radicalization of Canadian white nationalists.

1.4. Why Look at Stormfront Through the Lens of Radicalization

Stormfront provides an opportunity to gather primary data in the form of asynchronous dialogue that is relevant to white nationalist Canadians in an unobtrusive and anonymous manner. Stormfront is also created by a publicly known white supremacist. His purpose is to generate discourse and comradery between right-wing white nationalists. The web forum espouses extremist ideas in the introductory threads that are moderated by senior members who set the tone of each discussion thread on the forum. The posts indicate that the forum moderators believe the problem with humanity is “not so much one of ideology – this or that religious, political, social, or economic system – but rather one of blood” (<https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t968576/>). Many posters subscribe to the position that at least 90% of a person’s intelligence or character is determined by their DNA.

The senior members of the stormfront community have also explicitly identified an enemy in which they consider to be involved in a grand conspiracy to eradicate their race, which provides an environment that is extremist at its core and ideal for studying radicalization to violence (Bowman-Grieve, 2009). The stormfront community takes a highly dangerous anti-Semitic approach which targets members of the Jewish community. Their claim is that Jews are inherently evil and conniving, and that Jews control the destruction of “pure white people” behind the scenes. Consider, for example, a section of the Introduction to the Forum, written by a senior forum moderator:

The Jews have been working together behind the scenes to gain control of all the TV stations, schools, newspapers, radio stations, governments, movie studios, banks, etc. — an all-encompassing ‘Matrix’ of lies — to destroy all potential rival groups and rule the world. And they are very close to achieving it. They managed to get our people's heads so far up their butts that Whites think that allowing millions of Third Worlders into the US and Europe will somehow ‘improve’ those lands with ‘diversity’ and economic prosperity.

The origin of the problem with the Jews is, once again, in the blood. As a group, a distinctive race, they suffer from psychopathy — a mental disorder whose main symptom is the ability to lie like there is no tomorrow without any empathy for people unlike themselves. Furthermore, they are able to organize and work collectively as a group based on this trait.

[Jews, they argue,] seem to be able to talk entire nations into believing just about anything they [the Jews] want. That is the ... secret to their success. And, yes, our people bear a large part of the blame for believing and trusting them in the first place. Not to mention, the embarrassingly large number of fools, traitors and cowards within the ranks of Whites. (Retrieved from, <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t968576/>)

The Stormfront forum openly displays an extremist baseline for acceptable discourse which provides a great opportunity to examine extremist development and discourse surrounding white nationalist Canadians (Bowman-Grieve, 2009). The forum is designed to be a safe space for extremist ideologues to openly converse and develop a mutual rapport. This provides a great source of primary data to researchers that help to explain white racist radicalization.

1.5.Importance

Scholarly focus on terrorism has largely been international in scope since the catastrophic leveling of New York's Twin Towers on September 11, 2001. In the two decades since then domestic or homegrown terrorism has lacked serious academic scrutiny or proper data collection by the authorities. Canadian-grown terrorism continues to pose a tangible threat to Canadians. This problem is compounded when vital resources are committed elsewhere. As Parent and Ellis (2014) note, there is a lack of data surrounding right-wing extremism in Canada despite its extensive history and contemporary presence.

By pinpointing and mapping out common sets of ideological beliefs, behavioural and psychological patterns, common traits, and events, there is a potential to intervene and redirect domestic right-wing extremists, potentially saving lives.

1.6.Problem Statement:

A problem identified in this thesis is there exists a knowledge gap about the sub-culture of Canadian white nationalists. Thus, there is a concomitant lack of academic studies dedicated to the radicalization of Canadian white nationalists. The few studies in this genre lack empirical analyses that identify: (1) behaviours and beliefs of Canadian white nationalists; (2) the development of Canadian white nationalists toward radicalization; and (3) how such development can contribute to discussions of current radicalization pathway theories.

1.7.Research Question:

The research question to be answered in this thesis is: In what ways do the factors that drive individuals and groups to develop as Canadian white nationalists resemble a path towards extremist radicalization and how does identifying that pathway contribute to debates surrounding current literature that examines radicalization pathways?

A qualitative content analysis approach was used to answer this two-part question. The approach focuses on establishing an empirical understanding of the ideological and behavioural development paths by individuals in the Canadian white nationalist subculture. Additionally, the results of the ethnographic research approach were applied to a current radicalization pathway in order to contribute to existing radicalization pathway literature.

1.8.The Research Design

As stated previously, the research method used in this thesis is an unobtrusive, conventional approach to qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) that is conducted on the Stormfront forums examining Canadian white nationalists. The analysis of the forum's content is focused on identifying common Canadian white nationalist behaviours and beliefs that are found within the forum posts and threads that are relevant to the stages of radicalization in a Canadian white nationalist development path.

The participant sample consists of 10 individuals who frequent the Canadian section of the Stormfront forums, www.stormfront.org/forum/f40/. The individuals were purposively picked to find individuals who spend a large amount of their time in the Canadian section of Stormfront. The posts gathered are from the year 2008-2018. This was done in an effort to find beliefs and behaviours that are representative of contemporary Canadian white nationalists. Although the posts are from the 2008-2018 period the members had their entire posting history examined, as the goal was to identify the progression of their radicalization. The timeframe is provided for the purpose of replicability and accuracy. All of the participants posted during the year 2018; however, forum participation varied among participants during the 2008-2018 period.

Each of the 10 self-identified as Canadian either overtly or contextually. This was the first qualifier established to avoid studying the wrong sample population or developing an analysis that is not representative of the target population. A similar unobtrusive research design was completed by Simon Henry (2016) for his PhD thesis in which he studied the Australian survivalist subculture. Henry uncovered a survivalist development pathway and compared it to existing radicalization pathway theories. In doing so, he contributed to the conversation on

radicalization research. Simon Henry demonstrated that an unobtrusive analysis of an extreme fringe group provides a candid, firsthand analysis of radicalization processes.

1.9.Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis was developed from examining theories of individual and group radicalization pathways. Considering the scope of this thesis and the time allotted, only one theory was ultimately chosen to thoroughly analyze it and to produce an elevated and more sophisticated contribution to the current body of radicalization pathway theories.

The theory chosen was Marc Sageman's Four-Stage Islamist Radicalization (2008) theory because of its applicability to online radicalization, the modus operandi of the 10 forum users, and to test its applicability to an alternative extremist network. Marc Sageman's theory focused on an Islamist radicalization process that exploited religious hatred using the discussion content of an online web forum. In contrast, this thesis examines the radicalization process that exploits racism using the discussion content of an online web forum that targets white nationalist Canadians. Scrutinizing the candid words and ideas of white nationalist Canadians when they are engaging with fellow forum members of a similar or like mind suggests that this could provide a unique perspective for radicalization research.

1.10. Assumptions and Limitations

This thesis analyzes qualitative content by Canadian members of the popular white nationalist forum, stormfront.org, unobtrusively. Using this methodology requires the researcher to accept a major assumption when collecting and analyzing data. Since individuals do not know they are being researched and are using anonymous usernames, it must be assumed that the

participants are being honest in their posts and about their experiences. As there is no firsthand contact with the participants, it is impossible to tell if they are fabricating stories and events or are being facetious in their responses. This requires the researcher to exercise extra caution when analyzing forum content.

Furthermore, this thesis contains limitations in the methods chosen and the scope of the research. Given the fact that this is a master's thesis and not a PhD dissertation, the time available for analyzing data is limited. This means that the sample size can not be as large as a major dissertation and therefore this thesis is unable to be as in-depth regarding the analysis and findings. With more time comes the ability to understand and uncover more regarding the Canadian white nationalist subculture. Additionally, the Stormfront forum contains over 340,000 members and has over 13 million posts (stormfront.org, 2019). That means that a qualitative observation of a larger number of subscribers that constitute a representative sample of those who are experiencing a more complete Stormfront experience would be difficult. Nevertheless, the Stormfront website is an enormous open-sourced forum that provides a fruitful platform for developing a retrospective understanding of how members of white nationalism change over time.

1.11. Thesis Overview

Chapter one, the *Introduction*, presents the background to the white nationalist problem in Canada. This chapter calls attention to the myopic focus on Islamist extremism which leaves a gap of knowledge concerning the development of Canadian white nationalists. The chapter then presents the research question identifying the aim of this thesis to examine the under-researched Canadian white nationalist subculture, by ascertaining how the Canadian white nationalist

development resembles a path towards radicalization and by determining how that development process contributes to current radicalization pathway research.

Chapter two, the *Literature Review*, focuses on two main themes, [1] racism and white nationalism in Canada, and [2] radicalization and terrorism research. The review considers both historical and contemporary insights concerning racism and white nationalism in Canada. The chapter highlights the longstanding history of racism in Canada as well as the history and beliefs of white nationalist groups in Canada. The review then examines radicalization and terrorist research with a focus on individual and group radicalization pathway processes. The chapter shows that as a result of the longstanding history of racism and racist violence in Canada, as well as a narrow Islamist focused understanding of radicalization pathways, there is a need to directly examine the Canadian white nationalist subculture to understand the development path of Canadian white nationalists.

Chapter three, *Methodology*, addresses the need to directly examine the Canadian white nationalist subculture which was determined in the literature review. This chapter identifies the strategy undertaken in this thesis to utilize a conventional approach to conducting a qualitative content analysis of the public material displayed on the white nationalist forum, stormfront.org. The chapter establishes that using an unobtrusive methodology like conventional content analysis is justified by the absence of radicalization research pertaining to Canadian white nationalists and the impracticality and safety concerns of engaging with white nationalists and white supremacists directly in order to achieve unbiased primary data.

Chapter four, *Data Collection and Analysis*, presents the forum data obtained from stormfront.org which supports six common Canadian white nationalist behavioural and ideological development stages. The chapter presents the six-stage white nationalist development

path in a non-chronologically displayed order of succession that was determined by associated levels of increasing threat severity. The chapter then utilizes two participants in case-study format in order to highlight the increase of problematic behaviour as the stages are displayed.

Chapter five, *Results and Discussion*, answers the research questions of the thesis by presenting the Canadian white nationalist development path and how it compares with established radicalization pathways and radicalization research. Specifically, the Canadian white nationalist development path is directly compared to the tenets of Marc Sageman's four-stage Islamist model. This chapter demonstrates that the tenets of Marc Sageman's four-stage model could potentially be successfully applied to the development and group dynamics displayed on the Stormfront forums as they are conceptually similar to the development themes identified in the data obtained from stormfront.org. Furthermore, this chapter identifies the stormfront forums as an open recruitment nexus for Canadian white nationalists who otherwise would not be exposed to recruitment. This chapter argues that the female Canadian white nationalist experience on the stormfront forums is negative in nature, with a discourse that is hostile towards females, and potentially steering them away from further offline commitment. This chapter also demonstrates the echo chamber effect that is present on the stormfront forums, with a homogeneous ideological rhetoric that must be adhered in order to avoid being ostracized.

Chapter six, *Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations*, presents conclusions relating to the main findings of this thesis and how they were obtained. The chapter presents the academic and practical implications of this research. Academically, the implications suggest that more theory testing of Islamist-based radicalization theories on alternative subcultures can help fine-tune the understanding of radicalization research. Practically, this chapter presents implications for law enforcement agencies, as the forum acted as a recruitment nexus, recruiting

individuals otherwise unaware of active groups in their area, as well as step by step instructions on how to form new white nationalist splinter groups. This chapter also considers the limitations of the research and makes recommendations for further study of the Canadian white nationalist subculture and the social processes involved in radicalization.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the under-researched area relating to the radicalization of Canadian white nationalists by examining the popular white nationalist web forum operating as stormfront.org in order to contribute to debates surrounding radicalization pathways. In order to properly examine white nationalism in Canada, this literature review scrutinizes various aspects of right-wing white nationalism in Canada, and current terrorism through the eyes of radicalization research. The literature review begins with historical and contemporary reviews of racism and white nationalism in Canada. Additionally, terrorism and radicalization research themes are reviewed to understand the direction of radicalization research in general. Lastly, radicalization pathway theories are explored and outlined to determine common themes of radicalization theories as well as to justify the utilization of Marc Sageman's four-stage theory as applied to this thesis.

2.2. From Racism to Xenoracism in Canada

Within Canada, scholars have noted that traditional biological racism has been shifting towards a more cultural form of racism called xenoracism (Harris & Sim, 2002; Spickard, 1992). Xenoracism is explained by the Institute of Race Relations (2001) as follows: “[Xenoracism is] racism in substance, but “xeno” in form. It is a racism that is meted out to impoverished strangers even if they are white. Another explanation of xenoracism is: “an institutionalized racism that targets victims based on a perception of foreignness (xeno)” (McCoy, 2014).

Race is often perceived by many as a biological concept yet it is entirely socially constructed (Harris & Sim, 2002). Harris and Sim underscore the importance of the way race is

defined, pointing to a 2000 United States census that allowed individuals to choose which race best applies to them (2002). A change from a rigid measure to one in which participants could “mark one or more races” has changed the consistency of responses and suggests that racial identities were becoming more fluid and complex (Harris & Sim, 2002, p. 614). Scholars in the field of race and racism believe that the changing social construct of race is leading to a shift in the way racism is expressed. According to Harris and Sim (2002) and Spickard (1992), this shift is a result of progressing from biologically-based definitions of race to culturally- or ethnically-based descriptions of race. For example, Spickard (1992), when identifying the illogical nature of racial classifications in America, claims that despite a commonly understood biological interpretation of race, what really defines a race in America is its culture. Spickard suggests that the racial labeling process starts with geography, culture, and family ties, and then expands to economics and politics, and lastly, to biology (1992, p.4), not the other way around.

If race and racism are socially constructed and not a result of biology, how does a society that regards itself as one of the first multi-cultural societies come to experience such high levels of contemporary racism? Right-wing extremism can help explain these levels as it is often characterized by neo-Nazism, white supremacy, and white nationalism. These are all inherently racist doctrines as they consider other racial groups to be inferior, and believe they are in an active war to fight for the survival of the white race (Parent & Ellis, 2014:2016). Experts in homegrown violent extremism, John McCoy and David Jones, note that right-wing extremism is a globalized movement that is growing in Canada (2017). McCoy and Jones believe that spaces such as social media and web forums attract and energize individuals to explore ideas and develop relationships with a sense of anonymity (2017). McCoy (2018) attributes the growth in

right-wing extremism partly to an exploitation of the anti-Islamic social movement which has made its way into pseudo-intellectual and political discourse.

Jasmine Zine (2012) attributes the anti-Islamic social movement to the post 9/11 War on Terrorism, which presents Muslims as enemies to Canadians and their culture. According to Zine (2012), media sensationalism is a driving factor in portraying Muslims as an anti-democratic foreign entity that constitutes a threat to Canadians. Despite the presence of Muslims in Canada prior to 9/11, xenophobic political orders and discourse founded since the War on Terrorism have created a sense of fear and otherness over and among Western Muslims which acts to validate racist discourse (Zine, 2012). For example, President Donald Trump's *travel* ban, which was contained in Executive Order 13769 (whitehouse.gov, 2017), was designed to protect the country from foreign terrorists entering the US. But it quickly sparked xenophobia and associated discourse (Giroux, 2017). In the media, the order was rarely referred to by its original title — which was “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States” — and was often popularly referred to as the “*Muslim* ban” within everyday political discourse. Political orders and discourse that function to create a level of cultural otherness and spark xenophobia have a significant negative impact on the multicultural identity of Canadians and non-Canadians residing in or visiting Canada. Such orders and associated rhetoric often act to validate xenoracism and the agendas of right-wing hate groups (Giroux, 2017).

2.3. Canada's History with Xenoracism

The recent xenophobic climate may seem like a new phenomenon for young Canadians. However, Canada has a long and contentious history with xenophobic policies and discourse. For example, Orientalism, as well as the treatment of indigenous populations throughout Canada's history, shed light on the dangers associated with permitting or promoting xenophobic discourse

(Comack & Bowness, 2010). Edward Said (1978) first studied Orientalism to determine the differences between what the West conceptualized as Orientalism and the reality and experiences within Asia. According to Said, the portrayal of the Orient within Western culture is rather unsophisticated and does not encompass the richness and diversity of Eastern cultures. Other scholars studying the effects of Orientalism in Canada believe it has created a homogenized stereotypical portrayal of the Muslim community as a conservative Islamist population by denying the heterogeneity of Canadian Muslim populations in discourse and the media (Khalid, 2011; Zine 2012; McCoy, 2018).

Parallel to the surge in the effects of Orientalism seen post 9/11, Canada has experienced the phenomenon previously associated with the treatment of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War. Sensationalistic media that emphasized the Pearl Harbor bombings of 1941 by Japan resulted in the Canadian government interning all individuals of Japanese descent and confiscating their homes and businesses (Marsh, 2019). Patricia Roy (2007) believes that sensationalism combined with heightened fears deriving from the war caused many Canadians to no longer differentiate between and among Canadian-born and educated people of Japanese descent, Japanese nationals, and the Japanese government.

Similarly, the treatment of Indigenous Canadians historically has been studied at length by scholars such as Simon and Clark (2013), Flanagan, Le Dressay, and Alcantara (2010) and the effects are still being seen today. Aboriginal peoples are the least prosperous group in Canada with a low life expectancy, high unemployment rates, high welfare dependency, low levels of education, and low quality of housing (Flanagan, Le Dressay, & Alcantara, 2010). Indigenous peoples in Canada also experience disproportionately high rates of victimization and offending within the Canadian criminal justice system (Reasons et al., 2016). The Indian Act was an

attempt by the Canadian government to generalize and assimilate indigenous Canadians into non-indigenous or Western society (Henderson, 2018). The Act ignored the vast and varied indigenous populations within Canada and attempted to eliminate others, similar to the philosophy of Orientalism. The Indian Act is still in effect and continues to govern First Nations in Canada (Simon & Clark, 2013) and despite an apology in 2008 for the harmful treatment to Native Canadians by the Canadian government (Reid, 2015), the Act remains a serious obstacle to the prosperity of First Nations in Canada (Flanagan, Le Dressay, & Alcantara, 2010).

Although Orientalism and the treatment of First Nations in Canada are not solely responsible for xenophobia in Canada, racist discourse that is frequently state-sponsored provides an ideological validation to the racist doctrines of extremist groups (Department of Homeland Security, 2009; Giroux, 2017). According to Parent and Ellis (2014; 2016) right-wing violence is trending upward and Canada is continually plagued by its extensive history with racist hate groups.

2.4. White Nationalism in Canada

White nationalists are one of the groups most likely to be emboldened by the xenoracist climate due to their racist ideology. With the post 9/11 War on Terrorism and the xenophobic discourse that has resulted, there has been an increase in right-wing violence and recruitment (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2017). Terrorism scholars have noted that information on right-wing extremists in Canada is highly disconnected and not able to generate a nuanced national perspective (Parent & Ellis, 2016). According to the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness (2019) there are over 100 active white supremacist and neo-nazi extremist groups in Canada. This number represents a need to thoroughly understand how to derail radicalization that is geared toward right-wing extremism.

2.4.1. Canada's History with White Nationalist Violence

Some Canadians believe that Canada is a multiculturalist country that is free from overt racism and that white nationalist and supremacist groups are a United States of America phenomenon (Ross, 1992). However, Canada has a long history with right-wing racist groups. Scholars studying the history of racist extremist groups in Canada emphasize the chronic presence of the Ku Klux Klan in Canada. According to Parent and Ellis (2014), the Ku Klux Klan is Canada's oldest active right-wing extremist group and it has boasted of membership numbers in Canada ranging from 15,000 to 40,000 at various times. Richard (2010) highlights the Western presence of the Klan in Canada, with a heavy concentration in Alberta; however, he admits that the Klan also has roots centered in maritime Canada. The Klan has been involved in many violent acts in Canada, including arson attacks on Catholic churches in the 1920s, shootings and riots in the 1930s, and a plethora of individual violent attacks in the 1970s (Ross, 1992).

Incidents during these periods were often subtly supported or dismissed by the media. Constance Backhouse refers to an event on February 28, 1930, where 75 Klansmen from Hamilton gathered in Oakville, marched along the street, burned a cross in the town center, and forcibly removed a white woman from a black citizen's residence (1999, p.173-175). When the perpetrators were stopped by the chief of police of Oakville, they exited their cars, took off their hoods and were recognized by the police chief, who shook their hands instead of arresting them (Backhouse, 1999, 174). The media in their newspaper reports at the time focused on the lack of violence used by the perpetrators in the event, dismissing any guilt and validating racial violence (Backhouse, 1999, 175).

In examining the Ku Klux Klan during the 1920's Saskatchewan, James Pitsula (2013) suggests that during events that stemmed from racial prejudices, the Ku Klux Klan exploited existing racial prejudices and did not create them. This suggests that the Klan uses societal and political racist climates as an impetus to commit violence. This generates concern during a political time that was rife with dichotomous politics and sensationalist media surrounding extremist events. While scholars describe the movement as fragmented (Spindlove & Simonsen, 2018; White, 2017), the contemporary movement is rich with virtual support that encourages its members to open new chapters and cling to old ones (Bowman-Grieve, 2009).

Neo-Nazis and Skinheads also plague Canada. They rank number 11 among the highest in Skinhead activity globally (Cotter, 1999). Skinheads made their way to Canada in the 1980s with a vast transnational network numbering in the tens of thousands (Parent & Ellis, 2014). According to Cotter (1999), Skinheads often form fragmented and sporadic groups that do not fit under any formal organization. Skinheads are also extremely diverse, ranging from anti-racists to supporters of white supremacy under the idea of a white nation (Young & Sumner, 1997). Despite the lack of a formal organization and a chosen leader to solidify the disjointed neo-Nazi groups, Canada recently added two neo-Nazi chapters to their list of terrorist entities, identifying them as a potential threat to Canadians (Public Safety Canada, 2019). Blood & Honour and its armed branch Combat 18 are listed as terrorist entities because it has been alleged that they have committed multiple murders and bombings in Canada (Public Safety Canada, 2019). To study and detail the over 100 right-wing groups in Canada (Perry & Scrivens, 2015) could be a thesis by itself. The two groups examined were included to highlight the fact that white nationalist violence is not a new phenomenon in Canada, and it constitutes a very real security threat.

The literature shows that in Canada there is a xenoracist climate and a large population of right-wing groups. Researchers have noted that the majority of right-wing violence is perpetrated by individuals who hold no formal affiliation to any group and instead adhere to a general right-wing ideology. This suggests the threat of a “lone wolf” scenario is on the rise (Sageman, 2004; 2008). The question that remains is why and how extreme right-wing ideology has become something that individuals are willing to kill for. In order to understand why individuals would go so far as to kill for an adopted ideology, the beliefs and motivations of Canadian white nationalists must first be unveiled and thoroughly examined.

2.4.2. Beliefs and Motivations of Canadian White Nationalists

The nexus among white nationalists is their desire to preserve a distinct white culture (White, 2017). David Lane coined the 14 word-phrase commonly uttered within the white nationalist community, which is: “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children” (David Lane, retrieved from Anti-Defamation League, 2019). White nationalists believe that their race is intrinsically superior to other groups and they have a need to ensure their group remains superior (i.e., “and pure”) (Simi, Bubolz, & Hardman, 2013). They believe that Western civilization is more accurately portrayed as a white civilization, with minority groups and corrupt governments being a threat to their (the whites’) way of life (Simi, Bubolz, & Hardman, 2013; White, 2017).

Support for white nationalism in Canada can stem from cultural, religious, or political motivations (Parent & Ellis, 2014; 2016). Michael and Minkenberg (2007) found that alienated white individuals may find relief and solidarity through white power slogans when they are feeling out of place culturally in their surrounding area. A sense of camaraderie is often facilitated through chat rooms and other online media sources (Castells, 2015). Proponents call

this identity a “pan-Aryan” (Michael & Minkenberg, 2007, p. 1120) identity which is based on a white race that transcends all national borders, creating a global unified sense of community. Culturally in Canada, individuals who are attracted to white nationalism perceive adverse changes to their way of life and blame the changes on multi-culturalism. This results in a negative interpretation of minority groups and immigrants (Mackey, 1999).

Mackey (1999), in her book *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada*, details identity and cultural politics in Canada. She notes that complex patterns of economic and cultural colonization and underdevelopment have fomented multiple identities in Canada that constantly spar with each other. Mackey (1999) notes that national identity in Canada is constantly evolving, which leads to ever-changing cultural identities of and within groups. She posits the example that Canadians often rely on their ethnic identities and refer to themselves as Italian-Canadian, Native-Canadian, Chinese-Canadian, Afro-Canadians (p.33), etc., creating a sense that non-ethnic (i.e., “ordinary”) Canadians are white. McCoy (2018) notes that critics of multi-culturalism believe it promotes divisiveness among Canadian groups which hinders integration and can cause disharmony over conflicting values. In the post 9/11 context, signifying the White population as Canadians creates a narrative that minorities are problematic and criminal, which can motivate white nationalists (Zine, 2012) to adopt radicalism as a philosophy.

Religious white nationalism is less prevalent in Canada than in the United States (Parent & Ellis, 2014). However, it does occur (Ross, 1992). Ross (1992) refers to arsons and assaults that protestant Ku Klux Klan members in Canada used to target Catholics and Catholic buildings in the 1920s and 1930s. Contemporary Canadian white nationalism often reflects European white nationalist sentiments that oppose immigration. Rampant are nativistic, anti-Islamic, and anti-

Semitic sentiments (Parent & Ellis, 2014). Although Canadian white nationalism is not as directly involved with registered political parties as European white nationalists, it still focuses largely on these motivators (Parent & Ellis, 2016).

White nationalists are also fearful of a grand Jewish conspiracy to control the government, which is referred to as “ZOG,” or the “Zionist Occupation Government” (Michael, 2009, p.47). In this regard, the respective governments of Western society are all seen as already corrupted by “Zionist forces” that seek to destroy the white race (Michael, 2009, p.51). This belief in a corrupt Jewish-controlled government foments reactions by white nationalists. America’s Department of Homeland Security (2009) proposed that right-wing extremists capitalized on the election of the first African American president, allowing the white nationalists to recruit more members, mobilize supporters, and broaden their appeal. The United States Department of Homeland Security further stated that an economic downturn during United States President Barrack Obama’s regime also aided in the justification of hate-filled rhetoric.

Giroux (2017) points out that President Trump’s discourse is thoroughly hate-filled and regularly targets Muslims, unauthorized immigrants, and visible minorities. Such hate-filled rhetoric has fueled an increase in the number of white supremacist and anti-Semitic groups, and acts of violence rooted in xenophobia. Giroux (2017) further states that an increase in hate crimes in the United States can be directly correlated with the timing of President Trump’s discourse. As previously stated, Alexandre Bissonnette searched for President “Trump-related material 819 times over the month before his attack” (p.1) and was reportedly spurred into action when Justin Trudeau implied on Twitter that Canada would welcome more refugees (Andy Riga, 2018), indicating the pervasive effects of United States political discourse on Canadians.

Right-wing white nationalists have also utilized a fictional book written pseudonymously by William Pierce titled the *Turner Diaries* as a basis for both a belief system and a call to action (Brodie, 1998). The *Turner Diaries* is a fictional portrayal of an apocalyptic revolutionary period in which a race war ensues, the white population overthrows the federal government, and utilizes nuclear war to eliminate all non-whites, thus creating an all-white utopia (Goehring & Dionisopoulos, 2013). Timothy McVeigh, the terrorist responsible for the Oklahoma City bombing of 1995 had clippings of the *Turner Diaries* in a sealed envelope in his car when he was arrested (McAlear, 2009).

2.5. Radicalization and Terrorism Research

This section of the literature review provides an in-depth account of the development and utilization of radicalization research to justify the selected research design. The focus of this thesis is to understand how white nationalist Canadians radicalize toward violence, and the method of research chosen reflects the need to understand the process in the most ideal way and to provide a comprehensive analysis of the process.

The focus on radicalization in this literature review examines the processes that lead to violence. As such, it circumvents research that focuses primarily on radicalized ideas or delving into more radical ideologies (i.e., ideas and concepts only) that do not unveil the processes of radicalizing into violence (i.e., actions). Only after common themes of terrorism and radicalization research are examined, can an understanding of radicalization theories and their scope be thoroughly understood. Lastly, the development of radicalization pathway theories will be examined to justify the logic for choosing Marc Sageman's four-stage Islamic radicalization theory as the basis for analysis.

2.5.1. Research on Terrorism

Terrorism research has yet to develop a consensus on the definition of terrorism or extremism (White, 2017; Parent & Ellis, 2014; Spindlove & Simonsens, 2018; Schmid, 2004). Therefore, researchers are left with an operational definition of the term. Jonathan White (2017) and Schmid (2004) claim that terrorism and extremism are social constructs and the various definitions mean different things to different people occupying different social and political realities. This creates difficulties for researchers because the definitions will differ among literature. In examining statistical fallacies in terrorism research, Schmid (2004) found that the concept being socially constructed resulted in researchers having different approaches to tallying terrorism within the research.

Onwudiwe (2007) has highlighted that prior to September 11, 2001, terrorism research was not heavily within the focus of criminologists and was largely considered an issue for other academic disciplines. This means that criminological research on the subject is relatively new and therefore still evolving. Onwudiwe (2007) also posits that criminologists have generally provided a monolithic view of terrorism and need to provide a broader, more nuanced, view that does not obstruct the object of study and separate it from its context. Lafree and Miller (2008) suggest that terrorism was not historically included as a focus of criminologists because it is rare, covert, and collective. Historically, it has been difficult to collect data on terrorists and extremists on the individual level and instead the focus has been on group-level dynamics which has made it difficult to study for criminologists (Lafree & Miller, 2008).

2.5.2. Role of Women in Terrorism

Female terrorists have been a growing phenomenon, with females having a diverse role in terrorist organizations (Bloom, 2011). According to Mia Bloom (2011), female bombers have committed a quarter of the suicide bombings between 1985 and 2010. Jessica Davis (2006) notes that women and terrorism are not an anomaly, with women being involved in operational roles in “nearly all insurgencies” (p.1). Despite the frequency of attacks committed by female terrorists, Tanya Narozhna and Andy Knight (2016) point out that female terrorists have not been a concern of the West until they started directly affecting the West. Furthermore, Norozhna and Knight (2016) state that scholars tend to feminize female suicide bombers within terrorism literature by utilizing discourse that reduces them to their biological sex, such as “mothers/wives/brides” (p. 34), which works to represent them as less than their male counterparts. Davis (2006) notes that despite the pronounced role of women in Islamic and left-wing terrorist groups, conservative right-wing movements tend to exclude women from their ranks. This is based on the conservative view of women being weaker members of society (Davis, 2006).

2.5.3. Radicalization Research

As with terrorism, there is no consensus on a definition for radicalization and often the definition is used vaguely (Schmid, 2013). Despite the lack of consensus, research on radicalization has identified some common conceptual understandings to which many scholars subscribe (Christmann, 2012; Parent & Ellis, 2011). The literature on radicalization to violent extremism notes that radicalization involves more than simply adopting a system of extreme beliefs. It implies that you must also seek to impose those beliefs on the rest of society, usually through violence or threats of violence (Della Porta & LaFree, 2012). Furthermore, many

scholars conceptualize radicalization as a process or pathway (Christmann, 2012; Greenberg, 2016; Parent & Ellis, 2011, 2014, 2016; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). This means that many scholars consider radicalized individuals as steadily heading down a road toward violent extremism.

Conceptualizing the term as a pathway process assumes that radicalization can be realistically predicted smoothly from point A to point B. In radicalization literature, however, scholars conceptualize the process in a variety of ways. Some subscribe to the view that radicalization is a collective or group process (Della Porta, 2013:2018; Tilly 2003; McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001) while others view radicalization as an individual process (Christmann, 2012; Silber & Bhatt, 2007; Sageman, 2008; Moghaddam, 2005). The differing conceptualizations of radicalization clearly suggests a lack of consensus on how to understand radicalization (Dawson, 2019). Taking the lack of consensus into account, some common approaches to understanding radicalization will be analyzed and discussed below to get a sense of the most appropriate approach to analyzing the radicalization of Canadian members of the Stormfront forum.

2.5.4. Online Radicalization and the Echo Chamber Effect

In order to understand online radicalization, it must be contrasted with its physical counterpart. Firstly, Goldsmith and Brewer (2015) claim that online information can be routinely accessed which increases the deviant opportunity for those online. Scholars like Gary Lafree (2017) suggest that investigations into online radicalization must move seamlessly between online and offline behavior. The rationale behind this is that information and contacts may be gathered online and then spread offline, or vice versa. The users are constantly in both online and offline domains on a regular basis. Furthermore, Lafree (2017) notes that actors go to the internet

as a resource for finding information once they are motivated. Lafree (2017) claims that while individuals will use the internet after they are motivated to find more information, the information is still highly influential in ideological development. Castells (2010) suggests that the widespread diffusion of the internet has increased the dissemination of damaging political information, such as corruption and immorality, providing an easier means of legitimizing the rhetoric of extremist groups.

A major contributor to the influence of online communication on radicalization is what is conceptualized as the echo chamber effect. An echo chamber is characterized by scholars as an online domain in which people selectively avoid opposing arguments which is assumed to reinforce and polarize opposing viewpoints (Karlsen et al., 2017). O'hara and Stevens (2015) suggest that people position themselves to be exposed to similar opinions as their own, filtering and restricting the feedback they receive. Du and Gregory (2017) suggest that this is a result of the community structure of online networks, which are usually developed based on similar interests or opinions. Castells (2010) provides the example of the American militia movement, which according to Castells was bolstered by the internet faster than any hate group in history. According to Castells (2010), the militia movement can utilize the internet to broadly recruit members across the United States that share their general hate of the federal government as they all have internet access and a desire to find like-minded individuals. Castells (2010) adds that chaotic movements like the militia movement and other extremists are ordinarily unlikely to have a stable organization, yet with the internet their common enemy and vision helps to build a widespread identity.

2.5.5. Group (Collective) Radicalization Dynamics and Theory

Collective or group radicalization research has focused on radicalization dynamics of groups, considering their relational dynamics with other groups and actors, instrumentalization, and ideological formations. A large amount of research that considers relational dynamics of groups and their potential for generating political violence has stemmed from what researchers in this field have labeled the *contentious politics paradigm* (Della Porta, 2013:2018; Tilly 2003; McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001).

This paradigm frames radicalization as a complex set of interactions between individuals, groups and institutional actors (Della Porta, 2018). According to Della Porta, radicalization leading to violence develops relationally from interpersonal contact and processes at the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels. This line of research sees group radicalization toward political violence as an outcome that involves contributions from both parties, acting as a sort of spiral of actions and reactions between parties (Della Porta, 2018). A reactionary and relational approach is further developed by Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou (2015) where they classify the relational dynamics mentioned earlier as arenas of interaction. The arenas of interaction according to them do not occur in a vacuum and so they identify three interactional arenas that are present in every form of collective radicalization. Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou's arenas of interaction are: "upward spirals of political opportunities," "competition for power," and "outbidding" (Alimi, Bosi, & Demetriou, 2015, p.16).

The arenas of interaction are suggested to be the most robust relational dynamics present in the collective radicalization process. The relational dynamic is similar to the Mutual Radicalization approach taken by Fathali Moghaddam (2018). Mutual radicalization is described by Fathali Moghaddam (2018) in a rather concise manner in which he postulates that mutual

radicalization occurs when two groups take increasingly extreme positions opposing one another and try to address threats, whether they are real or imagined by outperforming, weakening, or attempting to destroy the other group. Additionally, research that encompasses group dynamics has demonstrated that terrorist and extremist groups will exploit local social and political contexts and historical narratives to recruit and expand (McCoy & Knight, 2017). A good example of a group radicalization theory and its scope can be found in strain theory.

2.5.6. Strain Theory Approach to Radicalization

The strain theory is a social science theory utilized in radicalization research as an attempt to explain the response to grievances by social movements (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2008). Robert Agnew (2010) refers to the strain that is responsible for some forms of terrorism as “collective strains” (p.132). Collective strains are strains experienced by members of a group that are perpetrated by a significantly more powerful group (Agnew, 2008). For example, those displaced by the West in their home countries over the conflict in the Middle East may experience a collective strain which, in turn, could increase support for terrorist groups and facilitate terrorist action.

A collective approach like those found in strain theory offers generalizable information about social movements but fails to answer why some individuals radicalize to violence and why some others do not while experiencing the same collective strain (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2008; Agnew 2010; Newman, 2006). Collective theories may be able to explain the appeal for recruits to social movements, but they fail to consider the interpersonal processes that occur once a person is inside those social movements (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2008). Some researchers note that for some victims of violent radicalization, the social movement or cause is far less important, suggesting that some radicalized individuals could have been radicalized in any ideology that

resonated with them (Borum, 2008). For this reason, radicalization theories examining collective or group dynamics would not make a suitable choice to study the interpersonal communication on the Stormfront forum.

2.5.7. Dynamics and Theory of Individual Radicalization

Individual Radicalization theories take an alternate approach to understanding radicalization by focusing on the individual rather than the collective social movements and political climates. This section will identify some of the proponents of individual radicalization theories and how they contribute to the concept of radicalization. There are a plethora of individual approaches to understanding radicalization, such as psychodynamic approaches, identity theory, cognitive approaches (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2007), psychological approaches (Post & Gold, 2002), pathway approaches (Silber & Bhatt, 2007; Sageman, 2008; Moghaddam, 2005), rational choice theory (Crenshaw, 1998), and more.

The literature on individual radicalization has focused largely on the two main proponents of individual radicalization: cognitive radicalization and behavioural radicalization (Malthaner, 2017). According to Malthaner, cognitive and behavioural radicalization can be studied in isolation or can be intertwined. The initial focus of literature in this area was concerned with creating a profile of a radicalized individual rather than identifying a pathway (Taylor & Horgan, 2006). According to Taylor and Horgan, characterizing radicalization as a pathway allows for modeling which can be used to mark the trajectory towards radicalization. Without this trajectory, the concept cannot be properly understood as a process, which results in a one-dimensional profile of a terrorist instead of understanding how they got to the point of extremism.

Neumann (2013) identifies a fault in individual radicalization theories that do not connect cognitive and behavioural radicalization with their social movements and environments. He posits that theories should provide a mutual understanding between cognitive and behavioural foci of radicalization and the social environments surrounding them rather than focusing on one approach. To Neumann, this provides a better potential of understanding radicalization of individuals in vastly different circumstances rather than focusing on only psychological or sociological factors in isolation. Randy Borum (2008) insists that individuals may adopt extremist beliefs and conduct extremist actions without being heavily invested in the radical ideologies of the extremist group. This means that social ties and the social environment individuals are entrenched in are just as important to examine as the ideology and actions taken by individuals on the path to radicalization.

Expanding upon the importance of social networks there have been multiple important conceptual understandings that have resulted from studies in the field of individual radicalization that focus on the social environment. For example, individuals feel less responsible for actions committed in the name of their social group, and individual opinions and attitudes become more extreme in a social group context (McCauley & Segal, 2009). Individual radicalization theories have identified consistent patterns of behaviour which illustrate the importance of social networks and social environments. For example, *Mobilization via pre-existing social ties* is an important concept regarding recruitment into violent extremist groups through the individual's social environment. It identifies commonalities between extremist groups, in which individuals are often recruited through previous social ties such as friendships or family prior to being invested in the extremist ideology (McAdam & Paulsen, 1993; Diani, 2013; Malhaner, 2017).

This concept is very important when trying to identify the first contact with an extremist group and understanding how individuals initially become involved in a movement.

Close friendships or family ties cannot, however, explain radicalization and violent extremism by themselves. Individual radicalization theories provide explanations of socio-structural conditions and individual vulnerabilities when it comes to extremist ideals. Individual radicalization can target an individual of any type of group as they consider themselves an outgroup that does not fit into their society (Sageman, 2011). Sageman's (2011) book *Leaderless Jihad* argues that individuals often experience personal vulnerabilities and encounter socio-structural conditions that are unique to each individual. Sageman uses the example of a young Muslim named Omar who was living in England and was thought by his friends and family to be an intelligent and kind individual. Despite these benevolent descriptions, Omar participated in terrorism, kidnapped tourists in India, and dedicated his life to violent jihadism. Individual radicalization theories attempt to understand the process in which a vulnerable individual becomes a violent extremist.

2.5.8. Framing theory

Framing theory is one of the more promising theories used to explain radicalization (Borum, 2011). It provides a way of conceptualizing the broader dynamics and processes of political mobilization (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2008). Framing theory seeks to explain violent radicalization through a constructed reality that is shared by members of violent groups which categorizes problems as injustices rather than misfortunes (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2008). If the problem is framed as an injustice rather than a misfortune, then presumably there is someone responsible for the injustice, which motivates group members. When discussing framing theory scholars use the term *frame alignment* when referring to the point at which an individual's

framing of reality coincides with the group's framing, resulting in a motivation to dedicate themselves to the position of the group (Beck, 2008). For example, white nationalists are cohesive in their belief that there are Zionist forces controlling Western governments. If an individual were to attribute their personal issues to a Zionist occupational government, they would align with the group's framing protocol.

Colin Beck (2008) argues that media representations are often the central disseminator of rhetoric and claims by social movements. Representations by the media can be in the form of manifestos, calls to action, speeches and more. While framing theory may be able to develop a more generalizable understanding of why radical groups mobilize and resonate with individual recruits, it fails to explain the intricacies of why some individuals within those movements make the transition from extremist thought to extremist action and others do not (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2008). The complex factors involved in interpersonal communication cannot be thoroughly investigated by examining macro-level collective dynamics. Radicalization pathway theories present a solution to this problem.

2.6. Radicalization Pathway Theories

The goal of this thesis is to understand how Canadian white nationalists develop online and how their trajectory may contribute to current debates surrounding radicalization pathway theories. In order to achieve that aim, this section of the literature review is designed to understand radicalization pathway literature and models and to identify the most relevant radicalization pathway theory for data analysis. Radicalization pathways were explored broadly in the development of this literature review, but three radicalization pathways are examined in detail in this section to justify the choice of utilizing Marc Sageman's four-stage processes as the basis of analysis for this thesis. These pathways have been identified in peer-reviewed journals

and are considered recent, as they are post 9/11. This approach was also undertaken by Simon Henry in his 2016 PhD dissertation.

Individual pathways towards violence have been developed because of the shared skepticism by scholars of extremist pathologies or profiles of an extremist (Della Porta 1995; 2013). Scholars now believe that there is no pathology that inclines one to become a terrorist (White, 2017) and instead there are a complex set of cognitive processes that lead to developing a violent radicalized outlook. Pathway theories emphasize the cognitive role of social ties and interpersonal processes in the radicalization process (Della Porta 1995; 2013). Close personal bonds formed in subcultures and radical networks are a powerful influence in militant forms of protest, as they generate trust and loyalty which help sustain commitment while under distress or pressure (Della Porta, 2018). Malthaner and Waldmann (2012) found personal networks to be crucial in radicalizing towards violence in both ethno-nationalist and religious movements, although they can take very different forms which, in turn, can shape individual pathways differently.

There are a number of approaches to radicalization pathway theories, such as: Paul Gill's Four-Stage Suicide Bomber Radicalization Pathway Model (Gill, 2008), Association of Chiefs of Police Officer's Prevent Radicalization Pyramid (Christmann, 2012), New York Police Department's Four-Stage Jihadi-Salafi Islamist Radicalization Process (Silber & Bhatt, 2007), Fathali M. Moghaddam's Staircase to Suicide Terrorism (Moghaddam, 2005), Quintan Wiktorowicz's al-Muhajiroun Islamist Radicalization Influences Model (Wiktorowicz, 2004), Randy Borum's Four-Stage Process of Ideological Development (Borum, 2011), Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko's Mechanisms of Political Radicalization (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008), and Marc Sageman's Four-Stage Islamist Radicalization Process (Sageman,

2008) and more. For the purpose of this literature review, Randy Borum's four-stage process, Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko's Mechanisms of Political radicalization, and Marc Sageman's four-stage pathway theory will all be detailed and discussed to show the various types of pathway models created and there will be a case made for one to utilize for analysis.

2.6.1. Randy Borum's Four-Stage Process of Ideological Development

Randy Borum's Four-Stage ideological model proposes a development pathway in which to conceptualize the terrorist mindset. Borum attempts to understand a diverse array of extremist groups by creating an ideological development pathway that is designed to encompass multiple ideologies and viewpoints (Borum, 2011). This leads to a more generalized model that focuses on how an extremist will justify violence internally. Borum acknowledges that a universal method of developing extremist ideas that would justify violence is highly unlikely, but he attempts to create a generalized ideological development model for practical use (Borum, 2003).

Borum's model takes a psychological approach that is designed to be a heuristic model for investigators and intelligence analysts to use when assessing behaviours and experiences of groups with extremist ideas (2003). This model has four stages, with the first involving a group or individual framing an event or condition as unjust. Borum (2003) claims that an undesirable event or condition can be socially or economically focused. The second stage involves applying exclusivity to the perceived injustice. Borum (2003) insists that identifying an event as unfair creates feelings of resentment toward the creator(s) of the event. For example, he suggests that the excess consumerism attributed to the United States by countries in the Middle East highlights economic disparities and facilitates resentment towards the West. Borum (2003) then claims that the feelings of resentment will be attributed to a group or individual that they deem responsible. When there is a negative event or condition there is likely a group responsible for creating or

facilitating that negative event. Lastly, Borum (2003) suggests that they would then demonize the entity responsible, insisting that good people would not intentionally inflict harmful or unpleasant conditions on them. This leads to a justification of violence or aggression, as the demonized group is labeled as evil and thus aggression towards that which is deemed as evil will not be perceived as unjust.

Borum's model is a sequential four-stage process surrounding ideological development. Utilizing a sequential model allows Borum to aid law enforcement in providing a more predictable pattern of development. This is not a surprise as Borum first posted his model for the terrorist mindset on an FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin (Borum, 2012). With a sequential process, Borum permits his model to be used as a tool by law enforcement rather than merely as a formal social science theory for scholars. Borum acknowledges that no universal method exists for developing extremist ideas; however, he attempts to develop a way of forecasting an extremist's behavior by utilizing four common observable stages (2003). Realizing that individuals live in their own internal version of reality rather than reality itself, Borum provides a model that attempts to map out the development of individuals who do not operate under typical ideological circumstances. For example, Borum identifies the differences in the internalization of suicide bombings. To most of Western society, suicide is identified with a sense of hopelessness, but suicide bombers are treated as martyrs in the eyes of some extremists (Borum, 2003). Borum pondered this difference and created a model that accounts for alternative ideological perspectives.

2.6.2. McCauley and Moskalkenko's Mechanisms of Political Radicalization

Another theoretical route that could have been undertaken in this thesis is the twelve-step mechanism of political radicalization presented by Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalkenko

(2008) and outlined in Table 2.1. McCauley and Moskalenko’s twelve-step scheme of political radicalization is a pathway designed to encompass personal, group, and mass motivations of radicalization in a single conceptual framework (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). They use the term “mechanism” to encompass a psychological underpinning that includes the “manner in which something is accomplished” (p.415).

Table 2.1: Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko’s Mechanisms of Political Radicalization

Level of Radicalization	Mechanism
Individual	1. Personal Victimization
Individual	2. Political Grievance
Individual	3. Joining a radical group – Slippery Slope
Individual	4. Joining a radical group – Power of Love
Individual	5. Shift toward Extremism in like-minded groups
Group	6. Extreme Cohesion under isolation and threat
Group	7. Competition for the same base of support
Group	8. Competition with state power – Condensation
Group	9. Within-group competition – Fissioning
Mass	10. Jujitsu politics
Mass	11. Hate
Mass	12. Martyrdom

They are not fixed on twelve mechanisms and realize that there is the potential for more to be discovered. However, they consider these twelve as important to understand political radicalization. Utilizing a pyramid metaphor, with higher levels of the pyramid containing fewer persons but an increase in radicalized behaviours, feelings, and beliefs, they present a highly

reactive approach (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). The two researchers present 10 reactive mechanisms and two autonomous mechanisms (2008). The third mechanism, “joining a radical group – the slippery slope” (p. 419), and mechanism number nine, “within-group competition” (p. 426), are relatively autonomous as individuals self-radicalized via a phase of self-justification of beliefs and behaviours. They also compete within their respective group for a higher level of acceptance. The other 10 mechanisms are reactive, which is very important in the process of radicalization according to McCauley and Moskalenko (2008) because they adhere to the two-way reactive nature of radicalization that Della Porta (1995; 2012) posited. According to Della Porta, as one group reacts in a more radical way, the opposing group, whether it be the state or a non-state group, will react in an increasingly more extreme manner to compensate, thereby creating an ever-churning cycle of adopting more and more extreme measures and beliefs.

Borum (2012) considers McCauley and Moskalenko’s pathway as a model to explain group conflicts. Their pyramid of radicalization attempts to explain the relationship between the radicalization processes of the individual, a group, and the masses. McCauley and Moskalenko admit that it seems unlikely that any single theory can integrate all the mechanisms and influences that drive an individual to extremist political action (2008, p. 429). Instead, they suggest that there are multiple and diverse pathways leading individuals and groups to extremist violence.

2.6.3. Sageman’s Four-Stage Islamist Radicalization Process

Marc Sageman’s four-stage Islamist radicalization process is an Al Qaeda-influenced non-sequential framework for analyzing the radicalization process of Islamist extremists (Sageman, 2008). Sageman designed his model to develop a strategy for fighting the spread of terrorism.

Sageman (2008) proposes that to combat terrorism one must understand the nature of the terrorist's behavior. Sageman claims that the average Islamist terrorist cell is comprised of a "small group of mostly young people, who aspire or belong to a violent social movement that uses violence against civilians for political ends" (2008, p.224). Sageman believes that terrorists are simply young people seeking fame and thrills and a sense of belonging to something special rather than being a product of poverty or brainwashing (2008). Sageman posits that usually terrorists are radicalized within small groups of friends who gradually evolve into terrorist groups rather spontaneously (2008). He proposes that these types of terrorists are attempting to construct a utopia for themselves in the name of their God (Sageman, 2008).

Sageman indicates that over 80% of the arrested terrorists in Europe and the United States are second- and third-generation Muslims (2008). This demonstrates that they are radicalized in the West and not in the Middle East. It is not surprising then that online radicalization is replacing face-to-face radicalization, according to Sageman. Sageman (2008) expands on this concept, claiming that local groups at radical mosques or madrasas used to become radicalized together by creating an echo chamber and amplifying their grievances and intensifying bonds that generated different values from their host society, leading to a gradual separation from the rest of society. He postulates that Internet communication, often in the form of discussion forums, has replaced face-to-face radicalization by creating easily accessible niches within which participants can interact and function as an echo chamber. This phenomenon can contribute to the separation from the rest of society. Sageman (2008) considers the extensive discourse present on the forums as the "true leader" of the social movement as the discourses function to influence the members of the social movement.

Marc Sageman's (2008) four-stage process was designed to illustrate the radicalization processes of both online and offline extremists. The stages of Sageman's pathways are as follows: a sense of moral outrage, a specific interpretation of the world, resonance with personal experiences, and mobilization through networks (see Table 2.2). The first stage, a sense of moral outrage, involves a cognitive reaction to a perceived moral violation. Sageman (2008) provided the example of the war in Iraq which has provided fuel to Islamist radicalization beginning in 2003. According to Sageman, the moral violation must be interpreted in just the right way to trigger a move toward radicalization. That is where the second stage, a specific interpretation of the world, becomes relevant. This stage is the point at which Sageman (2008) suggests the group would attribute moral violations as relating to much larger social concerns, which for Islamist extremists would be identifying a war on Islam by the West.

The third stage involves having perceptions from everyday life that make Muslims feel that they are being discriminated against because of their faith. Sageman (2008) provides the example of the Muslim Europeans who have extremely high unemployment rates compared to the rest of their society and may attribute this to discrimination stemming from the War on Terrorism and the fact that they are Muslim. According to Sageman, the first three factors work together to influence some young Muslims to become angry at their host society and through the fourth stage (network mobilization) they have the potential to act on their intensified ideology and become terrorists.

Table 2.2: Sageman’s Four-Stage Islamist Radicalization Process (Sageman, 2008)

Stage	Description
1	A sense of moral outrage (Reacting to major moral violations);
2	A specific interpretation of the world (Seeing moral violations as related to larger concerns, i.e., a war against one’s religion);
3	Resonance with personal experiences (Individual perceptions of everyday life that relate to bias and discrimination); and
4	Mobilization through networks (Organizing and committing actions through connections with like-minded people).

Sageman’s model contains both cognitive and situational factors (King & Taylor, 2011). The first three factors of Sageman’s theory are cognitive and can work to reinforce each other. For example, personal experiences can lead to moral outrage which in turn can lead to an altered interpretation of the world (Sageman, 2008; King & Taylor, 2011). The fourth factor is situational in that it occurs within the social movement, differing according to each situation. It can serve as a way in which activists can mobilize using the social network. For example, some individuals may encounter friendly groups that drive them towards terrorism while others are steered down an alternative route. Sageman (2008) takes great pains to emphasize that these stages are recurrent but not necessarily sequential. In other words, they are all present but do not necessarily flow in any particular order. This point provides a valuable analytical tool for potentially predicting the actions and progressions of different extremist groups.

Sageman’s work is designed to explain Islamist radicalization but the model contains aspects of social psychology that I believe has the potential to be transferrable to other extremist

networks. For example, Sageman's stages are not only available for Islamists in their conceptualization, as any type of subculture has the potential to experience a sense of moral outrage, develop a problematic interpretation of the world, resonate that interpretation with their personal experiences, or mobilize through their network. These social psychology concepts are not exclusively available for Islamist extremists, they have just been found as core developmental concepts for Islamists by Sageman. It seems apparent that Sageman has developed a pathway that is suitable for generating an understanding of online radicalization, with a distinct applicability to internet forums. The question at hand is whether that pathway is applicable to other subcultures, in this case, Canadian white nationalists.

2.6.4. Why Utilize Marc Sageman's pathway for the analysis of White Nationalism? Online Radicalization and a Leaderless Jihad

When deciding on an analytical framework to utilize for this thesis, it was important to select the most appropriate pathway for generating a fruitful analysis. With all the radicalization pathway literature available, there is none concerning Canadian white nationalists, creating an onus to find a pathway that would be most suitable for the platform the subculture is entrenched in. It was ultimately decided that Marc Sageman's four-stage radicalization pathway would be able to give rise to the most nuanced findings given its applicability to online forums and his acknowledgement of the importance of online communication in the development of radicalized extremism. For example, Marc Sageman applied the concept of *Leaderless Jihad* (2008) in examining the global Islamist terrorist threat. Sageman explains that a central organizing force behind terrorism is unnecessary and absent in modern terrorism. Instead, acts of terrorism are carried out by independent local groups that draw inspiration from the terrorist ideology. This concept from Sageman is especially applicable given the global reach the stormfront forums has

and the protection it has received from authorities, allowing it to stay functioning despite its hate-based rhetoric and ideology (Meddaugh & Kay, 2009; Bowman-Grieve, 2009; De Koster & Houtman, 2008; Vyssotsky & McCarthy, 2015).

Sageman (2008) acknowledges the role of the Internet, noting that new terrorist groups are often physically isolated but can stay in communication through Internet forums in the hopes of being accepted as a member of the group they have come to idolize. Sageman believes that terrorists are “simply young people seeking fame and thrills” bolstered by a belief that they will build a better world through their cause (2008, p. 224). The Internet plays an integral part in almost every young person’s life; it is where they get their information, socialize, and spend idle time. Lorne Dawson (2009) in congruence with Sageman denounces the idea that terrorists are brainwashed and instead claim they are active participants in their own radicalization process. Does this understanding of radicalization transfer to alternative ideologies other than the al Qaeda-based Islamist extremism that Sageman examined? The stormfront forums present an ideal platform for utilizing a pathway model that analyzes radicalization to jihadism to assess the evolution and path of right-wing white nationalists in Canada. Marc Sageman realized that online radicalization presents new opportunities for terrorist groups and radicalization processes, and so he attempts to account for radicalization in the digital age. Bowman-Grieve (2009) notes that online white nationalist community members will also utilize online forums to contact like-minded individuals and supporters that are geographically close to them, thus mimicking Sageman’s revelations of online forum use by al Qaeda (2008).

Marc Sageman realizes the significance of radicalization through online socialization. Lorne Dawson (2009) refers to Sageman’s (2008) reference to homegrown jihadist terrorists as just a “bunch of guys” when examining the importance of online socialization in radicalization.

As Dawson (2009) puts it, “they are semi-autonomous grass-roots groups responding to either a broader social movement or a set of ideas” (p.69). For example, homegrown jihadists are not feeling first-hand the frustrations of al Qaeda members that are in direct contact with the conflicts in the Middle East. Both are Muslim and embrace violence but the circumstances that lead to their violence are vastly different. Western-born jihadists are not directly exposed to the negative effects of the war in the Middle East and their influence to adopt a radical jihadist perspective is less practical than, for example, those in war torn areas. Consider the case referenced earlier in this literature review that was examined by Sageman (2011) of Omar, a western born Jihadist who had a middle to high class upbringing and a bright future in the United Kingdom yet dedicated his life to becoming a Jihadist. This case presented by Sageman features a direct parallel to white nationalists Canadians, who are Western born yet still consider themselves to be in a war to save the white race. With the focus on online forum communication and having a Western focused sample, Marc Sageman’s pathway model presents the most suitable model for analyzing the pathway of Canadian white nationalists on the stormfront forums and contributing to radicalization pathway research.

2.7. Conclusion:

The purpose of this thesis is to aid radicalization pathway research by studying an under-researched extremist population, Canadian white nationalists. A review of the applicable literature examined the scope and characteristics of racism and white nationalism in Canada to highlight the pervasiveness and history of right-wing extremist violence in Canada. The literature indicates that Canada is not exempt from racist discourse, groups, and violence. Following this, a review of radicalization research and theories makes a case for the best theory to utilize for analysis. After examining the ways in which radicalization has been examined in the past, it was

evident that radicalization pathways presented the greatest opportunity for predicting and preventing radicalization to violence. After examining a plethora of radicalization pathways, three were detailed to highlight potential alternatives and make a case for a single pathway to utilize for analysis. From this, Marc Sageman's four-stage Islamist theory was chosen based on its focus on extremists who employ online forums like those who comprise the participants of this thesis.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction:

In the preceding chapter outlining a review of the applicable literature, it was established that there exists a considerable gap in knowledge surrounding the radicalization of white nationalist Canadians. This was demonstrated by the lack of research conducted on white nationalism in Canada in the context of radicalization. With the limitations of research on Canadian white nationalism in mind, there was an emphasis placed on going beyond the examination of published research articles and to examine the subculture firsthand to understand their development. In order to address this need, this chapter on Research Methodology outlines the use of a conventional approach to conducting a content analysis of the white nationalist forum stormfront.org. A conventional approach to radicalization is an approach in which the study begins with observation and codes are defined during data analysis and derived from the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Analyzing the open-sourced content on the stormfront.org forum allowed for a detailed retroactive study of Canadian white nationalist development. Given the unique circumstances terrorists and extremists are in, it is unlikely that you can establish a proper sample with face to face methods (Khalil, 2019). With face to face methods such as interviews, recruitment for extremists and terrorists is largely from a snowballing process which has the propensity to elevate the risk of sample bias as researchers will be referred to likeminded group members rather than a varied sample of ideologically affiliated members (Khalil, 2019). Open-sourced forums provide a solution to that problem. Through a conventional content analysis approach, the attitudes and behaviours of Canadian white nationalists were studied directly from the source and over time, providing a detailed study that answers the two-part research question which is

the focus of this thesis. Analysis of the Stormfront forum was key in comprehending [1] how Canadian white nationalists behave and develop; and, [2] how this behaviour may contribute to debates concerning radicalization pathways.

3.2. Justification of Research Methodology

The use of an unobtrusive research methodology when studying white nationalism in Canada provided substantial security benefits to both the researcher and participants. An unobtrusive methodology is described by Christine Hine (2011) as a methodology of choice for researchers looking to avoid having participants aware of the researcher's presence as opposed to methods utilizing more direct interaction such as interviews and surveys. Methods that leave participants unaware that they are being studied circumvents the issue of having participants potentially changing their behaviours and responses to be more socially desired (Hine, 2011).

The stormfront community is notoriously supremacist in nature despite being labeled as a white nationalist website, with members expressing a white supremacy based discourse and rhetoric on the forum (Meddaugh & Kay, 2009; Bowman-Grieve, 2009; Koster & Houtman, 2008; Vyssotsky & McCarthy, 2015). It is highly unlikely that individuals in the Canadian white nationalist and supremacist subcultures would be willing to be directly examined by a researcher (Khalil, 2019). White nationalists and supremacists would be reluctant to participate in research that [1] considers them extremist and [2] attempts to map out their radicalization. The participants choose to commiserate online anonymously in order to avoid detection from the public, as they do not share their views or consider them the enemy. This increases the likelihood that answers from white nationalists and supremacists in academic surveys or interviews would contain fabricated and false information if they even chose to participate at all. The use of an unobtrusive methodology circumvents this problem by examining the subculture in its natural

setting, providing online conversational discourse between peers as primary data. The internet provides a beneficial setting for this type of unobtrusive methodology as it is likely to make people feel less restrained and express themselves more openly as they perceive the space to be safer (Suler, 2004).

There are ethical concerns surrounding the social risks of using publicly available data without informing the participants, as they have the potential to be negatively affected if their extremist ideology online were connected to their real-life identity. However, there are factors that lessen this risk to participants. First, forum members create public discussion posts even though they are aware that there is a private communication option available to them. This creates an expectation that their publicly presented opinion may be read and responded to by others. Not opting to restrict their posts to the private conversation stream indicates an acceptance that all their displayed and publicly accessible discussion posts are created with the intention of them being read and potentially responded to by anyone. Using pseudonyms such as “participant 1” over already non-descript forum member screen names provides an extra layer of anonymity.

Furthermore, there are benefits to utilizing an unobtrusive methodology. Since participants are afforded anonymity online while using forum-names, they will be more inclined to answer honestly (Hine, 2011). The Stormfront forum is a public forum. It has a warning on its landing page that informs users that their posts have the potential to be read by outside sources (stormfront.org, 2019). This means the forum members are aware of potential third-party readers. This provides the researcher with the ability to gather candid first-person information concerning white nationalist experiences and thought processes. This process allows the data gathered to be considered more accurate and reliable when compared to face-to-face encounters given the

likelihood for a population such as white nationalists to be extremely wary and untrusting of so-called outsiders. This is extremely important given the lack of research surrounding white nationalism in Canada.

3.3. The Research Method

A conventional approach to qualitative content analysis of Canadians on the stormfront.org web forum was chosen as the research method for this thesis. A conventional approach to content analysis allows the data to speak for itself and to be compared to radicalization research following data collection and analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This method was chosen as it represents the best means of obtaining data in an environment that has its own unique method of communication via codewords and symbols and has not received sufficient academic attention. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) identified three separate approaches to qualitative content analysis that have their own strengths and weaknesses. They are conventional, directed and summative (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

As indicated by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) in their three approaches to content analysis, conventional content analysis represents an inductive method where the codes and keywords are not derived prior to data analysis. This approach begins with observation rather than keywords or theory, which provides a greater opportunity to let the data speak for itself and develop codes that are more representative of the unique subculture being studied rather than past theory and research (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). A summative approach works more soundly when keywords can be analyzed and counted quantitatively to indicate their prevalence and contextual use. This type of method would not be suitable, given the lack of research surrounding Canadian white nationalists and the lack of understanding of their discourse and rhetoric while in their online environment. A directed approach would also prove unsuitable because biases from prior

radicalization pathway theories may encroach on the design of the Canadian white nationalist development pathway and create a pathway that mirrors previous pathways instead of deriving from the data itself. Consider table 3.1, provided below, outlining the three different approaches to qualitative content analysis and how they function:

Table 3.1: Three Approaches to Content Analysis (Hsieh, and Shannon, 2005)

<i>Type of Content Analysis</i>	<i>Study Starts With</i>	<i>Timing of Defining Codes or Keywords</i>	<i>Source of Codes or Keywords</i>
Conventional content analysis	Observation	Codes are defined during data analysis	Codes are derived from data
Directed content analysis	Theory	Codes are defined before and during data analysis	Codes are derived from theory or relevant research findings
Summative content analysis	Keywords	Keywords are identified before and during data analysis	Keywords are derived from interest of researchers or review of literature

Instead, a conventional approach was utilized to inductively supplement a movement from observation to theory. An inductive approach creates an environment for the researcher to identify patterns in their observations and create hypothesis and theories from those patterns (Elo & Kyngas, 2007; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This type of approach works better when trying to create a development pathway for white nationalists rather than trying to apply the concepts of an already-created radicalization pathway. This does not mean that literature on radicalization theories was not utilized, but that the development pathway was created from observations rather than trying to fit the observations into an established theory. Using this method means that biases attributed from reading radicalization pathway literature will be less likely to become apparent in the development pathway created. This is approach although inductive in nature, is employed in order to test the tenets of Marc Sageman’s (2008) four-stage theory for new theoretical insights. Scholars have utilized a conventional content analysis approach to Internet forums before,

suggesting the more inductive approach allows for greater openness to new findings (Seale, et al., 2006; Ravert, et al., 2015).

3.4. Sampling Frame

The target population of this thesis is Canadian white nationalists. The radicalization of Canadian white nationalists is difficult to pinpoint with a simple random sample and since the sampling unit is an individual person, it presents ethical issues as well. The goal of sampling is not simply the sample size, but the adequacy and ability of the sample to answer the questions this research poses (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013).

For the purpose of this thesis, individuals within the sample frame were Canadians who involve themselves in Canadian discourse. The use of a purposive sampling strategy allows the researcher to gather uniquely Canadian data without any false positives. Given the specific objectives this thesis was designed to answer, a strategic sampling choice proved to be the most practical method to represent the target population.

3.5. Data Source

The data source chosen for this thesis was the online web forum stormfront.org. This web forum consists of over 340,000 white nationalists using an open-sourced web forum that has been in operation since 1995 (stormfront.org, 2019). The forum is split into sections based on subjects of interest and geographical location, including representative sections for sixteen different international groups and regions.

Data were retrieved from members who frequent the Canadian subforum (<https://www.stormfront.org/forum/f40>) to gather data relevant to Canada. There have been other studies conducted on the Stormfront forums which have suggested that Stormfront is an ideal

data source for first-hand accounts of racist and extremist discourse (Meddaugh & Kay, 2009; Bowman-Grieve, 2009; De Koster & Houtman, 2008; Vyssotsky & McCarthy, 2015), although this is the first study focusing on Stormfront through the lens of Canadian radicalization.

3.6. Sample Population

The sample population was gathered using a purposive sampling approach. A purposive sampling approach is a method of sampling widely used in qualitative research when a researcher is looking for information-rich cases that can make the best use of the limited resources of the researcher (Palinkas et al. 2015). It involves selecting participants based on inclusion criteria determined by the researcher in order to provide the best method for answering the proposed research questions. This approach was undertaken in this thesis to circumvent any potential irrelevant data gathering, given the vast size of the stormfront forum and the focus on Canadian white nationalists. To adopt a random sample would not be beneficial to finding cases rich with information that can help develop an understanding of the development of Canadian white nationalists. Roderick Graham (2016) also utilized a purposive sampling approach when studying white extremist ideologies online. This allowed Graham (2016) to find cases specific to the ideological group he was looking for and develop an analysis that can specifically answer his research question. The purpose of this research was to understand the development of Canadian white nationalists, not to focus on the subculture globally. With this in mind, the Canadian subforum (stormfront.org/f40) underwent an initial examination by the researcher to select 10 individuals who fit the two inclusion criteria:

- 1) The users must post regularly in the Canadian subsection of the Stormfront forum, meaning they were active within the Canadian subsection (stormfront.org/f40) of Stormfront and posted about Canadian issues, and

2) The users must identify themselves as Canadian, either overtly or contextually.

The first selection criterion was designed to find individuals who have been influenced heavily by Canadian white nationalist discourse rather than other sections of the large forum. This was calculated by using the subject's overall post count in conjunction with the advanced search function on the website. The users' overall post count was compared to their post count in the Canadian subsection to identify users who were heavily invested in Canadian white nationalist discourse and rhetoric.

For the purpose of this thesis, users with at least 50% of their posts in the Canadian subsection of Stormfront were chosen. This is to make sure the data is more representative of the target population. The posters examined had a combined average of 65% of their posts in the Canadian section of stormfront with 1,471 posts occurring in the Canadian section and having 2,263 posts overall. The second inclusion criteria required the researcher to search the Canadian section thoroughly to find individuals who identified as Canadian, to verify that they were Canadian white nationalists, who are the focus of this study. This involved an initial screening of the Canadian subsection of the forum for the 2018 period, marking individuals down who identified themselves as Canadian, for further screening. To do this, the Canadian subforum was organized by the last post (see example below) and the threads with posts from 2018 were read to find suitable participants for this thesis. There were 43 posters that were found to identify themselves as Canadian and during screening the first 10 participants that met the required posting percentage in the Canadian subforum were chosen.

Last Post <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Replies	Views
02-14-2018 01:41 PM by wildwiseandwhite	61	15,683
02-11-2018 02:02 AM by OverThere	2	561
02-09-2018 11:35 AM by Leafcloaked	3	1,668
02-09-2018 11:32 AM by Leafcloaked	64	35,988
02-08-2018 08:09 PM by Cydonia	1	438

3.7. Concerning the Time Period of the Data

Concerning the time period being examined, forum participants contain varied posting times between the period of 2008-2018. As it is very unlikely to find 10 individuals who have identical posting periods, the participants contain varied posting careers in between a 10-year period. The average forum career length was 6 years, varied between 2008 to 2018, with median of 6.5. All the participants selected posted during the 2018 year in the Canadian section of stormfront, as this was the basis of participant selection. In this way, participants are discussing contemporary Canadian discourse. Since the stormfront forum has been open since 1995, it is important to make sure that contemporary Canadian discourse is the focus of analysis. A contemporary time period selection was decided as the approach of choice given the understanding of racism shifting from racism to xenoracism in contemporary Canada that was determined in the literature review. Matthew Houdek (2018) in his study of racialized violence found that the way racism is understood and expressed is continuously evolving. This way the data received will more accurately represent the current white nationalist population.

3.8. Data Gathering

Data from the identified sample was gathered utilizing the Stormfront websites advanced search function. Data was extracted from the white nationalist website stormfront.org from Canadian members who frequently contribute to the Canadian subsection of the forum, <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/f40> (stormfront.org, 2019). The Canadian section is designed for forum posting involving distinctly Canadian discourse. The advanced search function provided on the website was used to display the participants' posts in chronological order and be easily gathered utilizing the Windows Snipping Tool for screen capturing. See below:

The screenshot displays the 'Search Forums' interface on the Stormfront website. It is divided into two main sections: 'Search Forums' and 'Search Options'.

Search Forums:

- Search by Keyword:** A text input field for 'Keyword(s)' and a dropdown menu for 'Search Entire Posts'.
- Search by User Name:** A text input field for 'User Name', a dropdown menu for 'Find Posts by User', and a checked checkbox for 'Exact name'.

Search Options:

- Find Threads with:** A dropdown menu set to 'At Least' and a text input field for '0 Replies'.
- Find Posts from:** A dropdown menu set to 'Any Date' and a dropdown menu set to 'and Newer'.
- Sort Results by:** A dropdown menu set to 'Last Posting Date' and a dropdown menu set to 'in Descending Order'.
- Show Results as:** Radio buttons for 'Threads' (selected) and 'Posts'.
- Search in Forum(s):** A list of forum categories including 'Search All Open Forums', 'Search Subscribed Forums', 'Private Forums', 'Introduction to Stormfront', 'Guidelines for Posting', 'Introduction and FAQ', 'Announcements', 'New Members Introduce Yourselves', 'News', 'Stormfront News Service', 'Newlinks & Articles', 'Politics & Continuing Crises', and 'STOP WHITE GENOCIDE messages to Whi'. A checked checkbox for 'Also search in child forums' is located below the list.

Posts gathered were kept in their chronological order and were recorded for analysis and evidence.

3.9. Theoretical Approach

Data gathered was developed into a Canadian white nationalist development path which was analyzed in reference to Marc Sageman's Four-Stage Islamist Radicalization Process (2008). The rationale for selecting a pathway design is outlined in the literature review. Pathways provide a method of predicting radicalization to violence, and this thesis attempts to aid in the development of radicalization pathways examining a subculture other than Islamist extremists. The models examined were models utilized in multiple peer-reviewed journals and are widely regarded (Christmann, 2012; Borum 2011). Sageman's model was chosen because of its applicability to online domains and because it was designed by examining a different population (Islamist extremists) on an Internet forum, which benefits theory testing. Sageman's pathway and conceptualization of radicalization can be directly compared to the analysis developed in this thesis since they both examine extremist forum populations through the lens of radicalization.

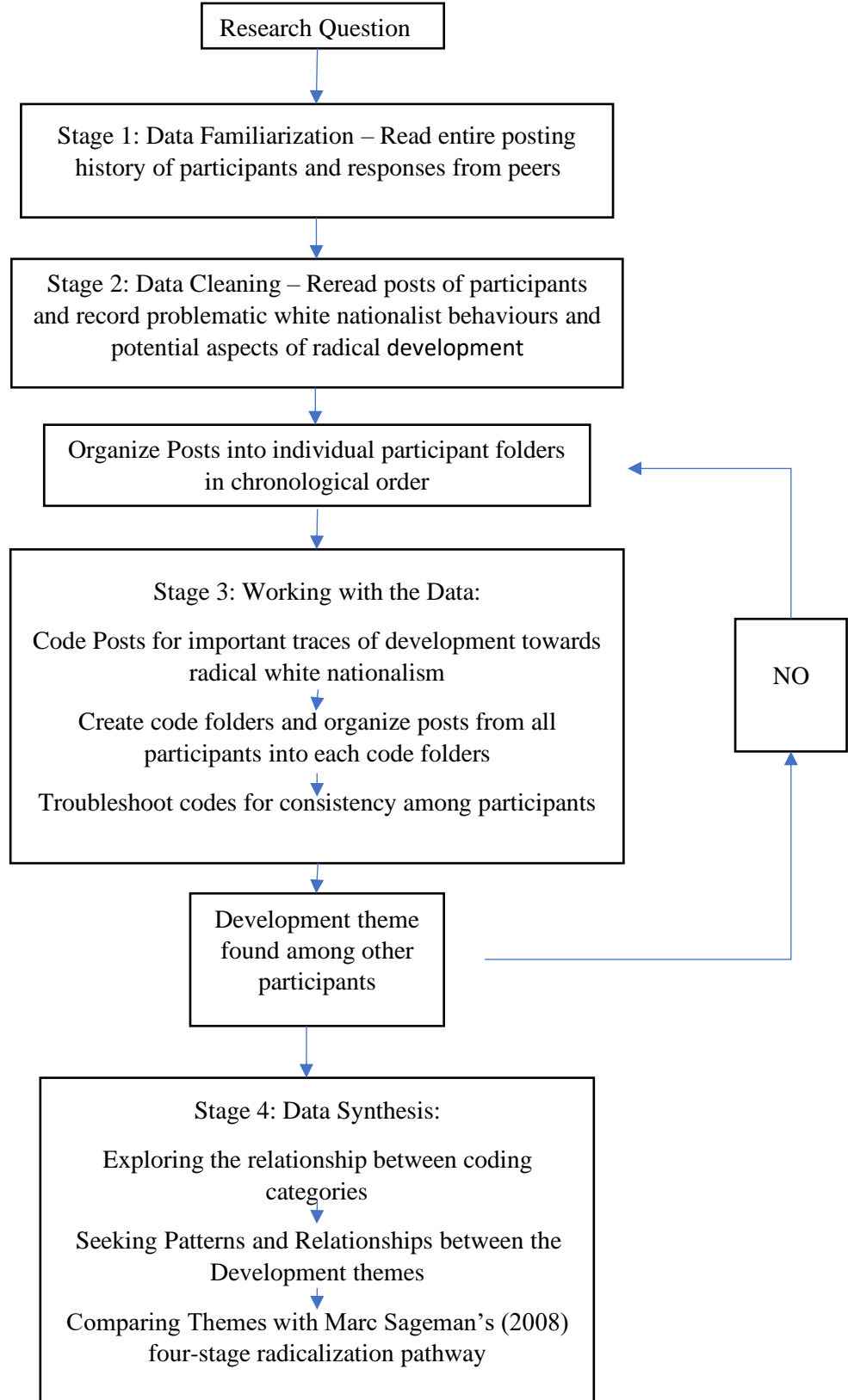
In order to accurately test the development path created in this study against Marc Sageman's (2008) four-stage development path, the central tenets of Sageman's theory had to be broken down based on conceptual understandings of radicalization found in the literature review. Sageman's theory was found to be non-sequential (2008) despite other radicalization theories depicting the process as a linear process (Moghaddam, 2005; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). From this understanding, the development path created in this study was analyzed to understand if the development of white nationalist Canadians was sequential or non-sequential. This approach was taken by Simon Henry (2016) in his study of Australian Survivalist sub-cultures and radicalization pathways. Next, the four-stages proposed by Marc Sageman (2008) were broken down thematically and conceptually to develop an understanding of the impact those stages had on the development of a radicalized mindset. The stages of Marc Sageman's (2008)

pathway were then directly compared to the stages of the development path created in this study to identify any similarities or differences.

3.10. Analyzing Forum Material and Capturing Significant Content

This thesis underwent a four-stage forum analysis to generate codes and capture significant content. The four-stages were determined by the researcher to encompass the conceptual components of conventional content analysis outlined by Hsieh and Shannon (2005). A similar four-stage approach to qualitative content analysis was undergone by Ross Templeton (2019) in his study of anti-gay hate crime motivation. The entire process is outlined below in table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Data Analysis Flow Chart



The first stages involved examining each participant's forum post history from start to finish, to gain a base understanding of how the forum operates. This was completed by utilizing the advanced search function of the Stormfront website, which allows for the forum members content to be displayed in its entirety and organized in chronological order.

The second stage involved removing the signal from the noise and cleaning the data. There were posts that were insignificant in the development of participants, such as the use of emoji's, off-topic pictures, and responses with little contribution to understanding the development of subjects. This narrowed the data set from 2263 posts to 443 and provided the researcher with a more refined sample to examine in greater detail. This was done by using discussion themes on the stormfront forums that pertained to problematic ideological and behavioural themes displayed by members on the forum. The discussion themes were created from the first stage of analysis and utilized only to clean the data and obtain posts that were relevant to radical white nationalist behaviours and create a more manageable data set. The reference themes used to clean the data are displayed in chapter 4, in table 4.1. Each post recorded included a note added by the researcher that indicated the atmosphere of the forums, the other members responses, and any important understandings that would contribute to further coding surrounding the development of the participants. These notes were called "forum post analysis notes" by the researcher and functioned in a manner as to not lose any important understandings of the participants' involvement on the stormfront forums when the posts were recorded. After all, when analyzing interpersonal communication, the responses from peers are important in the development and internalization of new behaviours and ideas.

Forum posts were recorded using the Windows Snipping Tool to screen capture image files and store them in a word document for each participant in chronological order. After the first stage and during the second stage of data analysis, an initial coding scheme was designed. The coding scheme involved themes of discourse that pertain to Canadian white nationalists on the stormfront forum. The codes were constantly refined during analysis to eventually create final codes that displayed themes more representative of the Canadian white nationalist subculture. The coding schema is outlined in more detail in Chapter 4, Data Analysis.

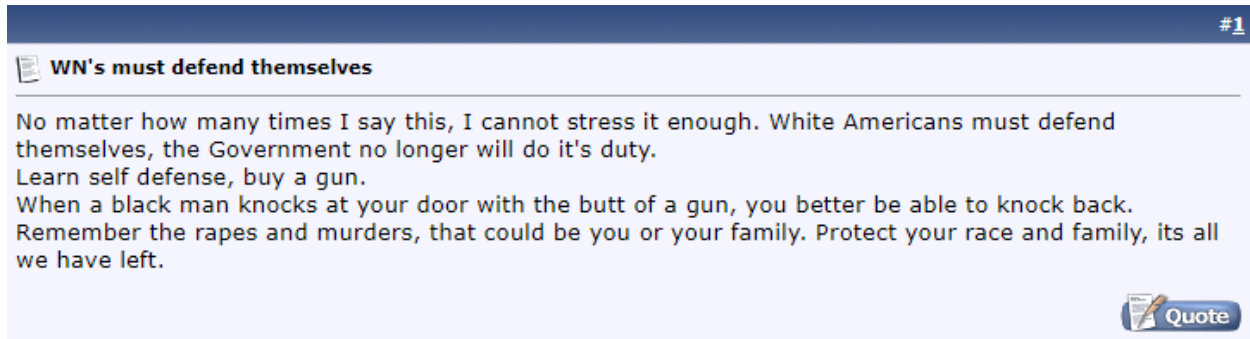
This thesis utilized an inductive approach to content analysis and the coding strategy was derived from the data itself. This means the codes utilized were determined by the researcher during the content analysis and constantly refined to better understand the data. The participants had their entire posting history in separate chronologically ordered word documents that were analyzed for commonalities and differences among participants' development. This ultimately led to organizing the posts recorded in stage three into coding folders for (a) stages of development, (b) the female experience, and (c) recruitment.

The third stage involved organizing the posts into the coding folders and further analyzing the posts to determine the final codes and the order of the development path stages that were found. This involved creating an additional forum post analysis note for each post in the coded folders, which was used to describe what was occurring in the post, and the reactions of other forum members in the thread, whether supportive or unsupportive, and how it contributed to their development. This allowed the researcher to keep track of the atmosphere of the forums as well as the substance of the post itself to understand the effect on ideological and behavioural development. This approach allowed the researcher to refer to the forum thread the post came from and understand what was occurring in each post when coding the data. In this way when

codes were created, the social processes surrounding the posts were not lost to the researcher during coding. Consider the example forum post analysis note below about a post from

Participant #7:

Participant #7 - Post #14:



Forum Post Analysis Note: Participant #7 has created a thread concerning gun ownership and minority violence. He refers to “White Americans” despite identifying himself as a Canadian. He insists that the government is not to be trusted, that white nationalists should own guns, and that minorities are inherently violent. Given the atmosphere expressed on the forums, he most likely knows that the thread he has created will gain positive responses from his peers and that the other members will likely praise him for the thread and echo his response in following posts. He is perhaps attempting to gain favour with his peers or signify his commitment to the movement. He is repeating the idea that white individuals are victims of minority violence, which is a common theme among participants.

The example forum post above from participant #7 is an example of a forum post and a forum post analysis note used during the data cleaning and coding phase. This strategy was undertaken to avoid losing the context of the overall forum thread that the post was situated in. With 443 posts following the data cleaning phase, it was important to make sure each post could be referenced with how it was received by the rest of the forum members. This strategy allowed coding to consider the factors

that could encourage or discourage the progression of a participant's development towards radicalization as well as reoccurring trends that presented themselves. The posts were recorded in individual word documents for each participant and theme in chronological order for careful examination and analysis. When a development stage, theme, or common occurrence appeared, additional word documents were created in new code folders for each participant in order to keep track of the narrative of the participants' posts. The chronology of the posts was always scrutinized by numbering the posts in order to identify any consistency among the participant's development.

The fourth stage of data analysis involved comparing the data in the resulting code categories with the principles of Sageman's conceptualization of radicalization. The inductive approach enabled a Canadian white nationalist development path to be compared to the theoretical tenets presented by Marc Sageman. This involved comparing the content of each stage of the Canadian white nationalist development path with the stages present in Marc Sageman's four-stage process, as well as conceptualization of radicalization described by Sageman in his other works. The codes developed from Sageman's (2004, 2008) work that were utilized for analysis were "sequential or non-sequential process," "a sense of moral outrage," "a specific interpretation of the world," "resonance with personal experiences," and "mobilization through networks." The codes were directly compared to the development path created, with each stage of Sageman's being analyzed with each stage of the development path created in order to find similarities and differences between the conceptualization of the stages.

3.11. Methodological Limitations

3.11.1. Representativeness

The Stormfront community is extremely large, with over 340,000 members spanning the globe and over 13 million posts (stormfront.org, 2019). Representativeness is limited when using unobtrusive and inductive methodologies like the conventional content analysis. This thesis utilizes a sample size of 10 subjects. While the amount of data gathered remains significant, there exists a likelihood that the data obtained from the 10 subjects may not be reliably generalized to the entire Stormfront population. An independent study such as this thesis is unable to guarantee that representativeness will be ensured. With 10 subjects chosen based on their self-identifying as Canadians who collectively amassed over 2263 posts in the forum on stormfront.org, the condition is offset by utilizing a sample committed to posting about white nationalism in Canada.

3.11.2. Veracity

This thesis utilizes anonymous data of individuals participating in an extremist subculture and their posts must be taken at face value. This brings into question the veracity of the data. It is up to the researcher to understand the underlying meaning behind the posts and determine if they are embellished or altered due to the loss of awareness experienced in groups. In social psychology, deindividuation is a concept that describes individuals acting in groups rather than as individuals (Vilanova, et al. 2017). Deindividuation is a concern when analyzing the Stormfront forums, as some members may embellish stories or write more extreme statements than they would normally when offline. This leaves the researcher to take the data at face value, potentially affecting the veracity of the research.

3.11.3. Validity vs. Credibility

In terms of reliability, this research has a sample of only 10 individuals, who have an extensive amount of posts between them. If the research were to be replicated, utilizing the same sample, there is the potential that a different researcher may subjectively find different parts of the data to be important. This does not necessarily mean that the data is not credible. The findings of this thesis are supported by the data. Indeed, where there are claims, data are present to support the claims. This study conducted is not meant to be an inferential study, but rather identify radicalization trajectories in a select group of individuals. Whitney Hunt (2017), in her study of online forum dialogue surrounding sexism and racism on a comic book forum, found that providing examples of forum posts directly in her study as evidence functioned to help substantiate the credibility of her subjective findings.

3.12. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research methodology of this thesis, which was used to address the gap in literature and knowledge concerning the radicalization of Canadian white nationalists. The research method consisted of a conventional approach to content analysis of publicly posted material on the white nationalist discussion forum, stormfront.org. An unobtrusive research methodology was justified by the absence of Canadian white nationalist research in the lens of radicalization and the impracticalities of engaging with an extremist group directly. Concerning the sample used in the content analysis, it was identified that considering the extensive post count of members on the forum, and the objective of understanding the complete narrative of development of the participants, that a sample size of 10, self-identified Canadians would provide the best opportunity to scrutinize the radicalization of white nationalist

Canadians. The details of the Stormfront discussion forum content analysis undertaking and results are presented in the next chapter of this thesis, titled Data Collection and Analysis.

Chapter 4: Data Collection and Analysis

4.1. Introduction:

This chapter presents the results obtained from the conventional qualitative content analysis of the Internet discussion forum at stormfront.org and shows the selection of the participants and their posts as well as a keyword reference chart that was developed from monitoring the forum. The data collection and analysis resulted in the development of a Canadian white nationalist pathway that was found to have six non-sequential stages. The six-stage Canadian white nationalist development path of common white nationalist behaviours that were identified through reoccurring displays on the Stormfront forum are examined here. Finally, the six-stage Canadian White Nationalist Development Path is explained narratively while discussing the rationale behind its development.

The Stormfront website does not overtly claim that it is for white nationalists or white supremacists only. Instead, its manifesto reads as follows:

The truth is "hate" to those who hate the truth!

“We are a community of racial realists and idealists. Black, Hispanic, Asian and Jewish Nationalists openly support their racial interests, with American taxpayers even required to support the Jewish ethnostate of Israel. We are White Nationalists who support true diversity and a homeland for all peoples, including ours. We are the voice of the new, embattled White minority!” (Stormfront.org, 2019)

Additionally, the website proudly claims that it is “followed by Dr. David Duke,” the 69-year-old American white supremacist, convicted felon, former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, Holocaust denier, and espouser of debunked conspiracy theories that claim Jews control the financial system, the press, and academia (Stormfront.org, 2019; splcCenter.org, 2019).

4.2. Data Collection and Analysis Approach

The research questions developed for this thesis are: (1) In what ways does the development of Canadian white nationalists on the Stormfront forums resemble a path towards radicalization; and (2) How does the development path of Canadian white nationalists contribute to current radicalization pathway research? The content analysis conducted on the Stormfront forum consists of 10 selected Canadians on the stormfront.org forum. They were selected because they were frequent posters in the Canadian subsection of Stormfront.org and overtly identified themselves as Canadians in the anonymous forum. Internet discussion posts were deemed an ideal source for useful radicalization pathway research because the posts provide an unobtrusive means of identifying a development path. This chapter identifies that pathway with recorded posts of the anonymous users as evidence. During data collection and analysis 2,263 posts were read, with 443 being recorded for further examination. This led to the development of numerous themes, with six development stages being found among the participants and three secondary themes found during analysis. Themes that were not substantiated by other participants were disregarded if there was not enough evidence to support them. The data was analyzed until saturation was achieved and no new insights could be found among the data.

4.3. Analyzing the Forum Material

An unobtrusive content analysis was completed on 10 participants of the Stormfront forums. While immersed in the Stormfront forums, I allowed the data to lead and shape the research process. That approach helped to prevent bias that could potentially be created by having the data collection and analysis be driven by already established radicalization theories. The purpose of the analysis is to highlight potential benefits to radicalization research and assess the Stormfront forums as a potential development tool for Canadian white nationalists. Keeping

this in mind, I worked from the ground up, identifying commonalities of behaviour and ideological development exhibited by the participants. This thesis examines 60 years worth of posts completed by 10 participants who expressed varying degrees of participation and experiences, both online and offline. Hine (2000) claims that cyberspace is not detached from connections to offline experiences and the analysis of the recorded data takes this into account.

Despite the responses being textual in nature, I tried to account for the orientation of the responses on the Stormfront forums. This means that I considered the social context the participants were in during the time of their post and how this may have impacted their forum posts. Matthew Richardson (2012) found the social context to be extremely important when he conducted a study on the radicalization of American al-Shabaab recruits. In order to fully understand the development path of Canadian white nationalists, I had to first understand the broader social contexts within which white nationalism is situated to aid in further understanding the social group. As Hine (2000) states, “our accounts can be based on ideas of strategic relevance rather than a faithful representation of objective realities” (65). As a researcher, I concentrated my focus on aspects of extremist development by Canadian users of the Stormfront forum. After examining over 2000 posts, I avoided a purely theoretical approach and instead focused on the social processes that encourage migration towards potential violence. Charmaz (2006) warns ethnographers to avoid “seeing data everywhere and nowhere, gathering everything and nothing” (p.23). By focusing on the social processes that enable or impede the development of an extremist mindset rather than trying to know everything available on the Stormfront forums, I bypass low-level description and instead generate insights into the social processes that encourage and discourage participation in white nationalism.

Data analysis occurred in four phases. The first involved an initial examination of all posted material submitted by the 10 participants and the responses by other members of the forums. The purpose of this was to generate coding categories from the data and to see how forum members interacted with the posts. As noted in Chapter 3, this thesis undertakes a conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), which means coding categories are derived directly from the data. As Hsieh and Shannon (2005) note, the goal of content analysis is to “provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study” (p.1278) and with limited radicalization literature pertaining to white nationalism, conventional content analysis was chosen.

Conventional content analysis is deemed by this researcher to be the most effective despite the amount of existing theory in radicalization pathway literature. This choice was made because, despite the amount of radicalization literature available, it is mostly concerned with Islamist extremism. By allowing the codes and categories utilized for analysis to be generated by the data, new insights can be made that avoid attributing existing understandings to the ideological and behavioural developments of white nationalists and thereby potentially biasing the data.

The second phase involved selectively recording posts for analysis that were deemed useful for secondary scrutiny and would derive more comprehensive insights into the development path of Canadian white nationalists. As the Stormfront forum is an expansive social platform for members to communicate, there are often posts and threads that provide very little in terms of potential data. The codes developed were utilized for data cleaning, leaving behind a chronological display of posts discussing extremist subjects. The third phase involved narratively examining the cleaned data for ideological and behavioural patterns of development. This

included factors that encouraged and discouraged participation, ideological changes and how they were achieved, and behaviours on the Stormfront forum. From the third phase, a white nationalist development path was created using behaviours that were common to the participants and represented an increased likelihood of violence. The fourth phase of analysis involved comparing the Canadian white nationalist development path with the tenets of Marc Sageman's (2008) four-stage Islamist radicalization process to contribute to current radicalization pathway research.

4.4. Ethics and Data Display

The Stormfront forum is a controversial website used by many right-wing white nationalists and white supremacists. With the focus of this thesis on identifying the development of Canadian white nationalists, there is the possibility that their identities may be unintentionally revealed. A corresponding consequence of that could be that their lives may be negatively affected if the display of data is not properly handled. Accordingly, only the bare essentials of participants' data are revealed or discussed. The descriptive data of the participants, including their username, date of each post, their start date, and their location are hidden for their safety and privacy. This means posts displayed will include only the thread title and the contents of the post in order to mitigate the potential of participants, if personally identified, being harmed while preserving the necessary contents needed as evidence.

Research Ethics Board approval was sought at Wilfrid Laurier University, and clearance was issued on May 9th, 2019 under REB #6120.

4.5. The Selected Participants

This thesis examines 2,263 posts among the 10 participants as well as the surrounding threads and posts for contextually understanding the participants' responses. A white nationalist keyword chart was created using data drawn from the forum posts. Each forum post was analyzed qualitatively. Posts were recorded when well-established white nationalist behaviours reoccurred between participants or the post was significant in the development of the participant. Of the 2,263 posts examined, 443 were recorded during data examination for evidence and follow-up analysis. The posts represent what is considered the most important for analysis as many posts were simple remarks made on the forum that would not contribute to radicalization discussions.

The participants' posts are derived from the time period of 2008-2018. This means that the data collected was collected from this period, but without identical starting periods for all participants. In this regard, one individual could start posting in 2010 until 2018, while another started in 2008 until 2018. As it is very unlikely to find 10 self-identified Canadians with identical posting periods, the participants have varied initial forum post dates. The participants had their entire post history analyzed up until the end of 2018, meaning their entire forum post history from initial post to last post in 2018 was qualitatively analyzed. This is to gain a complete understanding of their forum involvement, without overlooking necessary information regarding their development. Utilizing entire forum histories from start to finish was also utilized by Simon Henry (2016) in his study of charting radicalization pathways among members of a survivalist forum.

4.6. Canadian White Nationalist Reference Themes Found During Content Analysis

After the initial examination of the participants entire post history, codes were developed and utilized to clean the data. This worked to strip the data down to contain posts concerning problematic white nationalist behaviours and beliefs that are relevant to an extremist mindset. Concepts such as race, conspiracies, references to violence, and recruitment were the contributing factors to developing these codes. The keywords in the table below were assessed by hand in the second phase of data gathering to select posts to screen capture for further analysis. The keywords were not utilized verbatim, and references to the concept were the influence in recording the posts for further analysis. In this regard, the discussion themes were more important than specific keywords for the scrutiny of the data. In this way the relevant posts concerning white nationalist discourse were recorded for further examination. For example, a post stating “heil Hitler” would be recorded in the same fashion as a participant referencing “14 88.” Similarly, referencing issues with minorities pertaining to those of African descent would fall under the code “negroid” and were recorded for further analysis and so on. This was the chosen approach because of the nature of online forums involving the use of images, special jargon, and symbolism that would be otherwise lost if a strict keyword approach was taken. The keywords represent unique utilizations present on the stormfront forums of common white nationalist ideas that may aid future researchers, which is why they are listed under their unique keywords. Once the data was cleaned, it was narratively analyzed in order to unpack the ideological intent of the forum content.

Table 4.1 – Stormfront White Nationalist Discussion Themes

White Nationalist Keyword Terms Chart	Meaning
14 88	Reference to the 14 words by David Lane and the 8 th letter of the alphabet (H), meaning Heil Hitler (88)
Mud people	Reference to any visible minority with darker skin
White flight	The concept of relocating white nationalists to a new location to create an all white community
Zions	Jewish individuals involved in a grand Jewish conspiracy
Negroid	Negative term used on the forums to describe individuals of African descent.
ZOG – Zionist Occupation Government	Antisemitic conspiracy theory that insists Western states and governments are controlled by Jewish conspirators
White genocide	Term used to explain a plot to eradicate the white race through overt and covert mechanisms, such as forced assimilation, immigration, abortion, violence.
Race-Mixers	Term used to describe white individuals who have sexual relations with minority groups
Race-Traitors	Term used to describe white individuals not committed to white nationalism
Anti-racist	Term used to describe individuals who are anti-white
Mudslimes	Racist remarks to refer to Muslims
Recruitment/Social Gathering	White Nationalist’s utilization of the forums for recruitment and offline contacts

4.7. Creating the Development Path of Canadian White Nationalists

During the content analysis, 2,263 posts were examined from 10 participants. The investigation produced a six-stage development path. The average post count is 226 with a median of 222 and a range of 196. The development stages displayed were non-sequential, but the stages were deemed important in the development of the behaviour and ideology of the

selected participants. The stages consist of six phases of the individuals posting careers that were commonly expressed among all of the participants and were considered problematic in their ideological narrative. The rationale for the conceptualization of the six stages are anchored in the content of the participants posts. In order to understand the development of individuals online, the narrative of their posts must be scrutinized in detail in order to interpret the story of their development. Once the interpretation is uncovered and fleshed out, there is a need to analyze and dissect it.

4.8. Data Analysis Results – The Canadian White Nationalist Development Path

The data analyzed supports the six-stage Canadian white nationalist development path outlined below. The 10 participants had their posting history narratively analyzed which resulted in the six-stage development path for Canadian Stormfront forum members. This is shown below with an explanation of the stage and its effects followed by an example that explains how the stage functions on the forums. Additionally, two case studies are examined to illustrate the logic and validity of the ordering of the development path stages and the effects on the development of the participants within the subculture.

Table 4.2 – The Canadian White Nationalist Development Path

White Nationalist Development Stage	Percent of Posters Participating
Stage 1 – Negative Real-Life Experience	100%
Stage 2 – Seeking Like-Minded Individuals Online	100%
Stage 3 – Discuss and Validate Ideology	100%
Stage 4 – Solidification as a Victim	100%
Stage 5 – Pursue Local/Regional Discussions	100%
Stage 6 – Attempt to Meet Other Members in the Real World	90%

4.9. Progressing Through the Canadian White Nationalist Development Path

The development of Canadian white nationalists online presented itself in a non-chronological six stage development path. Having six-stages was a result of having commonalities among the participants. In order to be a reliable development stage, the stage had to be common among most of the 10 participants and supported by the narrative and posts. Otherwise, the stages are arbitrary and would not provide an accurate base to predict and prevent violence from right-wing extremists. The development path was not reflected by the chronology of the forum members posts; however, an explanatory narrative will be discussed below in order to express how the stages function and a rationale for them comprising their own development stage. This same approach was undertaken by Simon Henry (2016) when studying the path of radicalization in the Australian survivalist subculture.

Stage 1: Negative real-life experience

On the Stormfront forums, many participants frequently expressed that a negative real-life experience prompted them to join the forums. The negative stimulus experienced was different for some participants but there was a negative precursor they all experienced offline that worked as an impetus for them to join the Stormfront forum. For some participants, it involved moving to a new area and feeling overwhelmed socially, racially and/or culturally. Others attributed financial problems to the aspects of immigration and special treatment in favour of other races. The reasons amounted to a hodgepodge of justifications. The singular unifying theme was that all participants expressed a negative experience in their real lives which catapulted them onto the forum. Each stated so explicitly. There are two important ideological factors that comprise this stage. The participant has a negative experience and the participant

assigns the blame for this negative experience on something that pertains to race. Consider the examples below from participant #3 and participant #4.

Participant #3:

#1

 Deleted me Cause I am a Facebook Racist

Banned from Facebook again for posting White Pride !! I am white and proud of it. Not hiding it from anyone. And ya, I am racist so ban me!!

Are you white?
Have you had a hard time breaking the news to your friends?
Do you feel angry when black people stare at you?
Have you ever felt sick around muslims?
Do you feel oppressed cause you are white??
Hate is alive and well and targets the white race!!
Blacks, Jews, Muslims, LBGTs, immigrants and all people of color hate white people!
We can not be broken or defeated, the power in the blood, boils up in the veins of the white man.
WHITE POWER wins!

White Pride Worldwide!


New to Stormfront. Near Toronto Canada

Last edited by Proudtildead; 02-10-2018 at 12:43 PM.


 Quote

Participant #4:

#7

 Re: Canadas "aid" to Africa

And yet revenue Canada is hounding my wife and I on some rent receipts we didn't receive so we couldn't hand them in. Once my wife was about seven hours short so she couldn't even get unemployment. It's all bull. I used to be proud to be a Canadian, but it's getting harder and harder as we get sold out/thrown aside to make room for the scum looking to exploit and change Canada into their own little haven. If your country and religion is so great stay where your from.

 Quote

In the post above, Participant #3 states that he feels oppressed because he is white, but has difficulty divulging his attraction to white nationalist ideology to his friends. He notes that he was also recently banned from Facebook for his white pride-related posts. He attributes oppression and hate to other racial groups and notes that he has no one whom to express his opinions in his real life. This was a reoccurring theme among all the participants but sometimes expressed differently. For example, Participant #4 attributed his white nationalist leanings to his financial circumstances. He rationalized that as a white Canadian he is being marginalized because of his financial difficulties and to add insult to injury the Canadian government has opted to aid others rather than him. He believes that he is being “sold out/thrown aside” for races that are treated as more important than him. In this example, Participant #4 has experienced a negative life experience pertaining to finances and has placed the blame on the government and minority groups.

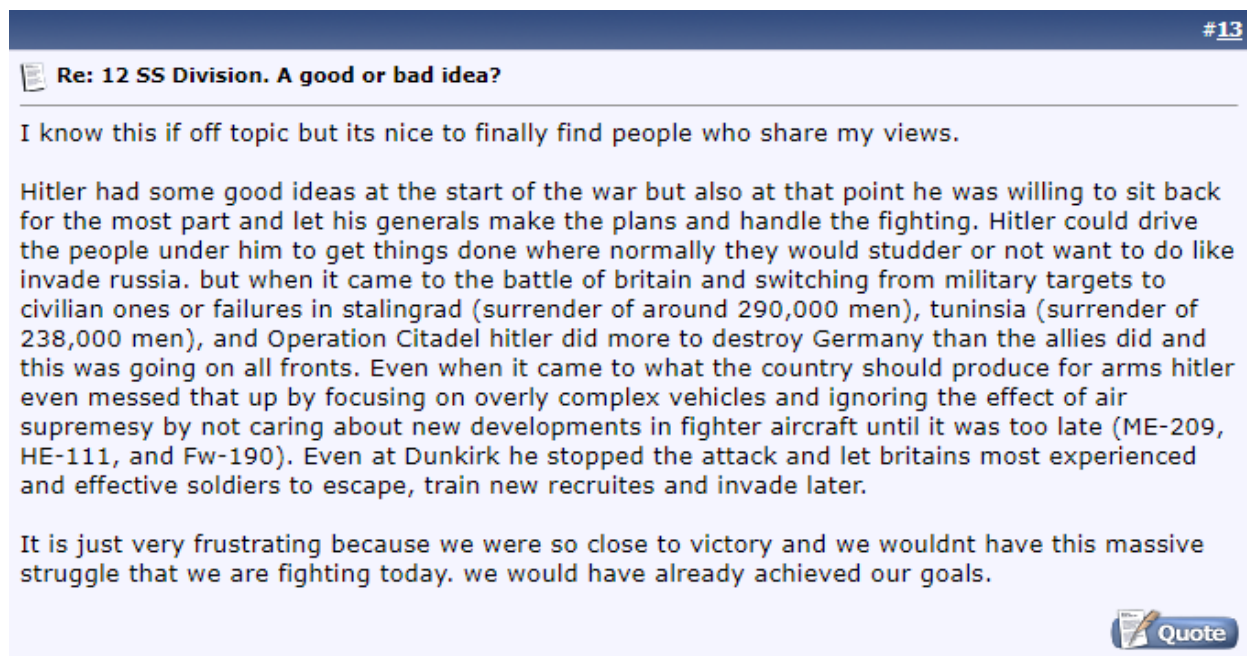
Stage 2: Seeking Like-Minded Individuals Online

The recurrent verse among Participants in Stage 2 was an inability to discuss common controversial interests among like-minded real-world cohorts. Not able to find such associates offline, they migrated online in search of compatible compatriots, a sort of white nationalist “band of brothers.” They could commiserate, huddle together, think together, and perhaps fight together for all things righteous in the name of white nationalism. Soon after finding comradeship online Participants in Stage 2 averred that they were glad to have someone to finally talk to about their sentiments and beliefs. Where there was once total isolationism now there is camaraderie. A large part of their comfort or catharsis was being relieved that, finally, there was someone, indeed, many people, with whom to talk candidly to who were similarly

situated and espoused a homogeneous philosophy on white pride, race, victimhood, etc. This sentiment was expressed explicitly by Participant #8.



Participant #8 remarks that he is finally able to speak his mind and even dedicated a thread to express how delighted he is to finally talk openly without holding back. For Participant #8 Stormfront allows him to openly be himself and not be monitored and censored by the political correctness harboured by the status quo. To Participant #8 this is something he has been searching for and now has a venue where he can “finally” speak his mind. Participant #10 expressed a similar sentiment in the post below.

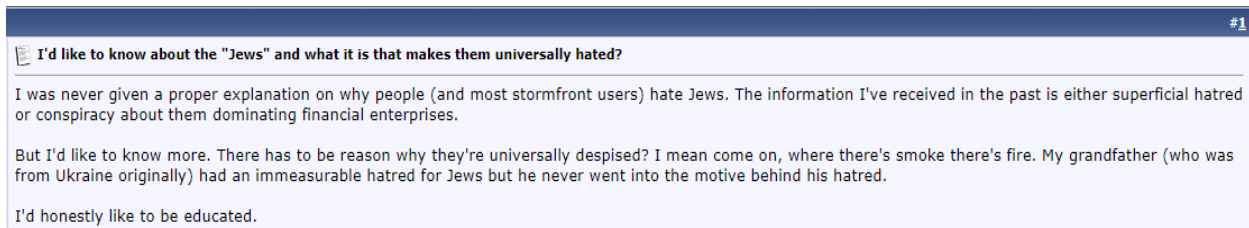


Participant #10 remarks in a different thread that he, too, has “finally” found people who share his views. Canadian white nationalists have remarked at how free they feel on the forums and find relief in being able to express their controversial views with relative autonomy and without being censored.

Stage 3: Discuss and Validate Ideology

Stage 3 consists of the period in which individuals on the forums engage in debates and discussions that work to modify their thoughts and opinions to conform to the collective Stormfront ideology as expressed by prominent Stormfront advocates. This stage was developed because of the echo chamber effect of the forums. During forum use, individuals either accept the major ideological narrative being presented on the forum and echo it back to members or they are accosted by other members until they acquiesced to the predominant narrative.

During this stage, individuals alter their ideology and conform to the forum or they are already entrenched in the narrative of the forum and bolster the echo chamber which in turn reinforces their own beliefs. The atmosphere on the Stormfront forums is full of conformity and there is a generally accepted ideology. Any objection to that ideology is shunned and corrected. Participant #2 provides an example of how his ideology was altered by the aggressive rebukes he received when attempting to understand why Jews are hated by white nationalists.



The screenshot shows a forum post with a blue header bar containing the number "#1" on the right. The post title is "I'd like to know about the 'Jews' and what it is that makes them universally hated?". The main text of the post reads: "I was never given a proper explanation on why people (and most stormfront users) hate Jews. The information I've received in the past is either superficial hatred or conspiracy about them dominating financial enterprises. But I'd like to know more. There has to be reason why they're universally despised? I mean come on, where there's smoke there's fire. My grandfather (who was from Ukraine originally) had an immeasurable hatred for Jews but he never went into the motive behind his hatred. I'd honestly like to be educated."

In the post above, Participant #2 does not understand why Stormfront members and white nationalists hate Jews. In his post asking to be further informed, he utilizes the term “superficial hatred” which garners a negative response from his peers.

Re: I'd like to know about the "Jews" and what it is that makes them universally hated?

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Fading Light** 
Aren't you looking for the Opposing Views forum? You sound like you oppose us, especially when you write stuff like this:

"Superficial hatred"? What liberal taught you that phrase?

<https://www.stormfront.org/jewish/whorules.html>

Oh no I don't oppose.

I meant the term superficial hatred as I've asked people who dislike Jews why they feel that way and I get a superficial response like "they're ugly, they're greedy" nothing with any substance.


 Quote

In the response from Participant #2's peer, he is attacked and suggested that he should take his views to the opposing views forum as it seems he opposes “us.” Participant #2 quickly responds as an attempt to not be ostracized and to let other forum members know that he is willing to conform. Participant #2 then illustrates the conformity in a later post in which he presented an anti-Semitic sentiment.


#272

Re: Baltimore riots live

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Popper504** 
Indoctrinated ? Pffft lol. This is megroes in their natural habitat. Raping and looting. This comes natural , no Jews needed. They did not do this often back then cause white men acted like me. And were there to kick them in the teeth if the chimping out got too crazy

The Jews are their enablers. Of course the negro nature is inherent (no one is really debating that). They would never in a million years be allowed to get away with this type of behaviour though if it wasn't for their enablers and protectors.

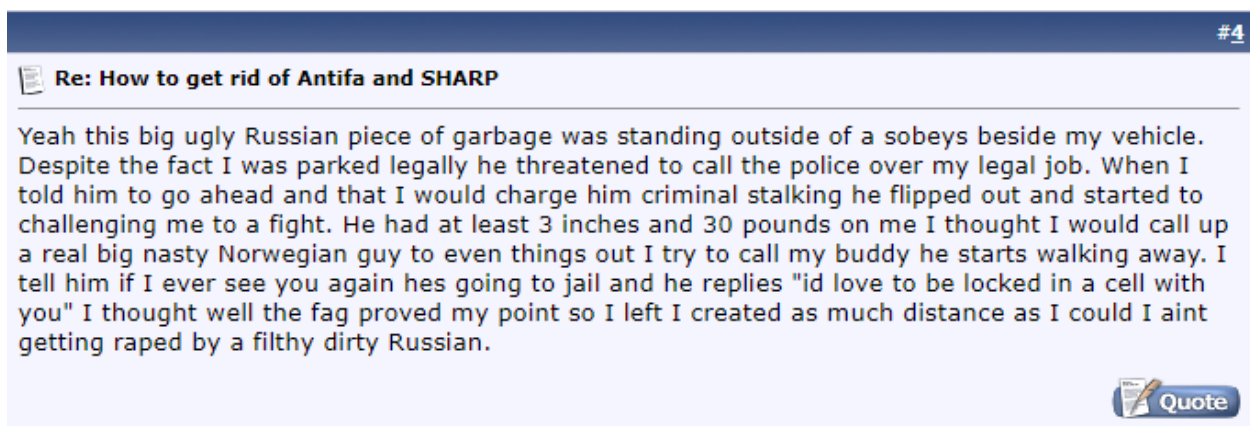
 Quote

In the post above, Participant #2 displays a change of ideology and a newly-found hatred for Jews and a belief in a Jewish conspiracy that he did not have prior to coming to the Stormfront forums. This marks a drastic change in Participant #2's ideology as he goes from not

understanding the hatred for Jews to blaming racial violence on a Jewish conspiracy, facilitated by a discussion with other members.

Stage 4: Solidification as a Victim

This stage of development involves Canadian white nationalists identifying themselves as victims. By identifying themselves as victims, the Canadian white nationalists hold someone responsible for their victimhood, identifying a party that they deem responsible for their victimization. The party that is deemed responsible is relative to the participant, as some blame the government, some a Zionist conspiracy, and still others blame visible minority groups. The blame seems to be placed based on what that participant is exposed to in the real world. By identifying themselves as victims, Canadian white nationalists justify the “by-any-means-necessary” approach with combatting the issues that are rendering them as victims. Two posts from Participant #9, below, provide context to this stage.



The screenshot shows a forum post from a user identified as #4. The post title is "Re: How to get rid of Antifa and SHARP". The text of the post describes a near-violent encounter with a large Russian man outside a Sobeys store. The man threatened to call the police over the author's legal job, and the author threatened to charge him with criminal stalking. The man flipped out and started challenging the author to a fight. The author had a Norwegian friend who tried to intervene but was walking away. The author threatened to call the police and the man replied "id love to be locked in a cell with you". The author felt the man proved their point and left as much distance as possible to avoid being raped by a filthy dirty Russian. There is a "Quote" button in the bottom right corner of the post.

In the post above, Participant #9 describes a near-violent encounter that he had with what he described as a large Russian man. Participant #9 felt that the man was physically imposing

and left as he feared that since the man is of Russian descent he would naturally try to assault him as he is the natural victim to other races.



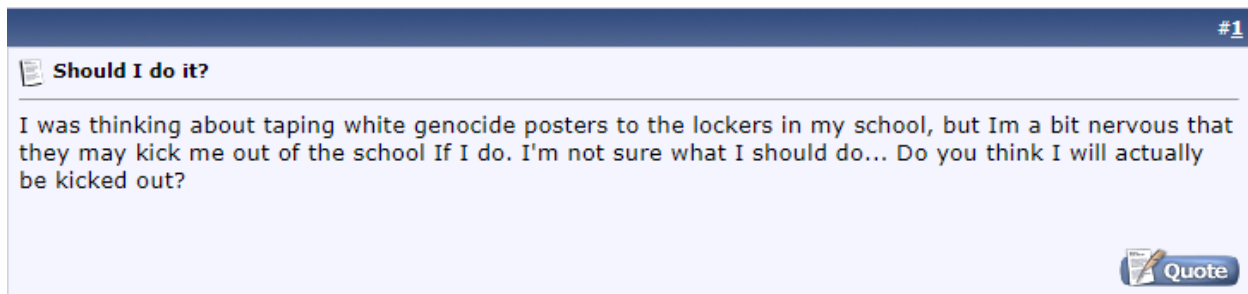
The screenshot shows a forum post with a blue header bar containing the number "#8". Below the header, the post title is "Re: How to get rid of Antifa and SHARP". A quote box contains the text: "Originally Posted by **White Canadian Heritage** Are there many European immigrants there?". Below the quote box, the main text of the post reads: "Seems like more than enough Russians. Fortunately I have some Austrian in me, Hitler makes me proud because he killed 25 million of those pieces of crap. I feel like I can kick a Russian out of Canada any day. Hitler makes me proud to have Austrian because he killed so many communist retards. The hook nose on those Russians you could hang your families coat on it." A "Quote" button is visible in the bottom right corner of the post area.

Participant #9 in the post above takes the negative feelings he attributes to being victimized and now uses those feelings to buttress his new belief that that suddenly authorizes him to now kick Russians out of Canada. Participant #9 showed a distaste for communists and Russians and blames his victimization on those two groups. Participant #9 was reassured by members of the forum that his feeling of victimhood is valid and that Russians are the valid target of his negative emotions and hatred. With a reassurance that Russians and communists are enemies to Participant #9, he then feels that he could “kick a Russian out of Canada any day.”

Stage 5: Seek Local and Regional Discussions

Canadian white nationalists on the Stormfront forums have all participated in and/or initiated discussions in their respective regional areas. During this stage, the participants sought out threads pertaining to similar white nationalist themes in their local areas. This suggests a desire towards bringing their online development into the real world. Also during this stage, the participants displayed a tendency to focus their controversial ideology on local discussions.

During Stage 5, participants identify targets near them locally upon whom to specifically direct their hatred, rather than generalize their hate towards a vaguely-defined group. In other words, at least locally speaking, they would rather target, for example, a specific minority they know, rather than discuss hypothetical racial problems online. An example from Participant #7 below provides additional context.



Participant #7 asks on the forums if he should tape up white genocide posters around his school to build awareness. He receives mixed responses as some members tell him he will simply be kicked out of school while others shout out a “by-any-means-necessary” mantra and suggest that if he wants to do it, he should. The “by-any-means-necessary” rhetoric was observed on the stormfront forums as a way to combat white genocide, as stormfront members posted about the urgency of preserving the white race and how white nationalists need to do whatever they can to ensure their cultures survival. This post marks a departure from general ideological discussions and questions and has real-world consequences. Discussions during this stage revolve around real individuals and groups rather than non-specific, hypothetical actors and generalized ideology.

Stage 6: Attempt to meet like-minded members in the real world

This stage of the White Nationalist Development Path involves individuals actively trying to take their participation in the movement offline and on to their streets, bars, schools,


and workplaces. This can involve joining an already established group, attempting to create a group, or trying to meet up with other members offline for a casual association. The Stormfront forums are actively used for recruitment into established hate groups. This can happen at any stage of the participants' forum usage. Some individuals like Participant #5, as demonstrated in his post below, attempted to join a group early in his development period.

#1

Groups, where are you??

I found this article on Global news: "White nationalist groups on the rise in Canada" great, keep up the good work!! Where are these groups???

I want to join but I can't find a damn thing here in Oakville Ontario!!!


 Quote

Participant #5 proactively tries to join a group and is given suggestions on where to find groups located in his area. Another example, below, by Participant #3 provides a slightly different example of active recruitment by a member of a white nationalist extremist group.

#9

Re: Unit 14


Quote:

Originally Posted by **proudcracker420** 

We're in Canada are you located? We are legit we are just a new group but we have chapters in western Canada, ontario & the SouthEast of the U.S & various LoneWolf members located in different places.

Check out our site & email Unit14Global@gmail.com if you are interested in joining our group.

Again, I'm really sorry, didn't mean to sound disrespectful but I hope you understand the need to be a little paranoid. I live in Waterloo and have sent an email. Thanks.

 Quote

In this post Participant #3 was asking about the legitimacy of a group in his regional area and is responded to by a member of the group on the steps to join the group. Participant #3 then indicates that he would send an email address for the group, effectively being directly recruited off the forum and to become a member of a racist hate group in his area.

4.10. Prioritizing the Behaviour Categories along the White Nationalist Development Path

The six-stage development path is based on data derived from the white nationalist subculture and was systematized based on an increasing level of threat severity. The threat severity was determined by the likelihood of a participant to develop increasingly violent outlooks and to take their participation offline and into the real world. The purpose of radicalization pathway literature is to chart the trajectory of radicalization toward existential violence to predict and prevent violent extremism. Logically, this started with the motivation behind their first involvement with the forums and progressed to them attempting to take their involvement off the forum. The stages were not displayed on the forums sequentially and therefore were arranged based on the likelihood of intensifying a pro-violence outlook and eventually networking with other white supremacists offline. This was decided by the researcher based on the ideological and behavioural effects each development stage was observed to have on the participants.

Stage 1, *Feeling like an Outsider/Negative Real-Life Experience* presented itself as the impetus to forum involvement by the participants and was therefore ordered first. The second stage *Seeking Like-Minded Individuals Online* presented itself as the result of the negative real-world feeling and was subsequently ordered second. The third stage, *Discussion and Validation of Ideology* presented itself as a stage in which participants displayed the ability to add new viewpoints to their ideology or have their ideology validated which in turn made their racist

viewpoints seem correct but was determined to be less problematic than stage 4, *Solidify their views as being victims*. This was decided because stage 4, while still involving ideological validation, presented their enemies as perpetrators of violence towards the white race and worked to justify the defense of the white race. Stage 5, *Pursue local and regional discussions*, was determined to be more problematic than stage 4 because it applied racist ideology to a local context, marking a departure from hypothetical discourse to a real-world context. Stage 6, *Seeking Like-Minded Individuals* was determined to be the most problematic stage because it involved offline social groups and networks as well as direct recruitment, marking a departure from online discourse to real-world participation, which presents the greatest observable threat as the context is no longer only involving online discussions.

As the information available for analysis was textual only it is impossible to understand exactly what order the behaviours and beliefs manifested internally for each participant. The stages were not supported by the chronology of the postings. Some individuals posted attempts to join established hate groups immediately while others waited until they had established a rapport on the forums and enough trust to meet others offline. This correlated to the other identified stages as well, with very little chronological resemblance between the participants. Some participants displayed stages in early posts while other displayed the same stages at much later posting periods. Despite the lack of sequential display of behaviour, the six stages were identified in all participants except one, who did not attempt to contact other members offline.

4.10.1. Case Studies:

This section of the thesis will explore two participants in case study form in order to illustrate how the stages manifest in a single participant's narrative, as well as the validity of the ordering of the development path stages. As mentioned previously, the development stages

presented themselves in a non-chronological manner. Therefore, the ordering is based on an increasing potential for real life violence. The two case studies provide an explanatory narrative of how one individual's behaviour and ideology are more problematic depending on the stage they are expressing. The crux of radicalization research is to track and prevent extremist violence, not just an extremist mindset.

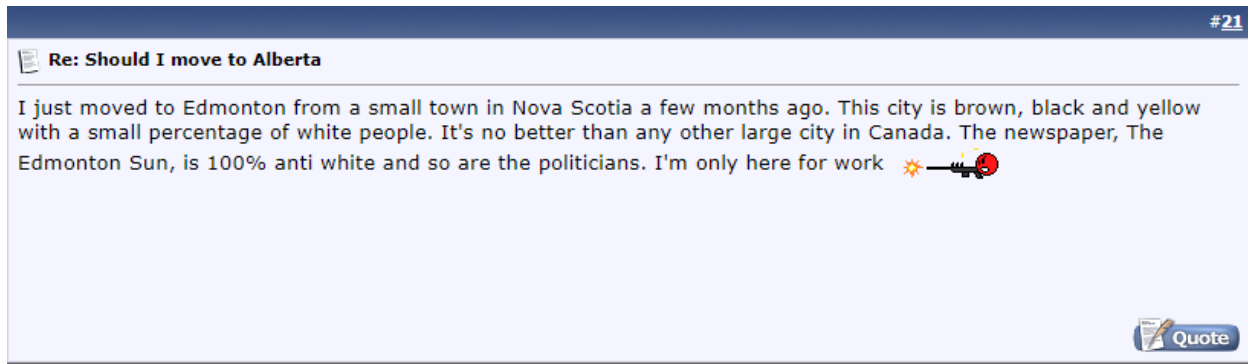
4.10.2. Case Study #1 – Participant #1

Participant #1 is a Canadian white nationalist from a small town in Nova Scotia. At his initial forum usage, participant #1 has recently moved from his small town in Nova Scotia to Edmonton, Alberta, and is finding himself feeling like an outsider. Through utilization of the Stormfront forums, the participant starts to believe in increasingly more problematic white nationalist behaviours such as a global Zionist conspiracy, which he believes is responsible for the victimization and targeting of white individuals near him locally. Participant #1 remarks that he is not an extremist, regardless of believing in conspiracies common to right-wing extremists. Despite insisting that he is not an extremist, Participant #1 posts about being interested in networking offline, and even remarks that he has been successfully contacted by other members to meet offline to further discussions.

Development Path Stage 1: Feeling Like an Outsider/Negative Real-Life Experience

Stage 1 of the Canadian white nationalist development path focuses on the negative feelings expressed by participants on the Stormfront forums. The negative feelings were precipitated by experiences had by participants while offline and in the real world. The negative real-life experience can be a tragic event that occurred to them or merely a sense of feeling like an outsider through the lack of a compatible peer group. The important aspects of this stage are

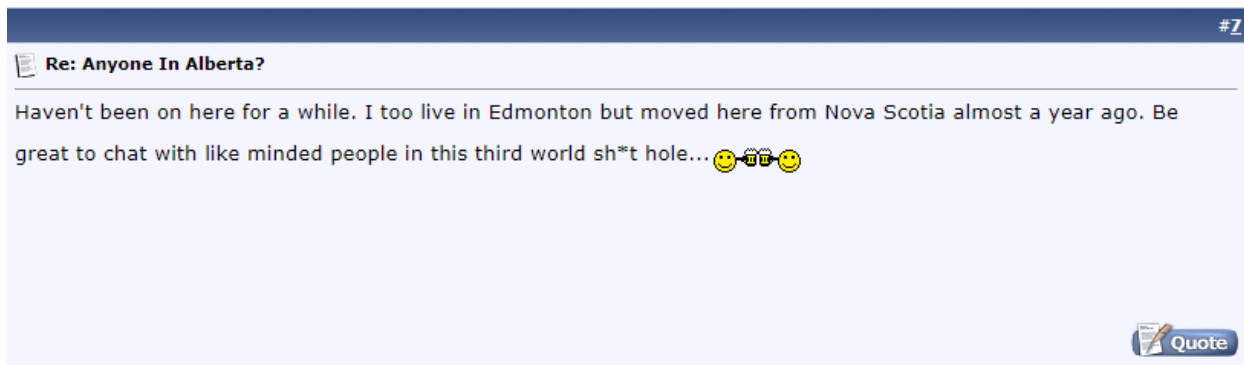
that the participant experiences something negative offline and they place the blame on something pertaining to race. They almost always assign race or ethnicity as the core culprit; almost never do they assign their own faults as the problem.



As you can see from the post above by Participant #1, he has felt like an outsider since moving to Edmonton from Nova Scotia and has turned to the Stormfront forums to talk with ideologically harmonious individuals in order to relieve their anxiety of being an outsider. Participant #1 sought out a forum thread in his local region and expressed that he is feeling out of place culturally. In terms of potential for violence, this stage marked the period in which participant #1 was driven to initially seek out the forum.

Development Path Stage 2: Seeking Like-Minded Individuals Online

This stage of the Canadian white nationalist development path analyzes participants who seek out like-minded individuals online. Participants on the Stormfront forum expressed gratitude for finally having a group of individuals with whom to have discussions and socialize harmoniously. The participants turned to the Stormfront forums when they lacked a peer group that shared their beliefs offline with whom they could socialize and with whom they could have their beliefs on race-based justifications validated. Consider the post below:



In the above post, Participant #1 states that it would be great to chat to like-minded people. Participant #1 lacks a peer group that would be able to positively interact with him and share his white nationalist sentiments. Participant #1 expresses a desire to interact with individuals with similar viewpoints because he has attributed his negative feelings as an outsider to race and seeks individuals in similar circumstances to discuss them with. This is consistent with the findings of other participants who express a desire to communicate with individuals who are similarly situated. Participant #1 in this stage has taken the negative outlook he has on the location he is living, calling it a “third world sh*t hole,” and is trying to find people online with whom to discuss it.

Development Path Stage 3: Discussion and Validation of Ideology

This stage of the white nationalist development path examines individuals who alter their perspective to more closely coincide with the overall ideological dogma and therefore feel supported in their conformist beliefs by the rest of the members. In this stage of the development process, individuals seek to have their ideas validated by other members of the forum. The result is that a validation creates a sense that they are correct in their racist viewpoints but that other members of their race are not racially “woke” or sufficiently aware of white nationalist issues. Consider the post below:

Re: An Open Invitation to All National-Socialists (but only to National-Socialists)!

I believe in National Socialism. The ideology in practice was very pragmatic under Hitler. He even admitted that as a statesman he needed to be flexible and it worked fantastic for Germany. Makes me wonder though about the war and it's outcome and the "what if Germany never went to war" question. But I guess war was inevitable. And I also believe in the "Führer Principal" in the sense that if a man or woman is democratically elected by the Party and People they should have absolute control and ACCOUNTABILITY! In our current situation we merely have puppets as leaders and we go through them like a box of kleenex with ZERO ACCOUNTABILITY!

Wonderful color photo of Adolf without the mustache. He looks a bit unhappy in this photo...

Participant #1 participates in a discussion on national socialism within the Stormfront forums. The sample member echoes the core beliefs expressed in the forum and the contributors reciprocally support each other toward mutual agreement. The thread acts as an echo chamber with no posts deviating from the prevailing ideological narrative. A member has created a thread on national socialism, inviting other members to discuss National Socialism, but only national socialists. Within the thread, there are only individuals who support the dominant ideology. This psychologically reinforces to each participant that they are correct in their otherwise controversial beliefs and that it is the rest of society that is wrong and unenlightened. Participant #1 has progressed from having a negative outlook on his living situation to having a place to discuss radical ideas that are consistently supported, validating his stance on issues relating to government and race. The participant discusses national socialism or Nazism with support and applaud, which works to create a mindset that the tenets of national socialism, such as anti-Semitism, eugenics, and scientific racism are not only acceptable to discuss, but are correct in their position.

Development Path Stage 4: Solidify their views as being victims

This stage of the white nationalist development path explores individuals who identify themselves as victims in a larger conflict. In this stage, white nationalists internalize that they are victims of a politically correct majority. They utilize their perception of being a victim to justify

the “by-any-means-necessary” motif as a means to promote white nationalist issues. At this stage of development, participants succumb to the belief that they are victims in a conspiracy to harm or eradicate the white race.

#2

Re: Alberta News Headline: Apparent white supremacist shot by cops after disturbing peace rally

This is the man who was shot by Calgary Police for shouting "White Power". The cops pulled a car in front of him and 4 cops came at him in an alley. I wonder if the metal pipe is BS to excuse why they tried to murder him. Anyone know him? He is 30 years old. Most recent media info is that he is in critical condition.



I guess White people are an easy target for the Calgary Police. Another White man was shot in the head three times only a week ago.

Participant #1 replies to a thread discussing a police shooting in his area. Participant #1 suggests that white people are easy targets for the police in his area and assumes that the police lied about the circumstances of the shooting. Thus, Participant #1 concludes that white individuals are easy targets for police and white nationalists should, therefore, distrust police. Participant #1, along with the other forum members work to conclude that white individuals are being overtly victimized by police. The forum members paint the man out to be a victim, avoiding any objectivity on the situation and instead target police as killers out to victimize the white race. This works to ideologically create an “any means necessary” approach to the situation, as those who are supposed to protect you are out to target you and you must therefore

defend and rely on yourself. Participant #1 had originally targeted politicians as being anti-white and now has painted white individuals to be victims of overt physical violence perpetrated by a corrupt anti-white police service.

Development Path Stage 5: Pursue local and regional discussions

This stage of the white nationalist development path concerns individuals seeking localized discussions on white nationalism. Here, forum members scout for discussion threads that address events and situations that are in close proximity to them in the real world. As noted earlier, the stages are non-sequential. Some members seek to participate in local discussions immediately upon joining a forum while others only do so after being committed to the forum. Nevertheless, wherever this happens along an individual's trajectory, it marks an effort to take the extremist ideology offline coupled with a desire to apply its effects to the real world, to their immediate physical surroundings. Individuals in this stage are motivated to justify specific racist events within their own communities and/or identify the perpetrators responsible for their victimization and those who seek to eradicate the white race.

#3

Re: From The Edmonton Red Star: Edmonton police sound the siren for ethnic diversity

Quote:

Originally Posted by **yarmouth**

- 5% identified as having aboriginal status
- 10% were a visible minority
- 3% had a disability
- 3% were a sexual minority
- As of April 2013, about 33% of the service was female
- Karulewa believes only three officers are African.

It's numbers like this that prompted the recruiting unit to begin the diversity positive recruiting advisory committee, which meets once a month with a liaison member from the aboriginal, Chinese, LGBTQ, African, Jewish, East Indian and black communities.

The Zio/Comm's were unhappy with the statistics of White/Straight healthy normal humans ratio, so they had to accelerate the mutation of the Edmonton Police Service by creating a "Committee"!!! Now the Police Chief is screaming for more police officers because the ones they have now can't do their job. Lower quality equals more quantity is the new formula of EPS. 🙄

#6

Re: EXCLUSIVE: Documents show Calgary police considered anti-Israel riot a public relations problem, not a crime

You would think that the Jews in Western Europe and North America would be dead set against Muslim immigration. After White Christians are gone the Jews will be next on the Muslim's hit list guaranteed.

Quote

Participant #1 posits that the Canadian Government is controlled by Zionists who therefore control police recruitment in Edmonton. In this post, Participant #1 applies the thread-worn Zionist government conspiracy to the police service in his local area. He asserts in a previous post that he believes the Zionist police are murderers. Participant #1 has moved from blaming politicians for being anti-white, to blaming police services as being murderers, and now has deemed a Zionist conspiracy as the basis for his local issues. This is problematic in the ideological development of participant #1 as he has increased the extremity of his discussions when focusing on local issues.

Development Path Stage 6: Seeking Like-Minded Individuals

This stage of the white nationalist development path concerns the transition from online involvement to real-world engagement. At this point in development, Stormfront users attempt to transition from online forum-only involvement to joining white nationalist and supremacist groups from the site or attempting to form additional offline social groups and networks. This marks a clear departure from utilizing the forum for online discussions and utilizing it to establish offline in-person contact.



Participant #1 creates a thread that helps him search for individuals in his area of Halifax. He expresses in his thread that he has been successfully contacted by other individuals in a follow-up post in his thread. Participant #1 made numerous attempts to contact others and has even suggested starting a branch of a group he admired in New Zealand. This is his first confirmation of contact with other members offline. Participant #1 has moved from theoretical


discussions and has actively networked on the website, which is problematic considering his tendency to blame local issues on a grand Zionist conspiracy.

4.10.3. Case Study #2: Participant #4

Participant #4 is a Canadian white nationalist who has relocated to Kitchener, Waterloo for work. The participant expresses that he only goes to work and then back to his hotel, indicating that he is utilizing the stormfront forums to negate the fact that he has no one with whom to discuss his problems. He has been experiencing financial issues and has placed the blame on preferential treatment of racial groups to whom he is exposed. Participant #4 blames the Canadian government's preferential treatment of Asian groups and Muslim populations over white families as the basis of his financial problems. Despite participant #4 blaming the government for creating his problems, he often chooses to direct his hate towards visible minority populations near him locally. He remarks that there are no groups in his area and is promptly corrected by an organizer of a local established hate group, effectively being recruited to an established white nationalist group.

Development Path Stage 1: Negative real-life experience

Stage 1 of the Canadian white nationalist development path scrutinizes the negative offline-experiences by participants that led to feeling ostracised by the overall community. The negative real-life experience can be a tragic event that occurred to them or a sense of feeling like an outsider through the lack of having a like-minded peer group. The important aspects of this stage are that the participant experiences something negative offline and they place the blame on some external factor that pertains — always — to a racial component.

 **Re: Kitchener people/groups**

Nice if I could afford to stay at the Howard Johnson while I work down here in Waterloo. But since I'm white, raising a white family, and contribute to society I am ***** out of luck.



Participant #4 dislikes his financial predicament and places blame on his racial standing in society. The participant is offended by the way minorities, allegedly, abuse the social welfare systems in his area. The participant uses the Stormfront forums as a catharsis for his lack of an enviable financial standing.

Development Path Stage 2: Seeking Like-Minded Individuals

This stage of the Canadian white nationalist development path concerns participants who seek out online people who are ideologically harmonious to themselves. Participants here expressed gratitude for finally having a group of like-minded individuals to unabashedly discuss controversial topics and with whom to socialize. The participants turned to the Stormfront forums when they lacked a peer group that shared their beliefs offline. This allows them to at least socialize with like-minded compatriots whom they can rely on to validate their philosophy on race and the problems associated with race. Consider the post below:

 **Re: Kitchener people/groups**

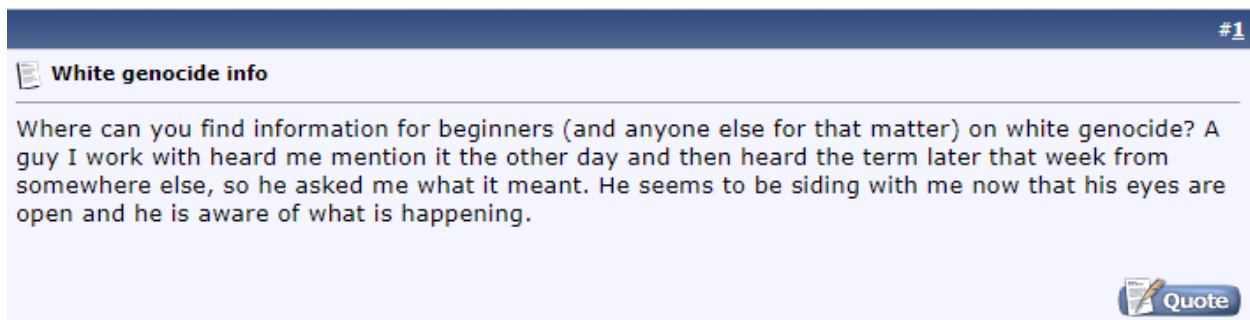
I only go to work and then back to my motel. Don't venture out too much. Definitely getting sick of Ktown though.



Participant #4 utilizes the forums to vent his frustration about experiences in his life or perceptions of events occurring locally or nationally in Canada. The Stormfront forums provide constant positive reassurance to members that their experiences are egregious and their reaction and viewpoint on the matter are justified. Participant #4's negative experiences in real life found him with no one to talk to about his struggles. As he mentions in the post above, he goes to work and then back to his motel. This signifies that he has no one to vent his grievances to, or from whom to receive comradeship. The Stormfront forum provides a global arena for the individual to develop a rapport with white nationalists that he would not normally be able to contact, thereby allowing the individual to unapologetically participate in regular ideological discussions on his preferred topics.

Development Path Stage 3: Discussion and Validation of Ideology

This stage of the white nationalist development path examines individuals who willingly alter their ideology to match the overall philosophies promoted in the Stormfront forum, and those who are supported in their conformist beliefs by the rest of the members. Their ideas are validated by other members of the forum, creating a sense that they are correct to have and to openly express racist viewpoints. They often conclude that other members of the white Canadian race are not racially aware.

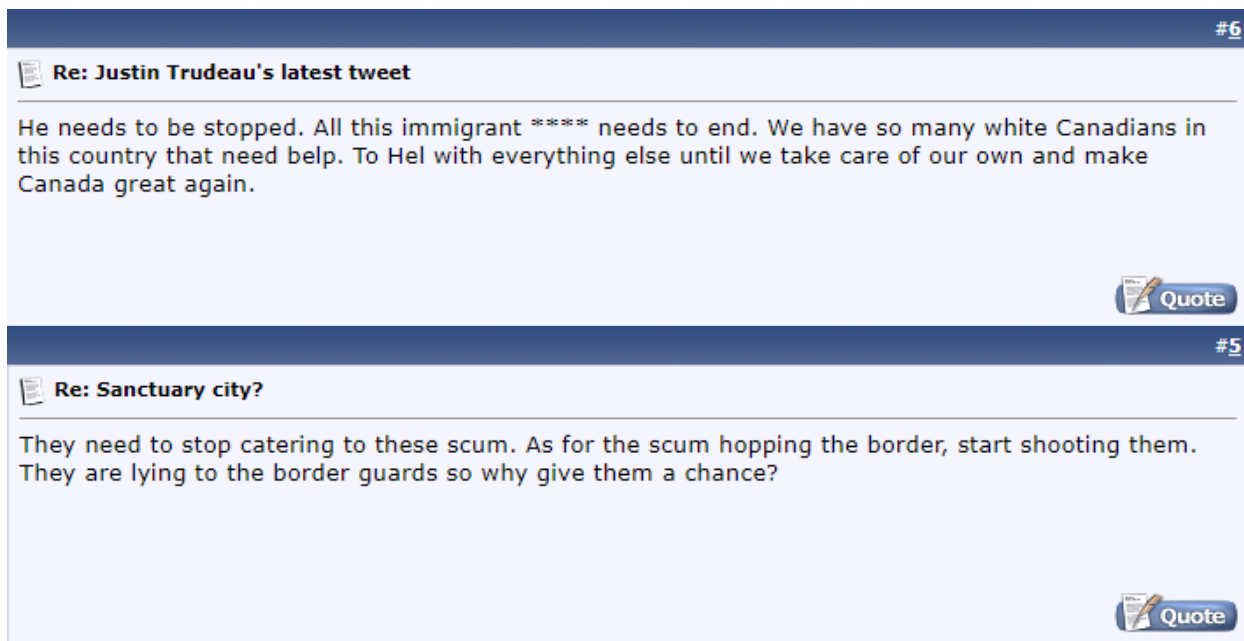


The screenshot shows a forum post with a dark blue header containing the number "#1". The post title is "White genocide info" with a small document icon to the left. The main text of the post reads: "Where can you find information for beginners (and anyone else for that matter) on white genocide? A guy I work with heard me mention it the other day and then heard the term later that week from somewhere else, so he asked me what it meant. He seems to be siding with me now that his eyes are open and he is aware of what is happening." In the bottom right corner of the post, there is a "Quote" button with a small icon of a document and a pencil.

Participant #4 utilizes the Stormfront forums as a “search engine” of sorts for ideological information to share with peers. Participant #4 receives multiple suggestions for information to utilize to enhance his knowledge of white nationalist topics. He is told what to search for and what to avoid. Discussions and information-sharing help to build a rapport among members and to verify that their viewpoints are correct. Participant #4 suggests that he is racially aware, and others are not, insisting that ideas discussed on the stormfront forums are accurate while outside sources are corrupt. He remarks that his co-worker “seems to be siding” with him now that “his eyes are open” and he is “aware.” During this stage individuals on the stormfront forums come to solidify that the dominant ideology on the stormfront forums is correct, and that they are individuals with a heightened sense of racial awareness.

Development Path Stage 4: Solidification as Victims

This stage of the white nationalist development path reflects on those who identify as victims in a larger conflict. Here, white nationalists internalize their perceived victimization to justify their “by-any-means-necessary” war cry to foment white nationalist issues. Participants in Stage 4 often express their claim that they are victims in a conspiracy to harm or annihilate the white race.



Participant #4 is participating in a thread that involves financial issues. Participant #4 accuses immigration policies of causing his financial problems. This is what prompted him to come to the Stormfront forums. His post echoes the dominating positions shared by the other members of the Stormfront forums and quickly paints himself as a victim. Participant #4 suggests that (Prime Minister) Justin Trudeau “needs to be stopped.” This dangerously identifies an individual person as a specific target. Thus, Participant #4 blames his perceived victimization on one soul, not on the government or society at large. He is now keen to suggest violence in order to make Canada all-white.

Development Path Stage 5: Seek local and regional discussions

This stage of the white nationalist development path probes individuals seeking more localized discussions. In this stage, forum members seek out discussion threads that are topically relevant to them and are within their local community. As noted earlier, the stages are non-sequential, with some members seeking localized discussions immediately and others after being

massaged by the recurring themes discussed within the forum. This stage marks the first trajectory towards taking the extremist ideology and applying it to events occurring in their real lives. Individuals will justify specific racially-related events nearby. They also seek to identify community people who they (the white nationalists) can accuse of trespassing on their person or psyche and thereby making them (the white nationalists) into victims. These Canadian white supremacists further allege the local “culprits” are waging war against them in an attempt to extinguish the white race.

#1

Mudslime take to the streets

[Muslim youth to canvass Owen Sound | Owen Sound Sun Times](#)

Quote

#4

Re: Mudslime take to the streets

Owen Sound has a mudslime church. It's just up the road from the court house. I'm just pissed my white pride world wide shirt isn't in yet to wear that day. So it's either my Hitler world tour shirt or a SS deaths head shirt.

Quote

Participant #4 created a follow-up post in a thread he created about a Muslim youth who was using the forum in order to remove negative stereotypes about Islam. In this post, he refers to wearing a white-nationalist-themed T-shirt to intimidate the youth in his area and to promote his white pride. Participant #4 provided the location of a Muslim mosque in his area and speaks negatively about it. He refers to the worshipers as “mudslimes” instead of “Muslims.” He claims the followers of Allah are “taking to the streets” and therefore white nationalists must remain vigilant. Participant #4 heaps his negative white nationalist outlook upon a non-Christian group

and conflated all Muslims with non-whites. The forum members support Participant #4's aggressive behaviour. This presents a greater potential for violence than stage 4, as he has now identified a local group to apply his extremist ideology.

Development Path Stage 6: Attempt to Meet Other Members in the Real World

This stage of the white nationalist development path traces the transition from online involvement to real-world engagement. At this juncture in the development process, Stormfront users endeavor to transition from online involvement on the forum to join white nationalist and supremacist groups offsite or engage offline with social groups and networks. This marks a clear departure from utilizing the forum purely for online discussions and taking the leap toward establishing offline contact.

#9

Re: Looking for likeminded people in southern Ontario

No groups in the Owen Sound and Hanover area that I'm aware of.

Quote

#10

Re: Looking for likeminded people in southern Ontario

The NSCLRP has members all over Southern Ontario. most of our members are clustered in the Brantford, Hamilton, Simcoe area, but we do have members across the Country.

So... there are groups here.

Quote

#11

Re: Looking for likeminded people in southern Ontario

I will keep an eye out for them then and hopefully connect soon.

Quote

In the cluster of posts above, Participant #4 is recruited when commenting that he can't find any groups in his local area. He initially remarked in a thread that he was looking for similarly inclined people in Southern Ontario and that he knew of none in his area. When told by a fellow Stormfront member that his group has members in that area, Participant #4 replied that he would soon contact them and is effectively recruited into an established white nationalist group. This presents the greatest potential for violence for participant #4, as he has taken all of the ideological developments that have increased his radical white nationalist beliefs and is now recruited offline to discuss them with real-world peers. This marks a clear departure from utilizing the forums for theoretical and ideological discussions, to now focusing on establishing offline contacts.

4.11. Conclusion:

This chapter identified the data collection and analysis approach taken as well as outlined the six-stage Canadian White Nationalist Development Path and how each stage was formulated and conceived. The content analysis undertaken was an unobtrusive approach utilizing a conventional approach to qualitative content analysis. The content analysis had a two part research question in mind: (1) In what ways do the development of Canadian white nationalists on the Stormfront forums resemble a path towards radicalization? and (2) how does the development path of Canadian white nationalists contribute to current radicalization pathway research? In order to display how those research questions were addressed, each stage of The Six-Stage Canadian White Nationalist Development Path is explained using specific examples and two case studies. The stages are explained using examples from multiple participants in order to detail how they function both ideologically and behaviourally to comprise important steps in the development of Canadian white nationalists. The case studies were comprised of posts by two Participants as they contributed to the Stormfront forums. The two case studies are utilized to explain and exemplify the rationale of the ordering of the development path, specifically how each stage comprises a further step towards radicalization to violence. This provided context to the development of the participants and how the increased potential for violence was understood and justified by the researcher. The contributions to radicalization theory research that the content analysis provides are presented in Chapter 5: Results and Discussion.

Chapter 5: Results and Discussion

5.1. Introduction:

This chapter answers the research questions of the thesis by demonstrating how the Canadian White Nationalist Development Path may serve as an express highway towards radicalization and how it compares with established radicalization pathways and radicalization research. Specifically, this chapter will analyze how the Canadian White Nationalist Development Path materialized by delving into the stormfront.org website and the stormfront.org forum and assessing how they relate to Marc Sageman's four-stage Islamist model. Also, secondary findings that were collected through the content analysis will be examined. These additional findings unveil how the Stormfront community doubles as an echo chamber and as a white nationalist recruitment platform. Also discussed are the experiences of females within the Stormfront forums, some of whom have a different experience.

5.2. Finding 1: The Canadian White Nationalist Development Path

The Canadian White Nationalist Development Path as outlined in Chapter 4 displays a non-sequential understanding of how members of the Stormfront forum develop increasingly dogmatic behaviours. The development path comprises six non-sequential stages that are ordered based on a logical progression towards more aggressive behaviours (see table 5.1 below). As overt calls to violence are against the terms of service on the Stormfront forum (stormfront.org, 2019) the most proactive behaviours permitted on the forums are attempting to network with other hate group members in a real-world setting.

Table 5.1 – The Canadian White Nationalist Development Path

Stage	Stage Title
Stage 1	Negative Real-Life Experience
Stage 2	Seeking Like-Minded Individuals Online
Stage 3	Discussion and Solidification of Ideology
Stage 4	Solidification of Victimhood
Stage 5	Seeking Local and Regional discussions
Stage 6	Attempt to Meet Other Members in the Real World

Logically, the progression examines what drew individuals to seek out the forums. It also scrutinizes what alters or reinforces their ideology to become extremist or validates their already extremist mindset. It looks closely at a forum member’s progression from merely clicking into the forum discussions to networking offline in the real world. Finally, it is important to be cognizant of the fact that not every person’s “progression” is necessarily on a straight-line progression. There may be several stops and starts, reversals, detours and even diversions.

5.3. Finding 2: Radicalization Themes Which Coincide with Marc Sageman’s Four-Stage Radicalization Process

Marc Sageman’s Four-Stage Radicalization Process (2008) explores the radicalization process of Islamist extremists. During data analysis, it became apparent that the same group dynamics Marc Sageman outlined in his work apply to the development of Canadian white nationalists on the Stormfront forums. That suggests that Sageman’s model is not sub-culturally specific but instead broadly captures well-established group dynamics and interpersonal processes that can be attributed to various extremist hate groups. While Sageman’s model contains only four stages, the four stages comprise similar themes to the six-stage path currently under review here.

5.3.1. Radicalization Process as Non-Sequential

Sageman (2008) describes the stages of his model as “phases” (p.225). He, too, insists that his four stages are not sequential but more often recurrent. What he means is that the stages did not occur in an inevitable straight-line order, but each stage tended to be “present” in every case. The Stormfront forums displayed radicalization development in a similar manner. The participants displayed themes of radicalization at different times during their involvement on the forum but the themes found were displayed by all participants except Participant #6, who did not show signs of reaching stage 6 of the White Nationalist Development Path.

5.3.2. Stage 1: A Sense of Moral Outrage

Sageman’s first radicalization pathway stage examines individuals who strongly reacted to a major moral affront. What constitutes a major moral affront is different for different people. They may also be place-, country- and/or time-specific. This stage is consistent with the themes found when monitoring the Stormfront forums. In the White Nationalist Development Path, all 10 individuals posted about major moral violations that they perceived to adversely impact the white race. Sageman (2008) insists that Islamist extremists generally display a sense of moral outrage due to violations that are perceived as egregious, such as murder or rape. In the Stormfront forums, individuals often express outrage over events that were happening near them that they believed were working to harm the white race. For Stormfront members, moral violations were attributed to racial minority groups. For example, Participant #5 in the post below attributes a coverup of black-on-white violence to the Jewish-dominated media.

Media Covers Up Black Hate Crimes Against Whites

The jew media covers up hate crimes against whites all the time. Even white cops hide from truth when it comes to protecting blacks when they have assaulted or killed whiteS. How the hell can you, as a white person, let blacks kill us and then hide the truth, you POS 'n' loving.....@%\$#%&.

The mainstream jew media deliberately fabricates a myth of white racism in North America in order to cover up an epidemic of black-on-white violence!! Very few know about the thousands of whites who have been brutally murdered, raped, beaten and robbed by blacks as the jew media keeps regurgitating lies about the white race. Are the lives of these innocent white people not important enough to report on, or is the jew media purposely inciting racial tensions for a reason? You KNOW they are!!

Anyone who has paid attention to the BS Trayvon Martin shooting knows that key information about the case has been distorted and fabricated. Evidence now shows that George Zimmerman had a broken nose, black eyes and lacerations to the back of his head. The police report stated that Zimmerman's back was wet and covered with grass clippings. On the other hand, Martin's autopsy revealed that Martin's knuckles were scraped. Even eyewitnesses saw the six-foot-three-inch Martin viciously pummeling the five-foot-nine-inch Zimmerman in the face while he had him on the ground.

While this dog-and-pony show is going on however, the mainstream jew media has been totally silent on atrocious crimes that have been and are being committed by blacks on whites. Here are a few—from among THOUSANDS of incidents—that have been confirmed. Take some valium and read on:

On February 27, two black males in Detroit abducted and killed a white couple. The victims were found bound, shot and burned beyond recognition in an alley. Police are calling it a random "thrill killing."

On February 28, in Kansas City, Missouri, two black teens attacked a 13-year-old white boy on his front porch as he was returning from school. They poured gasoline on him and set him on fire for no apparent reason, saying "You get what you deserve white boy!"

On March 14, a 20-year-old black man broke into the home of Bob and Nancy Straight in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He raped the 85-year-old Mrs. Straight and then beat her to death. Then he shot 90-year-old Mr. Straight in the face with a pellet gun and broke his jaw and ribs. He died several days later. The thug stole \$200, a TV set and their Dodge Neon, which he drove to a nearby house where he went to hide. The police spotted the stolen car in front of the house and arrested him.

On April 1, in Jackson, Mississippi, a 31-year-old black man broke into a house to rob it and found a white woman inside. He forced her to lie on the floor with a blanket over her head as he shot her in the back of the head, execution-style.

On April 5, a 34-year-old black man checked into a hotel with his pregnant 25-year-old white girlfriend and their one-year-old child. The next day the woman was found dead on the floor brutally mutilated and covered with blood, as was the one-year-old child. The knife was in the room.

On April 15, a 22-year-old black man raped a 38-year-old white woman and her 10-year-old daughter. He then killed them by smashing their skulls with a hammer.

On top of all these brutal murders there have been hundreds of "flash mob" attacks across the country where anywhere from half a dozen to as many as a hundred blacks, gang up on innocent white people and beat them senseless or to death.

One of these attacks occurred in Norfolk, Virginia, where more than 30 blacks brutally beat a white couple as another 70 blacks watched and cheered them on, a typical phenomenon in these black-on-white "flash mob" attacks. Martin's name came up as the excuse for the brutality. You black garbage do not need an excuse for your behaviour, it was born in you!! The couple actually worked for the main newspaper in town, The Virginian Pilot, which has direct political ties to the Obama administration. That publication could not even be bothered to report on the attack of its own employees for two weeks—and even then it was only as an opinion piece written by a friend of the couple.

In this example, Participant #5 lists numerous rapes and murders that he attributes to a genetic propensity for violence and a coverup by the Jewish media. Such moral violations are a common theme for discussion on the Stormfront forums. This, again, dovetails Sageman's theory. Stormfront members will share media events perpetrated by white individuals and side with the perpetrator or provide stories of acts of violence against white individuals by minority groups, and side with the "white victims," of course. For Stormfront members, when a white person is violent it is because he or she is pushed or coaxed into the regrettable act rather than

being malicious; minority perpetrators, on the other hand, are seen as inherently hostile and violent by nature, especially against “already victimized whites.”

5.3.3. Stage 2: A Specific Interpretation of the World

Sageman’s second stage involves individuals attributing any perceived moral violation to a larger, but nebulous, adversary such as “the Jews,” “the Russians,” “the Muslims” or any non-white ethnic group. For Islamists, this stage involves major moral violations that are applied to a War on Islam. On the Stormfront forums, Canadian white nationalists attribute moral violations to a similar theme, which they have deemed white genocide. Canadian white nationalists blame the government, media, and minority groups for the perceived threat of elimination of the white race and the generic “degradation” of society writ large.

Canadian white nationalists believe they are in a war to save the “pure” white race and to preserve their culture and history against an encroaching enemy. Consider the example below that was posted by Participant #5, who advocates that whites need to wake up as the white race globally is being targeted for violence and annihilation.

White hate....

I was just reading an article about this jerk Gordon Jenkins, the black mayor of Monticello, New York, who was arrested for drunk driving and went on an unhinged, vicious, anti-white rant while being processed at the police station, all of which was captured on video. He repeatedly referred to white police officers as "crackas" and characterized the black police officer processing his arrest as a traitor for not letting him off the hook. Despite Jenkins's vitriolic racial epithets, there was no outrage in the jew controlled mass media. There can be no doubt that the situation would have been quite different had Jenkins been a white man spewing racial slurs. Can you imagine what would have happened if this was a white guy...??!!

The same anti-white message comes through loud and clear from the black hatred of whites with BLM, an updated version of the panthers that is also supported with jew money. This serves to reinforce the current multi-cultural crap which is based on the premise that white people have no right to assert their interests and identity as whites, except when white identity is linked in the jew media to unjustified violence against non-whites or some other evil. If we do something, we are evil racist demons!!!

The disdain for whites could not be more obvious in the jewish mainstream media and the scared political establishment. Whites are regularly attacked, both physically and verbally, worldwide. The epidemic of black-on-white violent crime is on the rise, and more and more whites are coming to the realization that the much-ballyhooed "knock-out game" in which unsuspecting whites are sucker-punched by roving groups of black thugs in an effort to knock out or seriously injure unsuspecting victims, is a real phenomenon in major American cities and in other nations. What is being done about it, what has jew media said about this horrendous crime?? NOTHING, because white people who care about their country, traditions and history are routinely demonized and slandered as "racist". Meanwhile, millions of unskilled non-white immigrants—both legal and illegal—are displacing the former white majority in every country in the world!!!!. Look at South Africa, murders of whites every day!!!

Whites are foolish indeed to willingly head into minority status, which is happening real quickly, given the outright hostility shown toward whites in the jewish mainstream political and media establishment, making us look like cowards and less than life babies. When whites are a minority, we will be powerless to stop the tide of hatred against us. Today's hatred of whites will be tomorrow's large-scale victimization and death of whites. We will come to an end. WAKE UP!!!




In this example, Participant #5 states: "Today's hatred of whites will be tomorrow's large-scale victimization and death of whites. We will come to an end. WAKE UP!!!," indicating that he believes the white race is en route to large scale victimization and eradication, or what white nationalists have deemed white genocide.

5.3.4. Stage 3: Resonance with Personal Experiences

SageMan's third stage involves assigning their imagined discrimination or victimization to deeply painful personal experiences. SageMan (2008) provides an example of European and American Muslim populations and their differences. For example, SageMan insists that European Muslim populations feel discrimination because of their experienced social inequalities, such as higher unemployment rates, and therefore they feel discriminated against for simply being Muslim, whereas American Muslim populations are much better established and integrated economically (2008) into society.

Members of the Stormfront forum expressed similar sentiments, particularly as displayed in Stage 1: Negative Real-Life Experience, and in Stage 4: Solidification as a Victim of the created Canadian White Nationalist Development Path. In stage 1 of the path, users have had a negative experience that prompts them to seek out like-minded individuals by, for example, logging on to the Stormfront forums for validation and support. There, individuals crystalize their feelings and reinforce their perception of being victims, which, in their myopic view, justifies the “by-any-means-necessary” outlook to rectify their problems. Consider, for example, Participant #6’s first recollection of being a white nationalist below.


#34

 **Re: How did you become a white nationalist?**

I can't remember exactly how or when it happened, but part of the why was because my mother was very much against our current immigration policy. She often asked why someone fresh off the boat got government assistance to see a dentist or go back to school, while we were dirt poor and none of us could see a dentist and she never got to finish school.

My earliest WN-related memory was of walking home, feeling shame and anger over what we were being taught in school. About how evil White people are. How everything we do is evil. And how everything that people of colour and First Nations did was precious and golden.

I was soon snapped out of my reverie and began to question everything I knew.

 **Quote**

Participant #6’s mother caused her to generate an initial negative outlook on immigration. Through that outlook, she had a negative experience at school, which caused her to feel like white individuals were being victimized. In this example, Participant #6 believes that the school curriculum is inherently racist and white individuals are the victims of the racist curriculum. On the Stormfront forums, anecdotes pertaining to the white race being portrayed as victims are common and are often echoed. The intense echo chamber amalgamates their viewpoints as

victims and — at least in their minds — countenances a negative outlook on the government and society at large.

5.3.5. Stage 4: Mobilization through Networks

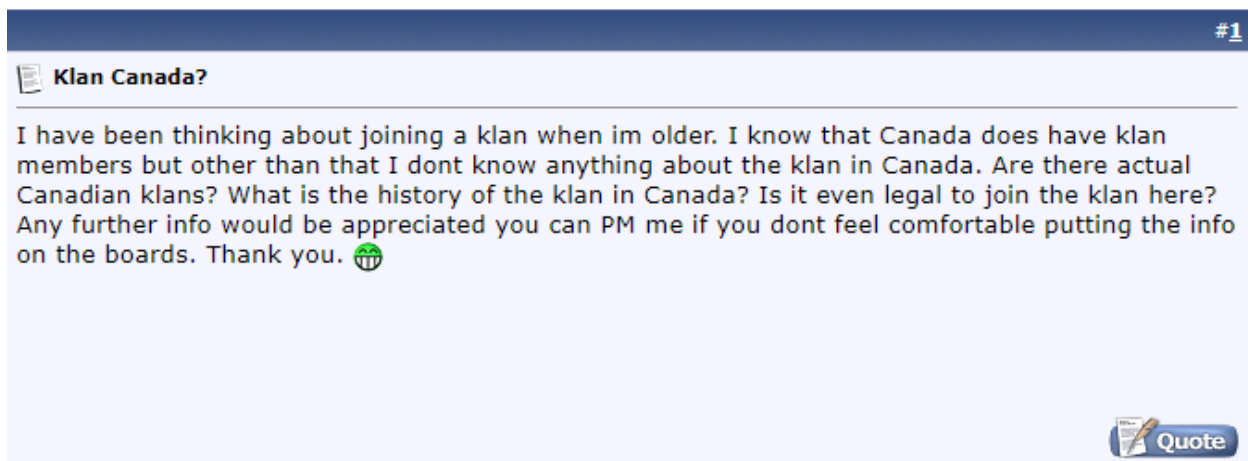
The fourth stage of Sageman's radicalization theory pertains to mobilization through networks, which involves smaller cliques or friends and family groups. Today, these networks have expanded to include interactive on-forum communities that specialize in radicalizing participants through natural group dynamics (Sageman, 2008). The Stormfront forums function in the same way by echoing negative sentiments and bolstering the opinions of members via the expression of extremist doctrines. Extremist viewpoints, such as a grand Zionist conspiracy or holocaust denial, are simply inconceivable to the general population. The same controversial philosophies, however, have strong support on the Stormfront forums, which acts to normalize violent propensities and debunked conspiracy theories.

This creates and motivates angry individuals who believe they are in a war for the survival of their kind. For Sageman (2008), the true leader of Islamist extremists is the collective discourse that is present on Internet forums that embolden members to participate in extremism. Without the Internet, that platform would not otherwise be accessible by them. The Stormfront nexus functions in a duplicate manner. It harbours extremist discussions that would not normally be accessible to white supremacists or the white nationalist movement. This is evidenced by the posts of Stormfront members who exude relief that, finally, they can have discussions with people who espouse homogeneous ideologies.

Sageman (2011) described Islamist fanatics as groups of friends that form from the ground up, without a central leading figure. Extremists groups, therefore, are groups of friends

who have built trust among and between each other. Each member has sought out the group because of its reputation or respect in the community or society writ large. This theme was present on the Stormfront forums, too. Some members would simply seek out people like them to hang out with in the real world, while others sought out established groups like the Ku Klux Klan because of its prominent history and pronounced notoriety.


In a few cases, however, it is apparent that some individuals would join almost any extremist group, regardless of its name, notoriety or specific ideology, just as long as it was extreme in its advocacy of “whiteness.” Participants were indifferent about which group they joined if they had similar views and were close enough to physically meet. This suggests that even potential converts who sought out the Ku Klux Klan were most likely doing so to simply “join a peer group” and thereby have unabashed discussions revolving around extremist rhetoric and other controversial viewpoints. Participant #3 displays this in his contrasting posts below. One is centered on the Ku Klux Klan. Later, he reveals that it does not actually matter which group he would join as long as it contains like-minded individuals.



The image is a screenshot of a forum post. At the top right, there is a blue header with the text "#1". Below the header, the post title "Klan Canada?" is displayed next to a small icon of a document. The main body of the post contains the following text: "I have been thinking about joining a klan when im older. I know that Canada does have klan members but other than that I dont know anything about the klan in Canada. Are there actual Canadian klans? What is the history of the klan in Canada? Is it even legal to join the klan here? Any further info would be appreciated you can PM me if you dont feel comfortable putting the info on the boards. Thank you. 🍷". At the bottom right of the post, there is a blue button with a white icon of a document and the word "Quote" next to it.

Re: Unit 14

Quote:

Originally Posted by **proudcracker420** 

We're in Canada are you located? We are legit we are just a new group but we have chapters in western Canada, ontario & the SouthEast of the U.S & various LoneWolf members located in different places.

Check out our site & email Unit14Global@gmail.com if you are interested in joining our group.

Again, I'm really sorry, didn't mean to sound disrespectful but I hope you understand the need to be a little paranoid. I live in Waterloo and have sent an email. Thanks.

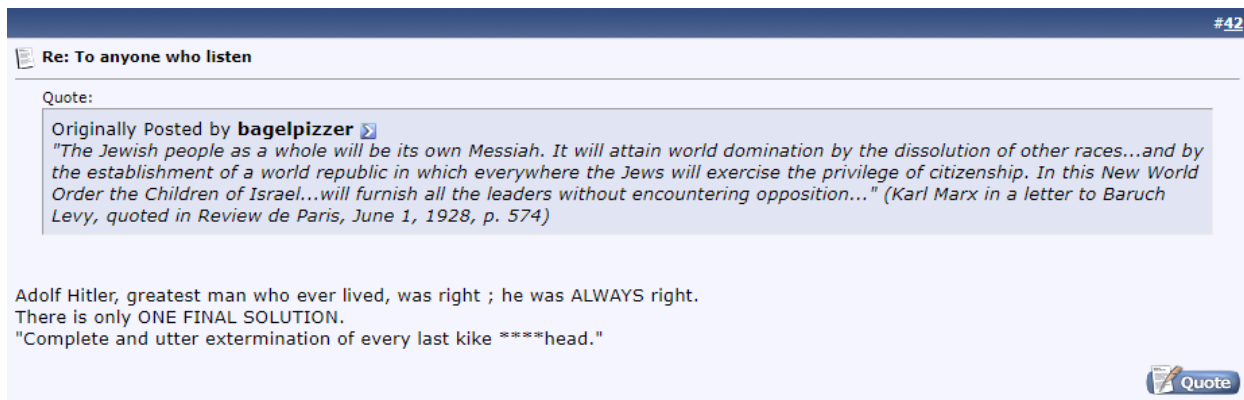


In the posts above, Participant #3 initially tried to join the Ku Klux Klan. He or she received feedback on their attempts, and later asks for information about a different group, Unit 14. Participant #3 questioned the legitimacy of Unit 14. However, after another member vouched for the legitimacy of Unit 14, Participant #3 sent them an email. This indicates that the group is less important and the main driver behind the recruitment is finding a peer group offline that parallels the ideology and beliefs of the participant. Sageman (2011) buttresses this point by remarking that Islamist extremists “simply took on the beliefs of their friends” (p.70) and the process is akin to a “group adventure” (p.70) rather than the lone-wolf process that is often reflected in the general media. The Stormfront forums mimicked the process found by Sageman on central recruiting strategies of al Qaeda. Stormfront members expressed the ability to change their beliefs to match the atmosphere of the forums if they wanted to be accepted into that subculture.

5.4. Finding 3: Stormfront as an Echo Chamber

When conducting the content analysis and analyzing the participants' posts and responses from other members on the forum, it became apparent that the Stormfront forum acts as an echo

chamber for a right-wing, white supremacist, ideology. Within the subgroup, contrasting viewpoints are not accepted and are relentlessly attacked by veteran members. Stormfront members consider themselves to be in a war to save the white race and if another white individual has tolerant viewpoints on a specific group or topic they are shunned and attacked. Alternatively, if they accept the “party line,” they are encouraged and allowed to continue their participation. Participant #5 provides one of the more aggressive examples of acting as an echo chamber in a thread to which he replied. See below.



The screenshot shows a forum thread. At the top right is a blue header with the number "#42". Below it is a post titled "Re: To anyone who listen" with a small icon of a document. Underneath the title is a "Quote:" section containing text attributed to "Originally Posted by bagelpizzer". The quote is: *"The Jewish people as a whole will be its own Messiah. It will attain world domination by the dissolution of other races...and by the establishment of a world republic in which everywhere the Jews will exercise the privilege of citizenship. In this New World Order the Children of Israel...will furnish all the leaders without encountering opposition..." (Karl Marx in a letter to Baruch Levy, quoted in Review de Paris, June 1, 1928, p. 574)*. Below the quote is a reply: "Adolf Hitler, greatest man who ever lived, was right ; he was ALWAYS right. There is only ONE FINAL SOLUTION. "Complete and utter extermination of every last kike *****head."". In the bottom right corner of the post area is a "Quote" button with a small icon of a document.

Participant #5 replied to another member with a remark designed to provoke an intensified response and potentially signify his commitment to the movement. His post has very little substance other than affirming the opinions of his fellow Stormfront members. It also signifies his commitment to the proffered ideology. Posts in the forum often emulate posts by their fellow posters in an attempt to fit in or flatter more-senior posters and senior commentators.

On the Stormfront forums, there is very little contentious debate or disparate opinions. Instead, discourse is filled with congratulatory and adulatory reinforcement followed by constant echoing and re-echoing of oft-repeated ideas and well-worn opinions. Stormfront members feel that their right-wing viewpoints are validated and re-affirms the notion that more moderate white

individuals are not racially conscious or they are race traitors. Participant #2 provides another example, below, in a discussion on the Baltimore riots that occurred in 2015.

#175

Re: Baltimore riots live

Quote:

Originally Posted by **Peace Through Stormfront**

Not that long ago, some people here bridled at my use of the word "patriottard", but I think we will see many of those in the coming days and weeks. Many white people will go to any length to avoid coming to terms with the true natures of negroes and jews.

They can't come to terms with it because it literally disturbs their entire reality. Things of genetic nature (and the negroes violence is indeed genetic) terrify a lot of people which is why they try to deny it. "No they're acting that way because they're poor and oppressed.. Not because of their race. It's only a skin color after all"...

Quote


In this thread, members of the forum attribute the violence to a genetic disposition or the “true nature” of minority groups. Group members wholeheartedly believe that violence committed by visible minority groups is, in fact, genetic. In this pseudo-intellectual discussion, there is no one denying the false claims that violence is genetic. Instead, they parrot each other which reflexively validates their false claims that minority violence is a consequence of their genetics. While members occasionally adopt pseudo-intellectual stances during discussions, the group nevertheless takes contrary opinions as an assault to its ideological fervor. This is evidenced by the treatment of Participant #6, who self-identified as a female on the forums.

5.5. Finding 4: Female Stormfront Experience


Of the 10 participants examined, Participant #6 revealed herself to be female during the content analysis. Participant #6’s trajectory on the Stormfront forum was acutely atypical compared to that of male participants. I believe extensive research into the female exposure to white nationalists would prove useful in countering violent extremism. Participant #6 experienced negative reactions on the forums from other members due to her alternative

viewpoints and reluctance to ameliorate her views to conform to the idiosyncrasies of the forum. For example, Participant #6 expressed tolerance of homosexuality on the Stormfront forums in the cluster of posts below and believed that anti-homosexual postures should not be a core belief of white nationalists.

#15

 **Re: My girlfriend and racialism**


Quote:

Originally Posted by **Fr. John** 


IF she is not willing to do this, then she is NOT a 'True' Woman, but nothing more than a vagina in slacks.

Wow. You just reminded me of why I left the movement. Utter disrespect for women.

I was lurking here, thinking I might come back. But I'm sure glad I saw this message first.

 **Quote**

#9

 **Re: Kathleen Wynne becomes Ontario's first female and openly gay premier.**

You guys can crap all over me, but I'm going to have my say.

I don't care who you sleep with, so long as the person is old enough and has consented.


I only care that you're White and that you're willing to have White children and raise them well.

I also don't care if you're a man or a woman, so long as you do a good job.

But then, I believe in the rights of the individual. I believe in freedom. I don't think it's the government's business to tell me who I can sleep next to at night.

We need to preserve what is good and special about the White race. We are strong. We are generous. We protect our weakest individuals. We don't go poking our noses into our neighbours' bedrooms. And we don't disrespect our women like the Arabs do.


Or at least we aren't supposed to.

 **Quote**

#8

Re: Gay and Lesbian coworkers getting married

Quote:

Originally Posted by **MinisterFredE** 
Time for your ban from here to start I reckon, Queer lover!


I've done more in real life for this movement than most keyboard warriors ever have.

But hey, kick out a White person who isn't being tricked into the divide and conquer tactics that have been successfully used on all of us for years and see if that helps our movement.

But then, this pressure from the Jewish Old Testament and its rules for how desert Jews are supposed to live or not live seem to strongly permeate us and guide our people far more than our ancestral religions and our ancestral codes of conduct.

In other words, if you're a Christian who believes in the Old Testament, you go ahead and do that. If you're a proud White person subscribing to our ancestral belief systems, you're not bound to hate your fellow White man for his sexuality, no matter what the Christians or the Muslims or the ancient Jews say.

Not every proud White person believes what you believe, Fred.

 Quote

Each of the three posts is in different threads on the Stormfront forum, but they garnered the same reactions from her fellow Stormfront members. Each subgroup insisted that she take her non-conforming views to the opposing views section of the forum, as they textually assaulted her. Members of the forums even called for her banishment because of her condonation of homosexuality.

From the content analysis, it is apparent Stormfront acts as a white supremacy networking site where intolerant views are counterpoised. This treatment forced Participant #6 onto a different trajectory when compared to the fate of other participants. Participant #6 had her views met with constant attacks and negative reactions rather than consistent echoes and reinforcement of ideas that the other participants received. This caused her to have negative interactions and even have some members suggest she should be summarily banned from all forums because of her non-conformity and refusal to boycott homosexuality. Participant #6

expressed a reluctance to return to the movement because of the disrespect towards women by the forum.

Participant #6 was the only participant that did not attempt to meet with companion forum members in the real-world. This is likely due to the negative reactions she received from other members. Instead of feeling a sense of comradery and acceptance she was met with negativity and attacks. Just as well, most of the members hold anti-feminist views and express them openly and often. Anti-female prejudice creates a toxic environment for female members. Moreover, females tend to harbour alternative or more tolerant views than males on the forum.

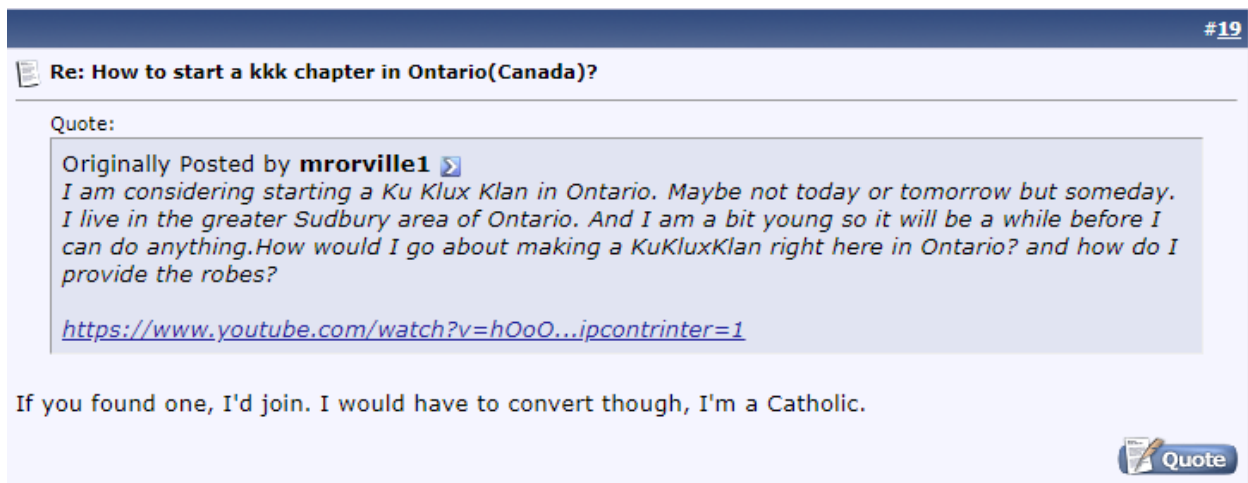
Marc Sageman (2008) states that the mobilization of Islamist extremists is based on friendship and kinship. This explains the lack of attempts to meet other members in the real-world. For Participant #6, Stormfront provides a means of discussing the white nationalist ideas that she would not normally be able to discuss in the real world. Regardless, Participant #6 does not identify with the other Stormfront members in a friendly manner because they have been aggressive towards her — to the point of being verbally and emotionally attacked.

5.6. Finding 5: Open-Recruitment on the Stormfront Forums

Marc Sageman once stated when addressing terrorist attacks against the United States that “the threat of incarceration prevents potential human links from freely advertising their connection to the jihad and facilitating the enrollment of new members” (2003). Within the Stormfront forums, recruitment of interested members is done openly. If a member seeks to join a group, it would only take a small amount of lurking onsite before connecting with a receptive recruiter who would arrange for a private connection to an active forum member.

Recruitment within the Stormfront forums is rampant. Potential members are often recruited proactively and easily facilitate the exchange of all information to become viable and active members of a given movement. Members are also encouraged to develop new hate groups, while simultaneously suggesting changes and additions to group manifestos.


While the Global Salafi Jihad is threatened with incarceration, white supremacy-based hate groups can enjoy Western-guaranteed freedoms of association while masking themselves under the guise of white nationalism and disseminating racist ideologies and recruiting potential members in the open for all to see. Without the threat of incarceration, Stormfront members do not feel the pressure of being discovered attempting to join an extremist group. Consider the example below of a member blatantly seeking information about the disreputable Ku Klux Klan.



#19

Re: How to start a kkk chapter in Ontario(Canada)?


Quote:

Originally Posted by **mrorville1** 

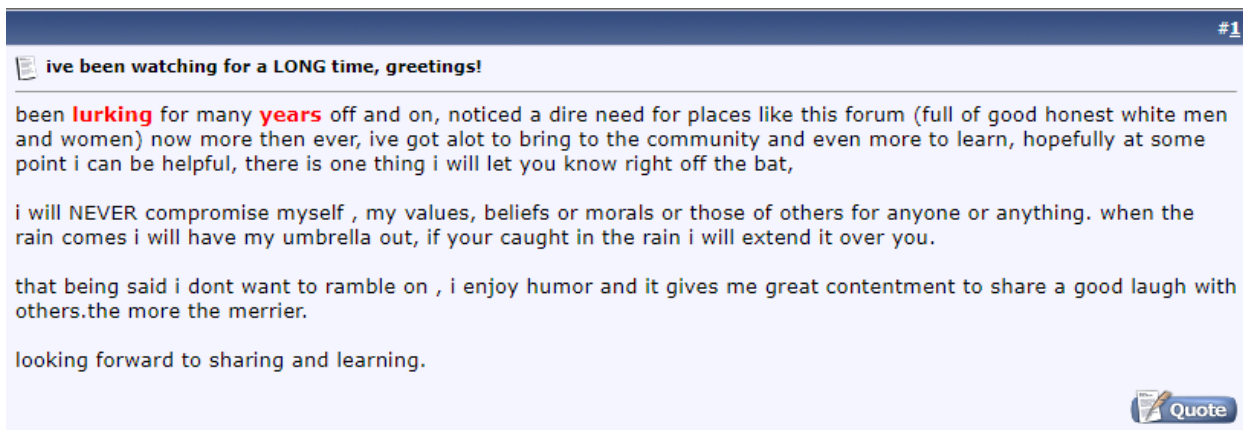
I am considering starting a Ku Klux Klan in Ontario. Maybe not today or tomorrow but someday. I live in the greater Sudbury area of Ontario. And I am a bit young so it will be a while before I can do anything. How would I go about making a KuKluxKlan right here in Ontario? and how do I provide the robes?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOoO...jpcontrinter=1>

If you found one, I'd join. I would have to convert though, I'm a Catholic.

 Quote

The amount of networking on the forum is extensive with nine out of the ten participants attempting to establish offline contacts. The scope of recruitment is likely more extensive than is expressed, however, given the amount of lurking on the Stormfront forums. Lurking is what Stormfront members consider reading the forums without posting. Some of the Stormfront members noted that before participating they went through a period where they lurked on the forums as exemplified in the post below.



With extensive lurking and the ability to send private messages, the amount of actual recruitment on the forum most likely overshadows what can be seen visually. As noted in the post above, that member has lurked for years and this was commonly expressed on the Stormfront forums. Overall, the Stormfront forums functioned as a means for regional members or groups to find like-minded people and recruit for offline purposes.

5.7. Conclusion:

This chapter presented the results and findings from the content analysis, starting with the six-stage Canadian White Nationalist Development Path that had its conceptual design outlined and detailed in Chapter 4: Data Analysis. The themes of Marc Sageman's Four-Stage Path were compared to the six-part themes present on the Stormfront forums. The comparison shows that Marc Sageman's theory is not sub-culturally specific and could be utilized to accurately evaluate disparate extremist subcultures. As noted in this chapter Marc Sageman's pathway contains four stages that are conceptually similar to the six stages outlined in the Canadian white nationalist development. The results indicate that if Marc Sageman had examined the Stormfront forum he would have likely been able to apply his Islamist based theory on the white nationalist forum successfully. Following the comparison to Marc Sageman's radicalization theory, the secondary

findings of the content analysis were explored, thusly. Firstly, this thesis undertook a discussion of how the Stormfront forums act as a white supremacist echo chamber while simultaneously bolstering opinions and validating racist ideologies.

Secondly, this thesis presented and contrasted the lukewarm reception of a female member of the Stormfront forums. That examination unveiled the hostile environment that is heaped upon non-conformists who fail to immediately adhere to the homogeneous echoes of a “closed bubble” society like the Stormfront forum. The chapter then discussed the open recruitment practices that are present on Stormfront. Open recruitment is conducted alongside the establishment of fresh new hate groups and active networking to create offline contacts. All this is done openly and under the watchful eyes of the Stormfront moderators.

Chapter 6: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

6.1. Conclusions Surrounding the Main Findings of this Thesis:

This thesis has undertaken a conventional content analysis of publicly posted Canadian white nationalist content on the white supremacist forum stormfront.org. The results of this thesis outline the Canadian White Nationalist Development Path which describes the motivations behind the development of Canadian white nationalists using the online posts of 10 participants. When compared to Marc Sageman's Four-Stage Islamist Radicalization Theory the results indicate that Marc Sageman's radicalization theory is not specific to Islamist radicalization and utilizes a comprehension of group dynamics that could be employed to understand the radicalization of alternative extremist subcultures.

The other findings of this thesis constitute the importance of understanding the Canadian white nationalist subculture that was discovered while analyzing the online posts of the 10 participants. The findings contain important aspects that appertain to extremist recruitment, female experiences on Stormfront, and the echo-chamber nature of the forum that were deemed important to an understanding of the Canadian white nationalists who surf the Stormfront forums.

The findings suggest that the Stormfront website is an open-recruitment nexus utilized by Canadian white nationalists to boost membership into established hate groups and to meet like-minded people online. The forums are toxic environments, even more so for females due to the anti-feminist tone and zero tolerance for alternative lifestyles and minority views. The forum also acts as a vocation vacuum, creating a reverberating environment that bolsters white supremacy and anti-government sentiments.

6.2. Conclusions and Explanation of How the Findings Were Achieved:

This thesis begins with a review of applicable literature that identifies the themes and scope of white nationalism in Canada. This is followed by an examination of radicalization literature and theories of established and well-defined pathways to radicalization. The purposes of these two undertakings were:

(1) to gain an in-depth understanding of the history and comprehensiveness of white nationalism in Canada; and

(2) to identify a pragmatic radicalization pathway theory that could be used as a tool to objectively analyze the Canadian White Nationalist Development Path that results from the content analysis.

From this examination, it was determined that Marc Sageman's Four-Stage Islamist Radicalization Theory would be used as a basis for the analysis.

Next, an examination of the text posted on the Stormfront forums was undertaken. Four qualitative analyses were applied during the examination to ensure that the common themes expressed by the 10 participants were investigated thoroughly. The Stormfront membership is over 340,000 (stormfront.org, 2019). It is outside the scope of this thesis to analyze the dozens of posts of each of the 300,000+ members. Instead, a representative sample of 10 members (the 10 Participants) was discretely selected based on the high number of their respective posts.

The long-standing Stormfront forums provided years of user-generated posts. There were 2,263 posts among the 10 Participants. The users were further selected based on their self-identification as Canadians while posting in the Stormfront Canada subforum (stormfront.org/f40) in order to find participants who discussed Canadian issues and displayed

radicalization themes relevant to Canada. Utilizing the Stormfront forums as a primary data source allowed for a detailed retrospective and longitudinal examination of changes in the behaviours and beliefs of Canadian white nationalists from their initial to their most recent post at the time.

The content analysis conducted in this study resulted in six stages used to categorize and organize predominant behaviours that were displayed on the website by the participating Canadian white nationalists. The six themes were deemed critical to developing a radicalized white nationalist outlook. The six stages displayed no specific chronological pattern because individuals displayed some of the stages at completely different points along the continuum of their forum participation. However, nine out of the 10 participants experienced all six stages at one time or another. The Canadian White Nationalist Development Path was then devised, analyzed, and applied to each stage. Each of the Canadian white nationalist six-stage rubrics was then compared with and evaluated against, Marc Sageman's Four-Stage Islamist Radicalization Theory. Similarities were found.

The similarities suggest that Marc Sageman's theory could be utilized to study alternative extremist subcultures, as the principles of Marc Sageman's four-stage theory were found throughout the six-stage theory developed in this thesis. Arguably, this indicates that Marc Sageman's understanding of group dynamics and radicalization is not specific to Islamist extremism.

6.3. Implications of this Research:

The findings of this research have both academic and practical implications. In the academic context, this thesis presents an in-depth look at a Canadian extremist subculture in a

retrospective and longitudinal manner. It provides a candid look at the development of Canadian white nationalists in a manner that helps to refine current radicalization research. Academically, this thesis helps to fine-tune our understanding of radicalization research by utilizing an Islamist-based radicalization theory to analyze the growth and development of Canadian white nationalists. This research presents a candid look at the behaviours and beliefs of Canadian white nationalists over the years of posting content discussing their philosophies, experiences, and aspirations. Extremist subcultures and terrorist groups are notoriously hard to study due to the ethical and safety concerns that are inherent and coexistent when studying violent extremist groups. This thesis circumvents this issue and provides an examination of an extremist subculture that can help garner an in-depth understanding of the mechanics of developing extremist ideologies that use online forums as their gateway to radicalization. The academic value is such that it can help to refine a scholarly critique of radicalization pathways by utilizing an established pathway while proposing a development path that is proffered in this thesis. In the practical context it can assist law enforcement agencies in countering online radicalization.

6.3.1. Using This Study to Counter Online Radicalization

Karen Greenberg (2016) states that terrorist organizations rely on the Internet to disseminate extremist rhetoric and to recruit. Therefore, any meaningful counter-terrorism strategy must account for the ways in which terrorist organizations use the Internet to lure in recruits and manipulate minds into having a desire to serve a cause larger than themselves (Greenberg, 2016). Castells (2012) states that online social movements are both local and global at the same time, given their connectedness to both their online network and their global presence and debates. This thesis takes a local and global approach to understanding the radicalization of Canadian white nationalists. By understanding how Canadian white nationalists

fit within Canada and in the global white nationalist social movement, stronger and more nuanced counter-narratives can be established and developed. For example, participants have expressed issues related to social services, immigration, local indigenous groups and more, which are all relevant to specific contexts in Canada. The participants are also connected globally through the stormfront forum by a strong belief to ensure the survival of the white race and combat white genocide.

According to Karen Greenberg (2016), counter-radicalization strategies utilizing the Internet have taken three main forms: “disruption, diversion, and countermessaging” (p. 167). There is the potential for all three forms of counter-radicalization strategies to be benefited from this study. Disruption tactics involve using technology to disrupt the function of sites and online accounts that disseminate extremist discourse which limits an extremist subculture’s ability to grow and spread (Greenberg, 2016). This thesis presents the stormfront forums as a recruitment nexus for white supremacists and white nationalists into established groups as well as a platform for the formation of new groups. A recruitment nexus like Stormfront would make for an ideal online platform to utilize disruption tactics in order to limit recruitment into hate groups in Canada.

Diversionsary tactics can also be aided by this thesis. Diversionsary tactics involve using technology to address the loneliness, desperation, and naivety of potential extremists utilizing the Internet by redirecting their searches and having them engage in more positive online searches (Greenberg, 2016). The participants of this thesis all expressed negative experiences in their real lives that propelled them to search for like-minded individuals and they found the stormfront forums through their searches. There is the potential to have searches for white nationalist and

supremacist communities to be diverted to counter-radicalization narratives rather than being able to find the stormfront forum and similar communities.

Counter-messaging can also be directly supported by the results of this study. Counter-messaging practices involve developing counternarratives to combat extremist discourse through debunking and correcting problematic narratives (Greenberg, 2016). On the stormfront forums there is a plethora of pseudo-intellectual discussions pertaining to conspiracies and other white nationalist topics in which participants displayed the ability to learn from and adopt. The white nationalist development path that resulted from this thesis can be directly used to aid in the development of counter-narratives that have the potential to hinder the dissemination of white nationalist discourse. The pathway developed in this thesis addresses how Canadian white nationalists use the forum as well as how they interact with their peers, which provides an in-depth account of forum use that can be utilized for counter-messaging.

6.4. Recommendations for further study

Sageman (2008) stated that experts have focused far too much on . He insists that Islamist extremists are “far from [being] Islamic scholars” (p.226). On the Stormfront forums, this theme holds true for Canadian white nationalists, too. Members have discussions in a pseudointellectual manner but posters are far from being experts on the subjects that anger them. Forum members claim they are more aware than the rest of the population and that is why they are white nationalists. Yet they too often demonstrate a propensity to be easily persuaded to drastically modify their ideology at the mere — though harshly stated — suggestion by the forum majority. With this in mind, research that aims to understand radicalization to violence should focus on the social and psychological processes that work to alter the cultivation of individuals rather than their specific ideological beliefs.

By focusing on group dynamics and social processes rather than the type of ideology, Canadian law enforcement can utilize the forum for gathering knowledge which would aid in security planning. As noted earlier, recruitment is not hidden; there are threads dedicated to established groups attempting to disseminate their ideas and gather new members. Security planning could potentially utilize the web forum to create counter narratives based on the themes of discourse present on the forum. Furthermore, they can examine thoroughly how senior forum members utilize group dynamics and social processes to entrench newer members in the movement and create strategies to misdirect and reduce recruitment into white nationalism in Canada.

6.5. Limitations of this Research:

This thesis undertakes a conventional content analysis of the Canadians on the publicly posted white nationalist web forum stormfront.org. During the investigation of the content, there were three major limitations. Firstly, there were ethical constraints concerning the identity of participants which severely limited the release of appurtenant data. The subject matter displayed by the participants has potential real-world repercussions, as they are on a hate group forum and are discussing Canadian topics and events that could adversely affect individual lives or Canadian society at large.

In order to mitigate the potential harm to the 10 Participants, most of the descriptive data were redacted from the database to avoid revealing their identities. Only the contents of the posts and their thread titles remained as usable data. This limits the amount of descriptive data that can be utilized for analysis.

Secondly, only the online posts by the 10 Participants were collected and used. For the purposes of this thesis, it is assumed that the content of the several posts is authentic and honest. The participants are anonymous. As such, their real-life experiences and opinions as stated online are taken at face value. Just as well, utilizing online data from anonymous participants prevents an examination of offline data that would be pivotal to assessing the complete radicalization development path of the participants.

Thirdly, when collecting usable data, there may be a concern regarding the limited sample size used herein. The sample size for this thesis is only 10 participants because of the timeframe and abilities of the researcher. Yet the secondary sample size comprises 2,263 posts, which is quite substantial. With over 345,000 members (stormfront.org, 2019), it is, of course, difficult to argue that the development path derived from the conduct and interactions of our 10 Participants alone is indicative of the entire Stormfront population. As a result, the development path is limited to describing the experiences of Canadians utilizing the web forum and not the entire white nationalist subculture that comprises the full client base of Stormfront.org.

6.6. Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations Chapter Summary

This thesis represents the first look at Canadian white nationalists through the lens of radicalization. With the goal of (1) addressing how Canadian white nationalists on the stormfront forums resemble a path towards radicalization, and (2), discerning how that may apply to current debates surrounding radicalization research, this thesis undertook a conventional content analysis in order to answer these questions.

This chapter presented conclusions concerning the findings of the content analysis as well as how they were formulated. Specifically, how the examination of Stormfront helps to refine

understandings of radicalization pathway theories by suggesting that Marc Sageman's theory could be utilized for alternative subcultures and that radicalization should focus on group dynamics and social processes, rather than the type of ideology. Additionally, the results indicate that the experiences of female white nationalists may differ from that of male white nationalists, and that the stormfront forum is an overt recruitment mechanism for Canadian white nationalists. Thereafter, this chapter explored how the findings were calculated, specifically the selection of literature and the analysis of the Stormfront forums. Next, the chapter identified the limitations of the research process, both practically and academically. Lastly, this chapter identified recommendations for future research; specifically, it addresses how radicalization research should focus more on group dynamics rather than the type of ideology; and finally, whether that approach will lead to greater potential effectiveness for future research on the Stormfront forums.

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