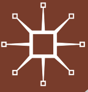

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Right-Wing Extremism in Canada

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For all of those who challenge hatred.

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1

Thinking About Right-Wing Extremism in Canada

In April of 2009, the US Department of Homeland Security released an assessment of right-wing extremism (RWE) aptly entitled "Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment". Within months, it had been purged from virtually every intelligence and law enforcement database, a victim of conservative backlash and the related resistance to admit to the presence of extreme-right-wing activism (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2009). A similar reticence pervades the Canadian extremism debates. In fact, at the opening conference for Public Safety's Kanishka Project in 2012, several keynote speakers also denied the presence of any threat from "the right".

That terrorism associated with RWEs is largely absent from the public agenda in Canada is evident from even a cursory review of the *Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre (ITAC)* website, for example. The list of "Terrorist Incidents", while international in scope, includes only one right-wing terrorist incident: Anders Breivik's horrific attacks in Norway in 2011. Until 2019, the list of "Terrorist Entities" did not include any reference to RWE or white supremacist organizations. In that year, *Blood & Honour* and the affiliated *Combat 18* were added. Additionally, none

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of the publications included on the *ITAC* site mention these extremist elements. In contrast, that the extreme right continues to represent a viable and active presence is clear from recent events in Alberta, British Columbia and Quebec, for example, where multiple RWE attacks, demonstrations and prosecutions have been recorded (e.g. *Blood & Honour*, *White Nationalist Front* and *PEGIDA*) in recent years. The *B'Nai Brith*'s audits of antisemitic activity document white supremacist activity yearly. Moreover, looking to our south, indications from such bodies as the *Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)* are that right-wing terrorism and related activities are far more common than those associated with Islamic fundamentalism. Indeed, based on their analysis of the distribution of terrorist activities recorded in the *Global Terrorism Database (GTD)*, Webb and Cutter (2009: 448) conclude that

> While many researchers and government officials focus on the transnational threat to the U.S., such as the perpetrators of 9/11, we argue that the historic pattern of terrorist activity in the U.S. is more locally-focused, home grown, and derived from political and social activism by U.S. citizens against other U.S. citizens.

Among this home-grown threat is RWE.

The attacks of 11 September 2001 shifted terrorism from the periphery to the centre of the public consciousness. What had heretofore been restricted to "fringe" groups, or something that happened "over there", suddenly appeared to be something much larger, much more threatening and much closer to home. However, one significant consequence of the 9/11 terrorist attacks is that they drew attention away from the more typical white domestic terrorist—such as Timothy McVeigh and members of RWE groups. Now the terrorist is defined by his brown skin and his Muslim religion (Chermak et al. 2010; Jaggar 2005; U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2009). Yet it behoves us, in the interests of domestic security, to continue to pay attention to the more traditional form of "home grown" RWE. RWEs continue to represent a distinctive threat to the well-being of Canada's diverse communities. This book aims to paint a picture of the contemporary RWE movement in Canada, providing an analysis of membership, distribution

and activities during the time in which we conducted our fieldwork. In the remainder of this introductory chapter, we define what we mean by RWE and offer an overview of our theoretical and methodological approaches. This is followed by a historical overview of the RWE movement in Canada, and a summary of our observations of the make-up and distribution of the movement during the time of our fieldwork in Chapter 2. In Chapters 3 and 4 respectively, we unpack some of the key endogenous and exogenous factors that both inhibit and facilitate the development of and propensity for violence associated with Canada's RWE movement. We end with a discussion of strategies to defuse RWE in Canada, and an epilogue accounting for "post-Trump" patterns of extreme-right activism in Canada. It is important to stress from the outset that the RWE movement is fluid and ever-changing. The bulk of our analysis derives from fieldwork conducted between 2012 and 2015. A great deal has changed about the movement since then, as reflected here in our epilogue. Nonetheless, many of the core characteristics of both the nature and environment of RWE in Canada remain the same and remain critical to our understanding of the sustainability—or lack thereof—associated with the movement.

Defining Right-Wing Extremism in Canada

In spite of the fact that RWE has not been the focus of much policy or academic work in Canada, there are myriad strands of substantive analyses of RWE within the broader literature. Among them: the links between terrorism and hate crime (Deloughery et al. 2012; Mills et al. 2015) and the related notion of "cumulative extremism" (Bartlett and Birdwell 2013; Busher and Macklin 2015); RWE ideologies (Oaten 2014; Pollard 2016; Schafer et al. 2014); classes of violence associated with RWE (Bérubé and Campana 2015; Mulholland 2013; Petrou and Kandylis 2016); and comparative/international analyses (Mammone et al. 2012). By way of introduction, however, we restrict our comments to three central foci: definitions; RWEs' use of media/social media; lone actors; and the contexts of the rise of RWE.

One of the first points of contention in discussions around far-right extremism revolves around defining RWE. The challenge is a reflection

of the heterogeneity of the groups in question. Nonetheless, there is no shortage of efforts to define what is meant by "right wing" extremism. A US team of scholars, for example, has adopted a broadly descriptive conceptualization of the term:

> We define the American far-right as individuals or groups that subscribe to aspects of the following ideals: They are fiercely nationalistic (as opposed to universal and international in orientation), anti-global, suspicious of centralized federal authority, and reverent of individual liberty (especially their right to own guns, be free of taxes), and they believe in conspiracy theories that involve a grave threat to national sovereignty and/or personal liberty, that one's personal and/or national "way of life" is under attack and is either already lost or that the threat is imminent (sometimes such beliefs are amorphous and vague, but for some the threat is from a specific ethnic, racial, or religious group), and in the need to be prepared for an attack by participating in paramilitary preparations and training, and survivalism. (Adamczyk et al. 2014: 327)

This is perhaps an apt characterization of the RWE movement in the United States, but may not be as useful in the Canadian context. There is much less emphasis here, for example, on gun rights, or survivalism. Other observers have identified key pillars of RWE that likely have more resonance here. Jamin (2013) suggests that the core tenets are

a. The valorizing of inequality and hierarchy, especially along racial/ethnic lines.
b. Ethnic nationalism linked to a mono-racial community.
c. Radical means to achieve aims and defend the "imagined" community.

Perliger's (2012) list adds some elements:

1. Nationalism
2. Xenophobia, racism, exclusionism
3. Traditional values
4. Anti-democratic

Finally, Lauder's (2002) enumeration of core themes includes:

1. Race/ethnicity as the foundation of social solidarity/nationalism
2. Xenophobia, racism, especially antisemitism
3. Illegitimacy of established regime of power

With these frameworks in mind, we suggest that RWE in Canada is a loose movement, characterized by a racially, ethnically and sexually defined nationalism. This nationalism is often framed in terms of white power and is grounded in xenophobic and exclusionary understandings of the perceived threats posed by such groups as non-whites, Jews, immigrants, homosexuals and feminists. As a pawn of the Jews, the state is perceived to be an illegitimate power serving the interests of all but the white man. To this end, extremists are willing to assume both an offensive and defensive stance in the interests of "preserving" their heritage and their "homeland". Different RWE groups might well emphasize one of these tenets over others, or integrate additional concerns. Thus, their rhetoric and practice may be similarly diverse.

Historically, hate groups recruited members or spread their message of intolerance through word of mouth, or through traditional media. However, by the early twenty-first century, engagement was largely transferred to the digital world. Indeed, the hate movement has been blessed with a valuable gift in the form of the Internet. Since the birth of the Internet in the 1990s, radical right-wing groups have used it as an alternative form of media, both to publicize messages of hate, and recruit and connect with like-minded others within and beyond domestic borders (Anahita 2006; Chau and Xu 2007; Wojcieszak 2010).

Scholars have devoted considerable attention in recent years to the white power movement's growing presence on the Web. Analyses of how RWE use the Internet to recruit and sustain members have generally focused on the content featured on websites (e.g. Borgeson and Valeri 2005; Bostdorff 2004; Perry and Olsson 2009) and web-forums (e.g. Anahita 2006; Bowman-Grieve 2009; Wojcieszak 2010). We have also seen a handful of studies on how members of the extreme right use social media outlets, such as *Twitter* (Berger and Strathearn 2013;

Graham 2016), blogs (e.g. Chau and Xu 2007) and online newsgroups (e.g. Campbell 2006).

An emerging strength of this focus on online hate is the recognition that digital media allow for dialogue and the *exchange* of ideas. Websites are not restricted to the provision of "information" and literature; on the contrary, they enable participatory interaction and a shared construction of identity. The "virtual public sphere" that characterizes the Internet invites active participation whereby collectives "attempt to interpret and understand crises, injustice, and adversities, and to envision alternatives and map strategies" (Langman 2005: 54). Importantly, the Internet also allows this shared project to cross the global rather than simply the local or national landscape. There have been some attempts to assess this trend at the global level (Caiani and Kröll 2014; Grumke 2013).

Ready accessibility to extreme right social media has also meant that those without formal affiliation with a hate group can also draw on their discourse. Consequently, there is growing interest in the notion of the "lone wolf" or "lone actor". Hoffman (2003) observes that there is an apparent increase in the tendency for individuals loosely or in fact not at all connected with formal organized groups to engage in extremist violence. Similarly, the Toronto Star (2015) reported on internal Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS) documents that suggested that RWE lone actors represented a more pressing threat than did Islamists in Canada. However, we are only just beginning to come to terms with the nature and potential of these extremists. There is considerable debate as to how closely these actors are allied with organized groups (Gruenewald et al. 2013). Moreover, the breadth of the notion of "lone" actor is debatable (see Gill 2015), as some would argue that the trio suspected of a Halifax mall shooting plot in Canada in 2015, for example, might loosely be described as a small "pack" of lone wolves (Hoffman 2003).

Mares and Stojar (2016) offer a comprehensive assessment of far-right lone actors globally, concluding that there is likely no profile that fits all such actors. Inspired by, sometimes loosely affiliated with organized hate groups, most of the actors identified seemed dissatisfied by the lack of action and impact of formal parts of the "movement", and

thus enact "propaganda by the deed" in an effort to make a loud and clear statement. In the American context, Timothy McVeigh's 1995 Oklahoma City bombing was long held to represent the epitome of lone actor right-wing terrorism (Bates 2012; Simon 2013; Simi 2010). In more recent years, Anders Breivik has become the "poster child" for RWE lone actors and has garnered considerable scholarly attention (e.g. Borchgrevink 2013; Hemmingby and Bjørgo 2015). Breivik's case has been used to highlight the challenges in predicting and defending against lone actor terrorism (Appleton 2014; Bakker and De Graaf 2011; Pantucci 2011), as well as the intensity of the risk posed by right-wing lone actors relative to other ideological classes (Appleton 2014; Gruenewald et al. 2013).

Theorizing Right-Wing Extremism in Canada

In Canada, we have little contemporary social science scholarship on RWE organizations and there have been few attempts to methodically and systematically analyse their ideologies and activities. The latest such effort was Kinsella's "Web of Hate", last updated in 2001; however, it was largely a journalist description of the movement rather than an academic analysis. There can be little doubt, then, that a theoretically informed contemporary assessment is needed.

What has been especially disappointing about the RWE scholarship is the trend whereby—as in the broader field of hate crime—it has tended to be largely atheoretical, especially in the United States where the tyranny of positivism prevails. Data are drawn from "official" statistics and subjected to regression analyses with little to no framework to guide the selection of variables; descriptive accounts of RWE websites are offered; white power music is assessed with no reference to the conceptual tools that shape those assessments. These approaches may provide some awareness of RWE sentiment and activity, but they do not take us very far in terms of a deeper understanding of how or why the identified patterns emerge.

Nonetheless, there have been some useful attempts to apply theory to RWE. Strain theory has proven popular among criminologists (Blazak

2001; Wooden and Blazak 1995). Those drawn to hate groups, it is argued, are responding to, on the one hand, their perceived loss of access to economic opportunity, and on the other, their belief that minority groups (racialized communities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transexual and queer (LGBTQ) communities and women, especially) are by contrast undeservedly privileged across all sectors of society. Consequently, they retreat into an alternative cultural milieu. Mark Hamm (1993, 2007) integrates traditional criminological theories to account for skinheads specifically, and terrorism more broadly. In his seminal work on American skinheads, Hamm (1993) collapses strain/anomie, neo-Marxist and differential association theories to unpack how disenfranchised youth might be socialized into a rebellious subculture. More recently, he has argued that social learning theory can account for the ways in which terrorists—including members of RWE groups—learn how to exploit opportunities for engaging in criminal activities via awareness of the routine activities of security and intelligence personnel (Hamm 2007). So, too, have Parkin and Freilich (2015) tested routine activities theory in the context of RWE, observing that both opportunity and proximity, for example, play a role in fostering violence by adherents.

Another theoretical thread that has emerged of late is grounded in identity-based theories and social movement theory. The former class of scholarship grounds analyses in the precept that engagement in RWE activism is a means by which to "do difference" and especially to construct particular kinds of identities. For some, this involves considering the ways in which RWE adherents are engaged in constructing forms of hegemonic whiteness (Hughey 2010; Simi et al. 2016), or hegemonic masculinities (Ferber 2016; Treadwell and Garland 2011), or both (Perry and Scrivens 2016). Whichever the case, RWE groups are seen as locales in which white men are able to carve out places in which to exercise and in fact enhance—often through violence—power and privilege. As an offshoot, scholars like Kathleen Blee (2002) use a similar racialized and gendered lens to understand the role of women in such movements. In essence, scholarship in this vein stresses how, as Hughey (2010: 1289) explained it, "racist, reactionary and essentialist ideologies are used to demarcate interracial boundaries, and (2) performances of

white racial identity that fail to meet those ideals are marginalized and stigmatized".

Identity perspectives are closely linked to, if not explicitly derived from social movement approaches. Of particular interest here are analyses that consider how RWE adherents are actively constructing not just individual but collective identities (Bowman-Grieve 2009; Futrell and Simi 2004; Oaten 2014; Perry and Scrivens 2016). The collective identity at issue here—the universal white man—is one such illustration of what Adams and Roscignio (2005: 76) describe as a "process that allows a disparate group of individuals to voice grievances and pursue a collective goal under the guise of a 'unified empirical actor'". Efforts to frame RWE groups within the social movement literature are rapidly emerging. Interestingly, scholars working in this area recognize the tendency to focus on progressive political movements, rather than on reactionary and regressive actors like RWEs (see, e.g., Langman 2005). Nonetheless, the theoretical frame allows the space to acknowledge oppositional groups (Adams and Roscignio 2005; Tanner and Campana 2014). Writing of the racist Quebec skinhead community that was the focus of their study, Tanner and Campana (2014: 35) concluded that they could, in fact, be identified as such an oppositional movement, by virtue of the fact that they "consciously and strategically adopt a marginalized position within society, following and defending alternative rules and norms".

The current project that is unpacked in this book draws on some of the above-mentioned theoretical insights, but also more explicitly leverages a framework derived from the work of sociologist Donald Black (2004). Black (2004) has articulated an account of terrorism as a form of social control in response to deviant behaviour. From this perspective, it is "a form of justice pursued by organized civilians who covertly inflict mass violence on other civilians" (Black 2004: 12). Immediately, this resonates with the motives and intents of organized hate groups, who aim to constrain and punish those who dare to step outside the boundaries of what is deemed their "appropriate" place, defined according to their location on any number of relational hierarchies—race, gender, religion or sexual orientation for instance (Perry 2001). Black's utility does not end there, however. Following from his core definition

of terrorism, Black identifies a series of characteristics that can prove valuable in analysing and describing terrorist groups, including hate groups. Heuristically, the seven derivative elements, identified and described below, provide a useful tool by which to systematically analyse RWE in general and RWE in Canada in particular. The framework allows identification of the nature of violence associated with diverse hate groups (i.e. severity, frequency, visibility), as well as key factors that are likely to contribute to the tendency to engage in violence (e.g. perceived threat/grievance, and organizational capacity of the group).

Black (2004) characterizes the methods of terrorism as recurrent, and typically as highly violent. As Mark Hamm (2007) stresses, it is important to remember that terrorism involves at root criminal events: murder, bombing, hostage taking, etc. In his recent book, "Terrorism as Crime", Hamm (2007) unpacks his relatively simple thesis—that terrorism is "ordinary" criminal behaviour, carried out for "extraordinary" purposes. Nonetheless, in its most lethal form, terrorism constitutes mass violence—multiple victims, even into the thousands. Regardless of the nature of their criminal activities, terrorist organizations typically carry out their strategies covertly, whereby they operate underground. Clearly, this is the case for organizations like *al-Qaeda*, or the *Irish Republican Army (IRA)*. So, too, does this describe the activities of right-wing hate groups. For example, beginning in the 1980s, Louis Beam, a long-time Klansman and virulent racist in the United States, was the architect of the militia movement's strategy of "leaderless resistance", which was an attempt to enhance the invisibility of white supremacist and anti-state activists (Dobratz and Waldner 2012). Beam learned from his experiences with the Klan the danger of traditional lines of leadership and communication, wherein the chain of command could be easily uncovered. "Leaderless resistance", in contrast, advocates phantom cells and individual action—from like-minded individuals—as a means of defeating state tyranny. This is not to say that such groups are wholly invisible. All too often they crawl out of their dark corners to engage in visible forms of violence, or in very public demonstrations.

The intent of terrorists, regardless of their focus, is to manage or respond to a "grievance with aggression" meant to intimidate and instil fear (Black 2004). Violence is thus perpetrated with the aim of

terrorizing their targets—individual and collective—into submission. Moreover, this intimidation is not only—or even primarily—targeted at just the immediate victim. Rather, the goal is to terrorize secondary victims, or more broadly, a nation's people and/or their governing body. Looking at the "work" of terrorists like *White Aryan Resistance (WAR)*, as an example, the grievance might be what they perceive as lax immigration law or loss of white male privilege. Regardless, such groups are typically reacting against what they perceive to be threatening behaviour on the part of their victims (i.e. collective liability). Moreover, terrorists are often animated by structurally grounded grievances, derived from an interpretation of a social order as itself illegitimate. Both Christian extremists and those inspired by radical forms of Islam, for example, are waging a battle to "maintain or restore a social order based on the fundamentals of faith, family and community against a rootless world order of abstract markets, mass politics and a debased sacrilegious 'tolerance'" (Rosenfeld 2004: 26).

Typically, terrorists sport membership in identifiable bodies with the "capacity to organize: recruitment, fund-raising, leadership, internal communication, and decision-making" (Oberschall 2004: 28). This accurately describes such "traditional" terrorist groups as *al-Qaeda* and the *IRA*, noted above. These generally have a formalized structure and chain of command, as well as access to material and financial resources that facilitate their operation. So, too, by definition, do organized RWE groups. The *Ku Klux Klan (KKK)* is a classic example, having as it does a rigidly structured hierarchy, and depending on the specific clavern, access to substantial financial support. However, there is some evidence that this is becoming less the case as hate groups move towards leaderless cells, or in fact, simply collapse into loosely connected individuals and groups due to their lack of ability to garner resources (Freilich et al. 2014; Lauder 2002).

While Black's (2004) model is valuable for assessing factors among group members that might account for their viability and activity, it does not consider the environment that simultaneously shapes them. Hate does not emerge in a vacuum. Rather, it is embedded within a broader culture that often bestows "permission to hate". This may be evident in, for example, the activity and inactivity of the state and

political actors. When anti-immigrant rhetoric prevails, this sends a message that xenophobia is acceptable. So too does a lack of police response enable hate groups to act with impunity. Moreover, regions that have a history of being "unwelcome" places for racial or ethnic minorities, for example, are also likely to breed contemporary extremists. In such cases, the line between "mainstream" and "extreme" may be very fine.

Scholars have written often about the fact that hate can only grow in an enabling environment (e.g. Burnett 2017; Perry 2001; Poynting 2006). We need only observe recent developments in the United States, and Europe to discern the importance of context for the emergence and strength of a viable RWE movement (e.g. Huber 2016; Inglehart and Norris 2016; Komaromi and Singh 2016; Wigerfelt and Wigerfelt 2014). In those parts of the world, populist right-wing groups have exploited a dismal economic situation and rapidly shifting demographics to foment hostility towards Others increasingly in their midst: immigrants, people of colour and Muslims in particular. To assume that the sentiments that inspire those groups are anomalous ignores the fact that they are embedded in a broader cultural ethos that bestows "permission to hate" (Bowling 1993; Young 1990).

To the extent that hate groups define their collective identity as the norm, they necessarily engage in a politics of difference which seeks to negate, exclude and repress those groups that are outside the norm (e.g. non-whites, non-Christians, non-heterosexual, even non-male). They do so by invoking ideological claims to superiority and power that represent the ongoing struggle on the part of supremacists for the right to define the limits and boundaries of inclusion. But those "boundaries of inclusion" are informed by the broader cultural and political arrangements which "allocate rights, privilege and prestige according to biological or social characteristics" (Sheffield 1995: 438). RWE adherents attempt to reaffirm their dominant identity, their access to resources and privilege, while at the same time limiting the opportunities of others to express their own needs. The performance of hate activism, then, confirms the "natural" relations of superiority/inferiority.

Right-wing activism is also, however, grounded in notions of space and place. Hate groups are situationally located; they have a spatial

element that is often overlooked, although just as often implied by the language of "borders", "boundaries", "transgressions" or "territory". RWE groups are concerned with policing the appropriate "spaces for races" (Perry and Blazak 2010). Rhetorical and physical assaults are often invoked when victims are perceived to threaten the racialized boundaries which are meant to separate "us" from "them". And all of this occurs within the institutional context of what is known to be the appropriate place of victim and victimizer. There is—as many black or Asian or Native or Hispanic people know—danger in non-conformity and in challenging borders. Far-right violence and vilification becomes justifiable as a punishment for transgressions of institutionalized codes of conduct, for crossing the boundaries of race. Reactionary violence to such border crossings ensures that white people and people of colour, Christians and non-Christians, native-born and immigrants will inhabit their appropriate places in physical and cultural terms. The boundaries are preserved.

The sort of sociological and cultural analysis of hate groups suggested herein allows us to recognize that they reside in a structural complex of relations of power. As noted earlier, hate does not emerge or operate in a vacuum. Rather, it is embedded in broader patterns of subjugation and oppression. It is conditioned by structural and cultural practices that leave its subjects vulnerable to victimization. It is more than the outcome of the conscious acts of bigoted individuals. It is systematic. It represents a network of norms, assumptions, behaviours and policies which are structurally connected in such a way as to reproduce the racialized and gendered hierarchies which characterize the society in question. Our exploration of the contexts in which RWE groups ebb and flow in Canada suggests three core structural patterns that seem to enable the growth and sustainability of such groups here: the historical normativity of racism, political climates of intolerance and weak law enforcement frameworks. This is very much in line with Heitmeyer's (2005) identification of core enabling factors: resonance with broader sentiments; the complicity of the "political elite"; and the lack of sanctions, as reflected in police engagement. We take this up in more detail in Chapter 4, where we explore the contexts in which RWE groups have flourished—or not—in Canada.

The purpose of our study was to uncover those factors that shape the development of Canadian right-wing hate groups, and that make them more or less likely to plan, engage in or incite violence towards targeted objects and communities. Thus, drawing on Black (2004) paired with our own conceptualization of permission to hate, we sought to identify:

1. Which groups are amenable to violent activity;
2. The nature of such activities (e.g. recurrent, covert/overt, severity of violence);
3. Endogenous variables most closely associated with group development, sustainability and violence; and
4. Exogenous variables most closely associated with group development, sustainability and violence.

Project Methodologies

The often-scattered nature of data on Canadian RWE groups mandated a multifaceted approach that went beyond interviews with key informants. Information is fragmentary and often depends on local resources and capacities for data gathering. Those directly concerned with the policing of extremist activity tend, necessarily, to have a narrow lens that allows them to see the immediate context of their work. They typically have neither the time nor the resources to see how events and activities in their own communities may dovetail with activities elsewhere. Moreover, there are considerable challenges to studying RWE activists. Not least of these is access. The suggestion is that members of hate groups are largely clandestine, often paranoid, and for these reasons unwilling to expose themselves even to academic scrutiny (Blee and Creasap 2010; Gruenewald et al. 2009). Yet several long-term ethnographies have illustrated that building rapport and thus trust is possible (e.g. Hamm 1993; Simi and Futrell 2015). However, the ability to build the needed relationships may well be constrained by the identity(ies) of the researcher. Simi and Futrell (2015), for example, report that Simi was allowed access to their *Aryan Nations* group in the United States only on the condition that he was white. Even when groups

invite academics into their midst, direct communication with extreme-right adherents may also pose some risk to researchers (see Blee and Creasap 2010).

These challenges have not stymied all qualitative research. Hamm's (1993) "American Skinheads" was an early example of the depth of insight that could be gleaned from talking to adherents—in that case, yielding 36 extended interviews. Treadwell and Garland's (2011) ethnography of *English Defence League (EDL)* adherents is another interesting case. Their very informal observations and interviews occurred "where they lived", that is, at demonstrations, and in local pubs, workplaces, homes, neighbourhoods. Perhaps because they were approached on their own turf, study participants seemed to be very forthcoming about their worldviews and their propensity for violence. A final example is Simi and Futrell's (2015) study of white power groups in the United States, which spanned the years 1996–2014, consisting of interviews, participant observation and content analysis of relevant websites. Like Treadwell and Garland (2011), they engaged with activists in their homes, favourite local hang-outs, white power events, even Bible studies.

Few such studies have been conducted in Canada. Thus, we have a limited national perspective on the threat posed by RWE in Canada. The sources of intelligence and data for this project are largely localized and time specific. For an academic, in contrast, any incident "has *meaning* only in relation to its earlier history and its political and cultural context" (Ezekiel and Post 1991: 121). The intent, then, was to engage multiple methodologies that allow us to see the "bigger picture" of the RWE movement in Canada. Consequently, the project involved a combination of archival research and primary research. The following means of data gathering were utilized.

1. *Website analysis*: This takes us directly to the rhetoric of the hate groups themselves. In line with previous work conducted by Perry (2000; see also Perry and Olsson 2009), we identified and analysed the websites established by Canadian hate groups (e.g. *Blood & Honour, White Nationalist Front*), as well as those that contain Canadian content, but might be on domains outside of Canada (e.g. Stormfront.org). The online environment has allowed unprecedented

opportunities for recruitment and for the enhancement of existing collectives, and the creation of new online-shared identities. It is thus a location that is rife with insights into the ideologies, belief systems, and strategic planning of the groups. The analysis pays attention to the "grievances" identified, where blame is ascribed, potential "solutions" to problems identified, links to other sites and organizations, etc.

2. *Media scan*: Like court records, media venues can be valuable sources of information on community impacts of extremist activities through reporting on reactions to the initial offence and subsequent legal proceedings. They often include detailed descriptions of the alleged events, and sometimes provide background details as well.
3. *Interviews with law enforcement and intelligence communities*: We interviewed more than 40 personnel associated with the Alberta Hate Crime Committee, the British Columbia (BC) Hate Crime Team, Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Extremism and Hate Crime section and police officers from communities in which there has been white supremacist activity. These interviews uncovered additional data on activities, membership and ideologies associated with the groups.
4. *Interviews with community activists*: There are a number of national, regional and local community organizations in Canada—like *B'Nai Brith* and *Anti-Racist Canada*—that have set themselves the task of monitoring RWE activity in this country. Their publications along with interviews provided additional information about the distribution, membership, activities, ideologies and threats associated with relevant groups. They also added to knowledge and awareness of anti-hate initiatives by which extremists are challenged. In all, we interviewed more than 30 individuals from such groups.
5. *Interviews with hate group activists*: We were able to conduct three interviews with former/current members of hate groups. We also had access to a number of similar interviews conducted some years ago by Dr. Abbee Corb. These interviews provided the most direct access to the motivations for engaging in right-wing extremist activities.

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