Securitizing the Alt-Right

A discourse analytical study on alt-right online activism and its securitization processes.

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Abstract

Within the last decade, the alt-right movement has migrated from secluded corners of the internet into mainstream media. This migration, and subsequent gained following, challenges traditional views on security by bringing forth social actors that securitize, despite a lack of authority. This takes place on online platforms, such as YouTube, where the political and non-political coexist.

This thesis aims to explore the securitization speech acts located within alt-right online discourse and their reinforcement of online alt-right activism. Combining securitization theory and Stritzel's conceptualized speech acts, a large number of YouTube videos from the three most popular alt-right content creators are analyzed with a discourse historical approach to discourse analysis, in search for exclusionary narratives and tools that support securitizing moves.

The analysis shows that alt-right securitization speech acts form a security discourse targeting liberalism, globalization and feminism. Furthermore, irony, othering and performativity are identified as the main tools for enhancing the effectiveness of the securitization acts by establishing a connection between audience and content creator. This allows securitization to occur despite the lack of formal authority.

Key words: Alt-Right, Securitization, YouTube, Online Activism, Far-Right Politics, Discourse analysis

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1. Introduction

"It's always night, or we wouldn't need light"

Thelonious Monk | Thomas Pynchon

Taken from Pynchon's novel "Against the Day" (2006), this quote encapsulates Pynchon's perception that resistance to domination can develop into its own regime of domination. Counterculture that "transcends all questions of power" and hegemony tend to meet, as do all extremes, bringing light to violence and possibility. In the light of counterculture, the alt-right movement has been actively gaining its following online, propagating white-supremacy and distrust to mainstream media, the government and liberal democracy.

During the 2016 US general elections, where the alt-right was mentioned for the first time by Hilary Clinton as "the emerging racist ideology, the radical fringe that takes over the republican party" (Rappeport, 2016). Since then the alt-right movement has gained significant exposure in the mainstream media. Another example is the Charlottesville rally on August 12, 2017, where self-identified white-supremacist James Alex Fields Jr. drove his car on peaceful counter-protestors of the "Unite the Right" rally, killing one and injuring 28 people (Binkowski, 2018). According to the investigation, federal hate crime charges were applied to the case, however, Field was justified by alt-right leading figure Richard Spencer saying that Fields felt in danger and thus accelerated into the crowd. (Bacon, 2019; Hernández, 2017. During the Black Lives Matter protests, following the killing of George Floyd on May 2020, sixty-six incidents of cars driving into protesters have been documented across the US, seven of them being by law enforcement vehicles (Hauk, 2020). Following this emerging pattern, some of these attacks on protestors have been framed as white-supremacist, with Charlottesville being referenced as an example and memes of cars driving into a crowd with a humorous remark shape the online alt-right discourse (Ibid)

Reshaping violence in an ironical manner has been fostered in the online environment of 4chan, where anonymity allows alt-right users to express their thoughts, often in an extremely racist, misogynist and gory manner (Nagle, 2017: 15). Real life manifestations of alt-right extremism have also been reported as warnings: before the shooting of five Black Lives Matter protestors in Minneapolis in 2015 the two perpetrators proclaimed on the political 4-chan sub-forum /pol/: "We just wanted to give everyone a heads up on /pol/... Stay white" (Ibid:23) The fundamentally racist character of the alt-right movement has found an outlet from the fringe corners of 4chan to mainstream social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, creating a fusion of gamer counterculture and white-supremacy. What is striking about the alt-right movement is the use of internet language (use of irony, jokes and memes) in order to interpret and propagate political stances that favor polarization, framing issues such as migration as life threatening for the white race. These utterances were the first motivation for this thesis to explore the presence of securitization speech acts within the alt-right online discourse.

Furthermore, the online and offline mobilization of the movement has been assisted through the alt-right's use of social media. As Julia Ebner puts it "Their use of computer game references, anti-establishment rhetoric and exciting counter-culture activities, has allowed them to appeal to large proportions of Generation Z" (Ebner, 2019). As online and offline space have merged with the use of social media, social movements have been using online activism and their online freedom to reinforce their mobilization. Some examples are platforms such as Tumblr, Discord and Reddit. However, YouTube is highly dominated by the alt-right movement (Amin, 2019). According to Amin:

When we talk about politics on YouTube, we are usually talking about the alt- right. YouTube is one of the most powerful tools in the right wing's war for the hearts and minds of Americans, particularly white men under the age of 30. From Christchurch to Poway, case after case shows that YouTube is one of several

platforms capable of radicalizing viewers, plunging those susceptible to conspiracy theories and racial hatred into a rabbit hole of extremist content (Amin, 2019)

The suspected connection of online right-wing extremist activism with offline mobilization patterns and violence against protesters has led to the examination of right-wing activism, and radicalization pathways on YouTube (Ribeiro et al, 2020) However, the alt-right movement and its activism online has thus far only been investigated within social movement scholarship, or media studies. This leaves a question to be answered: does a security discourse exist within the alt-right discourse, reinforcing alt-right activism online and offline?

1.1 Aim & research questions of the study

This thesis is focusing on the alt-right movement's political discourse on YouTube from a critical security perspective. Inspiration was taken from media studies of online participation and activism, analysis of right-wing populist rhetoric, European far-right political parties and their western-centric notions of security. Critical security scholarship has widely questioned traditional positivist understandings of security, as Eurocentric assumptions about agency, objectivity and what can constitute a threat or a referent object reproduce politics involving the use of force (Barkawi and Laffey, 2006 :351). Discourses on security often function on these assumptions, framing communities as threats (cultural or economic) highlighting exclusions and narratives (McDonald, 2013 :48). Thus, by analyzing the alt-right's online discourse, this study is aiming to explore any exclusionary narratives that support securitizing speech acts. Identifying a security discourse would provide an insight on the mobilization of the alt-right activism, conceptualizing how otherness is situated within the discourse and how it overlaps with the construction of what needs to be protected. Therefore, the research questions of this thesis are formulated as the following:

-What strategies are used by alt-right content creators in the securitization of online political discourses on YouTube?

-How do alt-right securitization speech acts reinforce online activism and mobilization of the movement?

1.2 Delimitations

The focus of this study is the securitization processes used by alt-right content creators. In the attempt to explore and analyze in depth the strategies, ideological stances, discourses and mobilization techniques that alt-right movement uses to support their securitization acts, the positions and responses of the target audience could not be included in this thesis. However, the ambition of this study is to provide further insight on the mobilization of the alt-right security discourse, highlighting the constructed threats, fallacies and security practices that are finding their way to more mainstream audiences.

1.3 Thesis outline

This thesis consists of 7 chapters:

Chapter 2 presents the literature review, including the ideological claims and influences of the alt-right movement as well as justifying the use of YouTube to situate the alt-right securitization discourse.

Chapter 3 entails the securitization theory presented by the Copenhagen school as well as any discussions within the post-Copenhagen wave on critical security studies, leading to the choice of securitization speech acts by Stritzel (2014) as a suitable framework for this thesis.

Chapter 4 presents the methodological approach of this study, adopting a post-Marxist understanding of Ruth Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach. An outline of the empirical data is included as well as sampling and coding techniques, followed by a presentation of the alt-right YouTube content creators chosen for this study. Also, the analytical framework is followed by a discussion on ethical considerations on gray data and limitations of the study

Chapter 5 entails the analysis connected to the theory presented in chapter 3 and the analytical framework of chapter 4. The first part of the analysis is focusing on the discourses within the alt-right online discourse that entail securitization speech acts and their framing as threats. The second part of the analysis expands on the use of the securitization threats in constructing action plans and reinforcing alt-right activism and mobilization online and offline.

Chapter 6 presents the discussion of the contextualized findings within the broader security discourse and in response to previous literature and assumptions made in chapter 2. Also, it presents ground for further research, in relation to the results within critical security scholarship.

Chapter 7 includes the conclusion of the thesis in juxtaposition to the research question and aim of this study.

1.4 Terminology

Antisemitism

"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed towards Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, towards Jewish community institutions and religious facilities" (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, 2016).

4chan

A forum, originally containing Japanese animation and memes, that has become an important gathering space for far-right users from the early 2010s onwards, especially on the /pol/ board.

Far right

Groups and individuals exhibiting at least three of the following features: nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy and strong state advocacy (Ebner, 2020; Mudde, 2020).

Internet memes

"Units of popular culture that are circulated, imitated, and transformed by individual Internet users, creating a shared cultural experience in the process" (Shifman, 2013: 367).

Identitarianism

Pan-European ethno-nationalist movement which focuses on the preservation of European ethno-cultural identity and is inspired by the French intellectual right movement the Nouvelle Droite (New Right).

Reddit

Reddit is a news website and forum where content is socially curated by users.
Certain sub-forums, such as the 'r/The_Donald', which has now been quarantined for inciting violence, became gathering points for alt-right users not only to promote the candidacy of Donald Trump, but also to harass his political opponents (Ebner, 2020).

8chan

Forum founded after 4chan had banned discussions of the 'Gamergate' controversy and harassment of female video-game journalists, in order to continue coordination and discussions of such controversial issues.

2. Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to provide an introduction to alt-right politics outlining the intellectual inspirations of the alt-right movement, as well as key features of its emergence in the American political scene and, in retrospect, the expansion of the movement across the US borders to a globalized context. Moreover, I will engage with previous research highlighting the interconnectedness of communicational tactics used by the alt- right. Thus, the main focus is placed on the rise of New Right Movements throughout Europe, especially the French New Right, involving a hatred for liberal internationalism, multiculturalism and global capitalism while promoting an identitarian form of race-based politics (Steinmetz-Jenkins, 2018).

2.1 Defining the Alternative-Right

In 2009, Richard Spencer created his website titled *Alternative Right*, in short *Alt-Right*, showcasing white-nationalist content with prominent 4chan influences (Hawley, 2018; Nagle, 2017). After the 2016 US general elections the popularity of the alt-right has been reportedly rising (Rappeport, 2016).

In terms of organization and structure the alt-right hardly resembles an organized movement, as it has no formal documents and institutions binding its existence (Hawley, 2018) Angela Nagle, in her book *Kill all Normies,* outlines the fact that the alt-right consists of a merge of white nationalist movements and online subcultures, which justifies the use of the word "movement" in their characterization (Nagle, 2017). Following Hawley and other scholars that also agree with Nagle (Hawley, 2018: 20; Grey, 2018; Kelly,2017) Thus, I will be characterizing the alt-right as "movement", as this thesis is partly focusing on the online mobilization strategies of the movement.

In a loose definition, the alt-right can be described as a white-nationalist movement that rejects mainstream aspects of the American conservative movement. At their core, most alt-right views and approaches are concentrated on issues such as IQ, European demographic and civilizational decline, cultural decadence, "cultural Marxism", anti-egalitarianism and Islamification (Nagle, 2017: 12). The fundamental concern underlying all other is that of race, aspiring to the creation of a white ethnostate in North America (Hawley, 2018: 25). In the next sections I will attempt to map the ideological and communicational influences of the alt-right movement.

2.2 White nationalism and Libertarianism

The ideological expressions of the alt-right have several distinct characteristics that can be traced back to white nationalism and radical libertarianism in the United States. From slavery to public policies designed to support white demographic dominance (i.e. Chinese exclusionary act of 1882, the Immigration act of 1924) and from the operations of the Ku Klux Klan to William Pierce's founding of the National Alliance in 1974, the overlap between the manifestation of white nationalism is extremely significant (Hawley, 2018). However, the irony and humor that characterize the alt-right, or as Hawley suggests, a "sense of amused detachment" in their presence online, are far off the resentment, rage and hate expressed primarily by their historical predecessors (Ibid). These expressions of white nationalism are consisting of movements with memberships and distinct hierarchy, something that cannot be found in the alt-right, due to the mask of anonymity in their online realm of action.

Furthermore, another evident influence can be drawn from libertarianism which, as an ideology, represents the notion that economic inequality in the United States could be analyzed with the consideration of racial characteristics and, especially, genetic differences in intelligence (Herrstein and Murray, 1994). The libertarian notion that the government is obsolete and the prediction that mass immigration will cluster the U.S. and Europe has found ground within the alt-right movement,

as expressed by their opposition towards mass migration and Islam as well as people of color and social justice advocacy (Nagle, 2017; Hawley, 2018).

2.3 The French New-Right and "cultural Marxism"

Looking towards European right-wing movements one can find several similarities that mirror the alt-right movement and its ideological stance. A first example would be the neo-Nazi element within the alt-right movement, which is expressed via the notion that "the problem with Nazi Germany is that it lost the war" (Hawley, 2018). Additionally, ideological references of Alain de Benoist and the French European New Right from the 1960s are seen within the alt-right's influences. Notions such as the creation of a "conservative revolutionism" that will expand and rule around the world, while rejecting the liberalism of the United States and the communism of the Soviet Union (Ibid). According to Benoist's views, "cultural hegemony", in civil society, responding to control of dominant values, attitudes and ways of perceiving and being, promises authority over contextualized societal power structures (Steinmetz-Jenkins, 2018; Bar-On, 2011, p.204).

The notion of overpowering liberal democracy has proven to be extremely influential for the alt-right, especially through challenging mainstream culture with an alternative form of cultural and political hegemony (Williams, 2017). But what is a war without an enemy? A relatively new, partly fabricated opposition of the alt-right is "cultural Marxism" (Braune, 2019; Oliver, 2017). Anders Breivik, the person behind the terrorist attacks in Oslo in 2011, has been brought forth by many sources researched in this study, due to his definition of "cultural Marxism" and political correctness in his manifesto (Veranoudi, 2018; Moyn, 2018; Goldstein, 1992). According to a popular 1980s conspiracy theory, connecting the so-called "Jewish" translation of Marxism to the Institute of Social Research (later known as the Frankfurt School) (Steinmetz-Jenkins, 2018; Moyn 2018) underlines the undermining of traditionist conservativism and Christianity while forcing an attack

on Western values and culture (Richardson, 2015; Jérôme, 2014). Adopting a sense of cultural pessimism and anti-Semitism, as seen in Feldman's "Fascism and Culture", "cultural Marxism" can be traced back to the hitlerian anti-Semitic term *Kulturbolschewismus* or cultural Bolshevism, where Jewish cultural influence was the source of German and Western cultural and societal degeneration under the liberal regime of the Weimar Republic (1918-1939) (Griffith and Feldman, 2003). Thus, this conspiracy theory has been placed at the heart of the alt-right discourse, where the fight against the "cultural hegemony" of liberal democracy is creating a set of unified demonized Others, where liberals, communists, people of color, immigrants, feminists and people of the LGBTQ+ community are responsible for the economic, political and social failure of western civilization and capitalism (Linda, 2016; Jérôme, 2014; Chip, 2012). Therefore, Benoist's writings have influenced the alt-right movement's notion of decadence and degeneracy of the West, justifying the fight against "cultural Marxism" (Gray, 2018; Kelly, 2017).

In addition, what made the Nouvelle Droit "new" appears to be similar to the approach alt-right has over popular culture (Ibid). Alain Benoit in the 1980s reinterpreted the "right to difference" in a global framework, promoting a "multiculturalism of the right" targeting the preservation of culturally "authentic" regions of Europe against non-European immigrants (Bar-On, 2011, p.208). By shifting the divide on the European culture and not on race or nation-state, an appeal to the uniqueness of European culture and heritage was justified (Steinmetz-Jenkins, 2018). This notion appears to be extremely popular within the alt-right (Kelly, 2017), as well as Renaud Camus's dystopic future image of Europe, where he explains that civilizations and religions, since they have their own societal and political structures "cannot and don't want to …blend into other peoples, other civilizations" (Williams, 2017). This argument is frequently used by Front Nationale and Marine Le Pen, while justifying anti-immigration policies, coloring racism with a mere will to preserve French cultural values (Ravid, 2017). The endorsement of such ideas was discussed when Benoist appeared in several Jared Taylor's American Renaissance conferences (Ibid). Dana Kennedy and Joseph

Lowndes have also connected the French New Right and the alt-right in their work, focusing on regionalism and anti-immigration argumentation as well as documenting the regular reference to Benoit by alt-right and pro-Donald Trump forums on *Reddit* and *4chan* (Lowndes, 2017; Kennedy, 2016).

Apart from the intellectual and argumentative connections between the "two rights" there is also a common communicational tactic: with the emergence of the European far-right, the identitarian movement in France in the early 2000s started incorporating activist tactics inspired by the left, such as occupation of buildings, usually mosques (Ibid). Therefore, an extremely right-wing take on identity politics has emerged, one feeding social injustice and anti-immigration policies to young identitarians, being approached by emerging populist right-wing and far-right political parties, all across Europe (Ibid). Consequently, the blending of European right- wing movements, and especially the French New Right with the alt-right, underlines the "new" and alternative" aspects as racial discrimination masked as cultural preservation,

2.4 NeoReaction and Gamergate

There have been two major online movements prior to the alt-right's introduction to the American and global political scene in 2016, that happen to overlap significantly. Firstly, the Neo-Reaction (NRx) movement (also known as Dark Enlightenment) constitutes extremely right-wing notions, against egalitarianism and democracy (Hawley, 2018). An aspect of the NRx is that its action is online, with their preferred expressions resembling the intellectual traditional white nationalism of Jared Taylor. Furthermore, NRx is supporting racial differences grounded in biology and genetics but without any interest in creating cultural or political tension online. (Hawley, 2018; Moldbug, 2016)

Secondly, Gamergate, or rather the Gamergate controversy, was an online harassment campaign in 2014 against a game designer named Zoe Quinn. She released a video game called Depression Quest and soon after she was accused of

trading sexual favors for favorable reviews on her game (Dewey, 2014). The Gamergate controversy was expressed via a cluttering inflow of misogynistic and life-threatening messages and comments on Twitter and 4chan, creating a campaign against Quinn and other women in the gaming world and journalism that supported her (Hawley, 2018; Nagle, 2017; Lees, 2016).

In an attempt to summarize the overlap between the alt-right, NRx and Gamergate I would argue that the NRx and the alt-right share a common philosophical ground to some extent. Also, Gamergate's strategic harassment and trolling has an influence on alt-right's expressions. The next section will provide literature and context on right-wing online activism on YouTube.

2.5 YouTube and right-wing online activism

YouTube was created in 2005 by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen and Jawed Karim and as of 2006 it is owned by Google (Lange 2014: 8) With availability in 100 countries and 80 different languages, as well as 2 Billion monthly users, YouTube is the most visited website after Google.com, with more than 500 hours of content being uploaded on the platform every minute (Hale, 2019).

From multipurpose media videos such as TV and news media clips, music videos, short films, audio recordings and concerts to user generated content such as entertainment and educational videos, YouTube has it all. According to Lange, new forms of digital communication invite the reconceptualization of communicational tools, skills and knowledge sets that future generations need to acquire to be able to successfully participate in civil society and function as "self- actualized individuals" (Lange, 2014: 9). More specifically, social media have gained a space in everyday communication, making social media skills pivotal for everyday participation in civic processes, forming political dialogue and influencing voter behavior and outcomes (Ibid :10).

Discussing political content on YouTube, and especially the success of alt-right content, the question of the YouTube recommendation algorithm arises. This corresponds to the software that regulates which videos appear on users' home pages, as well as inside the "Up Next" sidebar while a video is still playing, suggesting related content to what the user is consuming (Roose, 2019). This creates echo chambers, customized via popularity, which intersect, enhancing their visibility. Several studies and reports have explored the possibilities of recommendation algorithms, where videos reach new audiences, and are potentially used to *recruit* new activists and *empower* those already involved (Back, 2002; Sureka et al, 2018; Ottoni et al., 2018; Ribeiro et al, 2020). To this, Rebecca Lewis adds the factor of personalization[1], identifying a collective attempt for reactionary politics within what she calls Alternative Influence Network on YouTube, responsible for political discourses which most prominently oppose social justice, liberalism, feminism, and "cultural Marxism" (Lewis, 2018). The AIN provides a media source for users that do not wish to consume mainstream news and political commentary of mass media production sites (Ibid).

Furthermore, the network has reportedly adopted a recruiting strategy of so called "digital natives", meaning individuals belonging to Generation Y or Generation Z[2], which marks a period after the 1980s until today (Ebner, 2019). These generations have developed new social identities and communicational skills that, as mentioned above, are heavily shaped by the use of social media; here Ebner argues that "computer game references, anti-establishment rhetoric and exciting counter-culture activities" have allowed far-right content creators to appeal to individuals born within those generations (Ibid).

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[1] following one's preferences to adhere patterns leading to attraction to right-wing and eventually radicalized content (Sureka et al, 2018)

[2] Generation Y or millennials refers to individuals born between 1981 and 1994, while the exact age span for Generation Z is argued to be from 1993 or 1997 to 2012 (Ebner, 2019).

"By hiding racial slurs behind funny memes and jokes, and by replacing traditional swastika-ridden attire with cool jeans and Ray Ban sunglasses, the far right has increasingly polished its image among younger generations" (Ebner, 2019 :175).

The distinct particularity that rises from the embeddedness of social media and their political influence on these generations today is based on the notion that there is not a clear distinction between politics and non-politics (Ibid). Nothing that happens on the internet stays on the internet anymore and that is especially evident with online activism and the participatory culture that is emerging with it (Burges and Green, 2009). For alt-right content, documenting political and group activities has been a communication strategy that transcends the borders between political and non-political, as it provides a "dimension of collective identity, a sense of belonging, community and sustained commitment" (Asknanius, 2012 :78). Aiding to the socially fragmented formation of the alt-right movement that rests online, these aspects are vital for the empowerment of a cohesive movement. (e.g., van Zoonen, Vis and Mihelj, 2010, p.259)

YouTube's co-creative environment (Ibid :82) is enabling the interchanging roles of participants as audiences, editors, distributors and critics with emphasis on the personal meaning-making of one's self, within the various discourses (Ibid van Zoonen, Vis & Mihelj, 2010). Also, celebrity and influencer culture are often ascribed to content creators due to their platform, gaining credibility within mainstream audiences and thus normalizing white-nationalist content (Abidin, 2018; Lewis, 2018).

In addition, participation cannot be contextualized without any power structure where the platform to speak varies, depending on one's influence and geographical positionality (Ebner, 2019 :83). Even though representation and diversity has grown within YouTube, content production still remains Western-centric, due to echo chambers and the use of English as prominent language by content creators (Ibid). Also, as a commercial enterprise, it is an example of the intersection between cultural and digital production that could be marketable. Cultural production here

is heavily influenced by subcultural and community-based attributes, shaping and amplifying them into mainstream commercial logics supported by mass media (Ibid :77) Consequently, YouTube has become a gateway of influence on popular culture, as cultural and political discourses coexist online and offline. According to Stuart Hall:

Popular culture is one of the sites where this struggle for and against a culture of the powerful is engaged: it is also the stake to be won or lost in that struggle. It is the arena of consent and resistance. It is partly where hegemony arises, and where it is secured (Hall, 1998: 453).

Numerous advances to combat the spread of hateful content on YouTube, and what attributes are attached to it, are being implemented. YouTube's new terms and conditions against hate speech are focused on de-platforming far-right channels (Hate speech policy - YouTube Help, 2020)

However, the alt right movement has been using both mainstream and alternative media platforms to distribute their content (Ebner, 2019). Guhl, Ebner and Rau (2020) have explored how de-platforming of mainstream social media accounts with far-right content correlates with the size of one's followership on alternative platforms. If a channel is de-platformed, their audiences do not migrate to alternative platforms to view their content (Guhl, Ebner and Rau, 2020:40). However, de-platforming as a tactic cannot be used entirely to exterminate alt-right and generally far-right content, as there is a risk of reducing legitimate political positions and thus endangering political pluralism and constitutionally secured civil rights (Ibid). The way alt-right content has successfully established itself on social media is yet to be explored, through identifying its underlying mechanisms. This study aims to contribute, utilizing critical security scholarship, whether a securitization discourse exists within the alt-right online discourse. Ideologies, conspiracy theories and online mobilization tactics are brought together in an attempt to contextualize alt-right's securitization claims.

2.6 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to provide the intellectual inspirations and historical predecessors of the alt-right movement, drawing from existing literature. More specifically, the movement manifests an ironic and polarizing stance towards its opponents, mainly liberalism and the cultural Marxism conspiracy theory. Currently, the alt-right movement is central to a growing body of work, connecting political far-right movements and online activism, following the rapid transformation of online interfaces. However, the alt-right movement and its expressions have not been, to my knowledge, directly approached and analyzed by securitization theory. This study raises several questions on security: Does the alt-right make any securitization moves? This way a question of the contextualized medium is raised, as the personalized online space of a YouTube channel has not been the norm of uttering security thus far.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introducing Securitization

In an attempt to frame the alt-right discourse via securitization theory, there is a need to shift away from traditional security approaches. Thus, by using post-positivist approaches I wish to emphasize that there is no objective view from anywhere, no neutral position outside history and politics that one can take in order to make normative claims (Peoples and Williams., 2010).

Due to the amorphous structure of the movement online, that seems to be interconnected through a common sense of "othering", as well as counter cultural traits and online activism, a deeper understanding of security is needed (Stritzel, 2015: 46). In the following chapter I will present the core reflections of the Copenhagen School, moving towards a more reflective reading on securitization theory. Thus, within critical security scholarship, a neo/post Marxist reading could provide a wider incorporation of social space (Stritzel, 2015), in this case online public space, and discursive productions that can apply to the participatory culture of YouTube.

Furthermore, the idea of eurocentrism within critical security studies has been highlighted by Waever, as naming schools of thought (Copenhagen School) is perpetuating the neglect of numerous scholars and geographies.

3.2 Securitization theory and the Copenhagen School

The initial development of the concept of securitization, as a basis for a critical security analysis, constitutes a fusion of the works of Buzan and Waever. Barry Buzan's notion of different sectors of security and Ole Waever's concept of securitization pose the question on the mere definition of security: in an attempt to broaden the understanding of security, how can one identify what is and what is not a security issue? (Peoples and Williams, 2010; Buzan et al, 1998) There is a need

for a distinct analytical principal to judge what constitutes a security issue, otherwise there is a risk for the concept of security to lose meaning (Ibid). For Buzan, security as a concept is ultimately about survival: it is when an issue is represented as posing an existential threat to the survival of a referent object (Buzan et al, 1998). Here a referent object might be the state, according to a positivist structuralist approach, or, in the case of the alt right, wider collective identities such as the white race. Within the concept of national security, the state "has to survive", therefore it is vital for it to preserve a strong military force, means of production, intelligence agencies as well as a strong national identity (Ibid).

One of the ways we can distinguish an existential threat is by the level of response it generates (Stritzel, 2015:18). In a classic example from International Relations scholarship, where a state undergoes an existential threat, it is its right to self-defense: if a state is under attack, it can legitimately use exceptional political measures (Waever, 1995: 51). Existential threats, as Waever argues, normalize a chain of effects that respond to a specific quality of security problems: urgency-where the issue at stake is a priority and extraordinary measures- where authorities operate by claiming power, rights and liberties that otherwise would not apply (Waever, 1995: 51). This way, an existential threat to a referent object constitutes a security issue (Ibid). Through this, one can analyze the conditions required for a securitization to take place.

Within Securitization theory, when an issue comes to be treated as a security issue, it is justifiable to use exceptional political measures to deal with it (Peoples and Williams, 2010). Therefore, it is treated with the same urgency as we would treat a military threat. According to Buzan, this process of securitization can be conceptualized as a spectrum that runs from an issue being non-political (nonpoliticized) through being political (politicized) to the issue being an existential threat (securitized) (Buzan et al,1998:25). This happens by simply stating that an issue is indeed a "security issue" (Ibid). Waever here argues that a "speech act" is what initiates that securitization process, where important political factors contextualize a previously non-threatening issue as a security threat (Waever, 2000: 252). In the attempt to counter this component to securitization theory Buzan

highlights that the task is not to identify objective "threats" but rather it is to understand the process of constructing a shared understanding of what is to be considered and collectively responded to as a threat (Buzan et al, 1998: 26).

In addition to a speech act, as Waever argues, successful securitization requires a certain degree of acceptance between the one imposing the securitization speech and the relevant audience (Waever, 2000 :252). This can be identified by a set of three "felicity" conditions, that might increase the chance of a successful securitization (Ibid).

 The first condition is the securitizing speech act, where an issue is presented as an existential threat, and thus legitimazing the use of extraordinary measures to combat that threat (Peoples and Williams, 2010). The second condition entails an authority position of the actor attempting to securitize an issue (Ibid). Here Peoples and Williams mention the political and social capital of "security experts" as an example for actors holding an authority position, but in the case of the alt-right this position is held by content creators on YouTube based on their following and interaction with other alt-right members (Lewis, 2018). Last but not least, the third condition, is the historical connotation of threat, danger and harm that objects associate with the securitizing issue a hand (Ibid).

 Consequently, different power assemblages[3] (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2009) favor securitization processes depending on their credibility at a given point in time. Certain actors, institutions or collective identities are better at securitizing others because they have more credibility by a responding audience, and certain objects are easier to securitize, depending on the associated connotations they entail (Waever, 2000). Credibility of course can vary, impacting significantly the outcome of the securitization process. For instance, the alt-right first came to the spotlight during the US general election campaign of 2016, with the endorsement of Donald

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[3] settings where a range of different global and local, public and private security agents and normativities interact, cooperate and compete to produce new institutions, practices, and forms of security governance (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2009)

Trump, providing visibility and credibility to the movement (Salazar, 2018). However, no condition or authority can promise a successful securitization, underlining the importance of the speech act itself (Waever, 2000).

Understanding securitization theory outside the traditional IR scholarship requires the understanding of different types of interactions, hierarchies and referent objects that occur in environmental, economic, societal and political sectors, initially identified by Buzan in 1991. Within the social, securitization occurs when issues are accepted as threatening the existence of a collective identity (Buzan, 1991). Additionally, within the political sector, according to Buzan, the referent object is usually the constitutive principle of a political unit, such as sovereignty or democracy for liberal nation-states (Ibid). Therefore, a pattern is identified, where the referent object matches the type of interaction and the dynamic of the securitization process.

This is a quite constructivist reading of the securitization theory by the Copenhagen School, as securitization can apply to any issue that is presented and accepted as an existential threat, regardless of their actual qualities (Ibid). Therefore, a linguistic discussion is brought forward, referring to the definition of securitizing speech acts as "illocutionary acts in relation to security" given by Waever in *Security, the Speech Act* (Waever, 1989).

Here, building on John L. Austin's Speech Act Theory which proposed that "to say something is to do something" (Austin 1962: 12), the understanding of a speech act is open to various competing interpretations, causing confusion in the security discourse (Stritzel, 2014). Waever's notion that the meaning and performative force of a speech act are not related to its context, is deriving from Austin's "total situation" and the ways it is comprised of the "pertinent facts" that determine the situation as being of a certain sort (Austin, 1962). However, this is met by Derrida, stating that it is important to deviate from the idea of the "totalizable context". The ways assertions are understood can never be fully determined by a context but only, necessarily incompletely, by how assertions are used (Derrida, 1972). In another reading of the speech act, Judith Butler stresses the understanding of performativity, leaving the merely linguistic sphere and moving towards a stronger

acknowledgement of social and cultural dimensions of linguistic acts (Butler, 1997). For her, language is never solely language: it is always language in its social and cultural operation, i.e. language articulated in and as social norms (Loyd, 2007). Such a reading comes closer to my interpretation of alt-right's online political activism, as performativity can be adapted to specific characteristics of the movement and thus strengthen socio-political identities.

Another poststructuralist reading of political performatives contradicts the notion of social power of a speaker, the abovementioned authority position by Waever, prior to the securitizing act. The reference to Bourdieu by the Copenhagen School, elaborates on the "facilitating conditions" for speech acts, where it is important to be specific about who is more privileged in articulating security (Buzan et al, 1998). According to Bourdieu the force of the performative ultimately derives from the social power of the speaker, rather than the institutional position of the authority speakers (Bourdieu, 1991).

This discussion shows that there is no comprehensive theory of security action, as the different readings of speech act theory do not overlap but rather differ substantially. One can have a more formalistic speech-act theory of securitization, elaborating on Austin; or a fluid poststructuralist theory of securitization, based on Derrida or Butler; or a more sociological theory of securitization elaborating on the concept of social power, based on Bourdieu. Apart from unresolved tension upon these readings, the idea of securitization in Waever's early works is also limited and unable to guide the study of "real-world" securitizations. For instance, on the issue of "speaking security" Lene Hansen, when examining honor killings in Pakistan, has argued that "reliance on speech act theory presupposes the existence of a situation in which speech is indeed possible" (Hansen, 2000). Therefore, she underlines issues of gender, and how it can impact our social position and hence our ability to perform a security speech act (Peoples and Williams, 2010).

Consequently, securitization theory offers significant additions to the research agenda of critical security, yet its unidentifiable analytical constituents have led to tension between different interpretations, thus questioning whether it can even be considered part of critical security studies. Even though Buzan, Waver and de

Wilde propose that securitization theory could apply to non-military cases, depending on the referent objects and the types of threats raised, they reject the idea that the study of security should focus solely on the well-being of individuals (Peoples and Williams, 2010: 85). Continuing, they argue that the broadening and deepening of notions of security to various needs of an individual can cause the mere concept of security to be "emptied of content" (Waever, 1995:49). Securitization theory, according to Waever, may be a more serious challenge to the established discourse within security studies, for it recognizes that a traditional approach to security is a vital element in the logic of both national and political principles (Ibid). The dynamics of securitization cannot be captured as long as we proceed to assume that security is a positive value to be maximized (Ibid).

3.3 A rearticulated securitization theory

Reflections by the Copenhagen School provide a rather incomprehensible understanding of the securitization theory, due to several insufficient articulations on the speech act. The notion that an authorized speaker articulates a securitizing speech act marked by a specific grammar of security appears to be significantly more complex empirically, both linguistically as well as socio-politically (Stritzel, 2014 :38). Typically, security articulations are conceptualized in relation to a broader discursive context (Ibid). As Waever admits: "certain categories and arguments that are powerful in one period or at one place can sound nonsensible or absurd at others" (Waever, 2001: 29). In sociopolitical terms, ideally, authorized speakers need to be established too, as authority may not always be consolidated in certain situations (Ibid).

 Traditional securitization theory can be read as strongly actor-centric formulations, to the extent that, sociopolitically, it is assumed that single actors (usually state representatives) can constitute a new social reality simply by 'declaring' a state of emergency (Waever, 2001:29). Such a reading presupposes an excessively strong concept of the speaker's pre-existing authority, which some scholars have interpreted as a predominant focus on leaders and leadership in

securitization theory (Ibid). In contrast to these readings, scholars of securitization theory post-Copenhagen, argue that the authority of the speaker is unlikely to be secured (Ibid). Also, the performative power of a speech cannot be enclosed in a single linguistic act, but rather needs to be synchronized with the broader power structures of authority and society (Stritzel, 2014:40). Understanding the dynamics of security in the societal realm presupposes the conception of a clear referent object: what is in need of security and what is it threatened by? For the post-Copenhagen school though, the referent object falls way beyond the traditional conceptions that security refers to the state, to a government or a territorial entity: it is "we", the shared social identity that is threatened and that risks the security of a society (Waever et al.,1993, Williams, 1998).

Consequently, the shifted focus towards societal security allows the incorporation of different visions of security, as non-traditional dynamics are brought into light, such as migration or challenges to cultural identity, that may initiate the "securitization" of identity (Ibid). Here, McSweeney argues that different views on identity construction, namely "forms of holism", and their implications are responsible for determining how the referent objects of societal security are to be defined (McSweeney, 1998. Williams, 1998).

Furthermore, the issue with the Copenhagen school's view of security, in an attempt to avoid methodological individualism, is that "state" and "society" constitute the only collective referent objects, positioning a holistic vision of "society" as the only counter-referent to the state (Ibid). This dichotomy creates an objectified version of identity, jeopardizing the analysis and the understanding of the dynamics of societal security (McSweeney, 1998).

 Following this argument, McSweeney underlined the danger of societal security being dangerously subjectivist, opposing the adoption of a vision of societal security from a "traditional" conception of security (Ibid). If security is uncritically filtered through identity, possibly resulting in a subjective judgement, there is high risk of xenophobic or racist visions to be politically applicable (Ibid, Williams, 1998). Here the example of the National Front in France is highly applicable, mentioned by Williams, as well as in the case of the alt-right, where white

supremacist and racist views are exhibited as objectified views within certain societal groups, and consequently in need of protection. Threats to societal security in the name of ideological and religious propriety or racial/ethnic purity, assist a process of "Othering", posing the mere existence of outsiders as threats to the security of a societal group with an objectified identity (McSweeney, 1998). McSweeney here argues that attempts to expand our understanding of security in involving "societal security" might be politically dangerous, as we need to have objective criteria that would assist the critical evaluation of identity claims and security issues (McSweeney, 1998).

In short, the concept of societal security risks legitimazing and hardening notions of "us" and "them" that in turn tend to fuel identity conflicts and could potentially rise to security conflicts (Ibid, Peoples and Williams, 2010). However, Buzan and Waever have argued that identities, once mobilized, constitute a fundamental point of reference and belonging, upon which people can act upon (Buzan and Waever, 1997). It is important to underline that securitizing actors use and refer to collective identities as if they are objective and sound, instead of fluid, fulfilling their mobilization purposes (Peoples and Williams, 2010). This is a point, I would argue, that is quite central in the understanding and analysis of securitization acts imposed by the alt-right, as the reference to group identity objectives are framing and reinforcing the mobilization purposes of the movement.

Furthermore, apart from societal security and its relationship to group identities, the ways in which the securitizing acts are being carried out constitutes a focus for critical security literature on securitization theory. In addition to Hansen and her critique on a defined speech act as a way of uttering securitization, Williams disagrees with focusing exclusively on speech acts, when visual media is so present in carrying out contemporary political communication (Hansen, 2011; Williams, 2003). In this context he suggests that the analysis of images as carriers of potential securitization, in addition to speech acts, are a necessary development in securitization theory (Ibid). Hansen's work on visual securitization provides a framework that focuses on the process of securitization through images, questioning whether "images speak security" (Hansen, 2011). There is a growing

literature focusing on the theoretical and empirical addition of images to securitization theory (Bleiker and Kay, 2007; Campbell, 2003a; Campbell and Shapiro, 2007; Danchev and Lisle, 2009; McDonald, 2008; Perlmutter, 2005; Weber, 2006; Williams, 2003) that is adapting to the growing use of new technological media, gaming and social media (Hansen, 2011). This interest, within securitization theory, offers a possible solution to the exclusively linguistic approaches of Waever and Buzan on securitization speech acts, as an image can accentuate "immediacy, circulability, and ambiguity" (Hansen, 2011). Furthermore, the visual, depending of course on the genre and medium that the image appears in, can draw attention on the forms of identity construction that may be securitized (Ibid)

Moreover, Balzacq and McDonald refer to awareness by the audience, political agency and context as major actors that supplement speech acts and eventually lead to successful securitization. Fred Vultee has proposed a media framing effect from securitization, where political actors attempt to create consensus about securitizing threats (Vultee, 2007). While his work has inspired this thesis, I would argue that within YouTube's participatory culture, awareness and political agency of the audience can confront the securitizing actors, leading to an unsuccessful securitization. Nevertheless, due to the undertheorized state of early securitization theory, Stritzel offers a more specific conceptualization of discourse dynamics, followed by ways to operationalize them, based on discourse analysis with four contextualized securitization acts: claim, warning, demand and propositional context.

3.4 Summary

This chapter has introduced Securitization theory as it has been carried out initially by the Copenhagen School, focusing on the articulation and operationalization of security speech acts for a successful securitization. Furthermore, it is the concerns and additions as well as the (re)articulations made by the post-Copenhagen School that will be deployed to assist further analysis of the alt-right discourse and

securitization moves. On the basis of a neo-/post Marxist reading of discourse and critical discourse analysis, securitization can be conceptualized as the analytical tool for the contextualization of securitization acts by the alt- right movement. The concept of securitization post-Copenhagen School, takes into consideration social structures of authority and processes of authorization in discourse, therefore appears as a reflective "grammar of security" (Stritzel, 2014 :51).

The following section will take onboard Stritzel's (re)contextualization of securitizing moves, as a strategic empirical tool to filter out the securitizing moves made by the alt-right. First, I will present the discourse-historical approach, introduced by Ruth Wodak, in order to frame the alt-right discourse within the data and contextualize the securitization acts. Second, I will present the operationalization of disourse- historical approach, drawing in the concept of *topos,* and fallacies as useful typology in the construction collective identities through "othering" and "victimization.

3.5 Key Concept - Moves of the Securitization Speech Act

Studying discourse in relation to specific grammar of security and rhetorical structure, (urgency, survival, priority of action) can be operationalized through a sequence of *claim, warning* and *demand*, which are typically supported by the *propositional content* of initial proof and/or reasons (Stritzel, 2014 :40). The initially abstract model of securitizing speech acts provided by Vuori, has been translated into an empirical typology by Stritzel in more contextualized securitizing moves:

1. *Claim:* contextualized description of the danger/threat;
2. *Warning:* contextualized description of the consequences of inaction;
3. *Demand:* contextualized description of an action plan;
4. *Propositional content:* contextualized presentation of proof and/or reasons.

For the authorization of actors to speak with regards to securitization, I would argue that Stritzel is proposing one of the most viable approaches. Buzan's notion that "security is a structured field in which actors are placed in positions of power by virtue of being generally accepted voices of security, by having the power to define security" is based on an a priori selection of agents within security (Buzan et al., 1998 :31). Such a selection, Stritzel warns, can become too exclusive, especially in less institutionalized settings when trying to capture unconventional practices. Seeing alt-right content creators as security actors falls into this category, as they do not operate in typical institutionalized settings, and do not hold any positions of power to "utter" security, such as heads of state or government, "security professionals" or intelligence experts (Stritzel, 2014: 50; Huysmans, 2006: 154–155; Bigo, 2000; Buzan et al., 1998: 35–42). I would suggest that what assists the securitization moves within the alt-right discourse is the online activism that the alt-right movement is engaging with and the participatory culture of YouTube that have blurred the lines between content creator and audience, political and non-political, ironic and faux-ironic.

 This is to say that positions of power within the discourse that define security should not be assumed but rather be an element of the analysis itself. As Stritzel underlines "an assumption of authority should be replaced by the empirical study or processes of authorization" (Stritzel, 2014 :50).

4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Studying securitization acts embedded within the alt-right online discourse implies discourse analysis, as suggested by Stritzel (2014:44) Methodologically, the detailed and systematic analysis of texts is an important but insufficient point of departure for an analysis of securitization, as there needs to be a broader sociopolitical and genealogical/historical context (Ibid).

 Thematically interrelated semiotic, oral and written tokens are manifested within and across the social fields of action, creating a complex bundle of simultaneous linguistic acts that constitute the discourse (Wodak, 2001:67). In this definition Wodak underlines the intertextuality and interrelatedness of articulations as well as the sociopolitical dimensions that these articulations are embedded in.

 In addition, different analytical lenses on securitization theory offer different explorations of the discourse, with some constituent aspects opposing others. These lenses include poststructuralist (i.e. following Foucault or Derrida), neo-/post-Marxist (i.e. in the tradition of critical discourse analysis of Norman Fairclough or Lclau/Mouffe), critical constructivist (i.e. following Jutta Weldes), and linguistic "epistemological" constructivist readings (i.e. following Kratochwil and Fierke) (Stritzel, 2014: 43). Among these different conceptualizations of discourse, a post-Marxist tradition of discourse theory has been my choice for this study, as the alt-right discourse is heavily relying on polarized representations of in-groups and out-groups, meaning "us" and "them" identity constructions, as well as creating a demonized "other" (Wodak, 2015 : 78; van Dijk 2001: 9).

 Therefore, the use of the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) can follow the initial understanding of the basic rules of a securitizing speech act, in an attempt to situate the act in a sociopolitical/historical context, giving space for a more intertextual analysis. In her research, Ruth Wodak uses DHA in order to analyze extremist right-wing political affiliations, as well as right-wing populist narratives of exclusion (Wodak, 2001 :41). According to Reisigl and Wodak, racism/ discrimination/ exclusion manifests itself discursively: "racist opinions and beliefs

are produced and reproduced by means of discourse […]; through discourse, discriminatory exclusionary practices are prepared, promulgated and legitimized" (2001, :41, 2015 :50). The fact that alt-right mainly stands for racial exclusion and white supremacy, creates a need for a layered understanding of securitization acts. In this chapter I will present the key concepts of the discourse-historical approach, and the notions of topoi and fallacies, that provide guidance in analysis of strategies of argumentation. These same strategies guarantee the transition from argument to conclusion (Wodak, 2015 :51).

4.2 Positionality

Before moving on to introducing my methodological approach, I will begin by positioning myself as a researcher within this research project in order to highlight the importance of subjectivity based on situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988). This notion of specific knowledge tied to a particular situation signifies the interconnectedness of the ontology, epistemology and ethics of the researcher with their research. Nevertheless, this constitutes a critical realist approach rather than the relativism of "everything is subjective" (Ibid).

Therefore, in need to recognize the risk of innate biases and layers of subjective practices, I will place myself within this study. Identifying myself as a woman and a millennial would be a first step, since I could be considered a "digital native" (Ebner, 2018:175). having access to the Internet and social media from a very young age. Growing up, the notion of borders between online and offline world was unknown to me, meaning that notions of self where anchored to an online identity, making friends through online platforms that i.e. massively improved my English language skills to a point where I would think and write in English, even as a Greek national, living in Greece. Furthermore, due to my online explorations I was exposed to a lot of graphic content, misogyny, self-harm, eating disorders and racism mostly cloaked in irony and delivered as inside jokes and memes. Thus, the rise of the alt-right movement was a phenomenon that I was aware for years before

its vast exposure on mainstream media. This, in combination to my active participation in anti-authoritarian and anti-fascist political activism mainly offline and online for several years, has shaped my understanding of the strategies of political activism. Keeping my subjective perspective and theoretical background in political philosophy in mind, I am situating myself as an insider, always transparent, reflexive and aware of the knowledge I am producing, in hope that this research serves in "deepening" our understanding of the alt-right movement and its security discourse.

4.3 Introducing the Discourse Historical Approach

The Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) falls under the category of Critical Discourse Analysis and allows relating the macro- and meso- level of contextualization to the micro-level analyses of texts (Wodak, 2015 :50). Choosing DHA was guided by this study's research question and aim, which seeks to explore and understand the securitization moves within discriminatory and racialized claims of the alt-right discourse online. The following qualitative analysis is based on two levels, inspired by Wodak: the "entry- level analysis" focusing on the thematic dimension of the alt-right YouTube videos, and the "in-depth analysis" which scrutinizes coherence and cohesion of the videos and texts in detail (Wodak, 2015 :50). The general aim of the entry level thematic analysis is to map out the contents of analyzed videos and then to assign them to particular discourses. Here, discourse topics act like key analytical categories which summarize the video and its most important information (van Dijk 1991 :113). The in-depth analysis is, however, carried out based on the research questions, with an analysis of the genre as well as the structure, discursive strategies and argumentation schemes or other linguistic and visual aspects (Wodak, 2015; Kryżanowski, 2010; Reisigl and Wodak, 2009; Wodak et al., 2009). By studying the alt-right movement and its

discourses through the DHA I examine how discursive practices shape knowledge production and identities, as they have ideological effects and in the case of the alt-right act in favor of online and offline mobilization.

The DHA focuses on texts in various forms (audio, spoken, visual and written) as they relate to discourses, with a focus on the genre they are delivered through and their *situatedness*[4] (Wodak, 2015 :51). As Wodak underlines, many texts and other types of published media that are owing to their ambiguities as texts, cannot be understood without the consideration of different contextual layers (Ibid). Following Wodak, and my research questions, I have constructed a three-level model which includes: 1) an understanding of the historical and political development of the alt-right movement (see sections 2.1-2.3 of the literature review) as well as key discussions that provide context to specific discourses (see 2.5 literature review). 2) Utterances of YouTube content creators are analyzed through argumentation strategies, such as fallacies and topoi (Wodak, 2011), to explore the practices and expressions that are centered within those discourses. Here, the securitization framework is applied in order to explore any contextualized securitization moves within the existing discourses. 3) discursive elements and securitization moves are connected and added to the original discourse, underlining not only the intertextual and interdiscursive relations of the utterances and images but also re-tracing the discourse as a whole (Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 40ff).

4.4 Material and data extraction methods

The material of this study was gathered on the social media platform YouTube and the selection was based on popularity, theme and representation, accessibility and language. The dataset consists of 24 videos uploaded online by the three most popular content creators within the alt-right movement (Ribeiro et al, 2020):

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[4] Emphasis in original.

American Renaissance[5], Black Pigeon Speaks[6] and The Golden One[7]. First, I wanted to ensure my safety as well as that Ribeiro et als' list of most popular YouTube alt-right channels would still be valid, due to the rapid blocking of YouTube channels since 2019 (Ibid) Thus, I created a new personal YouTube account, where I started searching for alt-right content while saving the material watched for credibility.

In addition, consulting Ribeiro et al's list, I selected the channels with more than 100 000 subscribers, narrowing down to the three above mentioned channels. This has been an ethical strategy, since these content creators are often mentioned and referenced by other YouTube channels and media sources as representative of the alt-right movement on YouTube. Outside the scope of this thesis there are other alt-right content creators that could be analyzed in order to broaden the understanding of the alt-right movement and activism online. In terms of content representation, the most popular alt-right videos vary from 500 000 to 1,5 million views, but still I do not claim that it is representational of the entire alt-right movement. In order to have a broader representation within the alt-right content I have chosen videos with more than 100 000 views. However, one video in my material was selected without this criterion which is *Important Killings you probably missed* by American Renaissance (March 2020) due to the content of the video providing insights on alt-right activism and using reverse racism.

Furthermore, my selection was guided by video titles, indicating whether the videos were explicitly around topics such as European/American identity, migration or race.

Another indicator was the English language, but since the alt-right movement is western oriented, the English language is predominately the language used within the alt-right discourse.

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[5] Channel has been deleted (update 10 August 2020)
[6] Black Pigeon Speaks (2020) https://www.youtube.com/user/TokyoAtomic
[7] The Golden One (2020) https://www.youtube.com/user/TheLatsbrah

Out of 127 videos viewed (total 1920 minutes) the uploaded content analyzed in this study consists of 369 minutes and 71 seconds of video material.

4.5 Content creators

Figure 1 Screenshot of Black Pigeon Speaks Interview, 2020

[8]*Black Pigeon Speaks* (BPS) is the channel that until 10 of August 8, 2020 had 548 000 subscribers and 255 videos published on YouTube, with the earliest[9] being *How Face Shape EXPOSES White Racism* from 2016. The content creator never appears in any of his videos, remaining anonymous to this day. BPS content focuses on white-nationalism, neo-Nazism, anti-Semitism and anti-feminism. Core themes are global conspiracy theories, such as "Cultural Marxism" that target Western civilization by embracing immigration and feminism.

Figure 2 Screenshot of Jared Taylor Wikipedia Picture, 2020

Jared Taylor is an American content creator of the channel *American Renaissance*, with 135 000 subscribers and 200 videos until June 29, 2020 when his channel was removed by YouTube. Earliest content on AmRen channel is dating back to 2010.

Best known for what he calls "race realism" and "white advocacy"[10] Jared Taylor has remained in the spotlight

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[8] lukewearechange (2017) https://steemit.com/news/@lukewearechange/black-pigeon-speaks-on-attitude-kindness-women-and-the-fed [Accessed 10 August 2020]

[9]Black Pigeon Speaks (2016) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Kv_VmSizrA [Accessed 10 August 2020]

[10] Jared Taylor (2020) https://www.bitchute.com/video/aFmsTkHskkjQ/ [Accessed 10 August 2020]

through the New Century Foundation and his publication *American Renaissance.* Here, race realism entails the notion that racial and ethnic distinctions are based in biological traits, thus enhancing the aimlessness of any attempt towards social justice and equality. Hence, respecting any racial distinctions, societal organization should be reconstructed ultimately creating separate ethnostates (Sedgwick, 2019). In contrast to BPS, his content is not anti-Semitic, but mainly focuses on race (Ibid).
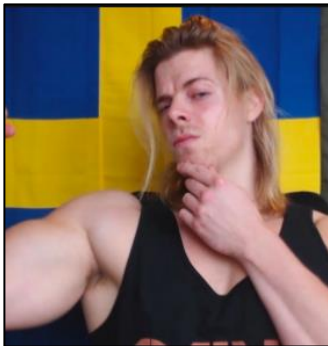
Figure 3 Screenshot of The Golden One YouTube clip, 2020

The Golden One is a Swedish content creator who, until 10 August 8, 2020 had 107 000 subscribers and 571 videos uploaded since 2013, with the earliest video being *Glory to the Allfather!* From 13 July 2013[11]. The channel's content was physical exercise oriented for the first few years, but then shifted towards discussing sociopolitical issues, with the first one being *What is wrong with Sweden. Why Sweden is committing Suicide. The Religion of political correctness.* published on 10 November 2015[12], The Golden One's content focuses on white-nationalism, anti-immigration and the protection of European civilization as well as anti-feminism, anti-LGBTQ+ and anti-pornography.

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[11]The Golden One (2013) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A82tRspSzKY [Accessed 10 August 2020]
[12]The Golden One (2015) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ek7KHcnlI2A&t=113s[Accessed 10 August 2020]

4.6 Discourse analytical techniques

4.6.1 Fallacies and the justification of exclusion

Wodak uses the notion of *fallacy* in order to analyze the right-wing, ethno-nationalist populism, that suggests national sameness, unity and cohesion. These narratives usually use strategies based on *the fallacy of sameness*, which imagines the nation as a culturally homogenous community, or *the fallacy of argumentum ad baculum*, which refers to (alleged) dangers that threaten this so-called national homogeneity (Wodak, 2015 :54). Another fallacy that could be used in the alt-right concept is *the fallacy of difference*, which emphasizes the clear distinction between nations or ethnic minorities (Wodak et al. 2009). Through this, members of other ethnicities, nations or minorities are excluded. In addition, *the fallacy of singularization* is used in constructing an identity narrative that imposes superiority and uniqueness, which then is making use of the *fallacy of comparison*: the superiority of one's own collective national identity to other nations and national identities is emphasized and exaggerated (Wodak, 2015 :54). Strategically invoking, for instance, a "European" identity has been used as an exclusionary measure against groups of people that are not considered European, or Western (Ibid).

4.6.2 The notion of *topoi*

Within discriminatory discourse the different forms of racial, national and sociocultural exclusion can be analysed with the use of *topoi* (Wodak, 2011). They

Figure 4 List of topoi, Wodak (2011:13)

refer to "content warrants" as parts of argumentation, or tautological rules that justifiably connect the argument directly to the conclusion (Wodak, 2011: 74; Kienpointner, 1992:194). Here, I incorporate a content-based list of topoi which will be used as a foundation for the analysis and justification of arguments (Wodak, 2011). An example would be the topos of danger or topos of threat which is based on the following: "if a political action or decision bears specific dangerous, threatening consequences, one should not perform it" (Ibid) More specifically, if there are any dangers or threats, one should act against them. (Ibid) The possibility of too many immigrants entering the country, might sparke the topos of threat of racism, as according to this the national population will become more violent against foreigners. This is a commonly used topos within the alt-right discourse, as this argument scheme reverses the position of blame between victim and victimizer. Thus, victims become responsible for the hostility directed towards them (Wodak, 2011:13).

In conclusion, the DHA focuses on which semiotic means are used to construct positive self- and negative other- images, within collective identities. ("Us" and "Them", the natives and the immigrants, the liberals and the conservatives). This also provides tools for selecting specific arguments and events in the flow of a

narrative, and convey messages that might be manipulative, misleading and in this case, framing a securitization act.

4.6.3 Analyzing the material

This thesis is focusing on securitization moves within the alt-right online discourse within the field of online right-wing activism. The empirical material is not analyzed solely as text but also as video, image, sound and symbols. This part pertains to the execution of the analysis and the components that are elaborated, i.e. sample, coding, categorisation and interpretation.

Looking through alt-right YouTube channels I was interested to explore how hegemonic understandings of notions such as nation, race, migration, identity and culture are reinforced within the alt-right discourse and with what strategies or discursive strategies it is achieved.

All YouTube videos were first downloaded, in order to secure them, in case the alt-right channels were deleted while this study was being conducted. The next step was the transcription of the videos, with as much accuracy as possible, as the punctuation and silences were added within the transcripts to enhance the non-verbal aspects of logos within the videos. (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015)

While coding the transcripts my method was abductive and highly dynamic, as I was committed to a constant movement between the theory and the empirical data (Wodak, 2011:8). Since the material consists of videos, transcribed and treated as text, image and sound, the intertextual relationships were investigated, following the same back and forth movement in order to constantly inform the analysis. By connecting these genres of material with topics and argumentative strategies such as fallacies or the concept of topoi, a recontextualization was important, in order to incorporate the nuances expressed originally in the video (Wodak, 2011). For example, in the video "*James Allsup: Beyond Trump*" by American Renaissance I identified the fallacy of sameness in the following quote:

"Americans used to derive our identity from who we are, our national characteristics, our attitude, our common ancestry, our spirit" Here the US nation is imagined as a culturally homogenous community (Wodak, 2015: 54), reinforcing an "us" and "them" polarization. This quote has emerged while discussing the loss of American identity, within the broader discourse of immigration and while recontextualized, no further nuances emerged from the original content. In addition, the historical context that was mentioned in sections 2.2 to 2.4, was always kept under consideration throughout the interpretation of discourses and of videos and transcripts.

To code the transcripts Nvivo 12 software was used, developing a code system where initially codes stemmed as ideas within the data which, after the second wave of coding, merged into categories. Lastly, the categories were developed into more abstract larger themes and points (Bazeley, 2013). Since my research question is focusing on securitization moves within the alt-right discourse, a set of four "a priori" codes were created plus one more for the referent objects of the securitization processes corresponding to the four contextualised securitization acts by Stritzel (Wodak, 2001:78; Stritzel, 2014). Later these codes expanded and merged with sub-codes, or other emerging codes representing wider themes within the data. Some examples of other emerging codes would be "alt-right ideology", "victimization" or "historical fallacies".

The themes identified (see table 1 Appendix) represent the core themes of the alt-right discourse and the sub-themes that were identified in order to discover any overlaps between different discourses. Any overlaps were identified having intertextuality and interdiscursivity in mind, where the former focuses on how references are made within each video and how it overlaps within other videos, the latter reflects on the ways different discourses overlap within the same video (Wodak, 2011). Nevertheless, since the study's material is drawn from social media there is a need to address hyperintertextuality and hyperinterdiscursivity (Barros, 2014 :1223; Bennett, 2018b). The videos that were analyzed are including

hyperlinks from other sources e.g. articles, tweets, other YouTube videos or webpages leading to hyperintertextuality, where "texts can be transformed and given multiple and alternative interpretations" providing insight on embedded ideologies that legitimize the actors' claims. (Ibid) The sub-themes that developed at this stage (see table 2) were analysed textually against the securitization theory, in order to identify any securitization moves within the alt-right discourse and create a better nuance between the data analysis and the theory.

4.7 Considerations

Having discussed the assumptions, data extraction methods and analysis framework, I will now elaborate on the ethical considerations and limitations of the methodological approach used in this study, as well as any limitations and reliability.

4.7.1 Ethical considerations

All the empirical data used in this thesis is collected on YouTube without the content creator's knowledge or consent, which raises several ethical questions. Online data and metadata from social media, such as YouTube, are identified as "gray data", that is information that can be perceived either as text, material published publicly (i.e. tweets, comments or videos) or as products of human research subjects (Rambukkana, 2019). Within digital and media studies, the debate around gray data has underlined the distinct difference between "published content that is publicly accessible or actions intended by their authors as public, or intended as a public act or performance that invites recognition" (Ibid: 315) and if "participants in this environment assume/believe that their communication is private" (Ibid: 314) Furthermore, the issue of genre, in this case YouTube, is ethical

as participants have expectations and assumptions on the privacy of their communication and content based on the format (Ibid :314)

The empirical data used in this thesis were publicly published by the content creators within YouTube, a venue that enables the sharing of content and communication. Content creators have the choice to share their videos publicly or under the private[13] or unlisted[14] settings, as well as close the comment section on their videos and allow the "thumbs up/thumbs down" like ratings. As this study focuses on an in-depth analysis of online securitization utterances, this research can create intimate proximities (Ibid :314) between the researcher and the content and by extend, the content creator. This does not mean that the content creators welcome, expect or understand a researcher's attention to their online communications (Kim & Kim 2014; Zimmer 2016) The reactionary discourse of the alt-right (Stead, 2016) has created backlash against social justice politics, not only against feminists, antiracists and other social justice advocates (Weinman, 2014) but often against researchers, who face the risk of doxxing[15] or insults and abuse (Rambukkana, 2019 :313). Since my research focuses on discourse analysis, there was an urge to anonymize the content creators, in an attempt to create division between the content and the subject and focus solely on the discourse. However, two of the three content creators in this thesis are commonly known within the alt-right community, not only by the use of their platform but also by appearing in other alt-right channels as guests (Lewis, 2018). Nevertheless, I chose to respect the will to anonymity of one content creator, Black Pigeon Speaks, as he does not use his real name and photograph on either of his YouTube Channels or social media. Even if publicly accessible online, his personal information does not add to the aim of this thesis and thus will not be used.

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[13]Private content: Videos cannot be viewed, researched or found in the creator's channel unless there is an invitation to view the private content by the creator.
[14]Unlisted content: Video cannot be found through search or within the creator's channel unless the viewer has the direct link to the video.
[15]Doxxing: comes from the expression "dropping dox" and means the act of searching and publishing private or identifying information about (a particular individual) on the Internet, typically with malicious intent.

4.8 Limitations

The results of the analysis cannot be generalized to a larger sample or population, as the analysis purpose was to perform an in-depth analysis, within the content provided by three alt-right content creators. Thus, the sample is not representative of the entire alt-right movement, the content consumers of the videos analyzed or right-wing activism online and their securitizing practices.

4.8.1 Reliability and Validity

Concerning validity, the results obtained from this thesis are in line with research questions and aims previously stated. Also, the data acquisition process has been presented together with the analytical methods in order to ensure credibility. Furthermore, the decision of relying on different alt-right content creators, providing different points of view on the most popular discourses, was made deliberately.

It can be assumed that the security discourse outlined in an alt-right YouTube channel uses language that complies with YouTube's terms and conditions and is different from the language used in the comments of that video or in a 4chan post, where anonymous users debate the topic. These hypothetical variations are important and were part of the analyzing process. Also, the videos selected for this thesis cover a span from 2015 until 2020, from 3 different content creators and with content on various subjects, in order to achieve data triangulation. Therefore, the quality and diversity of the study can be enhanced in terms of enabling interdiscursive and intertextual relationships between different discourses and content creators as well as eliminating bias (Wodak 2001:65; 29-30).

Another issue when researching online environments such as YouTube, is the authenticity of the content, which is risked by trolls or bots (Wahlström & Törnberg 2019). In this case the data acquisition process was carefully conducted, making

sure to correspond to previous literature in order to provide authentic content and minimize the risk of bias. In the following chapter, the analysis of this chapter takes under consideration all the ethical issues raised in this section.

5. Analysis

Using the argumentative strategies of fallacies and topoi, within the analytical method of DHA, alt-right argumentation has been analyzed, aiming to investigate how securitization moves are constructed based on discriminatory narratives. The first section of my analysis is focusing on exploring the presence of Claim and Warning as securitization speech acts (Stritzel, 2014; see figure 1) within the alt-right discourse. More specifically, liberalism, immigration and "cultural Marxism" constitute the most prominent securitizing claims in the material (see figure 2). Furthermore, the second section of the analysis is based on the Demand and the Propositional Context which provide an action plan countering the threats analyzed in the first section.
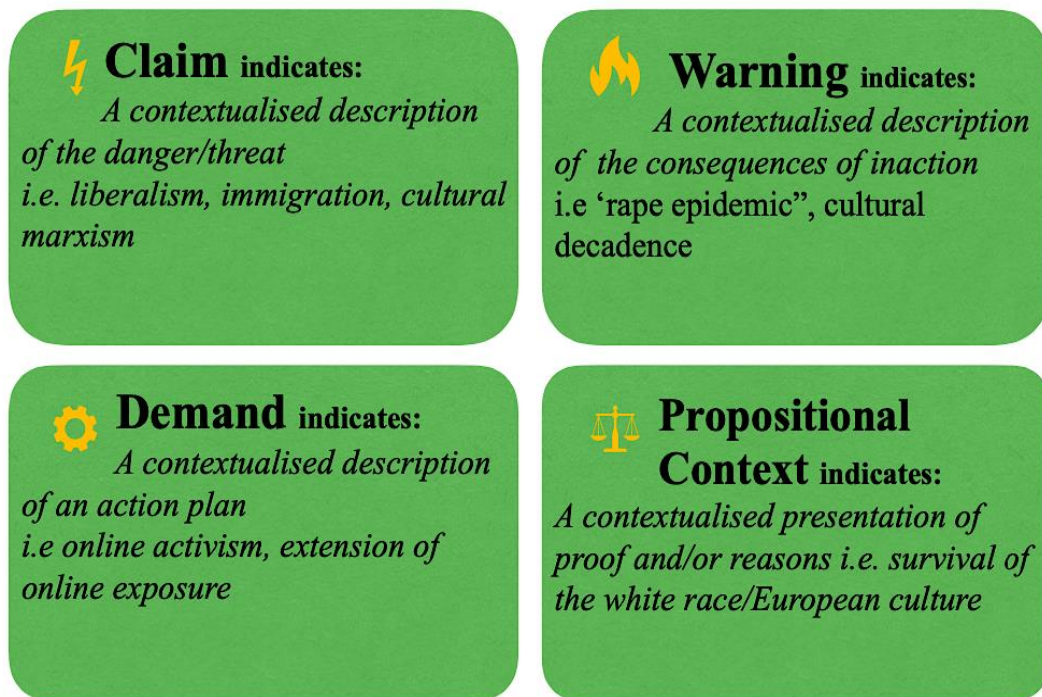
Figure 5: Securitization speech acts (Stritzel, 2014:40) The structure of the analysis is based on the securitization speech acts and the corresponding discourses found within the material (figure 1) This mirrors the material analysed in this study where, as seen in figure 2, the securitizing claims are the most predominant securitization act. This can be traced to ideological influences of the the alt-right movement, as complex societal issues (such as immigration) are generalised and provided with oversimplified solutions, usually while constructing a common enemy (Kaiser & Rauchfleisch, 2019)
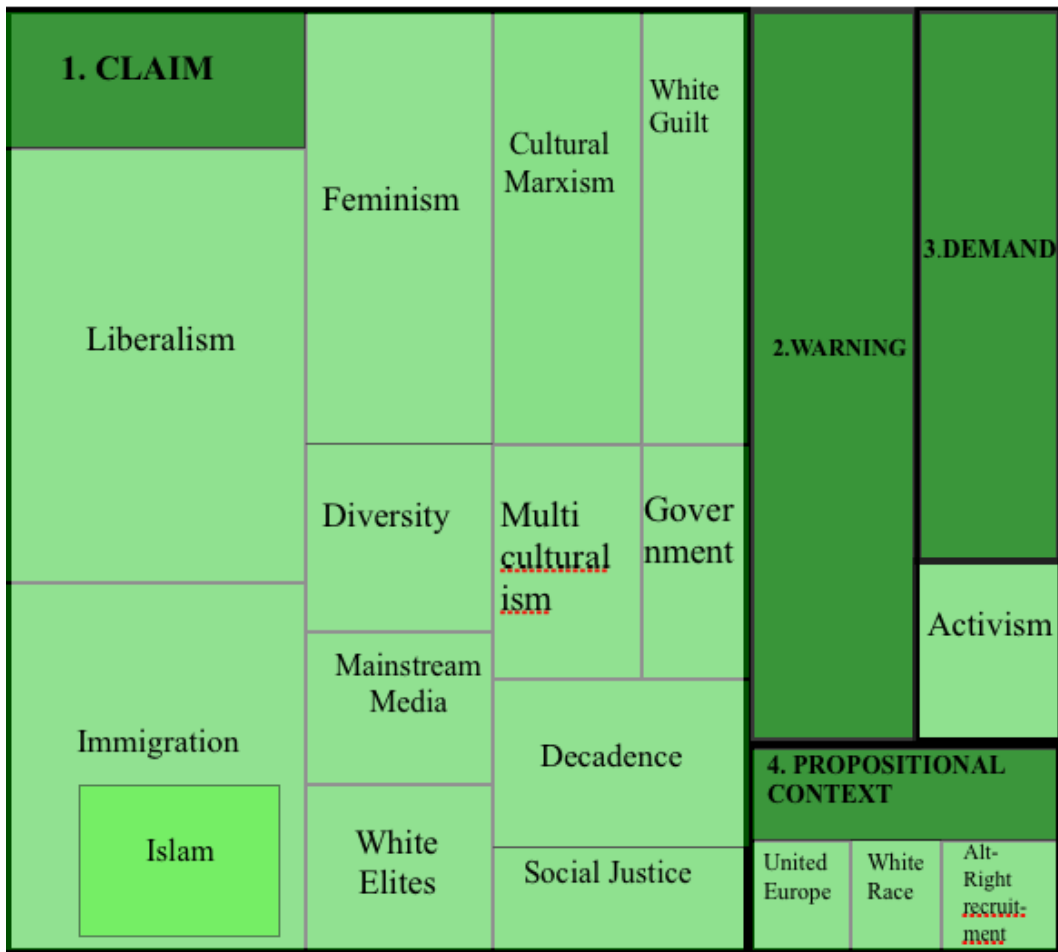
Figure 6: Most predominant securitization moves are claims, entailing liberalism as the most referenced threat. Second most referenced threat is immigration, and third is "cultural Marxism" and feminism. The securitizing warnings, demands and propositional contexts are referenced noticeably less in the material. This can be interpreted as simplification of a problem by the alt-right, as a securitizing warning or demand can correspond to several securitizing claims.

5.1 Securitizing claims and liberalism

Liberalism is the first threat that appeared in the material, confirming the alt-right's tension and wish to distance itself from liberal political views (see section 2.3 of literature review). More specifically, liberalism ,according to the alt-right discourse, is enabling the fall of western civilization through allowing mass immigration, identity politics, feminism and is usually connected to "cultural

Marxism". The way liberalism is framed in most of my material is the root of all evils, that lead to all of the above discourses that are eventually framed as existential threats. The decadence discourse ascribes a sense of fatality and exigency to the framing of liberalism and all its constituents, reminding the cultural pessimism of the French New Right. Black Pigeon Speaks, in his video *The END GAME-WHY the WEST is LOST,* is giving a run-through of the political aspects of liberalism, glorifying the past and leading to a deteriorating future:

"Liberalism led to more individual rights and it led to capitalism. Europe not only began the great exploration of our planet but also into the nature of reality with the birth of modern science." (Black Pigeon Speaks, 2017: 00:05:24)

However, this is opposed to the following statement "Liberalism has also led to another very important and in most other societies alien concept: that of the immigrant."(Black Pigeon Speaks, 2017: 00:07:06) Using the f*allacy of sameness* (Wodak, 2015 :54) the reference to "societies" imagines a culturally homogenous community that immigration is interfering with. As a concept that is relatively new, it is disregarding all migration tendencies that came before the emergence of western liberalism. Expressing such a historical fallacy serves its purpose as the turn of liberalism from useful to fault is underlined, and immigration is brought to the foreground as an issue that disrupts the alleged homogeneity of western culture. Following this argumentation comes a process of Othering, with a construction of an immediate out-group:

"and the bitter pill for many is that it is the non-binary, gender fluid, the bugchasers and gift-givers and Antifa, that are indeed and in fact the true intellectual heirs of Western civilization that goes all the way back to the Enlightenment. And let that sink in for a minute." (Black Pigeon Speaks, 2017, 00:14:45)

The framing of non-binary, gender-fluid individuals and members of the Antifascist movement as "heirs" of western civilization is met with irony, assisting the

construction of a demonized other. This build-up within the video leads to the conclusion that:

"Liberalism in today's society has become maladaptive. It literally destroys itself as it leads to cultural degeneracy and low fertility that we can see throughout the Western world today. [liberalism] cheers on the destruction of its own civilisation and given the recent election in France it looks to be almost impossible for Western people to believe they have an in-group."(2017: 00:15:51)

The use of emotionally charged language where liberalism "destroys" itself is adding to the overarching discourse of degeneracy, ascribing urgency to the situation. On the other hand, the reference to low fertility can be interpreted as a nod to the feminist movement and pro-choice campaigns, in a very general manner. Moreover, by mentioning the French elections of 2017, and the loss of Front Nationale of Marine Le Pen against centrist and liberal Emmanuel Macron, the constructed negative connotation of liberalism is tied with a real-life political event, adding to the decadence discourse.

Furthermore, the "cultural hegemony" of "Western people" is at risk, as the group itself is portrayed unable to construct a coherent identity. Echoing Alain de Benoist on "cultural hegemony", these utterances reveal the in-group's main concerns here, not in biological/genetic attributes but rather extended in other social attributes such as, gender, sexuality and leftist political affiliations. Following Philips' work on identity construction of the alt-right, the deterministic collective identity that filters any grounds for epistemological claims within the alt-right discourse are seen here, framing liberalism and any other identity constructions as a danger to Western civilization.

The exigency that characterizes this framing of liberalism, and all the social locations that identity constructions of the out-group emerge, enables a securitization framework to take place. Therefore, drawing on the *topos of threat*, liberalism is framed as an existential threat stating that the rise of liberalism necessarily implies the destruction of Western civilization. Thus, this puts western

civilization in a need to be protected, or what in security terms constitutes the referent object.

In addition, following Stritzel (2014: 49), the contextualized threat in this context is liberalism as well as the constituted out-group, which in this case concentrates on the face of leftist, gender-fluid, anti-fascist identity constructions. The depiction of the Other as evil that will bring destruction, comes closest to traditional security discourse, constituting a threat to be faced and conquered (Hansen, 2011). Additional depictions and framing of the Other as threats constitute the biggest part of the material analysed in this thesis, as seen in figure 1, with liberalism being the most reoccurring one within the alt-right discourse. Another example brought by The Golden One and his video *"My Hero. Rodrigo Duterte. The Crusade against Drug Cartels"* on how liberalism is defiling western civilization:

"Its also quite interesting the contrast between the liberal West where justice is more about, you know, finding sympathy for the one who has done something heinous, you know, we have to understand why the pedophile is a fucking pedophile instead of us having him swing from a fucking tree. You have to find sympathy for a rapist because this and that, you have to find sympathy for everyone who's doing something wrong instead of you saying, you know what, this is the fucking line if across it I'm going to kill you." (The Golden One, 2016: 00:01:36) This argument is developed around the tolerance and presumed sympathy of the liberal West, drawing on The Golden One's view of homosexuality as pedophilia (The Golden
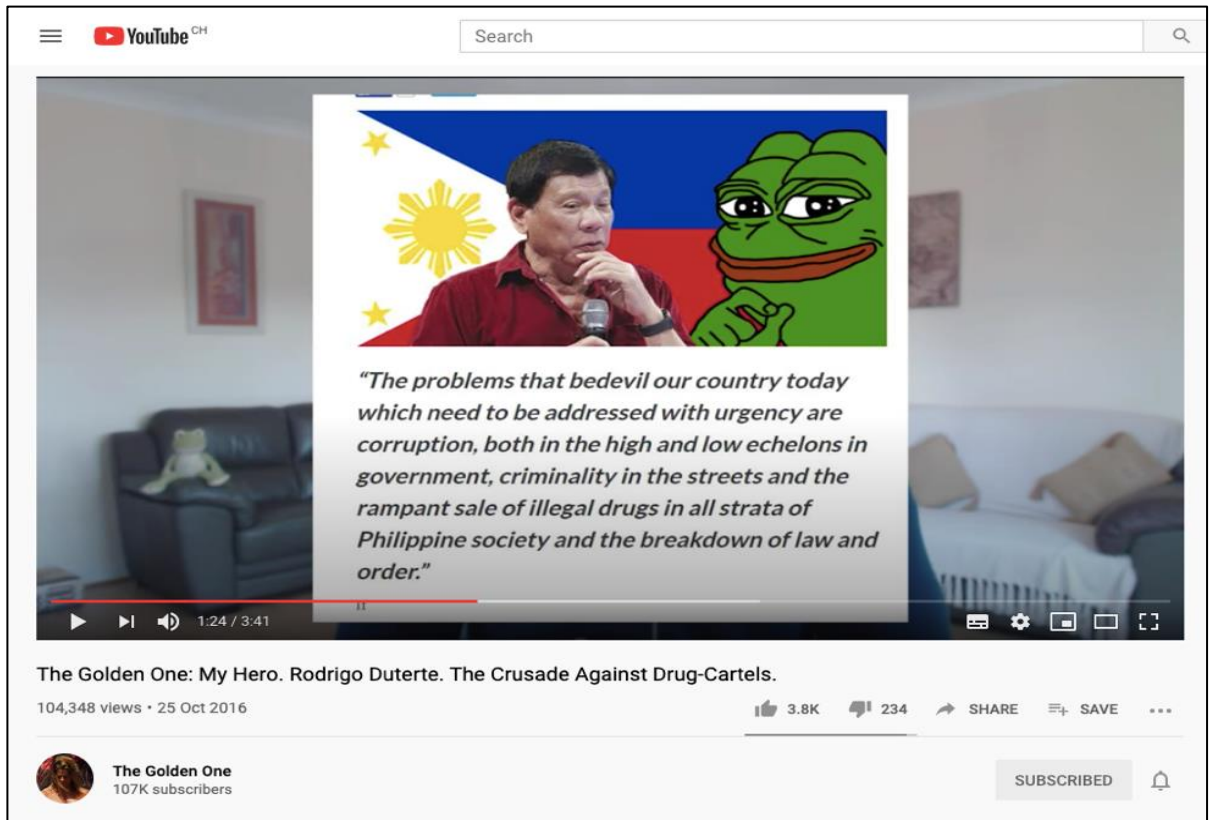
One,   2016)

Figure 6: Screenshot (The Golden One, 2020, 00:01:24). The image of Rodrigo Duterte, president of Philippines next to the popular alt-right meme "pepe the frog", in similar position. Underneath a text, presumably from Duterte. In the background, a stuffed animal frog sitting on the couch is interpreted as a reference, again, to the "pepe the frog" meme.

In this video, The Golden One expresses his support of the Duterte administration and the war on drugs in the Philippines. Duterte has been criticized extensively by the international community for giving a "permission to kill" to police forces, since the beginning of the "war on drugs" in 2016 (BBC, 2020). Based on a recent UN report, official figures show that more than 8000 people have been killed since 2016, mostly young men, as police forces do not need search or arrest warrants to conduct house raids, forcing suspects to risk lethal force (UN rights office, 2020). Within this context, an analogy is made with the Duterte administration serving as a paradigm in the ways that "degeneracy" should be met, in the liberal West. Using the topos of threat, homosexuality and perceived tolerance against it are framed as threats to patriotic, hypermasculine and Christian moral images of western civilization. Thus, the out-group collective identity is ascribed to the "degeneracy"

discourse and raised to an existential threat, allowing for a securitization move to take place. Moreover, while this statement is uttered, the visual representation is adding more layers of meaning to the claim. The portrayed image of Duterte (seen in Figure 7) with the flag of Philippines underlines the nationalistic character of his statement that is enclosed below. Also, the issues addressed here are framed as evil and urgent, constituting a threat that needs to be countered. Within the text appearing on the screen, that presumably belongs to Duterte, reads a series of issues that "bedevil our country" and need to "be addressed with urgency". Thus, through hyperintertextuality, this text has taken a new meaning, as used by The Golden One to reinforce his analogy (Barros, 2014 :1223; Bennett, 2018b).

Another point arising here, besides the argumentative strategies and the visual analogies drawn, is the subtle use of memes (seen in figure 4) as the most dominant alt-right meme of pepe the frog is incorporated, mirroring Duterte's skeptical stance. This enhances the analogy between the "war on drugs" and the war on liberalism, that The Golden One is claiming. This provides a level of irony, an integral part of the alt-right communicational strategies (Nagle, 2017), as it mediates the securitizing claim only for those familiar with the in-group cultural and humoristic expressions. Also, the figure of a stuffed frog animal in the background adds more to the contextualization of the meme, and thus adds a layer of irony in the delivery of the securitizing claim. Thus, the contextualization and embeddedness of this securitizing utterance in the broader alt-right discourse is assisted by articulations (memes) that are familiar to the movement. These articulations assist the interconnectedness and intertextuality of the securitizing claims, as they are utilized in a broad spectrum of discourses.

As liberalism has occurred as an existential threat in 16 out of 24 videos, it constitutes a predominant securitizing claim in the alt-right discourse.

5.2 Immigration and multiculturalism

Following liberalism, immigration constitutes the second most prominent threat and is reported by alt-right content creators with arguments about "culture",

depicting it as an entity that is threatened by non-residents of the civilized west; the Other, belonging to a different society, with cultural and societal values that are unwilling to assimilate (Wodak, 2015:55). The following is an example from Black Pigeon Speaks on immigration:

"an immigrant is distinct from a foreigner, a foreigner goes to another country and lives there as an outsider; an immigrant is seen as having equal standing with the natives even though having no ties, history and at times very different world views than the dominant in-group[...] regarding cultures as being equal was elevated to a sacrosanct fact that only a perceived idiot could dispute. And again, another completely anti in-group preference that is uniquely Western."(Black Pigeon Speaks, WHY the WEST is LOST,2017: 00:09:28)

Black Pigeon Speaks defines the immigrant as unequal to the native West, which presupposes a fallacy of sameness, imagining not only the US nation but the geographical west as a culturally homogenous group (Wodak, 2015:56). Furthermore, "the dominant in-group" which is the cultural hegemonic west, is perceived as unique and superior to the out-group of immigrants, with the fallacy of singularization (Ibid). This argument is further developed with the threat of liberalism, with equality portrayed as a notion that cannot be criticized within the liberal west.

Core moral values are questioned, tying immigration with multiculturalism, thus employing the topos of threat, where immigration is contextualized as a securitizing threat. The referent object here can be perceived as the imagined culturally homogenous west, which is in need of protection. Another example that is centered around race but also brings forth immigration and multiculturalism is from Jared Taylors' CNN Interview:

"Hillary Clinton would have been beavering away trying to legalize every single illegal immigrant not just the ones who came over as minors, she would have been opening our doors to as many Muslims as possible, increasing the number of Syrian

refugees coming to the United States; she would have been welcoming Muslims as wholeheartedly and as warmly she possibly could"(Jared Taylor, CNN Interviews Jared Taylor on White Identity, 2017: 00:02:59)

This example exhibits the same claim of threat against liberalism and immigration, is utilizing the topos of burdening or weighing down as a tautological consequence, meaning, if a nation is burdened by specific problems, then one should actively eliminate these burdens (Wodak, 2001:13). Thus, immigration is conceptualized as a threat because there is motive for further action against it. Furthermore, religion is brought forth as a cultural indicator that clashes with the imagined Judeo-Christian western culture and its moral codes.

Through this set of arguments, the securitizing claims act as a basis for a warning, a contextualized description of the consequences of inaction (Stritzel, 2014: 49). Here, I draw on Musoff's concept of metaphorical scenario:

"We can characterize a scenario as a set of assumptions made by competent members of a discourse community about "typical" aspects of a source situation, e.g. dramatic storylines and outcomes. These assumptions are mapped onto the respective target concepts" (2006:28)

If Trump supporters and the alt-right movement had not stood up against Hilary Clinton in the presidential elections of 2016, according to Jared Taylor, the number of refugees and migrants specifically from Muslim countries, would have flooded the country. This utterance reinforces the danger of the securitization claim, not only as immigration but also as liberalism in the face of Hilary Clinton, bringing urgency to the warning via imagining a scenario of inaction that would have threatened national US security.

Another content creator ties immigration with anti-feminism claiming that:

"If you're for women, you are against mass immigration from the third world. Simple as that. [...] Why do you think women would be for multiculturalism? they're the primary victim. What do you think feminism would be for an increased influx of Muslims? why do you think gay people aren't standing against an influx of Muslims? They cannot comprehend that influx of people from the third world results in mass rape epidemic of white women, they do not care because that's not part of their religion; the part of their religion is to blame everything on white men." (The Golden One, What is Wrong with Sweden, 2017: 00:04:37)

The Golden One's understanding of immigration is portrayed as an outcome of liberalism and its presumed tolerance, with his reference to "gay people". This argument is constructed and delivered in connection to the topos of danger or threat and can be summarized as "if mass immigration is dangerous for women, we should stop it" (Wodak, 2015: 55). Also, the mere reduction of migrants into a homogenous group that are defined by their religion, as a signifier that underlines the difference between "us", who have been ascribed a national European territory with the Judeo-Christian culture, and "them" as Muslims, placing them outside of the national and cultural territory. Furthermore, he employs the "flood metaphor", that is "the influx of Muslims" (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 54-61) which substantiates his argument. This discursive construction of "us/Europeans" and "them/Muslims" is a reoccurring pattern in The Golden One's rhetoric, which could also be seen as a construction of national identity (Wodak, 2009:33-42). I would argue that The Golden One's imaginary transnational Europe, contextualized here as the referent object, represents the nativist understanding of the "nation" as the "body" (Wodak, 2015: 76) that is united under the emphasis of a common threat.

Within the securitization discourse, mass immigration is seen as the common threat and is conceptualized as a claim, constituting a danger to "white women" which are the "primary victim". In addition, building on the claim, a warning is also contextualized, as in case of inaction, the result of the "influx of people from the third world" is the "mass rape epidemic of white women". The questions that The

Golden One raises here puts members of the LGBTQ+ community at fault insisting that "they do not care because part of their religion is to blame everything on white men" There are several issues to be addressed here, not only in terms of connecting multiculturalism and the LGBTQ+ community but also on the specific interpretation of security that is contextualized here. More specifically, as seen in the previous section liberalism is understood, within the alt-right discourse, as one of the main enemies of western civilization. This can be explained by the historical and ideological claims of the alt-right movement, but also due to a set of fallacies: the fallacy of singularization, which indicates the construction of an identity narrative that is conceived as superior and unique (Wodak, 2015:54), which then is making use of the fallacy of comparison: the superiority of one's collective identity to other identities is emphasized (Ibid) However, in this example of The Golden One, the identities are dual: first, as underlined above is the in-group European identity against the out-group Muslim identity, and second, another out-group that is created is that of the LGBTQ+ community. Thus, this justifies the notion that is widely expressed within the alt-right discourse that "nobody can destroy the West, so it is destroying itself" (American Renaissance, 2017; Black Pigeon Speaks, 2017,2019)

Moreover, there is a broader feminist point to be made in reference to conceptualizing women's bodies as "goods" to be protected. Critical security scholarship has acknowledged that for many individuals, their provider of security (whether the state or patriarch) is also their greatest source of danger (Booth 2007:202-203; Rossdale, 2016). Thus, The Golden One operates from an assumed position of dominance where he frames a securitization practice based on patriarchal and exclusionary power structures. Furthermore, a victim-perpetrator discursive strategy is in place (Wodak, 2015: 178) in order to persuade that 'the religion of the "gay people" is to blame everything on "white men'. By reversing the roles between victim and perpetrator, in this case, the LGBTQ+, non-binary identities and the identity of cis gendered white male, The Golden One emphasizes the victimization of "white men" that are harmed by liberal expressions of self. At the same time, he projects the dichotomy between "white men" and "the Muslims"

which are framed as perpetrators. This dichotomy projected as crisis of national masculinity constitutes a reoccurring feature of mainstream political discourse in the post 9/11 United States (Kelly, 2017). Traces of the "war on terror" have shaped the security discourse around supposed stricter safety borders of both body and nation (Ibid). Additionally, the populist influences within the alt-right movement are expressed, drawing on traditionalist discourses that are xenophobic and racist. This comes to contradict the new, "softer" identity politics of Western Europe that, even though they are legitimizing discrimination due to security measures of neo-liberal welfare chauvinism (Wodak, 2015:185), still remain coded through "all inclusive" and "refugees are welcome" political agendas.

5.3 The underlying issue of race

In the previous sections I attempted to investigate the underlying threats, within the alt-right discourse, that lead to the "decadence" or fall of Western civilization. Immigration, multiculturalism, "Cultural Marxism" and feminism appear interconnected, all stemming from the alleged "weak" and "accepting" liberalism of Western democracies, that fail to secure the future of an imagined culturally homogenous nation/Europe. Having established the main argumentative strategies, fallacies and topoi that contextualize the securitizing moves, as well as the main peripheral themes that constitute the alt-right discourse, I will be moving to the core concern of the alt-right movement, which is the issue of race. This structure is based on my understanding of alt-right's arguments, as other issues/threats are deployed, masking the underlying fixation on racial segregation.

An example would be the video *South Africa 2019-Beginnig of the END* from Black Pigeon Speaks and his interpretation of the discourse on land ownership in South Africa. Historically, black land ownership has been undermined, during colonial dispossession and discriminatory apartheid legislation, meaning that the majority of the population was forbidden from owning property based on their race (Aljazeeera, 2019). Thus, 87% of the land was white-owned, but since the

distribution was based on a system of racial segregation, there were no registered real estate rights. Leading to today, a draft constitutional amendment bill has been published, proposing the redistribution of land, without providing compensation to owners of expropriated land (Cohen, 2020). Black Pigeon Speaks, however, insists that:

"It is quite literally the theft, from some South Africaners that happen to have white skin, of their property and it is being handed over to other people with black skin, who also happen to be South African. It is explicitly racist. I am of the opinion, however, that this is not only an issue of race but it's an expression of the deeply rooted Marxist ideology of radical social justice, manifest in South Africa." (Black Pigeon Speaks, South Africa 2019-Beginning of the END, 2018: 00:03:45)

Figure 7: Screenshot (Black Pigeon Speaks, 2020, 00:04:05) Image of the natural geographical map of the Republic of South Africa with highlighted borders. In front and centre of the image, reads "Marxist radical social justice", in reference to the Economic Freedom Fighters Party and the securitizing claim of "cultural Marxism", providing hyperintertextuality.

This is an example of how the issue of race is presented as intertwined with the conspiracy theory of "cultural Marxism" within the alt-right discourse. More specifically, Black Pigeon Speaks forms his argument based on the fallacy of difference (Wodak, 2015:55), emphasizing the clear distinction between the two racial groups, "blacks" and "whites". Then, by addressing the redistribution of land ownership as "literally theft" reconstructs its initial meaning within the alt-right discourse (topos of definition), managing to paint the "whites" as victims of theft. Utilizing this argumentative bridge that is the topos of definition, reaches the conclusion that it is, in fact, the racially white group that needs to be protected, and thus reveals another referent object within the security discourse: the white race. Moreover, Black Pigeon Speaks moves on to express the threat to the referent object, the security claim, not only as the black community, but as the "Marxist ideology of social justice" that is popular in South Africa, referring to the far-left Economic Freedom Fighters[16] party in combination with "cultural Marxism". Consequently, the use of "cultural Marxism" as a securitizing claim provides interconnectedness and hyperintertextuality, as it has been contextualized in other discourses too, in addition to South Africa's land ownership discourse.

One of the most vocal content creators on racial segregation is Jared Tylor, framing his racial concerns within the alt-right discourse as "fear of extinction":

When it comes to race, I don't want my children and my grandchildren to become a minority in the nation that their ancestors built. I do not believe that my civilization, my people will survive if we continue to import everyone from all around the world. [...] All I'm saying is I want the chance for my people to survive and prosper, what is hateful about that? is it hateful for Nigerians to want for their country remain Nigeria or Egyptians remain Egyptian? again Israel had the right to remain Jewish is that because Jews hate everybody else in the world? No,

[16] Black Pigeon Speaks, 2018 https://youtu.be/nURta8-zu4E?t=140 [Accessed 10 August 2020]

they want their people and their culture to survive, and that's all I want too.
(Jared Tylor, CNN Interview, 2017: 00:03:38)

This quote encapsulates one of the most prominent propositions of the alt-right movement, which is racial segregation, as well as the founding of a racially white ethnostate. However, the white race has fallen in a position of victimhood and betrayal (Kelly, 2017), framed as a referent object within the security discourse. Also, the notion of intimacy is at play, as Taylor places himself within the collective and culturally homogenous referent object ("my children"), and thus reinforcing the in-group identity against the fantasized Other.

There are several interconnected securitization acts taking place here, from the claim, which is revealed as "mass" immigration, to the warning, that the white race will become a minority. Moreover, Taylor provides a hint for the demand, the action plan that will help "white people survive and prosper" but does not go into detail in this utterance or this video. However, he stresses the urgency of the securitizing claim and warning he makes, raising the utterance to an existential threat. The demand as well as the propositional context are also conceptualized in other videos, providing interdiscursivity to the security discourse of the alt- right.

5.4 Calling for action

Thus far in this analysis, the securitizing moves of claim and warning have been identified, with the assistance of discursive strategies that point out exclusionary arguments that the securitization moves are based on one. Moving on I would like to explore what I perceive as the second stage of the securitization process which constitutes the action plan, or demand (Stritzel, 2014) and the supporting propositional context. The call for an action plan corresponds to the movements' mobilization strategies, listing from online and offline activism, financial support and interpersonal connections, reinforcing the homogenized ideal of a collective in-group identity. While examining securitizing claims, the danger of threat imposed as an existential threat which calls for various types of counteraction. In the

following section I will explore how these calls for action are contextualized within the alt-right security discourse, as well as how proof or context is provided in order to fuel actions.

I will start with the question posed by James Allsup in the American Renaissance: *"where does the dissident Right go from here? should we be acting as a tug guiding the oil tanker of conservatism in the right direction? should we go dark? start collecting wood pallets become Charlie Daniels's[17] long-haired country boys and buy our 80 acres and build a shed secede from society as far down the highway as possible."(American Renaissance, Beyond Trump, 2018: 04:37)*

These series of questions capture the ideological and political "detachment" (Hawley, 2018) the alt-right is experiencing. From the metaphor of the alt-right seen as a tug assisting the much larger ship of American conservativism, to the reference of Daniels's patriotic and conservative songwriting, the far right is presented with no other solution than to withdraw from any political activity. However, hope for action follows:

"we have the incredible opportunity to construct a nation within the shambling corpse of a once great country, so why did we fall for Trump? [...] Come to think of it, t's not all bad, we did get some upsize from Trump. Gen Z[18] trusted Trump and were genuinely shocked by his betrayal, these are people who are young, idealistic, full of energy with boundless potential. It's not just the boomers[19], there are hundreds of thousands of people all across this country that were brought into the political process, brought out of the shadows like the left likes to say, by the Trump campaign and are now politically homeles,s looking for answers; why wasn't he able to accomplish what he promised? these are people we can appeal to and we

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[17]Charlie Daniels, singer songwriter.
https://web.archive.org/web/20090403081913/http://www.charliedaniels.com/soapbox-2009/soapbox-2009-0327.htm [Accessed 10 August 2020]
[18]Short for Generation Z, see literature review
[19]Baby boomers: The generation defined as people born from 1946 and 1964, during the post–World War II baby boom (Sheehan, 2011)

must appeal to. Now we can do a retrospective and acknowledge what we knew before, that counting on any politician, any party or any leader to save Europeans and Americans from extinction was asking too much" (American Renaissance, Beyond Trump, 2018: 11:19).

This utterance is providing a way out, from the "dark" that is the American political scene (seen in previous quote), which can be materialized with the approach and appeal of the alt-right to Generation Z, as well as older citizens. Moreover, the rhetoric of betrayal, here from president Donald Trump, is a reoccurring pattern in the alt-right discourse, reinforcing the structure of the in-group identity. This is also realized in the need of the alt-right movement to "appeal to politically homeless people" while refusing to trust any other politician to "save" the imagined racially and culturally homogenous Europe and the US from "extinction". A combination of fallacies takes place here: the fallacy of sameness and the fallacy of argumentum ad baculum, referring to the danger of extinction, threatening the so-called national homogeneity (Wodak, 2015:54). Moreover,

However, within the security discourse the propositional context is explained, providing proof for the action plan of approaching younger people, and people who either have been "betrayed" by the Trump administration, or who do not identify with any particular political party in the American political scene. Furthermore, apart from the argumentation strategies that are used here, the concept of betrayal invokes nostalgia, which ties together the alt-right discourse with American conservativism and traditionalism and thus possibly embracing the older generations of the audience. While propositional context has been established Allsup moves on to adopt, or rather appropriate, a strategy used by the intersectional Left and academic left (Grey 2018; Kelly, 2017):

"[image: James Allsup takes a sip of water from a bottle] the Fiji water will be deeply ironic when I talk about capitalism later. Confrontational, provocative, visually commanding, legal activism is essential and that's a topic covered well by

Patrick and others for many, especially those with prestigious careers or families to protect, activism may not be the best use of your potential, or you may want to engage in activism but you need to know that your life won't be effectively over if you are to be the target of a leftist media smear campaign. Political institutions aren't the only institutions that matter, institutions like job networks, social circles the modern family, the media entertainment, all of these in a healthy society would serve the betterment of the people"(American Renaissance, Beyond Trump, 2018: 14:37)

Therefore, the demand, as a description of the action plan against all the claims mentioned so far, is contextualized in the security discourse as activism. But not any activism. Allsup goes on to describe the type of activism that should be deployed by the alt-right movement as "confrontational, provocative, visually commanding and legal". This emphasizes the alt-right's character, influenced by online gaming, trolling and provocation but simultaneously ensuring any practices are legal. The notion of legality is added to acknowledge that a lot of alt-right content creators have been criticized extensively, by YouTube or other social media platforms, due to their racist, xenophobic, anti-Semitic and anti-feminist content, leading to their accounts being deleted (Hatmaker, 2020). Moreover, social situations that alt-right activism is targeting are described, providing a rather abstract, additional propositional context as a securitizing move: the "betterment of people". This can be interpreted as another fallacy, as "the people" can presumably ascribe to the culturally homogenous imagined community/nation that will be profited by alt-right's activism.

Other content creators provide a different notion of demand, as a securitizing action plan, some in more interpersonal, others in more economic terms. More closely, The Golden One in *Is Europe Lost* (2018) states:

"Do not fantasize about some heroic crusade or anything might come later in a few decades who knows but as for now dispel any thoughts of violence because if you

do violent acts the establishment will jump with joy because then they can implement more restrictive measures against any pro-european groups or individuals so basically my own vision and I put my theory into practice by my you know my business endeavors and stimulate Eastern Europe."(2018: 00:05:57)

This reading of demand is provided as an alternative to what, according to The Golden One, the alt-right movement and his followers are "fantasizing": a "heroic crusade" that entails "violence". The glorification of the past is used as an argumentation strategy in order to evoke nostalgia, drawing to the fascist rhetoric of Front Nationale as well as the populist strategies right-wing European political parties. However, violence is prohibited, revealing another securitizing claim in the face of "the establishment" which in this utterance can be interpreted as a combination of the government and the established mass media. This combination is commonly used by alt-right content creators, usually under the term "Cultural Marxism", constituting an anti-Semitic conspiracy theory widely accepted within the alt-right movement (see section 2.4). Therefore, based on this claim, the demand is conceptualized as "business endeavors" to strengthen Eastern Europe, which here is framed as the referent object that, according to The Golden One, is weak and needs to be protected. Thus, his support of the alt-right movement, is partly based on financial compensation through the expansion of his clothing brand, as well as the brand of nutrition supplements and work- out programs (see figure 9).
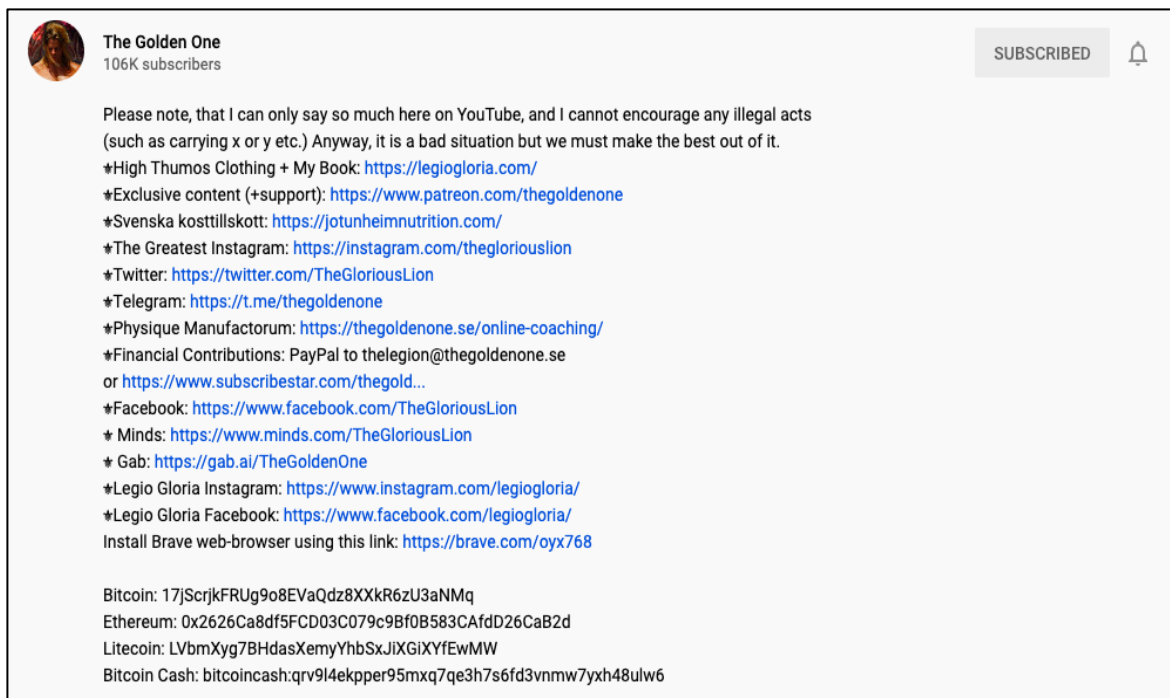
Figure 8: Screenshot, Metadata, The Golden One, 2020. Links to The Golden One's online shops and social media. Links for direct financial contributions though Paypal and Patreon, as well as payment through Bitcoin, Ethereum, Litecoin. Enclosed is a disclaimer for any illegal acts which corresponds to his securitizing demand of reinforcing Eastern Europe through "business endeavors".

White supremacist and far-right groups usually use various processes of funding their projects, either via asking their following to directly donate to their crowdfunding site (usually via platforms such as Patreon, GoFundMe or Kickstarter) or by promoting various services on their social media that the audience can purchase (The Soufan Center, 2019 : 20). Content creator Black Pigeon Speaks analyzed in this study also uses crowdfunding as a financing strategy but he is also accepting compensation through cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, in order to "support the cause" (Black Pigeon Speaks, 2018).

In a similar way to James Allsup, The Golden One suggests a more interpersonal mobilization strategy to sustain the alt-right movement. Since YouTube has been following its new rules and regulations against hateful speech, alt-right content creators started shifting their online activism towards other social media platforms. This I would argue explains the use of different argumentative and

communicational techniques by content creators to establish a more coherent collective identity and normalize the alt-right discourse.

In *Western and Swedish young men hear my words (2015)*, The Golden One, makes a different type of security demand, one that is far more intimate, saying:

"Any Western guy and Swedish guy who is a bit older, a bit stronger, a bit more confident, if you see a guy who's not comfortable in life, perhaps he doesn't even have a job or a girlfriend; talk to him, say "there are people who care about you", "you are important to me, to a lot of people, to your family, and we need you, we don't have the luxury of not looking out for each other; it's far too fucking late for that now, so we need to start looking out for each other."(2015: 00:03:05)

What is interesting here is the way the demand is contextualized using intimacy. It is addressed to "western" and "Swedish" men, following the same pattern of utilizing an imagined, homogenous European collective, with an emphasis on their masculinity (fallacy of sameness).

Moreover, the demand unfolds as an act of kindness, that I would argue targets to appeal to the "softer" side of the potential target group of the alt-right, which is mostly the younger generations today. In an attempt to appeal, The Golden One encourages his audience to "care for each other" as well as follow in his footsteps (2015; 4:58) appearing as a "charismatic" leader, imposing a hierarchical male structure (Wodak, 2015:21). Here I am drawing on the personalization and commodification of political leaders, linked to celebrity culture, a common strategy of current populist politicians (Ibid). An emphasis is put on the strengthening of interpersonal relations between the alt-right members, and in the urgency of time, while drawing on the notion of decadence and thus creating a scope of an uncertain future.

Additionally, intimacy is enhanced with the visual representation of The Golden One, as he appears to be in his living room. Such performativity adds to a more dynamic contextualization of the securitization act (see Stritzel, 2014: 46) resulting
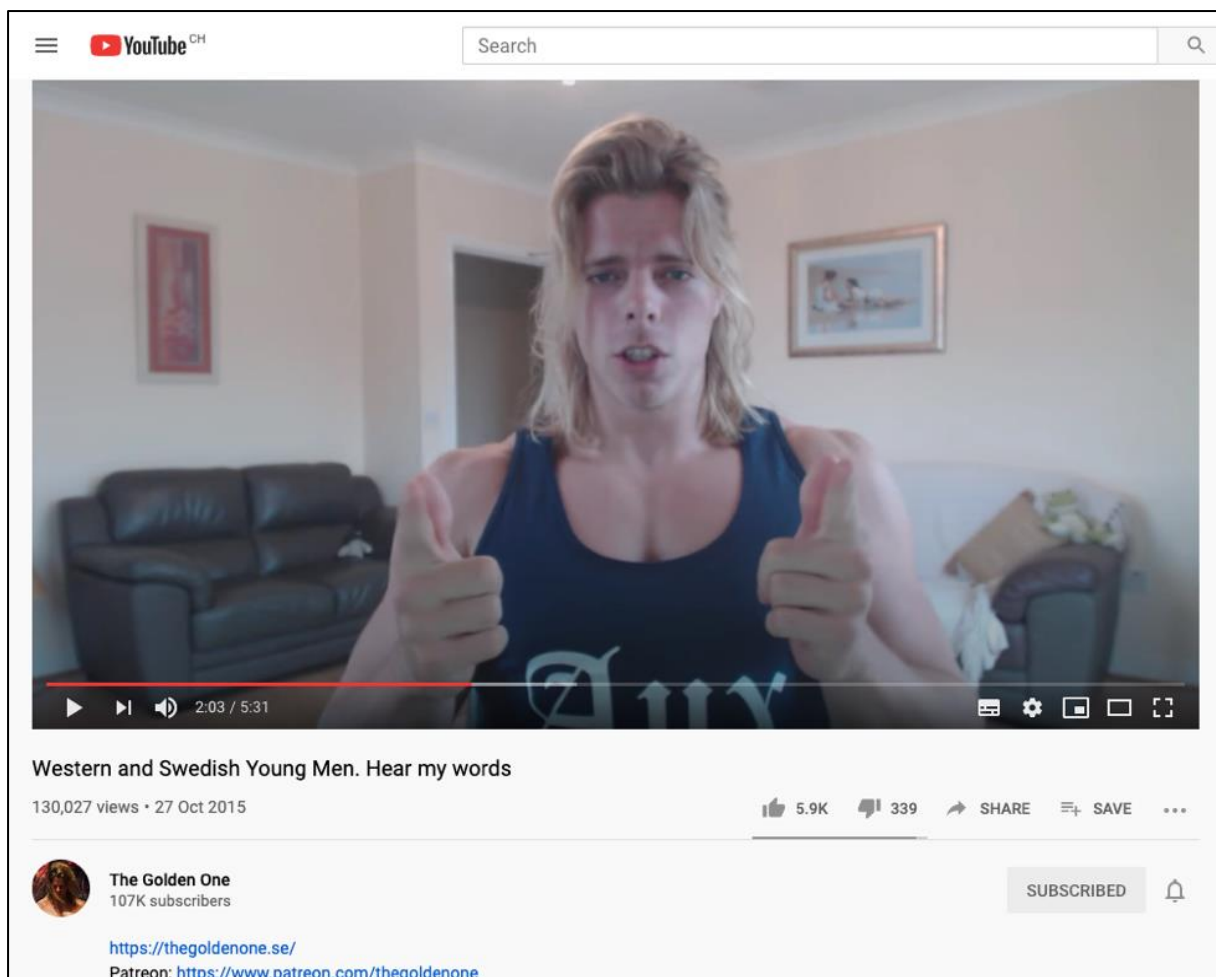
Figure 9: Screenshot (The Golden One, 2020, 00:02:03) The Golden One, expressing a securitizing demand, appears in his living room. This can be interpreted as an example of the performativity in the delivery of the securitizing demand, while calling for "all Swedish and Wester men".

in the delivery of the demand as a solution and a plan for action that will provide security.

In contrast to American Renaissance and The Golden one, Black Pigeon Speaks states that "the change must come from on high" in his video *WHY the NPC meme CRASHED TWITTER #OrangeManBad (2018)*. In this video Black Pigeon Speaks uses the analogy of a popular meme in the gaming world, that of the NPC, an abbreviation for Non-playable character (Sommerlad, 2018). This refers to any

supporting character encountered in a game that cannot be controlled by the gamer, solely programmed to further the plot (Ibid). Memes of NPC players were used by the alt-right movement to attack liberal voters on twitter, ahead of the midterm elections of 2018, in support of Donald Trump (Ibid). This analogy created between NPCs and liberal voters is supporting the securitizing claim against liberalism in order to provide a demand for an action plan. In addition to this utterance, the face of Hilary Clinton appears on screen (Figure 7) with a media headline reading "Obama and Clinton love to celebrate gay marriage now. Here's how late they were to the party" (Schwarz, 2015). Then he continues to add that:

"Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama were both against gay marriage until they weren't […] These are the kind of people that post on social media and appear to

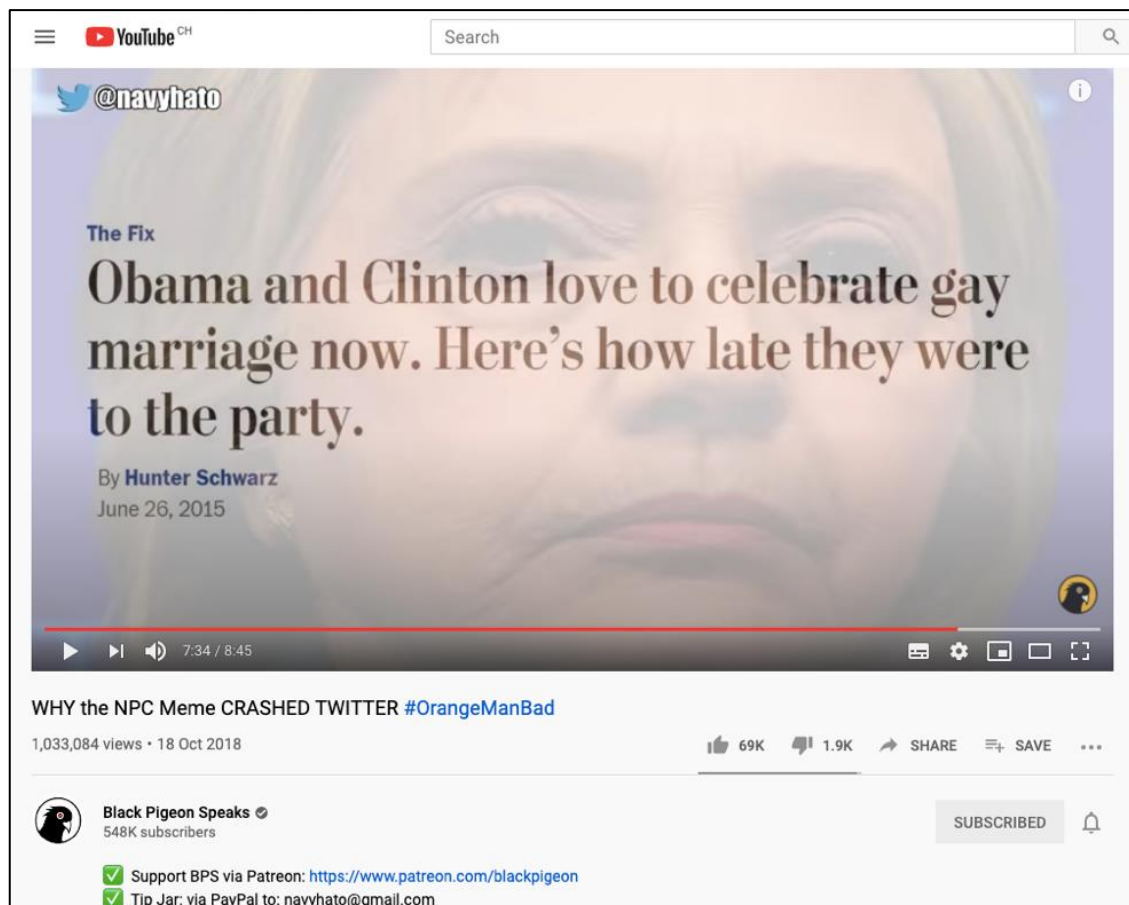*Figure 10, Screenshot (Black Pigeon Speaks, 2020, 00:07:34) Background image of Hilary Clinton, with overlying text, media title "Obama and Clinton Love to celeebrate gay marriage now. Here's how late they were to the party" by (Schwarz, 2015). This can be interpreted as an attempt to visualise the securitizing claim of liberalism, providing context for the securitizing demand of voting for Donald Trump.*

have no souls but are on autopilot and in the very same way NPCs" (Black
Pigeon Speaks, 2018, 00:07:34)

By creating an analogy between the NPC meme and Clinton and Obama, the securitizing claim of liberalism is established, and thus the support of Donald Trump in the midterm elections of 2018 would have been a securitizing demand, an action plan to counter liberalism. Noticeably this article was written on 2015, thus before the US general elections, however Black Pigeon Speaks uses this article title, thus providing intertextuality to the material. Also, interdiscursivity is enhanced as the securitizing claim of liberalism is used again, but in support for a different securitizing demand, one that suggests for his audience to vote for Donald Trump.

The next chapter is dedicated to the discussion of the results deriving from the analysis, gathering the argumentative strategies and the contextualized securitization moves in one unifying interconnected framework.

6. Discussion

In the previous chapter, argumentative strategies (fallacies and topoi) were used in order to locate securitization speech acts based on exclusionary rhetoric. Performativity of the securitizing actors (Stritzel, 2014) as well as irony and memes (Ebner, 2019; Kelly, 2017) have reinforced the securitization moves delivered by the alt-right content creators.

The generalized notion of a culturally homogenized nation (Wodak, 2015: 45) is central to all securitizing speech acts and thus has taken the place of the main referent object within the alt-right security discourse (see section 2.3). The nativist perception of the nation as the body, is conceiving strangers, immigrants and the Other, as an intruder that needs to be countered, in the case of the alt-right, with activism (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 54-61). However, the process of Othering has

contextualized "Them" not only as immigrants (i.e. Jews, Muslims) but also as whoever has a liberal stance on immigration, LGBTQ+ rights and feminist rights. Moreover, the notion of victimhood is quite central, placing the white race as the most prominent referent object in the security discourse, thus framing a number of existential threats through the victim- perpetrator reversal (section 5.2).

Furthermore, multiculturalism and globalization are portrayed as outcomes of liberalism, threatening the imaginary homogeneity of the referent object, not only culturally but also through capitalism. This is rooted in the "Jewish question" and the anti-Semitic conspiracy theory of world domination through capital accumulation, as well as its cultural counterpart "cultural Marxism". The failure of current mainstream parties (such as the US Republican party) to address vital social issues has been answered with the alt-right oversimplifying and ascribing these issues to the wider conspiracy theory of "cultural Marxism". This is where securitization happens for the alt-right, as the intersection of societal, political and financial issues is expanding, the need to accommodate identity constructions that are not based solely on race rises. Thus, the alt-right security discourse provides a simplistic yet appealing outlet via polarization. The issues that are raised as existential threats are the issues that adhere to societal complexity and clash with the nativist imaginary of the nation. More significantly, patterns of categorisation form a deterministic group identity, based on biology and genetics, that clashes with societal complexity. This identity is crucial, as social and political structures are filtered through it, justifying the need for a counter action. The race discourse is defined by the fear that the authority population, meaning the racially white population, will become a minority. This is a constant factor that is re-emerging within both alt-right discourses on race and immigration. The alt-right identity is a mirror of the discourse itself: it is constituted based on the construction of a demonised Other. Therefore, the slurs and meanings that are used by alt-right content creators describing immigrants, people of color, non-binary or LGBTQ+ people are embedded in a knowledge generating process that normalizes and legitimizes such content. Following Ebner's argument, the alt-right movement's

appeal to younger audiences is based on their ability to convey white supremacist ideological claims through memes and jokes (Ebner, 2019:175).

Conversely, securitization speech acts embedded within the alt-right discourse are heavily dependent on the medium (video format) which assists the performativity of the content creators. The Golden One addresses his audience as "true friends" and appears in his living room (figure 6), or casually walking in the forest[20], while Black Pigeon Speaks uses personal experiences from his life in Japan[21] with extended imagery, to exemplify on how immigrants should not be allowed to engage with a culturally homogenous nation. These practices, of expressing personal narratives, are borrowed from the academic left (Kelly, 2017), enhance the intimacy provided by participatory media (Lewis, 2017) and thus blend securitization acts with news and entertainment content. Therefore, a nonconventional form of security threats is formulated, even though the threats themselves echo the white-traditionalism and right-wing populism of alt-right's ideological influences. The performativity of social actors, (Stritzel, 2015; Vultee ,2007), is an integral part of their delivery to the audience, and especially in the context of YouTube alt-right creators as "alternative media" (Lewis, 2018). This study's additional aim is to challenge traditional conceptions of security, by bringing forth social actors that do not have the authority to extend securitization acts, as well as to question the Western oriented view of the world and its "Othering" problems. Securitization acts are realized in the analysis due to format, accessibility of content and performativity of the social actors, as the lines between ironic, and faux ironic are blurry. The language and core issues being securitized within the alt-right discourse are definitely not new to traditional realism, as immigration for instance can be conceptualized as "bodies crossing the national borders" (Vultee, 2007). However, the alt-right is using that same language and performativity to securitize race, political and ideological claims (liberalism) or identity constructions (non-binary, LGBTQ+) thus reinforcing the in-group identity

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[20]The Golden One, 2020 https://youtu.be/9K-y5wEwPJ8?t=3 [Accessed 10 August 2020]
[21] Black Pigeon Speaks, 2020 https://youtu.be/6-266bADD-M [Accessed 10 August 2020]

constructions. This is mediated with a smirk of irony, testing and reinforcing the underpinnings of the collective "we", where the ones who resonate with the joke/meme are included and accepted in the movement.

Additionally, the use of securitization speech acts in this study have framed the media content with bringing forth the rhetorical devices and performativity utilized by political actors in securitizing processes (Stritzel, 2014; Vultee, 2007). However, the alt-right content creators are not elected nor state authorized political actors but social actors that have a social media platform. The threats contextualized in the analysis revolved around shared understandings of liberalism, immigration and multiculturalism as claims, but also expand on the imagined collective identity that is being threatened by them. As Buzan and Weaver put it "Identity rather than sovereignty, is a focus of existential threats to society because it defines whether "we" are still "us" (Buzan & Waever, 1997).

Linked to anti-immigration rhetoric, the alt-right movement endorses an anti-emancipatory narrative on identity politics and especially on gender, claiming that pro-choice stances on women's rights for example stand against the reproduction and survival of the white race. This brings forth a type of right-wing feminism, one that merges a nostalgia for the traditional family values supported by conservativism but also supports the role of a modern woman. As Wodak notes, this type of "frontier-feminism" is propagated by right-wing populist parties, such as the US Republicans, underlining the contradiction with migrant women (mostly conceptualized as Muslim) who experience oppression through wearing a headscarf (Wodak, 2015). Gender becomes instrumentalized while linked to exclusion (Ibid) and western liberties are essentialized, seen also in the alt-right discourse where women allegedly abuse their freedom at the stake of the white race.[22] For the alt-right nothing from the mainstream culture today is worth preserving, thus a search for meaning has to by-pass American conservativism and reach back to biology

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[22]Black Pigeon Speaks, 2019 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFTSt-A2Cls [Accessed 10 August 2020]

(Gray, 2018). This brings forth the decadence discourse, which takes new dimensions when interpreted through securitization. Thus, this is what the alt-right security discourse is acting upon: all issues that do not assist the preservation of "white" American/European culture, are raised to an existential threat, resilient enough to become a catalyst in what Donovan calls the "survival scenario" (Donovan, 2012).

The four securitization acts in my analysis have contextualized not only the claims and threats of security within the alt-right discourse but also the action plans involved to counter those existential threats. Right-wing activism has appeared as an action plan throughout the material, but an emphasis was brought to offline, interpersonal connections. Putting this in the context of the recent Black Lives Matter protests against police brutality, I would argue that this brings much more substance to the so far online presence of the alt- right. This is contextualized in the analysis through the securitization speech acts of Demand and Propositional Context, where calls for action by all three YouTube content creators were made, underlining the legality of their actions and the need to defend their right to free speech. Two out of three content creators proposed activism as a securitizing demand, as the third one proposed voting for Donald Trump. However, the argumentative strategies and communicational tools used for the delivery of the demands differed, showcasing the variety of expressions of securitizing speech acts, as well as the interdiscursivity of the material. Articulations, such as memes, are connected and utilized in the conceptualization of securitization moves and thus assist their embeddedness in the broader discursive structure of the alt-right. In addition, the performativity of the alt-right YouTube content creators encourages the action plans to appear as natural responses to counter the securitized claims and warnings. This is the reason why Stritzel's four conceptualizing securitization speech acts have been used in my analysis as a unified concept, connecting the framing of threats to an action plan, where all the stages and decisions of securitization can be put into display and analyzed as parts of an integrated process within the alt-right discourse.

Moreover, online right-wing activism appears as a tool for the alt-right to gain mobilization, but the goal of the movement is eventually racial segregation. However, racial superiority is claimed by the alt-right to be secondary (Jared Taylor, 2018) in the ideal culturally homogenous ethnostate that they advocate. This brings the construction of a unified identity to the foreground and justifies why alt-right's securitized threats are focused so much on other social sources of identity construction, such as gender, sexual orientation or socioeconomic attributes. As Kelly puts it, white racial consciousness ensures the homogenization and primacy of a collective identity (Kelly, 2017) leading to the securitization of everything that does not reinforce alt-rights epistemological stance.

7. Conclusions

This thesis has examined the modus operandi of the alt-right movement around the securitizing speech acts embedded in their online discourse. With the use of securitization theory and the four conceptualized securitization speech acts provided by Stritzel (2014:40), securitizing moves were located within the alt-right online discourse. Following a discourse- historical approach on critical discourse analysis (Wodak, 2015: 50) exclusionary narratives were identified supporting the securitizing speech acts made by the alt-right movement, creating a security discourse. Within that, the securitizing claims and warnings were used to raise liberalism, immigration and "cultural Marxism" to an existential threat that endangered the referent objects: Judeo-Christian morality, European/American culture and the white race. As an exhortation to counter the securitizing claims, online and offline activism was proposed as a securitizing demand. The additional securitizing propositional context reminded in most case the reasons why the referent object needs to be protected, leading to the reinforcement of the collective identity of the alt-right movement. Through the analysis processes of "Othering",

notions of victimhood and argumentative fallacies were identified to be supporting the securitizing speech acts. Also, images, irony and memes negated the securitizing moves, supporting the alt-right's call for action through speaking the same internet language as their young audience that they wish to recruit. This was also reinforced by the performativity of the securitizing actors, empowering alt-right members and providing group cohesion.

This thesis is an addition to the empirical studies on securitization theory, within critical security scholarship, examining the delivery of securitization moves outside of the traditional discursive locations that security is usually made. Much of what is securitized within the alt-right security discourse are issues that are framed as such due to the explicitly westernized notions of knowledge production and identity constructions, as well as the projection of liberal democracy as a sociopolitical structure that ensures freedom. This study has attempted to question the means that claim to be "alternative" sources of information, underlining the participatory format of YouTube. Alt-right's securitizing actions online utilize the participatory culture of social media, leading to any action against their channels being interpreted as oppression of the movement's freedom of speech. Thus, following this study's first encounter with the alt-right security discourse, further research could either explore the target audience's reaction to any alt-right securitizing moves. Here I would point to Ekman's work on far-right video activism (Ekman, 2014) in order to explore how the aesthetic dimension of the media format can contribute to securitization acts and social mobilization. This would contribute to a further deepening of our conceptions of security not only in delivery but also in the process of securitization. However, since many of securitizing claims of the alt-right echoed right-wing populist discourses i.e. on immigration, the question of de-securitization rises, placing the claims in a much wider global political discourse. Therefore, the alt-right counter- culture seems to aspire its own "cultural hegemony", underlining the need to create a counter-narrative to such deeply rooted racist epistemologies as the ones propagated by the alt-right movement.

Consequently, by focusing on emancipatory practices and representation, security that is based on bigotry, racism and oppression can be countered.

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Appendix

Table 1: Empirical Data – Themes, related sub-themes and their occurrences in the source material.

Themes	Sub-themes	Number of Occurrences
Race	- White race becoming a minority	35
	- Diversity	12
	- White elites and anti-Semitism	9
	- Right to live freely	11
	- Reverse racism	1
	- White power	18
	- Glorification of the West	33
	- Denial of indigenous rights	3
	- Denial of hate crimes	1
		Total: 123
Liberalism	- Multiculturalism	12
	- Immigration	38
	- Loss of American/ European culture	30
	- Generation Z	7
	- Capitalism	5
	- "Social justice warriors"	4
	- "Cultural Marxism"	21
		Total: 117
Immigration	- "Islamification"	6
	- Loss of American/European culture/identity	33
	- "Rape epidemic"	2
	- Glorification of the West	33
	- Democracy	1
	- Trump's betrayal	11
	- United Europe	10
	- Japan as an ideal state	5
		Total: 101
Free Speech	-"Red Pill" analogy	5
	- Online censorship as harassment	11
	- Anti-Semitism and mass-media	21
	- Neoliberalism – Fake news and mass media	21
		Total: 58
Feminism	- Women's fertility and rights	3
	- Denial of patriarchy	1
	- Women's sexuality	5
	- LGBTQ+ rights and individuals as mentally ill/evil	9

		- Women as victims			25
					Total: 43

Table 2: Detailed list of source material.

Video Title	Content Creator	Publication Date	Views	Length	Likes	Dislikes
"You Stole America from the Indians"	American Renaissance	1 May 2017	518 041	6:50	30 000	2300
CNN Interviews Jared Taylor on White Identity	American Renaissance	16 May 2017	501 994	48:26	17 000	734
Who Wants to Abolish the White Race?	American Renaissance	12 January 2018	453 000	13:08	17 000	1300
Richard Spencer: "Why Do They Hate Us?"	American Renaissance	9 May 2015	345 718	42:11	6800	1500
Jared Taylor on the Gavin Mcinnes Show	American Renaissance	29 May 2016	271 083	31:32	7300	413
National Geographic Pushes Pseudoscience	American Renaissance	21 June 2018	202 641	6:34	13 000	730
CNN's Fareed Zakaria Interviews Jared Taylor (Full Interview)	American Renaissance	1 July 2019	160 748	56:02	9 300	167
Nick Fuentes: "Generation Z: The Answer to the Boomer Problem"	American Renaissance	17 May 2018	136 229	44:41	7 800	394
Important Killings You	American Renaissance	20 March 2020	50 350	6:08	7 500	46

Probably Missed						90
Japan | No Country for Islam	Black Pigeon Speaks	17 January 2017	1 650 367	7:43	44 000	10 000
WHY the NPC Meme CRASHED TWITTER #OrangeManBad	Black Pigeon Speaks	18 October 2018	1 030 573	8:45	69 000	1 900
South Africa 2019: Beginning of the END	Black Pigeon Speaks	9 December 2019	788 409	11:14	31 000	1 400
The END GAME: WHY the WEST is Lost	Black Pigeon Speaks	8 May 2017	780 628	17: 28	31 000	2 300
This is the END, Hungarian FRIEND	Black Pigeon Speaks	29 September 2018	629 442	10:13	30 000	689
Why "Islam IS RIGHT About Women" is Causing "Confusion & Anger"	Black Pigeon Speaks	21 September 2019	561 400	8:49	48 000	649
LEFT OVER WOMEN & the Gigolos that Love Them	Black Pigeon Speaks	28 October 2019	367 174	12: 40	26 000	610
Modern IDENTITY LEFTISM WILL EAT ITSELF	Black Pigeon Speaks	22 September 2018	270 435	8:01	18 000	218

The 2020s: Coming Decade of Crises and Turmoil	Black Pigeon Speaks	2 July 2020	104 517	18:21	12 000	176
Thank You, Poland – From the Swedish People	The Golden One	22 July 2018	170 141	2:02	13 000	180
Why I Hate Porn and Why You Should Stop Watching it	The Golden One	14 July 2017	136 835	9:03	5 500	344
What is Wrong with Sweden. Why Sweden is committing suicide.	The Golden One	10 November 2015	135 641	5:48	5 400	432
The Golden One. 2016 Training Motivation	The Golden One	16 August 2016	131 291	4:02	2 800	154
Western and Swedish Young Men. Hear my words.	The Golden One	27 October 2015	129 427	5:31	5 900	334
The Golden One: My Hero. Rodrigo Duterte. The Crusade Against Drug Cartels.	The Golden One	25 October 2016	104 180	3:41	3 700	233