The Myth of the Viking

An online ethnography of a collective narrative amongst
Scandinavian white supremacist men

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Abstract

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This thesis investigates the construction of collectiveness amongst Scandinavian white supremacist men. The research questions for the study set out to answer how their collective narrative is constructed, and how they use narrative to communicate their social problems in contemporary society. Previous research on cultural trauma, victim narratives, anti semitism, and masculinity show that there is still much to be learned about the narratives constructed and adopted by white supremacist men. The research questions will be answered with the use of theories and concepts such as narrative criminology, cultural trauma, collective identity, and masculinity. Through the use of online ethnography, I gather and analyse data from the two online forums Flashback.org and Stormfront.org, and come to the conclusion that white supremacist men construct their collective narrative based on their understanding of white culture as superior. That narrative is then used to communicate their contemporary social problems and subsequent re-narration of their ruptured collective identity which has been threatened and ruptured by a set of antagonists. This is also communicated as Scandinavian white supremacist men's cultural trauma. The findings of my thesis generally agree with the previous research, however, it also allows for further research on the subject of collective identities and their experiences of cultural trauma.

Keywords: Cultural Trauma, Narrative Criminology, Collective Narrative, Masculinity, Femininity, Victimhood, Collective Identity

Popular Science Summary

The aim of this study was to examine how Scandinavian men who believe in white superiority discuss and express their shared opinions and experiences online. In other words, how do men who view themselves as better than others because of their skin colour and religious beliefs, talk about themselves together with other like minded men? I must then study their narrative, which refers to their shared way of telling stories about how they experience and view the world.

Given the limited existing literature on this topic, there existed a need to explore it. However, this also resulted in a small basis to conduct my thesis on, and because of this research related to gender, white supremacist movements, and trauma narratives had to be combined. The previous studies found that men perceive other men differently depending on factors such as race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, especially white men with extremist views, namely white supremacists. White supremacists value men who differ from them as lesser people. The studies on trauma narratives reveal a focus on almost exclusively individual experiences, and those who have studied groups of collectives who have experienced traumatic events have done it using other methods than I utilised in this thesis.

The conclusion drawn from this thesis points to a shared sense of victimhood amongst Scandinavian white supremacist men who blame outsiders such as immigrants, people who have different political beliefs, and women who deviate from set gender norms for causing a rupture in traditional Scandinavian society. This rupture is equivalent to a cultural trauma which is a collective experience of a significant event that causes damage for the members. By studying groups such as white supremacists and the underlying structure of their collective identity, this thesis contributes to a wider understanding of how collectives experience and make sense of traumatic events.

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1. Introduction

For decades, white supremacists have been concerned with possible threats that might endanger the white race. In the first half of the twentieth century European white supremacists were concerned with Jewish people as scapegoats for all misfortunes white, aryan people experienced (Perelberg, 2022). In the US, African American people became the targeted group (Givens, 2022, pp. 89–90; Seeger et al., 2022). Gathii (2021, p. 1613) defines white supremacism as the premise that white identity symbolises an ideal only those of caucasian descent can achieve. The white 'race' is according to the notion of white supremacism superior in regard to moral values and civilisation. Those who are unable to live up to the ideal are marginalised and excluded. White supremacism is founded on racial beliefs, such as primitivism, and heavily influenced by Christianity (Dorrien, 2008, p. 14).

Expo, a Swedish foundation that takes a stance against racism, writes that organised activity within race ideological environments has increased in Sweden in 2022 (Finnsiö et al., 2023). Similar political developments are taking place around the world. Over the past years, Eastern Europe has seen right wing populism emerge in governments (Korolczuk, 2019), the right wing party National Rally has gained support in France, and supposedly the most discussed event to happen in recent history, the Presidential election in the US 2016, and all racial debates it has caused within and outside the country. This thesis takes as its departure the collective narratives within which such activities emerge and are made sense of. Through mapping out this collective narrative, my intention is to investigate what unites different groups and how their internal structures and values are produced. By understanding these aspects, a reasoning behind their agenda can be found. It could possibly be in the shape of a traumatising event which has caused a cultural or collective trauma, thus forever changing their internal structure.

Cultural trauma has been a frequently studied topic of many scholars in the field of sociology. The concept refers to an event or experience that fundamentally changes and threatens the collective identity and sense of normalcy of a society or group. The Holocaust and the September 11 attacks are examples of events that have been identified as cultural traumas (Giesen, 2004; Smelser, 2004). In recent years, scholars such as Jeffrey C. Alexander and Ron Eyerman have developed theories of cultural trauma which highlight the role that narratives play in remembering and overcoming such events. Simultaneously, studies on

masculinity have shown that gender plays a crucial role in shaping the ways in which individuals and groups construct collective narratives (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Bridges, 2021; Ming Liu, 2017).

This thesis aims to study and identify a cultural trauma and subsequent collective narrative experienced by Scandinavian white supremacist men. Using narrative theory as developed by Mayer (2014) and Presser (2016; 2018), as well as theories on masculinity by Connell (2005), Messerschmidt (2005), and Lloyd (2020), this thesis seeks to analyse the ways in which narratives of cultural trauma are constructed, represented, and remembered in contemporary Scandinavian society. Considering that little has been studied and written about white supremacism through the concept of cultural trauma, this study will give new insights into the field of trauma narratives.

Through a qualitative analysis of narratives, this thesis will explore the ways in which gender and masculinity shape the representation and expression of cultural trauma in Scandinavia, experienced by white supremacist men. The study will be situated in the context of contemporary Scandinavian society, which is experiencing a rapid change in its demographic and cultural landscape (Aarnivaara, 2022). By shedding light on the role of gender and masculinity in influencing and shaping narratives of a possible cultural trauma, this thesis aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how collective identities and societal power relations shape the experience and narration of collective traumas.

The focus of this study is on white supremacist men who share a collective identity and a collective narrative. By mapping out the foundation of white supremacism in Scandinavia, it can become clear who the outsiders are, and how they are discredited and villainised. The research questions for this study are:

1. How do Scandinavian white supremacist men construct their collective narrative?

2. How do Scandinavian white supremacist men narrate their social problems in contemporary society?

By answering these research questions I will be able to identify a possible cultural trauma for Scandinavian white supremacists. Through their understanding and communication from that cultural trauma some of the central aspects of a narrative can be identified and situated.

Considering that the studied group solely consists of men, representations and understandings of masculinity and femininity will also be of importance.

2. Previous Research

There are multiple topics and areas of research that are relevant to this research. Drawing from the research questions which are concerned with the construction of a collective narrative within a group of white men, many aspects have to be taken into consideration. The previous research that will be in focus is centred around cultural trauma, narrative, white supremacism, and masculinity. From this, I can gather an understanding of how other researchers have sought out and identified collective narratives, and how these different collectives have narrated their cultural traumas. Research on white supremacism and masculinity will supplement those findings and give an insight into how studies on collectives of men have been done and what they might have missed. The combination of all four areas of research can result in new findings. Cultural trauma and narrative will be referred to as overarching theories and research topics, and the remaining topics will be used to operationalise them.

2.1. Research on Cultural Trauma

A majority of research on cultural trauma shows a trend of studying already established traumatic events and the consequences they have caused specific groups, or even whole societies, opposed to seeking out a possible trauma and its characteristics. One example of a study where possible cultural traumas are identified is in Eyerman's (2022) research on white American identity. By following the history of white American identity, Eyerman finds events in history which have shaped the collective identity and narrative of the group. Amongst other historical and contemporary events, Eyerman lifts the Civil War and the election of a black president as essential in the construction of a trauma narrative for white Americans.

Savelsberg (2022) studies the Holocaust and the process through which it has become a cultural trauma for post World War II generations. In a similar manner, Ring et al. (2017) refers to the Vietnam war as a cultural trauma for both American and Vietnamese citizens and they aim to identify how the two groups have been affected and to understand their meaning making processes. In accordance with Eyerman, Onwuachi-Willig (2021) counters this research aim by examining whether the killing of George Floyd in May, 2020 has resulted in a cultural trauma for white people. Instead of solely studying the effects and the meaning of a cultural trauma, Eyerman (2022) and Onwuachi-Willig (2021) identify possible cultural

traumas. The focus is on a possible trauma for a group of people, rather than an expansion of knowledge of an already established cultural trauma.

A common theme in the research is the aspects of narratives. How these present narratives are found does, however, differ. Compared to Savelbergs sample of biographies and family histories, Ring et al. and Onwuachi-Willig's conclusions are based on comprehensive samples, thus making the analyses and concluding remarks more generalisable. The differing aims of the studies does, however, explain the sample sizes. A study concerned with experiences and narratives can be conducted with the use of fewer, and more in-depth samples, whereas research aimed to answer a yes or no question requires additional samples to draw an objective conclusion.

All above mentioned studies have predetermined social groups and possible traumas in focus when conducting the research. A different approach could then be to seek out a cultural trauma within a social group. The previous research uses a variety of methods depending on the aims and restrictions of the studies. There is thus no generalisable method to apply when studying cultural traumas. New research on cultural trauma then stands relatively independent. Eyerman (2022) does, however, present a feasible approach. A cultural trauma can be identified when the collective memory of the studied group is taken into account, and when its collective narrative is contextualised. Considering that the focus of my study is somewhat complementary to Eyerman's (2022), a similar approach will be taken. By developing new methodological strategies in cultural trauma studies, the field will expand and unknown traumas could be unveiled and examined. The central role of narratives within groups suffering from cultural trauma and its essential role for understanding cultural trauma research underlines its importance in future studies.

2.2. The Absence of Collective Victimhood Narratives

If a cultural trauma is identified amongst Scandinavian white supremacist men, it entails that they have been victims of a traumatic event. It is then of interest to study how victimhood can result in a new narrative, and how it is used to manage and overcome the experienced trauma. Research conducted on victim narratives has mainly been focused on criminal policy, individual occurrences, and socially accepted victims, such as female abuse victims. The perspectives of men have also been studied more frequently in recent years. It has mainly been studied in a similar perspective as females who have been victims of crime. Victim

narratives have been studied in order to make sense of a victim's experiences and emotions, and later used to change criminal policy for the better for victims (Walklate et al., 2019). Male victimhood is a relatively new field of research, even though the phenomena has existed for as long as female victimhood has (Dziewa & Glowacz, 2022). Male victimhood has been and to some degree, is still, characterised by shame as it does not meet the requirements of being a man (Burcar Alm, 2013). The male victim narrative is predominantly used as a coping mechanism to handle the event or trauma which caused them the status as a victim (Vollman, 2021).

The previous research points to how male and female victims have a similar process in the role of being a victim. It begins with recognising one's life situation as abusive and unsustainable due to someone else. The victim must then manage to leave the abuse and come to terms with one's victimhood, and eventually leave the victim identity behind to regain a new, self-appointed identity (Dziewa & Glowacz, 2022). Burcar Alm (2013) argues that without noticing it, male victims take the notion of hegemonic masculinity in consideration when contemplating on identifying oneself as a victim. The role of a victim is inconsistent with the role of a man. If a man does not identify as a victim after a crime or trauma, it is less likely that he will report it to the police or ask for help from a third party (Burcar Alm, 2013).

Considering that a majority of research on male victimhood has been conducted on men who have been victims of violent crimes or sexual crimes, there is a need for exploring victimhood related to other traumatic events, as well as collective victimisation. In order to understand the full spectrum of victim narratives, the idea of identifying as a victim without receiving recognition from society must also be explored. As all previously mentioned research on victim narratives have used examples of men and women being recognised as victims by others, little is known about individuals and collectives who take on a victim narrative without being recognised as victims by other groups. Examples of this would be collectives of xenophobic white men which will be delved into further below.

2.3. Contextualising White Supremacism

Continuing on the theory of cultural trauma, the perspectives of the victims, perpetrators and the process of gaining recognition from surrounding groups and actors can be associated with research on white supremacism, racism, anti semitism and masculinity. These topics can be

used as examples of how a group identifies and manifests a trauma. Research on groups consisting of predominantly white males generally focuses on either the exclusionary or the inclusionary aspects. This includes studies on how, or why white supremacist, racist, and anti semitic groups reject outsiders such as people of different skin colours and of other religious beliefs. Gallaher (2019) analyses how the modern American 'alt-right' uses mainstream media to spread its politics and normalise their ideas of white people as a suffering group. Hughes (2018), however, takes an opposite stance and studies the myth American white supremacists live by, which primarily includes their superiority to other races, religions and ethnicity.

Alexander and Adams (2023) argue that anti semitism still has a prominent role in modern society, despite its negative historical impacts. Anti semitism is, according to Alexander and Adams' (2023) study, based on the belief that Jewish people are synonymous with the profane, whilst Christians are synonymous with the sacred. Not only are Jewish people and their way of living claimed to be polluted, they are continuously blamed for their alleged involvement in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, thus implying that their collective goal is to destroy Christianity and its followers. Research conducted in Sweden and in the Swedish white supremacy context reveal a focus on state-level and mobilisation of these groups (Rostami & Askanius, 2021; Antoine, 2022). Instead of studying the structures and agendas within Swedish white supremacist groups, these studies apply a macro perspective in order to understand its role in Swedish society, both in modern times, as well as in previous history. A differing study conducted on the Scandinavian context is by Simonsen (2020) who writes about the Norwegian far-right with the aim of finding anti-jewish motifs, images, and narratives which have been present among its members.

The methodological strategies vary according to the differing aims of these studies. Some use data depicting generalising knowledge from a longer time frame, whereas others only use one source with rich, informational data. It seems of great importance to summarise the history of white supremacism in the chosen context considering that all literature introduces the subject before problematising the subject further. White supremacism cannot be understood as a modern phenomena without acknowledging its history. In accordance with Eyerman's (2022) historical narrative on white Americans, a cultural trauma can be identified through a combination of historical and contemporary contexts. By looking back at the never-ending

construction of Scandinavian white supremacists' collective memory and identity, we can trace out the underlying circumstances for their collective narrative.

As societies around the world develop and transform, so do white supremacist groups that exist within them. More recent studies are, therefore, focused on the roles white supremacist groups play in modern societies, and how they either convert to or oppose societal changes. By taking research on cultural trauma and white supremacism into account, little has been written about the two aspects together. Much of the research on white supremacism is, as previously mentioned, focused on their structure and attitude towards outsiders; not so much on their own experiences and reasonings for their values, such as cultural traumas. By understanding the group as a carrier group, along with their structure and common values, a cultural trauma narrative, and possible master narrative can be identified.

2.4. The Male White Supremacist

Similar to the research on white supremacy, racism, and anti semitism, masculinity research will be approached as a strategy used in the process of gaining recognition and spreading awareness of their experienced cultural trauma. Masculinity can, just as the previously mentioned topic, be exploited in a collective consisting of men as central in a cultural trauma narrative. Studies on masculinity will most likely show how masculinity expressed by white men differs from that of other ethnicities. Considering that an overwhelming percentage of white supremacist groups' members are men, masculinity, and consequently also hegemonic masculinity, must play a crucial role in the collective identity of white supremacist males. Unnever and Chouchy (2021) consider multiple ways of 'doing masculinity' depending on factors such as race, age, and social class. The study is, however, focused on black masculinity, which has developed from an adaptation to a racialised structure. Compared to the norms of white masculinity, Unnever and Chouchy (2021) argue that black males are more likely to be pressured into conforming to the 'cool pose', mostly as a coping mechanism to deal with racial oppression.

Similarly, Bridges (2021) also stresses the interrelation between race and masculinity, arguing that white men distinguish between white and black masculinity. The depiction of black masculinity by the white men in the study also shows negative associations to roughness, and aggressivity, albeit traits white men envy them for. Black masculinity is associated with more freedom, and as white masculinity with many disadvantages in terms of negative stigmatised

behaviour, deemed by white men as illogical. Bridges also explores challenging masculinities, generally performed by young white men who distance themselves from this established perception of masculinity. In the analysis of these hybrid masculinities, stance towards women is also taken into account.

In turn, Ming Liu (2017) adds a class perspective, pointing to how differences in class provide different white privileges. Wealthy men tend to achieve social and capital status thanks to their privilege, whereas lower- and working-class white men use privilege to legitimise victimhood and inequality. Even if white men experience privilege differently, they can mobilise white supremacist ideology together. Similar to other research, Ming Liu (2017) discusses white privilege in contrast to people of colour, thus taking into account the broader perspective of society, and how white masculinity stands in opposition to other masculinities.

A core concept in research on white masculinity is 'privilege'. Its meaning does, however, differ. It can both be considered as something positive, as well as negative; often depending on the underlying cause of the privilege. Men in white supremacist groups overwhelmingly associate negatively to privilege due to their belief that it has been taken away from them, thus making them victims. The sense of victimhood is closely related to a successful master narrative within the group (Alexander, 2004). It also entails responsibility for those who have caused this harm (Onwuachi-Willig, 2021), which according to previous research would be other opposing masculinities and femininities. The understanding of privilege thus becomes central in my study. A sense of privilege, or a loss of it, can explain the collective narrative amongst Scandinavian white supremacists. An interesting perspective to add to research on masculinity and white supremacist groups would then be finding the perceived cause of this damaged privilege and following victimhood.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. Narrative Theory

Given the research questions' stress on communication and constructivism, the concept of narrative needs to be defined. Narrative criminology is, according to Presser (2016, p. 138), concerned with "a temporally ordered, morally suggestive statement about events and/or actions in the life of one or more protagonists". When focusing on the perspective of multiple protagonists, a narrative theory of collective action is relevant. Mayer (2014, pp. 30, 50) states that narrative is essential for collective action and an important tool for a group to use in order to have a unanimous purpose and meaning. Narrative has no clear definition, however, Mayer (2014, p. 54) identifies its form and function as significant. Its closeness to a story and its essential parts is also underlined. A narrative, no matter how simple or comprehensive, can also evoke emotion and reflection. Like stories, narratives have a plot and a style in which it is written, as well as a setting in which it takes place. The plot includes a beginning, an end, and dramaturgical elements that make it interesting, such as tragedy, complications, triumph, and resurrection (ibid, pp. 55–61). Some of the most common characters in a narrative/story are victims, survivors and winners, as well as villains. These are evident in the roles of narrators, protagonist, and antagonist. In collective action narratives, characters are depicted according to shared understandings of stereotypes, thus making the distinction between good and bad clear (ibid, pp. 62–63).

Drawing from narrative criminology, Presser (2018) also writes about narrative as a tool that is used to influence and motivate individuals to commit mass harm, and how it is used to manage harm committed by others. Presser (2018, p. 2) writes that people can easily get "lost" and "seduced" by narratives, thus becoming blind to possible inconsistencies or deceptive facts. Narratives often engage the reader or listener in a non-critical and emotional manner. Individuals can also easily sense a collectiveness through narratives, and the individual's own reasonings and morals fade away. Narratives are said to govern individuals and groups' aspirations and identities through their emotional impact (Presser, 2018, p. 62). Mayer (2014, pp. 103–104) describes a group's narrative as the most significant part of its collective memory, which is referred to as a collectively established memory in which individuals create rituals and meaning together. A collective's narrative helps to structure shared beliefs, values, and moral codes, thus creating a collective identity. Historical and

ideological narratives also structure the collective. The narrative's three most central functions are to integrate and create meaning, construct collective goals as achievable, and to moralise and justify events and experiences (Presser, 2018, pp. 67–72).

Similar to Presser (2018), Mayer (2014, p. 64) argues that without meaning, the narrative has no point. A story's meaning is closely related to how the world is understood, how it works and possible critiques of it. The meaning allows for identity to be established and controlled, both from our own perspective, and from the point of view of others (Mayer, 2014, pp. 74–76). The narrative is also fundamental in presenting a moral stance towards something, as well as the emotions that are connected to it (Mayer, 2014, pp. 71–72).

Presser (2018, pp. 86–89) emphasises the significant role emotions play in narratives, especially in creating triumphant portrayals of those suppressed by others, which Presser (2018) defines as an underdog story. It is, however, not as positive as it might appear. Presser (2018) connects the underdog stories to cases of individuals committing mass harm as a response to their oppression. No matter who an individual is and why they have been given the role of a lesser being, the underdog story can be applied when triumph and transcendence take place. For individuals or collectives who are forced to identify with victimhood and a state of abjection can, through an underdog narrative, ascend into a state of heroism and triumph. An underdog story entails a threat or injustice that either has taken place, or is predicted to do so in the near future. By taking action and defying the odds, the protagonist conquers struggles and threats which have restrained and put them at serious risk previously (Presser, 2018). In relation to the research question of this study, it is of interest to investigate if Scandinavian white supremacists have constructed their collective narrative based on a perceived victimhood. The study would thus investigate a relatively unresearched field, namely male collective victimhood.

3.2. Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity

Following the theories on narrative and its purpose in collectives, they are also essential in the creation of a cultural trauma. The construction of a collective narrative is partially rooted in certain events that have fundamentally impacted the collective. Cultural trauma is an example of such an event. Smelser (2004, pp. 32–35) accentuates both the differences and similarities between cultural trauma and Freud's writings on psychological trauma from the late 1800's. Both constructions of trauma take context into account, yet differ in next to all

other aspects, especially the social aspect. The term 'cultural trauma' explains the feelings and status of members of a collective which have experienced an event that fundamentally affects their collective memory and identity, by assuming the role of a victim (Alexander, 2004, p. 1). If a collective's members have acted as perpetrators, this also becomes a traumatic event for that group. An example of this is the Holocaust as a trauma for the German national identity (Giesen, 2004, pp. 114–115). For an event to become traumatic, it has to affect the collective's core; its identity (Alexander, 2004, p. 10). The trauma also has to be claimed by certain actors within the collective who have ideal and material interests. These actors make up what Max Weber (1968) refers to as 'carrier groups'. By using certain strategies which emphasise victimisation and using relevant and situated vocabulary, other members in the community can be persuaded and thus identify with the trauma. When this is achieved, the carrier group has produced successful meaning work, and has ultimately resulted in a new master narrative (Alexander, 2004, pp. 11–12).

A fundamental reaction and response when a cultural trauma has taken place is to assign responsibility for the resulting harm (2004, p. 52). In Eyerman's (2001; 2004, pp. 60–111) writings on slavery and the subsequent African American identity where millions of African American people fell victims to traumatising structural oppression, the fault is placed on the structure which enabled it, as well as individual actors who partook in it. Following the establishment of a new master narrative there is also the process of institutionalising the narrative as well as being acknowledged by other collectives in society, which is what Alexander (2004, p. 1) refers to as the process of trauma creation. If there exists solidarity towards other collectives, their traumas are likely to be recognised, however, other social groups might oppose the narrative and thus reject or question other groups' articulated suffering (Alexander, 2004, pp. 1, 24–27).

Collective identity, is according to Eyerman (2022, p. 16) what has been fractured by a cultural trauma, which then causes a "meaning struggle to re-narrate a fractured collective identity". Giesen (2004, pp. 112–114) defines collective identity as a result of a never-ending process of a group. The identity is based on past triumphant and traumatic events and experiences. Triumphs become myths which permeate the collective, whereas traumas rupture the social bonds thus forcing the collective to manage and re-narrate. It is through shared values, norms, emotions and practices that collective identities are formed. As these

claims are made about the structure and members of a collective, distance is taken from outsiders who are not qualified to be a part of the collective.

3.3. White and Black Masculinities

In section 2.4 I described how race, ethnicity, and social class influence men's expressions and perceptions of masculinity. In the following section the concept of masculinity will be developed further. Connell (2005) explores the social dynamics of masculinity. Masculinity and its characteristics only exist in relation to femininity. How certain social and cultural contexts define masculinity and femininity depends, however, one cannot exist without the other. Just as the previous research has shown, Connell (2005, pp. 75–76) presents the connection between gender structures and race and class. Aside from masculinity being constructed in relation to femininity, certain masculinities are constructed according to other racially defined, and class defined masculinities. White masculinity is then interpreted in contrast to black masculinity. Connell (2005) illustrates the point by writing that white supremacist men construct their masculinity in relation to black masculinities and what they identify as inferior traits. Despite the fact that these differences are based on racially motivated attributes stemming from decades of racial discrimination, they are still evident in modern definitions of masculinity.

'Hegemony' is a concept which refers to power dynamics situated in a certain cultural and social reality where one group asserts the preferred social position (Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity is thus the most legitimised and idolised masculinity. Apart from hegemony, Connell (2005) identifies three other masculinity types: complicity, subordination, and marginalisation. These typologies explain to what degree men correspond and accomplish hegemonic masculinity. Complicit masculinity aligns with the preferred social norms and structures. Subordinate masculinity is associated with men who do not conform to the ideals of masculinity, and who because of this occupy positions of lower social power. Lastly, marginalised masculinity refers to the experiences of men who are excluded from mainstream masculine norms due to factors such as race, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. Hegemonic masculinity is also closely related to the significance of violence, as it has frequently been used to assert power, and thus masculinity (Connell, 2005, p. 83). The concept is associated with subordination of other inconsistent characteristics; both

feminine and male characteristics that deviate from it. Connell (2005, p. 78) highlights homosexual men as a prime example.

Lloyd (2020) develops on the concept of black American masculinities and how its background in slavery and oppression has resulted in different possibilities and limitations than other masculinities. With a basis in patriarchy being a deep rooted system of oppression and domination, Lloyd (2020, pp. 64–66) argues that masculinity is in need of reconstruction. This is especially the case for black Americans who have a great disadvantage in society due to masculinity being white-orientated. This systematic oppression can, in some cases, result in black men concealing their collective history and culture, and instead adapt to the ideal of white masculinity.

4. Methodological Framework

4.1. Empirical Data and Sample

The research questions' focus on interpretation, collective experience and how the social world is understood and reproduced, suggest a qualitative methodology (Ellis, 2020; Ellis 2014). For a narrative to become evident, I must take part of accounts and statements from the group members themselves. The research question will thus be answered through the use of posts from online forums made by white supremacist men. When collecting data in virtual communities, online ethnography will be used (Rahm-Skågeby, 2011, pp. 411–414). Online ethnography allows the researcher to interpret and explain narratives and sentiments within groups active online. For instance, Törnberg and Nissen (2022) study the communicative functions used by the far right on Facebook, and how the use of digital media creates a sense of collective identity. Other studies conducted online include Wästerfors et al (2023), who shed light on the complexities of online sleuthing on the Swedish platform Flashback. These studies point to how online ethnography can be used so as to investigate how participants establish familiarity and collectiveness on online forums.

The amount of relevant websites and forums that exist are limited. Due to regulations on websites such as Facebook (2023), Instagram and Twitter (2023) against extremist opinions such as those praising white nationalism, anti semitism, and white supremacism, less data exists than before the introduction of these guidelines. Research conducted on extremist groups thus entails searching for less known or less restricted websites and forums. The two chosen forums used in this study allow users to express their political opinions, with some restrictions in using slurs and derogatory terms in posts. The first forum-website is American Stormfront.org which is described as "a community of racial realists and idealists" (Stormfront, 2023a). The users are white nationalists who view themselves as the spokespeople of an "embattled" white minority. Stormfront has been studied by other researchers who also focus on its political and collective aspects. Törnberg and Törnberg (2022) studied the users' sense of social membership within the culture that digital media provides. Since it was founded in 1995, the website has over one million threads, fourteen million posts, and almost 400 000 users. Anyone is allowed to browse the website and post on the open forums, however, only registered users can post on all existing forums. A majority of the posts are written in English, with a large number of threads written in other

languages, including Swedish. The biggest forum for discussing Sweden, amongst other topics, is named *'Stormfront Baltic / Scandinavia'* which consists of 4 866 threads and 44 333 posts (Stormfront, 2023b). Two of the biggest threads from the forum were used in this study. The threads are titled *Scandinavia struggles against Multiculturalism* and *Swedistan* and consist of about 40 pages each, equating to hundreds of posts on each.

The second forum-website that will be used to answer my research questions is Swedish Flashback.org. Flashback and its members have also been frequently studied in previous research. In accordance with my study which seeks to identify a collective narrative, Törnberg and Törnberg (2016) investigate how outsiders, in their case Muslims, are perceived and communicated on the forum and how the exclusion of others strengthen the internal Swedish culture. According to Flashback's rules, users are not allowed to threaten or express hateful and offensive views towards marginalised groups with allusion to race, skin colour, ethical origin, religious belief, or sexual orientation (2023). The website does, however, advocate freedom of speech, thus allowing discussion about almost anything. Flashback is more restricted than Stormfront.org, which ultimately results in differing data with varying vocabulary and expressions. The threads on Flashback have been chosen based on number of posts and relevance to the research topic. The chosen threads are titled *Nordisk Styrka, ny NS-grupp utbrytare ur NMR*, which loosely translates to *Nordic Strength, new National Socialist group for former NMR-members* and the thread *Tråden om svenskhet/svensk identitet* which translates to *The thread about swedishness/swedish identity*. The threads consist of 217, respectively 138 pages with approximately 10 posts on each page.

One difference between the two websites that is worth noting is who the targeted user and reader is. While Stormfront reaches out to white supremacists in, predominantly, the US, Flashback has no specific targeted audience or type of user. Anyone is welcome to post and read on the website, no matter political orientation. This does, however, entail that the posts on Flashback are not necessarily written by individuals who consider themselves anti semitic, racist, or as white supremacists. The posts taken from Flashback will thereby not be interpreted as factual right extremist agenda, but as a suggestion of a right extremist narrative, unlike posts from Stormfront where the users are overwhelmingly right extremists. Existing users on Flashback who state that they are right extremists are considered as such. By collecting both authentic narratives and suggested narratives from outsiders, the result and conclusion will be based on a larger amount of data and thus be more generalisable and closer to the truth. The main focus of the study, however, is to find an internal generalisation,

meaning a generalisable result for the population that is in focus for the study. Due to the data from external groups, such as those who partake in discussions but who do not identify with the targeted group, the result might also present an external generalisation (Maxwell, 2021). For the result to be as accurate as possible, a majority of the data must be gathered from posts written by individuals who represent the population of interest (Ellis, 2020). In accordance with the conclusion that Ellis (2020) makes, my study must be based on a representative sample to have a reliable finding for that exact collective. Unlike quantitative research which seeks to be as truthful as possible for a large population, qualitative research is concerned with findings that are representative for the study's sample whilst being aware that experiences vary between each person and population.

When limiting the sample size, it is important to consider how rich the data is and, consequently, how much is needed to answer the research question. In accordance with Ellis (2020) conclusion, Emmel (2013, p. 138) also emphasises the importance of density of the data in qualitative research. Instead of focusing on the views and experiences of a larger proportion of the population, capturing nuanced and elaborate cases is of more importance when using qualitative research methods.

4.2. Analysis

The data was analysed through thematic coding and inductive analysis. Initially I sorted and coded preliminary by a set of recurring themes which are related to the research question. The process of coding was continuous during the data gathering period, thus resulting in new codes and patterns being explored until the last data has been gathered and analysed (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46). By using a systematic process to organise data and its relevance to the study, thematic coding allows efficient qualitative research (Vaughn & Turner, 2016). The coding process began with selecting threads using the categories on the forums. On Stormfront, threads were chosen from the category containing threads about Scandinavia and the Baltics. Thereafter, the amount of relevant threads were narrowed down to two threads with hundreds of posts each. Their relevance was estimated by the amount of posts, if the topics that the users discussed were relevant to the collective, and if the users claimed to either be Scandinavian or of Scandinavian descent. A next to identical sampling process was used on Flashback. In the same manner as the Stormfront threads, the two chosen Flashback threads had the highest number of opinionated posts, and likely Scandinavian male inhabitants.

After reading and re-reading the material, I gained a thorough understanding of the content, thus being able to identify correlations with the theoretical standpoints and previous research. By having a thorough and linear understanding of the data, theories such as cultural trauma and collective narrative can more easily be applied since they entail a wider perspective. The analysis is thus similar to that of a general inductive approach which refers to a procedure in which the researcher introduces themes and theories from the data (Thomas, 2006, pp. 238–239).

The codes were created after the gathering of relevant posts. The codes and subcodes were named after the theories and concepts that will be used in the analysis. Based on the research questions of this thesis, the codes are primarily based on the narrative construction of the collective. The collective in question consists of white supremacist men who believe in white superiority, thus resulting in codes such as "Whiteness", "Protagonist in Collective Narrative", and "Positive Masculinity" that consisted of posts where users expressed approval and praise for their own collective. In order to answer both the first and second questions which are concerned with the boundaries of the collective, codes such as "Negative Masculinity" and "Antagonist in Collective Narrative" were used. These codes consisted of posts that demonstrate how outsiders are portrayed and narrated. I formulated the codes and subcodes according to the white supremacists own formulation and perception of the world as well as in line with the concepts and theories of narratives, cultural trauma and masculinity. The codes and subcodes are subsequently constructed and formulated based on the theories and concepts and thereafter adapted to the line of thought that is used by the users on the forums. Some examples of subcodes that are formulated according to the viewpoint of the users are from the code "Positive Masculinity" which read: "Strong Warrior Viking" and "White Scandinavian Man". The emphasis on strength and whiteness is consequently both evident in the data, as well as in the theoretical framework for this study.

Some codes were reconsidered in the process of writing the analysis. Other codes were combined, such as the codes "Past Trauma", "Current Trauma", and "Future Trauma" which ultimately touched upon the same traumatic event for the studied group. The division of the trauma was, however, helpful in mapping out and illustrating the cultural trauma since it, according to Giesen (2004) and Eyerman's (2001; 2022) examples, is a long-lasting process. As stated by Mayer (2014), the construction of narratives is also evergoing, and by gathering data and sorting it according to time makes it easier to get a comprehensive understanding of the collective narrative.

The process of coding the data was influenced by thematic analysis. The approach allows a flexible and preliminary interpretation of the data (Byrne, 2021, pp. 1392–1394). Thematic analysis is, according to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 79), used to identify, analyse and describe patterns and themes that appear in the data. Drawing from narrative constructivism, which both takes the relationship between speaker and listener, and the broader social and cultural approach to the story, narrative analysis will also be applied in this study (Smith & Monforte, 2020). Narratives are believed to be passed down from former generations, thus reproducing certain social and cultural contexts. These narratives should not be considered truthful, but rather as constructed by the narrator's surroundings and all impressions that a person encounters, as well as ever changing (ibid). Many forms of narrative analysis exist. In order to answer my research question which is related to how a certain narrative is constructed within a collective, I will combine thematic analysis which uses theories to describe the content, and dialogic/performance narrative analysis which views narratives as social and cultural construct, and is concerned with who narrates, why, and when (Smith & Monforte, 2020, pp. 3–4; Riessman, 2008, pp. 2–6). Riessman (2008, p. 5) claims that the dialogic/performative narrative analysis is applicable to studies concerned with identity constructions, hence appropriate for this study.

4.3. Ethical Considerations

As new technologies emerge, so do new ethical concerns (Light & McGrath, 2010). Both Stormfront.org and Flashback.org can be considered public spaces due to the easily accessible forums, allowance to read posts without having to sign up to the websites, and awareness of outsiders reading users posts. Instead of gathering informed consent from users on the forums, the open structures of the websites entail that outsiders can partake in discussions and users opinions on certain topics (Franzke et al. and the Association of Internet Researchers, 2020; Light & McGrath, 2010). Informed consent is therefore not needed in this study. No personal information will be used in the data gathering process or in the analysis. All usernames will be anonymised to ensure that no personal information is shared. Considering that the data consists of sensitive and private information, namely political orientation, user privacy is of importance in the study (Zimmer, 2010).

5. Narrating a Cultural Trauma

The upcoming analysis will be structured by the narrative of Scandinavian white supremacist men. It begins in the folklore and legend of the white Scandinavian man as a true warrior Viking. How he is depicted as the protagonist and saviour in their collective narrative. His most important attributes and characteristics will be in focus, and thereafter analysed in contrast to the perceived antagonists. After the main figures in the collective narrative have been introduced and set side by side, the object of struggle and cultural trauma will be identified. The analysis will be concluded with a discussion of what the Scandinavian white supremacists narrative urges them to do in order to save the alleged threatened white race.

5.1. The Myth of the Viking

As Mayer (2014) writes, a narrative must have a beginning where the story is introduced and situated. Without a descriptive setting and beginning, there is no story. On both Stormfront and Flashback, a representation of an ideal Scandinavia and of Scandinavian inhabitants is recurring. Hughes (2018) who identifies the myths American white supremacists live by, points to a natural ideal order which God is believed to have set up. These American myths represent the very core of white supremacism, and it includes Christianity as the chosen religion, and refers to white Americans as the chosen ones. The myth also allows them to act in their own ethnic and religious interest without being punished for it. The users in my data write that the ideal has its origin in Scandinavian history, and that it has become a vital part of what unites white people. This historical retelling of the group is what Alexander (2004) and Eyerman (2022) refer to as collective memory and collective identity. A post from the Flashback thread about "Swedishness and Swedish identity" as well as one from Stormfronts thread "Swedistan" states:

> A Swede is a white person of North Germanic or closely related origin.
> Different Germanic tribes once populated almost the entirety of Northern
> Europe. A Swede should be white and act white, whites act the same all around
> the world because everyone has the same origin and genes. How difficult is it
> really!? It is pretty fucking obvious according to me. Swedes have collective
> customs, values, behaviours, history, language, moral etc. (Flashback 1:1[1])

[1] The quote is taken from the first page, from the first of the two Flashback threads.

I hate what is happening to Sweden right now! Sweden used to be once a great, ethnically/racially homogeneous and proud nation for the real Swedes for more than a millenia, but that started to change some 30 or 40 years ago when Swedish politicians invited non-Whites/non-Swedes by the thousands and now, in 2017 Sweden is on the brink of becoming the Islamic Caliphate/Republic of Swedistan. (Stormfront 1:1)

The quotes lift the importance of a collective origin and history for white people. According to the first user above, all white people around the world have the same origin, namely Northern European descent. This conforms with Mayer's (2014) claim that many narratives are constructed according to history. The focus on historical context also agrees with the previous research conducted on white supremacists in Sweden and the US (Hughes, 2013; Rostami & Askanius, 2021; Antoine, 2022). Even though the previous research does not focus on the internal and structural aspects of white supremacism, the historical aspect is of importance. By understanding their history and approach to others, their own ideals and beliefs become clear. By, for example, claiming superiority over African Americans, which Hughes (2018) identifies as a conviction in American white supremacism, it becomes clear that whiteness is the ideal. White people all act the same, and according to the same values and morals. As the users exemplify in the quotes, their collectiveness also functions as a guideline for who is considered a Swede, and who is not. The ideal is thus depicted as being exclusively white, and as being related to a certain area in the world. It appears that Northern Europe is defined by its white inhabitants and the long period of time they have lived there, and that white people are defined by their origin, which is Northern European. The emphasis on the amount of time this ideal has existed for is used as a motivation for its legitimacy.

The ideal society that the users refer to is predominantly white. White is, according to the users, both defined as a skin tone and as a set of customs. They claim that Sweden was characterised by its pride and greatness, and by the racially pure white people that lived there. This understanding of Sweden and Scandinavia appears to be the only valid one to the user who wrote the first of the two quotes mentioned above. It is apparently "obvious" that this is the correct line of reasoning, and any other way of viewing Scandinavia and white people is ridiculed by the user. In relation to the present day, which the latter quote compares it to, old Sweden was an ideal where white people flourished and were proud of their nation.

This depiction of old Scandinavia makes up the setting and beginning of the story; now, the protagonist of the story must be identified. The protagonist is, according to Mayer (2014), essential in order to make a distinction between good and evil in the story, and to easier understand the upcoming plot and events. As in the excerpts above, users on both Stormfront and Flashback mention Swedish, Scandinavian, and Nordic men as being an undisputable part of the ideal society, as well as its protector:

> The Swedish men who are nationalists are the strong and true men who, like our forefathers, want to fight and go into battle for a united Sweden with one ethnic group, one nation, and preserve our traditions. (Flashback 2:39)

> I am a Proud Nord, I stand for the Reclamation of my Nordic culture, I stand for the rebirth of the Nordic spirit, I will do whatever it takes, afterall it takes a Viking to raise a village. (Stormfront 2:7)

Through these quotes, the white man who lives in the Nordics can be understood as having an active role in the ideal society. Like their forefathers, men want to preserve the state of their home nation which they are a part of. It is through the perspective of the white man that society is created and understood. Based on the quotes, it is also of importance that the white man reclaims and follows traditions, belongs to Swedish and Nordic culture, and ultimately acts with the intention of upholding the ideal. His active role in the narrative is equivalent to the role of a protagonist, as well as a narrator. The constructed protagonist also has certain requirements he must live up to in order to be considered valid. He must be proud and strong, and be prepared to fight and do whatever it takes in honour of his nation.

The protagonist and narrator then claims the sought-after ideal characteristics of a white male. Just as the latter quote exemplifies, it is solely the Viking who has what it takes to claim this ideal presentation of white masculinity. The white supremacist narrative thus has its origin in the role and meaning of the Viking. The Viking as a protagonist can also be identified as a depiction of hegemonic masculinity, which Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) define as the most legitimised and idolised masculinity within a social sphere. For example, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) state that hegemony is associated with violence and power, just as the role of the Viking is. Hegemony is also constructed on the subordination of others, similar to the Viking who stands out in relation to other men and members of the

village. The Viking is also defined in terms of privilege. As Ming Liu (2017) and Bridges (2021) write, privilege can both be something positive and negative depending on if the men in question have it or not. In the ideal Scandinavia, as presented in the data, white men have privilege, whereas in modern day time it has been taken away from them, as stated in the quote above taken from the thread "Swedistan". For a man to then claim correct masculinity within the white supremacist collective narrative, one has to be a true warrior Viking.

5.2. Identifying the Ones to Blame

Just as Mayer (2014) writes, every story with a protagonist has an antagonist. The protagonist represents the good, whereas the antagonist is needed in order to establish a conflict, or a struggle. In the white supremacist narrative, the antagonist must then threaten the ideal white man; the viking, or the ideal he must uphold and protect. The antagonist is essential in order for an underdog story to take place (Presser, 2018). The story entails that the protagonist is greatly disadvantaged due to the ill will of someone else. Being able to triumph over the oppression is seen as almost impossible since the antagonist has the higher ground. The protagonist does, however, create enough momentum and self-confidence to overcome it. A triumph and transcendence can only occur when the protagonist is oppressed by someone else. Posts mentioning the hardship and struggles of the white man does, in most cases, accentuate the ones to blame. Two post from the Flashback threads "Nordic Strength, new National Socialist group for former NMR-members" and "Swedishness and Swedish identity" do exactly this:

> The opponents on the other hand, are immature brats, drug-liberal trash, criminal immigrants and rapists as well as left extremist activists in an unholy alliance. This trash is embraced by the politically correct establishment as 'the good ones'. Because of this, they feel entitled to use violence against those who express different opinions. (Flashback 2:53)

> Then there are also state-swedes, "paper-swedes" or "national swedes" whatever you want to call them. These are non-ethnic Swedes with Swedish citizenship. They have, according to me, way too much freedom and rights, plus that there are too many of them. (Flashback 1:1)

The user behind the first post points to a handful of antagonists, such as criminal immigrants and liberal left voters. They are believed to conspire against those who express different

opinions, namely the white proud man. There also appears to be a separation between the immigrants and liberal left voters. The second one is a latent threat coming from within the ideal. It is an internal betrayal which has allowed the other antagonist, the immigrant, to invade society. There is hence a latent threat and a manifest threat, where the first one allows for the other to exist. Their existence in Scandinavian society appears to anger the writer, considering the use of the charged word "trash". The antagonists each express and symbolise negative traits that the user identifies them by. The immigrant is defined as someone who oftentimes breaks the law and overrules the Scandinavian morals and customs. A post taken from the thread "Swedistan" on Stormfront exemplifies a similar villainisation: "Immigrants are here to destroy us, why expect anything better from them? Disgusting apes raping our blood, am boiling with rage." (Stormfront 1:15). Just as the former quote, this one also shows a categorisation of immigrants who are believed to be in opposition to "us", us being Swedish citizens. The same separation of the antagonist and the protagonist is found in the quote above taken from the thread "Swedishness and Swedish identity". The user identifies multiple categorisations of non-Swedes who, according to the user, are not worthy of Swedish citizenship. The ideal society which the white man has spent more than a thousand years building and maintaining is now threatened by the immigrant who dishonours the ideal with his mere presence and wrongful actions.

There also appears to exist a perception of the immigrant as a symbol for something dirty and impure. The user who wrote the first quote uses the word "trash" to describe the members of the unholy alliance, thus including the "criminal immigrant". The latter of the three quotes contains the word "disgusting" which similarly to the first quote, is used to describe an immigrant in a negative way. The impurity they are believed to represent is thus crucial in why they are portrayed as opponents to the white supremacists. By "raping our blood" they also threaten to spread that impurity amongst white people whom they rape. Similarly, the second quote is an example of immigrants being identified by their non-Swedishness. No matter what they are called, they will never be as pure as ethnic Swedes. It is hence both their impure existence and the threat of spreading that impurity amongst white people that scares the users.

The same could be said about the remaining opponents in the quotes above. Drug liberals and left extremist activists are also portrayed as trash, however, no quote was found that presents drug liberals and left extremists as actively infecting the white population in the same way

that the immigrant is thought to be doing. As drug liberals and left extremists are defined and ridiculed due to their political affiliation, this must be what the users define as impure. As shown above, the users idolise traditional Scandinavian society and its accompanying values and morals. Those who then wish to rupture that system, are evidently viewed as opponents. By ruining Scandinavian traditions and introducing liberal values, the purity of white society is tainted.

According to Connell and Messerschimdt's (2005) definition of hegemony, the concepts of power and the use of violence are central. As stated above, the role of the Viking achieves hegemony in Scandinavian white men's collective narrative, and he is often identified through his violent tendencies. Aggressive features are also, according to Bridges (2021), generally connected to black masculinity, an example of this in the data is the claim that immigrant men rape and abuse Scandinavian women. Bridges (2021) finds that white men envy black males for their alleged aggressive and violent tendencies and for the fact that those features are not criticised, whilst they are if a white man possesses them. Violence as a male feature is a recurring characteristic in the data. However, it is portrayed differently when linked to antagonists. The opponents are believed to frequently use unprovoked violence against the protagonist. As a previous quote exemplified, Vikings are allowed to use violence and fight in order to preserve and protect their society and its traditions. The same cannot be said about the antagonists. The reasoning behind their violent tendencies are not moralised in a similar way as it is for Vikings. The antagonists are thought to use violence because "they feel entitled to" as a consequence of the establishment labelling them as the "good ones". Unlike the Viking who fights for his village's survival, the antagonists do not have a valid reason to use violence. The users then criticise immigrant men, as well as left extremists, for their violent features, since no one else does it. The envy Bridges (2018) points to is, as seen in the quotes, expressed through anger and disgust. The users do not grant immigrants and left extremists the position of hegemony since their use of violence is not acceptable.

Continuing on the line of hegemonic masculinity, Connell (2005) states that it stands in opposition to deviating femininities and masculinities. The prime example that is given by Connell is homosexual men. By expressing features that actively stand in direct opposition to what Connell defines as hegemonic, homosexual men are positioned low in the hierarchy of men. The process of excluding those who do not belong, would in Mayer's (2014) words be the formation of a collective narrative as well as the internal structuring of the collective's

shared beliefs, values, and moral codes. An example of this exclusionary process is found in the data: A picture posted on Stormfront's thread "Swedistan" displays a character from the TV series *Vikings* with the text: "Swedish men 1016". The character is a Viking, dressed in rugged middle age clothing, holding an axe in his right hand. Next to the picture of the Viking is another man wearing pink shoes, a puffy skirt, and a tiara, holding a sign with the text: "refugees welcome here". Above the man reads the text: "Swedish men 2016". Users responding and commenting on the pictures use the words "homo" and "fag" to describe the latter image.

The side-by-side comparison that is made by both the user who posted the pictures, and by the users who comment, indicates that there exists an ideal man as well as a nonideal man. The man dressed in clothes and accessories that are not typical men's clothing is heckled as being a "homo" and a "fag". The users then do exactly as Connell (2005) predicts. They set up and accentuate the boundaries between them, as ideal men, and homosexual men who are marginalised because of their differences in masculinity. A man who is nowhere close to achieving hegemonic status is referred to as someone who identifies with the LGBTQI+ community; a homosexual. Precisely which male features the "homo" is opposing can be deduced from the images. The Viking is a muscular bearded man, dressed in dark rugged clothes whereas the man portraying "Swedish men 2016" is much smaller in size, has no facial hair, and is dressed in light and bright colours. The modern man is thus thought to be going against the very core of white masculinity, namely the body and mind. A man who does not appear or act as a white man should, will not be granted the respect of one. Just as Douglas (2002) writes, anomalies, taboos and antagonists are not merely used and referred to to create or escalate a conflict, their primary function is to strengthen the ideal, which in this case is the collective identity of the white proud man. This defilement of the white body is somewhat similar to the impurity an immigrant and left extremist is perceived to have. Homosexual men, along with immigrants and left extremists are all considered impure. The latter are, however, impure in the sense of wrongful actions and morals, such as their causeless use of violence and disrespect for white culture. The homosexual is believed to be wrong from his very core of manliness. He is not even capable of being masculine since he does not know how to appear correctly or have the correct opinions.

So far, the users have established the antagonists to be immigrants, left and liberal extremists, and homosexual men. They are perceived as non-ethnic trash who feel entitled to harass

white supremacist men. The initial quote above is worth repeating along with a similar one from the Flashback thread "Nordic Strength, new National Socialist group for former NMR-members" reveals another type of antagonist besides the previous ones:

> The opponents on the other hand, are immature brats, drug-liberal trash, criminal immigrants and rapists as well as left extremist activists in an unholy alliance. This trash is embraced by the politically correct establishment as 'the good ones'. Because of this, they feel entitled to use violence against those who express different opinions. (Flashback 2:53)

> Every group needs an external enemy in order to unite, even in this time when the Jew is the external threat, you could also say that feminism or immigration is a threat, but it will come as a revelation when you can show the people that it is all the Jew's making. (Flashback 2:10)

According to the users who have written these posts, there is a spectrum of antagonists. There is no doubt for white men that immigrants, liberals and leftists are their opponents. Yet, they are not the only ones. As seen in the quotes, those antagonists are merely a consequence of the greater external antagonists, namely the politically correct establishment and the anti semitic categorisation of the "Jew". The role that the, so called, "Jew" plays in white supremacist narratives derives from one of the myths that Hughes (2018) points to in white supremacism; that Christianity is the chosen and superior religion. A consequence of this sense of superiority is, as the latter quote exemplifies, that Jewish people have been villainised. The villainisation can also be connected to Alexander and Adams' (2023) study where anti semitism claims to be based on the belief that Jewish people represent the profane, whereas Christianity is a symbol for the sacred. The claim that Jewish people are orchestrating the downfall of white Christian society also aligns with Alexander and Adams' (2023) findings. They find that the "Jew" is believed to be set on the destruction of the sacred Christianity. In an alliance, the "establishment" and the villainised "Jew" are believed to be actively working against Scandinavian white men. Immigrants, left extremist liberals, and even feminists are perceived as opponents, but with a closer look into the current state of society, it becomes clear to the users that they are regulated and created by the political establishment and the "Jew". The secondary antagonists are merely claimed to be a symptom, or proof that the primary antagonists have achieved their goal to create complications for the protagonist.

The antagonist is described as a system of multiple actors who in varying ways aim to threaten and ruin the society Vikings and Scandinavians have built. The antagonists are portrayed as both internal and external in the narrative. They can also be understood as primary and secondary in the white supremacists' collective narrative. The immigrants, liberals, left extremists, and feminists are claimed to be active within society. They are actively going against the set standards of Scandinavian society, whereas the political establishment and the "category of the Jew" have a more hidden and passive role, yet they actively seek to destroy the ideal Scandinavian society, albeit in a different manner than the active antagonists.

5.3. The Object of Struggle

Presser (2018) and Mayer (2014) both point to the division that narratives create. There is a distinction between good and evil, just as the relationship between a protagonist and antagonist displays. It is the division of individuals and groups that creates the state of being an underdog (Presser, 2018). Another example of narratives being dependent on opposites is given by Eyerman (2022) who argues that white Americans have defined themselves, and consequently also their white identity in opposition to non-white individuals or groups. The role of the antagonist and constructed "other" is also portrayed differently by Mayer (2014), Presser (2018), and Eyerman (2022). An antagonist can be actively seeking to harm the protagonist, just as the two first mentioned portray them as. In Eyerman's (2022) case however, non-white individuals are not as active, they are merely representing a deviancy which is then used by the white Americans to create meaning and identity. The antagonist and the division they create between both the protagonists, as well as other antagonists, illustrates their plurality and diversity. As seen above, the two sides and perspectives in white supremacist men's narrative are depicted as each other's opposites. One of the sides consists of the myth of the Viking and the ideal society it represents. It is defined by purity, white masculinity, and authenticity in actions and behaviour. The previous discussion on antagonists identifies the opposite features in the opponents. The ideal society the users are idolising stands in direct opposition to modern day society where its values and morals are overruled and replaced by those actors. The ideal has been tainted by illegitimate citizens whose reasonings are considered immoral.

A shift such as the one white supremacists are experiencing would in Alexander (2004) and Eyerman's (2004; 2022) words be defined as a traumatic event which has caused a rupture in the collective identity. With the use of situated vocabulary, actors within a collective can assert the group the role of a victim of a traumatic event. Once this victim narrative is accepted and utilised within the community, a new master narrative has been established. The master narrative functions as a measure taken in order to repair and re-narrate the rupture in the collective identity. A fundamental part for the new master narrative to have a function, is to assert blame on those responsible for the trauma and consequential rupture. In Eyerman's (2001; 2004) example of slavery being a cultural trauma for the African American collective, the blame was put on the structure and individuals who enabled it.

I will argue that the shift that white supremacist men are experiencing should be analysed through the concept of cultural trauma. If the posts on the forums contain the fundamental elements needed in a trauma narrative, namely asserting oneself as a victim, blaming others for it, and attempting to engage others in the narrative, a cultural trauma can be identified, as well as the consequential process of trauma creation. Two posts taken from the Stormfront thread "Swedistan" and Flashback's "Scandinavia struggles against multiculturalism" retell the shift from the ideal society to modern day Scandinavia:

> I hate what is happening to Sweden right now! Sweden used to be once a great, ethnically/racially homogeneous and proud nation for the real Swedes for more than a millenia, but that started to change some 30 or 40 years ago when Swedish politicians invited non-Whites/non-Swedes by the thousands and now, in 2017 Sweden is on the brink of becoming the Islamic Caliphate/Republic of Swedistan. (Stormfront 1:1)

> And we must work by spreading inspiration to our folk and *make* them hear how their own people are suffering from the multiculturalist experiment. We must break the poisonous web of Egalitarianism and Pseudo-Tolerance which imprison and spellbind the minds and thoughts of common people. (Flashback 1:7)

The users claim that Swedish and Scandinavian people now live in a society where their sense of peace and pride has disappeared. The first quote emphasises that Sweden "used to be" great, thus indicating that a shift has taken place. The change has caused their own people

to suffer and lose ground in their own home, whilst "non-Whites" and "non-Swedes" are flourishing. Focus is here on the result of this shift rather than the reason behind the change. Based on the quotes, together with the previous discussion and identification of the protagonist and antagonist, the perceived victims are white Scandinavian people. Their victimhood is motivated by their newfound vulnerability and lack of influence in their own society. The established ideal in Scandinavia which is upheld and symbolised by the protagonist, is now in the process of becoming nonideal. This decline is said to be the making of antagonists, such as the immigrant, left voters, and the political establishment who and subsequently gaining advantages from the suffering of the white proud man.

The first step of realising victimhood is, according to Dziewa and Glowacz (2022), to recognize how unsustainable and abusive one's life situation is. The victims must realise that their sense of normality has changed for the worse, and that this has subsequently caused damage. The first quote taken from the thread "Swedistan" emphasises the unsustainability in modern Sweden by writing that "Sweden is on the brink of becoming the Islamic Caliphate/Republic of Swedistan". Unless something is done to stop this unsustainable development, Sweden is claimed to transform into something foreign. The second step in realising victimhood is to come to terms with one's victimhood and to leave the current abuse (Dziewa & Glowacz, 2022). As victimhood is characterised by agony and loss of power, the users must realise this, and consequently attempt to regain their power. The second user above does this by writing that the people are "imprisoned" and "suffering". Once the citizens of Sweden and Scandinavia have realised and come to terms with their victimhood, they are urged to "break the poisonous web of Egalitarianism and Pseudo-Tolerance". The collective act of resistance which is advocated for will allow the people to leave the victim identity behind them, thus completing the process of victimhood (Dziewa & Glowacz, 2022).

The blame for this victimhood is put on both the "non-Whites/non-Swedes" as well as the political establishment who allowed this abuse to happen. It is not because of their own actions that this development is taking place, it is due to the poor judgement of others who are ruining their ideal. It appears that this has happened right under their nose, thus implying that white people either did not do anything, or could do anything to stop it. The victims' obligation to disrupt the negative development is not mentioned in the quotes; full responsibility is assigned to the previously claimed antagonists. Politicians have allegedly allowed immigrants to harm society.

What exactly has happened, and what the root cause of the claimed victimhood is, can also be found in the quotes, along with this post taken from the thread "Scandinavia struggles against multiculturalism":

> What we need, is for us to all reclaim the culture of our own that was stolen
> from us. Old Scanadanavia's Warrior culture, the culture that suceeded [sic],
> the culture that crushed our enemies, the culture that let us perservere [sic].
> (Stormfront 2:7)

The user claims that the old Scandinavian culture has been "stolen" from them. Equivalent to the previous quotes, Scandinavians claim victimhood based on the fact that they struggle to preserve Scandinavia in its true, ideal form. The ultimate fear for the users is that there will not be a white culture left to save. The urge to "reclaim" their culture and the need to make people hear how their own people are suffering, reveals that fear. The traumatic event is thus narrated as an ongoing loss of collective identity. Swedish and Scandinavian people can no longer feel united through their ethnically/racially homogeneous warrior culture since it is currently being stolen from them. Drawing from Presser's (2018) description of an underdog story, which entails that someone has fallen victim to a progressive oppression, thus causing the victim to lose power and influence, as well as self-confidence in his/her ability to overcome it. The data exemplifies that white ethnic people from Scandinavia are now being forced to identify as victims, and that their former glory and strength has been lost. The proud white man is threatened by a unified latent enemy: the political establishment and the "Jew". Thereafter, the latent enemy has sent its footmen to weaken the ideal and hurt the white people. The suffering that white men are said to be experiencing creates an emotional meaning for the collective.

Presser (2018, p. 62) claims that the emotional impact of narratives governs and guides the groups' aspirations and identities, thus making a certain goal achievable. By moralising and justifying their experiences as victims of oppression, and giving meaning to their planned reclaim of their ideal and power in society. The Viking can, once again, become the sought after role for all Scandinavians, and the white proud man can thrive in his own society. The only way out of victimhood would then, according to Presser's (2018) logic, be to claim the role of an underdog and triumph over injustice.

The conflict which is said to take place in Scandinavia is also mentioned in the following quotes posted on Stormfronts thread "Swedistan":

> This is Sweden right now, we have to do something about it! ******s and camel****ers can't be allowed to take over the country my ancestors built for us! Us Swedes need to act, and that's soon, before this country is forever lost. I've lived but been afraid to say something for way too long, i've been lurking here and agreed to most of what i've read, but now I decided to make an account and finally say something, so here it is! (Stormfront 1:24)

Not only has the white culture and country been stolen, this user goes further than the previous by stating that it might forever be lost if nothing is done to prevent it. The user is portraying the change in society as a war being fought between white Scandinavian people and foreign invaders. Non-whites are claimed to be actively "taking over" what Swedes have built for generations, and the user urges people to do something about it before it is too late. Swedish and Scandinavian society is prophesied to collapse unless white people unite and win the war. This is the turning point for the underdog where he has recognised his victimhood and realised that this oppression can be stopped (Presser, 2018). The user has been too afraid to say anything before, but something has happened since then. The user has been emotionally hypnotised and persuaded that they can complete the underdog story by acting together as one, and standing up to the injustice. They would then be fighting for the survival of the whole collective where many still have not realised or dared to face the injustice.

The conflict and consequential tear in society that Scandinavian white men identify as the cause of their collective trauma is fought between themselves and the multiple above-mentioned antagonists. The conflict is portrayed as a long lasting struggle for white men, going back decades to the start of multiculturalism in Scandinavia. As the conflict has been taking place, Scandinavian culture and identity have lost their positions and purposes. This has fundamentally undermined the collective's sense of their place and function in the world, thus causing a cultural trauma to be narrated.

5.3.1. The Threat Against the White Man

According to Lloyd (2020) and Connell (2005), an opposing masculinity can be viewed as a threat to those who occupy a preferred masculinity. As I noted before, white men construct

their masculinity in opposition to black masculinity, and they do it by referring to their white characteristics as the controlled version of black masculinity. White masculinity, as seen in the role of the Viking, is associated with strength, toughness, rationality, and sexual dominance, whereas black masculinity is portrayed as overly aggressive, irrational, and dangerous (Connell, 2005, pp. 150–152, 156–157, 165–166). Black men are thus embodying what Connell (2005) refers to as subordinate masculinity. Bridges (2021) identifies the reasoning for this separation and consequential subordination of black men as envy. According to Bridges (2021), some white men may view black masculinity as a more authentic form of masculinity, and may envy the perceived freedom and power that black men have to express their emotions and assert their dominance. Black masculinity and its characteristics is thus viewed as a threat to white masculinity. The negative associations black males have threatens the control that white men have established thanks to their correct masculinity.

Drawing from the conflict which is claimed to be taking place in Sweden and a majority of Scandinavia, the threat can with a closer examination be identified as a threat against white masculinity. The conflict is mentioned in the following quote taken from "Nordic Strength, new National Socialist group for former NMR-members", where emphasis is put on ethnicity and gender of the offender: "Swedish women are heavily exposed to brainwashing by the media ruled by Bonnier and many of them seek Swedish stable men who are willing to stand up against misogynistic Mena [Middle East and North Africa] men." (Flashback 2:8).

The user separates Swedish men from Middle Eastern and North African men. Men from Sweden are said to be actively against misogyny, whereas men from the Middle East and North Africa are directly associated with it. This correlates with what Connell and Messerschimdt's (2005) write. Whilst foreign men are expressing aggressivity and sexual dominance towards Swedish women, Swedish men are able to control themselves and use their power to defend women from the threat of another man. However, not all Swedish women want or deserve the protection that Swedish men are willing to give. Women are claimed to be exposed to brainwashing by an influential media company, and many of them fall victim to it by no longer seeking the attention of Swedish men. They would rather prefer the attention of Middle Eastern and North African men. The shift in desire of Swedish women comes to signify a shift in the hegemonic understandings of what it means to be a man in Sweden.

As seen in the previous discussion on identifying a conflict in modern day Scandinavia, there is an articulated ongoing conflict between white men and a handful of antagonists, one of them being immigrants. Precisely what immigrants are blamed for doing is related to the destruction of white Scandinavian culture where white men have had a powerful positions for more than a millennium. What the latest quote informs us of is that white men express fear of actually losing that position in the hierarchy, and that they are being replaced by a foreign man who expresses other features. These features include those mentioned by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), namely aggression and an irrational use of violence. White men are losing their position in the hierarchy because Swedish women are no longer drawn to or connected to their masculinity in the same way as they were in old Scandinavia. In this context, Swedish women who were previously attracted to white Swedish men are, according to Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005, pp. 854, 857) theory, claiming hegemonic femininity. Hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic femininity are conceptualised in relation to one another, and by accepting this new masculinity that immigrants are presenting, Swedish women are conceptualising a new hegemonic masculinity. White men are thus on the verge of no longer being regarded as hegemonic and they are because of that, asserting victimhood.

Besides Scandinavian masculinity being threatened by immigrant men, emphasis is also put on the importance and authenticity of whiteness. As seen in theories and research conducted on white and black masculinities, skin colour is of importance in this separation (Unnever & Chouchy, 2021; Connell, 2005). Men of colour are associated with negative features, whereas white men are given a superior position in society thanks to their skin colour and ethnicity. Previous discussion on the threat white masculinity face by the emerging competing immigrant masculinity, mainly focuses on the claim for hegemony. The aspect of skin colour can thus be further developed. Whiteness is referred to in the following post taken from the thread "Swedishness/Swedish identity":

> To stand in a queue is for example Swedish (white) culture, liking animals and nature is Swedish (white) culture, keeping a certain distance and using a certain body language and a certain volume when speaking/conversing with someone is Swedish (white) culture, having specific definitions of what is 'cowardice' and 'bravery' is Swedish (white) culture, respecting other creatures such as small animals is Swedish (white) culture, respecting women and viewing them as equals is Swedish (white) culture. And so on. Women have been equal since

the Viking age, all kinds of misogyny and rotten views of women that have
existed in the Western world are imported shit from the Middle East. It started
in Christianity. There are tons of examples. (Flashback 1:2)

The user goes in depth describing Swedish and white culture. According to the user,
whiteness is characterised by a handful of features. White people are claimed to be respectful,
well behaved, logical, and just. In accordance with the previous definition of the
Scandinavian white supremacist ideal, whiteness and the culture it represents is portrayed as
correct and sacred. Non-whiteness on the other hand, is defined in the opposite way.
Non-whiteness is articulated as the nonideal and profane. Any negative changes whiteness
has undergone lately, is blamed on the influence of cultures deriving from other parts of the
world. Misogyny claims to be "imported shit from the Middle East", thus not being part of
the white culture which exists in Sweden. By taking another post from the thread
"Swedishness/Swedish identity" into account, the division between white culture and
whiteness, and foreign, non-white culture becomes even more noticeable:

As the situation looks like today, only because you have a Swedish citizenship
you are automatically 'Swedish', ridiculous. A blatte [Swedish term referring
to a person of non-european descent] can, in my opinion, never be Swedish, it
is a shame that some people think that. Only because you moved to Sweden
you become Swedish. (Flashback 1:11)

In relation to the previous quote, there exists a consensus of white culture and whiteness
being sacred. A person cannot decide whether or not he or she wants to be a Swede.
Swedishness is, according to the users, something one deserves. Those claimed to be
deserving of the sacred white culture and whiteness are people who have lived in Sweden for
generations, whereas people of another ethnic background are considered undeserving. The
division that the users make between different ethnicities reveals a belief that whiteness,
Scandinavian whiteness to be exact, is a symbol and indication of purity. Whiteness is
depicted as an ideal skin colour and white culture as an ideal culture. Any foreign influence is
believed to pollute whiteness, thus ruining the ideal that the white man has spent a
millennium establishing and maintaining.

The data suggest that Swedish and Scandinavian whiteness is represented through social traditions. One example of this is a post taken from the thread "Swedistan" where a user writes: A n**ro as Santa Lucia?! Heeeeeeelllll nnnnnoooooo!" (Stormfront 1:6). The Christian celebration of Christmas, which includes celebrating and honouring Saint Lucia, is referred to as a token of whiteness seeing that it causes irritation when a dark skinned person is dressed as her. The great distaste for the non-white person results in the user using discriminatory language. The alleged white Saint Lucia is thereby defiled by a non-ethnic Swede. To put it concisely, the ongoing conflict and traumatic event threatens white masculinity. Both in the aspect of its hegemonic position, as well as its level of purity.

5.3.2. The Threat of Islam

Alexander et al. (2004) and Eyerman (2001; 2022) use the concept of collective identity to refer to the ways in which individuals come to understand themselves as part of a larger social group or category. Collective identity is a social construct that emerges from shared experiences, memories, and narratives that unite individuals into a group. Similarly, Hughes (2018) identifies a handful of myths that American white supremacists live by, which have shaped their collective identity. One of the myths refers to the idea that America is a unique nation which has been blessed by God to lead the world. Even though Alexander et al. (2004) and Eyerman (2001; 2022) do not point to religion being directly related to collective identity, religious belief plays a subconscious role in shaping collective identity and the experience of cultural trauma since religion shapes a nation's values, morals and memories. As seen in the myths that American white supremacists live by, religion, in the shape of a "God", has played a part in constructing the collective identity of white Americans. Consequently, Scandinavian white supremacists might also have constructed their collective identity on religion. A post written by a user taken from the thread "Scandinavia struggles against multiculturalism" mentions and values the influence of religion in Scandinavia and Sweden:

> Ive seen s [sic] lot of threads and post saying "we are whites so we can go to
> scandinavia" whites are destroying whites instead of conserving their variety of
> people and cultures, in the top of stormfront page there are banners inviting
> each people to their own country, not to go to a foreign country and degenerate
> it, also there are a lot of WN [white nationalists] that are christian, so whats
> that? christianity doesnt even belong to europe, we have to thank our ancestors,

our gods, not a foreign god that has nothing to do here in the first place.
(Stormfront 2:7)

According to the user, Scandinavian white supremacists are either of Christian belief, or they believe in another set of gods, which are referred to as "our gods". The user is thus referring to Odinism which is said to have existed in old Scandinavia. Similar to Hughes' (2018) connection between American white supremacists believing in a God and the conviction that religion has had an impact in white culture, the user does the same thing between white Scandinavians and their belief in either Christianity or Odinism. There is, however, a difference between believing in Christianity and Odinism. Whilst some white Scandinavians are Christian, the legitimate religion is claimed to be Odinism. Odinism is thus part of the claimed ideal that Scandinavian white supremacists refer to in their collective narrative. Christian gods are viewed as foreign gods that have "nothing to do here in the first place". By believing in their ancestors' gods, white supremacists honour and thank their forefathers who have shaped and brought meaning to their white Scandinavian culture.

Another quote which demonstrates the legitimacy of a correct Swedish and Scandinavian religion and an incorrect one, is in the following post taken from the thread "Swedistan":

Muslim migrants have made Malmö, once a peaceful city, crime-ridden and hazardous. In Sweden, Muslim migrants from Afghanistan are 79 times more likely to commit rape and other sexual crimes than native Swedes. Migrants and refugees commit 92 percent of rapes in Sweden. Rapists in Sweden come from Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Eritrea, Syria, Gambia, Iran, Palestine, Chile, and Kosovo, in that order; rapists of Swedish background do not exist in sufficient numbers to make the top ten, and all the nations on that list except Chile and Eritrea are majority Muslim. (Stormfront 1:14)

Similar to Christianity being portrayed as a foreign religion in the previous quote, Islam is defined as the same by this user. According to the user, Muslims are thought to be inherently violent and dangerous based on their religious belief. The user draws a parallel between the likelihood of committing rape and other sexual crimes to a country of origin, and whether that country has a majority of Muslim inhabitants. Those of Islamic belief are, according to the user, more likely to commit such crimes than native Swedes are. It is not merely "migrants" who are portrayed as the antagonists, it is specifically Muslim migrants who are villainized.

Immigrants are, as seen in previous examples and discussions, claimed to be infecting white supremacist men's society and culture, and as seen here, they are doing it with the religion of Islam as a weapon.

Equivalent to Swedish and Scandinavian white men being narrated as hegemonic, their ancestral religion and culture is as well. Whether that hegemony refers to Christianity or Odinism, varies between users. That hegemony is now believed to be threatened by another religion similar to how the different masculinities are competing. The fear of immigrants from Muslim countries ultimately connects with the collective trauma of a collapse of Scandinavian society and extinction of the white race. Not only are immigrants perceived as impure, their religion is as well. The expansion of Islam in Northern Europe is hence recognised as a negative phenomenon. It is believed that the Scandinavian ethnicity has since the dawn of its civilization believed in Odinism, and later in Christianity. One of the biggest representations of whiteness, namely its religion, is now being shattered by a foreign, destructive religion.

5.3.3. The Internal Threat

In Connell's (2005) theory of hegemonic masculinity, a complicit man is one who may not necessarily embody the traits of the idealised hegemonic masculinity but is nonetheless complicit in its maintenance and reproduction. These men may not be at the top of the social hierarchy, but they benefit from the power and privilege that comes with being a man in a patriarchal society. Since complicit men are not actively opposing hegemonic masculinity, they are not viewed as a threat by those who achieve hegemony. Consequently, they play an important role in society as they partake in upholding the hierarchy of masculinities. Men who are expected to be complicit, but who actively choose to oppose the hierarchy, and thus lose their convenient position, can be considered traitors. Mayer (2014) notes that traitors or those who betray the collective cause can play an important role in defining the boundaries of the group and reinforcing group identity. He also discusses how narratives of betrayal can be used to mobilise collective action against an internal enemy, particularly in the context of nationalist movements.

The traitors might in this context be white men who in some way deviate from the ideal and norm of being a white supremacist man. Two posts from the thread "Nordic Strength, new National Socialist group for former NMR-members" read as follows:

> But hold on… where are you, you cowardly weakling? You sit behind your screens and write 'more battle', 'reclaim the country' and so on. But where the hell are you? Participate in the battle. Or, shut up. (Flashback 2:66)

> When I see the picture of these nordic men who want to show their strength, I see a group of boys who try to be 'manly' 'nordic broooothers'…. Nonsense and they could just join a role play-group and pretend to be trolls in some forest. They are not nationalists, they are a cult. (Flashback 2:12)

It appears that the users are criticising nationalists who deviate from the preferred way of thinking in terms of white supremacism and its politics. The criticism is posted on a thread dedicated to discuss the new extremist right wing party "Nordic Strength", and several points are lifted as to why they are incorrect in their beliefs and strategies. The members of the party are referred to as cowards unwilling to fight for their country, like true men. These statements by the users entail that the members of the party could live up to the hegemony if they merely chose to participate and employ the correct mindset of a white nationalist. "Participate in the battle. Or shut up." is an example of the member having the possibility of claiming hegemony, or complicit masculinity, but choosing not to do it because of internal doubt and a faulty mindset. The ideal features of a Viking, namely being an active participant, having strength, and being willing to fight for his country and culture, are not evident amongst the members of the party. They are not necessarily threatening the hegemony as immigrant men and Islam are, they are rather weakening the internal structure, as traitors.

Another category of society which is referred to in a similar way as wrongful nationalist men are, is the police. A similar form of passivity as white nationalist men have sunken into is credited to Swedish police in the following quotes taken from the Stormfront thread "Swedistan":

> Police in Malmö invited all the Malmö gangstas for a little chit chat party to discuss the crime ... scratch that, to beg them like the little (insert the you know what) they are, to stop shooting each other. Lol. Yes. That actually happened *facepalm* and offered them pizza as a 'peace offering'. First they tried few months back with fika haha. No. I am not making this up. You can't possibly

make this stuff up. Just come to Sweden to see the absurdity in every day life. (Stormfront 1:28)

This rot would never have happened in the Third Reich. Swedish cops must be a bunch of pansies. They should wade into these criminals. People have a sovereign right to defend their homes and their children. The governments are ordained by God to bear the sword of terror against evil-doers. It seems that Sweden is intent on committing national suicide. (Stormfront 1:29)

The situation regarding Swedish police's handling of criminals in the city Malmö is used as an example in the first post. The police are said to "beg" the criminal "gangstas" to stop shooting, instead of taking firm action. Kind-hearted actions like these are frowned upon by the user. It is seen as an absurd way of handling crime. The role that police are expected to have in Sweden is thus the opposite of this. They are supposedly meant to take firm action against shootings and other violent crimes, just as ideal men did in old Scandinavia. Ergo, police should act and reflect in accordance with a true Viking. When police thus go against it, they are seen as traitors who are failing in their task of protecting and upholding Swedish society.

The main issue with Swedish police is, according to the users, their inadequacy in protecting and keeping Sweden safe, which is one of the essential attributes of a true Viking. If a man cannot fight for his country or family, and keep those who live in it safe, he is not deserving of being a Viking. Governmental agencies are thought to be "ordained by God" to protect the safety of its people. The belief that a country should have a group of carefully chosen fighters whose only mission is to stop invaders, does still exist within patriotic and nationalist groups who want to rekindle old Scandinavia where white Scandinavian men were 'true' men, and had a high social status. The fact that Swedish police cannot fulfil their purpose, results in them being heavily criticised as uncaring and therefore seen as traitors of Swedish citizens, their society, and culture. Their traitorous actions are ultimately overruling the way true men are supposed to act.

Apart from complicit masculinities being part of the social order, Connell (2005) also writes about subordinate and marginalised masculinities. Subordinate masculinity refers to men who occupy a lower status in society due to their class, race, and sexuality whereas marginalised masculinity refers to men who are excluded from normative forms of masculinity, altogether.

Due to this, marginalised men suffer discrimination and stigma. The hierarchy of masculinities stresses how the division and construction of its parts shapes men's experiences and relationships with one another. An example of subordinate and marginalised men are those who deviate from normative sexuality. Examples of sexually deviant men mentioned in the data are homosexual men, transgender women, and transgender men. As stated previously in the walkthrough of the antagonists, sexually deviant men are claimed to be expressing a completely wrongful masculinity, resulting in them being portrayed as the least desired version of a man and the opposite of the white supremacist ideal. A post taken from "Swedistan" mentions these individuals in the negative manner Connell would predict: "They even have a special changing room at my gym! So both degenerate men and females can use the same place, oh yay... And a lot of mothers take their children there too. Sick, filthy and degenerate." (Stormfront 1:5).

The user writes about "special changing rooms" for men and women who do not conform with the normative gender roles, namely male and female. Individuals who use the changing rooms are referred to as "degenerate", and the fact that mothers allow their children to use them causes irritation with the user. It appears that the establishment of changing rooms for individuals who do not identify as male or female is relatively new for the user. After spending a lifetime with only two options of changing rooms, the user is faced with a third one that challenges their perception of gender. Those who use the third option of changing rooms are called "sick, filthy and degenerate", as opposed to those who use male and female changing rooms. After being neglected in society, individuals who identify as other than male or female are now given the option to use a separate changing room to help with comfortability and safety. It is thus this change that the user opposes. The former exclusion of the LGBTQI+ community correlates to the ideal society that white supremacists hold in high regard. Only those who occupy the high statuses in society are meant to thrive and be rewarded with what they deserve and want. The fact that people in the LGBTQI+ community are being more widely accepted in society and given opportunities they were not given before, goes against the ideal white Scandinavia.

By reading the previous post in relation to another post from "Swedistan", it becomes clear that the target group are not necessarily foreign born. The post reads: "Swedish homo in drag brings teenage muslims home, gets stabbed to death. The homo's wig slipped, and a 16 year old muslim realised that it is not a woman, so he stabbed the homo to death." (Stormfront

1:17). It is difficult to assume the skin colour or ethnicity of the people using the "special changing rooms" in the previous quote since there is no mention of this. In the second quote, however, the user makes a distinction between "homo" and "muslim", thus implying that they indeed are two separate groups of antagonists. Instead of portraying an external threat like immigrants and a foreign religion do, individuals identifying with the LGBTQI+ community are considered an internal threat. It is claimed that Scandinavia's own inhabitants are identifying as other than male or female, not immigrants. The user even expresses more distaste toward the homosexual man than to the immigrant men, most likely due to his inconsistency in masculinity, both bodily and spiritually. The user's wording implies that the man who was stabbed to death deserved it because of his sexual orientation, regardless of who killed him. The user writes "So he stabbed the homo to death." thus diminishing the victim to a lowly regarded "homo"; not a Swedish white man who was stabbed to death by an immigrant.

The first of the two quotes also highlights the reason behind the villainisation of individuals who identify with the LGBTQI+ community, primarily homosexual men and transgender men and women. The user describes people using the third option of changing rooms as "sick, filthy and degenerate", thus implying that the individuals embody something the user disapproves of. As previously discussed, whiteness is a symbol of purity from white supremacist men. The same can be said about heterosexuality as a symbol of purity. Transgender men and women who no longer identify with the gender they were assigned at birth are perceived as spoiled and depraved as they are dishonouring the predetermined gender roles white supremacist have. To dishonour the body you were born in by transitioning into a male or female, or identify as non-binary is considered sinful and a violation of masculinity and femininity.

Connell (2005) does not discuss the function and perception of transsexual or non-binary individuals in the world of hegemonic masculinity, although they would fall in the same category as homosexual men due to their sexual deviancy. If it were up to white supremacists, they would not be granted the same positions as, to them, ordinary men and women. Since they do not conform to the set gender roles in old Scandinavian society, they will not have a function, and will thus be considered immoral and threatening. The data suggests that transgender men and women, along with homosexual men, occupy a marginalised

masculinity within the hierarchy of masculinities which Scandinavian white supremacists have established.

5.3.4. The Female Role

Women and their femininity are, as Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) write, defined in relation to masculinity. In this way, femininity is often constructed as subordinate to masculinity and associated with attributes such as weakness, emotionality, and nurturing, while masculinity is associated with strength, aggression, and competitiveness. The narrative of women more commonly being portrayed as victims than men thus derives from gender stereotypes and patriarchal power structures (Walklate et al, 2019). According to Connell (2005) and Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), hegemonic femininity refers to the dominant and idealised form of femininity that is privileged and valued within a particular culture or society. As discussed earlier, Scandinavian white women who partake in upholding the white supremacist ideal are believed to occupy hegemonic femininity. It is a set of practices, values, and characteristics that are associated with being a "good" and desirable woman, and it is a type of femininity that is complementary to hegemonic masculinity.

Hegemonic femininity includes traits such as nurturing, emotional sensitivity, and attractiveness, but it also involves the reinforcement of gendered hierarchies and the subordination of other forms of femininity that do not conform to these ideals. The data can reveal how Scandinavian white supremacist men are categorising and possibly subordinating the existing forms of femininity. One user compliments Nordic women on the thread "Swedishness/Swedish identity" by writing: "Nordic women are known for their beauty, most of all Swedish women, I personally think that Swedish women have a prominent international position." (Flashback 1:12). Another user makes a distinction between different forms of femininity on the thread "Nordic Strength, new National Socialist group for former NMR-members":

> If you think "nazis are ugly" you should google "leftist vs national woman"
> and then you will see who is ugly. Overweight with tattoos everywhere and
> pink hair might be your dream girl, the boys are scrawny and quiet, pathetic!
> (Flashback 2:36)

The quotes reveal a categorisation of femininities. Whilst Nordic women are praised or referred to in a positive manner, leftist women are depicted as lower in rank. Nordic and Swedish women are said to have a prominent position, thus implying that they occupy a correct form of femininity. The most favourable attribute a woman can have, according to that reasoning, is her appearance. If a woman is attractive, she is viewed as desirable. Since the nonideal woman is described as overweight and having tattoos and an obscure hair colour, the ideal woman must present the opposite. The ideal woman is thus on the skinnier side, with a traditional hair colour with no tattoos to ruin her perfect appearance. As the nonideal women mentioned in the second quote are paired with "scrawny and quiet" boys, they are not fitted to compliment an ideal man who embodies the role of the Viking. That man should, instead, be paired with the ideal woman who is mentioned in the first quote. This is an example of a hegemonic femininity which is constructed in relation to hegemonic femininity.

By actively going against the set norms a Nordic woman is said to have according to white supremacist men, they might lose the position of a victim. As seen in previous quotes, women often fall victim to the propaganda of the Scandinavian political establishment, and immigrant men who hurt and rape them. Although this abuse and subsequent victimhood is perceived as unacceptable by the users, it is necessary in order for them to conform to the female role of the victim that Walklate (2019) deems as dominantly female. When a woman does not conform with the ideals of a Scandinavian woman, she loses her position as a victim, and as someone who should be protected by white Scandinavian men.

Just as there exists a hierarchy of masculinities, the users write about femininity as a hierarchy, where one end corresponds to their perception of hegemonic masculinity, whereas the other end consists of incorrect femininities. At the top of the hierarchy sits the traditional Scandinavian femininity which is compliant with Scandinavian hegemonic masculinity, whilst a progressive and unattractive femininity is positioned at the bottom. Despite women being villainized, they are not perceived to be as dangerous as the male antagonists mentioned above. They are rather believed to be a consequence of the leftist progressive forces spreading in Scandinavian society. It is plausible that women are underestimated by white supremacist men due to their inferiority to masculinity. Instead of perceiving women who deviate from the ideal as physical threats, they are seen as a deformity which threatens and causes imbalance in the hierarchy of masculinities and femininities.

5.4. Fighting Back

Presser (2018) explains an underdog story as a narrative of struggle and eventual triumph over adversity. The underdog story typically features a protagonist who faces significant challenges or obstacles and appears to be at a disadvantage compared to a more powerful opponent. Through perseverance, ingenuity, or some other exceptional quality, the underdog overcomes the odds and emerges victorious. Similarly, Mayer (2014, pp. 30, 51, 83) argues that the concept of triumph is an essential element of successful narratives in collective action. According to Mayer (2014), narratives of triumph typically involve three key elements: the achievement of a goal, the overcoming of obstacles or adversity, and a sense of collective empowerment or agency. Mayer (2014) emphasises that these elements work together to create a sense of momentum and direction in the narrative, giving participants a sense of purpose and motivation to continue their collective action.

As argued for previously, Scandinavian white supremacist men claim that they are experiencing challenges and are thus placed in a position of great disadvantage. For them to consider themselves underdogs and thus be in need of an underdog narrative, there must exist a hope that they can overcome the struggle. In posts that mention the possible extinction of the Scandinavian white people and collapse of Scandinavian society, there is a trace of communicated hope. Two posts taken from "Scandinavian struggle against multiculturalism" and "Swedistan" read:

> The problem is that if we want to save our Scandinavia we have to do
> something NOW!!! It's not too late, we just have to remember where we stand
> and remember that we all MUST unite, if we do not unite we're lost.
> (Stormfront 2:2)

> I say it is time for the decent minded Whites of Sweden to take a stand now
> otherwise their country is going to be ruined forever. (Stormfront 1:23)

The urgency and desperation in their appeals to the other users suggest that there both is a threat as well as a trace of hope that they can eliminate it. The users refer to a struggle that Scandinavians and Swedes are experiencing, which has consequently resulted in them suffering. Scandinavians and Swedes are thought to be losing, whereas those who have caused the suffering are thriving. Thereby, there exists a victim and an oppressor in their underdog narrative, those being Scandinavians and Swedes, and those responsible for the

ongoing conflict. Now that the users have claimed their victimhood in the oppression which is said to be taking place, they must achieve a obtainable goal, create a sense of empowerment and unity, and eventually persevere.

Alexander (2004) points out that situated vocabulary is essential when establishing a trauma narrative. Through the use of situated vocabulary, a collective can overcome the trauma and, by that, re-narrate the social bonds which have been ruptured. The users use imperative language to communicate the severity of their situation, and to motivate others into believing that they can conquer the obstacles which have restrained them. They are attempting to make Scandinavians and Swedes aware of the situation and subsequently create a sense of unity which will inspire them into action. It is "our Scandinavia" that is in danger, and "their country" that might be ruined forever. It is thus up to "us" or "them", meaning Scandinavians and Swedes, to overcome this obstacle.

The final step in fulfilling the narrative of a triumph or underdog story is to create momentum, purpose, and motivation within the collective (Mayer, 2014; Presser, 2018). A post on the thread "Scandinavian struggles against multiculturalism" can provide us with a narrative containing just that. The user writes: "We must rekindle the flames of Midgård in the hearts of our brethren, the heathen, proud and defiant Will to resist the oppression and hatered [sic] directed against our kind." (Stormfront 2:7). The momentum in the post is the buildup of energy. The user generates excitement by writing about a collective spirit which is being threatened. The need to "rekindle the flames of Midgård" is the purpose and motivation in the user's underdog narrative.

The collective urge to fight back and re-narrate the shared identity goes along with Giesen's (2004) interpretation of a collective identity's ongoing process. White supremacist men are attempting to re-narrate their identity and social bonds by establishing the Viking as an ideal in modern society. After being ruptured by the cultural trauma, the collective identity is now in the process of being re-narrated with the use of a triumph where white Scandinavian men find the strength and union to fight back against those who have ruined their ideal society.

6. Concluding Discussion

This thesis set out to investigate how the collective of Scandinavian white supremacist men construct their collective narrative, both in the context of their collective identity and memory, as well as their contemporary social struggles. The use of narrative theory allows for a focus on cultural trauma as the cause for the collective narrative, and subsequent construction of victimhood and perpetrator. The representation and understanding of masculinity and femininity also become of importance in the discussion and manifestation of a cultural trauma for a male dominated collective. After gathering and analysing data from four threads concerned with the topics of Scandinavian white identity, its society and its limits of inclusion, I have concluded the study in the following way.

The collective narrative, identity, and memory, as defined by Alexander (2004) and Eyerman (2022), has its roots in the myth of an ideal society. The ideal is defined by a sense of collectivism and collective spirit that is exclusive for white people, and which is said to have existed for thousands of years. Whiteness is not only constructed as a skin colour, but as a token for purity and legitimacy. Within the construction of the ideal society exists a hierarchy. The hierarchy is believed to be made up of its inhabitants as well as outsiders who represent the nonideal. At the top of the hierarchy sits the proud white man who occupies hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). He is perceived as the symbol of purity and strength, and he is thought to act as the protector of the ideal and holy society that white people have built for generations. In white supremacist mens' collective narrative, the white proud man is the protagonist, as well as the victim of the perceived conflict taking place in their society today. His victimhood also conforms with the role of an underdog (Presser, 2018). The proud white man is the embodiment of a true Viking. The role of the Viking stems from old Scandinavia where true and honourable men fought for the safety and fortune of their people, without fear of anyone or anything.

The ideal is narrated and constructed in opposition to the nonideal. The ideal is defined by whiteness, purity and legitimacy, whereas the nonideal is impure and threatening. The nonideal is made up of a set of antagonists who have entered society gradually. The antagonists are narrated as the opposite to the protagonist, and their negative roles and characteristics are used to strengthen the collective spirit amongst white men (Mayer, 2014). The plurality and gradual invasion of the antagonists is partly based on the antisemitic

concept of the "Jew", and the belief that there are conspiring actors with influential power who are set out to destroy white Christian men (Alexander & Adams, 2023). These more dominant antagonists then pave the way for the external enemies, such as the immigrant, left voters, feminists, and members of the LGBTQI+ community.

The object of struggle, and what is narrated as the cultural trauma (Alexander, 2004; Eyerman, 2022), is the threat against and possible extinction of the 'white race' and the ideal it upholds. The threat is claimed to be against the white proud man and everything he represents. Not only is his influential role in danger, but his masculinity, his religious belief, his body, and his sexuality are also being challenged by the antagonists. The gender hierarchy that the white proud man is dependent on is also challenged by women who do not comply with their own role in society. The antagonists are thus believed to threaten and damage white Scandinavian men's collective identity, which results in them having to re-narrate it.

In order to save themselves and bring Scandinavia back to its ideal state, the white men must, according to their collective narrative, unite and fight back against the oppression. By overcoming the hardship and ending up as the unforeseen winners, they are completing and achieving the role of an underdog (Presser, 2018). The newly established collective narrative is thus defined by misery and struggle, however, there is a trace of hope considering that they are applying an underdog narrative which gives them confidence. Scandinavian white men construct their collective narrative based on their shared historic perception of how an ideal society is constructed, versus how the nonideal is constructed. As the nonideal has started to challenge and threaten the hegemonic state of the white men's society, this is also narrated as their social problems in contemporary Scandinavian society.

Future research should focus on other possible methods to employ when finding a cultural trauma. Considering the limitations of my study, I was only able to use a narrow set of data from a few sources. Other methods could entail wider samples and personal experiences from the members of the collectives. The impossibility of asking follow-up questions in the case of my method limits the deeper understanding and reasonings for their collective narrative and identity. Other qualitative methods could thus allow for such analytical depth and problematisation.

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