DIGITAL ECHOES: UNRAVELING THE TRANSNATIONAL SPREAD OF FAR-RIGHT IDEOLOGIES THROUGH THE IDENTITARIAN MOVEMENT'S SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIES

ABSTRAK

Bangkitnya gerakan sayap kanan di seluruh dunia, yang dicontohkan oleh Identitarian Movement, menekankan pentingnya media sosial dalam mobilisasi politik dan penyebaran ideologi. Penelitian ini mengangkat pertanyaan: Bagaimana Identitarian Movement memanfaatkan kelebihan media sosial untuk menyebarkan ideologinya secara transnasional? Melalui pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, studi ini menganalisis data sekunder dari laporan, buku, dan basis data akademis, dengan fokus pada penggunaan strategis platform seperti Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, dan Telegram oleh Identitarian Movement. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa gerakan ini memanfaatkan kelebihan media sosial berupa visibilitas, kemampuan mengedit, ketahanan, dan asosiasi untuk membuat dan menyebarkan konten berdampak tinggi yang menarik secara visual yang dirancang untuk melibatkan dan meradikalisasi audiens. Kampanye "Defend Europe" disorot sebagai contoh penting dari strategi ini yang sedang berlangsung. Penulis berpendapat bahwa memahami taktik digital ini sangat penting untuk memahami penyebaran ideologi sayap kanan jauh secara global dan untuk mengembangkan strategi kontra-ekstremisme yang efektif. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa penggunaan media sosial yang cakap oleh Identitarian Movement tidak hanya meningkatkan jangkauan mereka tetapi juga memperkuat pengaruh mereka di lintas batas nasional, yang menimbulkan tantangan besar bagi institusi demokratis dan kohesi sosial. Kata kunci: Gerakan sayap kanan jauh, Identitarian Movement, strategi media sosial, radikalisasi digital.

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ABSTRACT

The rise of far-right movements globally, exemplified by the Identitarian Movement, underscores the significance of social media in political mobilization and ideological dissemination. This research addresses the question: How does the Identitarian Movement utilize social media affordances to propagate its ideologies transnationally? Through a qualitative case study approach, this study analyzes secondary data from reports, books, and academic databases, focusing on the Identitarian Movement's strategic use of platforms like Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and Telegram. The findings reveal that the movement exploits social media affordances of visibility, editability, persistence, and association to craft and disseminate high-impact, visually appealing content designed to engage and radicalize audiences. The "Defend Europe" campaign is highlighted as a significant example of these strategies in action. The author argues that understanding these digital tactics is crucial for comprehending the global spread of far-right ideologies and for developing effective counter-extremism strategies. The study concludes that the Identitarian Movement's adept use of social media not only enhances their reach but also solidifies their influence across national borders, posing substantial challenges to democratic institutions and social cohesion.

Keywords: Far-right movements, Identitarian Movement, social media strategies, digital radicalization

INTRODUCTION

The rise of far-right movements globally is an alarming trend, with the Identitarian Movement serving as a prominent example. These movements have harnessed the power of social media for political mobilization and ideological dissemination, as evidenced by various studies (Berger, 2019; Gill et al., 2017). Social media platforms have transformed contemporary political landscapes, enabling the rapid spread of extremist ideologies across national borders (González-Bailón et al., 2011). Understanding the mechanics of this digital propagation is crucial for comprehending the global reach and influence of far-right ideologies.

The Identitarian Movement is particularly well-suited as a case study for several reasons. Firstly, the movement has been at the forefront of using social media to advance its agenda. Their adept use of platforms like Twitter, YouTube, and Telegram for disseminating high-quality, visually appealing content makes them a prime example of how far-right groups exploit digital tools for political ends (Schlegel, 2020; ISD Global, 2021). Secondly, the movement's activities are transnational, providing a comprehensive look at how far-right ideologies can transcend national borders and influence diverse political environments (Global Project Against Hate and Extremism, 2021). Additionally, Generation Identity, a key faction within the movement, employs sophisticated propaganda materials, slogans, and symbols to propagate their ethnonationalist views, which are designed to resonate deeply with their audience and facilitate widespread dissemination (Hope Not Hate, 2017; Weiß & Ball, 2020). By examining the Identitarian Movement, researchers can gain valuable insights into the strategies and impacts of contemporary far-right movements, particularly in how they leverage digital platforms to expand their reach and influence.

Unchecked far-right extremism on social media has profound societal implications, contributing to increased polarization, hate crimes, and threats to democratic institutions (Dresden & Howard, 2016). The potential for these movements to incite real-world violence poses significant risks to public safety and social cohesion (Costello & Hawdon, 2018). Addressing this issue is imperative to maintaining societal harmony and ensuring the integrity of democratic processes.

For international relations studies, understanding the dynamics of digital radicalization is essential (Alizadeh et al., 2014). This research is particularly relevant for policymakers and law enforcement agencies tasked with developing effective countermeasures against online extremism (Byman, 2021). It highlights the intersection of digital technology and radical political movements, offering insights into contemporary challenges in these fields.

Extensive research exists on far-right movements and their use of social media, highlighting key findings and identifying gaps in the literature (Ferrara, 2017; Berlet & Lyons, 2000). Specific studies on the Identitarian Movement or analogous groups, provide a foundation for further exploration (Blazak, 1998; Copsey, 2014). These studies offer valuable insights but also underscore the need for deeper, comparative analyses. There is a notable lack of detailed comparative analysis on the methods employed by different far-right movements in their social media strategies. Research is needed to elucidate the specific tactics these groups use to engage and expand their audiences across national borders (Jasko et al., 2017). Addressing this gap will enhance our understanding of the transnational spread of far-right ideologies.

This research aims to examine how the Identitarian Movement utilize social media to propagate their ideologies transnationally. Specific objectives include analyzing the strategies employed, the platforms used, and the extent of their reach. This study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of these movements' digital footprints.

This research will contribute to a deeper understanding of digital radicalization and the transnational spread of far-right ideologies (Bouhana et al., 2018). Its findings will have significant implications for developing more effective counter-extremism strategies and policies (Berlet & Vysotsky, 2006). The study aims to impact academic knowledge and practical applications, providing insights into combating online extremism. This study employs a qualitative case study approach, using secondary data from reports, books, and academic databases to investigate the Identitarian Movement's use of social media for transnational ideological propagation. It involves a thorough content analysis of existing literature, including academic articles and policy reports, to identify themes related to Networked Public and Affordance theory. The research examines how the Identitarian Movement crafts and

disseminates its messages to engage and radicalize audiences. By synthesizing findings, the study aims to understand the movement's exploitation of social media affordances such as visibility, editability, persistence, and association.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach through case study research, utilizing secondary data from reports, books, and academic databases to investigate the Identitarian Movement's use of social media for transnational ideological propagation. The research involves a thorough content analysis of existing literature, including academic articles, policy reports, and expert analyses, to identify themes and patterns related to the theories of Networked Public and Affordance theory, specifically regarding affordances of visibility, editability, persistence, and association. By synthesizing findings from various sources, the study aims to understand how the Identitarian Movement crafts and disseminates its messages and how these messages are designed to engage and radicalize their audience.

The reliability and validity of the secondary data used in this study were ensured through several measures. The data sources included reports, books, and academic articles from reputable institutions and researchers known for their work on far-right movements and social media strategies. To mitigate biases, a diverse range of sources was selected to provide a balanced perspective. Cross-referencing data from multiple sources helped to verify the accuracy and consistency of the information. Additionally, the content analysis was conducted systematically, using established coding techniques to identify themes and patterns. By employing these methods, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive and unbiased analysis of the Identitarian Movement's use of social media for ideological propagation.

Networked Public

The concept of networked publics refers to virtual spaces created by networking technologies, such as the internet and social media, that simulate physical spaces, allowing individuals to gather and form communities around shared interests, activities, or social movements. These virtual spaces enable a range of activities from casual socializing to significant political mobilization. The vitality of these networked publics depends heavily on

policy and regulatory contexts, which determine the accessibility, security, and overall functionality of these spaces. Effective governance can foster an environment where meaningful connections and information exchange thrive, while restrictive policies can hinder access and limit community engagement (Dutton, 2018).

Affordance Theory

Affordance theory, rooted in the work of James J. Gibson, focuses on the opportunities for action that objects or environments provide to individuals, based on the properties of the objects and the capabilities of the actors. In the context of social media use within organizations, affordance theory identifies four primary components: visibility, editability, persistence, and association. Visibility allows users to see others' behaviors and knowledge, enhancing awareness and potential collaboration. Editability enables users to revise content before sharing, ensuring clarity and appropriateness. Persistence refers to the lasting availability of content, which supports organizational memory and continuity. Association pertains to the connections between individuals and content, fostering social networks and knowledge sharing (Treem & Leonardi, 2013).

Synthesis

Combining networked publics and affordance theory is essential for analyzing how social media platforms are used by transnational far-right movements. Networked publics provide the virtual spaces for interaction, while affordance theory explains the specific features of social media that these movements exploit. This synthesis allows for a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms these groups use to propagate their ideologies:

Formation and Maintenance of Networked Publics:

- Far-right movements utilize social media to create spaces where members can interact and reinforce each other's beliefs.

Leveraging Social Media Affordances:

- Visibility: Enhances the reach of their messages, making their presence known to a broader audience.
- Editability: Ensures the clarity and impact of their propaganda by allowing careful message construction.
- Persistence: Maintains a continuous presence online, ensuring their messages can be accessed repeatedly.
- Association: Builds networks of like-minded individuals, facilitating recruitment and the spread of their ideologies.

Given the research question, "How does the Identitarian Movement utilize social media to propagate its far-right ideologies transnationally?", the combined framework of networked publics and affordance theory provides a comprehensive lens to analyze their strategies. Researchers can investigate how these movements create and sustain networked publics and how they exploit social media affordances to enhance their visibility, refine their messages, maintain a persistent ideological presence, and build transnational networks.

DISCUSSION

The Identitarian Movement (IM) is rooted in far-right, ethno-nationalist ideology, advocating for "ethnopluralism," which promotes the preservation of distinct ethnic identities within their cultural and historical realms. This movement opposes globalization, multiculturalism, and immigration, especially from non-European countries. Their objectives include preserving European cultural identity, countering multicultural policies, and fostering a "counter-public" to shift the dominant cultural and political discourse towards their ideology (Global Project Against Hate and Extremism, 2023; Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2021).

The Identitarian Movement extensively uses social media platforms like Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Telegram to disseminate their message, recruit members, and coordinate activities. On Twitter, they engage in real-time debates and mobilize supporters. YouTube is crucial for distributing high-quality propaganda videos and vlogs, while Facebook helps organize events and build communities. Instagram shares visual content and redirects followers to Telegram for secure communications. Telegram is used for encrypted

messaging and sharing extreme content away from the scrutiny of mainstream platforms (Global Project Against Hate and Extremism, 2023; Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2021).

Twitter is used for quick updates and mobilization efforts, maintaining presence through constant creation of new accounts after suspensions. YouTube hosts professionally produced videos to attract younger audiences, despite efforts to ban certain channels. Facebook serves as a platform for event organization and community engagement, driven by a few key accounts. Instagram saw a 50% increase in activity around political events, redirecting users to Telegram for less moderated content and coordination of activities. These platforms together enhance the movement's outreach and operational capabilities (Global Project Against Hate and Extremism, 2023; Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2021).

The Identitarian Movement segments its activities and audiences into core members, sympathizers, youth recruits, and international allies. Core members are actively involved in organizing and strategy, while sympathizers engage with content online and occasionally participate in events. Youth recruitment is achieved through modern, professionally produced content that blends nationalist messaging with pop culture. International allies collaborate across borders to create a transnational network of right-wing extremists, emphasizing regional issues to attract local support (Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2021; Hope Not Hate, 2021).

Key figures like Martin Sellner, the leader of the Austrian Identitarian Movement, and Brittany Pettibone Sellner, an American author and activist, play significant roles in the movement's online presence. These personas humanize the movement, making its ideology more accessible and appealing. They use personal narratives, high-quality media production, and strategic framing to attract and radicalize followers. Their online activities include vlogs, speeches, and participation in public debates, enhancing the movement's visibility and credibility (Hope Not Hate, 2021; Global Project Against Hate and Extremism, 2023).

The Identitarian Movement has grown from its roots in France and Italy to become a transnational phenomenon with active branches across Europe and North America. This spread is facilitated by a network of affiliated groups such as Generation Identity in Europe and the

alt-right in America. The movement's transnational appeal is bolstered by a shared anti-globalist and anti-Islamic ideology, which resonates with far-right groups globally. The use of social media and digital platforms has been crucial in this expansion, allowing Identitarian groups to coordinate activities, share strategies, and support each other across borders. The movement's adaptability and decentralized structure enable it to connect with various nationalist and far-right entities worldwide, making it a significant force in contemporary right-wing extremism (Counter Extremism Project, 2023; Zúquete, 2018; Project MUSE, 2022).

The Identitarian Movement's Use of Social Media

The Identitarian Movement's "Defend Europe" campaign in 2017 was a high-profile initiative where activists chartered the C-Star ship to disrupt NGO operations in the Mediterranean Sea aimed at rescuing migrants. This campaign faced numerous logistical and legal challenges, including denial of port access, crew arrests for alleged human smuggling, and an engine failure. Despite these setbacks, the campaign achieved significant media coverage, which the group leveraged to amplify their anti-immigration message. Social media played a crucial role in this campaign. Identitarian activists used platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to broadcast their activities, share updates, and solicit donations, successfully raising over $150,000 through crowdfunding efforts.

Social media played a pivotal role in the "Defend Europe" campaign, significantly amplifying its reach and impact. Identitarian activists utilized platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube not only to broadcast their activities and share real-time updates but also to create a narrative that would attract attention and support from a global audience. These platforms were instrumental in disseminating propaganda materials, including videos, images, and live broadcasts of their actions, which helped maintain a continuous flow of information and engagement with their followers.

The campaign's organizers were adept at using social media to solicit donations, leveraging crowdfunding platforms to finance their activities. By effectively utilizing these digital tools, they managed to raise over $150,000, which was crucial for chartering the C-Star and covering operational costs. The movement's leaders, particularly Martin Sellner, were proficient in crafting messages that resonated with their audience, utilizing emotionally

charged language and visual content to galvanize support. This strategic use of social media not only ensured the financial viability of the campaign but also expanded its visibility, drawing both national and international media attention (Froio & Castelli Gattinara, 2017; Guenther et al., 2020; Hope Not Hate, 2017).

Their success in that specific campaign is simply a window into their adept use of social media which is supported by their robust online presenxes, utilizing platforms like Twitter, Youtube, and Telegram to disseminate their message and engage with their follower.

he Identitarian Movement has a robust online presence, utilizing platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, and Telegram to disseminate their messages and engage with followers. Their digital strategy involves the use of sophisticated, professionally produced content designed to appeal to young audiences. High-quality videos, polished infographics, and engaging social media posts are crafted to attract and retain a youthful demographic. This strategic use of visually appealing and professional content has been instrumental in spreading their ideology and coordinating campaigns across different countries.

The movement employs a variety of media to enhance their outreach. Videos produced by the Identitarian Movement often feature high production values, including professional editing, compelling narratives, and visually striking imagery. These videos are disseminated widely on YouTube and other video-sharing platforms, ensuring that their messages reach a broad audience. For instance, they create content that blends political messaging with elements of youth culture, making their ideology more accessible and attractive to younger viewers (Schlegel, 2020).

Additionally, the Identitarian Movement uses Twitter and Telegram to engage directly with their audience. On these platforms, they share infographics and memes that simplify and visually represent their complex ideological messages. This method not only makes their content more digestible but also encourages sharing, thereby increasing their reach. The movement's strategic use of hashtags and coordinated online campaigns helps to amplify their message and maintain a constant presence in online discussions (ISD Global, 2021).

Identitarian activists are also active on several online forums and chat groups, including Telegram channels and Discord servers. These platforms serve as key venues for planning events, sharing propaganda, and discussing strategies. The movement's reliance on these digital spaces has made it a significant player in the online far-right ecosystem. Online forums and chat groups like Telegram and Discord are crucial for the Identitarian Movement's operations. These platforms offer secure and relatively private spaces for members to coordinate actions and communicate without extensive oversight. For instance, Telegram channels allow the dissemination of information quickly and efficiently to a large audience, facilitating real-time coordination and mobilization. This has been particularly effective for planning flash mobs, protests, and other high-visibility events designed to attract media attention and recruit new members (Global Project Against Hate and Extremism, 2021).

On these platforms, Identitarian activists share a variety of propaganda materials, including memes, videos, and articles that promote their ideology. These materials are often designed to be visually appealing and easily shareable, which helps to amplify their reach. Discussions in these groups also focus on refining and disseminating strategic messaging that aligns with their broader goals of promoting ethnonationalism and opposing immigration and multiculturalism. By continuously adapting their strategies based on feedback and the current sociopolitical climate, the movement maintains its relevance and appeal among its target audience (ISD Global, 2021).

The Identitarian Movement's effective use of these digital spaces has solidified its role in the broader far-right ecosystem. By leveraging the networking capabilities of platforms like Discord and Telegram, they not only coordinate within their ranks but also connect with other far-right groups, enhancing their collective impact. This interconnectedness allows for the sharing of tactics, the building of alliances, and the reinforcement of their ideological narratives across different regions. The movement's digital presence thus acts as a force multiplier, enabling a small number of activists to exert a disproportionate influence on public discourse and far-right activities online (Schlegel, 2020; ISD Global, 2021).

One innovative way in which the Identitarian Movement (IM) gathers support is through the use of memes. The Identitarian Movement effectively uses digital propaganda and memes

to spread their message, leveraging these forms of media to engage and mobilize a younger audience. Memes, in particular, play a crucial role in their digital strategy by providing visually appealing, easily shareable content that resonates with their target demographic. Memes are a powerful tool for the Identitarian Movement because they combine humor, irony, and cultural references, making the underlying messages more palatable and engaging for younger users. These memes often incorporate popular internet trends and cultural symbols, helping them blend seamlessly into the broader social media landscape. The strategic use of memes allows the movement to subtly introduce and normalize extremist ideas within mainstream online discourse (Schlegel, 2020; ISD Global, 2021).

The visual appeal of memes is a key factor in their effectiveness. Memes are designed to be eye-catching and easily understood at a glance, which increases the likelihood that they will be shared widely. This shareability is crucial for spreading the movement's ideology beyond its immediate followers to a broader audience. By using visually striking imagery and succinct, impactful text, the Identitarian Movement ensures that their messages can quickly go viral, reaching thousands of users with minimal effort. This strategic use of memes has been instrumental in spreading their ideology and coordinating campaigns across different countries (Global Project Against Hate and Extremism, 2021; Datadab, 2021). Humor is a central element in the Identitarian Movement's meme strategy. By using jokes, satire, and irony, they make their content more engaging and relatable. This approach not only attracts attention but also helps to build a community around shared values and inside jokes, reinforcing group identity. Cultural references are used to tap into the interests and experiences of younger audiences, making the movement's messages more relevant and appealing. This engagement through humor and cultural relevance helps to maintain a strong digital presence and build a significant online following (Schlegel, 2020).

Generation Identity (GI), a prominent faction of the Identitarian Movement, employs a variety of propaganda materials, slogans, and symbols to propagate their ethnonationalist views. These elements are integral to their strategy of promoting an anti-immigration, anti-multiculturalism agenda and reinforcing a distinct European identity. One of the most prominent symbols used by Generation Identity is the lambda. This Greek letter, representing Spartan warriors, symbolizes resistance and European identity. The lambda is featured

prominently in their branding, including on banners, flags, and digital content, to evoke a sense of historical continuity and cultural heritage. It signifies the group's self-styled mission to protect and preserve European civilization against perceived external threats (Global Project Against Hate and Extremism, 2021; Schlegel, 2020). Slogans are a powerful tool for Generation Identity, encapsulating their core messages succinctly. Phrases like "Defend Europe" and "Stop the Great Replacement" are central to their campaigns. These slogans highlight their opposition to immigration and multiculturalism, suggesting that these phenomena threaten the homogeneity and survival of European culture. "Defend Europe" was notably used during their controversial maritime operation aimed at disrupting migrant rescue efforts in the Mediterranean, framing the mission as a defense of European borders (Hope Not Hate, 2017; Gower, 2017; Weiß & Ball, 2020).

Generation Identity's propaganda materials are designed to be highly effective in engaging and mobilizing supporters. They produce high-quality videos, professional graphics, posters, and social media content that are visually appealing and easily shareable. These materials often leverage modern aesthetics and digital marketing techniques to attract a younger audience. By using compelling visuals and concise, impactful text, Generation Identity ensures their messages resonate widely and deeply with their target demographic, fostering a strong online presence and community support (Global Project Against Hate and Extremism, 2021; Schlegel, 2020).

Another way they use social media is to recruit. The Identitarian Movement primarily recruits through social media platforms, targeting young people with professionally produced content that frames their ethnonationalist agenda in appealing, modern terms. They use memes, videos, and other digital media to attract followers, leveraging platforms like Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook. Additionally, the movement organizes real-world events, such as protests and training camps, to engage and recruit new members.

Social media is a key recruitment tool for the Identitarian Movement. Research shows that Identitarian groups have a significant presence on platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook. For example, the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism (2021) found 67 Twitter accounts for Generation Identity chapters in 14 countries, with nearly 140,000 followers.

The movement's leaders, like Martin Sellner, also maintain substantial followings, which they use to amplify their reach and recruit new members. The Identitarian Movement effectively uses these platforms to disseminate high-quality, visually appealing content that resonates with young audiences. They create and share memes, videos, and other digital media that leverage contemporary cultural trends and aesthetics to make their messages more engaging and shareable (Global Project Against Hate and Extremism, 2021).

In addition to their online activities, the Identitarian Movement organizes various real-world events to further their recruitment efforts. These events include protests, training camps, and other public demonstrations. Such events not only serve as recruitment opportunities but also help to solidify the group's presence and influence in the real world. These activities are often promoted and coordinated through their social media channels, ensuring maximum participation and visibility (ISD Global, 2021). The Identitarian Movement's recruitment strategy is a seamless integration of online and offline efforts. They use their robust online presence to promote real-world activities and vice versa, creating a continuous feedback loop that strengthens their recruitment and mobilization capabilities. This dual approach ensures that they can attract, engage, and retain a committed base of supporters who are active both online and offline (Weiß & Ball, 2020).

The Identitarian Movement has influenced and interacted with various far-right and nationalist groups across Europe and the United States. Their ideology, which emphasizes opposition to immigration and multiculturalism, has found resonance with other extremist groups that share similar views with the help of social media.

In Europe, the Identitarian Movement has forged connections with numerous far-right groups, leveraging their common opposition to immigration and multiculturalism. The movement's ideology, particularly the "Great Replacement" theory, has been embraced by various ethno-nationalist and white supremacist groups. This theory postulates that European populations are being systematically replaced by non-European immigrants, a concept that has been widely propagated across the far-right spectrum (Counter Extremism Project, 2022). Generation Identity, the youth wing of the Identitarian Movement, has been particularly influential. Their slick media campaigns and dramatic public actions, such as the occupation of

the Poitiers mosque construction site, have set a template for other groups. These actions are designed to provoke and garner media attention, thereby spreading their message further (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2020).

In the United States, the Identitarian ideology has influenced groups like Identity Evropa (now known as the American Identity Movement) and Patriot Front. These groups have adopted the Identitarian Movement's emphasis on cultural and ethnic identity, and they use similar strategies for recruitment and propaganda. For example, Patriot Front's recruitment efforts on college campuses mirror the Identitarian Movement's tactics of targeting young, impressionable individuals through visually appealing and ideologically charged content (Colorado Public Radio, 2019; Southern Poverty Law Center, 2020).

Formation and Mainternance of Networked Public

The Identitarian Movement (IM) leverages social media to create interactive spaces that facilitate the reinforcement of members' beliefs, a strategy that is instrumental to their operational and ideological persistence. The use of social media by far-right movements like the IM exemplifies the creation and maintenance of "networked publics," where digital platforms serve as arenas for interaction, affirmation, and mobilization. The IM exploits the affordances of social media to cultivate networked publics—online communities where members can interact in real-time, share content, and validate each other's beliefs. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Telegram provide the infrastructure for these digital echo chambers, where the movement's rhetoric is amplified and dissenting voices are minimized or excluded. This phenomenon is critical in understanding how the IM sustains its ideological coherence and mobilizes its base.

On Twitter, the IM engages in real-time debates and discussions, which allows them to quickly respond to political events, trends, and narratives. This real-time interaction is crucial for maintaining a sense of immediacy and relevance among their followers. By constantly creating new accounts after suspensions, the IM demonstrates resilience and adaptability, ensuring their continued presence in ongoing online conversations. This strategy not only helps in spreading their message but also in rallying supporters around current issues, thereby reinforcing their shared beliefs and objectives.

Facebook is utilized for organizing events and fostering community engagement. Key accounts act as hubs for discussion and mobilization, creating a sense of belonging among members. These accounts often share event information, ideological content, and community updates, providing a constant stream of reinforcement for members' beliefs. The platform's ability to facilitate group formation and event coordination is pivotal for the IM's strategy to create tight-knit communities that can act both online and offline.

To maintain the network, the IM's social media strategy capitalizes on the concept of homophily—the tendency of individuals to associate and bond with similar others. In the context of networked publics, this means that members are primarily exposed to content that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs, creating a feedback loop that reinforces their ideological stance. This reinforcement is critical for maintaining a cohesive movement, as it minimizes exposure to counter-narratives and dissenting opinions that could weaken the group's ideological foundation.

Social media algorithms further enhance this reinforcement by curating content that is likely to engage users based on their past interactions. This algorithmic curation ensures that IM members are consistently fed with content that supports their beliefs, thus deepening their ideological commitment. The echo chamber effect created by these algorithms makes it difficult for members to encounter opposing viewpoints, thereby solidifying their convictions and fostering a more radicalized base.

The IM also encourages user-generated content, where members create and share their own posts, memes, and videos that reflect the movement's ideology. This practice not only diversifies the content available within the network but also empowers members by giving them a platform to express and validate their beliefs. Peer validation through likes, shares, and comments further reinforces these beliefs, as members receive positive feedback from within their community. This participatory culture strengthens the sense of belonging and commitment among members, as they actively contribute to the propagation of their ideology.

Visibility

The Identitarian Movement's "Defend Europe" campaign in 2017 illustrates the critical role of visibility in enhancing the reach of a group's messages and expanding their presence to a broader audience. Despite encountering significant logistical and legal challenges, including port access denial, crew arrests for alleged human smuggling, and engine failure, the campaign achieved notable media coverage, which was instrumental in amplifying their anti-immigration stance. The movement's strategic use of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube further amplified their reach. Through these platforms, they broadcasted activities, shared real-time updates, and solicited donations, successfully raising over $150,000 through crowdfunding.

The activists effectively utilized these digital tools to disseminate propaganda materials, including videos, images, and live broadcasts of their actions, maintaining a continuous flow of information and engagement with their followers. For example, the production of high-quality videos with professional editing and compelling narratives was central to their strategy. These videos, shared widely on YouTube and other video-sharing platforms, ensured that their messages reached a broad audience. Additionally, the use of infographics and memes on platforms like Twitter and Telegram simplified and visually represented their complex ideological messages, making their content more digestible and encouraging sharing, thereby increasing their reach.

The campaign's leaders, particularly Martin Sellner, were adept at crafting messages that resonated with their audience. They employed emotionally charged language and visual content to galvanize support. This strategic use of social media not only ensured the financial viability of the campaign but also significantly expanded its visibility, drawing both national and international media attention. Furthermore, the Identitarian Movement's robust online presence, utilizing platforms like Discord and Telegram for secure and relatively private communication, facilitated the coordination of actions and mobilization of supporters, further enhancing their outreach and impact.

Editability

The Identitarian Movement's approach to editability in their messaging ensures the clarity and impact of their propaganda by allowing for careful and strategic construction of their content. This meticulous approach to crafting messages plays a critical role in their ability to effectively communicate their ideology and mobilize support. The Identitarian Movement extensively utilizes social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Telegram to disseminate their propaganda. These platforms offer various tools for editing and refining content before it is published. For instance, videos produced by the movement often feature high production values, including professional editing, compelling narratives, and visually striking imagery. This polished content is more likely to engage viewers and convey the intended message effectively.

The use of memes and infographics is another example of their emphasis on editability. Memes, by their nature, are easily editable and can be quickly adapted to current trends or specific audiences. This flexibility allows the movement to maintain the relevance and appeal of their content. Infographics, which visually represent complex ideological messages, are carefully designed to be clear and impactful. The ability to edit these graphics ensures that the information is presented in an accessible and engaging manner, enhancing its shareability and reach.

The campaign's success in raising over $150,000 through crowdfunding platforms can be attributed to their carefully edited and constructed appeals for donations. These appeals often use emotionally charged language and persuasive visual content to galvanize support. The editability of these messages allows the movement to tailor their appeals to resonate with their audience's values and concerns, thereby increasing the effectiveness of their fundraising efforts. Leaders like Martin Sellner are particularly skilled in crafting messages that resonate with their audience. The use of emotionally charged language, compelling narratives, and visual content is not left to chance. These elements are carefully edited to ensure they maximize emotional impact and clarity. This strategic construction of narratives helps in maintaining a consistent and persuasive message across various platforms.

Persistence

The Identitarian Movement's persistence in maintaining a continuous online presence ensures that their messages remain accessible and impactful over time. This sustained digital presence is a cornerstone of their strategy, allowing them to continually engage with their audience and keep their ideological narrative in circulation. The Identitarian Movement utilizes multiple social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Telegram to maintain a steady stream of content. By regularly posting updates, videos, infographics, and memes, they ensure that their message is consistently visible to their followers and potential new audiences. This regular activity helps keep their content fresh and relevant, preventing their message from fading into obscurity.

The movement produces high-quality videos and visually appealing graphics that are designed to capture and retain viewers' attention. These materials are shared widely across video-sharing platforms like YouTube and social media, ensuring that their polished and compelling content reaches a broad audience. Additionally, the use of platforms such as Discord and Telegram allows for the continuous dissemination of information and coordination among supporters. These platforms facilitate ongoing discussions, real-time updates, and strategic planning, thereby maintaining the movement's visibility and relevance. By leveraging these tools, the Identitarian Movement ensures that their presence is felt continuously in the digital sphere, allowing their messages to be accessed repeatedly and keeping their audience engaged over the long term.

Association

The Identitarian Movement strategically leverages association to build networks of like-minded individuals, which facilitates recruitment and the spread of their ideologies. By creating and maintaining connections among supporters, they establish a sense of community and solidarity that strengthens their movement. This network-building is achieved through various online platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Discord, and Telegram, where they actively engage with their audience and encourage interaction among followers. These platforms provide spaces for supporters to discuss ideas, share content, and coordinate activities, thereby fostering a robust network of individuals united by common beliefs.

In addition to online engagement, the Identitarian Movement organizes real-world events such as protests, training camps, and conferences. These gatherings serve as opportunities for personal interaction, reinforcing the bonds formed online and further solidifying the network of supporters. By bringing like-minded individuals together in both digital and physical spaces, the movement enhances its recruitment efforts and amplifies the dissemination of its ideologies. This dual approach ensures that their message is spread widely and that new members are continually integrated into the network, sustaining the movement's growth and influence.

The findings of this study highlight several critical implications for developing effective deradicalization strategies aimed at countering the far-right ideologies propagated by the Identitarian Movement. Firstly, given the movement's adept use of social media affordances such as visibility and editability, deradicalization efforts should include targeted online interventions. These interventions can involve creating counter-narratives that directly address and debunk the movement's propaganda. Platforms like Twitter and YouTube, which the movement extensively uses, should be leveraged to disseminate these counter-narratives and engage with individuals at risk of radicalization. Enhanced monitoring and reporting mechanisms are also essential due to the persistent presence of the Identitarian Movement on platforms like Telegram and Discord. Social media companies and law enforcement agencies should collaborate to develop robust systems for tracking extremist content and identifying patterns of radicalization. This can help in swiftly addressing and mitigating the spread of harmful ideologies.

Additionally, the creation of networked publics by the Identitarian Movement suggests that community engagement and education are vital components of deradicalization. Educational programs that raise awareness about the tactics and dangers of far-right extremism should be implemented in schools, community centers, and online forums. Fostering open dialogues within communities can help build resilience against extremist narratives. Support for at-risk individuals is crucial, as the movement's strategy of recruiting youth through modern, professionally produced content highlights the need for accessible counseling services, mentorship programs, and support groups. Collaboration with tech companies is necessary to implement and enforce policies that prevent the spread of extremist

content. Features such as content moderation, algorithm adjustments to reduce the visibility of harmful content, and support for counter-extremism initiatives are crucial. Continuous research into the methods and impacts of far-right movements should inform policy development, enabling the creation of legislation that addresses the root causes of radicalization and provides frameworks for effective deradicalization programs.

CONCLUSION

The primary aim of this study was to analyze the strategies employed by the Identitarian Movement to enhance their visibility, clarity, impact, persistence, and association in disseminating their ideologies. By focusing on their "Defend Europe" campaign in 2017, we explored how the movement leveraged digital and physical platforms to maintain a continuous presence, carefully construct messages, and build robust networks of like-minded individuals.

The main findings indicate that the Identitarian Movement successfully uses social media and real-world events to engage and expand their supporter base. Their persistent digital presence ensures their messages are continuously accessible, while high-quality content and strategic message construction enhance clarity and impact. Additionally, the movement's efforts in network-building through both online platforms and offline events facilitate recruitment and the spread of their ideologies, demonstrating the effectiveness of a dual approach.

These insights have significant implications for the field of knowledge regarding political movements and social media strategies. They underscore the importance of a multifaceted approach that combines digital engagement with real-world activities to maintain and grow a movement. This approach not only sustains member engagement but also enhances the visibility and appeal of the movement's ideologies.

However, this study acknowledges limitations, particularly the focus on a single case study of the Identitarian Movement. While this movement provides valuable insights, further research is necessary to generalize these findings across different movements and contexts. Additionally, the study primarily examines online and public activities, leaving out more covert or less documented strategies that may also play a crucial role.

For future research, it is recommended to conduct comparative studies across various political movements to better understand the generalizability of these strategies. Investigating the impact of different types of content and engagement methods on recruitment and retention could also provide deeper insights. Furthermore, exploring the role of counter-strategies and resistance against such movements can help develop more effective measures to combat the spread of extremist ideologies.

In conclusion, the Identitarian Movement's strategic use of visibility, clarity, persistence, and association offers a robust model for understanding how contemporary political movements can leverage digital and physical platforms to grow and maintain their influence. Further research in this area will enhance our understanding and provide critical tools for both supporting positive social movements and countering extremist groups.

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