Received: 2 February 2022 | Revised: 3 June 2022 | Accepted: 20 July 2022

DOI: 10.1111/nana.12873

ARTICLE

WILEY

Is 'white nationalism', nationalism?

Maeve Rigney[1] | Carolyn E Holmes[1,2]

[1]Political Science and Public Administration, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Mississippi, USA

[2]Department of Sociology, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

Correspondence
Carolyn E Holmes, Political Science and Public Administration, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Mississippi, USA
Email: ceh679@msstate.edu

Abstract

Are 'white nationalists' really nationalists? This label is one that right-wing, white activists themselves have chosen, and as such, compels rigorous investigation to avoid simply adopting the preferred nomenclature of these activists and their ambitions. The nation and nationalism are concepts with rich scholarly histories, and this paper seeks to examine the discussion, activities and statements of so-called white nationalists in light of this literature. We argue through a three-fold concept of the nation—based on territoriality, population and symbolic and/or cultural content—that the vision of the political community and ambitions of these activists falls short of the standard of a nation and that their aspirations do not conform to what the literature lays out as nationalism. We argue, therefore, that using the language of 'white nationalism' to describe these groups obfuscates and sanitises their motives and lends undue legitimacy to their standing in public discourse.

KEYWORDS
far right/radical right/populist right, race, social movements, symbolism, territory

1 | INTRODUCTION

Alt-Right. Identitarian. Race Realist. These terms have come to be associated with a resurgence in public organising by white, right-wing, often violent, groups in the United States, Australia and Western Europe, especially since the

mid-2010's. Under the banner of 'white nationalism', this movement has its roots in the post-Civil War and post-Civil Rights eras in the United States and grew dramatically with the rise in internet connectivity in the mid-1990's (Wojcieszak, 2010). The advent of the Trump Campaign in 2015, and his election to the Presidency in 2016 in the United States further emboldened public organisation of these groups. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, the number of so-called white nationalist groups in the United States has risen 55% since 2017 (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2020a, p. 4).

But what, if anything, is nationalist about 'white nationalism?' Is the appellation 'nationalist'—one that many such groups have themselves used to describe their activities—a fitting description, or a politically advantageous euphemism? How does 'white nationalism' map onto the concept of nationalism? While such a question may seem like a mere scholarly inquiry into conceptualisation, there is a pressing need for evidence-based scrutiny of the language around right-wing organisations, as the appellation 'white nationalist' has public and cultural currency that other labels like 'white supremacist' do not. Both public opinion and public policy have seen a more widespread acceptance of 'white nationalism' in whole and in part, with policy makers taking cues from movement activists in the United States and Western Europe (Clark, 2020), and public opinion being significantly more sympathetic to 'white nationalism' as opposed to other appellations like 'white supremacist' (Fearnow, 2021; "Morning Consult/POLITICO National Tracking Poll #2107125", 2021).

Popular media writers and journalists, despite rigorous debate on the appropriateness of the term (see, e.g., Rubin, 2019), often use the term in ways that distinguish the movement and signal its mainstream appeal (see, e.g., Collins, 2020; Taub, 2016; Zidan, 2018). Media have often highlighted voices that make the distinction between 'white nationalists' and 'racists' with the former being framed as the acceptable category (Oprysko, 2019; St. Félix, 2019; Stollznow, 2020; Weigel, 2016). The scholarly study of 'white nationalism' has also ballooned, with Google Scholar pulling more than 2500 articles with the phrase in the title over the last year alone. While this almost certainly not be indicative of scholars adopting the framing or taking seriously the idea of so-called white nationalism *qua* nationalism, there is a widespread seeding of the frame in scholarly discourse.

We examine the idea of 'white nationalism' through the lens of three distinguishing features of nationalism: territory, population and symbolic-cultural content. Using white supremacist texts, secondary literature and original message board posts on white supremacist forums like Stormfront, we assess the ways in which so-called white nationalists discuss and use ideas of territory, population and symbolic-cultural content in their organising and internal discussions. What we find, however, is that across all three dimensions of the nation as a concept, these activists, groups and audiences fall short of the basic characteristics of a nation, and their movement often does not use the frames of nationalism. So-called white nationalist groups have made attempts to 'reclaim' their respective countries through elections and advocacy and have successfully influenced policy discussions, but independent territorial claims made by white activists lack coherence or widespread legitimacy, even within the movement. The definition of population—whites—is similarly fraught, with activists advancing contradictory racial and descent-based standards to determine who can be a member of a white nation, while others adopt largely ideological markers for belonging. The symbolic and cultural definitions of the white nation are also fractured. Myriad groups have symbols that are unrecognised ed by others. Within the movement, the narrative of alleged white oppression around which so-called white nationalists do coalesce is a thin and relatively indistinct notion of national history, which is neither a founding nor connected to a territorial claim. There is significant disagreement on the use and meaning of 'white history', and whether such history should include, for example, references to Christianity, or instead rely on faith traditions from pre-Christian Europe.

We argue, therefore, that 'white nationalists' are not nationalists in the scholarly sense of the word. This is not to say, however, that these groups are harmless or peripheral. We believe that the scope of their ambitions and their mainstream presence is significant; the proponents of these ideologies hold a worrying degree of influence in democracies around the world. That being said, there are scholarly ramifications of adopting this term, insofar as it stretches and contests the meaning of the words 'nation' and 'nationalism'. Additionally, while this may seem to be a semantic exercise, we further argue that by adopting this terminology, scholars are tacitly adopting the framing and preferred

nomenclature of these activists, thereby granting them legitimacy (Anti-Defamation League, 2017) and the grounds for greater public acceptance (Fearnow, 2021; Hatewatch Staff, 2015) that is undue for groups that are explicitly promoting a hateful and divisive ideology.

2 | UTILITY OF 'WHITE NATIONALISM' AS A TERM

The Southern Poverty Law Center defines a group as 'white nationalist' when that group 'espouse[s] white supremacist or white separatist ideologies, often focusing on the alleged inferiority of nonwhites … [and] seek[s] to return to an America that predates the implementation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965' (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2022b). Part of the white activists' goal in adopting the nomenclature 'white nationalist' is in making their cause more acceptable to mainstream audiences (European Center for Populist Studies, 2022; Anti-Defamation League, 2017), and distinguishing their cause by arguing that 'unlike white supremacists who are fueled by hatred of other races, they are driven by a desire to protect and preserve white identity and culture, which they argue is threatened by diversity and multiculturalism' (Hartzell, 2020, p. 3).

There is also evidence that the rebranding of these activities has been met with broader mainstream acceptability. In a 2021 Morning Consult/Politico Poll, voters from across the political spectrum were significantly more likely to report a 'somewhat' or 'very favorable' 'white nationalism' as compared to 'white supremacy'. This effect was strongest among republican-identifying men, of whom 13% reported a favourable rating of 'white supremacy', but 23% reported the same of 'white nationalism' ("Morning Consult/POLITICO National Tracking Poll #2107125", 2021). It is imperative, therefore, that scholars critically examine this language, at risk of adopting in scholarship the preferred nomenclature of hate groups.

We argue, however, that it is of particular importance to critically examine the appellation 'white nationalist' in the context of scholarship on nationalism, for two distinct but interrelated reasons. First, there is a scholarly imperative in the social sciences to build analysis around clear and useful concepts as the foundation of social scientific research. In order to maintain what Gerring calls the coherence, differentiation, and theoretical and field utilities of the concept of nationalism, the usage should be critically examined in light of the existing literature before being adopted (Gerring, 1999). Second, we argue that the term 'nationalist' should be examined critically because it is a preferred term of activists in the movement, and widely understood by these activists as more socially acceptable than terms like 'racist' or 'white supremacist' (Hartzell, 2020). Evidence suggests that, indeed, these activists are correct in these assumptions. Leaders across Western Europe and North America have adopted white nationalist rhetoric and policy agendas, while distancing themselves from 'white supremacists' (Clark, 2020). Additionally, to a statistically significant degree, public opinion reflects this, insofar as the 'nationalist' label does lend social credibility to these movements in comparison to labels like 'white supremacist' (Fearnow, 2021; Hatewatch Staff, 2015). As such, the mainstream adoption of this term is accepting the frame that these activists use, and potentially reifying their preferred nomenclature at the expense of more accurate, less sanitising, or more just descriptors.

3 | WHAT IS NATIONALISM?

In 2009, Brubaker asserted that 'we are all constructivists' now (2009, p. 28), and while some scholars of nationalism remain informed by qualified primordialist theories (Coakley, 2018), there is a broad acceptance that nations themselves are historically contingent and constructed. This 'constructivist consensus', to borrow a term from Wimmer (2013), means that the nation is largely an idea: of cultural identity linked with a sense of a group (Haas, 1986; Motyl, 1992), a grand solidarity (Renan, 1882), or an imagined community (Anderson). These beliefs are marshalled into a nationalist movement through the pursuit of political goals for the group, like territorial self-determination (Barrington, 1997) or seeking the congruence of 'the political and national unit' (Gellner, 1983). Signs and symbols,

including language, flags, songs and stories, are all part of the building and maintenance of the group identity—the nation—and the cause—nationalism (Fricke, 2013; Leib, 2011; Orlowska, 2013). Nationalism is a goal-directed movement aimed at self-determination and rights for a defined group in a territorially defined homeland (Barrington, 1997; Nagel, 1994), a group holding a collective identity or ideology (Anthony D. Smith, 2013) and a symbolic and/or narrative repertoire (Lauenstein, Murer, Boos, & Reicher, 2015; Smith, 2003).

Each of these ideas—territory, population and symbolic and/or cultural content—builds upon the others in creating a goal-directed movement for self-determination of a particular group, in a particular place. Each of these factors provide boundaries, or borders, that define the national in-group, from potential out-groups, whether they are physical boundaries of territory, or ideological boundaries of belonging. The goal of the in-group is in self-perpetuation and self-determination, legitimated by its claims to belonging and cultural uniqueness. Given this definitional foundation, how clearly does 'white nationalism' map onto the concept of nationalism?

4 | 'WHITE NATIONALISM': TERRITORY

Nationalism is distinct from other kinds of political identity—based in religion, ethnicity, language or region—by its territorial ambitions (Barrington, 1997, p. 714). The borders that define territory are 'kit and caboodle, then, to everyday nationalism' (Agnew, 2007, p. 403). Territory and claims to rightful ownership of territory are often constructed in nationalist myth-making, as in Gellner's 'potato principle' (1997), but remain an important facet of defining the nation, and the ambitions of nationalists. Territory itself exists in a feedback loop, both created as homeland by nationalists, and defining the national subjects by inclusion in or belonging to the territory. According to Herb, 'As the territory becomes reified, individual members of the nation become socialized within the territorial unit that exists. The space itself helps to weld together fragmented individual and group experiences into a common nation story. The territory creates a collective consciousness by reinventing itself as a homeland. Thus, nations cannot be conceived without a specific territory or homeland. Territory situates the nation, giving it roots and boundaries' (Herb, 1999, p. 17). The borders of the territory become the lines of exclusion, and the territory as physical space and as metaphor defines inclusion.

The resonance of territory for the nation comes from its definition as homeland, and claims to rightful self-determination in that homeland. Gellner's canonical definition of nationalism as 'a principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent' foregrounds the ways in which territory and self-determination fuse in the definition of nationalism (Gellner, 2008, p. 1), and its ambitions.

Yet, as many scholars have argued in the post-WWII era, sovereignty and self-determination have become more complicated in the face of the rising scope and powers of intergovernmental organisations. Such organisations take on state-like roles and the exercise of political power has migrated to the supranational level, thereby breaking the power-identity nexus of the nation-state as a vehicle for communal expression. Conversely, however, supranational organisations have provided opportunities for devolution of power and the empowerment of organised national movements within member nation states (Nicol, 2017; Willett, 2013). The idea of self-determination, then, has come to encompass both aspirations for national statehood, as well as devolution of power from existing states (Guibernau, 2006), for example for Catalan, Cornish, Scottish, Basque or Flemish nationalists in the European Union.

Within this context, the rise of groups calling themselves white nationalist has articulated a unique sense of self-determination. In Stormfront's 'White Nationalist Construction Manual for a White Homeland', moderators define the principles of the white homeland, including that 'A White Homeland may be of any size, or configuration, and consist of a single parcel of real estate, to an entire planet',[1] and the site itself frequently refers to the idea of 'white homelands', rather than a singular, or specific location, and even posits the idea of a 'cyber homeland'. Groups labelling themselves the 'Balk Right',[2] including groups like the ShieldWall Network, the League of the South, New Albion, Project New America, and NorthWest Front, all proclaim the 'inevitability' of the 'balkanization' of the

United States into a series of ethnostates (Wilson, 2021).[3] Sporadic movements to establish such 'ethnostates' have happened in the United States, in places like the Upper Penninsula of Michigan, (Oosting, 2021), Jackman, ME (Anti-Defamation League, 2018), and Leith, ND (Eligon, 2013).

Figure 1 illustrates the sheer breadth of proposals for locations of the so-called 'ethnostate' in the United States, including the Northwest Territorial Imperative[4] (1), New Europa[5] (2), Ozarkia[6] (3), the State of Franklin[7] (4), Gulflandia (5), New Albion[8] (6) as well as individual towns in North Dakota (7) and Michigan (8).

Similar proposals have existed throughout Europe and central Asia (Liyanage, 2021), the Caribbean (Vickerman, 2021) and South Africa (Holmes, 2020). In each of these contexts, the territory of the proposed ethnostates is fundamentally contested, with individual groups claiming completely different parcels of land for the purpose.

Far from a defined territory, the territorial proposals for this 'white ethnostate' seem to be largely a matter of convenience. Unlike the debates over *Kleindeutschland* and *Großdeutschland*, which were fundamentally over the territorial scope of the German national project, white nationalists do not propose a tie to any territory as homeland. The proposals are based, instead on convenience, as in the case of the North Dakota town where property was bought up cheaply by a white nationalist seeking to establish a town run by himself and his allies (Eligon, 2013), or because of the fact that a set of counties is home to mostly white residents (Anti-Defamation League, 2018). This ahistoricism is partially present because white identitarian groups outside of Western Europe stake their claim to an area based on the idea of settler colonial domination of the landscape, rather than framing themselves as autochthons (Devadoss & Culcasi, 2020). Indeed, the 'white nationalist' project in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, with their referents to Europe as a point of origin, is fundamentally disconnected from an idea of homeland as a place of origin.

Another rhetorical turn that alt-right figures have taken is to focus on self-sufficiency, rather than territoriality. Many so-called white nationalists have turned to the idea of homesteading to make claims on territory. This sentiment, included in the first part of the definition of a white homeland from Stormfront, says that such a homeland can 'consist of a single parcel of real estate'. But is self-sufficiency and living 'off the grid' and/or without dependence on outsiders the same as territorial self-determination? It does not seem so. Returning to the discussion of territoriality and nationalism from above, the idea of self-sufficiency does not actually create Agnew's (2007) borders, nor does it 'weld together fragmented individual and group experiences' except in the loosest sense, as Herb (1999, p. 17) dictates.

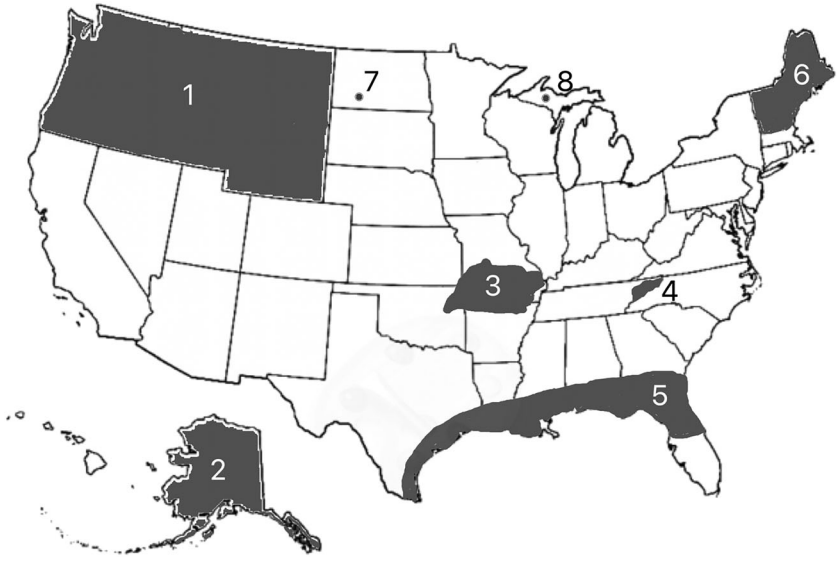

FIGURE 1 Map of proposed 'ethnostates' in the United States

The question that remains is whether self-sufficiency mirrors the fusion of authority and identity, as outlined in Gellner, or is akin to the idea of autonomy or devolution of power, as sought by, for example, Scottish, Quebecois, or Catalan nationalists. We contend that it does not, in part because while such 'homesteaders' do have autonomy on their land, it is individualised, rather than collective. Additionally, it does not involve the allocation of authority to them in any recognised sense. The individual unit of the homestead, even in a loose confederation of such arrangements, does not constitute the devolution of power to a community.

Some other groups do not have territorial ambitions of independence but are attempting to claim power within the structures of current governments, like the United States, both directly, through elections (Joyner, 2021) and indirectly, through advocacy (Staff, 2019; Stern, 2019). The groups themselves call these attempts 'reclaiming power' or 'taking [their] country back' (Geary et al., 2020), and as such, they may fit into the nationalist repertoire of reclaiming a homeland for a dispossessed nation. While these ambitions have met with varied levels of electoral success, white nationalists have rallied around the cause of 'taking back' the United States (Fording & Schram, 2020), Europe (BBC News, 2019) or Australia (Muller, 2019), and candidates have been able to effectively sway public debate around issues such as immigration and social welfare (Clark, 2020). However, when not representing a defined population, as discussed below, it is less clear that these groups and their political ambitions are nationalist in nature.

5 | 'WHITE NATIONALISM': POPULATION

Who is white? This question is central to evaluating the claim that white nationalists are, indeed, nationalists. 'The people' are often framed as the legitimating force behind territorial and political claims made by nationalists (Abulof, 2015; Hall, 1999; Kedourie, 1993). It is on behalf of The People that 'negative nationalism' rejects the idea of foreign rule while 'positive nationalism' asserts the right to self-determination (Abulof, 2015). The 'task of defining community' tends to 'emphasize both unity and "otherness"' (Nagel, 1994, p. 248). Membership in a national collective is defined by members of the group themselves (Barrington, 1997, p. 714).

The answer to the question of who is white may seem self-evident, insofar as whiteness exists as a category in the world, in official state functions, like taking a census (Lee, 1993; Loveman, Muniz, & Bailey, 2012), and is an inhabited identity at the individual level (Omi & Winant, 2014). The category of whiteness and the idea of racial categories themselves carry weight in the social and political world. In many ways, white supremacist groups draw on these official and stable-seeming categories to justify their actions.

One of the foundational preoccupations of white supremacist groups is with population and demographics. The infamous 14 words, articulated by white power activist David Lane, define the project of so-called white nationalism in terms of the security of future generations (Michael, 2009). The idea of demographic replacement—the loss of demographic majority or supermajority status because of migration, birth, or death rates—is central to the group identity of white nationalists, and an anxiety shared across state borders (Feola, 2021). Dehumanizing discourses, framing immigrants as 'vermin' and 'animals' who 'invade' and 'infest' states, are shared widely online (Apel, 2021), and have resulted in a spree of terrorist violence in recent years, including the murder of a British MP in 2016 (Jackson, 2019), chants of 'you will not replace us' at the Charlottesville rally (Feola, 2021), mass shootings in Pittsburgh in 2018 and El Paso in 2019 in the United States (Wilson, 2020) and in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2019 (Besley & Peters, 2020).

But who is the 'us' that is being replaced? Whiteness as a category is hotly contested (Rasmussen, Klinenberg, Nexica, & Wray, 2001), and a product of modernity (Du Bois, 1986), growing out of the projects of imperialism and colonialism (Lopez, 2012; Tyler, 2012), and American state and nation building (Jacobson, 1999). The boundaries of whiteness have shifted considerably over the course of the last century. In 1908, Harvard Professor William Z. Ripley warned that 'Future Americans will be Swarthy' and that the burden of the Anglo-Saxon race 'though physically thus engulfed, will be to bear the torch of civilization'. Ripley's warnings were not only about 'Negroid and Asiatic' peoples, but also 'rufous Irish and dark Italians' (The New York Times, 1908). Contra the ideas of Ripley, the

idea of whiteness in the United States has expanded to include immigrants of Irish, Italian and German origin (Ignatiev, 2008), as well as to immigrants from other European states (Kolchin, 2002).

Defining the boundaries of whiteness is, of course, a longstanding state project in the United States, South Africa, and other countries that had regimes centred on state-sponsored segregation and discrimination. Defining the populations to whom different tiers of citizenship were accorded was central to the project of segregation and resulted in standards like the 'one drop rule' (Hollinger, 2005) or the 'comb' or 'pencil tests' (Oyedemi, 2016). Whiteness, and identification with it, served a 'compensatory function' (Feola, 2021, p. 532), or a 'psychological wage' (Du Bois, 1999) that drew people in. The interplay between state mechanisms and social processes, as well as international shocks like the World Wars, has produced a shifting conception of who is classified as white (Omi & Winant, 2014). The category of 'whiteness' as such, has been primarily defined by 'individual taste and political need' in individual historical, geographic and political contexts, and changing nearly constantly throughout the 20th century (Painter, 2010, p. 383).

Who is white for white nationalists at present? White nationalist message boards contain myriad qualifying conditions for membership that are wholly unconnected to racial identity, including acceptable sexual orientations, political ideologies. Whiteness is defined not as an internally coherent concept, but only through othering people as a central defining mechanism (Monahan, 2021, p. 9). There is no coherent definition of whiteness that binds the population together. It is only defined by its boundaries. Borrowing from older forms of state-sponsored segregation, white nationalist groups tend to define whiteness in terms of phenotypes, focusing on hair texture, skin colour and 'stature'. As such, moderators on forums like Stormfront have taken to defining whiteness primarily in terms not of descent, but social acceptance, creating criteria like 'if a person looks White and thinks of himself as White and is the kind of person our other members wouldn't mind their sisters marrying – and if we know he is no more than one-sixteenth non-White, we consider him White', with others adding 'non-Jewish people of wholly European descent. No exceptions. And if you tell us you're not, we will believe you' (cited in Panofsky & Donovan, 2019, p. 653).

However, many so-called white nationalist organisations have leaders who explicitly claim racial identities other than 'white', and the movement has become increasingly multi-racial, while still maintaining a white power orientation (Carey, 2018; Cooper & Jenkins, 2019; Trouillard, 2021). The leader of the Proud Boys, an organisation affiliated with white nationalist talking points, policies and organisations but which does not use the term white nationalist, was quoted as saying 'White supremacy is not just for white people anymore' (Ngangura, 2021). Whiteness is primarily about aspirations and claims: of class, status, politics, and power that transcend 'racial' classifications. This orientation means that 'white nationalists' themselves have different orientations towards belonging in their group, which curiously situates them at the intersection of the 'civic' versus 'ethnic' debate among scholars of nationalism (Fozdar & Low, 2015; Tamir, 2019), with some groups claiming largely ideological or norm-based belonging, with others explicitly adopt descent-based terms of belonging.

The in-group for white nationalists is primarily defined not by 'racial' identity, but through hating groups outside, including not only more or less loosely racialised groups like 'immigrants' but also political opponents who lay claim to the identity of 'white' but not the ideology of 'white nationalism' (Monahan, 2021). The category of 'white' does little to define so-called white nationalists, which are more accurately defined by those who hew to a set of political principles and notions of 'rightness', rather than a category of 'whiteness'.

6 | 'WHITE NATIONALISM': SYMBOLIC/CULTURAL/ORGANISATIONAL CONTENT

Nations are defined through the symbols, culture and histories of their members and the groups that propagate them. Whether it is through narrative (Smith, 2003), symbols (Lauenstein, Murer, Boos, & Reicher, 2015), or the 'misuse' of past (Kedourie, 1994, p. 51), 'Nations are articulated through the stories people tell about themselves' (Suny, 2001, p. 866). The cultural and symbolic content of nations and nationalism is varied, from banal, state-centric symbols, like currency (Hawkins, 2010; Wallach, 2011), licence plates (Leib, 2011) and celebrations (Orlowska, 2013),

to the commemorative (Centeno, 1999; Esbenshade, 1995) and the familial (Thapar-Björkert & Ryan, 2002). In each of these modes, the nation is invoked as a community, bound together by a shared history, whether that history is of glory and victory (Renan, 1882), a history of domination and resistance (Iyob, 1997), or the purposeful erasure of contentious history (Fricke, 2013).

The history of the modern white supremacist movement is rooted in the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in the context of the Civil Rights Movement (Cunningham, 2013). The rise in the modern white-pride movements is linked to both the Klan and the Christian Identity and neo-Nazi movements in the United States (Dobratz & Shanks-Meile, 2000). The move of white supremacists online has allowed for an enormous expansion of the groups. The founding of Stormfront.org in 1996 by leading white supremacist Don Black marked a turning point in online organisation of white supremacist groups: participatory and membership-based forums for groups to organise both online and in life (Daniels, 2009, pp. 104–105). The new era of 'white pride worldwide' in the online space has allowed for coordination of like-minded people and groups across the world (Perry & Scrivens., 2016).

But what are the stories and symbols of the 'white nationalists' that bind them together as a nationalist movement? How are they deployed to try and create a sense of community, and situate that community, whether historically, spatially or as a cohesive whole?

6.1 | Symbols

So-called white nationalists use myriad symbols that are familiar in the nationalist repertoire: images, flags, and slogans. While overtly white supremacist groups will borrow iconography from, and inspired by, the Nazis like the swastika, the runic sig, and the number 88, 'white nationalists' tend to 'cloak their allegiance in plausible deniability in order to avoid social stigma' (Gilbert & Elley, 2020). While some American white supremacist groups use imagery of the American founding, including older versions of the US flag, or references to 1776, and songs like the Star Spangled Banner, others reject these symbols as representative of a government that has allowed for the perceived downfall of whites in the country (Thompson, 2001, p. 46). Some so-called white nationalist groups use Christian imagery in their organisations (Berry, 2017), others explicitly reject such symbols in favour of pre-Christian European religious symbols, from Norse and other mythologies (Fricke, 2018). Other, individual groups, like VDARE, the League of the South, the Patriot Front and Identity Evropa all have their own flags, which have been displayed at right-wing rallies like the 'Unite the Right' Rally in Charlottesville (Tiefenthäler & Reneau, 2017) and the January 2021 insurrection at the US Capitol (Washington Post Staff, 2021).

White identitarian organisers themselves acknowledge the fractures in their movement and are seeking to promote bridging symbols. Recruitment posters for the 2017 'Unite the Right' rally in Charlottesville featured no less than eight groups' flags, in a simulacrum of the Franklin 'Join or Die' cartoon from 1754 (Hatewatch Staff, 2017). The very multiplicity of symbols and fractiousness of the so-called white nationalist symbolic landscape points to the use of these emblems as not unifying but divisive symbols. There is no common agreement among 'white nationalists', which symbolic repertoire is representative, nor which histories should be included in their sense of group identity. Additionally, there is extensive research that those who deploy these symbols are often unaware of, or unable to explain their meaning (Miller-Idriss, 2018a, 2018b). The combination of many and divisive symbols with little grassroots knowledge of their meaning indicates that the symbolic reach of so-called white nationalist symbols falls short of what scholars might expect from a nationalist group.

6.2 | History

The telling and re-telling of selective history is central to the project of nationalism and nation-building, whether conceived of as popular or grassroots histories (Vladisavljević, 2002) or as elite-propagated narratives

(Johnson, 2013). The most unifying history told by white supremacists is centrally about the victimization of those people who have called themselves white. One of the books commonly recommended on Stormfront is *The White Nationalist Manifesto*, which is written by prominent 'white nationalist' Greg Johnson. Johnson argues that the white population is getting smaller because of intentional 'white genocide' through 'feminism encouraging young women to prefer careers over motherhood, birth control pills, legalized abortion—and overturning racial segregation, immigration restrictions, and bans on miscegenation' caused by Jewish people, black people, elites, and intellectuals (G. Johnson, 2018, pp. 18–19). In this narrative, so-called white nationalists perceive themselves as the victims of 'white genocide' at the hands of an unrelenting world. Feelings of victimhood can exist in the absence of actual conflict (Armaly & Enders, 2021), and feelings of white victimhood mobilise sympathetic white constituencies and help them recruit new members (Berbrier, 2000, p. 188). Mijić posits that a sense of collective victimhood helps preserve group identity and promote a positive group image (Mijić, 2021, p. 474). Aside from bringing so-called white nationalists together, collective victimhood also can insulate these audiences from criticism. Sullivan et al. argue that an ingroup can use feelings of perceived collective victimhood to shield the ingroup from accusations of unjust harm (Sullivan, Landau, Branscombe, & Rothschild, 2012). Because 'white nationalists'' narrative of collective victimhood increases positive ingroup identity and shields them from criticism, this narrative of victimization serves as an important binding factor for white supremacists, despite its lack of empirical support.

This mythmaking, however, is not unusual for nations. Nationalists will often use mythologised history, particularly of 'the age of struggle' or 'the dark age' to unite a group and create a sense of being driven by a cause (Coakley, 2018). This aspect of 'white nationalism', then, most closely maps on to the expectations of a nationalist group in scholarship. What makes these so-called 'nationalists' stand out, however, is the relative lack of depth of the idea of common history.

While charges of unique persecution on the basis of race do unite so-called white nationalist activists (Greene, 2019; Hinton, 2021), the deeper in-group histories are nearly as contentious as the symbolic repertoire of these groups. Much of the discourse around identity in white supremacist online spaces relates to the idea of European ancestry, and the contributions of 'white people' in history. However, the idea of white European descent as a set of genetic markers indicating racialised belonging within 'white nationalist' spaces has come under stress, as genetic ancestry testing has complicated many self-defined 'nationalists' claims to 'racial purity'.

Additionally, the debate over whose accomplishments can be celebrated rages on discussion boards, like Stormfront, where contributors argue over who was or is white, and whether the accomplishments of such groups can be celebrated in 'white history', including population groups like Native Americans,[9] Egyptians[10] and Israelites.[11] This debate is connected to the essentially contested nature of the population of 'whites' over whom 'white nationalists' can lay claim, as well as the geographic scope of 'Europe' as a referent for the origin story of this group (Bonnett, 1998). Whose historical achievements are celebrated is fundamentally a function of who is claimed as an in-group member. Because of the fundamentally contested notion of whiteness, even within these circles, the possibilities of celebrating heroes of the past is circumscribed.

While 'white nationalists' do have some concept of history that they share—specifically the alleged persecution of their group—it is thinner, less distinct and more contested than many national histories. It does not include ties to geography, nor does it clarify the boundaries of group belonging. This thin history is the result of a more foundational contestation of 'white history', who it includes and who it rejects.

6.3 | Groups

The fractured nature of the symbolic, historical, and symbolic terrain of so-called white nationalism is also mirrored in the multiplicity of groups and organisations espousing the ideology, as well as the post-organisational online activism under the same name. The Southern Poverty Law Center's list of White Nationalist groups list includes a number of different groups, each with distinct aims (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2022c). Groups like VDARE, the Patriot

Front, and the American Renaissance focus on the so-called 'reclaiming of America' from the alleged threats of immigration, demographic replacement, and race-mixing. By contrast, groups like the Shield Wall Network and The Base, from Arkansas and the Pacific Northwest respectively, claim to be laying the groundwork for a white ethnostate. Other groups, like Identity Evropa/The American Identity movement base their claim on 'Western supremacy', a stance they share with groups like the Proud Boys, who have rejected the term 'white nationalism' to describe their activities although they maintain ties with, and espouse the talking points of, groups that do adopt the label (Mapping Militant Organizations, 2022). While these organisations do have a kind of family resemblance, they are far from united, hence the need for interventions to 'unite the right' as in 2017 in Charlottesville. Additionally there is significant volatility in the numbers, influence, and membership of these groups, year on year (Press, 2021).

The majority of organisation and energy of so-called 'white nationalists' takes place on-line through message boards like 4chan and 8chan (Thompson, 2018), online forums like Stormfront (De Koster & Houtman, 2008) and social media (Smith, 2022). In ways similar to the resurgence of online nationalism across the world (Mihelj & Jiménez-Martínez, 2021), so-called white nationalist have been able to connect digitally across large distances, and articulate a kind of community. Yet, because the population, territory, and symbolism of this belonging are lacking in coherence, the belonging is unrelated to a nationalist cause as such. Rather the belonging is based in a reactionary sense of dissatisfaction—with the 'globalized', 'liberal' or 'multicultural' order—based on shared grievances which ironically are articulated by and through a global network of multicultural participants (Grumke, 2013).

7 | CONCLUSION

The simple fact that activists in the far-right wing prefer the nomenclature of 'white nationalism' to describe their activities and social groupings and that these frames have achieved mainstream success in terms influencing popular discourse, and in turn, both public opinion and public policy, means that the classification should be held up to scrutiny by social science researchers. To adopt the term uncritically is tantamount to adopting the desired frames of the same activists and legitimating their mainstream presence in political discourse. There is an additional, scholarly imperative to critically examine and define the concepts that are foundational to such research. As such, this paper has sought to use the central tenets that define nationalism—population, territory and symbolic-cultural content—to examine the extent to which so-called white nationalists adhere to these expectations.

We argue that the first two dimensions of nationalism—population and territory—remain essentially contested among so-called white nationalist groups. Both where a white nation could or should exist, and to whom it would belong, are not merely debated in edge cases, but across the board. Whiteness as a category is fundamentally contested, in both cases (who is included) and in character (whether it is defined by descent or by ideological adherence). The proposed territories of 'white nationalist' groups that have territorial ambitions are incommensurable, and largely the result of convenience. While the claims of some groups that they are seeking to 'reclaim' a country have been successful at shifting policy debates, it is unclear on whose behalf they are doing so, and overtly white supremacist candidates have met with limited success, electorally. While there is some shared symbolic and historical content, in the form of an empirically unsupportable notion of white victimhood, there is little or no common symbolism or cultural content shared by the various groups sharing the appellation 'white nationalist'.

Given the ways in which so-called white nationalism fails to conform to the scholarly definition of the term, we argue that the term should be regarded as primarily a euphemism for the activities of these groups, rather than a true reflection of their chauvinism, racism, and other prejudices. This argument is not intended to undercut the very real concerns that these groups and their ideologies raise, nor the potential threats that they pose to democratic functioning in the United States, Western Europe, Australia, South Africa and elsewhere. We simply assert that adopting the frames put forward by these activists of their own activities is questionable, both as a matter of scholarly debate, and grants these groups undue legitimacy in public discourse.

ORCID

Carolyn E Holmes https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6142-0979

ENDNOTES

[1] https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t1241064/?postcount=5#post14406823

[2] https://archive.org/details/balk-right-roundtable

[3] https://archive.is/RuMML

[4] https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/northwest-american-republic

[5] https://www.adl.org/blog/white-supremacist-town-manager-envisions-homeland-for-whites

[6] https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/shield-wall-network-swn

[7] https://www.adl.org/blog/white-supremacist-town-manager-envisions-homeland-for-whites

[8] https://www.adl.org/blog/white-supremacist-town-manager-envisions-homeland-for-whites

[9] https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t1305666/

[10] https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t809619/

[11] https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t1339454/

REFERENCES

Abulof, U. (2015). 'The people want(s) to bring down the regime': (positive) nationalism as the Arab Spring's revolution. *Nations and Nationalism*, *21*(4), 658–680. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12137

Agnew, J. (2007). No Borders, no nations: Making Greece in Macedonia. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *97*(2), 398–422. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.2007.00545.x

Anti-Defamation League. (2017). "White nationalism." April 14, 2017. https://www.adl.org/resources/glossary-terms/white-nationalism

Anti-Defamation League. (2018). "*White supremacist town manager envisions 'homeland' for whites*," January 22, 2018. The Anti-Defamation League Blog. https://www.adl.org/blog/white-supremacist-town-manager-envisions-homeland-for-whites

Apel, D. (2021). The migrant image: Fear of 'replacement' and the resurgence of white nationalism. In *Terrorism and the Arts*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429433818-2

Armaly, M. T., & Enders, A. M. (2021). 'Why me?' The role of perceived victimhood in American politics. *Political Behavior*, 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-020-09662-x

Barrington, L. W. (1997). 'Nation' and 'Nationalism': The Misuse of Key Concepts in Political Science. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, *30*(4), 712–716.

Berbrier, M. (2000). The victim Idology of white supremacists and white separatists in the United States. *Sociological Focus*, *33*(2), 175–191. https://doi.org/10.1080/00380237.2000.10571164

Berry, D. T. (2017). *Blood and faith: Christianity in American white nationalism*. Syracuse University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1pk86c2

Besley, T., & Peters, M. A. (2020). Terrorism, trauma, tolerance: Bearing witness to white supremacist attack on Muslims in Christchurch, New Zealand. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *52*(2), 109–119. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2019.1602891

Bonnett, A. (1998). Who was white? The disappearance of non-European white identities and the formation of European racial whiteness. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *21*(6), 1029–1055. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419879808565651

Brubaker, R. (2009). Ethnicity, Race, and Nationalism. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *35*(1), 21–42. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-070308-115916

Carey, I. (2018). More young men of color joining white supremacist groups. *FOX 26 Houston*. September 5, 2018. https://www.fox26houston.com/news/report-more-young-men-of-color-joining-white-supremacist-groups

Centeno, M. A. (1999). War and memories: Symbols of state nationalism in Latin America. *Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos Y Del Caribe/European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, *66*, 75–105.

Clark, S. (2020). How white supremacy returned to mainstream politics. *Center for American Progress* (blog). July 1, 2020. https://www.americanprogress.org/article/white-supremacy-returned-mainstream-politics/

Coakley, J. (2018). 'Primordialism' in nationalism studies: Theory or ideology? *Nations and Nationalism*, *24*(2), 327–347. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12349

Collins, S. (2020). Trump once flirted with white nationalism. Now It's a centerpiece of his white house. *Vox*. https://www.vox.com/21313021/trump-white-nationalism-supremacy-miller-bannon-immigration

Cooper, C., & Jenkins, D. L. (2019). Culture and Belonging in the USA: Multiracial Organizing on the Contemporary Far Right. In *Berkeley center for right-wing studies working paper series*. https://escholarship.org/content/qt1q86f20p/qt1q86f20p_noSplash_28e66e3e1ca21c4a3cae5d22483da0b9.pdf?t=pz0jxz

Cunningham, D. (2013). *Klansville, U.S.A.: The rise and fall of the civil rights-era Ku Klux Klan*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199752027.001.0001

Daniels, J. (2009). *Cyber racism: White supremacy online and the new attack on civil rights*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

De Koster, W., & Houtman, D. (2008). Stormfront Is Like a Second Home to Me. *Information, Communication & Society*, *11*(8), 1155–1176. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691180802266665

Devadoss, C., & Culcasi, K. (2020). Orientalist-Settler Colonialism: Foundations and Practices of Post-9/11 White Nationalism in the United States. In S. Moisio, N. Koch, A. E. G. Jonas, C. Lizotte, & J. Luukkonen (Eds.), *Handbook on the changing geographies of the state* (pp. 119–131). Edward Elgar Publishing. https://www.elgaronline.com/view/edcoll/9781788978040/9781788978040.xml. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788978057.00021

Dobratz, B. A., & Shanks-Meile, S. L. (2000). *The white separatist movement in the United States: "White power, white pride!"*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1986). The Souls of White Folk. In *W.E.B. Du Bois: Writings* (pp. 923–938). Literary Classics of the United States : Distributed to the trade in the U.S. and Canada by Viking Press.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1999). *Black reconstruction in America 1860–1880*. Simon and Schuster.

Eligon, J. (2013). New Neighbor's Agenda: White Power Takeover. *The New York Times*. August 29, 2013, Sec. U.S. https://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/30/us/white-supremacists-plan-angers-a-north-dakota-town.html

Esbenshade, R. S. (1995). Remembering to forget: Memory, history, National Identity in postwar east-Central Europe. *Representations*, *49*, 72–96. https://doi.org/10.2307/2928750

European Center for Populist Studies. (2022). *White Nationalism*. European Center for Populist Studies. Accessed June 2, 2022. https://www.populismstudies.org/Vocabulary/white-nationalism/

Fearnow, B. (2021). 23 percent of republican men have favorable view of white nationalists: Poll. *Newsweek*. July 31, 2021. https://www.newsweek.com/23-percent-republican-men-have-favorable-view-white-nationalists-poll-1614973

Feola, M. (2021). 'You will not replace us': The melancholic nationalism of whiteness. *Political Theory*, *49*(4), 528–553. https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591720972745

Fording, R. C., & Schram, S. F. (2020). *Hard white: The mainstreaming of racism in American politics*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197500484.001.0001

Fozdar, F., & Low, M. (2015). 'They have to abide by our Laws … and stuff': Ethnonationalism masquerading as civic nationalism. *Nations and Nationalism*, *21*(3), 524–543. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12128

Fricke, C. (2013). Protocol, politics and popular culture: The Independence Jubilee in Gabon. *Nations and Nationalism*, *19*(2), 238–256. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12018

Fricke, J. M. (2018). *White gods: Odin as the white male Hope*. University of Iowa. https://iro.uiowa.edu/esploro/outputs/graduate/White-gods-Odin-as-the-White/9983776827502771

Geary, D., Schofield, C., & Sutton, J. (2020). Toward a Global History of White Nationalism. In D. Geary, C. Schofield, & J. Sutton (Eds.), *Global white nationalism: From apartheid to trump* (pp. 1–28). Manchester University Press. https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526147080.00007

Gellner, E. (1983). *Nations and Nationalism*. Cornell University Press.

Gellner, E. (1997). Reply to critics. *New Left Review*, *I/221*, 81–118.

Gellner, E. (2008). *Nations and nationalism*. Cornell University Press.

Gerring, J. (1999). What makes a concept good? A criterial framework for understanding concept formation in the social sciences. *Polity*, *31*(3), 357–393. https://doi.org/10.2307/3235246

Gilbert, J., & Elley, B. (2020). Shaved Heads and Sonnenrads: Comparing White Supremacist Skinheads and the Alt-Right in New Zealand. *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online*, *15*(2), 280–294. https://doi.org/10.1080/1177083X.2020.1730415

Greene, V. S. (2019). 'Deplorable' satire: Alt-right memes, white genocide tweets, and Redpilling Normies. *Studies in American Humor*, *5*(1), 31–69. https://doi.org/10.5325/studamerhumor.5.1.0031

Grumke, T. (2013). Globalized Anti-Globalists: The Ideological Basis of the Internationalization of Right-Wing Extremism. In S. von Mering & T. W. McCarty (Eds.), *Right-wing radicalism today: Perspectives from Europe and the US* (pp. 13–22). Routledge.

Guibernau, M. (2006). National Identity, devolution and secession in Canada, Britain and Spain*. *Nations and Nationalism*, *12*(1), 51–76. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8129.2005.00230.x

Haas, E. B. (1986). What Is Nationalism and Why Should We Study It? *International Organization*, *40*(3), 707–744.

Hall, R. B. (1999). *National Collective Identity: Social constructs and international systems*. Columbia University Press.

Hartzell, S. L. (2020). Whiteness feels good Here: Interrogating white nationalist rhetoric on Stormfront. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, *17*(2), 129–148. https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2020.1745858

Hatewatch Staff. (2015). American racists work to spread 'Identitarian' ideology. *Southern Poverty Law Center (Blog)*. October 12, 2015. https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2015/10/12/american-racists-work-spread-%E2%80%98identitarian%E2%80%99-ideology

Hatewatch Staff. (2017). Flags and other symbols used by far-right groups in Charlottesville. *Southern Poverty Law Center*, (August 12, 2017). https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2017/08/12/flags-and-other-symbols-used-far-right-groups-charlottesville

Hawkins, S. (2010). National Symbols and National Identity: Currency and constructing cosmopolitans in Tunisia. *Identities*, *17*(2–3), 228–254. https://doi.org/10.1080/10702891003734987

Herb, G. H. (1999). National Idenitty and Territory. In G. H. Herb & D. H. Kaplan (Eds.), *Nested Identities: Nationalism, Territory, and Scale*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Hinton, A. L. (2021). *It can happen Here: White power and the rising threat of genocide in the US*. NYU Press. https://doi.org/10.18574/nyu/9781479808038.001.0001

Hollinger, D. A. (2005). The one drop rule & the one hate rule. *Daedalus*, *134*(1), 18–28. https://doi.org/10.1162/0011526053124424

Holmes, C. E. (2020). *The black and white rainbow: Reconciliation, opposition, and nation-building in democratic South Africa*. University of Michigan Press. https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.11518321

Ignatiev, N. (2008). *How the Irish became white*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203473009

Iyob, R. (1997). *The Eritrean struggle for Independence: Domination, resistance, nationalism, 1941–1993*. Cambridge University Press.

Jackson, P. (2019). The Murder of Jo Cox MP: A Case Study in Lone Actor Terrorism. In A. Waring (Ed.), *The new authoritarianism* (Vol. 2). Ibidem-Verlag.

Jacobson, M. F. (1999). *Whiteness of a different color*. Harvard University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjk2w15

Johnson, G. (2018). *The white nationalist manifesto*. Counter-Currents Publishing Limited.

Johnson, M. (2013). The aesthetics of diaspora in colonial fields of power: Elite nationalism, art and the love to die for. *Ethnos*, *78*(2), 175–199. https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2012.672334

Joyner, C. (2021). Why does a longtime white supremacist think he can win an election. *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. December 3, 2021.

Kedourie, E. (1993). *Nationalism*. Wiley.

Kedourie, E. (1994). Nationalism and Self-Determination. In A. D. Smith, J. Hutchinson, & A. D. Smith (Eds.), *Nationalism* (pp. 49–55). Oxford University Press.

Kolchin, P. (2002). Whiteness studies: The new history of race in America. *Journal of American History*, *89*(1), 154–173. https://doi.org/10.2307/2700788

Lauenstein, O., Murer, J. S., Boos, M., & Reicher, S. (2015). 'Oh motherland I pledge to thee …': A study into nationalism, gender and the representation of an imagined family within National Anthems. *Nations and Nationalism*, *21*(2), 309–329. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12123

Lee, S. M. (1993). Racial classifications in the US census: 1890–1990. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *16*(1), 75–94. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.1993.9993773

Leib, J. (2011). Identity, banal nationalism, contestation, and north American license plates*. *Geographical Review*, *101*(1), 37–52. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1931-0846.2011.00071.x

Liyanage, C. (2021). A fascist authoritarian utopia: The Eurosiberian Ethnostate for native Europeans. *OpenDemocracy*. https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/countering-radical-right/fascist-authoritarian-utopia-eurosiberian-ethnostate-native-europeans/

Lopez, A. J. (2012). *Postcolonial whiteness: A critical reader on race and empire*. SUNY Press.

Loveman, M., Muniz, J. O., & Bailey, S. R. (2012). Brazil in black and white? Race categories, the census, and the study of inequality. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *35*(8), 1466–1483. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2011.607503

Michael, G. (2009). David lane and the fourteen words. *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, *10*(1), 43–61. https://doi.org/10.1080/14690760903067986

Mihelj, S., & Jiménez-Martínez, C. (2021). Digital nationalism: Understanding the role of digital Media in the Rise of 'new' nationalism. *Nations and Nationalism*, *27*(2), 331–346. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12685

Mijić, A. (2021). Identity, ethnic boundaries, and collective victimhood: Analysing strategies of self-victimisation in postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina. *Identities*, *28*(4), 472–491. https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2020.1748348

Miller-Idriss, C. (2018a). *The extreme gone mainstream*. Princeton University Press. https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691170206/the-extreme-gone-mainstream, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvc777md

Miller-Idriss, C. (2018b). What Makes a Symbol Far Right? Co-Opted and Missed Meanings in Far-Right Iconography. In *Post-digital cultures of the far right: Online actions and offline consequences in Europe and the US* (pp. 123–136). transcript Verlag. https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839446706-009

Monahan, M. J. (2021). Racism and 'self-love': The case of white nationalism. *Critical Philosophy of Race*, *9*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.5325/critphilrace.9.1.0001

"Morning Consult/POLITICO National Tracking Poll #2107125". 2021. National Tracking Polls. https://assets.morningconsult.com/wp-uploads/2021/07/29154252/2107125_crosstabs_POLITICO_JAN_6TH_TRIAL_FLASH_RVs_v1.pdf

Motyl, A. J. (1992). The Modernity of Nationalism: Nations, States and Nation-States in the Contemporary World. *Journal of International Affairs*, *45*(2), 307–323.

Muller, C. (2019). Ultra-right-wing white nationalism: Literature insights on Breivik and Tarrant, and the significance of the phenomena in Australia. *Journal of the Australian Institute of Professional Intelligence Officers*, *27*(2), 43–52. https://doi.org/10.3316/informit.827290995243747

Nagel, J. (1994). Constructing ethnicity: Creating and recreating ethnic identity and culture. *Social Problems*, *41*(1), 152–176. https://doi.org/10.2307/3096847

BBC News. (2019). Europe and Right-Wing Nationalism: A Country-by-Country Guide. November 13, 2019, sec. Europe https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36130006

Ngangura, T. (2021). 'White supremacy is not just for white people': Trumpism, the proud boys, and the extremist allure for people of color. *Vanity Fair*. February 2, 2021. https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2021/02/trumpism-the-proud-boys-and-the-extremist-allure-for-people-of-color

Nicol, H. N. (2017). From territory to rights: New foundations for Conceptualising indigenous sovereignty. *Geopolitics*, *22*(4), 794–814. https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2016.1264055

Omi, M., & Winant, H. (2014). *Racial formation in the United States*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203076804

Oosting, J. (2021). FBI: Neo-Nazi leader sought 'white ethno-state' in Michigan's upper peninsula|bridge Michigan. *Bridge Michigan*. May 17, 2021. https://www.bridgemi.com/michigan-government/fbi-neo-nazi-leader-sought-white-ethno-state-michigans-upper-peninsula

Oprysko, C. (2019). Jeffries says trump Isn't a racist but defends 'grand wizard' comparison. *Politico*. January 23, 2019. https://www.politico.com/story/2019/01/23/hakeem-jeffries-trump-not-racist-1120101

Mapping Militant Organizations. (2022). Proud Boys. *Stanford Center for International Security and Cooperation*. January 2022. https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/proud-boys

Orlowska, I. (2013). Forging a nation: The Ethiopian millennium Celebration and the multiethnic state. *Nations and Nationalism*, *19*(2), 296–316. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12021

Oyedemi, T. (2016). Beauty as violence: 'Beautiful' hair and the cultural violence of identity erasure. *Social Identities*, *22*(5), 537–553. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2016.1157465

Painter, N. I. (2010). *The history of white people*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Panofsky, A., & Donovan, J. (2019). Genetic ancestry testing among white nationalists: From identity repair to citizen science. *Social Studies of Science*, *49*(5), 653–681. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312719861434

Perry, B., & Scrivens, R. (2016). White Pride Worldwide: Constructing Global Identities Online. In J. Schweppe & M. A. Walters (Eds.), *The globalization of hate: Internationalizing hate crime?* (pp. 65–78). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198785668.003.0005

Press, Associated. (2021). US Hate Group Numbers Decline but Online Organizing Has Strengthened, Report Finds. *The Guardian*. February 1, 2021, sec. US news. https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/feb/01/us-hate-groups-decline-online-organizing-strengthened-report

Rasmussen, B. B., Klinenberg, E., Nexica, I. J., & Wray, M. (2001). *The making and unmaking of whiteness*. Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11sn1gq

Renan, E. (1882). Qu'est-ce Qu'une nation? In *Oeuvres completes* Vol. 1, pp. 887–890. Calmann-Levy.

Rubin, J. (2019). Media Must Stop Quibbling about 'White Supremacy' vs. 'White Nationalism'. *The Washington Post*. August 9, 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/08/09/media-must-stop-quibbling-about-white-racism-terms-they-dont-understand/

Smith, A. D. (2013). The Rites of Nations: Elites, Masses and the Re-Enactment of the 'National Past'. In R. Tsang & E. T. Woods (Eds.), *The cultural politics of nationalism and nation-building: Ritual and performance in the forging of nations* (pp. 21–37). Routledge.

Smith, L. (2022). Lone wolves connected online: A history of modern white supremacy. *The New York Times*. May 16, 2022. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/26/us/louis-beam-white-supremacy-internet.html

Smith, R. M. (2003). *Stories of peoplehood: The politics and morals of political membership*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511490347

Southern Poverty Law Center. (2020a). The Year in Hate 2019: White Nationalist Groups Rise for a Second Year in a Row – Up 55% Since 2017. The Year In Hate. Southern Poverty Law Center. https://www.splcenter.org/presscenter/year-hate-2019-white-nationalist-groups-rise-second-year-row-55-2017

Southern Poverty Law Center. (2022b). White Nationalist. *Southern Poverty Law Center*. Accessed August 5, 2021a. https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/white-nationalist

Southern Poverty Law Center. (2022c). White Nationalist Groups. *Southern Poverty Law Center*. Accessed June 3, 2022b. https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/groups

St. Félix, D. (2019). Trump, the squad, and the 'standard definition' of racism|the new Yorker. *The New Yorker*. July 16, 2019. https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/trump-the-squad-and-the-standard-definition-of-racism

Staff, The New York Times Editorial. (2019). *White nationalists: Who are they and what do they believe?* The Rosen Publishing Group Inc.

Stern, A. M. (2019). *Proud boys and the white Ethnostate: How the alt-right is warping the American imagination*. Beacon Press.

Stollznow, K. (Ed.) (2020). I'm Not a Racist, But …. In *On the offensive: Prejudice in language past and present* (pp. 11–54). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108866637.002

Sullivan, D., Landau, M. J., Branscombe, N. R., & Rothschild, Z. K. (2012). Competitive victimhood as a response to accusations of Ingroup harm doing. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *102*(4), 778–795. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026573

Suny, R. G. (2001). Constructing Primordialism: Old histories for new nations. *The Journal of Modern History*, *73*(4), 862–896. https://doi.org/10.1086/340148

Tamir, Y. (2019). Not So Civic: Is There a Difference Between Ethnic and Civic Nationalism? *Annual Review of Political Science*, *22*(1), 419–434. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-022018-024059

Taub, A. (2016). White Nationalism,' Explained. *The New York Times*. November 21, 2016, sec. World. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/22/world/americas/white-nationalism-explained.html

Thapar-Björkert, S., & Ryan, L. (2002). Mother India/mother Ireland: Comparative gendered dialogues of colonialism and nationalism in the early 20th century. *Women's Studies International Forum*, *25*(3), 301–313. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-5395(02)00257-1

The New York Times. (1908). FUTURE AMERICANS WILL BE SWARTHY; Prof. Ripley Thinks Race Intermixture May Reproduce Remote Ancestral Type. TO INUNDATE ANGLO-SAXON His Burden, Though Physically Thus Engulfed, Will Be to Bear Torch of Civilization. November 29, 1908, Sec. Archives. https://www.nytimes.com/1908/11/29/archives/future-americans-will-be-swarthy-prof-ripley-thinks-race.html

Thompson, A. (2018). The measure of hate on 4Chan. *Rolling Stone*. https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/the-measure-of-hate-on-4chan-627922/

Thompson, K. C. (2001). Watching the Stormfront: White nationalists and the building of Community in Cyberspace. *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice*, *45*(1), 32–52.

Tiefenthäler, A., & Reneau, N. (2017). Video: Swastikas, Shields and Flags: Branding Hate in Charlottesville. *The New York Times*. August 15, 2017, sec. U.S. https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/100000005360556/white-supremacist-symbols-charlottesville.html

Trouillard, S. (2021). Enrique Tarrio, the Cuban-American Leader of the Far-Right 'Proud Boys. *France 24*. January 6, 2021, sec. americas. https://www.france24.com/en/americas/20210106-who-exactly-is-enrique-tarrio-leader-of-the-us-s-far-right-proud-boys-organisation

Tyler, K. (2012). *Whiteness, Class and the Legacies of Empire: On Home Ground*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230390294

Vickerman, M. (2021). Lebensraum's tropical turn: White Nationalists' (almost) Caribbean home. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, December: 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X21000382

Vladisavljević, N. (2002). Nationalism, social movement theory and the grass roots movement of Kosovo Serbs, 1985-1988. *Europe-Asia Studies*, *54*(5), 771–790. https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130220147047

Wallach, Y. (2011). Creating a country through currency and stamps: State symbols and nation-building in British-ruled Palestine. *Nations and Nationalism*, *17*(1), 129–147. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8129.2010.00470.x

Washington Post Staff. (2021). Identifying far-right symbols that appeared at the U.S. capitol riot. *Washington Post*. January 15, 2021. https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/interactive/2021/far-right-symbols-capitol-riot/

Weigel, D. (2016). Is Trump's New Chief Strategist a Racist? Critics Say So. *Politics*. *Washington Post*, November 14, 2016, sec. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/is-trumps-new-chief-strategist-a-racist-critics-say-so/2016/11/14/b72e2ab0-aa9d-11e6-a31b-4b6397e625d0_story.html

Willett, J. (2013). National Identity and regional development: Cornwall and the campaign for objective 1 funding. *National Identities*, *15*(3), 297–311. https://doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2013.806890

Wilson, C. (2020). Nostalgia, entitlement and victimhood: The synergy of white genocide and misogyny. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *0*(0), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2020.1839428

Wilson, J. (2021). Far-Right Supporters Move to Open Source to Evade Censorship. *The Guardian*. March 12, 2021, Sec. World news. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/12/far-right-open-source-technology-censorship

Wimmer, A. (2013). *Ethnic boundary making: Institutions, power, networks* (1st ed.). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199927371.001.0001

Wojcieszak, M. (2010). 'Don't talk to me': Effects of ideologically homogeneous online groups and politically dissimilar offline ties on extremism. *New Media & Society*, *12*(4), 637–655. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444809342775

Zidan, K. (2018). Fascist Fight Clubs: How White Nationalists Use MMA as a Recruiting Tool. *The Guardian*. September 11, 2018, Sec. Sport. https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2018/sep/11/far-right-fight-clubs-mma-white-nationalists

How to cite this article: Rigney, M., & Holmes, C. E. (2022). Is 'white nationalism', nationalism? *Nations and Nationalism*, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12873