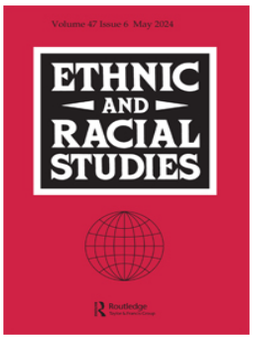

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Violence as method: the "white replacement", "white genocide", and "Eurabia" conspiracy theories and the biopolitics of networked violence

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I consider the "white replacement", "white genocide", and "Eurabia" conspiracy theories and the cycles of violence they have inspired, including mass murders in Norway, New Zealand, and the United States. Working from Foucault's theories of biopolitics and "race struggle", I investigate how these events enact a form of "networked violence" that combines offline and online actions to enact a distributed strategy of biopolitical control in an effort to discipline and control the bodies of people of colour, migrants, and in particular Muslims. Based in historical and ideological analysis of the three theories and their network logics, the paper aims to extend Foucault's theories of "race struggle" and governmentality by demonstrating how right-wing extremist strategies of biopolitical control are now digitally networked and use online platforms to predicate and enact alternative systems of governmentality based in race.

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"It's the birthrates, it's the birthrates, it's the birthrates". The opening words of the online document posted by the gunman who murdered 51 Muslim worshippers in Christchurch, New Zealand in March 2019, foreground the gunman's fear of white racial decline.[1] The document's title, "The great replacement", echoes the title of Renaud Camus's 2010 book of the same name, in which he argues that white French people are being "replaced" by Muslims. The killer's document also references two related conspiracy theories: the "white genocide" conspiracy theory, which claims that Jews are plotting to destroy the "white race"; and the "Eurabia" conspiracy theory, which claims

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that European-Arab elites are conspiring to establish an Islamic caliphate across western Europe.

The Christchurch massacre was one of a cascading series of recent attacks inspired by conspiracy theories that "white people" are subjected to "genocide" or a plot to "replace" them. The massacre followed the murder in 2018 of 11 people at a Pittsburgh synagogue by a killer who claimed that Jews "were committing a genocide to his people" (Beckett 2019), and was in part inspired by attacks in July 2011, in Norway, when a killer inspired by the "Eurabia" conspiracy theory murdered 77 people, many of them teenagers (Bangstad 2013). The Christchurch attack, in turn, inspired a 2019 attack in Halle, France, by a gunman who murdered two people, having posted an online document that complained of "ZOG [Zionist Occupation Government] elites", and called on whites to "[k]ill as many anti-Whites as possible, Jews preferred" (Nilsson 2022, 221). The Christchurch attack also inspired a 2019 attack in a Poway synagogue in which one person was murdered by a gunman who claimed in a post made on the online bulletin board 8chan before the attack, that "[e]very Jew is responsible for the meticulously planned genocide of the European race". "White men", he wrote, had a duty to "kill all" Jews (Nilsson 2022, 221). In a subsequent attack in El Paso 23 people were murdered by a gunman who was also inspired by the Christchurch attack, who targeted Latinos and immigrants and who wrote, "I am honored to head the fight to reclaim my country from destruction" (Gardell 2021, 84). The Christchurch attack also inspired an attack in Buffalo, N.Y., in 2022, in which 10 black people were murdered by a gunman who wrote that "This crisis of mass immigration and sub-replacement fertility is an assault on the European people that, if not combated, will ultimately result in the complete racial and cultural replacement of the European people" (Farivar 2022).

Designed to "go viral", these attacks were celebrated in extremist online communities. Livestreamed footage of attacks was shared on social media. Celebratory memes bestowed "sainthood" on the killers. Meanwhile, versions of "replacement" and "genocide" theory entered mainstream western politics, promoted by actors such as the Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán, the French politician Éric Zemmour, and then Fox News host Tucker Carlson.

In this paper, I investigate the "white replacement", "white genocide", and "Eurabia" conspiracy theories. While each of these theories has a specific history, I bring them together here as a topic for investigation because they share a similar structure, based in the belief that "white people" are being displaced by Others. They also have in common that they have motivated recent acts of mass murder. Following Bracke and Hernández Aguilar (2020), this article investigates the ways in which all three theories enact strategies of racialised biopolitical control and governmentality, as described in the work of Foucault (1991; 2020). The "Eurabia" and "white replacement"

theories, Bracke and Hernández Aguilar argue (2020, 687), enact "Foucault's discourse on race war or race struggle" and theories of biopolitics and governmentality, through their focus on demographic anxieties about Islamic versus white European fertility that, in the end, amount to eugenics. Here I extend on their work to demonstrate how these biopolitical strategies, which are also evident in the "white genocide" theory, are mobilised via digital networked media. The subtitle of this paper, "the biopolitics of networked violence", refers to the ways in which the strategies and exercise of racialised biopower are now digitally networked, spreading out through a symbolic network of blogs, bulletin boards such as 4chan and 8kun, alt-tech platforms such as Telegram and Gab, and mainstream media platforms such as Fox News, into mainstream politics. While Foucault's theories focussed on state-sanctioned biopolitics, here I argue that they apply no less to aspirational modes of governmentality enacted by right-wing extremists. The conspiracy theories at issue here and the violent hybrid events (Chadwick 2017) they inspire, I argue, and the celebration chatter, memes, and shitposting that create an obfuscating and promotional cloud around them, provide a platform for trialling new norms of governmentality based in racial separatism.

To make its case, the paper takes an historical and theoretical approach, based in analysis of the origins and history of the three theories, in analysis of right-wing extremist ideology, and in analysis of the digital network strategies of the extreme right. Its evidence base includes online materials posted by attackers,[2] media reportage, scholarly accounts, and instances of celebration chatter and memes posted on online following attacks. The paper begins by briefly canvassing the literature on conspiracy theories. It then outlines the ideological and historical origins of the "white replacement", "white genocide", and "Eurabia" conspiracy theories. Taking a lead from Bracke and Hernández Aguilar (2020), I then connect Foucault's theories of biopolitics, governmentality, and "race war and race struggle" to violent conspiracy theory motivated extremist attacks, to reveal how such attacks use violence as biopolitical method. I then demonstrate how the "replacement" conspiracy theories discussed here enact a biopolitics of networked violence, with reference to research on the reach of such theories and by analysing the network logics that underpin two key concepts that motivate right-wing extremist violence, "leaderless resistance" and "accelerationism".

Conspiracy theories in contemporary popular culture

The three conspiracy theories under examination here have been popularised at a time of proliferating conspiracy theories and declining public trust in government and institutions. Conspiracy theories such as QAnon or about "ZOG", "globalists", "Cultural Marxism", George Soros, the "new world

order", the COVID-19 "plandemic", 5G telephony networks, the "great reset", and the "steal" of the 2020 US Presidential election, are believed by considerable numbers of people.

While classical theories about conspiracy theories, notably, Richard Hofstadter's *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* (1964), used a pejorative, quasi-psychopathological frame, the late 1990s saw a growing willingness to take conspiracy theories seriously as a social phenomenon that articulates a relationship to power. These non-pejorative approaches understood conspiracy theories as potentially legitimate responses to information overload, growing power inequalities, increased anxieties about the future, declining public trust, and as a form of resistance to elite power (Dean 1998; Fenster 1999). Subsequent accounts by Birchall (2006) Dentith (2014) and Butter (2014), built on this democratising turn in the scholarship and note the widespread acceptance of conspiracy theories among the general public. Uscinski (2018, 234), describes how conspiracy theories are used by ordinary people as "tools for dissent" to critique of the operations of power. Others note correspondences between conspiracy theories and populism (Bergmann 2018; Castanho Silva, Vegetti, and Littvay 2017; Eberl, Huber, and Greussing 2021; Fenster 1999; Hameleers 2021; Jessen 2019), since conspiracy theories, like populism, orient around a we/they division and posit a shadowy elite who manipulates events.

For the purposes of this paper, conspiracy theories can be understood as a form of displaced political agency and alternative explanatory storytelling in an era of scientific, political, social, and cultural uncertainty. Conspiracy theories, I take it here, are also available as counter-hegemonic weapons that can be used to undermine dominant cultural and political norms. An example of this is Donald Trump's promotion of the "steal" of the 2020 US Presidential election. Such theories are frequently promoted by "ideological entrepreneurs" such as Trump, who.

> play a key role in ideological change and thrive in times of upheaval and alienation — a condition that also feeds conspiracism — when people are open to alternative interpretations of how things work. (Hyzen and Van den Bulck 2021, 182)

Such entrepreneurs, in turn, thrive in a digital arena where "Barriers to entry into the "marketplace of ideas" have lifted" (Finlayson 2021, 167).

Also relevant here is the link between conspiracy theories and violence (Rottweiler and Gill 2022), including links between "replacement" conspiracy theories and right-wing extremist violence (Davey and Ebner 2019; Obaidi et al. 2022). As Abdul Basit (2021, 4) has observed:

> In the context of VE [violent extremism], CT [conspiracy theories] play a significant "social" and "functional" role as "multiplier" and "enabler" of radicalisation.

> Violent extremists employ CT as a "rhetorical device" to advance their ideologies, identify scapegoats and legitimise use of (indiscriminate) violence.

The next three sections of the paper set out the backgrounds of the three conspiracy theories at issue here. The following three sections then discuss their logics of networked violence in the context of Foucault's theories of "race war".

The "Great Replacement" conspiracy theory

The "white replacement", "white genocide", and "Eurabia" conspiracy theories have been promoted in the context of rapid demographic change in many western nations. As noted above, each of these theories has a different origin story; accordingly, they are discussed separately here to maintain historical specificity. They also share much in common. All three theories place such demographic change in a millennial, apocalyptic context and seek to extract ideological advantage from change by positioning "white people" as victims of nefarious elite intent. In the case of the "white replacement" theory, these demographic anxieties have deep historical roots in French nationalism. One origin point is Maurice Barrès' trilogy of novels, *Le Roman de l'Énergie Nationale* (*The Novel of National Energy*) (1897; 1900; 1902). An avowed anti-Semite who through his role in the anti-Semitic 1894–1906 Dreyfus affair, pioneered the use of anti-Semitism for political purposes (Sternhell 1973), Barrès believed that Jews would occupy France and "ruin our homeland". Volume one of the trilogy, *Les Déracinés* (*The Uprooted*) (1897), the most famous of the three, tells the tragic story of seven young men who, lured away by Kantian-universalist teachers, become detached from their homeland and fall into crime.

Another source is René Binet's *Théorie du Racisme* (1950), which linked capitalism to race-mixing. A Trotskyist turned Fascist, *Théorie du Racisme* formed part of Binet's project to promote "biological realism" (a term influential among the French *Nouvelle Droite* and US alt-right), racial separatism and a "white world". Campaigning against "a new occupation" and the "colonization of Europe" by "Mongols" and "negroes", he wrote,

> We accuse the Zionists and anti-racists of the crime of genocide because they claim to be imposing on us a crossbreeding that would be the death and destruction of our race and civilization. (Lebourg 2020)

A highly influential source is Jean Raspail's apocalyptic novel, *Le Camp des Saints* (*Camp of the Saints*) (1972), in which one million starving Indian immigrants land in Southern France, and in league with Arab migrants and French anarchists, embark on a murderous campaign of destruction that spreads across Europe and leads to the annihilation of Switzerland. *Le Camp des Saints* helped galvanise 1970s French far right anti-immigration campaigns

and enjoys cult status among the extreme right, given notice by activists such as Stephen Bannon (Alexander 2019) and Éric Zemmour, whose *Le Suicide Français* (*The French Suicide)* (2014) is inspired by Raspail's book (Donahue 2019).

The pivotal work that underpins the recent popularisation of "white replacement" theory is Renaud Camus's *Le Grand Remplacement* (*The Great Replacement*) (2011). In part inspired by *Théorie du Racisme*, *Le Camp des Saints*, the "Eurabia" conspiracy theory, and the cultural racism of British politician Enoch Powell (Gardell 2021, 61), *Le Grand Remplacement* advocates a theory of French citizenship based not in equality but in race. France, Camus argues, is no longer a nation but a territory, dominated by a "dogmatic anti-racist regime" and the "absurd" notion that there is only one "species" of French people. Eschewing open anti-Semitism, his main target is Muslims. Described as "replacements", their aim, according to Camus, is the colonisation of Europe which they will achieve via their higher birth rates.

Camus's book made "replacement" theory an extremist rallying call, notably among the French *Nouvelle Droite* (FND), where it plays a role in "metapolitical strategies" inspired by Gramsci's theories of hegemony, that seek to advance political change by first creating cultural change (Bar-On 2011). "Replacement" theory lends life to two key FND concepts, "identitarianism" and "ethnopluralism", as promoted by the Identitarian Movement in France, including Génération Identitaire and iterations of Generation Identity across Europe and in the UK, and by leading US "alt-right" figures such as Richard Spencer, Daniel Friberg and Jared Taylor (Bar-On 2019; Nieli and Sedgwick 2019; Teitelbaum 2019). Both concepts seek to gain metapolitical advantage and a cultural foothold by avoiding traditional white supremacist tropes. Identitarianism avoids open claims of white racial superiority and is the belief that race, culture, place, and tradition are organically linked. "Ethnopluralism" is the allied belief that every race is a different species, and that humanity consists of a mosaic of races each of which has a "right to difference". In short, all races are of equal value but every race has its place. Any race that is not in its proper place, is out of place, thus providing a pretext for "replacement" theory and the removal ("remigration") of immigrant races.

The "White genocide" conspiracy theory

While "white replacement" theory originates in Europe, "white genocide" theory is most heavily promoted in the US (Miller-Idriss 2020). Like "white replacement" theory, "white genocide" theory articulates its biopolitical anxieties through a discourse of white victimhood at the hands of elites and racial outgroups, which in turn is used to justify acts of retribution. Its origins date to US colonial history and fears of slave uprising and white

usurpation by blacks; anxieties exacerbated after Reconstruction amidst fears that newly emancipated blacks would overwhelm a defeated, weakened Confederacy and use their new democratic and political rights to displace whites in US governance and politics.

Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916) built on this legacy with claims that Americans of Nordic stock were being pushed out and outbred by "alien people", namely Jews and immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe. The "Native American", as Grant calls Americans of Nordic stock in a gesture that erases Indigenous presence and seeks to naturalise white dominance in a settler nation, is thus "abandoning to these aliens the land which he conquered and developed" (Gardell 2021, 63). Lothrop Stoddard's similarly apocalyptic and influential *The Rising Tide of Color* (1920) warned that the "white world" stands at the "crossroads of life and death" (Gardell 2021, 63–64). Hitler kept a copy of *The Passing of the Great Race* in his personal library and Stoddard worked as a consultant for the Ku Klux Klan. Anxieties provoked by *The Rising Tide of Color* influenced changes to US immigration law in the early 1920s to favour migrants from northern and western Europe (Gardell 2021, 64).

"White genocide" theory was named in 1972, in *White Power*, a US white supremacist publication (Feshami 2017), but it was David Lane's pamphlet "The Death of the White Race" (1979), and his "White Genocide Manifesto" (1988), written in jail and influenced by Grant and Stoddart, that established "white genocide" theory as common parlance among the US far right (Michael 2009). Lane's work, consistent with white supremacist ideology as practiced in settler nations generally, positions white Americans as natural inhabitants of the US whose primary struggle is the defence of whiteness against world Jewry. White Americans, Lane wrote, "live in an occupied country", under control of the Zionist Occupation Government (Gardell 2021, 35). This "Zionist conspiracy … above all things wants to exterminate the White Aryan race" (Southern Poverty Law Center n.d.). Lane's "14 words" — "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children" — and allied slogans such as "1488" (14 words plus 88 for Heil Hitler, H being the eighth letter of the alphabet), have become a right-wing extremist mantra and their expression of demographic anxieties dovetails with the "white genocide" theory.

Lane's theory was subsequently heavily promoted by US white supremacist activist Bob Whitaker, who began publicising "white genocide" theory on his blog in 2006, urging followers to flood comments threads with memes such as "'diversity' is a code word for white genocide" and "antiracist is a code word for anti-white" (Hawley 2017, 49).

Lane was in part inspired by the writings of neo-Nazi William Pierce and his novels *The Turner Diaries* (1978) and *Hunter* (1989), written under the penname of Andrew Macdonald. *The Turner Diaries*, with its tale of

government taking guns from righteous Americans and black uprisings, purports to be written in the aftermath of a race war and played a key role popularising the ZOG conspiracy theory in the US and subsequently Europe (Nilsson 2022, 225). Pivotal to the book's plot is the "Day of the Rope", when white supremacists undertake mass lynching of people of colour and white "race traitors". *Hunter* tells the story of a radicalised Vietnam war veteran who sets out to murder mixed race couples and later, Jews, understood as responsible for the decline of white America.

Accelerationist impetus is given to "white genocide" theory by another talismanic white supremacist text, neo-Nazi James Mason's *Siege* (1992). So weak and corrupt are white people, and so few are the political options for change, according to the book, that the only option for the white race is to accelerate the destruction of "the system" through violent acts designed to trigger its downfall before time runs out.

The "Eurabia" conspiracy theory

As noted above, the "Eurabia" conspiracy theory predates and is a source for Camus's *Le Grand Remplacement*. An early source is Oriana Fallaci's book *The Force of Reason* (2004), which argues that European and Arab elites have conspired to swap oil for the passage of Arab immigrants into Europe. Such immigrants, according to Fallaci, "breed like rats", corrupting Europe to the extent that, as she wrote in a 2005 essay, "Europe is no longer Europe, it is 'Eurabia', a colony of Islam" (Bracke and Hernández Aguilar 2020, 684).

The main populariser of the Eurabia theory is the Swiss-Israeli author Giselle Littman in books and pseudo-academic papers published under the name Bat Ye'Or, most notably in *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis* (2005), which argues that the EU has conspired with leaders in Muslim majority countries in North Africa and the Middle East in a plot to impose Islamic Law on Europe.

Violence as method I: biopolitical control and its agendas

The three conspiracy theories discussed here demand attention because of the racism and violence they inspire. Such violence, I argue, is not something that happens in the aftermath of these theories but is part of their method, which is connected to strategies of biopolitical control and the promotion of race-based forms of governmentality.

By "biopolitical control", here, I refer to Michel Foucault's (2020, 242–243) observation that a new technology of power emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century, that

> is applied not to man-as-body but to the living man, to man-as-living-being; ultimately, if you like, to man-as-species … a global mass that is affected by

> overall processes characteristic of birth, death, production, illness, and so on … what I would call a "biopolitics" of the human race.

By "governmentality", I refer to Foucault's (1991, 104) critique of the role of the state in securing the "welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health, et cetera", through biopolitical management among other means that involve the management of the welfare, longevity, wealth and so on, of the primary mass of people.

One arena for the application of biopolitics is what Foucault (2020, 65) calls "race war or race struggle", a concept he develops by inverting the aphorism attributed in various forms to Clausewitz that "War is merely the continuation of policy [by] with other means" to observe that "politics is the continuation of war by other means" (2020, 16). This discourse of race war or struggle, as Foucault (2020, 65, 74) says, emerged in the sixteenth century and defines history, power and social relations as "a confrontation between races", understood in binary terms as a battle between "them and us". By the early nineteenth century, Foucault argues, the emergence of biopolitics coalesced discourses of race war and race struggle between races, into themes of racial purity and the appearance of "actual racism" (2020, 80), that is biological racism. This was accompanied by the theme that "foreigners have infiltrated this society", whereby the state becomes "the protector of the integrity, the superiority, and the purity of the race" (2020, 81), and society must be defended "against all the biological threats posed by the other race, the subrace" (2020, 61). Biopolitics hence becomes focussed on "medico-normalizing techniques" and "purity" (2020, 81), and race struggle plays out as "state racism" (2020, 239) and the exercise of the power to "make live and to let die" (2020, 241), enacted through emphases on "the birth rate, the mortality rate, longevity, and so on" (2020, 243).

Conspiracy theories such as "Eurabia" and the "white replacement" theory, Bracke and Hernández Aguilar (2020, 687) argue, enact "Foucault's discourse on race war or race struggle" through their emphasis on the "Muslim question" as a problem. The "Muslim question" is articulated at the level of demographic anxieties about Islamic versus white European fertility. Through analysis of two far right images depicting pregnant women, they analyse how pregnant Muslim women are understood as literally carrying bombs while pregnant white women are depicted as rightful breeders of the future population. Replacement logics, they argue, can be understood as an expression of governmentality that seeks to establish a regime of biopolitical control by limiting the fertility of Islamic women and enhancing the fertility of white women. Such strategies, as they argue, ultimately go to a fundamental form of biopolitics, namely eugenics.

Bracke and Hernández Aguilar do not dwell on acts of violence committed by adherents of "replacement" theory. Their insights into demographic anxiety can nevertheless be extended to demonstrate how murderous

violent acts inspired by the "white replacement", "white genocide", and "Eurabia" conspiracy theories, of are of a piece with race war and race struggle and their biopolitical logics.

Whereas Foucault describes race war or race struggle as having been, since the mid-eighteenth century, sublimated to the level of state-sanctioned biopolitics, violent acts committed by the extreme right aspire to spark a literal "race war" that wrests sovereignty from the state to reinvert Foucault's inversion of Clausewitz's aphorism, to make war once again a continuation of politics by other means. The conspiracy theories at issue here provide impetus for such violence. At their heart is a sense of existential urgency. Their millennialist drive, common to many conspiracy theories (Barkun 2013), preages apocalypse. Time is running out. One must act now or the very future of the race will be lost. Unlike the "state racism" described by Foucault, this biopolitics is enacted at a grassroots insurrectionist level, in the hope of sparking societal change. Violence, in the form of murderous attacks, emerges as a method to shock the populace into understanding the real conditions of their existence, which is that they have been infiltrated and subsumed by other races, and potentially to inspire them to take up arms as participants in a coming "race war". Identitarian and ethnopluralist ideology provides further impetus for violence, fostering the illusion that the "white race" has a claim to its own genetic sovereignty, and that self-identified whites have a right to use violence to reclaim racialised sovereignty from the debased pluralist state which, captured by ideologies of multiculturalism and diversity, is understood as having abrogated its proper role in maintaining white identity. Under conditions of biopower, as Foucault (2020, 240) says, sovereignty is defined as the sovereign right to kill. In effect, the extreme right seeks to claim this sovereignty for themselves; the right to decide who lives and dies. The calculus of such violence is zero sum: "if you want to live, the other must die" (2020, 255).

The urgent need for such violence, for the extreme right, creates an imperative to exceed limits imposed in conventional war. This includes the murder of children, such as those purposely targeted in the Norwegian and Christchurch mass murders. Asked about killing children, many of them white, as happened in the Oklahoma bombing, Lane responded: "[T]here are no innocents when your people face extinction. … There is no middle ground. Only those that are for your cause and those who are your enemies" (Gardell 2021, 36).

Such violence also serves as a warning to the Other. Its biopolitical aspiration is to discipline the Other into self-governance through silencing and ultimately self-removal ("remigration"), to warn un-self-disciplined whites that race-mixing, multiculturalism, and other manifestations of liberal pluralism are punishable by violence, and to propose forms of governmentality based in ethnopluralism, attainable after societal collapse and "race war".

Violence as method II: the networked logics of extremist biopolitics

Foucault, giving his lectures on biopolitics in the 1970s, could not have foreseen the ways in which strategies and exercise of biopower are now digitally networked. While early understandings of the internet forecast its democratic potential within a normative deliberative frame, violent hybrid acts are promoted, live-streamed, and celebrated in what has become a highly antagonistic online ecosphere where biopolitical struggle is routinised in trolling and "meme wars" over issues of gender and race. The extreme right has played a pivotal role in this battle, which for them involves a struggle over different modes of governmentality: those defined by liberal democratic norms and those defined by the embrace of inequality, white chauvinism, and birthright politics, among other tics of right-wing extremism.

In this and the next section, I outline how the three conspiracy theories at issue here enact their biopolitical strategies as network strategies, as part of a right-wing extremist project to trial alternate forms of governmentality based in racialised exclusion and expulsion. In short, struggles over the power to decide who lives and who dies are now digitally networked.

One arena for these power struggles is an online right-wing extremist ecosphere that since the founding of Stormfront.org in 1995 has developed into a sprawling extremist anti-public sphere that stretches from extremist pages, hashtags and private groups on mainstream platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, to bulletin boards such as 4chan and 8kun, to podcasts and vlogs such as *They Want You Dead White Man!* to white supremacist webzines such as *Counter-Currents*, *Occidental Dissent,* and *Daily Stormer*, to alt-tech "free speech" platforms such as Gab, Telegram, and Rumble, to alternative news platforms such as Breitbart.com, pi-news.net, Rebel News, and Riposte Laïque. This anti-public sphere with its own norms, values, and subcultural codes for the promotion of hate and racialised exclusion, is highly energised by "replacement" conspiracy theories.

Social media platforms, in particular, enable such theories to enact influence through their considerable participatory reach. According to Davey and Ebner (2019, 5, 15–16), between 2012 and 2019 around 1.5 million tweets referenced the "Great Replacement" conspiracy theory, with the frequency almost tripling from 120,000–330,000 per year in the four years leading up to the Christchurch attack. In 2019, Generation Identity, which has led promotion of the theory in Europe, had almost 70,000 followers on Twitter, 11,000 followers on Facebook, and its channels had 29,157 members on Telegram and 141,027 subscribers on YouTube. Researchers from the Institute for Strategic Dialogue have discovered high levels of activity among promoters of the theory on Gab, Voat, 4chan, and Minds (Davey and Ebner 2019, 24).

These network strategies seek to normalise "replacement" and "genocide" theory and provide justifications for the dehumanisation of and violence against Others, that in turn have been promoted by "ideological entrepreneurs" with profiles in mainstream media and politics. It is possible to discern a "trade route" that traffics the "replacement", "genocide", and "Eurabia" conspiracy theories from the pages of "manifestos" produced by killers, social media and the open web, and into mainstream media.

A transnational network of extreme right ideological entrepreneurs play an important role in facilitating this traffic, such as the Gefira Foundation, an extreme right "think tank" focussed on "demographic changes" (Davey and Ebner 2019, 16), and intermediaries such as Stephen Bannon or Richard Spencer, who led the Charlottesville "Unite the Right" rally in 2017, with its chants of "Jews will not replace us" and "You will not replace us". An important group of ideological entrepreneurs are self-styled "counter-Jihadist" bloggers such as the popular Norwegian blogger "Fjordman" (Peder Are Nøstvold Jensen), whose promotion of the "Eurabia" theory on his blog provided inspiration for the Norway killer (Bangstad 2019, 175).

The domestication of "replacement" and "genocide" theory is further pursued by mainstream political actors and commentators such Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán, Róbert Fico, former prime minister of Slovakia (Ekman 2022, 1), and H. C. Strache, of the far-right Freedom Party who is a former Austrian Vice Chancellor (Davey and Ebner 2019, 16). In the lead-up to the 2017 German election, Alexander Gauland, co-leader of Alternative for Germany, titled a news release "The Great Replacement" (Obaidi et al. 2022, 1676) and prominent AfD representative Björn Höcke has also promoted the theory (Davey and Ebner 2019, 16). The theory was a centrepiece of Éric Zemmour's 2022 French presidential campaign (Ganley 2022), and has been repeated by Pia Kjærsgaard, who previously led the Danish People's Party, Matteo Salvini in his role as Italian Interior Minister, and by Marine Le Pen, leader of the French far-right movement Rassemblement National (Obaidi et al. 2022, 1677). British politician Nigel Farage has claimed that Muslims are "coming here to take us over" (Penny 2019). Fox News host Tucker Carlson has reportedly aired versions of "replacement" theory in over 400 segments, amidst talk of "legacy Americans", and "demographic change" that involves "replacing the population" (Anti-Defamation League 2022).

"Replacement theory" also entered the Trump White House. Stephen Miller, who during the Trump presidency was Trump's immigration spokesperson and architect of anti-Muslim policies, was reportedly "obsessed with ideas such as 'white genocide'", as expressed in over 900 emails he sent to a Breitbart News writer (Bellware 2019).

The "Eurabia" theory, too, has been influential among mainstream commentators. Sympathisers reportedly include Niall Ferguson, Mark Steyn,

Robert Spencer, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, and Roger Scruton (Bangstad 2019, 170, 177). As Bracke and Hernández Aguilar (2020) note, in Europe terms such as "demographic jihad" and "population replacement", have permeated popular culture via mainstream journalism and commentary. They cite works such as Melanie Phillips' *Londonistan: How Britain Is Creating a Terror State Within* (2006), Bruce Bawer's *While Europe Slept: How Radical Islam Is Destroying the West from Within* (2006), and Thilo Sarrazin's *Deutschland Schafft Sich Ab* (*Germany Abolishes Itself*) (2010), as books with "eerily similar lines of argument" to *Eurabia*, that.

> keep adding layers to the palimpsests of population replacement, making it local, that is, London, or mixing the demographic threat with Islamic terrorism, while highlighting the alleged complicity of European governments and elites. (2020, 685)

Violence as method III: the networked logics of "leaderless resistance" and "accelerationism"

The connection between violence, biopolitics, governmentality, and network logics is not only enabled by the mediatisation and platformisation of extremism, it is also built into the ideological infrastructure of the extreme right, as can be seen via analysis of two key strategies that underpin right-wing extremist violence, "Leaderless resistance" and "accelerationism".

While the expression "lone wolf" is often used to describe the protagonists of murderous extremist attacks, this term belies the network logics that underpin such attacks. In the 1980s and 1990s, right-wing extremist leaders such as David Lane and Louis Beam, responding to the failure of organisations such as the Ku Klux Klan to secure the rights of white people and to the ease by which such organisations were monitored and infiltrated by security organisations, formulated a theory of "leaderless resistance" intended to protect extremist organisations from scrutiny while promoting violent attacks. Leaders would make generalised calls to arms not knowing who might take them up, to foster random, unpredictable violent events. This would require self-resourced actors willing to shun extremist organisations, take up arms and risk life and freedom, who would be rewarded with hero status in the white supremacist community as news of their attack spread (Gardell 2021, 12).

Lane's "14 words" were a milestone in the evolution of these tactics since, as Mattias Gardell (2021, 34) argues, "Through the 14 Words, white unity of organization can be substituted for unity of purpose". The shift is from centralised organisation to decentralised, networked process. As Lane writes to potential followers, "The 14 words are holy. They are decreed by the Gods. They give you a divine mission. Live them, and fight smart" (in Gardell 2021, 34).

Online tracts posted by killers play a key role in this networked strategy, as media documents that link together hybrid events through cascading sequences of mediatisation and violence that spread out over space and time. Through such documents extremist killers communicate with and in some cases give instruction to other would-be killers – "You wait for a signal, while your people wait for you", as the Christchurch killer put it – self-aggrandise their hero status and get their message out to the mainstream media and its publics. Through such documents killers also seek to "awaken" the "white race" and posit a "race" to be awakened, that is, construct a racialised audience who rightfully should be shocked into awareness that they have been colonised and respond by taking up arms. Such documents also send a message to Others who are would be targets of attacks. One aim of the Norway killer's attack, according to his online document, was to warn Muslims to leave Europe or die.

Such documents spark copycat events, figured as successive attacks in an ongoing battle, linked by network tendrils. The Norway killer directly inspired the Christchurch killer. The Poway Synagogue killer reportedly posted online that the Christchurch terrorist "was a catalyst for me personally. He showed me that it could be done. And that it needed to be done" (Dearden 2019). The El Paso killer wrote, "In general, I support the Christchurch shooter and his manifesto", and continued, "this attack is a response to the Hispanic invasion of Texas" (in Ware 2020b, 3). The Buffalo killer wrote in his online document that he had been "radicalized" by the Christchurch killer (Farivar 2022).

Networked extremist promotional strategies arguably came of age with the Christchurch attack, which anticipated its own reception in what, by 2019, was a highly developed extremist ecosphere, capable of avoiding scrutiny for long enough to orchestrate its own global media event. This involved a multi-tier campaign, beginning with pre-attack, pre-publicity tweets by the killer of photos of his weapons, emblazoned with fascist slogans including the "14 words", and the names of previous killers. Immediately before the attack, the killer posted an invitation to 8chan inviting people to watch him kill Muslim "invaders". Designed to "go viral" as a global social media event, during the attack the killer wore a GoPro camera attached to his helmet to livestream and gamify the attack from a first-person shooter perspective, accompanied by a soundtrack that included "Serbia Strong", also known as "Remove Kebab" in the extremist media ecosphere, which celebrates the genocide of Muslims. Before going live, the killer asked his audience to "please do your part by spreading my message, making memes and shitposting as you usually do". His online tract implicated popular social media figures as inspiration for the attack, ensuring its further virality.

The Christchurch killer was rewarded with an online audience that celebrated the shootings as they took place, conferred him hero status, and reposted the stream, which was uploaded 1.5 million times in the 24 hours

after the massacre (Gardell 2021, 78). In the weeks after the attack, dozens of different memes were posted that further gamified the attack by reframing stills from the livestream as mock screenshots from popular first-person shooter games such as Fortnite, with onscreen ammunition and kill counts. Other memes sanctified the killer as a "saint", complete with holy garb and halo.

The Christchurch killer's mediatisation strategies were imitated by Halle synagogue killer who wore a headcam and livestreamed his attack to Twitch, and the Buffalo killer, who livestreamed his murder of ten people. Before the attack, the Halle killer posted an online document which nominated points for "achievements" gained during the attack, such as killing children and people of different religions (Murdoch 2020).

These seemingly unlinked livestreamed attacks constitute a publicly visible, real-time form of population control, notable for its cruelty, and accumulate, one on top of the next, to form a genocidal miasma that positions racialised extermination as a possible future model of governmentality. They are given meaning via their being networked across an online ecosphere pre-primed in cultures of shitposting, lulz and trolling, that understands mass murder as a form of satire. Analysis of the 4chan /pol/ board shows a surge in anti-Semitism and anti-Semitism and hate speech after such events, along with an increase in posts by a "white supremacist" or "fascist" (Zelenkauskaite et al. 2021).

These network strategies are given further impetus by accelerationist ideology that seeks to destabilise the existing corrupt political order by highlighting its internal contradictions to hasten its ultimate downfall. Accelerationist ideology has multiple sources that include James Mason's *Siege* (1992), which inspired the formation of the violent neo-Nazi groups Atomwaffen Division and The Base (Ware 2020a). Another source is Nick Land's accelerationist philosophy which forms a basis for "neoreactionary" thought and the view that democracy is an impediment to human progress. Another source is esoteric fascism, based in the thought of Julius Evola and his appropriation of the Hindu doctrine of the "Kali Yuga", which holds that humanity currently inhabits a fourth, dark age of historical decline preceding a new age of historical renewal. For esoteric fascists, as Tuters (2020, 294) has said, this "would represent the return of the white world to its former status of hegemonic supremacy".

Underlying the right-wing extremist interpretation of accelerationist ideology is the idea that western liberalism is riven by internal contradictions, not least its embrace of diversity and race-mixing, and must ultimately tear itself apart since different races, ultimately, are irreconcilable. The role of extremists is to amplify divisions and foster instability to accelerate this inevitable self-destruction before it is too late to win a "race war", leading to the establishment of a white homeland or ethnostate. As the Christchurch killer wrote in

his online document, "stability and comfort are the enemies of revolutionary change". It is therefore necessary to "destabilise and discomfort society wherever possible". The massacre he committed was intended to spark such change, leading to a supposedly inevitable "race war".

Accelerationism is a myth that when networked, can provoke action at scale. As an ideology it adds collective urgency to extremist projects, with scale achieved through multiple attacks each building on the previous, accumulating audiences through their repetition. Networked violence thus provides a means to "reach the other side" of the historical abyss and achieve the biopolitical and governmental ends of right-wing extremism, that is, racial purity, by promoting a shared, time-delimited sense of mission. As David Lane has said, the aim of violence is "to hasten the demise of the system before totally destroys our gene pool" (Gardell 2021, 36).

Accelerationist ideology, like "leaderless resistance", is a potent component of violent extremist network strategies because it projects an aspirational vision of a collective ideal future that is easily communicated across a loosely networked transnational community of belief. From a biopolitical point of view, it projects a shared vision of governmentality based in racial exclusion, achievable through extreme violence.

Conclusion: everyday violence

The three conspiracy theories discussed here, as I have argued, use networked digital media to trial and promote retrograde models of biopolitics and governmentality that seek to dehumanise and potentially eliminate racialised Others as potential risk objects justifiably subject to violent discipline. Network logics are intrinsic to these biopolitics and in the digital era plays a crucial role in enacting Foucault's discourse on "race war" or "race struggle". The strategies and exercise of racialised biopower are now digitally networked. Further, whereas Foucault describes race war or race struggle as having been sublimated to the level of state-sanctioned biopolitics, right-wing extremist proponents of the "white replacement", "white genocide", and "Eurabia" conspiracy theories propose actual race war, to be sparked by murderous acts of racialised violence.

Conspiracy theories, in this context, become a means to a political end, used as counter-hegemonic weapons to undermine dominant cultural and political norms by providing supposed justifications for violence. Such violence occasions the most fundamental form of biopolitical governmentality, which is genocide.

To propose that violence has become a digitally networked method for the trialing and promotion of these modes of biopolitical governmentality via the means of conspiracy theories, as I have argued here, is not to make an arcane

theoretical point. The brutally exclusionary racialised systems of governmentality being floated by the extreme right and the conspiracy theories that mobilise their violence are increasingly promoted in the political mainstream. Such violence, in the shape of walls, draconian immigration and citizenship policies, bigoted media reports, statements of violent prejudice, forced family separations, and physical violence, is already being visited on the everyday lives of Muslims, immigrants, and other Others who find themselves victims of forms of governmentality produced in the shadow of, not completely distantly, "replacement" conspiracy theories.

Notes

1. The names of killers will not be used in this paper to avoid adding to their notoriety.
2. Such documents are sometimes referred to as 'manifestos', a potentially glamourising term that I avoid here. Direct quotations have been minimised and original document sources withheld, to avoid amplifying their messages.

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