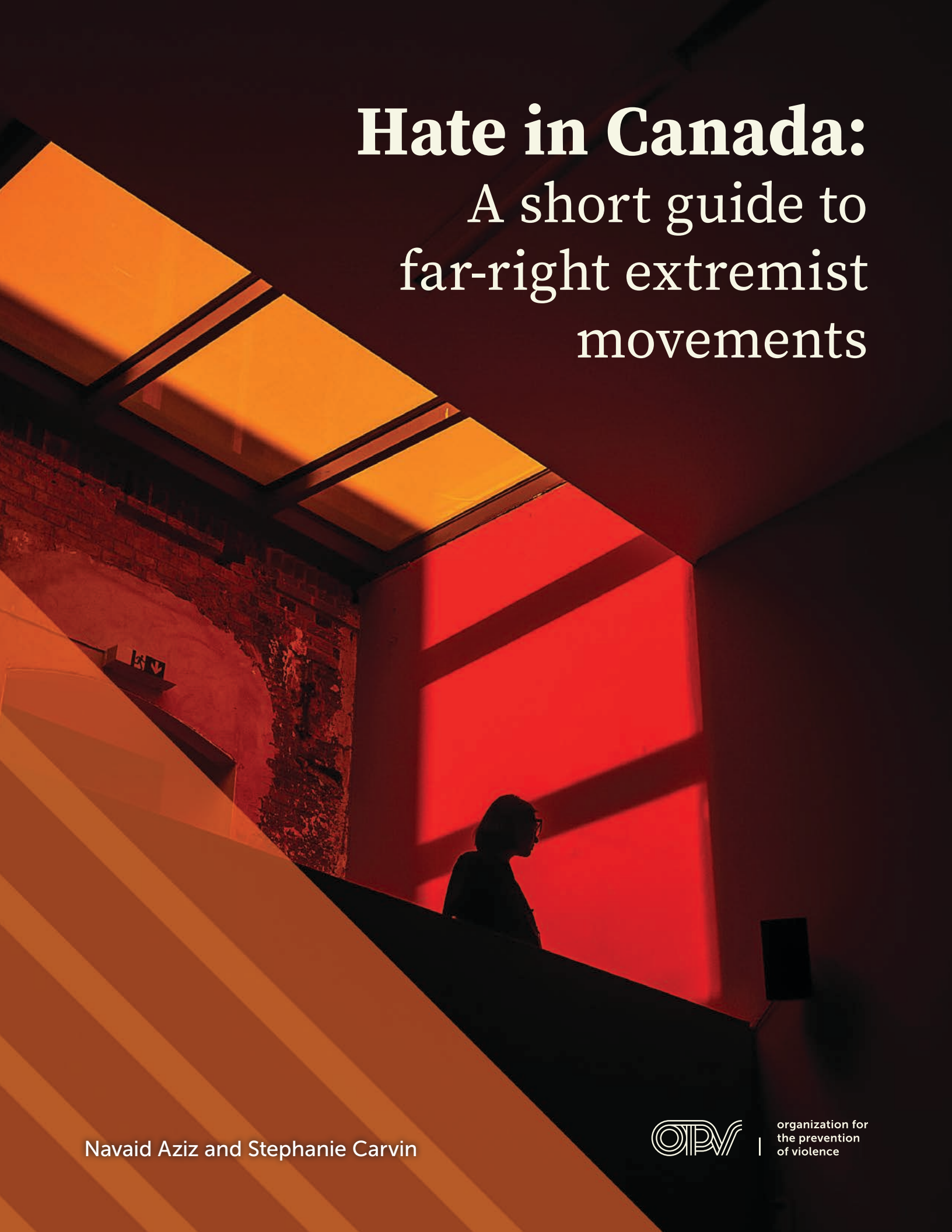
Hate in Canada:
A short guide to far-right extremist movements



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Suggested Citation

Navaid Aziz & Stephanie Carvin (January 2022). Hate in Canada: A short guide to far-right extremist movements. The Organization for the Prevention of Violence.

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Introduction[1]

Hate, unfortunately, has a home in Canada. Over the course of the last several years there has been a surge in hate crimes, many of which target the Muslim Community.

In January of 2017, six individuals —**Ibrahima Barry** (39 years old), **Mamadou Tanou Barry** (42 years old), **Khaled Belkacemi** (60 years old), **Aboubaker Thabti** (44 years old), **AbdelKrim Hassane** (41 years old), and **Azzedine Soufiane** (57 years old)— were shot and killed, and 19 others wounded in an attack on a mosque by Alexandre Bissonnette in Quebec City.

In September of 2020 International Muslim Organization Mosque caretaker **Mohamed Aslam Zafis** (58 years old) had his throat slit outside of the Rexdale area mosque in Ontario.

Then in June of 2021 the Afzaal family in London, Ontario, was struck by a pickup truck while taking a leisurely walk. **Salman**, (46 years old), **Talat**, (74 years old), **Madiha** (44 years old), and **Yumna** (15 years old) were all killed. Fayez (9 years old) survived the attack, having lost his father, mother, sister, and grandmother.

There have been ongoing hate crimes against Muslims, such as a series of attacks against hijab wearing Black Muslim women in Alberta. The pandemic may have accelerated this worrying trend, with Statistics Canada data indicating that police-reported hate crimes rising 37% in 2020.[2]

The purpose of the paper is to provide an overview of the far-right extremist ecosystem in Canada that can serve as a resource for the Muslim community, as well as other groups and individuals who seek to better inform themselves for the purpose of countering this threat. It also seeks to advance ideas for how to counter this threat, while appreciating the complexity of the phenomenon.

It provides an overview of far-right extremism, a history of these movements in Canada, an overview of far-right movements today and policy ideas that may further action by all levels of government, and communities themselves.

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in police-reported hate crimes in 2020.[2]

What is Far-Right Extremism?

Far-right extremism is a form of ideologically motivated violent extremism (IMVE) – but one that is difficult to describe.[3] There is no one, single ideology motivating these groups, but there is a shared framework of beliefs, ideas, concepts, and literature that cuts across them. To describe this mix of ideas, Barbara Perry and Ryan Scrivens suggest the following definition:

Far-right extremism: A loose movement, animated by a racially, ethnically, and sexually defined nationalism. This nationalism is typically framed in terms of White power, and is grounded in xenophobic and exclusionary understandings of the perceived threats posed by such groups as non-Whites, Jews, immigrants, homosexuals and feminists.[4]

Although Islamophobia is not explicitly listed as one of its components, it is a major theme among many, if not most, active far-right groups in Canada. Here, Islamophobia is understood as "anti-Muslim racism"[5] or "The fear of and hostility towards Muslims and Islam that is rooted in racism and that results in individual and systemic discrimination, exclusion, and violence targeting Muslims and those perceived as Muslims."[6]

Far-Right groups and movements are characterized by their fractious nature. Groups within the overall movement differ over key questions, such as the role of religion.

Some groups, such as Canada First, embrace what they see as a "traditional Christianity"[7], whereas others, such as the Order of Nine Angles invent/co-opt pagan beliefs, explicitly rejecting Christianity.[8] (Both groups are discussed further below.)

Moreover, hate groups find themselves dominated by rivalries and personality conflicts; there is so much infighting that it is hard for members to get along over long periods of time.

As such, many groups last only a few months or a year.[9] This is often compounded by weak-leadership and mobility among far-right adherents, who may simply seek other groups when infighting and arguments arise. In addition, research has shown that some far-right members find that being a member of a group dedicated to hate can be "exhausting", with constant demands to prove their ideological commitment and loyalty. [10] Combined with high levels of infighting, groups often disintegrate before they are well known or can be investigated.[11]

However, the fractious nature of far-right groups does not make them less dangerous; many IMVE attacks are conducted by lone-actors who do not have a clear affiliation or external guidance.[12]

For example, Justin Bourque, who killed three RCMP officers in Moncton, New Brunswick, in 2014 was motivated by a mix of anti-government beliefs that overlap with far-right narratives and conspiracy theories, obsessing about a right to bear arms and a looming apocalypse.[13]

Similarly, Alexandre Bissonnette, the perpetrator of the mass-murder of the Quebec Mosque in 2017, appears to have been radicalized by the consumption of far-right media and particularly Islamophobic conspiracy theories.[14]

Clearly, some individuals are drawn to this extremist ideology, regardless if they join a far-right group or not. Therefore, the far-right should be considered a movement rather than a collection of groups motivated by a singular belief system. This also mean that individuals associated with a group that collapses are quickly able to find other like-minded individuals, often in online spaces.

Before discussing the drivers of far-right extremism attracting individuals to this movement, we will first review the history of this form of extremism in Canada.

Hate in Canada: A Brief History

Although far-right and IMVE narratives are evolving "with unprecedented multiplicity and fluidity"[15], far-right extremism in Canada is nothing new. In the 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), a racist, nativist, and antisemitic group came to Canada via the United States. They were active in Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta.[16] During the 1930s and 1940s, some Canadians became dedicated Nazis and fascists, loyal to the violent political movements and governments in Europe.[17]

In the 1960s, the Toronto-based Edmund Burke Society, an anti-Left/anti-Communist group called for "militant conservative activism". This group attacked Vietnam War protestors and gatherings of labour groups and Marxists.[18] The group later became the more overtly racist and antisemitic "Western Guard" but its membership declined by the late 1970s.

There was a resurgence in the KKK's activities in the 1970s and 1980s, but this was forestalled by the conviction and imprisonment of much of its leadership.[19]

In the 1970s, Ben Klassen, a Canadian living in the United States, established the "Church of the Creator," an ethnically-based religion to advance the white race.[20] The movement coined the term of "RAHOWA" or "racial holy war," a term now in use by many far-right extremists, particularly fascist skinheads and neo-Nazis. This message was spread by Canadian band RAHOWA, which was influenced by the British skinhead band Skrewdriver.[21] These were distributed by a Canadian far-right extremist record label, Resistance Records.[22]

The Skinhead movement came to Canada in the 1980s, although it is unstructured and deeply divided. While many Skinheads do not adhere to far-right extremism, however, there are neo-Nazi Skinheads in Canada who subscribe to anti-immigrant, anti-LGBTQ2, and racist beliefs. Today the movement continues to target youth through music, websites, and internet forums.[23]

Far-Right Extremism in Canada Today

At present, far-right extremist groups co-exist alongside a mix of IMVE-groups, their core beliefs often intersecting and overlapping with others, such as grievance-based and gender-driven violence.

These groups are focused on a wide range of issues creating a far-right ecosystem where different groups feed off each other. This includes cultural-chauvinists and misogynist groups such as the Proud Boys, who are known to contribute to violence at political rallies and target Indigenous groups[24], through to violent neo-Nazi gangs. Because these groups are fractious, unstable, and constantly evolving, they can not be neatly placed in distinct categories. Nevertheless, we can still identify several far-right extremist clusters.

Legacy hate-groups

These are the remnants of older groups that operated predominantly in the 20th Century. This includes the KKK and the Creativity movement, which are considered to be still present, but considerably weakened.[25] The ideas (particularly RAHOWA) and symbols promoted by these groups continue to carry significance in the hate movements. Additionally, there are signs that the Klan and people sympathetic to its aims exist in Canada today; in 2017, flyers claiming to be from the organization were distributed in British Columbia.[26] There have also been some reports of limited online activities in the late 2010s.[27]

Anti-government/Anti-Authority Violence

Individuals in anti-government/anti-authority movements believe the government is illegitimate and they are not required to follow the laws of Canada. Instead, they often rely on misunderstandings and misinterpretation of treaties such as the Geneva Convention and the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, or made up treaties such as "the United Nations Convention", to assert rights and claims they do not have.[28]

Media reporting suggests there recently has been a surge of the use of Sovereign Citizen/Freeman on the Land pseudolegal documents and innovative forms of pseudolaw to fight COVID-19 public health measures by some small businesses and restaurants (or used against them).[29] For example, some far-right activists have declared themselves the true leaders of Canada[30], declaring the government unconstitutional, and issuing false notices.[31]

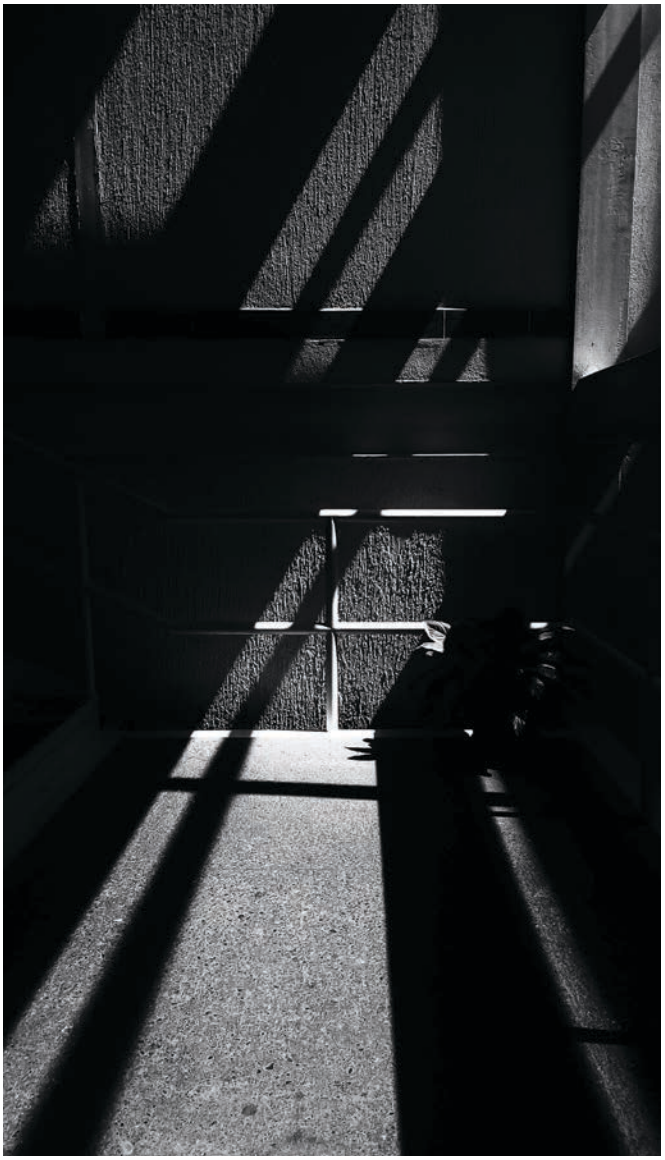
There is a wide range of anti-government and anti-authority movements in Canada. Yellow Vests Canada originally appeared to be a copy of the protest movement in France that emerged in late 2018. However, it became an anti-carbon tax and pro-pipeline movement that soon started promoting antisemitic and Islamophobic conspiracy theories involving "globalist" cabals and the United Nations.

QAnon adherents believe that Western governments and global institutions are corrupt, and controlled by a cabal of satanic, cannibalistic pedophiles against whom former-President Trump is waging a cosmic battle.[32]

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen the emergence of national and international anti-mask/anti-lockdown/anti-vaccine groups.[33] Many of these groups draw upon the ideas and conspiracy theories found in the above-mentioned movements, as well as anti-science "naturalist" ideas. In turn, many far-right movements have latched on to COVID-19 conspiracy movements to lure anti-vaccine activists and conspiracy theorists to their cause.[34]

While most individuals in these movements are non-violent, they play a role in spreading conspiracy-theories that perpetuate mistrust, racist, antisemitic and Islamophobic views, and harm democratic institutions. There are individuals within anti-government movements that are known to act violently on their beliefs. Subscribers to the Sovereign Citizen/Freeman-on-the-Land movements, who refuse to be governed by "human laws" because they believe they have not consented to it, have been known to attack and sometimes kill police officers, judges, and government employees in defence of what they see as their rights.[35]

There have been several anti-government attacks in Canada. In 2015, Norman Walter Raddatz killed a police officer and wounded another while they were serving a warrant for failure to appear in court in Edmonton. He fired over 50 bullets from his home before turning the gun on himself.[36] Raddatz espoused his anti-government views online, was known to make homophobic comments, and he had been investigated for antisemitic harassment for over a year.[37]



Similarly, Justin Bourque's attack on RCMP officers in Moncton, New Brunswick appears to have been inspired by anti-authoritarian and pro-gun beliefs, and his views fit within the spectrum of the Freemen-on-the-Land movement. Bourque has been described as increasingly anxious and paranoid in the months leading up to the attack, subscribing to anti-government conspiracy theories, obsessing over the right to bear arms and a looming apocalypse. Two months before shooting and killing three RCMP officers, he wrote on his Facebook page, "we're already losing the silent war you don't wanna believe is happening."[38]

Anti-Immigration

Emerging out of "counter-jihad" narratives on the far-right in the 2000s, and xenophobia, a number of anti-immigration groups emerged in Canada in the mid-2010s to thwart what they saw as a wave of Muslim immigrants who were determined to change the Western culture and way of life. This later part is important – many far-right movements are increasingly defining themselves through the lens of culture, rather than race. This is also very true among far-right movements in Québec that portray Muslims as a threat to the French language and secularism.[39]

Such views were espoused by Québec-based anti-immigration group La Meute (The Pack), that has held protests at government sites as well as border checkpoints. In late 2018 media reports indicated that Le Meute was suffering from "petty interpersonal drama and infighting", leaving the future of the group in question.[40] However, the fracturing of Le Meute does not mean the sentiments which propelled it have gone away.

Although xenophobia and anti-immigration sentiments are common among all far-right movements, those with these themes as their central focus have been more politically active and the most likely to form actual groups. For example, Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West (PEGIDA), a European group imported to Canada, has held rallies in the streets of several Canadian cities, including Montreal and Toronto, some leading to violence and has a robust Facebook presence.[41]

The Soldiers of Odin (SoO), an anti-Islam/anti-immigrant vigilante-style group that began in Finland, set up chapters in Canada at the end of 2015 and beginning of 2016. Although the group often portrays itself as a volunteer and community-oriented organization, members of the group frequently show up at anti-immigration protests and engage in "street patrols" to protect Canadians from what they see as an Islamist threat but are part of an intimidation strategy against immigrants and non-white Canadians.[42] SoO are also known to target institutions they believe are allied with anti-fascist groups (Antifa) and mosques.[43]

SoO attempts to normalize itself politically and socially through various strategies such as being photographed with politicians[44] and trying to establish links with various Canadian Royal Legion chapters.[45]

The resulting controversies have forced some of the SoO chapters to disband, but many have re-formed under different names such as the "Canadian Infidels", and "Wolves of Odin".[46] Consistent with the fragmentary nature of far-right groups, SoO has been subject to infighting and some members have splintered off from the SoO to form new but ideologically similar groups such as "Northern Guard" and "Storm Alliance".[47] Most of these splinter groups have also since collapsed, but many of their members continue to hold far-right beliefs.

Single issue/grievance-based extremism

Single-issue and grievance-based extremists are those who are fixated on a particular ideological issue such as taxes or abortion.[48] Similar to anti-government extremists, they do not necessarily subscribe to all of the views of far-right extremists, but their ideologies interconnect, placing them withing the wider IMVE ecosystem in Canada.

Of particular concern in recent years has been the rise of gender-based violent extremism in Canada. This includes misogynist violent extremism and anti-LGBTQ2 violence. For example, those who identify with the Incel sub-culture believe that society is rigged against men in favour of women, making it impossible for them to find a sexual partner. It is an extreme form of misogyny and anti-feminism – an area where there is a connection with most far-right extremist ideologies.

In April 2018, Alex Minassian who professed Incel beliefs, drove a van into crowds walking along a busy Toronto street, killing 10 and injuring dozens.[49] In January 2020, Alexander Stavropoulos pled guilty to randomly selecting and stabbing a woman multiple times and injuring her baby in Sudbury, Ontario in June of 2019. Stavropoulous indicated that his desire to kill was grounded in his sexual frustration and he was inspired by Minassian.[50]

Neo-Fascists/Accelerationists

Of the clusters of far-right extremism in Canada, the most violent and concerning are the transnational neo-fascist, neo-Nazi and white supremacist movements which advocate for the violent overthrow of governments and the creation of totalitarian Aryan nations.[51] Many of these groups are considered to be "accelerationist" because they believe that they will be able to accelerate the inevitable decline of Western democratic governments, particularly the United States, by sparking a civil war through the use of terrorist attacks, conducted by loosely networked, like-minded cells.[52]

The role of the Iron March website, which existed from 2011-2017 is often considered to be fundamental to the establishments of the current movement, the emergence of a number of transnational groups, and the facilitation of their activities, including recruitment, in-person meetings, training and activism.[53] For example, Lindsay Souvannarath, an American neo-Nazi arrested for a plot to engage in a mass shooting in a Halifax mall with Canadian James Gamble in 2015, is known to have participated in discussions on Iron March.[54]

Although the website has now been taken offline, Iron March legacy groups inspired by the neo-Nazi book *Siege*[55], and forum discussions, continue to emerge and evolve. Of these, the most infamous in Canada are The Base,[56] and Atomwaffen Division. In the summer of 2019, Patrik Mathews, a Canadian Armed Forces reservist was outed as a recruiter for The Base by the Winnipeg Free Press.[57]

After this media reporting, Mathews illegally crossed into the US and was arrested by the FBI in January 2020 and charged with weapons offences. It is believed that he was involved in a plot that aimed to trigger a race war. Prosecutors allege that Mathews videotaped himself advocating for murder, poisoning water supplies and derailing trains.[58] Also in 2019, the Canadian Armed Forces confirmed that members of Atomwaffen were in its ranks, possibly to seek military training and experience in order to conduct violent extremist activities later on.[59]

Following disruption to its activities and a series of arrests, Atomwaffen had diminished as a loosely networked group by early 2020. However, indicative of the regenerative nature of groups inspired by neo-Nazi accelerationist ideology, a new faction comprised of the remnants of Atomwaffen, the "National Socialist Order" was founded in July 2020.

There are other offshoots of this movement in Canada as well. Guilherme "William" Von Neutegem, who murdered Mohamed-Aslim Zafis, engaged in neo-Nazi occultist movements, including the Order of the Nine Angles (O9A).

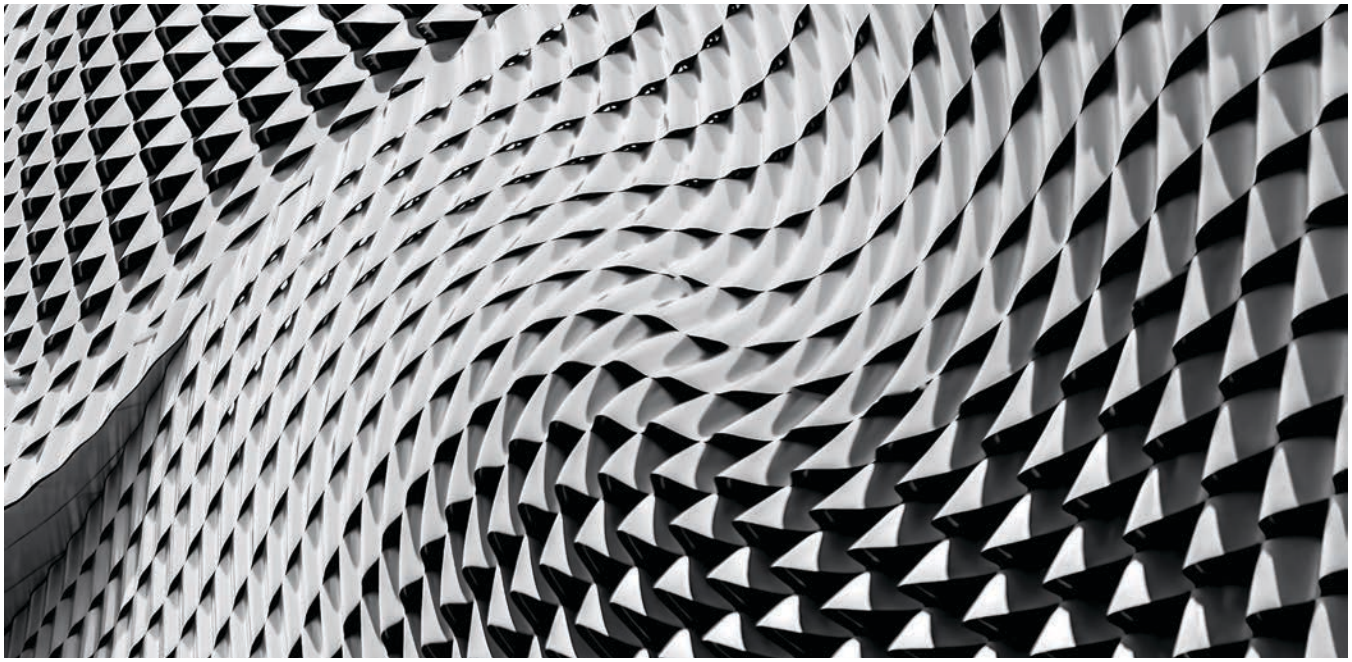
According to media reports, The Order of the 9 Angles is a neo-Nazi death cult that worships Hitler and its believers are told to carry out murders to establish a satanic empire.[60] O9A appears to have had influence in Iron March legacy groups such as Atomwaffen Division/ NSO and some of its offshoots, the UK-based National Action and Sonnenkreig.[61]

Alt-Right

The alt-right emerged in the United States in 2008 as an attempt to give far-right extremism a new and more acceptable image. Its ideology centres around the idea that white identity and western culture is under attack by multicultural forces.[62] Arguably, the most prominent alt-right organization in Canada is the Proud Boys who, despite being listed as a terrorist entity in early 2021, may be attempting to regroup, resisting dissolution[63] or forming new groups.[64]

Recently new alt-right/cultural chauvinist movements inspired by American white supremacist Nick Fuentes, have emerged in Canada. These "Groypers" attempt to normalize their white supremacy through aligning themselves with conservative Christianity. However, they criticize harass other alt-right organizations for not going far enough in pushing for a white ethnostate or for their support of Israel.[65]

A "Canada First" movement, modeled explicitly after Fuentes "America First", seeks to subvert Canadian conservative movements towards anti-immigration and white supremacist policies.[66]



What is Driving Far-Right Groups?

Why individuals join extremist groups has been the subject of much study, particularly in the last two decades.

The answer is that there is no answer – whatever the ideology or system of belief, there is no one explanation as to why radicalization and mobilization to violence occurs. Each individual each has their own pathway.

While we cannot say why an individual takes a path to join a far-right extremist movement, we can note certain drivers that are likely increasing the numbers of hate groups in Canada.

The Internet

Far-right extremists were early adopters of the internet, immediately observing the ability to spread propaganda, recruit and facilitate activities. Stormfront, arguably the first and one of the most influential hate sites, was established in 1995.

Although the website has been forced offline several times in recent years, it has been able to find new servers to host it.[67] In addition, there have been multiple other sites and internet forums that have proliferated online. This paper has already discussed the influence of Iron March on the neo-Nazi movement.

Throughout the 2000s and 2010s, far-right extremist movements have adopted social media, including Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok. When removed from these services, far-right extremists have used Russian social media services, like VKontakte (VK).[68] However, it appears more common for these individuals to switch to more permissive apps (like GAB, GETTR, Discord or the Toronto-based Rumble) or encrypted apps, particularly Telegram.

These sites go beyond discussing ideas, to the generation of a "far-right" culture specifically targeting youth with art[69], music[70], and ironic memes and phrases used to convey short-hand nods to racist ideas and in-jokes that reinforce beliefs and create a sense of belonging.[71]

Cross-Over and Connectivity

The internet is not just permitting far-right extremists to find each other: it also allows far-right extremists to reach out to other grievance-driven movements or followers of conspiracy theories and to build on their overlapping concerns. Without the connections provided by the internet and social media platforms, individuals would have a harder time validating their extremist beliefs and might be more likely to keep these beliefs to themselves. But with the internet, it is much easier to find someone to validate your extremist beliefs.

Today, violent misogynist views are shared by both Incels and many (if not most) far-right extremist groups.[72] Some prominent QAnon influencers are now openly espousing far-right extremist ideas.[73]

Media outlets are reporting on the existing and growing ties between the anti-vaccine/anti-lockdown movements and white supremacy.[74]

All of this shows the fluidity of far-right extremist movements, and the potential for other grievance-driven (e.g. Yellow Vests) or conspiracy movements to be infiltrated by groups that tend to be more violent.

Fluidity of membership has been encouraged by many of the leaders of Iron March legacy groups and is likely to be a strategy for the movement as a whole going forward, as it makes it harder for law-enforcement and national security agencies to follow and disrupt their activities.[75]

Permissive Environments

In recent years a number of scholars have argued that far-right extremist ideas are more visible because they have become more mainstream.[76]

While the Internet has contributed to this (as discussed above), there are a number of "offline" reasons why this may be the case.

Some suggest that a more permissive environment opened up to far-right groups with the campaign and presidency of Donald Trump, who used racist, anti-immigrant terminology in his speeches and social media posts, downplays concerns over ethno-nationalism, and was elected with a promise to ban Muslims from travelling to the United States.

Researchers note that his campaign appears to have galvanized Canadian-based white supremacist ideologies, identities, movements, and practices.[77]

Others point to the emergence of the alt-right[78], who have sought to give far-right ideas a mainstream makeover.

Along with this has been the emergence of a far-right media ecosystem that has capitalized on new platforms offered by the internet. This has allowed alt-right activists and their sympathizers to produce, promote, and spread content in volumes that frequently surpass engagements from traditional media sources, thus muddying the information environment.

Importantly, many of these global alt-right content producers are Canadian, including Faith Goldy, Gavin McInnes and Laura Southern. Rebel Media, The Post Millennial, and True North Canada amplify many of these views.

Another contributor to a more permissive environment for hate is what Perry and Scrivens call a growing "political/rhetorical climate of intolerance".

Responding to xenophobic grievances within their political bases, politicians and political parties have introduced policies that target immigrants, refugees and Muslims. This included a proposed "barbaric cultural practices" hotline for citizens to snitch on their new Canadian neighbours and niqab bans.

The most "successful" of these is Quebec's Bill C-21 which targeted visible religious symbols. The introduction of this legislation, which disproportionately affects Muslims in the province, may have coincided with an increase in hate crimes targeting Muslim women in Quebec.[79] And the refusal of many Members of Parliament to recognize and denounce Islamophobia in a private members' motion, M-103[80], also sends signals (deliberately or not) to groups inspired by cultural-nationalism that their views are supported.

The results of these trends are jarring. And a skyrocketing level of hate-crime in cities during the COVID-19 pandemic suggest that individuals inspired by far-right extremist ideas, grievances and conspiracy theories are increasingly mobilizing to violence. This highlights the need for the Canadian government to act and for all Canadians to confront the reality of far-right extremism in Canada today.

Conclusion

The recent wave of violent extremism and hate crimes in Canada, including those that are specifically targeting the Muslim community, require a response that goes further than expressions of sympathy.

More needs to be done by all levels of government and communities themselves. Noting the recommendations made by community organizations, such as the National Council of Canadian Muslims and the Canadian Muslim Public Affairs Council, we suggest several areas where more can be done.

Law Enforcement

When it comes to the role law enforcement and national security agencies in countering this threat, there are several complex issues at stake. Trust in national security and law enforcement in marginalized communities is often low among sizeable minorities of Muslim Canadians and other BIPOC communities.[81]

Simply adding funding and resources at national security forces is not going to fix this problem. However, there are more targeted concrete steps that may be taken that may help improve certain aspects of the threat and associated problems outlined in this paper.

One idea is to provide better training, particularly for law enforcement, with the aim of improving both the response and reporting of hate crimes within communities. As discussed in the next section, there are serious problems with the way hate crimes are reported, where it is often left to the discretion of an investigating officer, which may result in hate crimes being under-counted. However, recent history suggests that there are limits to this approach.

Of the many attacks and incidents discussed in this report, only two have had terrorism charges laid, a 17-year-old charged with Incel inspired terrorism for fatally stabbing a woman in February 2020[82] and the June 2021 London attack.[83]

Far-right extremism has seldom been recognized as a serious threat or terrorism under the Criminal Code, despite the similarity of actions that are often undertaken. In this sense there may be an inherent bias in policing and national security that training alone will be difficult to dislodge.[84]

A second issue, specifically for the Muslim community, is that there are many who may simply not feel comfortable speaking to law enforcement about their experiences of hate crimes after two decades of counter-terrorism practices that many have seen as discriminatory.[85]

Fighting the far-right requires law-enforcement and national security agencies to rebuild trust within communities by working with them and re-evaluating certain practices that have caused stigmatization.[86] In addition, enhancing independent and civilian scrutiny, review and oversight of local, provincial, and federal policing may provide further transparency and a sense of accountability.

Better Data and More Research

More hate crime reporting is important, so the Canadian government and Canadians have a better understanding of the threat. Already the federal government has released funding to improve research on violent extremism, much of it going to better understand far-right extremism in Canada.[87] However, more needs to be done at the federal level.

One of the key challenges in understanding hate crime reporting identified by Justice Canada is that "there is considerable variability in the definitions in use by policing services across Canada." For example, some police services will classify a "hate crime" when a crime appears to the investigating officer to be based solely upon the victim's race, religion, national ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender, or disability. Whereas others may use a lower threshold.[88]

In addition, Justice Canada has noted that hate crime is under-reported generally due to concerns by victims that their reports may not be taken seriously or concerns that they may be further stigmatized.[89]

An analysis of 2019 Statistics Canada data found that there were 223,000 self-reported hate crimes in Canada that year. However, in the same period, law enforcement reported 1,951 hate crimes, suggesting that less than 1% of perceived hate crimes in 2019 were captured in the police-reported statistics.[90]

The federal government needs to take steps to address the inconsistency and under-reporting in hate crimes to better understand the problem in Canada and to better target resources to affected communities.

Hardening Community Infrastructure

The Canadian government has made promises to provide funding to religious institutions and community organizations that are being targeted by hate through Public Safety Canada's Communities at Risk: Security Infrastructure Program (SIP).[91]

Moreover, this should not be the remit of the federal government alone. Provinces and territories should step up their funding for anti-hate programs. Alberta and Ontario, for example, have recently introduced such programs in 2021, although it is not clear if they are being coordinated with federal level partners.[92]

However, anecdotally, these funds are slow to be delivered to communities and organizations who are feeling vulnerable now. **The government must release this funding faster to ensure it is reaching those institutions which need it as soon as possible.**

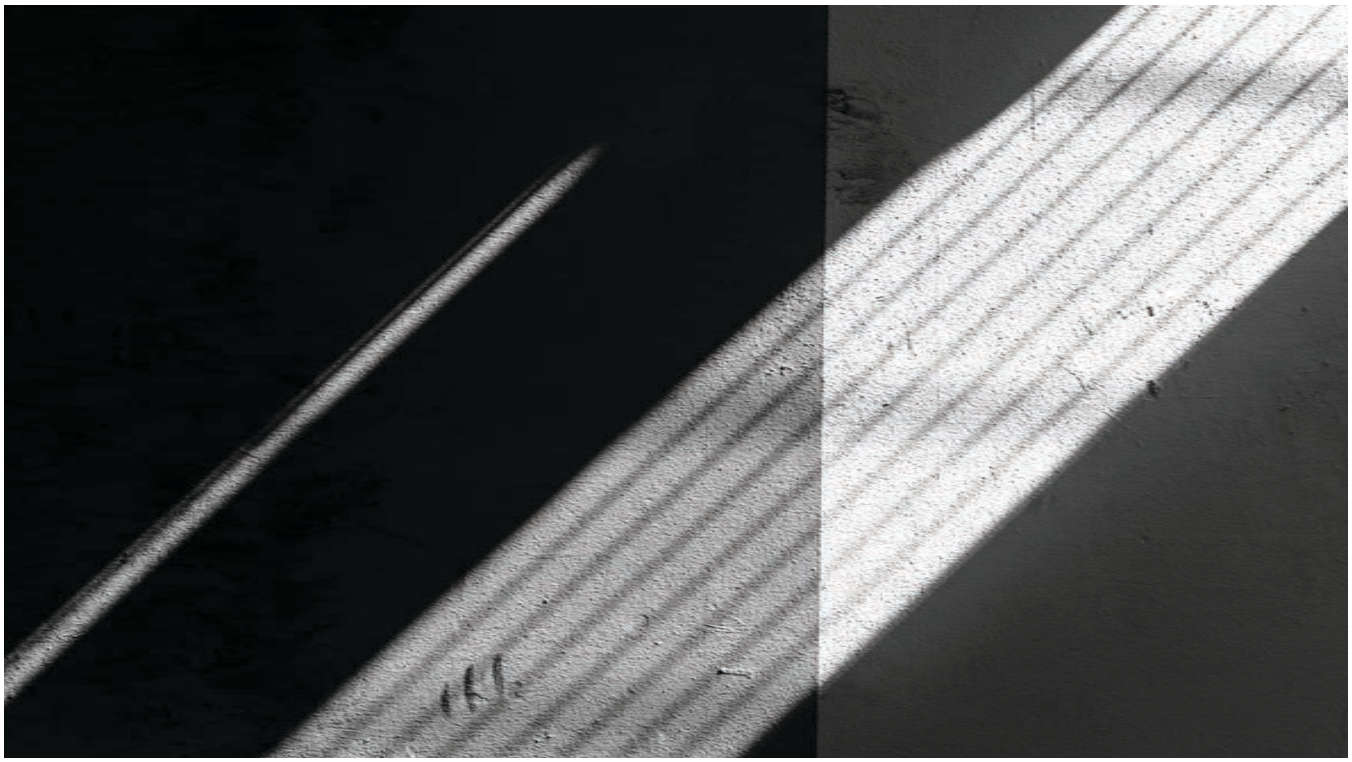
Community Empowerment

While hardening infrastructure is important, it should not be the responsibility of communities affected by hate crimes to find ways to protect themselves, or to make up for gaps in the response of politicians, public authorities, or law enforcement.

Nevertheless, communities can take steps to empower themselves. This may include using free "crime-prevention through environmental design" consulting by local law enforcements for community spaces and religious institutions, like mosques.

Community organizations may wish to provide training in self-defence or best safety practices for visible minorities.

Individuals may also request anti-racism and anti-Islamophobia training at their workplace and schools and increase advocacy to have such training within school curriculums.



Additionally, the Muslim community should also look to foster dialogue within itself, hosting conferences and events on how to respond to these challenges.

Such events can discuss questions such as:

- Should the community push for terrorism charges to be brought against far-right extremists or simply entrench political and legal regimes that have disproportionately targeted Muslims?
- Should there be more terrorism and hate-speech laws?
- How can communities push for more and better reporting on hate crimes?
- What are the pros and cons of using the term "Islamophobia" or "anti-Muslim hatred" in these discussions?

Political Action

Canadians should take steps to address the far-right by demanding that their political representatives act. Canadians can call, email, and write their Members of Parliament (MPs), Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) /Members of their Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and community leaders to ask that the challenge posed by the far-right is taken seriously and further actions are taken.

Further, encouraging elected officials to speak out forcefully against far-right extremism, particularly in the aftermath of an incident, is important for sending messages to their supporters that they do not condone such hate.

Another aspect of this is community solidarity. Preliminary research has shown that community-wide capacity building where the response to far-right extremism is recognized as a collective responsibility of the community is effective in countering the rise of far-right extremist groups.[93]

In addition, the presence of rights activists and anti-racism groups can help support these efforts in that they are able to investigate and monitor extremist groups and hate crimes, and to interact with communities in ways that police are generally unable to.[94] Canadians can therefore help to counter the far-right by financially supporting such organizations and/or disseminating their work.

Media Reporting

A free press reporting on hate crimes is fundamental to combatting the threat of far-right extremism. However, with shrinking newsrooms, it is becoming hard for reporters to specialize and cover these incidents.

Supporting publications that dedicate reporters who cover the far-right is important. In addition, there are steps that media outlets can take when covering these stories as well. This includes covering the far-right extremist movements in ways that do not sensationalise their actions or provide direct links to their propaganda.

Second, noting the links between groups such as Yellow Vests Canada or certain anti-vaccine/anti-lockdown movements and the far-right.[95] Finally, media rooms can utilize resources such as those provided by the Canadian Anti-Hate Network, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, and other anti-racist organizations to provide context to their reporting on hate-crimes and violent extremist movements.

Closing Statement

There is no one fix to address far-right extremism in Canada. The problem is diffuse and likely growing.

It is therefore urgent that all levels of government in Canada act where and how they can to meet this challenge, in partnership with affected communities, particularly by listening and understanding their needs and concerns.

It is important for Canadians to ask their representatives to take these steps and to show solidarity with their fellow citizens who live these threats every day.

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