

# The Alt-Right Revolution in the Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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This paper seeks to address three questions: what is the Alt-Right, why is it a revolution, and what has it gained from critical theory? The first point that must be made clear is that the intention of this paper is to explain the origins of the Alt-Right and what it has taken from critical theory. This paper's intention is not to decry how the Alt-Right supports and furthers structural oppression and the erosion of liberal-democracy, other texts and authors are currently doing this on television, podcasts and in opinion pieces. Nor is this paper intending to provide a strategy for confronting the Alt-Right or dissecting recent electoral failures.

The term Alt-Right is inconsistently used by its critics and supporters. The term had its first mainstream appearance in a Mother Jones article (Posner 2016) during the summer of 2016 and was subsequently popularized during a speech by Hillary Clinton to label Trump's right-wing supporters as White supremacists (Green 2017). Prior to the summer of 2016, the term was only used to describe a group of white nationalists connected to Richard Spencer (Gottfried 2008) but has since become the cultural short hand for the loose connection of Far-Right political groups within the West. While the Far-Right in India or the Middle East has advocated for a violent resistance to globalization and nationalistic rhetoric, it comes from a post-colonial tradition opposed to a revanchist tradition found within the West (Southern Poverty Law Center 2017) (including Japan) (Vice 2015). The second point that is essential to understanding the origins of the Alt-Right is that many of the Far-Right groups attached to the Alt-Right are not explicitly racially motivated, but rather tolerant of racism (Land 2013; Evola 2013). While the term more broadly relates to the assemblage of groups ranging from Neo-Fascists, Neo-Nazis, Traditionalists, Right-Wing Accelerationists, White/Racial supremacy movements and Neo-Reactionaries, these largely fringe right-wing activists and intellectuals had the sympathy of libertarians, social-

conservatives and the white working class who would not view themselves as racist (which is different from furthering racist structures of oppression).

The use of the term Alt-Right leading up to the 2016 American election specifically referred to an American political movement that drew upon racial supremacy, anti-feminism and right-wing populism connected with the Republican party, though the movement extends across a far larger political spectrum. The intention of Hillary Clinton and other pro-Democratic media figures was to push away moderate Republicans from the populist insurgency lead by Donald Trump and into the Democratic camp, (Green 2017) while partially successful at moving moderate Republicans towards the Libertarian and Democratic candidates, the choice also polarized Trump supporters, ultimately costing Clinton the election. Since the election, the American media has both condemned the actions of the Alt-Right while also normalizing their existence and political stances.

The Alt-Right is a revolutionary movement, yet as with the term Alt-Right, revolution and revolutionary are malleable terms open to many different and contradictory definitions. For this paper, I will define a revolution as the creation of a new political ideology which expresses a new understanding of the world rather than simply presenting a series of reforms to an existing one. Just as Kuhn describes revolutionary science through the creation of a new paradigm, ideology when mere reformists are a normal change, while a new vision of the future is revolutionary (Kuhn 2012). One of the essential elements of a revolution is its existence as an event which ruptures the sensible political reality rather than plastering over issues. A revolution need not be emancipatory or progressive, though they may appear this way, it is due to a historiography of revolution focused primarily on the Liberal and then Marxist revolutions of the modern era. Most revolutions discussed within political theory literature respond to the political organization and ideologies of

traditional social hierarchy, such as *The Rights of Man* (Paine 2009) or *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Burke 2010). Mussolini and Hitler both ascribed the Fascist and National Socialist movements as fundamentally revolutionary movements that provided an ideological break from the monarchist and aristocratic conservatism of earlier periods (Paxton 2004; Moss 2004). The Alt-Right, not simply a successor of Fascism, puts forward a new understanding of politics post-globalization that is revolutionary rather than simply reformist or a reinstatement of fascist ideals, even though some members are self-ascribed as or labeled Neo-Nazis or Fascists.

One of the primary ways in which the Alt-Right is revolutionary is its use of concepts and theories borrowed from critical academics (that is the non-liberal left). While many critical theorists have drawn upon authors traditionally ascribed to the right for inspiration, such as Foucault or Deleuze through their rehabilitation of Nietzsche (Deleuze 1983), the right has largely ignored the contributions of left-wing scholars since the Second World War. Drawing up the concept of deterritorialization, heterotopia, and the theories of biopolitics, discursive analysis, aesthetic politics and identity politics the new Far-Right has implemented these ideas within both domestic and international politics.

### **Where did the Alt-Right come from?**

The first question that should be asked when examining any emergent ideology is where did it come from, and subsequently what is it reacting to? The far-right was a minor or tertiary concern within critical scholarship, as the primary object of villainy has been the neoliberal system of politics (Laclau and Mouffe 2001). The neoliberal structure and the focus on structural violence dominated the literature (Žižek 2008) and left wing cultural critiques from outside of academia. The anti-globalization movement has largely been understood as a left-wing movement, with the prominence of “anti-globalist” campaigns emerging in response to the financial crisis of 2008

being misread as anti-government rather than anti-globalization. Which is why during 2015 and 2016 the term Alt-Right appeared to come out of nowhere. Despite a surge in popularity in post-eurozone crisis Europe coinciding with the emergent refugee crisis and the rise of Donald Trump within the GOP primaries, the movement has its roots in the early 1980s (Green 2017).

Starting in the 1980s the Far-Right reappeared after a 30-year disappearance from electoral democracies. Since the end of the Second World War, the far-right was marginal, the removal of the fascist movements from Europe by both allied powers and internal cleansing by Franco in Spain and Salazar in Portugal (Paxton 2004) left the groups politically and financially unable to reappear after the war. Those members of the far-right who had political success were cloaked in conservatism or the emergent libertarian philosophies of the 1950s and 60s rather than Fascism or traditionalism. The Barry Gold-Water campaign and the segregationist in the American South were not Fascists, merely right-wing populists that easily fit within the existing political narrative of American populism. In the 1980s the Euroskeptic movement began to reincorporate many of the tenants of the Fascist and Traditionalist thought, such as nationalist identity, favoring autarkic development opposed to free trade and an electoral focus on the emotional betrayal of the perceived marginalization of working class nationals by foreign and immigrant labour. While the neoliberal consensus promotes globalization, free-trade and the prominence of international finance, which would lead to a more bureaucratic state which based choices on utilitarian calculus rather than political debate, the Euroskeptics argued for a preservation of domestic culture against globalization, an increased focus on the working class and middle-class ethnic majorities, a group increasingly ignored by left-wing movements (Laclau and Mouffe 2001). Pan-European identity remained a marginal movement with success primarily found within the aspirational classes (Currid-Halkett 2017) and the trans-national capitalist classes. The movement stressed some of the

same talking points of earlier Fascist movements, that of revanchism and a politics of decline from glory. In the United States, the Far-Right's origins came out of both the Christian evangelical movement, which put forward a millennialist agenda which supported and propped up the Republican party during the 1990s and early 2000s and offshoots of the libertarian movement inspired by Ayn Rand's Objectivism and Rothbard's Libertarianism(Newman 1984).

What separates the Alt-right movement from those of the Euroskeptics and the Christian Right is the reliance on digital technology and in particular social media. Whereas the earlier Far-Right movements were dominated by traditionalist and conservative values, which relied on geographically situated communities, the Alt-Right relied on the deterritorialization of the internet to emerge. Gathering on websites such as 4Chan and Reddit the community responded both to the failures of the superstructure, particularly the failure of the state and political parties to address corruption, and a rejection of the academic and cultural platforms which argued for liberal and progressive left-wing politics, which Molberg would label the "Cathedral"(Anonymous 2015; Land 2013) as a catch all term to describe this cultural superstructure. The technological elements of the Alt-Right movement were spearheaded in part by a vanguard party of right-wing accelerationists, such as Nick Land, and technophiles and venture capitalists emerging out of Silicon Valley, while not fixated on the racial elements that dominate the White Supremacists, they are primarily focused on a space outside of society, a Foucauldian heterotopia for technological innovation. The use of cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin for private transactions is the ideal example of what the technophilic elements of the Alt-Right wish for, the option to opt out of the existing system (Yarvin 2017). While libertarians have argued for creating their own communities in New Hampshire, Wyoming or within enclaves of other Western states such as Colorado or California, they do so to establish a space with different rules and a new contractual

obligation for a libertarian society(Newman 1984). Rather than arguing that there is no such thing as society, merely individuals, the Alt-Right argues that there is a society, just one they wish to leave.

The Alt-Right's second major group of supporters is akin to the Fascists of the 1920s and 30s, the precariously employed and unemployed middle class. Responding to both the failure of the Left to provide an emancipatory politics for labour and the linkages between global finance and elected politicians, the Alt-Right draws upon this resentment to gain populist support. Steve Bannon, who came from Catholic Democratic household in Virginia, as with many Trump responded to the failures of the Democratic and Republican party elites to maintain the middle-class values and economic status after the implementation of NAFTA and other neoliberal policies. The third, and arguably the most vocal group within the Alt-Right are the ideological purists who draw upon Fascist, Traditionalist and Nationalist literature and ideas to support their campaign. In large part, this group contains the Neo-Nazis, Klansmen, White-Nationalists such as Richard Spencer and mystical Traditionalists such as the Archeofuturist Guillaume Faye (Faye 2010).

As with groups such as the Tea Party, (arguably the precursor to the electoral success of Trump) the Alt-Right movement focused on the feeling of alienation from both mainstream politics and culture, which complimented the existing fears of economic alienation from the globalized economy that have been present since the advent of NAFTA. The movement funneled this resentment and anger towards wedge issues which would further garner support from moderates who would be apprehensive of the Alt-Right's Neo-Nazis and White Nationalists. Drawing upon the perceived sense of injustice that affirmative action policies and emancipatory political movements, such as feminism or black lives matter, have put forward, the movement, with support

from Fox news, Info Wars, and Breitbart has targeted identity politics as its primary political concern (Green 2017; Ronson 2016).

### **How can we define the Alt-Right?**

The Alt-Right can be read as a response to several different movements within North American society; the first, being the globalized capitalism of neoliberalism; the second, is the rise of post-positivist discourse within universities and popular culture and the third being the acceleration of technological change with a specific focus on automation and social media. Each of these areas defines the movement's scope and agenda. First, the response to globalization and neoliberalism, which is the most obvious to the news watching public. The movement's electoral success in 2016 was incredibly shocking for the many left-wing commentators (Brooker 2016), due to its success within traditionally left-wing communities within the white working class. The success of Brexit within the industrial towns in the UK known for supporting Labour and Trump's victories in the Midwest being the most obvious examples. A popular reading of these electoral results has been a focus on their anti-cosmopolitan globalization, taking either racism or anti-neoliberal capitalism (known as anti-globalist by the Alt-Right) as the rationale for these choices. While this reading is reductive, it allows those who live in cosmopolitan spaces such as California, New York City or London to place the electoral blame on "ignorant racists" instead of the failure to communicate the benefits of cosmopolitan globalization or the contemporary post-Marxist left. The presentation of this narrative both internally within the progressive community and by major news outlets has furthered antagonized the alienation of those who voted against the EU or for Trump (Brooker 2016).

What the Far-Right's authors such as Molberg stress is a new kind of isolationism (Land 2013; Yarvin 2017; Anonymous 2015). While opt-in was the framework for understanding the



process of globalizing capitalism, the Far-Right now wish for an option to opt-out. Stressing that political freedom comes not from mandatory human rights, tolerance, and participation in an alienating system of global capitalism, but rather the ability to leave. Drawing partially upon the libertarian spirit of Ayn Rand's *John Galt* (1957), the new conception of freedom stresses a desire to disengage from the political commitments and obligations of democratic life. If we live in a social contract, why can't we end the contract and leave, one cannot consent to a contract if they have no option to refuse it? What separates this tradition from the earlier libertarian tradition is a complete abandonment of a social totality. Rather than a demanding the nation or system reflect the libertarian ethos, many in the Alt-Right simply wish to be removed from the system. The choice to opt-out ranges from Brexit, leaving the Paris accord to supporters of the Alt-Right such as Peter Tiel, wishing to create a capitalist island in the Pacific Ocean removed from both the taxation and ethical commitments of the American State (Robinson 2017).

While traditional Burkean conservatism has been filled with intellectual figures such as William F Buckley or Winston Churchill, the neoconservative movement has seen a pronounced retreat from the academic and intellectual spaces (Gordon and Neville 2015). As Richard Hofstadter stressed even within the 1960s, the American public rejected cosmopolitan intellectualism (Hofstadter 1963). The neoconservative/neoliberal movements within the 1980s to the present only furthered this division. The rise of identity politics and the shift from positivist to post-positivist social science has challenged the traditional narratives of politics and Whig history. The historical narrative from the Far-Right has a long tradition stressing a narrative of decline, with both Carlyle (2008) and Spengler (2006) arguing a decline of the west since the 1800s. These romantic interpretations of the past, reconstructing the narratives of Anti-Bellum south or pre-modern Europe have even less credibility within academic departments, yet they remain popular

accounts of history. Instead of using the academic spaces of their predecessors, the Far-Right has adopted the digital equivalent of the underground press of earlier political movements by using internet message boards and independent publishers to spread their ideas. Many of the English language translations of the post war (neo)-Fascist movements, such as Evola (2013, 2003) or Dugin (2012) are found out of independent political publishing companies focusing on online distribution rather than mainstream publishing houses.

While not an essential element of its ideological conception of the world, the movement has been closely connected with internet memes and the online culture that disseminates these memes. As internet memes are easy to share and often using initially innocuous images (Pepe the Frog for example), therefore if a post becomes viral the ideas of the Alt-Right can quickly be shared across Twitter, 4chan or Reddit. While this is not limited to the Alt-Right, as Socialist, feminist, and liberal memes are also easy to find online, the Alt-Right's use of memes serves a double purpose, that of ironic engagement (Film Crit Hulk 2017). The use of memes such as "I don't want to live on this planet anymore" (Know Your Meme 2010) capture the imagination of the apolitical "south park libertarians", whose political ideology served as a gateway to the Alt-Right. The heart of the "south park libertarian" thought process is a rejection of every political group or commitment as absurd and contradictory, stressing that one should critique everything, regardless of punching down or up. While unlikely to reject global warming as a hoax, they will target climate change activists for being too political and or absurd when they mention the impact of factory farming on the environment. On the other hand, they will decry the government support of large businesses within a supposedly free market system (Cannucciari 2016). The objective is to stress a balance between multiple perspectives by targeting the absurdity of both perspectives, that which is emotionally charged rather than derived from rational thought. By aggressively

targeting both sides of the conflict and hiding behind an ironic or satirical demeanor, the comedy becomes increasingly antagonistic, as, with a drug, a tolerance slowly builds up over time, requiring more outlandish jokes.

Under the veneer of a joke, an Alt-Right meme will often draw upon shocking imagery in a desire to evoke an affective response, rupture the sensible reality in which it is placed. The intention of such an online post is to trigger the audience, which is both an effective technique to spread the meme, relying on the controversy, and a direct response to the academic and activist culture of inclusion and identity politics. Under the guise of free speech, the authors of these memes can claim an ironic detachment from the work, arguing that the intention was to make a joke. While earlier movements on the Far-Right drew upon dog whistle politics, such as the image/word “88” (a reference to Heil Hitler, H being the 8<sup>th</sup> letter of the alphabet), the contemporary use of memes explicitly draws upon swastikas and racially charged imagery to invoke a response. Exploiting the space opened up by mainstream liberal and conservative media in response to the campaigns for tolerance and respect for trauma found on college campuses, which is labeled “political correctness”, the use of these hostile and triggering memes becomes normalized as a response to the “absurdity of political correctness”. By doing so the Alt-Right exploits the disagreements between what is free speech and hate speech, driving a wedge between Liberals and progressives.

While the trolling element of the Far-Right has gained media attention, the movement would not have captured mass public support if it was focused exclusively on gaining the attention and support from self-avowed white-supremacists and fascist communities. Instead, the movement has addressed the growing apathy and disengagement with civil politics, focusing on the rise of technocratic automation among the millennial and generation X communities and employment

opportunities. The movement's rejection of academic social science for its left-wing focus does not extend towards the STEM fields, which are actively supported and legitimated as legitimate fields of study. This legitimation is not merely a result of the Alt-Right's lobbying, but rather a tradition of scientism stretching back over a hundred years (Feyerabend 1982). Relying on the mathematical modeling of algorithmic life and science-ism claims to be apolitical (O'Neil 2016), the Far-Right attracts support from technological enthusiasts who wish for a more utilitarian society rather than one based on sociological, materialist and historical considerations. The technocratic community may disagree with white supremacy and think that men and women should be paid the same wage, but view affirmative action policies as unfair and ineffective, due to their perceived inefficiency and privileging of external conditions. This same community may even pass on the memes mentioned earlier, attacking the perceived problems of social science and humanities "political correctness".

Economically and politically the Alt-Right stresses a parallel state system for governance. As with earlier Fascist movements, the state has both a bureaucratic component, one which is run as a utilitarian law based system, and the second which is an aesthetic representational government (Paxton 2004). While most of the society can function within a neoliberal algorithmic way which is highly depoliticised, stressing deregulation or automatic "depoliticized" stabilization, the other half of the state functions for aesthetic purposes. While a liberal government may put forward legislation to address an issue, both to gain political support and to establish a policy, the Alt-Right focuses on introducing a policy that is at its most affective when proposed rather than when implemented. An event such as the Muslim Ban presents a clear political image to the American public and to the international community, even before it is implemented. Everyday political and economic considerations are depoliticized while the actions of the state on the national or

international scale are turned into a spectacle. Trump's administration has slashed funding and regulation for organizations such as FEMA (Fram and Taylor 2017), while publicly donating private money to charity. If examined from a utilitarian perspective the policies make no sense, if examined aesthetically like a performance than the government policies make sense.

The Alt-Right is still in relative ideological infancy, the movement's fractured origins and divergent literature have done little to clarify a cohesive and easy to label definition. While the Alt-Right has been dominated by white supremacists and other racially focused nationalists, this is only one of the three streams of the movement, though it is also the stream commonly referenced due to a combination of easy semiotic short hand and a legacy of scholarship equating Fascist movements with the racism of the Nazi party (Arendt 1973). After decades of the Nazis serving as a cultural short hand for evil, the term has become almost meaningless, resulting in both the terms *reductio ad Hitler* and Godwin's Law, which refers to the common practice of calling anything bad a Nazi or akin to Hitler. Historiography and political theory on Fascism argue that Nazism and Fascism are divergent theories (albeit closely linked and inspired by one another) (Evola 2013; Paxton 2004), but these theoretical and policy differences are largely academic concerns which are of interest within this paper, but not for rhetorical arguments and political activists engaging in public anti-fascist campaigns. The racist elements of the movement are therefore prominent and a significant concern, one which shows little sign of moderation, especially after the events in Charlottesville Virginia in 2017.

The accelerationist wing of the movement's fixation on technology and the role of academic and cultural institutions has little to do with the explicit white nationalist wing of the Alt-Right, but it rejects the identity politics discourse of feminist and anti-racist movements. While rejecting reforms to the structural violence that perpetuates racial and sexist policies, the

accelerationist wing is highly apprehensive of outright white supremacy (though authors within the movement, such as Nick Land, suggest that this is one of the public relations rather than moral compulsion (Land 2013)). The accelerationist wing of the Alt-Right, closely connected with the American Tech sector, has intimidated, harassed and shamed female and feminist journalists who comment on the sexist elements of their “community”. The prime example of this is the 2014 Gamergate controversy, in which a group of largely male “gamers” attacked female journalists commenting on the sexism within the video game industry, many of the journalists, such as Anita Sarkeesian received death threats for their reporting (Lees 2016).

**This brings us to the question: Why should we consider it a revolution?**

At first glance, the Alt-Right appears to be a collection of poorly constructed and contradictory arguments, relying on traditional arguments espoused by right wing politicians since the Second World War. Yet, as has been repeatedly mentioned throughout this essay, the Alt-Right is a new political ideology that is incompatible with earlier right-wing thought. Just as Fascism was initially a nationalistic reading of Sorrel’s work (Paxton 2004; Moss 2004) and drawing upon Gentile’s reading of liberalism, the outcome was something radically different from that of liberalism or Marxism.

The movement is a reactionary revolution responding to the shortcomings and isolation of the neoliberal system. Superficially the movement has been likened to the social democratic movement during the Democratic primaries simply because the movement also opposed globalization and the neoliberal understanding of capitalism. The Sanders’ wing of the democratic party argues for a reformist platform arguing for redistribution and a more equitable capitalism. In contrast, the Alt-Right argues for a reactionary revolution, drawing inspiration from Ayn Rand, the central conception of freedom for the Alt-Right is fundamentally different from the liberal

reading; freedom is the ability to exit a system you disagree with. A system of politics in which people can willingly leave is novel and presents profound challenges to how the social is understood. The contractual understanding of society that has underpinned liberal thought since Hobbes is shaken. By opting out of the system, and going Gault, the alt-right reject the totality of globalization and humanism. It is not neoliberalism with white supremacy, or libertarianism with populism, but rather a distinctly new paradigm for understanding politics.

One reading of the neo-reactionary branch of the Alt-Right movement (Sandifer 2016) is that it is an incomplete Marxist analysis of political and economic power within the world, arguing that Mencius Molberg comes close to a reading of the global capitalist system as one of class struggle but refuses to go the extra step and draw that connection, instead focusing on the cultural superstructure rather than economic superstructure (Land 2013; Yarvin 2017; Anonymous 2015). What this reading ignores is the heritage of the Alt-Right's intellectuals as the outcasts of the academic system, Molberg is not trained as a philosopher, but his works are popular. Even those within the Alt-Right with intellectual pedigree, such as Nick Land (Land 2013), have been removed from the traditional system of academic publication and publish their work online. While not explicitly banned from academics, the movement has established itself outside of the western academic environment, all the while exploiting the failure of the system to adapt to the 21<sup>st</sup>-century digital community. Even though documents such as *The Dark Enlightenment* (Land 2013) may have limited readership it far surpasses that of essays published in academic journals locked behind paywalls.

The simultaneous creation of a new canon political for the Alt-Right through online publications and reading lists containing a mixture of recognized political theorists and online commentaries has created a parallel space for political education. While the left-wing critiques of

academic spaces by figures such as Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1988) have been well received academically, they have not resulted in widespread academic change within the institutions of universities. Which is exacerbated by the cost of a university education has increased within the United States, compounded by fewer job prospects, universities are becoming less enticing for a new generation of scholars without financial support (Currid-Halkett 2017). The internet has allowed the dissemination of reading lists and texts for Far-Right thought, not only for those who are actively searching for these documents but also for many who stumble upon them accidentally. The content of a Far-Right blog post is appraised based on the amount of views, shares, and references to it, all of which occur after it has been published, in contrast, the journal process for academics appraises the document prior to the public interaction. While an essential element to maintaining academic authority and convention the process is nonetheless disciplinary in its exclusion of dissenting perspectives. The key texts of the Alt-Right movement are therefore not located within official published academic journals but instead found openly on blogs and in both digital and physical bookstores. By evacuating the academic space, the alt-right has evolved outside of the existing ideological structure of academic political discourse drawing upon a populist and public readership to expand their numbers.

### **What has this revolution taken from critical theory?**

The Alt-Right, and the groups who support the Alt-Right, such as United Russia, rely on the concept of deterritorialization. Coming from the work of Deleuze (Deleuze and Guattari 1995), deterritorialization is the conception of political, economic and social reality removed from a geographical understanding of community and politics. The practices of a locale are removed from their place of origin and removed from a specific spatial definition. For Nick Land, (right-wing) Accelerationism is fundamentally a theory of deterritorialization (Land 2017). The Tory



conservatism of the UK and Canada and the Jeffersonian liberalism that dominated American political thought has failed to respond to the impact of deterritorialization on geographically isolated or alienated communities. The urbanization and centralization of economic, cultural and technological growth within world cities such as New York or Toronto stress a cosmopolitan and globalized economy, the geographically centered community are unsustainable. As a result, the Far-Right has responded to this in two ways, the first being a doubling down on regionalism and isolationism. The works of the Russian political theorist Alexander Dugin are an example of this (2012), they stress a return to regionalism stressing a politics of culture, like that of the “Clash of Civilizations” argument put forward by Samuel Huntington (1993). Yet, unlike Huntington, theories of the Far-Right like Dugin draw upon Deleuze and Foucault to explain the failings of the liberal ideological hegemony. By retreating from the globalized space and effectively opting out of the global economy by reducing immigration and implementing protectionist measures, the anti-modern traditionalism can reappear. The policy argues for a return to a romantic pre-modern system of cultural, religious and ethnic organization of world politics.

The second response is to “Ride the Tiger” (Evola 2003) and double down on modernization and focus on a post-modern society of digital communities. Akin to a Marxist accelerating capitalism in order to bring about its own destruction (Sandifer 2016), the Alt-Right imagines that accelerating the economy is a solution to the hyper-competitive global world. The progressive cooperation of enlightened self-interest is not a solution to the Darwinian survival of the fittest that has come about from capitalism and globalization. The system of global capitalism is too entrenched in the state structures of the modern era, the current system is failing to provide the libertarian night-watchman state that libertarian theorist desire, nor does it allow for the neo-feudalism found within theories of neo-corporatism (Yarvin 2017). While traditional conservatism

relied on the localized space to gain support, as it does in gerrymandered districts in the United States, the Alt-Right's decentralization around the globe have relied on internet communities

The use of and understanding of the process of deterritorialization is used beyond political organization and critiques of the global economy, it is also key to understanding how the Far-Right has found success within contemporary warfare. While not limited to the Far-Right, the revolution in military affairs since the late 1990s has radically changed how war is fought. Instead of stressing armies occupying physical space or destroying less visible targets such as infrastructure, the revolution in military affairs has stressed a deterritorialized method of waging war. Armed forces are kept highly mobile allowing for surgical strikes while the larger military force function as fleets in being, it is the potential to be anywhere with overwhelming force rather than the act of being everywhere that deters enemy aggression (Hardt and Negri 2004). While the United States has successfully implemented many elements of this strategy, it has been most effectively used by Russia to occupy Crimea without officially declaring war on the Ukraine. The Russian state ideologist, Vladislav Surkov, utilized the post-modern ideas found within the works of Lyotard, Derrida, and Deleuze to deny the West with an affective image to respond to occupy Crimea (Curtis 2016). While a fleet in being, such as the massive American military can only be drawn into a conflict after sufficient affective violence. Understanding that the border between Russia and Ukraine is a solid line which cannot be crossed without violating Ukrainian sovereignty, thus provoke American aggression, Surkov deterritorialized the border into a porous membrane in which to slip civilian clothed Russian soldiers across the border, while also actively promoting civilian volunteers to do the same. Unable to tell who were official forces and those who were genuine volunteers, the Russian forces soon occupied the peninsula with little resistance. Western Media and American intelligence were not fooled by this charade, quickly imposing sanctions on

Russians, but the optics of the invasion were muddled enough that the aggression did not provoke an all-out war, which further complicated by a democratic plebiscite for integration into Russia (which was also far from transparent).

Drawing upon Surkov's work (Surkov 2013) the Alt-Right in American has actively undermined the concept of democracy as a legitimate system of governance. Campaigning on the idea that elected officials are simply career politicians who abuse a corrupt system is nothing new. What makes Surkov and the Alt-Right's political strategy (Green 2017; Curtis 2016) more effective is that it relies on the critiques of the left to legitimate many of their claims. Surkov's response to Western journalists decrying the democracy in Russia as unfair and structurally problematic was to read Western academics critiquing Western democracies with the same language that they used to decry Russian democracy. Even though Western democracies are far more liberal and transparent than that of Russia, the journalist is now forced to factually discredit someone who is relying on affective imagery to prove a point (Surkov 2013). While one party is taking things literally and factually, the other is focusing on the affective image, pointing out the simulacra of post-modern politics and media coverage. When Trump began to discredit the presidential election as rigged it was easy to respond with empirical facts, but it was difficult to impossible to discredit the aesthetic and affectual truth in his statements. Despite decades of statistics to back up racial inequality, the failures of tough on crime legislation, and employment statistics used by liberal and progressive politicians and commentators, the lived experience of an individual will hold more political sway. Trump's efforts to undermine the results of the election before his presumed loss is an excellent example of this, despite no evidence to suggest wide spread voter fraud it received substantial media coverage (Green 2017). Another example of this flipped media image is that of the sexual harassment scandal, rather than responding to the

accusations and evidence against Trump, he responded with Bill Clinton's sexual harassment accusations (Ronson 2016; Green 2017).

One of the lessons that the Alt-Right has taken from critical theory is how to use identity politics for their own end. The Alt-Right and Far-Right have regularly used individuals from various prominent identity groups to help support their cause. The prominence of gay males as public spokesmen such as Milo Yiannopoulos (Green 2017), or the focus on female liberation as a justification for anti-Muslim secular policies, allows the Far-Right to use the language of identity politics on mainstream news to normalize their perspectives. Critical scholars and activists on the left will critique these choices to no end, but by doing so they complicate the message that they are trying to present. A graduate student or professor with degrees in critical theory can tell the difference between the identity politics of a marginalized racial group and the racial supremacy of a white nationalist movement, but an outsider may and likely will be confused by the terminology of identity politics. The result becomes a twofold campaign, the first to further the mainstream acceptance of Alt-Right politics, and the second is to discredit the identity politics movement by suggesting false equivalencies.

The rhetorical techniques of identity politics and call out culture has also alienated moderate liberals from emancipatory projects. Despite the validity of movements such as Black Lives Matter, identity politics requires a historical understanding of the oppression of marginalized groups within society due to political structures, a pre-requisite knowledge of which is typically formed within post-secondary education. The intellectual one-upmanship of contemporary progressive culture (Currid-Halkett 2017) leaves little space for those using out-dated terms or ideas such as "women's studies" or "gay rights" opposed to "gender studies" or LGBTQ rights, those who use incorrect terminology are publicly shamed on social media for their ignorance. The

Alt-Right needs to do little to undermine these progressive identity politics movements, simply presenting an alternative position, no matter how obnoxious, such as All Lives Matter or the “Alt-Left”. These terms, no matter how recently created provide a narrative of a two-sided political conflict for the media to exploit. The use of the name ALM is a nefarious choice of discursive politics, as the name does not contradict the BLM name, but rather forces BLM to justify what its own name means through technical language coming from the postcolonial and African American studies discourse. The leftist activist community sees no problem with the BLM movement demanding the end of police at Pride, but for those outside of the community on the centre-left, it becomes a debate without clear answers; while they may find ALM racist, they are also in favour of the police, who have done little to harm them.

### **Conclusion:**

The Far-Right is going through a revolution, intellectually the movement is breaking from earlier traditions into a new political theory separate from the neoliberalism/conservatism, libertarian and fascism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The new revolution has gained public support throughout many western democracies, though it is still in its infancy and is still in the process of becoming a unified ideology. While Marxist ideologies of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century directly responded to the failures of liberal modernization through capitalism, and Fascism’s response to the failures of Marxism to address nationalism in addition to modernization, the Alt-Right has taken the failures of neoliberalism and the failure of the left to establish a new unified ideological narrative as its call to action. Drawing heavily on the literature of postmodernism, in addition to older Traditionalist and libertarian literature, the Alt-Right has both circumvented or run over many of the postmodern critiques, and internalized many of their concepts such as biopolitics and deterritorialization.

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