



Right-Wing Extremism and Mass Shootings in the United States

By Emily Kramer

Research Question

To what extent has the rise of **online platforms**, coupled with **the shift in leadership from Obama to Trump** contributed to the increase of mass shootings perpetrated by right-wing extremists in America since 2015?

Definition of Right-Wing Extremism

A reaction to perceptions of negative change [that] aims to revert fundamental features of the political system to some imagined past state.

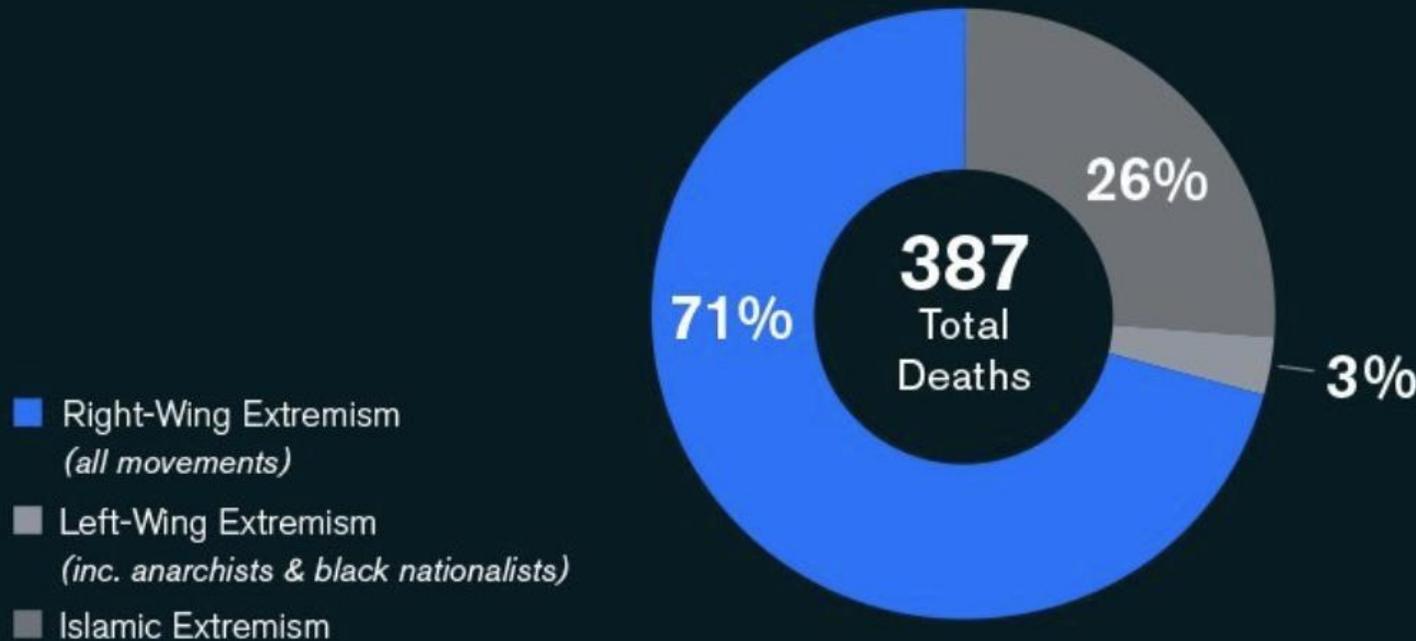
Samuel Jackson, *Oath Keepers*.

Threat of Right-Wing Extremist Violence from 2008-2017

MURDER AND EXTREMISM IN THE U.S.

ADL

Domestic Extremist-Related Killings in the U.S. by Perpetrator Affiliation (2008-2017)



RIGHT-WING EXTREMISTS

responsible for vast majority of extremist-related murders over last decade

Note: Total deaths include both ideologically and non-ideologically motivated killings

Source: Anti-Defamation League

Definition of Mass Shooting

A minimum of **four** victims shot (either fatally or not) excluding any shooter killed or injured in the attack

Mass Shootings in America from 2014-2019

GVA - SIX YEAR REVIEW	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Deaths - Willful, Malicious, Accidental	12,418	13,537	15,112	15,679	14,789	15,208
Suicides by Gun	21,386	22,018	22,938	23,854	24,432	PENDING
Injuries - Willful, Malicious, Accidental	22,779	27,033	30,666	31,265	28,233	29,501
Children [age 0-11] Killed or Injured	603	695	671	733	670	692
Teens [aged 12-17] Killed or Injured	2,318	2,695	3,140	3,256	2869	3,068
Mass Shooting	269	335	382	346	337	417
Murder-Suicides	624	530	549	608	621	614
Defensive Use [DGU]	1,531	1,393	2,001	2,107	1888	1,547
Unintentional Shootings	1,605	1,969	2,202	2,039	1662	1,837

Number of Deaths, Injuries, Children, Teens killed/injured [actual numbers]

Mass Shooting, Murder-suicides, Defensive Use, Unintentional Shooting [number of incidents]

Suicide numbers supplied by CDC End of Year Report [actual numbers]

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www.gunviolencearchive.org

www.facebook.com/gunviolencearchive

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GVA

Hypothesis

The change in presidency from Obama to Trump coupled with the resources that online platforms present for extremist groups caused the uptick in right-wing extremist mass shootings.

Methodology

- **Process tracing** using **causal mechanisms**, "a theory of a system of interlocking parts that transmits causal forces between a cause (or a set of causes) and an outcome"
- X = causal condition
- Y = outcome

El Paso Mass Shooting

- When: August 3rd, 2019
- Where: Walmart in El Paso, Texas
- Victims: 22 killed, 24 injured
- Targets: Hispanic individuals
- Perpetrator: Patrick Crusius



Case Study, Patrick Crusius

- X= Crusius' belief that immigrants are a threat to America and therefore should be eradicated
- Y= The enactment of Crusius' beliefs during the El Paso massacre.
- A: Crusius' perceived threat under Obama
- B: The proliferation of online platforms
- C: Trump's campaign and election

Crusius' Twitter Page



Patrick Crusius @outs... · 29 Jan 17

#BuildTheWall is the best way that @POTUS has worked to secure our country so far!



Tweet #BuildTheWall

Tweet #NoSanctuaryCities

Tweet #KeepGitmoOpen

Tweet #BanSyrianRefugees

5 4 1

John doe @juhjhjgghk · Feb 13, 2017

I'm extremely proud to call Trump my President! He's doing a wonderful job and is truly going to #MAGA! #MondayMotivation

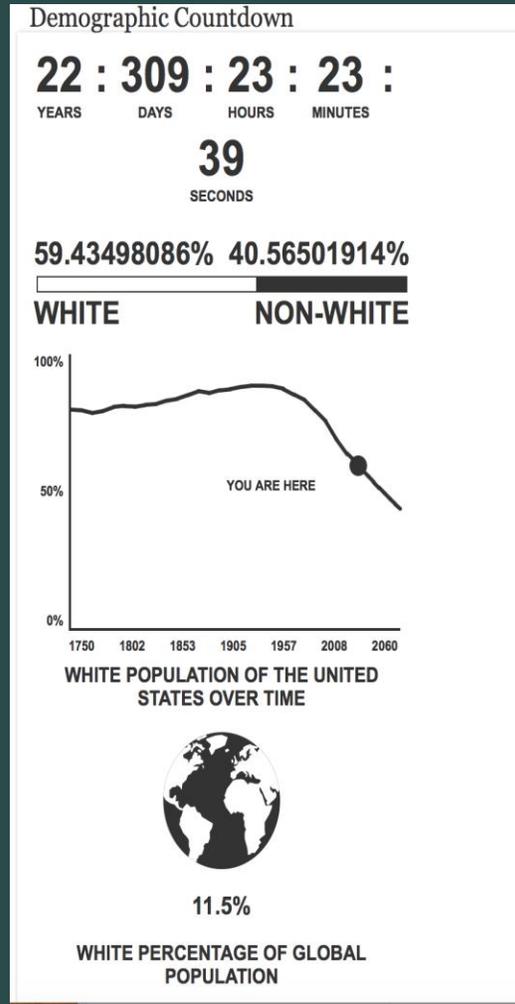


"The Inconvenient Truth," Crusius's Manifesto

My ideology has not changed for several years. My opinions on automation, immigration, and the rest predate Trump and his campaign for president. I am putting this here because some people will blame the President or certain presidential candidates for the attack. This is not the case. I know that the media will probably call me a white supremacist anyway and blame Trump's rhetoric. The media is infamous for fake news. Their reaction to this attack will likely just confirm that.

Online Platforms Catering to Right-Wing Extremists

gab



Welcome to 8chan, the Darkest Reaches of the Internet.

On 8chan, you can create your own imageboard for free with no experience or programming knowledge needed.

Findings

- Niche online platforms create a "contagion" phenomena
 - Conducive environments for radicalization
 - Direct correlation between increase in right-wing extremist mass shootings and the proliferation of such online platforms
- Trump's influence has a clear impact, but there is not enough evidence to make him directly responsible

Conclusion

- Hypothesis partially correct
 - Online platforms are linked to the increase in right-wing extremist violence
- Will become easier to measure Trump's level of responsibility as a new administration emerges
- Right-wing extremist mass shootings are an increasing threat to the United States, regardless of Trump's potential influence.