

Thematic Analysis of the Buffalo Shooter's Manifesto

by Virginia Llewellyn and Laila Okoli

Introduction

Payton Gendron, better known as the Buffalo Shooter, traveled to a Tops Friendly Markets in Buffalo, New York and killed 10 black people in 2022. This research aims to analyze the themes present in Gendron's manifesto that he wrote in the months before his attack. The goal of this research is to generate codes and definitions from the manifesto that may be helpful in future analyses of texts produced by domestic extremists and terrorists. Thus far, we have generated five relevant codes: Replacement Theory (RT), White Genocide (WG), Internet (IN), Lone Wolfism (LF), and Persuasive Tactics (PT).



Gendron uses this image to open his manifesto. It is a call to action that includes a Black Sun, which is an ancient European symbol appropriated by neo-Nazis to create an idealized "Aryan/Norse" heritage.

Description of Artifact

Payton Gendron's manifesto is a declaration of hate through racist discourse, ideology, and calls for ethno-violence. Much of his manifesto is grounded in Replacement Theory. His writing outlines grievances against various groups and advocates for violent actions against perceived enemies, including ethnic and religious minorities, and political adversaries. Gendron expresses a highly distorted worldview that was learned in online communities and blames his perceived enemies for larger societal problems. The goal of Gendron's rhetoric is to activate like-minded individuals to harm those he views as a threat.

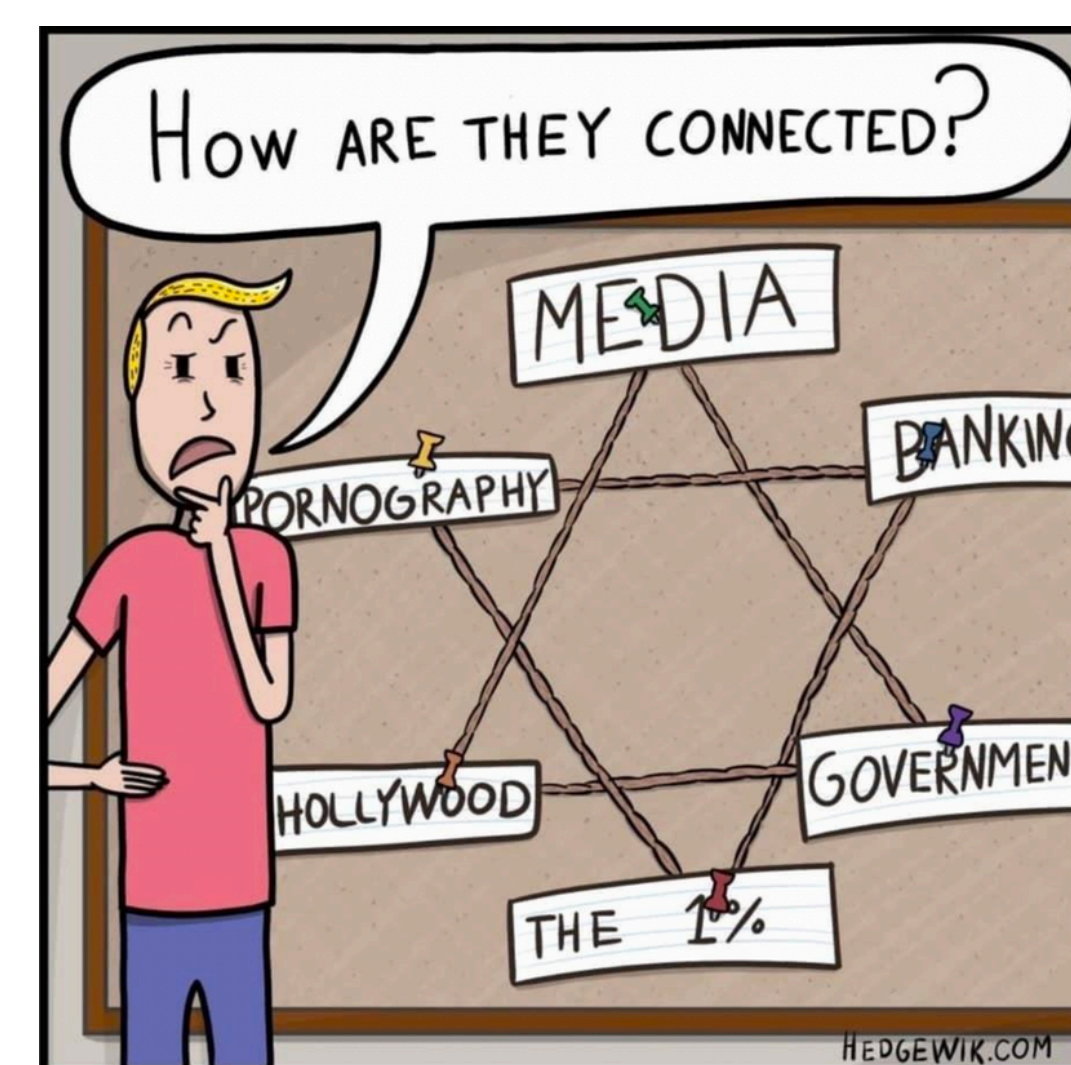
Alicia Garza (born January 4, 1981) is an American civil rights activist and writer known for co-founding the international Black Lives Matter movement. She has



Alicia Garza
Co-Founder

Garza was born in Oakland, California, on January 4, 1981. She grew up known as Alicia Schwartz in Marin County in a mixed-raced and mixed-religion household, with a Jewish stepfather and an African American mother.^{[1][2]} The family ran an antiques

Gendron claims that the Black Lives Matter movement was an act of Zionist control.



Gendron uses a comic by a well-known self-proclaimed internet "philosopher" to show how institutions are all connected and part of a Jewish conspiracy.

Methods

Two different methods were used to code our artifact. Both researchers began by looking into the thematic analysis process and then read the manifesto independently to familiarize themselves with the text. Following that, each researcher used a different method to code the data. Laila chose to code deductively. She defined codes and listed characteristics for each of her code indicators. She then coded the text. Virginia, on the other hand, chose to code inductively and created several codes to encompass the recurring themes in Gendron's writings as she completed her second pass. For this presentation, Laila's data is being used. Virginia's will be brought into the fold in future work.

Analysis of Data

The data shows that the most common code signifier was persuasive tactics with 41 occurrences. The code signifier for white genocide appeared 27 times. The code signifier for replacement theory appeared 26 times. The code signifier for the internet appeared 17 times. Lastly, the code signifier for Lone Wolfism appeared 13 times.

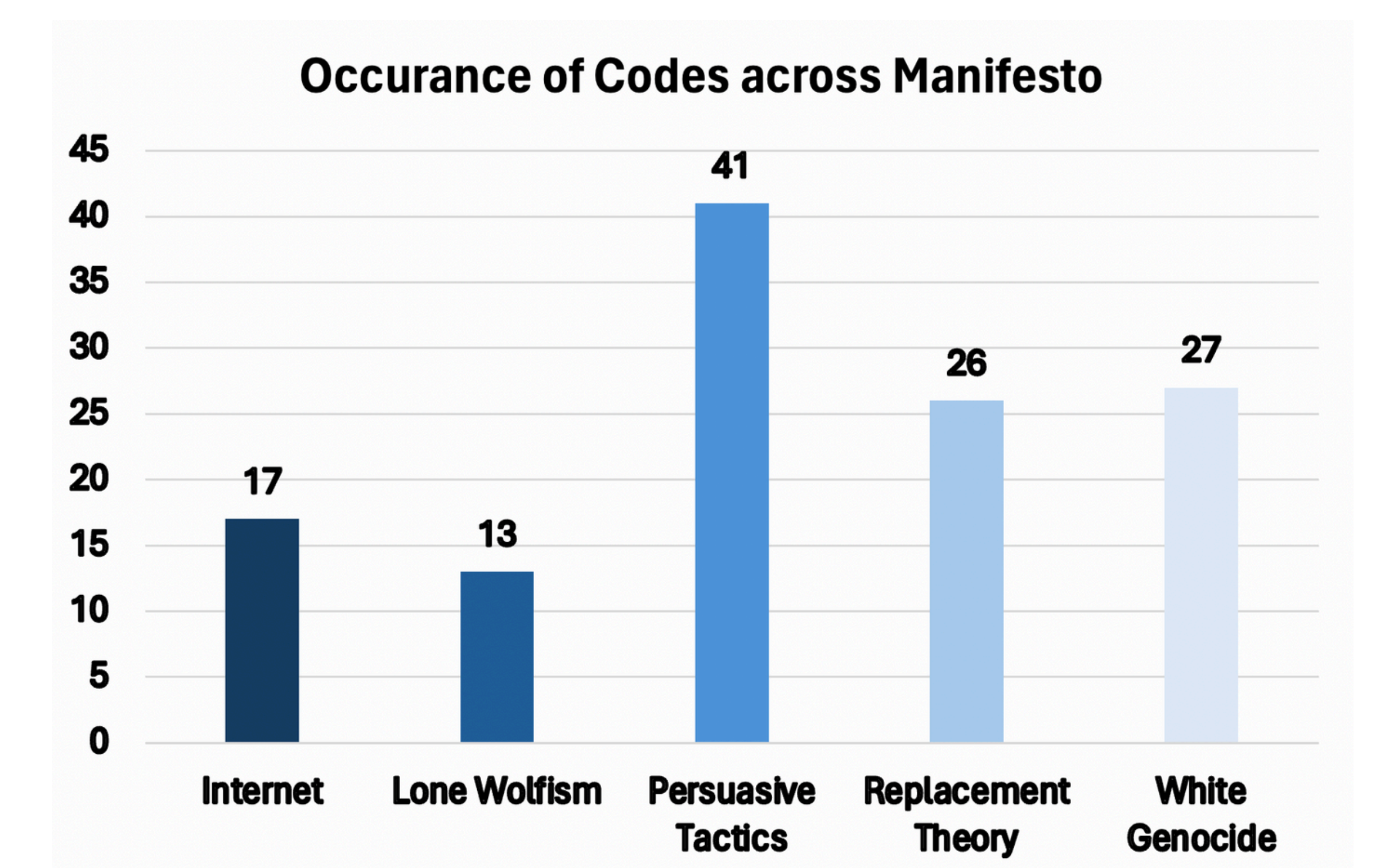
Conclusions

Gendron's work was intended to be highly persuasive, so it is unsurprising that the code signifier persuasive tactics was the most recurrent signifier. Both the code signifiers for Replacement Theory and White Genocide appeared nearly the same number of times, which leads us to believe there is likely a high level of correlation between the two categories. This may lead to future use of a third signifier as a representative of the overlap between these themes rather than two separate themes.

Next Steps

This project is still in its infancy. There is much more work to be done. Immediate next steps include further defining Virginia's data, completing a deeper analysis of the persuasive tactics used in Gendron's manifesto, determining the future definition of the cross between our replacement theory and white genocide signifiers, and exploring the ways in which our codes and thematic analysis may be applicable to future analyses of texts produced by domestic extremists and terrorists.

- LF - Any notions of beliefs or characteristics common to Lone Wolf extremists and terrorists.
 - PT - Any use of the politicization of social differences (in v. out groups) or any use of the likening, credibility, consensus, contrast, reciprocity, consistency, scarcity, social proof, or authority heuristics
 - IN - Any mention of the internet directly, any online community or platform, references to other internet texts, online hateful discourse, and the use of the internet for the mainstreaming of hate
 - RT - Any mention or talk of being replaced, government intervention in replacement, an apocalyptic context, any mention of fertility rates, and mentions of immigration
 - WG - Any notions of victimhood, apocalyptic context, demographic anxieties, defenses of whiteness, immigration, and mentions of cultural, ethnic, and racial erasure
- All qualifiers and characteristics of our code signifiers. These include Lone Wolfism (LF), Persuasive Tactics (PT), Internet (IN), Replacement Theory (RT), and White Genocide (WG).



The number of times each code appeared throughout the manifesto.

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