INTRODUCTION

How do hate groups recruit members?
- Protests/Public demonstrations
- Having an online presence

Organizing Modern Racism
- Use of technology/online presence
- “Education, participation, invocation, indictment” (McNamee 2010)
- Key word choices: “White Nationalist” “Heritage” “Cultural independence”

Patriot Front
- White supremacist group
- Founded in 2017 in Texas by Thomas Rousseau
- 188% increase in white supremacy propaganda in 2020, 80% from Patriot Front (Anti-Defamation League 2020)

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Framing Theory
- Framing theory highlights the presentation and assignment of meaning to a cause that resonates with the beliefs, feelings, and desires of prospective members (Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford 1988; Phadke 2018)
- Organizations such as Patriot Front frame grievances by using language, narratives, and symbols that align with the views of recruits

Resonance of Frames and Protests
- Frames resonate because a segment of people find them convincing and familiar (McCammon 2013; McDonnell 2017)
- Based on the theory, Patriot Front uses slogans such as “Reclaim America” to align with the worldviews of potential members
- Witnessing or learning of Patriot Front activism may lead to interest and pursuit of joining

METHODOLOGY

Google Trends
- First, I investigate Google search interest in “Patriot Front” and “Reclaim America”
- I mapped Google search interest nationally and with reference to major protest events organized by Patriot Front

Website Traffic
- Second, I examine site traffic for Patriotfront.us which is the webpage hosted by Patriot Front

RESULTS

- Relationship between protests and online presence
- Protests/demonstrations typically increase Google searches for “Patriot Front” and “Reclaim America”
- Increase in activism, regardless of location, and increased website traffic

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Key Insights
- Activism typically leads to greater online presence
- Protests increase search interest for Patriot Front

Implications
- Hate groups have adapted alongside the internet
- Legal authorities must begin to focus on fighting online organizing by white supremacist groups
- Racism and white supremacy evolve with society