

Can the Right Meme? (And How?): A Comparative Analysis of Three Online Reactionary Meme Subcultures

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This report examines memes from three reactionary subcultures that maintain a significant Internet presence. Using a mixed-methods approach to meme collection, the authors sorted and analysed a sample of 100 memes from three different online reactionary communities gathered from accessible and well-used public content on Facebook, Twitter, Telegram and meme aggregation image-hosting sites.



These memes included those generated and shared by the Hindutva movement in India, neo-Nazis oriented towards a primarily US-based audience and memes centred around the Kyle Rittenhouse shooting in Wisconsin in the United States.

The memes shared by supporters of the Hindutva movement and its political party accentuate the narrative of the movement, with memes suggesting that Hindus are in danger.

Unlike the Hindutva case, in which the targeted out-group was Muslims, neo-Nazi memes are often more diverse in their targets, including black people, LGBTQ groups, Jews, the US state and, particularly, women.

The memes surrounding the Kyle Rittenhouse case were often the most supportive of violence, with a wide variety of targets, including Communists and the Black Lives Matter movement. At the same time, the Rittenhouse meme community is also one of competition among meme creators, as they seek to elevate their own voices and condemn those they view as inauthentic or in opposition to their own values.