Understanding Hate Group Videos on YouTube

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ABSTRACT

Hate content warning: This paper contains hate ideology content that may cause discomfort.

As the largest video-sharing platform, YouTube has been known for hosting hate ideology content that could lead to between-group conflicts and extremism. Research has examined search algorithms and the creator-fan networks related to radicalization videos on YouTube. However, there is little grounded theory analysis of videos of hate groups to understand how hate groups present to the viewers and discuss social problems, solutions, and actions. This work presents a preliminary analysis of 96 videos using open-coding and affinity diagramming to identify common video styles created by the U.S. hate ideology groups. We also annotated hate videos' diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing to understand how the hate groups utilize video-sharing platforms to promote collective actions.

CCS CONCEPTS

• **Human-centered computing** → **Empirical studies in collaborative and social computing**.

KEYWORDS

YouTube; Hate Ideology; Collective Action

1 INTRODUCTION

Video-sharing platforms such as YouTube and TikTok are criticized for hosting hate group channels and spreading extreme ideologies and conspiracy theories. Research suggested that the video recommendation algorithms may consistently expose viewers to hate ideology and lead them to the rabbit hole of hate videos [8, 15]. On

YouTube, the openness and autonomy of the platform allow hate groups to create content and interact with the viewers. Although hate ideology videos might be removed by YouTube[1], many hate groups still manage their channels as a hub to connect to the in-groups. These videos may encourage viewers to interact with hate information, reinforce ideological beliefs, and call for public actions [15].

Most prior studies focused on understanding the algorithms that promote hate ideology content [1, 15] or the user interactions with hate ideology videos [7, 8]. Studies have examined hate groups on other social media [13, 16]. This poster offers a preliminary understanding of how hate group, as defined by an authoritative organization, presented videos to and interacted with the viewers. In this poster paper, we present our initial analysis of 94 YouTube videos posted by known hate groups in the U.S. We first categorize the styles of the videos. Then, grounded on the collective action framework [12, 17], we analyze the videos' diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing. Diagnostic framing of a video is how the video creator advocates the social problems that concern the hate group. Prognostic framing is what solutions are proposed in the video. Motivational framing is the actions the video motivates the viewers to take.

To collect the video data, we first referred to the hate organizations list[2] identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) – an organization that monitors hate groups in the United States. We manually searched all hate groups from the list on YouTube and located 145 hate group channels. Then we used YouTube Data API[3] to collect all videos belonging to those channels, which yielded 26,113 videos. All video data was collected on 11/23/2021 and 11/24/2021. We sampled up to 20 videos per channel. When a channel has less than 20 videos, all its videos were included; otherwise, 20 videos were randomly sampled from the channel. This sampling approach forms a smaller dataset of 2,027 videos with at least one video from each channel. Therefore, all hate group channels were represented in the dataset. We then randomly sample 100 videos from these videos to generate subframes of the collective action frames. 61 different channels post these videos. Three authors split and watched all sampled videos meanwhile write notes of video styles and the diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing information. After note-taking, six deleted or non-English videos were removed.

After all the notes were collected, all authors performed affinity diagramming with digital cards generated from the note texts to sort the collective action information into emerging subframes. This poster presents the results of the open coding phase of grounded theory analysis [2, 3]. The upcoming research will perform axial and selective coding to verify and saturate the subframes and use the finalized code book to encode all 2,027 videos.

2 RESULTS

2.1 Video Style

We identified four main video styles from the 94 videos (Table 1 and Figure 1). 49 videos are public speech recorded during in-group gatherings. Public speech videos have 21 sermon at church (Figure 2a), 16 interviews (Figure 2b), 9 public presentations (Figure 2c), and 3 recordings of meetings or panels (Figure 2d). The second-largest style is speaking to the viewers, with 22 videos, in which the video creator faces the camera and directly talks to the viewers (Figure 2e). 14 videos are news and information, among which 7 are news clips from other news media (Figure 2f) and 7 are infographics explaining information or hate ideology knowledge (Figure 2g). There are 9 videos showing recordings of public actions such as protests, public speech, and other promotional activities on the street (Figure 2h).

Style	Description
Public speech	A video recording of a public speech in a meeting, talk, sermon, or interview.
Speak to viewers	The creator talks to the viewer by directly speaking to the camera or live-streaming.
News & information	The video shares full or clips of news from news media.
Public action	The video shows a recording of public outreach such as protesting, group events, and other gatherings.

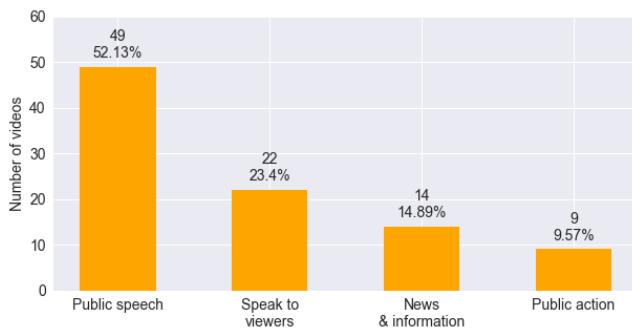**Table 1: Video styles identified from open encoding**

Figure 1: Distribution of video styles

(a) A sermon at a church

(b) An interview discussing the Equality Act

(c) A keynote talking about global freedom movements

(d) An interview about childhood trauma and addiction

(e) A creator talking to the viewers about colonization

(f) A video showing an Orlando shooting news

(g) An infographics explaining a religious document
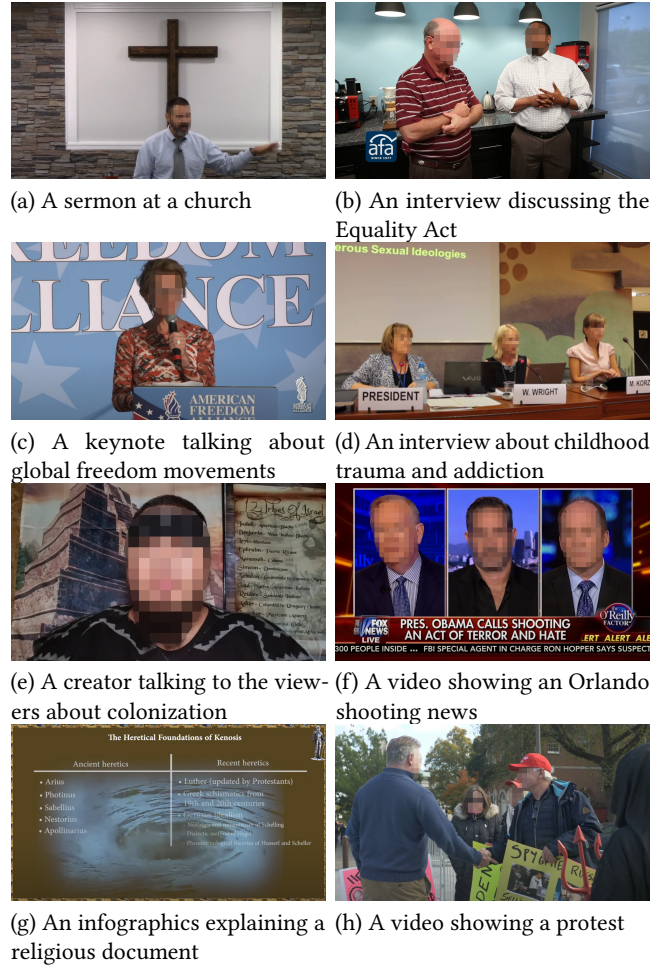
(h) A video showing a protest

Figure 2: Example videos of public speech (a-d), speak to the viewers (e), news and information (f, g), and public action (h).
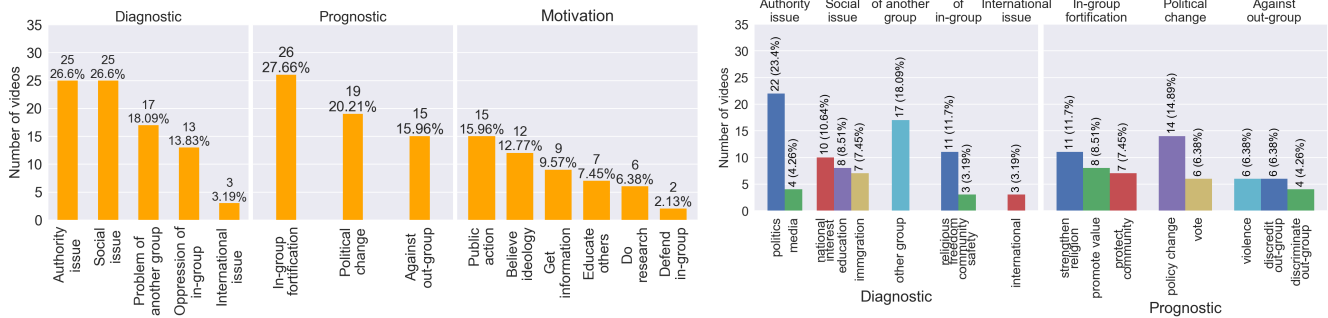
3 COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAMING IN HATE GROUP VIDEOS

3.1 Diagnosis Discourse in Hate Group Videos

The analysis of diagnostic framing shows that hate groups discuss five main types of problems: authority issues, social issues, problems of another group, problems within the hate group, and international issues (Figure 3). 25 videos mention at least one of the authority issue subframes. Among them, 22 videos mention problems with the government or politicians. For example, in one video from a right-wing group, the video creator says *"Democrats have completely missed named a piece of legislation in order to fool and trick people into voting the Equality Act."* Another type of authority issue is with mainstream media, which are mentioned in four videos. For example, an anti-immigration video mentions that *"They're not going to do it until America understands the [H1B visa abuse] problem and gets fired up and pushes it because mainstream media refuses to talk about it."*

Table 2: The concepts and definitions of subframes in the collective action frames

	Concept	Description
Diagnostic	*Authority issue*	The video mentions problems in the government, politicians, authority, or media.
	Social issue	The video discusses social issues in immigration, education, national interest, or COVID-19.
	Problem of another group	The video blames the problematic beliefs or practices of another group, community, or out-group people.
	Oppression of in-group	The video mentions problems the hate group faces, such as the group being attacked or losing religious freedom.
	International issue	The video discusses international problems or problematic foreign government or nation activities.
Prognostic	*In-group fortification*	The video proposes in-group activities, such as recruiting and expanding the in-group, promoting values, and protecting the community.
	Political change	The video promotes political actions such as voting for a politician or making political efforts.
	Against out-group	The video suggests tactics against the out-group, including taking violent actions, discrediting the out-group, and discriminating the out-group.
Motivation	*Public action*	The video calls for public actions such as voting, appealing, raising donations, protesting, etc.
	Believe ideology	The video calls for strengthening religious or ideological beliefs.
	Get information	The video offers other information source such as websites or videos for the viewers to checkout.
	Educate others	The video asks viewers to educate others and influence others around.
	Do research	The video asks the viewers to do their own research to deny the information from the mainstream media or government.
	Defend in-group	The video calls for defending in-groups and supporting the community.

Figure 3: The distribution of videos in each of the subframes.

25 videos mention social issues. Among those videos, ten videos mention national, industrial, and societal interest or safety is hampered due to the activities or beliefs of the out-group. For example, in one sermon, the speaker discusses the American health industry and says that *"The whole health industry it's all a bunch of nonsense folks they're trying to sell you something."* 8 videos mention problems in education or influences on children. In a video clip from Fox News, the video quotes *"The school told [the person in the video] that the pillars of Islam are benchmarks and state curriculum, yet the class had no discussion about Christianity or Judaism."* 7 videos mention problems caused by immigration policy or immigrants. For example, a video says *"[International students] are going to sign up be enrolled in this (OPT) program so in a sense... tens of thousands of new foreign workers being essentially imported into the workforce."*.

The third most common diagnostic framing is the problems of another particular group. 17 videos mention the problematic beliefs and practices of another group and community. For example, in one video discussing Muslims and feminists, the video says *"We can hold back the filthy tide of Islamists, globalists, and feminists that are polluting our Western."*

13 videos mention problems faced by the in-groups, such as the threatened religious freedom (11 videos) and community safety (3

videos). For example, in a video talking about a gay politician, the video uses the words *"They (the gay politician) might come in and seize your church in your property, and I hope you had the guts that our pastor had to just say no."* In another presentation against school-integration, the speaker claims the community is in danger that *"With [school] integration we lost the value of us, the black family, our education."*

3.2 Prognosis Proposed by Hate Group Videos

Three types of prognostic subframes are identified: in-group fortification, political changes, and against the out-group. 26 videos propose solutions focusing on fortifying the in-group. 11 videos suggest strengthening religious beliefs, most of which encourage people to believe in the bible or god. 8 videos promote their ideologies and values. For example, in a video promoting Trump's ideology, it says *"Ensure Americans get the first crack at our colleges and get the first crack at American jobs they want to roll back the wage and labor protections."* 7 videos call for protecting the endangered community. For example, in a video discussing sex education in school, the speaker mentions *"Churches need to stand up for themselves and their beliefs against trans and gay people."*

19 videos promote political changes as solutions to social problems. The majority of videos (14 videos) in this subframe promote government or legislation changes. For example, in a video talking about foreign policies, the speaker says *"We need a president that unifies, not divides. We need a nation that has a unified foreign policy, a unified military policy, and a unified defense policy."* Another type of political change is through voting for a political candidate or party that the hate group supports. For example, in an interview, the interviewee claims *"If Trump is not the president, we may not have a remnant as a free people, we may be in people's homes underground."*

15 videos contain solutions that target out-groups. 6 videos propose violent actions against the out-groups. For example, in a right-wing speech, the speaker says *"America must fight right now with the immediacy of the white farmers in South Africa, also preparing to take a last stand or to die in their boots."* 6 videos discredit the out-group by calling to stop trusting a specific group or mainstream media. A conspiracy theory video about immigration mentions *"It's not reported properly of course by the media, you can't trust anything you read now right."* 4 videos suggest discriminating against the out-group. For example, a video talking about homosexuality mentions *"this [gay] movement uses their sources, not exaggerating it, just tell the story of this incredible sin movement, which I think one of the biggest scams ever that have ever been perpetrated on the American public."*

3.3 Motivating Viewers' Actions through Video Sharing

Six motivation subframes are identified. 42 (56.76%) videos motivate actions. The most common subframe, with 15 videos, is calling the viewers to take public actions such as voting for or against politicians, appealing to authorities, and donating to the organization. 12 videos ask the in-group to believe in the ideology or group value, or perform ideological practices such as meeting religious requirements and returning to traditional values. 9 videos provide other information sources (e.g., a website) for the viewers to check out. 7 videos ask the viewers to educate others, especially the kids, about the hate ideology. 6 videos deny the mainstream media and the government by encouraging the viewers to do their own research. 2 videos call for defending the in-group.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

4.1 Sharing Opinions on Authority and Societal Problems

Our results suggest hate groups utilize online videos to share offline speeches in the online space, such as public speeches, interviews, and meetings. A quarter of the videos in our preliminary analysis mention problems with the government and society. This result contrasts that hate groups talk more about the oppression of in-groups on Facebook and mention problems of out-groups more often on Twitter [13]. Around 23% of videos also directly speak to the viewers to deliver their information and opinions. Prior studies hypothesized YouTubers provide ideological content to meet viewers' ideological demand [10]. When the hate group discusses social problems that echo a viewer's thoughts, the video can enhance viewers' thoughts and cause the "echo chamber" effect [4]. Our

results show that hate groups commonly discuss political, media, national, educational, and immigration issues with the viewers. Such discussion could enhance followers' biased opinions on the problems and strengthen conspiracy theories. Therefore, future research needs to examine hate groups' discussion of government and social problems and how such information affects viewers.

4.2 In-group Propaganda and Unification

The analysis of prognostic framing suggests YouTube is used to fortify and unify the in-group, especially among religious communities. The most common prognostic framing is in-group fortification. Hate groups ask to strengthen religious beliefs, promote their values, and protect the community. Hate group videos also use scare tactics telling viewers that religious freedom and community safety are in danger. Hate groups' primary prognostic solution to their challenges is fortifying the in-group. YouTube is known for supporting community activities and interactions. The spreading of conspiracy needs a connection to like-minded people [14]. Directly speaking to the viewers may establish "parasocial relationships" with the viewers and cultivate trust and companionship [6, 9, 11]. Future work needs to examine how YouTube videos help hate groups establish identities and a sense of community. Researchers also need to study whether watching YouTube hate group videos enhances the connection to the video presenters and belongingness to the hate group.

4.3 Motivating Public Actions and Information Consumption

The motivation framing in YouTube videos indicates that hate groups motivate viewers to take action and consume more hate group content. The most common motivation subframe is taking public action. The hate videos also encourage the viewers to check out information from their websites, educate others, and do their own research, encouraging viewers to watch more videos and consume more hate content. These results contrast the motivational uses of other social media by hate groups [13]. While many users may choose not to investigate social media information [5], it is interesting to note that hate groups encourage viewers to get more information and do research. Motivating viewers to "investigate" could mean interacting with more hate group content, which is an encouragement of reflection on and exploration of extreme content [14]. Watching more videos of hate opinions may make viewers fall into the rabbit hole [8]. Video-sharing platforms should consider technical approaches and new policies to moderate viewers' interactions with such content to prevent engagement in the hate group content.

5 FUTURE WORK

Our future work will analyze the extensive videos that have been collected. We will use social approaches to understand how hate groups interact with the viewers. Future research will examine how different video styles and collective action framing affect video viewership, such as views, likes/dislikes, and comments.

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