# THE TRUTH ABOUT STEF

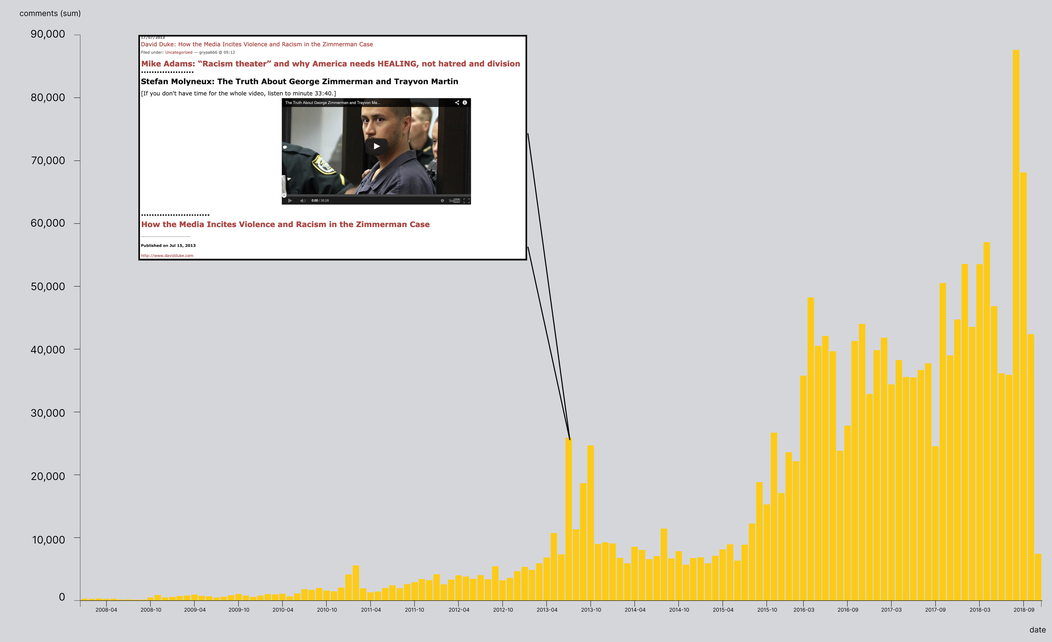
## Intersections of Participatory Culture and Critical Political Climates in Youtube's Libertarian-Turned-Alt-Right Community

## INTRODUCTION

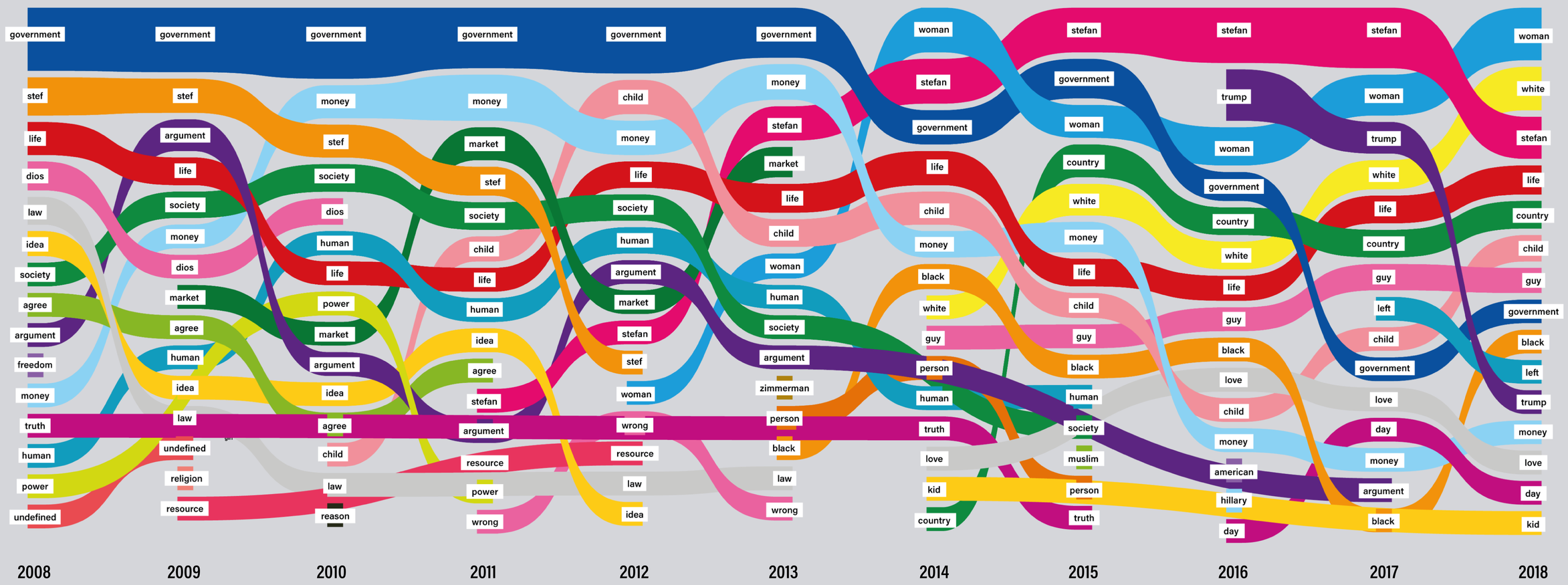
2019 was the year that stories of YouTube far-right radicalization dominated the news. One key 'influencer' in these stories was Stefan Molyneux, a Canadian self-described philosopher who acquired about 1 million subscribers at the height of his success. In 2020, YouTube deplatformed him for violating hate speech, removing all information about his community from public view. Using internet achieves and various digital methods, this project aimed to understand the historical development of the so-called libertarian to alt-right pipeline and community participation with Molyneux, identifying key political moments and participatory dynamics. The three findings (and corresponding visuals) on the poster highlight that:

1. The participatory culture of Molyneux's community took off in 2013, and the pivotal moment was the Zimmerman trial. We also found that the content Molyneux produced on Zimmerman was shared and referred to be David Duke, thus putting it on the radar of a white supremacist audience.
2. Alongside the participatory culture, we see a clear topical shift around 2014 that highlights the libertarian to the alt-right pipeline in the comments section.
3. Like the Zimmerman trial, spikes in engagement among Molyneux's audience align with key political moments generally associated with the far-right that highly engage his audience.

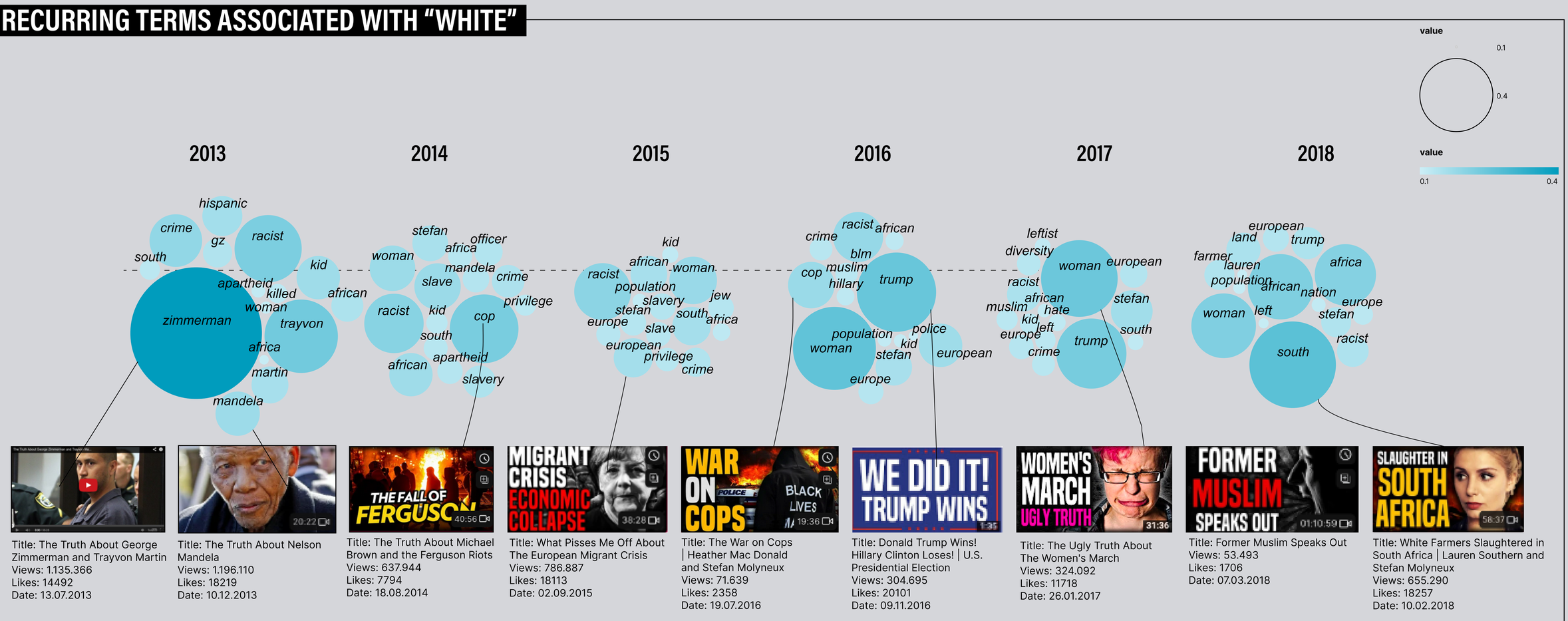
## COMMENT TRAFFIC 2008-2018




## TRENDING TOPICS IN MOLYNEUX COMMENTS OVER TIME




## RECURRING TERMS ASSOCIATED WITH "WHITE"





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