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Trump and Extreme Right, White Christian Nationalism

By Kumar Ramakrishna

SYNOPSIS

The nature and influence of Extreme Right, White Christian Nationalism on the Trump 2.0 administration and its wider global normative and ideological impact need closer analysis. Extreme Right ideology of any stripe is not workable in the secular, multiracial Singapore context.

COMMENTARY

As President Donald J. Trump begins his new term, attention has focused on his [domestic policy](#) and stance on foreign policy issues ranging from the [Russia-Ukraine](#) and [Israel-Hamas](#) conflicts to the [Panama Canal](#) and [Greenland](#). There is, however, another issue that deserves attention: how Trump's return represents a boost for the white supremacist Extreme Right movement. After all, respected analysts such as Cas Mudde have controversially referred to Trump as the "[white supremacist-in-chief](#)".

Julia Ebner reminds us that the Extreme Right espouses "at least three of the following five features: nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democracy and strong state advocacy", while the Far Right can be regarded as the "political manifestation of the extreme [right](#)".

In the US context, many of the aforementioned elements of Extreme Right ideology coalesce in the form of White Christian Nationalism, which rejects the idea of a secular multiracial democracy. Rather, it is a form of white supremacy that fuses white nationalist identity with Christianity.

While mainstream Christianity seeks racial inclusiveness, White Christian Nationalism promotes exclusivist "white supremacist assumptions" about the superiority of "white-Christian" culture and its "traditional way of [life](#)". White Christian Nationalism is deeply

rooted in a late 17th-century ideological notion that White Christian Americans possess a divine right to rule over non-white [races](#).

Trump has reportedly received the backing of powerful groups that are “hoping to create a country ruled by Christianity” and who regard “Trump as a divinely appointed soldier to help them do [so](#)”.

Extreme Right, White Christian Nationalism Unpacked

Broadly speaking, five attributes of Extreme Right, White Christian Nationalism (ERWCN) are worth unpacking.

1. ERWCN blends white supremacist ideas with xenophobic, racist assumptions about non-white groups, whether fellow citizens or new immigrants. ERWCN emphasises the need to maintain the “[purity of whiteness](#)” by preventing interracial marriages that would dilute the “good essence” of white people with the supposedly polluting “[bad essence](#)” of non-whites.

ERWCN activists regard the chastity of white women as a foundational principle to be upheld against the sexual advances of [non-whites](#). Hence, feminism, with its emphasis on societal and sexual emancipation for women, is seen as an existential threat to the white patriarchal society that the ERWCN movement envisages.

Some misogynistic ERWCN ideologues even assert that the “wombs of white women belong to white men”, and violence can be rightly used to ensure women “know their place” in the patriarchal order, so to [speak](#).

2. ERWCN activists fear that the divinely sanctioned patriarchal social order they desire to build and secure – thanks to globalisation – has been threatened by mass immigration and the relatively higher fertility rates of non-whites, creating the threat of “white genocide”. In this regard, one especially influential conspiracy narrative has been the “[Great Replacement](#)”.

Emerging around 2012, this belief holds that white Christian nations are being overrun by masses of non-white out-groups such as East Asians, Hispanics and Muslims. Some ERWCN activists argue that the Great Replacement of the white Christian population needs thwarting [urgently](#), primarily through “[accelerating](#)” progress toward a violent race war to set up a [white Christian ethnostate](#).

3. To ERWCN ideologues, the notion of a *white ethnostate* that is secured against the threat of an “invasion” by non-white masses is not a strange idea. Extreme Right American intellectuals such as Jared Taylor have long argued that “racial, linguistic, and cultural homogeneity” are crucial for a “nation’s stability”.

Taylor has argued that “racial and ethnic diversity is a curse” and that “multiracial, multiethnic, multilingual societies are inherently unstable and more conflict-ridden” than “more demographically homogeneous ones”. Taylor thus

argues that different racial groups are better off developing themselves in “separate homelands than in mixed-race [polities](#)”.

Another influential Extreme Right (or “Alt-Right” in US usage) activist, Richard Spencer, likewise supports the creation of “white, homogeneous ethnostates” in the US and Europe. Likewise, Greg Johnson suggests that white ethnostates could be created in “European colonial societies” such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Argentina, Uruguay – and the [US](#).

4. ERWCN intellectuals have long advanced strategies for charting a course toward a culturally homogeneous white ethnostate. The basic idea is that to change politics, one must first change culture and society, an approach called “[metapolitics](#)”. The French Extreme Right intellectual Guillaume Faye defines metapolitics as the systematic “social diffusion of ideas and cultural values for the sake of provoking, profound, long-term, political [transformation](#)”.

Metapolitics involves messaging in “multiple arenas of social behaviour and communication”, such as creating a “parallel educational system saturated with radical values”, exploiting “expressive genres like film, literature, art, theatre and [music](#)”, and creating an alternative social media ecosystem promoting ERWCN values and tropes.

In this regard, Trump’s well-known tendency to berate traditional media outlets as sources of “fake news”, has encouraged greater societal consumption of alternative media such as Breitbart, InfoWars, Truth Social, Discord, Substack, Gab and Telegram, amongst others. This has enabled “far-right fringe ideas” to be mainstreamed and further amplified when picked up by right-wing mass media platforms such as [Fox News](#).

Thanks to years of the mainstreaming of ERWCN tropes as just described, once-fringe ideas such as the Great Replacement conspiracy theory have become widely popularised not only in the United States but in Europe. A telling 2022 survey in the US, for instance, found that half of the Republican electorate agreed “at least to some extent” that “native-born Americans are being deliberately replaced with [immigrants](#)”.

It is no coincidence that in 2024, “far right parties and coalitions” collectively secured “a third of the seats in the EU [Parliament](#)”. Moreover, in Austria, the “far right Freedom Party” won “the largest percentage of vote share” in the September 2024 elections, while the “far right Alternative for Germany” secured victory in the “eastern German state of Thuringia” and did well more [generally](#).

5. ERWCN ideology in the US arrogates to white Christian men an ostensibly divine right to use violence to defend a preferred hierarchical order with them on [top](#). In short, ERWCN grants “whites in authority” the freedom to maintain a patriarchal sociopolitical order that “privileges ‘good people like us’ through violence if [necessary](#).”

Notably, in one of his first acts since returning to power, Trump pardoned all 1,500 individuals that had been charged in connection with the 6 January 2021

assault on the US Capitol, an act which senior Republicans criticised as sending the “wrong [signal](#)”.

Moreover, throughout 2024, “neo-Nazi groups and other white supremacists engaged in a stream of violence” mainly in Europe but also the United States, targeting Jewish communities, Muslims, non-Whites and [migrants](#).

The Singapore Context

Singapore and the US under Trump will certainly continue to share common views on many aspects of global security and technological challenges. That said, given the sheer potency of American soft power in global norm-setting, perhaps some circumspection is called for in the ideological space especially.

Since its independence, Singapore has been built on the pillars of secularism, multiracialism, and meritocracy. These principles have laid the foundation for sustained national progress. ERWCN and similar ideologies would be anathema to Singapore. Going forward, therefore, the National Pledge to be “one united people, regardless of race, language or religion” remains relevant and deserving of reinforcement, arguably more than ever.

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