



# Those Anti-Indian Posts and The “Great Replacement” Theory

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## **Those Anti-Indian Posts and The “Great Replacement” Theory**

*By Kumar Ramakrishna*

### **SYNOPSIS**

*The recent inflammatory online posts alleging that Chinese-majority Singapore was being “overrun” by Indians reflected the wider global drift towards far-right values, particularly the increasing salience of the Great Replacement conspiracy theory. Singapore should guard against the mainstreaming of such pernicious far-right tropes.*

### **COMMENTARY**

On 6 June 2026, Singapore’s Ministry of Home Affairs ordered YouTube, Facebook, and X to block 14 online posts targeting the local Indian community. Investigations showed the posts likely came from a China-based platform before spreading elsewhere.

They claimed that Singapore was being “overrun” by Indians, that its multiracial policy was a “façade” to appeal to “Western values”, and that stability stemmed from its Chinese majority, not multiculturalism. The posts warned that government “decoupling” from China and tolerance of Indians would harm the nation.

The posts used selective images of Little India and Indian religious festivals. Local authorities took pains to stress that Singapore is constitutionally multicultural, not a Chinese-majority state.

At one level, the incident showed how social media can be used to weaponise disinformation to exploit social, religious and ethnic faultlines within globalised, multicultural societies. In this particular case, although no evidence linked the posts to a foreign state, experts note that such hostile information campaigns are not uncommon.

Information warfare expert Nina Jankowicz argues that the Russian Federation's so-called hybrid operations against its neighbours have included coordinated social media campaigns targeting "ethnic tensions and historical revisionism" in Estonia, "culture and religion" in Georgia, "political polarisation" in Poland, and "anti-migrant sentiment" in the Czech Republic.

## **Nativism and Far-Right Values**

The deeper issue is nativism and the global rise of far-right ideas. Barry Buzan argues that since Donald Trump's return in 2025, far-right values have increasingly dominated the global order. A particular far-right trope, nativism – the belief that states should be inhabited only by "natives" and that outsiders threaten the nation – is central. As Pravin Prakash puts it, nativism is the ideological spine of global far-right movements. The narrative of outsider Indians "overrunning" Chinese-majority Singapore echoes this trope. When a particular ethnic group, as in this specific case, is encouraged by outside forces to see itself as a naturally dominant "native" group that is being overrun by undeserving "outsiders", nativist sentiments are being deliberately stoked. This line of argument, it should be noted, is hardly new. It reflects the Great Replacement Theory.

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## **The Great Replacement Theory**

This conspiracy theory has Western origins. In the late 19th century, white supremacists claimed that Jews and elites were conspiring to replace whites with Asians and Africans. Later, the controversial far-right French philosopher Reynaud Camus updated and popularised it in 2011, warning that Muslim immigrants were overrunning Europe.

The 2015 European refugee crisis, in which more than a million asylum seekers fleeing conflict in the Middle East and Africa landed on European shores, gave the theory significant traction. Archconservative and widely followed media figures like former Fox News host Tucker Carlson in the US, and far-right activists in Australia, mainstreamed Great Replacement ideas, warning that immigration would destroy "white heritage."

Popular right-wing writers such as Douglas Murray reinforced these fears. His book *The Strange Death of Europe* lamented that European towns were increasingly filled with immigrants, warning that White Christian Europe would be "swept away."

Such rhetoric helped far-right parties gain ground. For example, in 2024 alone, Donald Trump's presidential election victory, Austria's Freedom Party's win, and Germany's Alternative for Germany's electoral gains showed the power of Great Replacement ideas to generate anxiety amongst European publics and translate it into support for anti-immigrant far-right parties. Many far-right groups have also supported Russian President Putin in his ongoing war with Ukraine, viewing him as a global far-right leader.

## **Global Spread**

The Great Replacement Theory is not confined to the West. It has been “glocalised” – that is, adapted and customised to local contexts. In Sri Lanka and Myanmar, for example, Buddhist extremists have long warned that Muslims threaten Buddhist supremacy. In India, Hindu activists claim that Muslims and Christians endanger the Hindutva goal of establishing a Hindu Rasththra or state. In Israel, far-right politicians seek to cement Jewish supremacy over Palestinians.

Even in Japan, the far-right Sanseito party, drawing inspiration from “Replacement Theory”, has “promoted the notion of preserving Japanese culture and purity” to prevent the ethnic Japanese majority from “being overrun by immigrants and becoming a minority”. In other words, the idea of majority replacement has spread from the West and across Asia.

## **The Theory’s Violent Potentials**

It is important to note that the Great Replacement Theory has incubated a political environment in many countries, which, in conjunction with other factors such as political, social, and economic instability and crises, has helped stoke out-group violence.

Since Anders Breivik’s 2011 Norway attacks, far-right terrorism citing replacement themes has steadily grown. The 2019 Christchurch mosque attacker’s manifesto was tellingly entitled *The Great Replacement*. Copycat attacks have followed in the US. In India, Hindu extremists have attacked Muslims and Christians; in Myanmar and Sri Lanka, Buddhist extremists have violently targeted Muslims.

Glocalised, violent Great Replacement tropes have been detected in Southeast Asia as well. One example involves Austronesians – a vast ethno-linguistic group comprising indigenous ethnic populations spanning Taiwan and the Indo-Pacific. In Southeast Asia, Austronesian supremacists on TikTok have adapted the theory to demonise Rohingya refugees and Chinese communities, calling for “Total Rohingya Deaths” and “Total Chinese Deaths” respectively.

In 2025, two teenagers in Singapore planned attacks on Muslims. They regarded East Asians – Chinese, Korean and Japanese – as “superior ethnicities” and considered themselves “East Asian Supremacists”. Significantly, “deeply convinced” by and adapting “the Great Replacement Theory” to a Singaporean context, one teen believed “that violence was necessary” to prevent the Chinese majority in Singapore from being displaced by what he perceived to be a rapidly growing Malay population.

## **Implications for Singapore**

Even non-violent versions of “East Asian Supremacist” ideas could fan Chinese majoritarian sentiments, rendering Singapore acutely vulnerable to hostile information campaigns similar to the recent anti-Indian posts. Far-right ideologies oppose Singapore’s secular, multicultural, meritocratic model.

Protecting our social cohesion is vital. Singapore must work with like-minded nations to counter far-right ecosystems through diplomacy, education, and communications. Strong laws such as the Penal Code, the Foreign Interference (Countermeasures) Act, and the Online Criminal Harms Act, along with institutional safeguards such as the Presidential Councils for Minority Rights and Racial and Religious Harmony, are crucial. Campaigns such as Total Defence and SG Secure also help. Ultimately, durable social cohesion is Singapore's best defence against division.

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