



White Dominionism

The Taxonomy of White Radicalism

BY NIK MITCHELL, PH.D.

There are few topics that American society ignores at its own peril more than the intersection of radicalization and race. From the 4,075 Black people lynched between 1877 and 1950 to Timothy McVeigh and, most recently, Dylan Roof, racism has long been a radicalizing ideology in America; to pretend otherwise is intellectually dishonest.¹ Jonathan Githens-Mazer argues that radicalization is generally described in one of three ways: process, causation, and the negative definition.² Radicalization is a topic that is currently reserved for conversations about Islam and terrorism. This is problematic as it elevates a minority action to a pathology inherent to Muslim dominated cultures. In America, racism is the source of much of its past domestic radicalization and terrorism. Racism as a radicalizing force can be examined through both a process and a causation lens. In this article, race radicalization will be examined from a causation lens.

In recent months, journalists and essayists have written about the radicalization of White men, especially on-line.³ Mark Potok of the Southern Poverty Law Center agrees and asserts that the internet allows for young potential recruits to explore supremacist ideology anonymously and connect with other like-minded individuals.⁴ The radicalization of White men and

segments of the larger White population are causing concerns because, Potok argues, that, while Klan and Black separatist groups increased in 2016, White nationalist groups declined, which may be a result of their acceptance into the cultural and political mainstream.⁵ What ideology is radicalizing a segment of the White population and being absorbed into the main stream and how is it different from previous configurations of White racism? This article asserts that an emerging reconceptualization of pre-World War II White racism, which for the purposes of discussion I have termed *White Dominionism*, is the radicalizing ideology in question.

As an overarching ideology, White Dominionism is the intellectual descendant of the Reconstruction Era Redeemers and the Eugenacists of the first half of the 20th century, who were the architects and maintainers of Jim Crow respectively.⁶ It contains smaller movements such as the alternative right and other variants of the identitarian movement—which are active in Europe as a rejection of the broader European Union cultural block.⁷ In the American context, White Dominionism, as seen with the alternative right, rejects the baby boomer cultural principles such as post-Civil Rights Movement multiculturalism.⁸

Reconceptualizing the theories of figures like Madison Grant, the cultural project of White Dominionism is the creation of an explicit White culture that emerged from the creolization of White Western European Christian populations.⁹

White Dominionism bifurcates into *White nationalism* and *White culturalism*. White nationalism is an intellectual extension of longstanding scientific racism that has remained a palpable undercurrent in American society since the turn of the 20th century. White culturalists may not share the “scientifically” racist beliefs of their White nationalist counterparts but rather are cultural supremacists and intellectual extensions of the historical European civilizing mission. They hold that any immigrant or minority group must fully assimilate by abandoning their own cultural practices. Only then, can they be accepted into the White – which they assert is the only American – culture.

In regard to causation, on an individual level it is difficult to ascertain what attracts a person to White Dominionism or White supremacist groups in general. Joseph Schafer, Christopher Mullins, and Stephanie Box assert that White supremacist “awakenings” occur because of “seeds of discontent”: prejudice developing from racial observations occurring in ordinary social interactions or a triggering event with exposure to supremacist ideology through familial or peer networks.¹⁰ As a matter of how the seeds of discontent germinate, the causes are individualized. Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen writes, “Based on a review of scholarly articles within the field published from 1887-2003, Victoroff suggests that terrorists probably exhibit high affective valence on an ideological issue combined with a personal stake – strongly felt humiliation, need for identity and glory or a drive for revenge.”¹¹

For White Dominionism, “strongly felt humiliation, need for identity and glory or a drive for revenge” manifests as the fear of demographic loss and the power that entails. According to the Pew Research Center, the population as a whole will become majority-minority by 2055.¹² American culture is starting to reflect this diversification intellectually, artistically, and in the history books as diverse narratives take their place in the broader narrative. Politically, White voter power to block people of color from attaining important offices is eroding.

Economically, the demographic shift will occur much earlier. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015 report on labor force characteristics by race and ethnicity, currently only 30 percent of African Americans and 22 percent of Hispanics work in management or professional occupations compared to 40 percent of the White population.¹³ In this

economic stratification, the modes of production are still controlled by a White demographic. A 2016 report issued by the Economic Policy Institute states that about 39.5 percent of the current working class is non-White, the prime aged working class (25-54) will be majority people of color by 2029, and that people of color will comprise the majority of the working class as a whole by 2032.¹⁴

In the next 50 years, people of color may control the political apparatus in the United States through sheer numbers and activity, which will give them a large stake in the social and economic direction of the country. The United States has always been a creoled society sitting at the intersections of the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific worlds. This is why White Dominionism has sought a very public role in American life; it is the ideology that makes the protection of cultural, material, and spatial privilege the purpose of an overtly political goal. White Dominionism is unapologetic in its forms, declarations, and aims and does not seek reconciliation with multicultural society. It is opposed to it.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Equal Justice Initiative, *Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror* 2nd edition. 2015, <http://eji.org/sites/default/files/lynching-in-america-second-edition-summary.pdf>
- ² Githens-Mazer, Jonathan. *The Rhetoric and Reality: Radicalization and Political Discourse*. International Political Science Review / Revue Internationale De Science Politique, vol. 33, no. 5, 2012, pp. 556–567.
- ³ Silvercloud. Johnny. *Why isn't Anyone Talking About the Radicalization of Whites?* October, 12 2016, <https://afrosapiophile.com/2016/12/10/white-radicalization/>; Holmes, Jack. “Are Young, White Males Being Radicalized Online?” *Esquire*, November 9, 2016, <http://www.esquire.com/news-politics/news/a50513/young-trump-voters-undercover/>; Wilkinson, Abi. “We need to talk about the online radicalisation of young, white men” *The Guardian*, November 15, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/15/alt-right-manosphere-mainstream-politics-breitbart; Botoman, Eleanor. “Donald Trump And The Radicalization Of Young White Men” November 10, 2016, http://bust.com/feminism/18554-donald-trump-radicalization-white-men.html>.
- ⁴ Potok, Mark. *The Year in Hate and Extremism*. Southern Poverty Law Center, February 17, 2016, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2016/year-hate-and-extremism>.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁶ *Redemption* is the name of the movement which arose in opposition to Reconstruction. Cf. http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtid=2&psid=3107
- ⁷ Hatewatch Staff. *American Racists Work to Spread ‘Identitarian’ Ideology*. Southern Poverty Law Center, October, 12 2015, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2015/10/12/american-racists-work-spread-%E2%80%98identitarian%E2%80%99-ideology>.
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- ⁹ Grant, Madison. *The Passing of the Great Race*. Charles Scribner’s Sons. 1916.
- ¹⁰ Schafer, Joseph A., Christopher W. Mullins, and Stephanie Box. *Awakenings: The emergence of white supremacist ideologies*. Deviant Behavior, vol. 35, no. 3, 2014, pp. 173-196.
- ¹¹ Dalgaard-Nielsen, Anja. *Studying Violent Radicalization in Europe II: The Potential Contribution of Socio-Psychological and Psychological Approaches*. Danish Institute for International Studies, 2008, <http://www.diis.dk/node/4001>.
- ¹² Pew Research Center, *Modern Immigration Wave Brings 59 Million to U.S., Driving Population Growth and Change Through 2065*. September 28, 2015, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/09/28/modern-immigration-wave-brings-59-million-to-u-s-driving-population-growth-and-change-through-2065/>

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PRISON CAPITAL OF THE UNIVERSE

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At stake in the 2017 Louisiana legislative session, that began April 10, are critical moral questions about the kind of state Louisianans want for their children and grandchildren. Other states have shown that incarceration and crime can be reduced simultaneously and that reform efforts can change lives and save resources in the process. JSRI encourages our Louisiana readers to work for the reforms so urgently needed in our state's criminal justice policies by joining our advocacy email list at www.loyno.edu/jsri/take-action.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ See <http://www.sentencingproject.org/the-facts/#map?dataset-option=SIR> The state imprisonment rate for the U.S. is 471/100,000. The overall U.S. rate of incarceration, including state and federal prisoners, is 698/100,000.
- ² See <http://www.sentencingproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/international-incarceration-rates.png>
- ³ Ashely Nellis, *The Color of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparities in State Prisons*, The Sentencing Project, 2016 at <http://www.sentencingproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/The-Color-of-Justice-Racial-and-Ethnic-Disparity-in-State-Prisons.pdf>
- ⁴ The total cost for the LA Department of Corrections in FY 2015-16 is \$658,657,905. See <http://www.doc.la.gov/media/1/Briefing%20Book/Oct%2016/budget.oct.16.pdf>
- ⁵ See <http://www.doc.la.gov/media/1/Briefing%20Book/Oct%2016/recidivism-admissions.releases.oct.16.pdf>

- ⁶ From *Louisiana Data Analysis Part 1: Prison Trends*, Pew Charitable Trusts, August 11, 2016, a PowerPoint presentation to the Justice Reinvestment Task Force, author's files.
- ⁷ See <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/fact-sheets/2016/11/33-states-reform-criminal-justice-policies-through-justice-reinvestment>
- ⁸ James LeBlanc, *Criminal justice reform sees real progress*, *The Baton Rouge Advocate*, May 27, 2016 at http://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/opinion/article_cc7afd9c-5b10-5a6b-aaa6-d4977bc04dde.html
- ⁹ *Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Task Force Report and Recommendations*, March 16, 2017 at http://www.lasc.org/documents/LA_Task_Force_Report_2017_FINAL.pdf
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
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- ¹³ <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/race-and-ethnicity/2015/home.htm>
- ¹⁴ Wilson, Valerie. "People of color will be a majority of the American working class in 2032." Economic Policy Institute, June 9, 2016, <http://www.epi.org/publication/the-changing-demographics-of-americas-working-class/>

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