This slideshow will provide an overview explaining the connections between, and interactions among, three ideological belief systems in the United States:

**White Nationalism, Right-Wing Populism, and Fascism**

This analytical information will empower us as organizers to better resist Trumpism, defend Democracy, and pursue the entire Global Human Rights Agenda.

Excellent additional resources are available from [Showing up for Racial Justice](#) and the [Western States Center](#).

I’m Chip Berlet. I identify as a progressive straight White Christian man
(I often joke that I am still in the process of recovery)
favored pronouns: he, his, him

I have been studying and writing about right-wing movements for over 40 years. For several decades I worked at Political Research Associates a progressive think tank

My partner Karen Moyer and I spent 10 years living on the southwest side of Chicago (1977-1987) working in the leadership of a multi-racial neighborhood organization, the Southwest Community Congress (SCC), to stop violent attacks on Black families visiting or moving into the predominantly White working class area around Marquette Park.*

Below: Our colleague and friend Curt Koehler (left), key strategist for SCC, along with a local political ally (middle with sign), confront local Chicago Neonazi leader Art Jones (right) in a public park during a rally.

* Fun Fact: In the Blues Brothers movie, the two guys drive their car at a group of neonazis, forcing them to jump off a bridge into a pond. The scene was actually filmed in Marquette Park, where a few blocks away, the real neonazis had their headquarter building.
What is White Nationalism?

White Nationalism is an ideology and system of power that constrains our activities in the United States in ways that range from subtle to blatant to deadly.

White Nationalism is based on false and pseudo-scientific theories of the racial superiority of people who claim to have “White” skin. This arbitrary fiction is used to justify unfair power and privilege based on skin color.

White Nationalism is extolled by organized supremacist groups and armed insurgents, but also by some major media figures, political leaders, and religious leaders.
It would be easy to dismiss racist White Nationalism as limited to fringe groups on the extreme edges of civil society, but this is sadly not true.

Organized White Supremacist groups do not cause prejudice in the United States—they exploit it.

What we clearly see as objectionable bigotry surfacing in racist social and political movements is actually the magnified form of oppressions that swim silently in the familiar yet obscured eddies of “mainstream” society.

Both the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcom X (right) viewed White racism as a form of cultural, institutional, and systemic exploitation to preserve unfair power and privilege.

Their views have consistently been sanitized and misrepresented by “mainstream” and right-wing media.
The term “White Supremacy” is often used accurately by scholars to describe a constellation of racist ideas, practices, and power relationships.

The SURJ Racism 101 presentation explains that

Race Prejudice + Social & Institutional Power = Racism

These are excellent conceptual foundations which I adopt as an activist, researcher, journalist, and scholar*

I also use the terms on the following page to break the above concepts into an expanded and more easily grasped set of component parts. This is especially useful when speaking to audiences that are predominantly White.

*This specific Wikipedia page has an accurate and fair biography of me, warts, criticisms, and all.
White Superiority is the specious idea that White people are a uniquely talented “race.”

White Nationalism claims that the essence of the United States as a nation is carried in the social, cultural, economic, and political practices of European settlers.

White Supremacist System refers to the systems, structures, and institutions of a nation that give White people special privileges and powers whether or not they want these benefits or do not believe they still harbor a dislike or fear of other races.

Organized White Supremacist Groups are social and political organizations with the goal of ensuring White people exercise power over all non-white people.
In the United States

**White Nationalism** has been a core feature of Right-Wing Populist Movements since the 1800s

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The five essential components of Right-Wing Populism in America are:

- "Producerist" White Nationalism
- Demonization of a named despised "Other"
- Scapegoating of a named targeted "Other"
- Conspiracy theories warning of subversion from above and below
- Apocalyptic narratives & millennial visions of threats to the nation’s existence

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This section is based on:

*Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort*

Chip Berlet & Matthew N. Lyons

New York, Guilford, 2000

pp. 1-18

Available as a paperback

or as an E-Book

Otherwise search used booksellers like Powell’s
What is “Producerist” White Nationalism?

Producerism is the idea that the nation is divided into
The “Makers” versus the “Takers” as
Republican Presidential candidate Mitt Romney put it in 2012.

Producerism claims there are the wealth producers
at the top of the political and economic system, while
at the bottom is a heavy anchor of the mostly
non-White or immigrant “undeserving poor,”
dragging the middle class down into poverty
and the denial of the fruits of the “American Dream.”

The racist White Nationalist myth of “Producerism” spread by
White Nationalists, Republicans (and some Democrats)
helped elect Trump.

*Right-Wing Populism in America: pp. 6-7*
White Nationalism, Right-Wing Populism, and Neofascism Share these Common Traits, Rhetoric, and Methods in the US

Condemnation & Vilification: Publicly identifying a person as corrupt, dishonest, dangerous, odious, disgusting, etc. Unworthy. The “Other.”

Demonization: Claiming a person is evil, demonic, perhaps in league with Satan or the forces of darkness. Inhuman or subhuman.

Right-Wing Populism in America: pp. 7-9

Tarpley often poses as a leftist
Scapegoating of a despised “Other”

Scapegoating is the social process whereby the hostility and grievances of an angry, frustrated group are directed away from the real causes of a social problem onto a target group demonized as malevolent wrongdoers. The scapegoat bears the blame, while the scapegoaters feel a sense of righteousness and increased unity....

What matters is that the scapegoats are wrongfully stereotyped as all sharing the same negative trait, or are singled out for blame while other major culprits are let off the hook.

*Right-Wing Populism in America: pp. 7-9*
Scapegoating of a targeted “Other”

Scapegoating often targets socially disempowered or marginalized groups.

At the same time, the scapegoat is often portrayed as powerful or privileged in some secret, inappropriate, or malevolent way: Jewish bankers, Black “Welfare Queens,” etc.

As a result, scapegoating feeds on people’s legitimate anger about their own actual disempowerment, but diverts this anger away from the real systems of power and oppression in the society.

Right-Wing Populism in America: pp. 7-9
Conspiracism is a particular narrative form of scapegoating that frames the enemy as part of a vast insidious plot against the common good, while it valorizes the scapegoater as a hero for sounding the alarm. Like other forms of scapegoating, conspiracism often, though not always, targets oppressed or stigmatized groups.

In many cases, conspiracism uses coded language to mask ethnic or racial bigotry, for example, attacking the Federal Reserve in ways that evoke common stereotypes about “Jewish bankers.”

Far-right groups have often used such conspiracy theories as an opening wedge for more explicit bigoted ideology.

*Right-Wing Populism in America: pp. 6-9*
Apocalyptic Narratives & Millennial Visions of Threats to the Nation’s Existence

People who sense an “apocalypse” is at hand believe that:

There is an approaching confrontation between good and evil, about which a few have been selected to be forewarned; and during which everyone will be forced to take sides.

In the course of the struggle hidden truths will be revealed.

The outcome is uncertain; but when the apocalyptic period ends, the world will be dramatically changed.

*Right-Wing Populism in America: pp. 11-13*

Fun fact: the words revelation, prophecy, and apocalypse all stem from the words in archaic languages for the same phenomenon

“Apoocalyptic Aggression” is when folks decide they need to launch “spiritual warfare”
Some recent scholarship on Fascism and Neofascism concludes that Fascism is the most militant and aggressive form of Right-Wing Populism.

Thus the alliance between Donald Trump and Steve Bannon and Alt-Right represents a coalition that crosses ideological boundaries and stretches from “mainstream” Republicans to neofascists and neonazis*

*Most scholars call forms of Nazism continuing or formed after World War Two “Neonazism”
Fascism is a form of Populism

According to Scholar Roger Griffin:

“[Fascism] ...is best defined as a revolutionary form of nationalism, one that sets out to be a political, social and ethical revolution, welding the ‘people’ into a dynamic national community under new elites infused with heroic values.”

“The core myth that inspires this project is that only a populist, trans-class movement of purifying, cathartic national rebirth (palingenesis) can stem the tide of decadence.”
Fascism is the most virulent and dangerous form of right-wing populism.

Even when fascism fails to take political power, the named scapegoats are the targets of verbal and physical attacks...and murders.

In 2016 I joined my colleague Bill Fletcher, Jr. in warning publicly that when Trump’s scapegoating rhetoric named allegedly lazy, sinful, or subversive groups of people---then the number of physical attacks on these targets of Trump’s venom would increase.

Click for a video of the presentation

How Vilification Leads to “Scripted Violence”
I have a scholarly book chapter posted online here

A discussion sponsored by Showing Up for Racial Justice – May 16, 2017 – Prepared by Chip Berlet  → online here
Right-Wing political and social movements in the United States are awash in ludicrous conspiracy theories. Claiming subversion and betrayal by a secret coalition of radical leftists, liberal elites, the Democratic Party and the United Nations.

Most conspiracy theories in the US are rooted in earlier antisemitic rumors which are replicated in false claims about the Illuminati or Freemasons. Read more in the study “Dances with Devils.”

Chip Berlet - Political Research Associates

A discussion sponsored by Showing Up for Racial Justice – May 16, 2017 – Prepared by Chip Berlet ➔ online here
According to the Christian Right in the 1960s Folk Music and Rock & Roll were part of a communist mind control plot for the internal subversion of America by young people!

These conspiracy theories often had a racist White Nationalist, anti-feminist, or homophobic subtext.

Read more in the study “Theocracy and White Supremacy: Behind the Culture War to Restore Traditional Values” Chip Berlet & Margaret Quigley – Political Research Associates
The Conspiracy is Vast!
The target is the White Middle Class which is being squeezed in a vise by a conspiracy of Corrupt Elitist Parasites above and Subversive Radical Leftists below

This particular conspiracist theory originated in a group of right-wing movement activists allied with the John Birch Society. It is the basic thesis put out on radio and television by right-wing conspiracy theorist and media celebrity Glenn Beck and others.

Who reaps the benefits of this vast conspiracy? The Lazy, Sinful and Subversive people on the government dole dragging the Middle Class down the economic ladder by big government and progressive taxation…and no one needs to add these “parasites” below are usually framed by right-wing authors as being people of color, immigrants, welfare cheats, non-Christians, etc.
Hard-Working "Productive" Populists Feel Squeezed From Above So They Direct Anger & Conspiracism Upwards Toward Alleged Corrupt Elite “Parasites”
“Corrupt Elite Parasites”
(Historic caricatures of dangerous threats from above)

Secret Elites, International Bankers, Jews,
Illuminati, Freemasons, Committee of 300
Liberals, Democrats, Socialists,
Globalists, Godless Secular Humanists,
Corrupt Politicians, Government Bureaucrats
Council on Foreign Relations
Trilateralists

A discussion sponsored by Showing Up for Racial Justice – May 16, 2017 – Prepared by Chip Berlet ➔ online here
Hard-Working "Productive" Populists Feel Squeezed From Below So They Direct Anger, and Rhetorical and Physical Attacks, Downward toward Alleged Lazy, Sinful, or Subversive Parasites

A discussion sponsored by Showing Up for Racial Justice – May 16, 2017 – Prepared by Chip Berlet ➤ online here
“Lazy, Sinful, Subversive Parasite”

(Stereotypes of dangerous threats from below)

... Lazy:
Blacks, People of Color, Welfare Mothers,
"Undeserving Poor," Non-White Immigrants

... Sinful:
Feminists, Abortionists,
Homosexuals (and their supporters);
Non-Christians

... Subversive:
Immigrants, Social & Economic Justice Activists,
Muslims, Labor & Community Organizers
Hard-Working "Productive" Populists Feel Squeezed From Above
So They Direct Anger & Conspiracism
Upwards Toward Alleged Corrupt Elite “Parasites”

Hard-Working "Productive" Populists Feel Squeezed From Below
So They Direct Anger, and Rhetorical and Physical Attacks,
Downward toward Alleged Lazy, Sinful, or Subversive Parasites

A discussion sponsored by Showing Up for Racial Justice – May 16, 2017 – Prepared by Chip Berlet  ➔ online here
Trump pledges that the lazy, sinful, and subversive parasites will be cut off from government handouts, taxes will be made more fair, Mexicans will pay for the border wall, Muslims will be banned, enemies bombed, environmentalists beaten, protestors arrested, abortions stopped, the LGBTQ community blocked from public bathrooms, Andrew Jackson gets a national holiday, the manosphere gets a cabinet position, Bannon receives the Medal of Freedom, public schools are unfunded, medical research support slashed, human rights abuses ignored.

A discussion sponsored by Showing Up for Racial Justice – May 16, 2017 – Prepared by Chip Berlet ➔ online here
Is Trump a Neofascist?

Good Question

Scholars debate this question

What really matters is realizing that

Trump’s Vilification of
“Named Scapegoats”
is a form of “Scripted Violence”
indirectly but clearly encouraging violent assaults on his named scapegoated targets for White Nationalist and Christian Nationalist rage.

Check out these articles on Christian Nationalist “Dominionism” in the United States
The Processes Trump Used to Forge the Tools of Fear He Used to Get Elected

Prejudice
Bigotry
Discrimination
Dualism
Denigration
Scapegoating
Dehumanization
Vilification
Conspiracism
Demonization
Demagoguery
The Tools of Fear are used to create and maintain Systems of Oppression, based on Prejudice plus the Power to use Discrimination in several forms and Arenas, resulting in Passive or Active Aggression.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formula for Discussing Systems of Oppression</th>
<th>Some Common Prejudices (Ideas / Beliefs)</th>
<th>Forms of Discrimination (Actions / Acts)</th>
<th>Arenas in which Power Struggles Take Place</th>
<th>The Processes that Forge the Tools of Fear</th>
<th>The Outcome of Passive or Active Aggression is Systems of Oppression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prejudice + Power = Oppression</td>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>Individual (i.e. person to person)</td>
<td>Social Cultural Economic Political</td>
<td>Prejudice</td>
<td>Discriminatory Acts Segregation Exclusion Individual Attacks Group Attacks Slavery Expulsion Genocide</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sexism</td>
<td>Structural (de facto) i.e. within kinship, family, and/or societal structures.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bigotry Discrimination Dualism Denigration Scapegoating Dehumanization Vilification Conspiracism Demonization Demagoguery</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Classism</td>
<td>Systemic (de facto) i.e. political systems (social democracy, fascism), economic systems</td>
<td>Unfair power &amp; privilege maintained by social, cultural, economic, or political pressures (norms) create systems of oppression or even acts of repression, violence, and murder.</td>
<td></td>
<td>These processes are based on ideas (Ideologies) and can produce acts of Passive or Active Aggression ranging from snubs and verbal slurs to physical violence.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ableism</td>
<td>Institutional (de facto) i.e. Fox News, Tea Parties, John Birch Society, Heritage Foundation, Free Congress Foundation</td>
<td>In the most extreme forms these power struggles, especially over land, lead to genocide.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Media: the printing press, telegraph, radio, and Internet each expanded the reach of mobilizing resentment and acts of mass aggression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Homophobia</td>
<td>Legal (dejure) i.e. Courts, Police, Parole officers, FBI, etc. These can occur singly or in combinations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conspiracist theories claiming subversion and treachery are spread by demagogues who name scapegoated groups thus identifying individual targets for abuse and/or violence.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Xenophobia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Apocalyptic Aggression is action sparked by fear that an existential threat is near; and that time is running out to protect the deserving community; so therefore authoritarian, coercive, or violent solutions are justified.</td>
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<td>Nativism</td>
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<td>Antisemitism</td>
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<td>Islamophobia</td>
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<td>and Religious Triumphalism</td>
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<td>(and many more)</td>
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</table>

This simple formula allows us to discuss the interrelated "Systems of Oppression" Some specific prejudices and/or bigoted ideologies are listed in the next column. >>>

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Prejudice + Power = Oppression

- Power + Racial Prejudice Creates Racial Oppression
- Power + Gender Prejudice Creates Gender Oppression
- Power + Class Prejudice Creates Class Oppression
- Power + Ability Prejudice Creates Ableist Oppression
- Power + Religious Prejudice Creates Religious Oppression

... and the list goes on until we organize to end all systems of oppression

Excellent additional resources are available from Showing up for Racial Justice and the Western States Center

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Prejudice + Power = Oppression

We must organize to end all systems of oppression. Resistance is not futile. Resistance is necessary and effective.

History will record the outcome of our resistance to oppression. But history will judge us as to whether or not we stood up, spoke out, and resisted Trump’s White Nationalism, authoritarianism, and his neofascist allies.

Excellent additional resources are available from Showing up for Racial Justice and the Western States Center. 

Chip Berlet has stashed more resources online here.