What’s Going On?

Right-wing Republicans, Donald Trump, Ted Cruz, Fox News, Talk Radio, the Koch Brothers, the Tea Parties, the Patriot movement, the Oath Keepers, the Oregon Standoff, the New World Order conspiracy theories, Obama is a Muslim?

It’s not one big conspiracy folks, but there are linkages and processes that are as old as the Presidency of Andrew Jackson and the birth of the Ku Klux Klan after the Civil War.
Since their effort to impeach President Clinton, Republican operatives have spread conspiracy theories about treachery in high places.

As the white middle class was pushed down the economic ladder, a large angry right-wing populist movement has grown, fed by media such as talk radio and Fox News.

To corral this bitter voting bloc Donald Trump and other Republican politicians blame immigrants and “big government.”

Far Right insurgents see this moment as a time to recruit militants into open armed rebellion against what they see as a treacherous, tyrannical, and unconstitutional government.
How the Producerist Narrative of Right-Wing Populist Movements encourages bigotry, scapegoating, and violence

It’s a power struggle involving race, gender, and class—and our job as progressives and leftists is protecting people under attack while replacing the oligarchy of the 1% with actual democracy.

Based on the award-winning book

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

By Chip Berlet & Matthew N. Lyons
Don’t freak out, we are going to walk you through this.
(and this is only part of the whole chart!)
This is a little easier to start with...
Right-Wing Populism & the Producerist Narrative

Right-Wing Populist movements emerge when people (primarily in the middle class) feel they have lost—or are about to lose—power in the political, economic, or social arenas of society (Rory McVeigh).

Key elements of Right-Wing Populism include:

– Prejudice and bigotry
– Scapegoating of an “Other”
– Demonization and denigration
– Fears of a subversive conspiracy
– Apocalyptic calls for a showdown between good and evil.
Right-Wing Populism & the Producerist Narrative

Producerism can be a difficult concept to grasp. Essentially it divides the population into the productive people being subverted by the parasites above and below—but there is a complex process as well.

When demagogues emerge to denounce the parasites above as subversive, average people condemn the elite parasites above, but they cannot reach them.

So angry constituencies denounce “subversive, sinful, and lazy parasites” below them that are identified by demagogues drawing from pre-existing social fears, anxieties, resentments, and bigotry.

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Adapted from Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort
Updates and additional material at Research for Progress
“Elite Parasites”
(Caricature)

“Lazy, Sinful, Subversive Parasites”
(Stereotype)
Lazy: Blacks, People of Color, Welfare Mothers, Undeserving Poor, Immigrants (Historic)
Sinful: Feminists, Abortionists, Homosexuals
Subversive: Social & Economic Justice Activists, Labor & Community Organizers, Immigrants, Muslims

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“Elite Parasites”
(Caricature)
Secret Elites, International Bankers, Jews, Illuminati, Freemasons,
Liberals, Democrats, Socialists, Globalists, Godless Secular Humanists,
Corrupt Politicians, Government Bureaucrats

Hard-Working “Productive” Populists Feel Squeezed From Above
So They Direct Anger & Conspiracism Upwards

Pressure from above
ROTHSCHILD ROCKEFELLER C.F.R. ELITE

MIDDLE CLASS

Pressure from below
S.D.S. PANTHERS YIPPEES Y.S.A. COMMON CAUSE
Right-Wing Populism & the Producerist Narrative

Since the participants in Right-Wing Populist Movements have power over the targeted scapegoats, they attack them--at first verbally--but often physically as well.

This process involves demagogues using bigoted language to identify and scapegoat targets who are attacked via “scripted violence” in which the demagogue can claim no legal liability for directly inciting the violence.
“Lazy, Sinful, Subversive Parasites”

(Stereotype)

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Right-Wing Populism in the United States
How the “Producerist” Narrative Fuels Demonization & Scapegoating

“Elite Parasites”
(Caricature)

Hard-Working “Productive” Populists Feel Squeezed From Above
So They Direct Anger & Conspiracism Upwards

Two-Way Recruitment

Conservative Right Reformist Political Movements
Republican Party Other Political Parties Politicians Elections Legislation Policy Think Tanks Conservative Media

Dissident Right Populism Reformist Social Movements

Anti-Statist Tax Revolt Patriots & Militias
Anti-Affirmative Action Anti-Imigrant

Two-Way Recruitment

Ultra Right Insurgent Social Movements
(Racist Right)
(Extreme Right)
Ku Klux Klan Neonazis National Socialist Movement White Aryan Resistance Creativity Movement Racist Skinheads Posse Comitatus Christian Identity National Alliance Aryan Nations

Hard-Working “Productive” Populists Feel Squeezed From Below
So They Direct Scapegoating & Repression Downwards

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Right-Wing Populism & the Producerist Narrative

When there is a factional fight within the power elites (the 1%) populist mass movements sometimes are encouraged (even funded) to grow by the “outsider” faction of the elites.

Cynical politicians emerge using populist-sounding rhetoric to mobilize the angry social movement into a political constituency to vote for the “Populist” sounding candidates who “care about The People!”

The People are in fact only a selected group within the society who are seeking to defend relative unfair power and privilege.

If elected, the Outsider Faction merely replaces the Insider Faction.
Right-Wing Populism in the United States
How the “Producerist” Narrative Fuels Demonization & Scapegoating

“Elite Parasites”
(Caricature)

Electoral Candidate Pledges to Crush the Parasites Above & Below

Hard-Working “Productive” Populists Feel Squeezed From Above
So They Direct Anger & Conspiracism Upwards

Two-Way Recruitment

Conservative Right
Reformist
Political Movements
Republican Party
Other Political Parties
Politicians
Elections
Legislation
Policy Think Tanks
Conservative Media

Business Nationalist
Anti-Union
Property Rights “Wise Use”
Anti-Welfare
Christian Nationalism & Dominionism
Anti-Feminist
Anti-Abortion
Anti-Gay

Right-Wing Talk Radio, TV, & Internet
Tea Party & Town Hall Protest Groups
Nebulous Conspiracy Theorists
Christian Theocrats

Ultra Right
Insurgent Social Movements
(Racist Right)
(Extreme Right)
Ku Klux Klan
Neonazis
National Socialist Movement
White Aryan Resistance
Creativity Movement
Racist Skinheads
Posse Comitatus
Christian Identity Movement
National Alliance
Aryan Nations

Dissident Right Populism
Reformist Social Movements

Anti-Statist
Tax Revolt
Patriots & Militias

English Only
Anti-Affirmative Action
Anti-Immigrant
White Nationalists & Xenophobes
Anti-Semitic Conspiracy Theorists
Anti-Muslim

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Corrupt Politicians, Government Bureaucrats

Hard-Working “Productive” Populists Feel Squeezed From Above
So They Direct Anger & Conspiracism Upwards

Insurgent Right praises Electoral Candidate, but Warns of Reformism

Two-Way Recruitment

Conservative
Right
Reformist
Political
Movements

Republican Party
Other Political Parties
Politicians
Elections
Legislation
Policy Think Tanks
Conservative Media

Business Nationalist
Property Rights “Wise Use”
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Dissident Right
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Tea Party & Town Hall Protest Groups
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Politician’s Populist-Sounding Rhetoric

“The Demagogic Politician tells the target constituency that the current government is controlled by corrupt and evil parasites giving our tax dollars to the lazy, sinful, and subversive parasites below.”

“Elect me and I will kick the bums out.”
The “Producerist” narrative is used by demagogic politicians to mobilize mass support for replacing the current political party in power when there is a factional division among the ruling elites.

Politician’s Populist-Sounding Rhetoric
“The government is controlled by corrupt and evil parasites giving our tax dollars to the lazy, sinful, and subversive parasites below”

“Elect me and I will kick the bums out.”

The “Real” People
In a Right-Wing Populist Movement

The Despised Scapegoats
(The Lazy, Sinful, and Subversive Parasites Below)
Conspiracy Theories about Betrayal and Subversion Glue together the Narrative of Producerism when it appears in Right-Wing Populism
This illustration of how the productive middle class is squeezed from above and below is from:


Their right-wing POV is illustrated by their list of conspirators.
Conspiracism

A distinct narrative form of *scapegoating*, that uses *demonization* to justify constructing the scapegoats as wholly evil; while reconstructing the scapegoater as a hero.

Sees secret plots by tiny cabals of evildoers as the major motor powering important historical events.

Often employs common fallacies of logic in analyzing factual evidence to assert connections, causality, and intent that are nonexistent.

Periodically intrudes into the “mainstream” public political sphere such as during the McCarthy Period Red Scare (early 1950s) and the Palmer Raids (1919-1920).
How do the named scapegoats overlap and influence new forms?

• “Rule No. 2: In a conspiracy theory, nothing is ever discarded. Right-wing mail order bookstores still sell the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," the anti-Semitic fantasy hatched in Russia a century ago. Another big seller is "Proofs of a Conspiracy, " a 1797 book reprinted by the John Birch Society, which fueled speculation that a Freemasonic group called the Order of the Illuminati plotted with the Jeffersonians to turn over the fledging United States to followers of French Enlightenment philosophy -- the 18th century equivalent of secular humanism.”

• --George Johnson, “The Conspiracy That Never Ends”
Named Scapegoats Overlap and Create a Myriad of Hybrid Conspiracist Narratives

- Jews (Zionists)
- Khazars
- Liberal Collectivists
- Communists / Anarchists
- Freemasons (Illuminati)
- Catholics (Jesuits)
- Secular Humanists (Feminists / Gays)
- Space Aliens (Icke Lizards)
- Plutocrats (Robber Barons)
  (Secret Elites)
Conspiracy theories about an impending North American Union, for example, emerged from three distinct narratives: Generic Secular, Christian Apocalyptic, and Antisemetic.

Old fears of a “New World Order” & “One World Government” are the underlying memes of the North American Union conspiracy theory. The different narratives cross political boundaries and sometimes overlap through borrowing themes and ideas.
Some Ideologies Span Across a Number of Right-Wing Movements and into “Mainstream” Politics

White Nationalism

Not drawn to scale. For relative position and spread only.

White Nationalism is the widespread notion that the “real citizens” should be, or act like, proper “White” people. Everyone in the United States is influenced by the legacy of White Nationalism in one way or another.

Democrats

Republicans

Patriot Movement

Tea Party Movement

Glenn Beck

John Birch Society

Armed Militias

Oath Keepers

3% Group

White “Separatist” Movement

White Supremacist Movement

Ku Klux Klan

Racist Skinheads

Neonazis
Some Conspiracy Beliefs Span the Left/Right Political Spectrum

Belief in New World Order Conspiracy Theories
Belief in Sovereignty Legal Theories

Democrats
Republicans

Patriot Movement
Tea Party Movement
Glenn Beck
John Birch Society

Armed Militias
Oath Keepers
3% Group

White “Separatist” Movement
White Supremacist Movement
Ku Klux Klan
Racist Skinheads
Neonazis
Demonization of Target Groups by Political Sector Conspiracy Theories in the US

Impending Tyranny
New World Order Fears

Christian Apocalyptic
End Times Fears

Anti-Muslim

Anti-Jewish

White Supremacist
Organized Groups

Inflammatory rhetoric by political and religious leaders creates a milieu in which some people hear a call to defensive or offensive action that can lead to violence.
What’s Happening?

- Republican bigoted rhetoric encourages violence, but also prompts the Patriot movement and Ultra-Right to challenge government authority and threaten scapegoated groups and the Left.
- It’s a dynamic multi-sector, multi-actor process, not a vast conspiracy.
- We need to protect those under attack.
Remember: Civil Liberties
Span the Entire Political Spectrum

The First Amendment Protects Ideas

Conflate Ideology and Methodology.

The government assume that “Radical” or “Extremist” ideas lead inexorably to criminal acts or terrorism. This is false; and undermines free speech and the First Amendment protections needed to defend democracy itself.

The State is not our ally in this situation.
Democracy is a process, not a specific set of institutions

Democracy is a process that assumes the majority of people, over time, given enough accurate information, the ability to participate in a free and open public debate, and can vote without intimidation, reach constructive decisions that benefit the whole of society, and preserve liberty, protect our freedoms, extend equality, and defend democracy itself.

- Chip Berlet
Challenging Right-Wing Populism:
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Political Research Associates has an extensive website full of material on right-wing movements

Influenced by work of John Amato, Fred Clarkson, Sara Diamond, Jean Hardisty, David Neiwert, Sara Robinson, Spencer Sunshine, and others.