

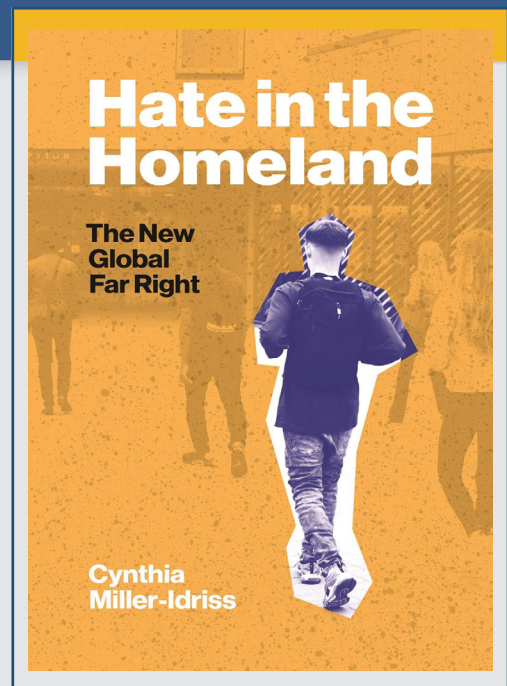
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الائتلاف الإسلامي العسكري لمحاربة الإرهاب  
ISLAMIC MILITARY COUNTER TERRORISM COALITION



**BOOK REVIEW**



# **HATE IN THE HOMELAND**

## **THE NEW GLOBAL FAR RIGHT**

**CYNTHIA MILLER-IDRISS**



## **Book Review**

Monthly Issue - Islamic Military Counter-Terrorism Coalition

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**Book Review**

## **HATE IN THE HOMELAND: THE NEW GLOBAL FAR RIGHT**

Recent decades have witnessed a wide spread of the right-wing extremism in USA, Europe, and other places, prompting many states to work actively on understanding this phenomenon and its implications on societies. Hate crimes have increased evidently; thousands were reported varying between the shooting of the synagogue in Pittsburgh and Poway, California, the arson attacks of black churches in the South in Spring 2019, and the terrorist attack on the New Zealand mosque, killing 51 people praying.

This all led to an increased attention to the far right among Americans in general, and among journalists, decision-makers, and experts in particular, and prompted questions such as: Why is the new far right prevalent? Why do common people join far right movements? How should we respond to the far-right violence? What are the new places and extents of the right-wing extremism activity today?

## This Book

This book is to examine the emergence of the far right, and look closely at the speeches of violent far-right groups and their misleading philosophy justifying conspiracy theories, their ways of youth polarization, and how they target the marginalized young groups, who can easily be induced into believing the far-right legitimacy. It, furthermore, pays special attention to the right-wing extremism in USA in the last decade, with reference to global events related to the emergence of the far right.

The book tackles the recruiting methods of far-right nationalists from various communities and settings, such as schools and universities; public places, such as coffeehouses, sports clubs and soccer fields; social media networks; chat rooms on the internet; cooking channels on YouTube; venues of small groups related to far-right groups, such as evangelical churches. Rather than looking into what the violent far right is, author Cynthia Miller-Idriss investigates physical and virtual spaces where hate is sown, places where the far right is active, how it polarizes young people, and its influence on their daily lives. She takes her readers on a journey to the main places and spaces of the far right, and unravels innovative strategies that can be implemented in countering fundamentalist extremism.

## Basis of the Exclusionary Doctrine

It is known that the far right is always opposed to the prevailing government policies. However, in recent years, there has been a tactical shift towards the subversion of governance from within, where far-right groups worked on their own reinforcement and development of their cultural, intellectual and financial capabilities through different groups whom they can utilize and who can work the current situation to their favor. For example in the United States, these groups encouraged their members to run as republicans. They worked on introducing the far-right views to the political spectrum mainstream in Europe, adopting a different approach, and accordingly won parliament seats in nearly all European states. These groups have had further impact all over the world. It has become harder to differentiate them from the traditional conservative right-wing parties.

Whether it was rooted in dehumanization or the idea of aggrieved entitlement, embracing the idea of white supremacy in the United States is considered the basis of the exclusionary doctrine, and the key to understanding belief system of the American far right. The far-right beliefs are based on an obvious exclusionary stratified hierarchy of supremacy according to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion and sex. They comprise a set of racist beliefs, which oppose immigrants and Muslims, are anti-Semitic and biased towards the white race, in order to justify the brutality right-wingers might engage in against others, with interest in the language and beliefs that put whole groups of people in lower ranks. These beliefs help to legitimize violence since they dehumanize the other and minorities by implanting racist thoughts, such as white supremacy and Christian supremacy, as well as hate towards members of groups they consider of lower social status, who work in posts the racist right wing consider his and only his.

## Concerns of the Existential Threat

The far right goes beyond the exclusionary beliefs to actually feeling threatened as dominant groups, such as white people, Christians, Europeans or Americans. This is manifested in the white race feeling of existential threat and the need to defend the state, nation or dominant people, or protect it from immigration and demographic change. This study shows how the far right depends on three overlapping theories that paint a dreadful future of deterioration and chaos: the Great Replacement, the White Genocide conspiracy theory often used in the United States, and the Eurabia theory used in Europe. According to this logic, the inevitable outcome promoted by the right wing is based on three fabricated concerns:

1. Islamic civilizations replacing Western ones.
2. Imposing Islamic Shari'a.
3. White people genocide by non-white and non-Christian immigrants.

These three views affirm the need to maintain the white supremacy and defend it against the invasion of immigrants, Muslims and Jews, who will replace westerners sooner or later. Accordingly, right-wingers act targeted and victimized. Their plans often play on



sentimental attitudes and slogans: to protect the sacred homeland, defend it and restore it. The far right believes that the only way to prevent this shift is an open-ended racial war, which would result in a new global system that revives the white glory. This belief is similar to the Islamic extremists' Jihad to bring back the caliphate. This is how the far right and Islamic extremists share the vision of how the world should end since they both adopt the same violent terrorist strategies, in an attempt to accelerate the process towards the end of time.

### Threats of the far right

The "Far Right" is the most suitable and realistic term to refer to the broad spectrum of right exclusionary beliefs, thoughts and groups. This term is used to refer to individuals and groups who believe in violence regardless of the catastrophic outcomes, as was the case in Charlottesville or Christchurch.

The racist right-wing extremism has become the deadliest of all kinds of extremism in the United States, where the majority of 81% of extremists are affiliated with this movement. Reports indicate that 75000-10000 extremists are affiliated with far-right groups in the US. This estimate does not include individuals who are sometimes involved in far-right scenes or inactive supporters. The German intelligence services, for example, have estimated the number of far-right wingers in Germany in 2018 to be 24100, more than half of which are not members of official groups or organizations, and 12700 of them are classified as violent extremists.

### Extremism and Recruitment

Analyzing recruiting extremists, the author often uses the terms "youth" and "youth culture" even though extremism is not limited to the youth. However, they are more vulnerable to extremists and more susceptible to join them. They are easily tempted by violent conspiracies. They often participate in murders, attacks, hate crimes, and other youth-related violence, such as bullying.

Hence, young people are more likely to be recruited in extremism since adolescence and early adulthood are two fundamental phases of identity formation and maturity. They are when young people become more independent; they meet new people and make new friends; they go through complicated cultural and social experiences. They also witness the development of their political stands, and how they are consolidated to last a lifetime. At this point in life, it is probably more important to engage in extremist ideologies.

Such factors make young people more susceptible to extremist beliefs throughout their journey of self-awareness, search for new identities, and understanding the philosophy of life. Those needs might serve as key to existential extremism among the youth—the urge to rebel against authorities, the need to belong to a strong and coherent community, and to break free from the overwhelming feeling of injustice, exclusion and rejection. The far right uses innovative approaches polarizing young people, such as humor, intelligence and symbols conveying exclusionary and dehumanized messages.





They also started shifting from using aesthetic rhetoric that conveys feelings and emotions, such as anger, to humor as part of spreading extremism. For example, rather than tattoos or posters of swastikas or racist statements, the far right youth are now exposed to hidden messages embedding racist or anti-immigrant sentiment, wrapped in colored iconography that often uses smart, historical codes. Part of this shift in communication styles is due to the extensive use of humor, jokes and irony in cyberculture, especially by creating and frequently sharing memes.

### Symbolism of Fictional Homelands

Humans develop deep sentimental attachment to the places they live in or around. The far right constantly refers in their speeches and propaganda—either direct or “encoded”—to spaces of belonging, national geographies and ancient homelands along with white-race states and the need to build isolating borders.

The centrality of space and territory in historical far-right movements is reminiscent of those metaphors used by the Nazi party, such as “blood and soil”, which has constantly raised contemporary far-right fears of the “Great Replacement” theory and conspiracies about Europe turning into Eurabia. Issues of territory, belonging, exclusion, race, and national geographies are all key to envision collective pasts as well as anticipated futures of the far right. Place can also be meaningful to framing nostalgia for a past era and longing for restoring an imaginary utopia. This is the basic premise of the white ethno-state and far-right claims about geographic entitlement, belonging, and exclusion.

### Real and Imaginary Homelands

This study affirms that the ideologies and sentiment on which the far right and white-supremacist extremism are based are deeply rooted in the sense of territorial belonging, possession, and ownership. This racism, white-supremacy and sacred land illusions have reinforced historical far-right ideas about the mystical link between “blood and soil” in Nazi Germany. Today they underpin the anti-immigrant, anti-Islam, anti-Semitic, and other racist sentiments that inspire policies such as border closure, segregation, forced relocation, and the establishment of separate racial enclaves or ethno-states. For example, Norwegian terrorist Anders Breivik justified the murder of dozens of children in Oslo in 2011 with fear of Muslims dominating Europe.

The rhetoric of the “great replacement” and white-genocide theories clearly invoke geographic space. It is claimed that immigrants and the non-white will inevitably invade the space, and expel the whites from their native lands. These fears and fantasies are manifested in the concept of personal and community belonging, which ties individual identity and racial groups to specific geographies, marking “home” as inseparable from ancestral land. Homelands here comprise biological and ecological concepts, linking a sense of belonging to a particular race. It is no coincidence that many metaphors related to the idea of national belonging are also associated with ecological ideas, such as roots and ancestral lands, or ideas of kinship, ethnicity and motherland. This brings appeal to the political rhetoric and nationalist or far-right symbols that evoke a sense of

nostalgia for sacred lands and geographies, and promise to restore the nation and its local communities.

The book points out the important idea of myths and legends about homelands as key parts of far-right sacred geographies. It links contemporary life to nostalgia and fantasies of utopian futures. Such myths intertwine with the individual identity since they are partly considered factual tales that connect people with places. Here the author emphasizes how the far right perceives such myths as undoubtedly real as life itself, which helps in shaping a nationalist fantasy that enables an expression of national whiteness, evoking a sense racial supremacy.

### A White Ethno-state

The desire to establish a white ethno-state or restore the white glory is what evoked far-right calls and white-extremist calls to end immigration, especially of ethnic minorities, expedite a race war to achieve rebirth and restoration of ancestral civilization. The far-right extremists and racist groups have a clear geography of racist activity, based on a shared commitment to territorial and social separation between races. This vision is rooted among the broader far-right spectrum who claim to be white separatists wanting a “white state” rather than white supremacists.

Those separatists argue that global elites aim at eradicating the whites by increasing immigration and empowering minorities. White ethno-states are not just fantasies of marginalized groups. However, they are actual political goals and suggestions that groups attempted to achieve, and still are. For example, in the 1990s, the white-supremacist group Aryan Nations attempted to build a white-separatist enclave in Idaho, USA, followed by broader efforts to establish a white homeland of five states through the “Northwest Imperative”.

### Populism and Mainstreaming the Message

The far right pays great attention to a set of political ideologies, ideas, and solutions accepted by the public at large. In fact, politicians rarely act on unfamiliar ideas or contradicting ones to the society’s culture since they owe it to their voters. Thus, they refrain from supporting policies and legislations that might be unacceptable to most voters. The possible ideas are usually gradual according to the slow evolution of mainstream norms, values, and beliefs among citizens. This can either be spontaneous or a result of the strategic efforts of think tanks, lobbyists, and grassroots activists.

Because of mainstreaming and normalizing far-right extremism, people are exposed to many extremist ideas more often in their daily lives, making engagements with

the far right more flexible and acceptable. Mainstream extremism takes far-right extremist ideas outside the window of backwoods militias and prison gangs. People do not just come across hate in abstract ways, but rather encounter it in specific physical and virtual places. Thus, geography is part of a bigger whole—how these ideas make their way from the far right to the mainstream. These ideas are no longer a phenomenon that needs to be sought out intentionally; people can rather easily and unintentionally encounter the white-supremacy idea shopping on the internet, or passing by a billboard in a public place, such as universities, etc.

Mainstreaming helps expose new people to hate and recruit them to adopt extremist ideologies by using hidden “encoded” terms. That way, mainstreaming and normalization help further radicalize individuals drawn to far-right ideas. Thereupon, reviving critical concepts, such as forced deportation and racial cleansing of immigrants, can make obnoxious expressions more acceptable to a wider range of individuals. Racist expressions may seem more acceptable if uttered by elected officials of major political parties, which helps to legitimize them and mainstream marginalized ideas.

Populism here is considered a rhetorical strategy used by some political factions to better sell their parties or programs to the people as the most realistic and worthy of their votes. Electoral campaign speeches use these populist, anti-elite strategies, just as Trump had promised to drain the swamp and considered those who opposed him as enemies of the people or traitors to the nation.

### Conspiracy Theories

The wide spread of far-right conspiracy theories on the internet was not a natural progression. Rather, they were promoted through content producers, like Alex Jones of Infowars, who used podcasts and publicity stunts to raise and propel ideas via different media—from the virtual world to the real world. For example, the FBI’s Phoenix field office issued an intelligence bulletin in May 2019 pointing out that conspiracy theories may inspire domestic terrorists or legitimize their violence.

The following are some of the prominent far-right conspiracy theories:

#### 1) Anti-immigration and anti-globalization

Far-right beliefs and ideas are clearly manifested in the right political rhetoric, particularly anti-globalization and the normalization of far-right stands regarding immigration and immigrants. The far-right anti-globalization leans towards the economic and cultural implications resulting from the fall of local and national authorities and increasing number of immigrants. The



far right view globalization as the source of all domestic and national crises. Anti-globalization language evokes regular folk's feelings of social and economic marginality, or suffering from the relative deprivation of "global forces", whom they believe are national elites who sell out their country, transfer power to global entities, and let jobs go to foreign countries.

## 2) Fake news

Conspiracy theories are tools used to shake the people's sense of reality. They offer a belief-based, ideological frame that gives meaning to people's social worlds, based on non-factual fake news. These theories draw a distinctive line between "us-versus-them" and "Friends and Enemies", and allow for an interpretation of a different set of injustices relying on coordinated efforts of a few elite members, which paves the way to understanding the perceived injustice. Many far-right extremists who believe in white supremacy engaged in terrorist or violence acts out of a sense of moral obligation, in an attempt to save white citizens from immigrants' invasion.

## Far-Right Marketing

The far right adopts different means and methods to propel and spread their views either directly or indirectly. On that point, "using food" is essential to the far right and all extremist groups. Therefore, these groups focus on food-cultivation and animal-hunting technologies, and how to move from living in organized states to living outside the realm of state and society.

"Wearable Hate" has become more common and part and parcel of the far-right image. This fashion has rapidly evolved in recent years. It is now all about aesthetics and

adopting famous brands, marketing the far right with embedded messages and symbols in clothes. The author asserts that shirts, for example, have been a perfect tool to mainstream racist and nationalist messages. These expensive right brand clothing rely on mainstream fashion, yet using embedded symbols implicitly or explicitly referring to far-right views or legendary icons. Even though young people are the main target of these groups, some brands target women and children clothing, too.

## Hate Comes to Campus

The author discusses how the far right have found their way into universities and specialized institutes (academic). They promote how derogated scholars, professors, and lecturers are, especially in lectures analyzing and fighting far-right ideologies. Miller-Idriss uses the example of Syracuse University that found itself dragged in a wave of hate incidents, a total of sixteen incidents over two weeks, including racist graffiti and epithets against African Americans, Asians and Native Americans. This led the university administration to suspend classes due to rising student protests and sit-ins, calling for firmer responses.

In April 2019, a white-supremacist group broke into a bookstore in Washington, cheering, "This is our land", disrupting a class that was about to be held there on far-right extremism. Their megaphone outcries caused disorder and chaos. A video of the incident went viral on different social media platforms. Another incident was the arson attack that destroyed a building at the iconic Highlander Education and Research Center in Tennessee,



which houses decades of archives on the civil rights movement, and continuously hosts educational sessions on important leaders like Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., Eleanor Roosevelt, and Rosa Parks.

Far-right extremist groups explicitly accuse higher education institutes of conspiracy and embracing cultural Marxism to destroy state institutions. Intellectually, the far right portrays universities as bastions of liberal brainwashing, where leftist professors churn out generations of students opposing capitalism and critical of the West. The far right uses the phrase “cultural Marxism” to infer how the left utilizes feminism, gender binary, multiculturalism, Muslim immigration, and gay rights to undermine the West, capitalism and Christian values as part of a larger conspiracy on behalf of communists.

### Weaponizing the Internet

Experts warn parents and teachers of the risks of the vulnerability of youth to extremism and recruitment, taking their mainstream virtual presence into account. In fact, exposure to extremism no longer requires a physical destination. Its virtual spaces beam right into our homes, schools, institutes, clubs, and all social communities. They draw young people and teenagers, particularly via chatrooms and online games. Like all other segments of society, the far right communicate via social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, and Tumblr blogs that are dedicated to far-right products and brand communities.

Far-right influencers proved capable of utilizing and collaborating on YouTube and other interactive platforms. These websites and channels have not only become of great strategic benefit to them regarding youth recruitment to extremism, but also for mobilization and motivation in relevant issues. In 2018 for instance, after the murder of a German over a dispute that happened on a public street, and the arrest of two Syrian and Iraqi refugees for the murder, six thousand protestors took to the streets overnight protesting against the “criminal immigrants” upon their mobilization across social media.

On the bright side, with the amplified hate and racist speech, vile rhetoric, dehumanizing language, and threats against individuals and their families across major online platforms, global tech companies started to revise their terms of service and ban users who violated them. Spotify and Apple removed white-supremacist hate music from their platforms.

### Inoculating against Hate

The author praised the efforts and influence of the Department of Education on the prevention of extremism. She pointed out that comprehensive curricula are usually meant to help citizens seamlessly move across different

future work environments, and help refugee children fit perfectly in their new countries. Thus, Miller-Idriss believes that fostering the sense of belonging of every individual towards their country, and acknowledging how far we are from achieving that goal requires a hard look at a number of assumptions in any given society.

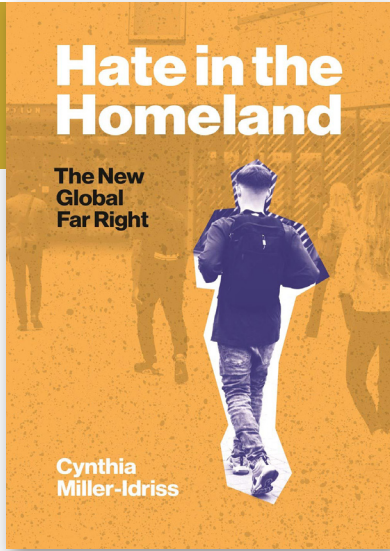
It is crucial to understand the extreme and violent reality of extremist movements, yet it also requires developing a better understanding of the how, why, and where of the early growth of extremist views. Many of the far-right youth, possibly a majority, engaged in extremist acts after their gradual and escalating participation in far-right scenes. To prevent this, we must develop a more comprehensive understanding of the far-right youth, beyond members of official terror cells or extremist movements that are at the very heart of violent white supremacy. Extremism pathways start at the margins. It might be easy to find spaces where young people are exposed to far-right messages by highlighting extremism inflows and outflows amid initial and occasional engagements, with racist stories and white-supremacist propaganda.

The author noted how we really need better understandings of youth polarization and recruitment, how they are mobilized from the peripheries of far-right movements to their very heart, especially via engagements over mainstream physical and virtual spaces. Also creating such mainstream spaces requires getting past the trend of examining extremist physical and virtual spaces separately. We rather need to look closely at the how of creating extremist spaces, both online and offline, and how this all results in the formation of the far-right identity to be an influential and fundamental force.

### Conclusion

Miller-Idriss concludes the book by suggesting some solutions to reduce the risk of the far right. She believes that preventive work can be critical to long-term reduction of white-supremacist and far-right violence. Local, federal, and global actors can also take more immediate steps to hinder the rise of far-right extremist violence. Local engagement with law enforcement groups, involving teachers, parents, social workers, and mental-health experts can start with education to develop awareness of far-right groups.

We can also raise awareness of the kinds of symbols and codes used to communicate and the social-media channels and platforms used to recruit and radicalize. Finally, we need improved channels for collaboration, and means for experts and the federal government to work with governors, mayors, and local law enforcement officials.



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