

The Nation's Bundle of Pride – Examining Intersections of the Pro-life Movement and White Nationalism in Trump's Contemporary USA

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Introduction

Since the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States of America in 2016, a revival of white nationalist sentiments has emerged. His infamous campaign slogan “Make America Great Again” alludes to a return to a nostalgic national fantasy defined by a vision of white patriarchal supremacy. This call for a return to tradition and conservative values is underpinned by a highly racialised conception of reproductive politics. Behind the justification of the protection of foetal life, the pro-life movement under Trump's presidency has consistently centered on defending traditional gender roles and Christian family values. This links the pro-life movement to a greater call for the preservation of the white hetero-family within the nation. This research examines this intersection between the pro-life movement under Trump and inflections of white nationalism, in order to answer the question: What is the link between the pro-life movement and white nationalism in Trump's contemporary America?

Methodology

Using a thematic analysis, this research examines various news articles, press releases and public statements from pro-life organisations, as well as political speeches on the topic of the pro-life movement in the USA.

Key Themes and Findings

Pro-life as pro-woman and pro-motherhood

- Central to this narrative is the notion that abortion necessarily harms women, both physically and mentally. Under this argument, abortion is presented as inextricably linked to harmful practices, including sex trafficking, pornography, eating disorders, suicide, as well as drug and alcohol abuse. By extension of this argument, the “women's safety” narrative not only serves to protect women, but also motherhood as a whole

Pro-life as the preservation of the nuclear family

- The pro-life movement represents a call for a return to the traditional nuclear family and the gender roles that accompany this. As such, the pro-life movement echoes an implicit fear over the displacement of the patriarchal family and the institution of marriage.

Pro-life as the preservation of American heritage

- The pro-life movement seeks to reinstate and preserve America's perceived Christian (and implicitly white) heritage and protect American Christians from the threats of secularism.

Pro-life as the prevention of economic displacement

- The pro-life movement seeks to prevent economic displacement. It therefore becomes a reaction to the fear of economic decline faced by white Americans.

Abortion as genocide

- The final and perhaps most surprising theme revealed from this analysis links abortion and genocide against women of colour specifically. Here, parallels are drawn between the practice of abortion and human rights abuses that have no place in a civilised democracy. Paradoxically, the debate over abortion becomes framed as a fight to protect civil rights, while at the same time casting women of colour as threats to the nation's dedication to human rights and equality.