White Nationalism and White Supremacy

Over many decades the terms “White Supremacy” and “White Nationalism” have been defined in a variety of ways by different authors. Biologists reject the popular concept of ‘race.’ The perception of biological racial differences, however, plays a central role in historic and current power relationships in our nation.

The term ‘White Supremacy’ is often used by scholars and activists to describe a constellation of racist ideologies and practices. There is no consensus on the use of different terms by scholars and activists who study racist and right-wing politics. For this edited collection we offer following as a guide.

* White Nationalism claims that the essence of the United States as a nation is carried exclusively in the social, cultural, economic, and political practices of early European settlers.
* White Superiority is the specious idea that White people are a uniquely talented ‘race.’
* 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 privileges or harbor a dislike of people from other races.
* Organized White Supremacist Groups are social and political organizations with the goal of ensuring White people exercise power over people of color. These may work through legal means inside of the democratic system as it exists now to maintain or increase the ‘White supremacist system’; advocate forming an all-White state; or seek to exterminate or expel people of color. These groups almost always rely on antisemitic conspiracy theories for a theoretical core, and often display intense misogyny.

A lively debate on terminology resulted in a series of definitions used by progressive researcher and activists in the United States. Thanks to Scot Nakagawa, Loretta Ross, and Ruby Sales for their thoughts which led to a collection of definitions collected at Figshare and here on this glossary