

The Traditionalist International: How Perennial Philosophy Became the Ideological Engine of Global Authoritarian Convergence

Abstract

This white paper examines the ideological foundation underlying the rise of global authoritarian movements, particularly in the context of the increasing convergence between diverse authoritarian leaders and political movements. The analysis identifies a common ideological thread rooted in Traditionalist philosophy, particularly the works of René Guénon and Julius Evola, that transcends cultural, national, and religious boundaries. From Steve Bannon's "civilizational clash" rhetoric to Vladimir Putin's Orthodox nationalism, Xi Jinping's Confucian socialism, Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalism, and Erdoğan's Islamic conservatism, these movements share a consistent intellectual framework. The paper argues that Traditionalist philosophy functions not merely as a backdrop but as a critical ideological engine for global authoritarian convergence. This convergence operates as an intellectual ecosystem that legitimizes authoritarian political structures while preserving local cultural and religious identities.

Introduction: The Hidden Ideological Infrastructure

The rise of authoritarianism in the 21st century is often attributed to economic inequality, technological disruption, or nationalist backlash against globalization. However, these factors fail to account for the ideological coherence that has emerged across disparate authoritarian movements. Leaders such as Steve Bannon, Vladimir Putin, Narendra Modi, Xi Jinping, and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan—despite operating within vastly different cultural and political environments—have converged around a shared intellectual framework rooted in Traditionalism. This convergence, while not a formal conspiracy, has created a Traditionalist International, a transnational intellectual and political network uniting these movements under the banner of Perennial Philosophy.

Part I: The Traditionalist Foundation

The Perennial Philosophy Framework

At the core of Traditionalist philosophy is the belief that all authentic spiritual traditions share a common metaphysical foundation that transcends time and culture. Traditionalism posits that the Sacred is the central organizing principle of reality, and that modernity—especially liberal democracy—represents a spiritual and metaphysical decline. Key principles include sacred hierarchy, traditional authority, rejection of modernity, and the belief in civilizational decline and restoration.

The Anti-Modern Synthesis

Traditionalist philosophy offers an anti-modern synthesis that resonates with authoritarian leaders seeking to reject liberal democratic values. It provides a metaphysical basis for authoritarian governance as a return to spiritual order, not mere political regression.

Part II: The Bannon Network - Traditionalism as Political Strategy

From Metaphysics to Politics

Steve Bannon's political career demonstrates how Traditionalist philosophy can be translated into political strategy. His civilizational rhetoric and alliances with figures like Aleksandr Dugin show how metaphysical narratives are weaponized for geopolitical purposes.

The International Network

Bannon's network connects populist-nationalist movements across continents, promoting Traditionalist values under the guise of religious and cultural revival. He uses institutions and media platforms to extend this influence globally.

Part III: The Leo Network - Reshaping American Institutions

The Architect of Judicial Conquest

Leonard Leo's strategic influence on the U.S. judiciary through the Federalist Society reflects Traditionalist emphasis on hierarchy and sacred law. His role in shaping Supreme Court nominations has shifted American legal foundations.

The Dark Money Machine: Fueling the Revolution

Leo's funding network empowers long-term political and cultural influence. The \$1.6B Marble Freedom Trust and other dark-money vehicles provide ideological infrastructure for conservative Christian nationalism.

Part IV: The Putin Model - Orthodox Traditionalism as State Philosophy

Russian Orthodox Traditionalism

Putin's governance is rooted in Orthodox metaphysics, reviving the Byzantine concept of church-state unity. Russia is framed as a protector of sacred civilization against Western secularism.

The Dugin Influence

Aleksandr Dugin synthesizes Traditionalist thought into Russian geopolitical strategy. His Fourth Political Theory rejects liberalism and seeks to unite Eurasian civilizations against Western ideological dominance.

Conclusion: The Perennial Resurgence of Authoritarianism

This paper identifies Traditionalist philosophy as the ideological backbone of global authoritarian convergence. Whether liberal democracy can respond effectively to this spiritually framed challenge remains uncertain.

Key Recommendations for Further Study

- The Role of Religious Institutions in supporting or resisting the spread of Traditionalist ideas.

- Comparative Analysis of Traditionalist movements in non-Western contexts (e.g., China, India, Russia).
- The Impact of Traditionalism on Human Rights and international law, especially in relation to gender, sexuality, and individual freedoms.