

DONALD TRUMP: WHITE HOT THREAT TO AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

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ABSTRACT

The 2016 American election altered the political landscape, with the consequences significantly encroaching on the human rights of American marginal populations. This paper examines the role of predatory identity and the disintegration of media in the election of Donald Trump as the 45th president and its subsequent impact on the American political landscape. By considering concepts such as predatory identity, The Daily Me during the current cultural-political moment within the context of the American constitution, this essay seeks to address the potential consequences of Donald Trump's election to American democracy.

INTRODUCTION

The 2016 American election altered the political landscape, with the consequences significantly encroaching on the human rights of American marginal populations. Since 2016, we have had time to reflect on what forces mobilized to allow a radical shift in paradigm to occur, and how these forces are still at large and continuing to grow. One of the most prevalent and threatening forces is the overt demonstration of white nationalism. This imminent threat to American Democracy has transformed from a subtle but influential social ideology to an unconcealed form of mainstream politics. Trump's race-based ideologies and his attempt to explicitly ground these ideologies as valid political positions have changed the trajectory of American politics. There is no single cause for Trump's election; pointing fingers is futile, rather it is more useful to understand how one particular aspect of his rise to power impacts society at large. My focus is to demonstrate that Trump ran as a Republican candidate whose ideological platform does not match the manner in which a traditional conservative American would identify, thus creating a slippery slope that opened a gate into mainstream radical right politics. The abject in this phenomenon lies within the consequences of Conservative voters who find themselves aligning with much more radical views, disrupting their moral positions.

The first section of this essay demonstrates, through the analysis of Donald Trump's election, how white nationalism gained a more overtly legitimate political presence. I would like to disclaim that Trump is not the first White Nationalist president. A brief historical review, for example, shows ethnocentric values in legislation and personal beliefs: Lincoln's well known acquiesce signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, Thomas Jefferson's and George Washington's participation in slavery and Andrew Jackson's forceful removal of Indigenous people through the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Systemic racism has long been part of the American foundation, and it is important to postulate how a blatant form of discriminatory politics in the 21st century will affect the future of the American political stage. An analysis of tweets, addresses, and the commentary from white nationalists will be used to demonstrate Trump's embodiment of an emerging radical figure with explicit white nationalist themes.

Can we say that Trump's election is a symbiotic relationship of heightened white supremacy and the mobilization of its ideologies into politics? Is Trump the abject embodiment of Akhil Gupta's notion of predatory identity forming into predatory politics? If so, what are the consequences of this form of predatory ideology? Within this essay, predatory is referred to as the abject cultural narrative of a distinct divide between who constitutes as Americans and who is produced as the "others" within the American political imagination (Anderson 2006; Appadurai 2006). Such a division between people creates the scapegoats whose identity is subjected to carry the failings of a nation. This discriminatory behaviour is expected to result in xenophobia, racism and possibly genocide (Appadurai 2006).

The second section of this essay will layout the potential consequences of a white supremacist-oriented American government. While there are numerous imaginable consequences on social, economic, and global scales, this essay will examine the Trump presidency's threat to American democracy. Using Cass R. Sunstein's concept of "The Daily Me" to provide insight into how modern American white nationalists influenced American politics, I will examine how the Alt-Right's heavy online presence breeds extremist values. To understand how the Alt-Right recruits individuals and the inner workings of their online dialogue is beyond the scope of this paper and has been detailed elsewhere (see; Patrick Hermansson's opinion piece in the New York Times on spending a year undercover with the Alt-Right). To highlight the consequences of the disintegration of media coverage on American politics, Bruce Ackerman's *We the People* demonstrates the traditional workings of American populist democracy and why Trump may undermine the longstanding process of dualist populist democracy. This section seeks to answer if we can maintain our confidence that populist democracy will continue to be the dominant political framework. Are we seeing a breaking point for the first time in American history? If so, what is the cause? Thus, I argue that the election of Donald Trump has altered the political landscape and has shifted the trajectory of American politics towards an explicit form of white nationalist politics.

WHAT GAVE WAY? TRUMP'S COURTSHIP WITH WHITE NATIONALISM

It is no secret that Trump's flirtation with white nationalism had grown into a full-blown courtship since the beginning of his campaign announcement. It has been said that Trump's racist attacks fanned the flames of rising white nationalism (Klein 2017:68). Still, it is important to work through his explicit efforts at engaging with white nationalists to claim how Trump is a manifestation of their beliefs.

In an interview with Richard Spencer, leader of the National Policy Institute and a self-described white nationalist, he describes Trump's affiliation with extreme nationhood. Spencer states that Trump's starting point is nationalism, not the typical freedom and liberty commentary of traditional conservatives (Letson 2016). Spencer does not mean a multicultural all-inclusive form of nationalism, where there is a promotion of citizenship based on one's passport, but rather one with increased borders and malignant scapegoating and division based on race. It is not profound to state Trump's main targets are black Americans, Muslims, and Mexicans; he paints them as threats to American society. Thus, it is fitting to begin this discussion with Arjun Appadurai's notion of "predatory identities" to refer to "those identities whose social construction and mobilization require the extinction of other, proximate social categories, defined as threats to the very existence of some group, defined as a we" (Appadurai 2006:51). Appadurai mentions how leading up to the second world war, "German-ness" became measured by ethno-racial terms and the desire to preserve "purity"; German identity required the elimination of the "other" (Appadurai 2006:56). This concept will be explored later in greater detail. To begin, this concept is echoed by Trump's campaign slogan "Make America Great Again." The fixation on the nation, the presumption that there is something currently bad, and the phrase "again" suggests a return to a time that Trump considers previously great can be viewed as an accelerant in the use of scapegoats as individuals who disturb what he considers the natural order.

The use of minorities as the other is an essential cog in the nationalistic machine. Minorities do not come preformed, they are productions of the state, and they are reminders of failed nationhood (Appadurai

2006:42). Encompassed by the boundaries of political humanity, minorities represent an incomplete and contradicting depiction of self-perception by the state. Trump delivers this message through his anti-immigration comments. Trump's nationalism was present at the inception of his well-known campaign announcement, where he declared Mexicans as rapists, drug addicts, and criminals (New York Times 2015). He went on to declare his intention to build a physical wall between Mexico and America, setting the foundation for his strongly bordered and nationalistic rhetoric. From this, Trump pushed to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). This, coupled with Immigrations and Customs Forces' (ICE) increased arrests of immigrants (with no increase in deportations), can be viewed as a tactic to induce fear into minorities and preform for his nationalistic agenda (Bendix 2017). His use of fear to mobilize his agenda and create a strong presence of "us versus them" was demonstrated again when Trump tweeted a series of blatantly Islamophobic tweets in response to the van incident in Manhattan. In a series of 10 tweets, Donald Trump called the aggressor a terrorist four times, referenced ISIS and bombastically called for the death penalty as well as sending him to Guantanamo Bay detention camp (Donald J. Trump [realDonaldTrump]. 2017, Nov 02). Trump proceeded to critique the Diversity Visa Lottery Program, which is the Visa program the individual entered the country. Shortly after the incident, he called for the termination of the program and proposed a new program based on security and merit. Trump's swift attempt to paint the aforementioned program as a large threat to American society and subsequent mobilization into anti-immigrant policy reformation is indicative of predatory identity creeping into American politics.

Trump's anti-immigration beliefs are clear; however, he goes beyond nationalistic borders and attacks black Americans. Trump's goal is to cast off American ethnic minorities as scapegoats for the country's political and economic failings. This was displayed in the media's reaction to the Charlottesville protest due to Trump's refusal to condemn white supremacists. The line that was most shocking was Trump's assertion that there was violence enacted on both sides. However, after Heather Heyer died because a man who identified with the Unite the Right rally drove his vehicle into a crowd of counter-protestors, it was made clear that the violence was not of equal

proportion. When asked if this specific act was considered terrorism, Trump avoided the question. The official transcript reads:

Well, I think the driver of the car is a disgrace to himself, his family and his country. And that is—you can call it terrorism. You can call it murder. You can call it whatever you want. I would just call it as the fastest one to come up with a good verdict. That's what I'd call it. Because there is a question. Is it murder? Is it terrorism? And then you get into legal semantics. The driver of the car is a murderer. And what he did was a horrible, horrible, inexcusable thing. (Donald Trump's Charlottesville remarks, retrieved from www.latimes.com/politics/la-na-pol-trump-charlottesville-transcript-2017-0815-story.html)

By initially questioning the epistemology of how we allocate certain phrases onto violent acts, a brief aside into legal semantics, and finally bestowing the term “murderer,” harshly contrasts the address Trump gave later in November 2017 regarding the Manhattan incident. This speech also included the infamous line “there were very fine people on both sides,” demonstrating Trump's refusal to wholeheartedly condemn the actions of the white supremacists, and validate the intent of the counter-protestors.

Finally, in an almost Kafkaesque display of Trump's emboldened racism, “The Onion,” a satirical and hyperbolic news organization, published a story on November 30th, 2017 entitled “Trump retweets video from anti-Muslim hate group” (The Onion 2017). The Onion broke its own fourth wall with this headline because it followed days after Trump actually did retweet three videos from a known British Far Right group. The videos depict a Muslim man breaking a statue of Mary, as if to say, “to hell with the separation of church and state” (Landers and Masters 2017). Donald Trump's use of propaganda to stir brewing hostility further cements his attempts to legitimize anti-Muslim sentiments amongst the general population.

HOW DOES HATE BECOME POLITICAL?

Laid out in the preceding section is Trump's attempts in recent years to serve white nationalists, along with their endorsement of his overtly

racist ideology. One must consider how the American population became so receptive to such dialogue. To start, I will begin by examining the preceding president, Barack Obama's legacy in relation to racial acceptance. In an essay entitled *The First White President* by Te-Nehisi Coates (2017), the author presents a possible explanation for how to embolden racism succeeded the first black president. Coates argues Trump is the first white president, meaning his entire political existence hinges on the existence of a black president (Coates 2017). Long before his candidacy announcement, Trump questioned Obama's country of birth, demanding him to release his birth certificate. Further verbal attacks included the accusation that Obama did not write his own memoir, and it was ghostwritten by a white man, undermining the intellectual feats on what can only be based on the colour of his skin (Coates 2017). This concept of finding a shift in power relations personally insulting was made visible by Trump's clear demonstration of insecurity through his commentary and insistent need to explicitly state how his administration is running better than Obama's. One can view this as an attempt to reverse the current shifts in culture and power America is experiencing, if only on vague terms expressed through tweets. However, this attempt surpasses the socio-political imagination, and grounds the insecurities felt by the general white nationalist population, thus reinforcing the fear of losing the privileges and powers that come with being the majority. In this shared insecurity, white supremacists see themselves in Trump. This rhetoric seems to have triggered anxiety amongst white Americans about the future of their country.

White Supremacists have long existed in American society, but during Trump's campaign, they mobilized themselves into a more visible identity whose ideologies are being legitimized in mainstream politics. Amenta, Caren, Chiarello, and Su (2010) define political, social movements as actors and organizations seeking to alter power deficits and to effect social transformations through the state by mobilizing regular citizens for sustained political action (288). The authors go on to state that it is important to address facts that the movements are not always attempting to create new policies, but rather sometimes are fighting to alter or replace entrenched unfavourable policies or defend favourable ones. In this case, the political impact of an emerging white-supremacist party is to not only defend systemic racism but unapologetically thrust a radical version of it into mainstream politics

(Amenta et al. 2010). While there have been various white nationalistic groups such as Aryan Nation and the KKK, an online subculture on 4chan and 8chan gave rise to the sharing of extremist ideas in a more convenient way than ever before. This has allowed for the flourishing of overt Far Right media such as Breitbart, a news source that seeks to validate and spread the perspectives of the Far Right. Trump's most explicit display of alliance with the Far Right was hiring Breitbart's executive chairman, Steve Bannon, as the White House Chief Strategist. This is indicative of an emerging network for people with shared nationalistic interests to congregate under one political representative: Trump. The basis of the Far Right, as defined by a group of American scholars, is the perception that one's "way of life" or national liberty is under threat from various ethnic or religious groups, creating the need for preparation for an attack from this imminent threat (Perry and Scrivens 2016). Trump's exploitation of these fears fed an increased desire for solidarity among the majority, as demonstrated in 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, where protestors chanted "you will not replace us" (Sanchez and Mills 2017).

Praise from well-known white nationalists and leaders of hate groups who endorse Trump further demonstrate how white nationalistic ideology gained mainstream political attention and value. Trump embodies hope for a white nationalist ethnostate. Media Matters for America, an organization dedicated to debunking news myths, gathered commentary from various white nationalists who found inspiration for the normalization of racist ethos in Trump's candidacy. David Duke, former Grand Wizard of the Klu Klux Klan stated that "voting against Donald Trump is really treason to your heritage" (Hananoki 2016). The calls for preservation of one's heritage is situated in the insecurity white nationalists are facing in a globalized world. Richard Spencer, whose high regard for Trump and distaste for a white minority is detailed below, said, "Trump thinks like me... do you think it's a coincidence that everybody like me loves Trump and supports him?" (Hananoki 2016). The strong ties between Trump's political ideology and the self-identifying white supremacist population demonstrate the intense symbiotic relationship between the elite lawmakers, policy influencers, and the common citizen. This established relationship is a fluctuating performance consisting of the growing flames of hostility towards ethnic minorities, which enabled Trump's rise to power, and how his newfound authority will further

the divide between what he considers Americans and what he “others.” In response, far-right white supremacists will continue to implement their ideology on a grassroots level under the pretence that their beliefs are validated in seeing one of their own occupying the most powerful office in the world.

In an interview with Richard Spencer, whose think tank is actively attempting to lay down the foundation for a white ethnostate, he claims that America is built on European influence, and says this paradigm is currently shifting. His acknowledgement of changing times makes it appropriate to use Arjun Appadurai’s concept of predatory identity to explain the increased mobilization and subsequent election of a radical white nationalist president. Predatory identity is born out of the notion that when majorities become insecure, they mobilize by the masses to protect the rights and privileges that come with being the majority (Appadurai 2006:104). This is evident in Spencer’s expressed fear of an eclipse of the white majority in America. Spencer declared that by 2042 white people could become a minority because the majority of births right now are by non-white people. Predatory identities are almost always the majority, and social uncertainty leads to a stronger sense of nationalistic ethos. This apprehension of shifting norms manifests in culturally motivated forms of violence, rooted in the attempts to rid society of “the other.” Trump has exploited this fear amongst the American people through his increased border and scapegoat rhetoric. Trump’s election should be understood as a “ferocious backlash against the rising power of overlapping social and political movements demanding a more just and safer world” (Klein 2017:22). Stuart Kaufman (2006) details how predatory identity manifests itself into predatory politics, and this has been demonstrated in Serbia and India (see: Lisa Kissopolous 2008). While this concerns itself with examples of grand displays of ethnic violence, it fits for America when considering Rob Nixon’s concept of slow violence (2011). Slow violence was conceived under the environmental crisis as a form of violence that is incremental but one with consequences that are still profoundly impactful. Extending this concept beyond environmental degradation in areas of economic insecurity, it makes itself evident in other subtle forms of state inflicted violence. This manifests as an increasingly militarized police force and regular accounts of police brutality against minorities; the prison industrial complex as outlined by Michelle Cornell in *The New Jim Crow*

(2012); and the Flint water crisis, a town made up predominantly of visible minorities and low-income Americans.

Kissopolous states, “instead of focusing on economic or political problems, leaders in my case studies try to keep the public’s attention on the potential threat posed by a minority community and on evocative appeals to majoritarian view of history” (Kissopolous 2008, 5). In the context of the Donald Trump campaign, he combined both the white nationalistic perspective of America as a predominantly white nation with the economic insecurity of jobs, using Mexican immigrants as scapegoats for a precarious job market. With a string of tweets such as the anti-immigrant commentary mentioned above, Trump tickled an already hostile environment. He exploited insecurity in an attempt to manipulate the majority into victimization, thus manipulating democracy itself (Kissopolous 2008:5). This tactic of elite manipulation serves to implement racist ideology into legislative policy, restricting the freedom and liberties of American citizens of colour. To sufficiently demonstrate that the American people are currently being manipulated by the elite and later by an increase of secularized media, I will detail how misinformation breeds extremism, which is then exploited in this context to create a division based on race.

THE PERSONAL CURATION OF MEDIA AND THE DISINTEGRATION OF DEMOCRACY

The presence of predatory identity of white nationalism and in relation to Donald Trump has been demonstrated through Trump’s engagement with white nationalists through his shameless promotion of shared values, and their receptiveness to his ideology. How does the presence of emboldened racism alter the trajectory of the American political landscape? As Diane Stone states in the introduction of her book, *Capturing the Political Imagination: Think Tanks and the Policy Process* (1996: 1), “ideas matter.” So, how do these ideas become so prevalent in American thought that they take the form of the predatory identity mentioned above? A potential answer lies in our ability to tailor the information we receive to reflect our own beliefs, creating a heightened sense of trust in what may actually be misinformation. To understand how this practice threatens democracy,

we must understand how the American Constitution allows for such processes to occur.

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY AS WE KNOW IT

Bruce Ackerman's canonical work *We the People* details how modern American democracy functions at its best, and predicts potential threats. While this paper does not concern itself with what is best for democracy or the American government, it is important to analyze how the current workings of democracy are subject to change with the increased presence of predatory ideology. Simply put, Ackerman suggests that populist democracy will prevail during a time of political crisis. This was evident in Lincoln's signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, where pressure from the populists intervened with the constitutional arrangement enslavement of black Americans. This was preformed again with Franklin D. Roosevelt's signing of The New Deal, which set a precedent for constitutional reform without going through Article Five of the Constitution.

A brief discussion of the history of Roosevelt's navigation around the Fifth Amendment is necessary to set the stage of understanding how the constitution can be affected by populist interest. The role of Article Five is core to dualist democracy: it maintains the role of the Senate and House in the role of proposing amendments. Two-thirds of both Houses are needed to agree, not just the bare majority of the Senate (Ackerman 1991:54). Further detail of the process is not necessary for this section of the paper; rather, it is of importance to discuss how the president can maneuver around the process. In the case of the New Deal, Roosevelt proposed a series of systems to alleviate the economic depression America was facing. The Supreme Court ruled to overturn Roosevelt's anti-Depression program. Their reasoning was based on the *laissez-faire* economic logic of the time. Through a series of congressional reforms, Roosevelt rejected the traditional form of a constitutional amendment by modifying judicial appointments (Ackerman 1991:51). In this section of his book, Ackerman questions if this precedent is a good thing, but goes on to state that it is possible for future presidents with far more equivocal mandates to abuse this method (Ackerman 1991:52-53). This practice further entrenches elitism into the American government, as predatory identity further solidifies into predatory politics, elites can manipulate the general

population to garner support for their constitutional proposals (Ackerman 1991:54). Though this is not a new tactic in politics, it potentially passes dangerous lines in the context of predatory identity. While Ackerman asserts navigating potential constitutional crises usually renders an improvement to the document, I argue Trump threatens this pattern due to his elitism and exclusive ideology. I suggest this has already started to take place, with Trump's selection of Neil Gorsuch for the Supreme Court, whose conservative religious tone in court aligns with Trump's beliefs.

THE DAILY ME

What led to the infiltration of such an overt form of white nationalistic ideologies into mainstream politics? It seems not too long ago that explicit discrimination against minorities was shunned; after all, World War II was not yet 100 years ago. The technological innovations since then may offer some insight as to how extremism breeds in contemporary society. It is here that I apply Sunstein's concept of *The Daily Me* to explain how predatory identity gained enough momentum to mobilize into predatory politics. Sunstein's theory claims that the recent ability to tailor one's media sources to their personal interest is dangerous not only to society but the very fundamentalism of democracy. So, how does the disintegration of media misinform people? The use of narrowly selected exposure to topics creates a fragmented society, where individuals listen and speak to others who share their views (Sunstein 2007:44). When society becomes fragmented, their views become polarized, which can breed extremism, hatred and even violence (Sunstein, 2007). The Internet is the greatest tool in this; you can select the media provider and further topics from thereon. Filters allow likeminded people to congregate and discuss a single topic (Sunstein 2007:51). What occurs now is a phenomenon called "confirmation of the wisdom of decision." This process often ignores the views of others—except when to hold up and ridicule, and this confirmation breeds confidence, which provides momentum for mobilization.

When people deliberate together, they tend to give a disproportionate amount of weight to "common knowledge" information that they all share in advance and in contrast, they give too little weight to new or foreign information shared by a select number of people (Sunstein

2007:71). By listening to an individual's arguments for the ideas or politicians that they favour will provide a disproportionate amount of bias information. When this occurs in groups, the consequence is further solidifying an individual's original inclination, if not moving it to a more extreme point (Sunstein 2007:64). As it turns out, group polarization increases when individuals think of themselves as a collective identity, forming solidarity. Incidentally, if they think of themselves in such a manner, their views tend to be more extreme (Sunstein 2007:67). Now envision applying these concepts to an online chat group whose focus is heightened political engagement, their ideologies regularly affirmed and built upon by one another, strengthened by the bubble of information they have created. Then, further acknowledged by seeing one of their own in a position of authority. The election of Trump breathed a new life into the validity of white nationalistic views in the general population, and their confidence from increased exposure to one another through rapid and unprecedented avenues of communication.

THE CONSEQUENCES

The idea of a narrowly informed citizen is eerily Orwellian and produces similar consequences. In order for America to remain a functioning democracy, like the Athenian model so highly regarded, individuals must be introduced to a variety of concepts and topics and have the ability to discuss them with fellow citizens, hence the revered notion of freedom of speech in America. This extends beyond personal preference as the basis for political sovereignty is reflecting on an exchange of diverse information. Sunstein insists that a well-functioning democracy includes regular encounters with new and conflicting information. This unanticipated exposure of information—where individuals are introduced to potentially irritating views they have not sought out—prevents forms of fragmentation and, therefore, polarization (Sunstein 2007:6). There is also the need for individuals in a society to share common experiences in order to address social problems in a heterogeneous manner, but with a system that rapidly diminishes the range of experiences available, polarization is bound to occur (Sunstein 2007). Deliberative democracy is based on the public forum, a concept regarding speech regulations based on the first amendment. While it is not necessary to divulge in detail, it is important to understand how The Daily Me may be compromising its

effect. Traditionally, the public forum allows for speakers to express themselves in public parks and on the street (Sunstein 2007:26). This practice seeks to facilitate a wide range of speakers to a heterogeneous audience where societal structures such as class, race and sex are not factors in whom the audience composes. It ensures exposure in everyday life to a wide range of topics. However, since the invention of the Internet, online exposure has become a much more influential mode to spread information. The public forum is deeply tied with the American understanding of freedom and liberty dictated in the constitution as a form of self-government. The idea that every common citizen has the ability to influence politics through free speech is the very basis of American democracy, and when the populist is misinformed, inter-dialectic politics is threatened.

Democracy is already in a fragile current state; we are starting to see a shift depicted in this election by how many Americans did not vote. The New York Times' 2016 election exit polls suggest a turnout rate of just 58.6% (NY Times 2016). The lack of voting may be due to The Daily Me effect, where their media intake did not involve politics; therefore, they were not informed or interested enough to perform their democratic duties. The larger consequence, as Ackerman states, is that "constitutional law may be jolted onto a new course without persuasive institutional evidence that a mobilized majority of the American people endorse the change" (Ackerman 1991:53). Thus, we see that predatory politics can be mobilized by a majority of Americans if they no longer possess the means for a widely informed understanding of society.

CONCLUSION

This paper examines the role of predatory identity and the disintegration of media in the election of Donald Trump as the 45th president and its subsequent impact on the American political landscape. I do not pretend to possess the ability to predict how predatory identity may facilitate a constitutional crisis. Instead, my assertion is two-fold. First, the election of Donald Trump has given rise to predatory politics, born out of an increase in predatory identity in response to shifting power relations and social norms. Second, given the current state of American democracy, the election of Trump

creates a foundation for a constitutional crisis as he embodies harmful extremist values similar to those held by a misinformed populist.

This has been demonstrated first by his blatant nationalistic rhetoric and the condemnation of immigrants posing a threat to American society and values. His fostering of “the other” as a threat to the economy and national security in an already precarious economic situation with the war on terror still at large is a calculated attempt to establish a threat to visible minorities. The call for heightened borders is an example through these exploited circumstances, such as the Manhattan van incident, a bordered wall between Mexico and the United States and the slander of Mexican immigrants. His fixation with traditional American identity as white Americans is only further validated by his condemnation of Black Americans. This started with his questioning of Barack Obama’s origin of birth and intellectual feats, demonstrating insecurity at the shifting societal forces allowing people of colour to hold prestigious authoritative positions. It then continued with his inability to fully condemn the Neo-Nazi’s marching in Charlottesville, where he maintained that the counter-protesters present were on par with the actions of self-identified white supremacists. The overt endorsement of Trump by prominent and nationally recognized white supremacist figureheads is the connection to Trump’s political beliefs. The presence of an insecure collective identity based on the fear of the loss of status to the face of a created and deemed “less deserving other” situates itself well into the concept of predatory identity. The use of this theory and the extension by Kissopolous into predatory politics to maintain the status quo among the majority, describes the current situation in American politics. The application of this phenomenon in the context of the increasing disintegration of media due to the increasingly popular technique of tailoring one’s news to suit their personal interest as an avenue to breed extremism explains how current American democracy is under threat. The election of Trump is a profession of a democratic crisis, where a small, misinformed portion of the populous has gained mainstream political recognition. As demonstrated with Roosevelt’s manipulation of the constitution with the New Deal, the document can be manipulated with enough populist force behind the intended reform. However, in contrast to Ackerman’s supposition that this will benefit the constitution, the confidence gained by the increased channelling of politically incorrect information may actually cause

harm to the foundation on which American liberty stands tall. Thus, the mobilization of white supremacy under Donald Trump has altered the American political landscape and may potentially induce a constitutional crisis.

To supplement the points made above, additional consideration of how the United States is functioning as a nepotistic oligarchy under the Trump administration can further explain how the creation and exploitation of the other for monetary gains is intimately related to the Trump administration. Naomi Klein's analysis of corporate takeover aligns well with understanding how racism and capitalism are inseparable. This line of inquiry can further explain the circumstances that led to predatory identity flourishing under the guise of economic interests for Trump's narrow and racially defined definition of Americans. Trump uses minorities as economic scapegoats, therefore a threat to "real American's" rights and freedoms. Other scholarship on the topic of the corporate takeover of the American government will further demonstrate the fragility of populist democracy in America.

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