

**The Resurgent American Old Right: Trumpism, Middle American Radicals
and the Challenge of the Liberal International Order**



uOttawa

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Submission Date: March 18, 2020

Abstract

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the United States has shaped the global governing system by providing grand bargains built around multilateral institutions that bind liberal democracies, foster economic and political cooperation, and establish a security community to avoid any future global conflicts. The success of the liberal regime was seen in the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, which amounted to the triumph of these liberal policies and institutions. However, thirty years after the collapse of the Soviet regime a new radical conservative movement has been rising within Western democracies challenging the liberal international order. A prominent case study is exemplified with the election of Donald Trump and the advancement of the America First agenda. In this research, three questions will be addressed: (1) determine whether if Trump's anti-liberal discourse is a new or revolutionary critique of the liberal international order, (2) explore the domestic considerations inside the United States that enable the growth of Trumpism and the hostile rhetoric towards liberal internationalism, and (3) explain the implications of Trump's rhetoric towards the liberal international project. This historical research will argue that Trump utilizes a long tradition from the American Old Right by using paleoconservative discourse to confront current order norms, infrastructure, institutions, and political elites. Furthermore, Trump's rise in popularity can be credited to the glaring shortcomings of neoconservatism that help shaped the Republican party following the demise of the American Old Right. This includes the failures in the Washington Consensus, the limitations in implementing interventionist foreign policy, and the handling of America's new demographic changes. The lasting damages of Trump's discourse can be most profound in his targeting of the liberal order foundational guiding principles, such as promoting political liberal governance, economic liberalism, and liberal intergovernmentalism to the global community.

Key Words: Liberal International Order, Old Right, U.S. Paleoconservatism, Trumpism, Neoconservatism, American Radical Right

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Introduction

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the United States became the influential geopolitical power responsible for constructing the new liberal international order. Through its design, the United States shaped the governing global system by providing grand bargains built around multilateral institutions that served to bind liberal democracies, foster cooperation of free markets, monetary relations and trade agreements, and establish a security community to avoid any future global conflicts.¹ The success of the American led order was re-affirmed by the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. According to John Ikenberry, the collapse of the Soviet regime and its proxy states amounted to the triumph of Western democratic institutions and their policies.² Despite this claim, thirty years after the end of the Cold War a new ideological challenge has emerged from radical conservative movements within Western liberal democracies challenging the liberal international project.

The surge in radical conservative movements is a striking contemporary development in the discipline of international affairs. The radical right movements across a variety of countries have recently challenged the prevailing liberal international order norms, institutions, and political elites. As evident in their political messaging, the radical right claim to be the authentic representatives of the nation by upholding and defending national culture, values, ethnicity, and countering foreign interference.³ The implications of this radical conservative rhetoric is not only influential in domestic arenas of developing and revisionist powers but now prominent inside the United States, the core architect of the liberal international order. This was as a result of a

¹ John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars*, (Princeton University Press, 2019): 160.

² *Ibid.*, 215.

³ Fernando López-Alves, Diane E. Johnson, and Diane E. Johnson, "The Rise of Populist Nationalism in Comparative Perspective: Europe and the Americas," *Populist Nationalism in Europe and the Americas*, 7.

transformable change with the election of Donald Trump and the advancement of the America First agenda. The Trump administration's hostile rhetoric towards the current liberal order subverts the foundational guiding principles of the international system, including the advancement of human rights/democracy, free trade and multilateralism.

In this research, three important questions will be addressed in examining America's anti-liberal trend. First, I am interested in assessing whether the challenge that Trump offers is a new and revolutionary American critique of the liberal international order. To determine if the Trump critique is new and revolutionary, this paper will trace the discourse from previous American radical conservative figures and the movements that emboldened them. The second research question that I will investigate is examining the domestic trends inside the United States that allowed the growth of Trumpism and the hostile rhetoric towards the international system. The final research question that I will analyze is examining the implications of Trump's discourse and the lasting damages that pose to the liberal international order.

The scope of this study will examine one faction within the American conservative Old Right that predates the current Trump critique. This research will survey the paleoconservative movement and investigate any commonalities of the current Trump anti-liberal rhetoric inside the United States. Based on observations from scholars, I will spotlight an argument that President Trump utilizes a long historical tradition from the American Old Right by using paleoconservative discourse to challenge the liberal international order norms, infrastructure, and political elites. Moreover, this research will argue that the current domestic considerations inside the United States that fuel the Trump's critique are related to the glaring shortcomings of neoconservatism that help shaped the Republican party following the demise of the American Old Right. This includes the collapse of the Washington Consensus, the failures in implementing

interventionist foreign policy, and the handling of America's new demographic changes. This research will conclude by underscoring Trump's discourse and decision-making having lasting damage towards the liberal international project. This is apparent with the dominant hegemon limiting the effectiveness of the liberal international project by attacking its critical principles of political liberal governance, economic liberalism, and liberal intergovernmentalism.

The Paleoconservative Movement and its Implications Towards Trump Critique

First coined in Paul Gottfried and Thomas Fleming's 1988 book *The Conservative Movement*, paleoconservatism was a term used to designate a diverse group of traditional conservatives who were increasingly dissatisfied with neoconservative influence within the Republican party.⁴ Linking concerns that date back to the American Old Right that opposed FDR's New Deal, paleocons are strong proponents in free markets and decentralization. However, paleoconservatives differ with establishment Republican-neocons on issues, including skepticism towards economic globalization and trade, strong advocates for a non-interventionist foreign policy, and the promotion of anti-immigrant policies.⁵

Political observers in American politics have noticed a close affiliation between Trump's policies and the paleoconservative ideology.⁶ The implications of the Trumpism movement heavily influenced by paleoconservatism has profound consequences towards the liberal international order. Notably, the United States, the architect of the liberal international order, is withdrawing their commitments and support towards the liberal international project. This is

⁴ Jean-Francois Drolet and Michael Williams, "The View from MARS: US Paleoconservatism and Ideological Challenges to the Liberal World Order," *International Journal* 74, no. 1 (2019): 17.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶ Dylan Matthews, "Paleoconservatism, the Movement That Explains Donald Trump, Explained," 2016, <https://www.vox.com/2016/5/6/11592604/donald-trump-paleoconservative-buchanan>; David Greenberg, "An Intellectual History of Trumpism," 2016, <https://politi.co/2OnnsV0>.

apparent in the actions of the current administration limiting the governance of the liberal order by blocking the World Trade Organization (WTO) from appointing new members on a trade dispute panel, withdrawing its seat from the UN Human Rights Council and pulling out of the UN Global Compact on Migration.⁷

The rationale for IR scholars to study the influence of the paleoconservative ideology within the Trumpism movement is vital to understand the growing hostilities towards the current international system. In the past, scholars have often underestimated the impact of paleoconservative scholars and their critique of the post-1945 multilateral arrangements. However, upon careful examination, the paleoconservative intellectuals provide convincing arguments against liberal internationalism that resonates well with contemporary concerns. To defeat this growing ideology, IR scholars must take seriously that the influential paleoconservative rhetoric in Trump's America First agenda has a highly strategic vision and should not be dismissive as "knee-jerks" or "no-nothing responses" to political events.⁸

Methodology

In this research, I will incorporate a variety of sources that will further add an understanding of the Trumpism movement and its opposition to the liberal international order. In particular, this historical research paper will be using three different sources of information to

⁷ Patrick Wintour, "Donald Trump Pulls US out of UN Global Compact on Migration," 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/03/donald-trump-pulls-us-out-of-un-global-compact-on-migration>;

Tom Miles, "U.S. Blocks WTO Judge Reappointment as Dispute Settlement Crisis Looms," 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trade-wto/u-s-blocks-wto-judge-reappointment-as-dispute-settlement-crisis-looms-idUSKCN1LC190>;

Matthew Lee and Josh Lederman, "U.S. Pulls out of UN Human Rights Council, Calls It an Organization 'Not Worthy of Its Name,'" 2018, <https://globalnews.ca/news/4283234/u-s-withdraw-from-un-human-rights-council/>.

⁸ Drolet and Williams, "The View from MARS.", 17.

highlight Trump's damaging paleoconservative rhetoric towards the international system. The first category of data that I will be using is primary sources of paleoconservative figures' books, articles and manifestos, and examining speeches made by President Trump. What I hope to gain is a better understanding of how the paleoconservative ideology and its historic criticism of the liberal international order is influential in the contemporary Trump critique. The second source of information that I will be incorporating in this research is secondary sources. The purpose of using secondary sources from the scholarly field will further contextualize Trump's nuanced approach towards the current rules-based order and better grasp the domestic considerations in American politics. The final source of data that I will be incorporating in this research is opinion polling data. In this paper, I will be using statistical research from the *Pew Research Center* to obtain trends of American sentiments towards international politics and U.S. foreign policy. The justification in choosing the *Pew Research Center* is not only America's most reliable public opinion polling but also *Pew* has data on American attitudes towards the liberal international order. Mainly, what I hope to obtain with this data is to view any partisan differences and the level of trust amongst Americans with regards to the current international system. The significance of these two underlying data quantifies American frustration towards the liberal international order and helps explain the rise of the Trumpism movement in American politics.

The goal of this research project is to examine the intellectual and historical roots of Trumpism and its critique towards the liberal international order. In doing so, this research will be divided into five chapters. In the first chapter of this paper, I will outline the literature review of the paleoconservative ideology and its attacks against the liberal international order. The goal in this section is to explain in detail who were the prominent figures within the paleoconservative movement that challenged the current order, account paleocons thesis concerning the rise of

liberal managerialism (i.e. theories in modernization, mass organization, elite power, and globalization), and discuss the potential political impact of Middle American Radicalism. The second chapter will further build upon the literature review. This section will focus on a brief historical analysis of how paleoconservatives evolved in American political discourse during the twentieth century. This will be followed by the third chapter analyzing the modern historical trends that help facilitate the rise of Trumpism. More importantly, I will address the question as to why Donald Trump was more successful than the previous paleoconservative figures? The fourth chapter explore the lasting implications of Trump's rhetoric and explain why it poses a real challenge to the liberal international order. Specifically, I will investigate the aspects of the liberal international system that have been a target for President Trump. Finally, in the last chapter of this paper, I will explore whether Trump's anti-liberal rhetoric would outlast a Trump presidency.

The Paleoconservative Ideology Against the Liberal International Order

Paleoconservatism is a prominent movement within the American Old Right that draws convincing arguments to challenge the liberal international order. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the paleoconservative ideology and highlight the commonalities with the contemporary Trump critique. In doing so, the chapter first explores the publications of Sam Francis, a foundational figure within the paleoconservative movement that brought forth the critique of the international system. Specifically, Francis' criticism towards liberal managerialism in global politics allowed for the intellectual ammunition to subvert the liberal international project and its agenda. Subsequently, the chapter moves forward to the expansion of liberal managerialism. This is apparent in Anne-Marie Slaughter's analysis of liberal managerial expansionism through executive, legislative, and judicial networking. For paleoconservatives, these connections not only dismantle and replace traditional state institutions but also refurbish the existing structures that reflect liberal managerial and cosmopolitan values. With the growing resentment towards the liberal managerial order that presents a direct threat to state sovereignty prompted domestic agents to seek a change in the current international system. By examining Jean Francois Drolet and Michael Williams' publication, the American example of agents wanting to alter the current order can be seen with the rise of Middle American Radicalism (MARS), a term that was first coined by Sam Francis and was later mobilized by President Trump. This chapter will conclude by building on Drolet and Williams' argument that focuses on Trump's hostile discourse towards the United Nations, The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), World Trade Organization (WTO), and other multilateral arrangements,

all of which POTUS claim to be taking advantage of the United States and undermining American interests.

Sam Francis

Although paleoconservatism is a relatively diverse ideology with numerous influential intellectuals one scholar that help shape the movement by challenging the liberal international order and its institutions was Sam Francis. Largely unknown by mainstream scholars, Francis was a controversial paleoconservative syndicated columnist for the *Washington Times* and a close adviser to Pat Buchanan and other paleoconservative politicians during the 1990's and early 2000's.⁹ Throughout his career, Francis authored several books on the intellectual history of American conservatism and provided a critical analysis of the cultural, socio-economic and political problems towards modernism. Notably, Francis was a revolutionary scholar that impacted several contemporary radical right movements. This is apparent in Francis' 1996 essay, "From Household to Nation" in *Chronicles* magazine highlighted a framework for the Trumpism movement by noting the high number of white "Middle Americans" affected by economic globalization.¹⁰ By observing this trend in American politics, Francis would mobilize a counterrevolutionary force of Middle American radicals whose goal is to have the state to fight for their self-interests rather than the need for other cosmopolitan groups.¹¹ Additionally, a posthumous publication in 2016, *Leviathan and its Enemies* was a powerful manifesto for White

⁹ Drolet and Williams, 18.

¹⁰ Michael Dougherty, "How an Obscure Adviser to Pat Buchanan Predicted the Wild Trump Campaign in 1996," 2016, <https://theweek.com/articles/599577/how-obscure-adviser-pat-buchanan-predicted-wild-trump-campaign-1996>.

¹¹ George Hawley, "Nostalgia as a Political Platform the Paleoconservatives," in *Right-Wing Critics of American Conservatism* (University Press of Kansas, 2016.), 194.

Nationalists and a prominent text for the Alt-Right movement to confront liberal internationalists.¹²

The Critique of the Liberal Managerialism

Within Sam Francis' publication, the paleoconservative scholar was intrigued by elite theory and power politics. Heavily influenced by James Burnham's 1941 book *The Managerial Revolution*, Francis' research explores the organizational revolution that transformed the political life of nineteenth-century industrial societies and noted the expansion of a transnational New Class specialized elites replacing the old bourgeoisie.¹³ Francis highlighted the implications of this transformative period which allowed the technical elites from their new social status position to "(1) encourage the process of organizational enlargement, (2) maintain the enlarged organizational scale, (3) expand the role of mass organizations, and (4) increase reliance on technical skills [in turn] enhance the range of their own skills throughout society".¹⁴ With this perspective, Francis noted by the mid-twentieth century the position of authority within government and corporations possesses a vested interest in the application of expert knowledge to solve social problems. The consequences in applying expert knowledge were seen in the progressive reforms and bureaucratic expansion in both domestic and international arenas, which rewards these new elites and "its professed [liberal] commitment to the interests of others".¹⁵ From the paleoconservative perspective, the promotion of liberal managerialism bent towards ideological universalism and cosmopolitanism created the most threatening aspects of

¹² Drolet and Williams, "The View from MARS," 18.

¹³ Samuel T. Francis, *Leviathan & Its Enemies: Mass Organization and Managerial Power in Twentieth-Century America: Samuel T. Francis*, First edition (Arlington, VA: Washington Summit Publishers, 2016), 12–13.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

¹⁵ Drolet and Williams, "The View from MARS," 20–21.

international politics. As highlighted by Drolet and Williams, the driving force behind the economic and cultural globalization lie not in capitalism nor realpolitik but in the dynamics of liberal managerialism itself. The consequences of increase liberal managerial decision making in international (as well domestic) politics result in redefining the global community in its image. Therefore, bureaucratic and cultural elites are responsible to impose liberal beliefs on to others and denounce those they find offensive or politically incorrect.¹⁶

Liberal Managerial Networks

The expansion of liberal managerialism is most prominent in the globalized networks of technical elites. Anne-Marie Slaughter's *New World Order* calls in attention the presence of globalized liberal managerial networks through several channels including, the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government.¹⁷ Slaughter underscores the significance of these interactions by not only spotlighting the establishment of these relationships but also offering technical advice and professional socialization to other members within the international community.¹⁸ Despite the potential advantages for the globalizing networks, Sam Francis would challenge the reliability of this mass coordination. Specifically, Francis argues that the functional demands of these instruments and the interests of those who control them would outgrow the national interests.¹⁹ According to paleoconservatives, the utilization of global liberal managerial networks further spreads the dismantlement of the traditional state institutions or refurbishes the

¹⁶ Ibid., 21.

¹⁷ Anne-Marie Slaughter, *A New World Order* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2004), 1–3.

¹⁸ Ibid., 4.

¹⁹ Drolet and Williams, "The View from MARS," 22.

existing structures to serve a new cosmopolitan rationale that legitimizes the enhancement of managerial rewards and influence.²⁰

Direct Challenge Towards the Nation-State

The increasing globalization of managerial politics is a major concern for paleoconservatives. In particular, the liberal international order agenda in regulating the relationship between states and their citizens is a direct challenge of the historic dominant theory of the modern nation-state.²¹ Moreover, the promotion of global liberal governance challenges the principles of state sovereignty by using institutions and regulations decided upon by global elites to set their own universal rules of morality.²² As demonstrated in President Trump General Assembly speech at the United Nations in 2018, POTUS stresses the importance of state sovereignty:

“Each of us here today is the emissary of a distinct culture, a rich history, and a people bound together by ties of memory, tradition, and the values that make our homelands like nowhere else on earth. That is why America will always choose independence and cooperation over global governance, control, and domination”.²³

Embracing rhetoric that “the future not belonging to globalists [but] to patriots”²⁴, President Trump would mobilize paleoconservative rhetoric to defend sovereign nation-state against increasing liberal managerial influence from international institutions, NGO’s and elite dominant

²⁰ Ibid., 22.

²¹ Ibid., 23.

²² Ibid., 23.

²³ The White House, “Remarks by President Trump to the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly | New York, NY,” <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-73rd-session-united-nations-general-assembly-new-york-ny/>.

²⁴ The White House, “Remarks by President Trump to the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly | New York, NY,” <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-74th-session-united-nations-general-assembly/>.

networks. Consequently, Trump and other paleoconservative figures would align themselves with U.S. isolationist discourse that opposed what it believes as a concerted effort from the international system to restrict national decision making. This is apparent in President Trump and radical right members targeting the International Criminal Court (ICC), the WTO, and federal judges who rely on decisions from foreign and international tribunals in their rulings of interpreting the American constitution.²⁵

Limitations in Managerialism Liberalism: Fragmented Societies and Alienation

As demonstrated in the previous subsections of this chapter, the paleoconservative analysis on managerial liberalism is a powerful criticism towards the international order. In sum, Drolet and Williams' highlighted two major limitations of the liberal managerialism that undermines the current international system. First, managerial liberalism's hedonistic ethics, relativist values, and implementation of its social practices produce highly fragmented diverse societies. This allows each group to advocate for their self-interests and weakens the state's abilities to enact its promises of collective solidarity and national identity.²⁶ The second limitation that Drolet and Williams addressed is the lack of diversity from liberal managerial elites on those who refuse to implement its ethos and desire to maintain their own identities, nationalist-patriotic solidarities, and non-liberal values.²⁷ The growing crisis of the international order is a direct result in increase alienation of these non-liberal social groups which are further exacerbated in the large-scale intake of migrants and the advancement of economic globalization practices implemented by those liberal managerial elites.²⁸ By understanding the non-liberal

²⁵ Drolet and Williams, "The View from MARS," 23.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

social group's sense of alienation help us conceptualize the agents' willingness to change the current order. In the American context, Sam Francis developed the concept of Middle American Radicalism, which addresses these concerns.

Middle American Radicalism (MARS)

With the growing belief that mainstream conservatives are unable to defeat the liberal managerial order, paleoconservative scholars formulated a response towards the alienation of the current system. Sam Francis portrays Middle America as the primary victim of the liberal international regime. The mobilization of Middle America had profound implications towards the paleoconservative critique towards the current order. Francis argued that the predominantly white and working-class Middle Americans are uncertain about their futures:

“These Americans find that their jobs are insecure, their savings stripped of value, their neighborhoods and schools and homes unsafe, their elected leaders indifferent and often crooked, their moral beliefs and religious professions and social codes under perpetual attack even from their own government, their children taught to despise what they believe, their very identity and heritage as a people threatened, and their future—political, economic, cultural, racial, national, and personal—uncertain. They find that no matter which party or candidate they support, no matter what the candidates and parties promise, nothing substantially changes, except for the worse”.²⁹

With the growing insecurities, paleoconservatives exploited the cultural conservative segment of American society, which had been ignored by mainstream political parties since the beginning of the Cold War. During this period, the “Middle Americans” as Francis described help contributed to the labour that sustains the managerial system by paying taxes to support the system and fighting the wars that establish leaders devise. However, over decades to come the liberal

²⁹ Sam Francis, “Nationalism, Old and New,” in *The Paleoconservatives New Voices of the Old Right*, 1st Edition (New York: Routledge, 1999), 192–193.

managerial regime did not produce results for “real Americans” as the United States becoming more multicultural, the standard of living decreasing and an increase in foreign interventions.³⁰ According to Drolet and Williams, Francis’ observation in American society demonstrates an increasing polarization between the ruling elites that relies on national and international institutions of global governance as its principal means control and prosperity, and a deprive Middle America lacking the technocratic and managerial skills to access economic benefits and political power created by globalization.³¹

Trump and Middle American Radicalism

Utilizing similar paleoconservative objectives, Trump engages in paleoconservative rhetoric to construct a Middle American populist movement that focuses on anger, alienation, and the conditions of decay over the years. Throughout Trump’s rallies and speeches, POTUS would note the multilateral institutions created by those liberal managerial elites (i.e. UN, NATO and WTO) are taking advantage of the United States and undermining American interests.³² In previous speeches made, President Trump has questioned the reliability of the NATO calling it “obsolete”, cited WTO unfair practices towards China, and de-legitimizes UN’s work in the global community. The damaging discourse is not only apparent in intergovernmental organizations responsible for peace and security and the regulation of international trade between

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 193.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 26.

³² United Nations, “US President Trump Rejects Globalism in Speech to UN General Assembly’s Annual Debate,” September 25, 2018, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/09/1020472>;

Ashley Parker, “Donald Trump Says NATO Is ‘Obsolete,’ UN Is ‘Political Game,’” *The New York Times*, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2016/04/02/donald-trump-tells-crowd-hed-be-fine-if-nato-broke-up/>;

Adam Behsudi, “Trump Ramps up Attack against WTO,” 2019, <https://www.politico.com/story/2019/07/26/trump-world-trade-organization-1623192>.

nations, but also in trade negotiations and bilateral arrangements. Notably, within the U.S-China trade negotiations, President Trump called China a nation of “cheaters”, criticize previous administrations for not protecting American workers and launched a trade war on the world’s second-largest economy.³³ A more extreme example in Trump’s rhetoric can also be seen in the comprehensive and close relationship between the United States and Canada. During the negotiations of the USMCA, Trump heavily criticized Canada’s dairy supply management in which on twitter declared that it is “hurting our farmers [and] killing our agriculture”.³⁴ The hardening discourse was most profound in the aftermath of the G7 meeting in Charlevoix with Senior White House economic advisor Peter Navarro’s peculiar attack towards Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau deserving a “special place in hell [...] when engaging bad faith diplomacy with President Donald J. Trump”.³⁵ The implications of this damaging rhetoric to close allies can impact the United States standing in international politics. Not only the hostile rhetoric with close allies can overtime result in a decoupling of long-standing relationships that aided the security and economic prosperity of the United States but also losing the legitimacy of America positioning as the dominant hegemon of the current order.

³³ Jeff Cox, “Trump Says China Cheated America on Trade, but He Blames US Leaders for Letting It Happen,” 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/11/12/trump-says-china-cheated-america-on-trade-but-he-blames-us-leaders-for-letting-it-happen.html>.

³⁴ “Donald J. Trump on Twitter: ‘Prime Minister Trudeau Is Being so Indignant, Bringing up the Relationship That the U.S. and Canada Had over the Many Years and All Sorts of Other Things...but He Doesn’t Bring up the Fact That They Charge Us up to 300% on Dairy — Hurting Our Farmers, Killing Our Agriculture!’ , .

³⁵ Elise Von Scheel, “‘Special Place in Hell’: Trump Advisers Blast Trudeau for Comments at G7 Summit | CBC News,” “Special place in hell”: Trump advisers blast Trudeau for comments at G7 summit, 2018, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/white-house-adviser-kudlow-trump-trudeau-g7-summit-blame-1.4700061>.

The Paleoconservative Movement in the C20th

Although paleoconservatism is a relatively new faction in the American radical right the intellectual roots of this movement have been part of a long progression within American conservatism in the twentieth century. Tracing its intellectual beginnings to the Southern Agrarians, the movement became a reactionary force of progressive change towards the expansionary liberal managerial policies. Following the analysis of the Southern Agrarians, the chapter will examine the implications of a Franklin Delano Roosevelt's (FDR) presidency and his New Deal policies. Noticing the expansionary liberal managerial state going beyond domestic politics and becoming influential in foreign policy, the American Old Right and paleoconservatives have attempted to stop this trend in American politics. In particular, this chapter will explore the lasting legacies of Ohio Senator Robert Taft within the American Old Right and its ultimate demise in the 1952 Republican party primaries. Following his death, the American Old Right/paleoconservatism was pushed out by the neoconservative wing of the Republican party during the period of the Republican Ascendency. This chapter will conclude by investigating the resurgence of the American Old Right in the 1990's and examine the rise and fall of the paleoconservative figure Pat Buchanan.

The Southern Agrarians of the 1930's

The intellectual ethos of the radical paleoconservative ideology emerges from the criticism of the Southern Agrarians during the early twentieth century. The Southern Agrarian project first originated at Vanderbilt University with a group of writers, poets, and novelists publishing *the*

Fugitive magazine in 1925 interested in promoting the revival of Southern literature and poetry.³⁶ Despite the publication advocating for Southern culture, the Southern Agrarian movement opens further discussion concerning the impacts of modernization in the South. In the aftermath of Reconstruction, many “New South” businessmen and urban-based professionals supported Northern centralized industrial development projects to help revitalize the Southern economy.³⁷ The implications of this rapid modernization of the “New South” produced profound cultural and social changes. As noted by Paul V. Murphy, the rapid changes in Southern society from country to urban resulted in destabilization of southern agricultural life and its features, including the age-old symbiotic relationship between the planter and yeoman, the reciprocity and exchange of rural and small-town living and the ritualized trips going to the country seat.³⁸ As a result of losing its distinctive southern traditions and social practices, the Southern Agrarian scholars are becoming increasingly deprived of their cultural ancestry from Northern industrial expansionism.³⁹ With the growing sentiment towards the North, the Southern traditionalist sought to advance a conservative vision that confronts modernity, urbanism, and industrialisation of the new South.

Published in 1930, *I'll Take My Stand* was a prominent intellectual publication for the South Agrarians that presents a critical analysis of the South and the rest of the United States. The book title incorporating lyrics from the popular Southern song “Dixie” conveys a defiant manifesto attacking the northern industrial expansionism, questions the centralization of the state, and the emergence of a consumerist culture.⁴⁰ The implications of the Southern Agrarian publication help shaped the contemporary paleoconservative movement and America’s Old Right. Edward Ashbee,

³⁶ Paul. V. Murphy, “The Rebuke of History: The Southern Agrarians and American Conservative Thought,” 2001, 11–12.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

a historian in American politics, underscores the significant impact of the Southern tradition to the paleoconservative movement by not only providing critical commentary on untrammelled capitalism imposing its decisions from centralized bureaucratic management but also reinforce the attachment to localism.⁴¹ The growing suspicion towards the federal government highlights a broader trend in America Old Right. Specifically, both factions have viewed the expansionist progressive policies closely connected with an intrusive central government as its vehicle. Although the Southern conservatives were skeptical towards the strong federal government since the ratification of the American constitution in 1787 the emergence of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) and the New Deal policies prompted greater urgency amongst a variety of conservative groups, namely laissez-faire conservatives and Democratic Southern Agrarians, to stop the federal administrative state.

Challenging FDR's New Deal and the Expansionary Managerial State

The foundation of the contemporary conservative movement emerges from the right's hostile response towards FDR's progressive New Deal policies. The implications of the 1932 presidential election had profound consequences not only in American history but also in the Old Right coalition. Amid an ongoing economic crisis, both the Republican party nominee Herbert Hoover and Democratic presidential candidate Franklin Delano Roosevelt offered distinctly different approaches to end the Great Depression.⁴² Influenced by his business supporters, Hoover advocated for limited federal government and allocating its responsibility to the states. This is in contrast to FDR's proposal in promoting a stronger executive power and centralized managerial

⁴¹ Edward Ashbee, "Politics of Paleoconservatism," *Society* 37, no. 3 (March 2000): 78–79.

⁴² Elliot A. Rosen, *The Republican Party in the Age of Roosevelt: Sources of Anti-Government Conservatism in the United States* (University of Virginia Press, 2014), 3.

state that is responsible with the authority to implement policies preventing any further downturn of the economy.⁴³ The outcome of the election resulted in FDR winning in a landslide against the Republican incumbent. The election results were a devastating defeat for radical conservative activists who were committed to stopping the expansionary liberal administrative state. Throughout FDR's administration, Roosevelt would advance his progressive agenda by creating new federal programs and agencies that were designed to stimulate the struggling economy, public welfare for struggling workers, and establish financial reforms and regulations.⁴⁴ Although FDR's New Deal was intended to aid the recovery of the American economy its approach to increasing the liberal administrative state would extend beyond its public works programs and become more prominent in other policy areas, including foreign policy. Following the defeat of Hoover, the conservative movement attempted to stop this trend in American politics. One prominent figure within the American Old Right that enter the political landscape to stop the advancement of liberal managerial policies was Ohio Senator Robert Taft.

Ohio Senator Robert Taft: Critic of the Postwar Liberal Internationalism

Robert Taft was a significant figure in the American Old Right following the decisive defeat of Hoover in 1932. The eldest son of William Howard Taft, the 27th President of the United States, Taft rose to prominence in 1938 upsetting incumbent Democrat Robert Bulkley.⁴⁵ The young Ohioan Senator became an influential critic of the Roosevelt administration and a rising figure within the Republican party. Upon entering Congress in January 1939, Taft supported

⁴³ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁵ Clarence Wunderlin, *Robert A. Taft: Ideas Tradition and Party in U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC, 2005), 28.

maintaining the existing neutrality laws that prevented the United States to not become entangled in foreign conflicts.⁴⁶ As demonstrated in his actions between the outbreak of the war in September 1939 and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941, Taft opposed nearly all attempts from the Roosevelt administration to aid countries fighting against Nazi Germany and the axis powers. Even though Taft was supportive of the American war efforts after the Pearl Harbor attack, the Ohio Senator continued to foster a deep resentment of American involvement in the postwar plans in constructing the new world order. Notably, Taft would heavily criticize the various postwar proposals involving international organizations that required U.S. commitment of resources overseas and the loss of American sovereignty to international bodies.⁴⁷ In contrast, Senator Taft offered an alternate vision of a world order that was heavily influenced by WWI conservative internationalists that advocated for American participation in international organizations conditional upon the United States to retain its sovereignty and the right for the United States to use unilateral decisions on matters, including national security and economic diplomacy.⁴⁸ Taft's struggle against multilateral approaches to postwar reconstruction was apparent in his opposition to Bretton Woods, the World Bank, the adoption of the UN Charter, and later the institutionalization of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).⁴⁹

Despite Taft running in four unsuccessful presidential campaigns, it was the 1952 Republican presidential primaries that were the most consequential for the American Old Right. Taft was defeated in a heavily contested primary against former U.S. Army General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Eisenhower's nomination represented the party's liberal eastern establishment and was a crushing defeat for conservative Republicans concentrated in the Mid-West and Southern

⁴⁶ Ibid., 33.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 102.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 102.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 111; 147.

states who supported non-interventionist policies. After Taft's death in 1953, the American Old Right has faded away into the new conservatism movement that helped fuel the Republican Ascendancy (1968-1980). Led by William F. Buckley, Barry Goldwater, Richard Nixon, and later Ronald Reagan the new conservative movement adopted the domestic anti-New Deal conservatism of the Old Right while demanding an aggressive and overly interventionist and anti-communist foreign policies. It would only be after Reagan's neoconservative presidency that the American Old Right began to gain traction in American political discourse. This was apparent with the rise of Pat Buchanan and the emergence of paleoconservative rhetoric within American politics.

Pat Buchanan

Before Donald Trump's entry into politics, a paleoconservative politician Pat Buchanan utilized similar Trumpism rhetoric towards interventionist policies, globalization, and multiculturalism. A former Nixon speechwriter and advisor, Pat Buchanan was an influential figure within the early paleoconservative movement. According to Thomas Fleming, Buchanan was responsible in creating a 'New Fusionism' combining the traditionalist and the anti-globalist wing of the Old Right and mobilizing the movement for calling to "take it back from the occupying army of government officials, managers and interest groups that treat the citizenry like a conquered people".⁵⁰ Disillusion from the Republican party neoconservative tendencies, Buchanan launched an America First challenge to the incumbent President HW Bush in the 1992 presidential primaries, a campaign in which he asserted was a decisive break from "universalist and cosmopolitan ideology that has been masquerading as [conservative values]".⁵¹ Despite obtaining considerable two million votes in the primaries Buchanan lost the nomination

⁵⁰ Thomas Fleming, "The New Fusionism," *Chronicles*, May 1991, 9.

⁵¹ Pat Buchanan, "America First – and Second and Third," *The National Interest*, no. 19 (1990).

creating a deep rift within the Republican Party. Following the divisive primary, Buchanan later sought to mobilize his voter base and Republicans in Congress to challenge the Clinton administration on a variety of issues, including NATO expansion in Eastern Europe, the proliferation of policing operations in Somalia and Bosnia and aggressive campaign for trade protectionism against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Despite Buchannan's efforts, this paleocon leader was unable to advance his radical conservative agenda against the liberal order. Following the second defeat in running for the Republican nomination in 1996 and growing anti-Semitism allegations, Buchannan was further viewed as a fringe candidate and the paleoconservative movement was ostracized from the Republican party. This is apparent in 2000, Buchannan left the Republican party and became the presidential nominee for the Reform Party. Although Buchannan was revolutionary in helping to shape the paleoconservatism it would only take fifteen years later and the failures in neoconservative policies to reach a wider audience amongst conservative voters.

The Legacies of Neoconservative Failures: The Rise of Trumpism

By the third year of the Trump presidency, many scholars and political commentators attempted to explain the rise of the Trump phenomena in American politics. As shown by a variety of opinions from political pundits Donald Trump's rise can be coupled with Hillary Clinton's lack of campaign strategy in the Midwest and the timely events that helped influence the outcome of the 2016 election (i.e. WikiLeaks hack of the DNC and FBI sudden announcement in investigating Clinton's mishandling of classified information). Despite this observation, the cultivation of the Trumpism movement emerged well before the 2016 election cycle. This chapter will analyze the historical developments that helped facilitate the rise of Trumpism and its criticism towards the liberal international order. More importantly, the central guiding question is to explain why Trump was more successful than the other paleoconservative politicians? This chapter will argue that it was in part the glaring neoconservative failures of the past that helped shape the Republican party following the demise of the American Old Right. Specifically, this chapter will investigate three trends that allowed Trump to gain traction in using paleoconservative rhetoric to attack the liberal order. This includes, (1) the failures in the Washington Consensus, (2) the emergence of unilateral interventionist foreign policy, and (3) America's new racial consensus in multicultural leadership. The chapter will conclude by discussing the emergence of the Tea Party that not only cemented the anger towards traditional Republicans but helped to provide a path forwards for Trump's victory in the 2016 election.

The Limitations of Washington Consensus and Neoliberal Policies

The first historical trend that enables Trump to gain an advantage over other paleoconservative politicians was the glaring limitations of the Washington Consensus. First coined by John Williamson, an economist from the *Institute for International Economics*, the Washington Consensus was a set of policy prescriptions that were agreed upon by Washington based institutions and think tanks (i.e. IMF, World Bank and U.S. Treasury Department) for the economic recovery of the financial crisis in Latin America during the 1980's.⁵² By summarizing the sentiments in Washington, Williamson proposed ten policy recommendations; (1) fiscal discipline, (2) reordering public expenditure priorities, (3) tax reform, (4) liberalizing interest rates, (5) competitive exchange rates, (6) trade liberalization, (7) liberalization of inward foreign direct investment, (8) privatization, (9) deregulation, and (10) enforcement of property rights.⁵³ Although the aim of the Washington Consensus was to provide unanimity for economic reform in South American countries, Williamson's concept was embraced by prominent American figures that supported neoliberal and market-based fundamentalist policies.⁵⁴ Amid a period of stagflation in the American economy, the Reagan administration promoted a Reaganomics agenda that advocated for tax reform by lowering federal income and capital gains tax, government deregulation, reduction in government spending/expenditures, and tightening the money supply in order to reduce inflation.⁵⁵ Despite the popularity of the neoliberal/market-

⁵² John Williamson, "A Short History of the Washington Consensus," *Paper Commissioned by Fundación CIDOB for a Conference "From the Washington Consensus towards a New Global Governance," Barcelona, September 24–25, 2004.*, 2004, 3.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵⁵ Emeritus John Komlos, "Reaganomics: A Historical Watershed," CESifo Working Paper Series (CESifo Group Munich, 2018), 3–4.

based policies within all U.S. administrations after Reagan, the Washington Consensus overtime did not produce the results of economic growth for middle class Americans.

At the beginning of the 1970's, the United States had reached its peak of global economic superiority. During America's golden age (1945-1970's), the United States remained unscathed from the devastating destruction of the Second World War while the rest of the world was rebuilding their domestic economies.⁵⁶ Over a period of twenty-five years, the Western European countries and Japan recovered and did so in a manner where they innovated with the latest technologies and labour practices. This is apparent in the automobile industry where Japanese and European (i.e. German) automakers revolutionized their production technologies by replacing workers with machines and decentralizing their operations.⁵⁷ As a result, American companies across a variety of industries had to follow similar models in order to match their competitors.⁵⁸ The implications of a globalized economy have profound political and socio-economic consequences towards the American economy. Not only were growing foreign manufactures beating the once dominate American companies by providing goods with higher quality and lower prices, but overtime it led to automation, outsourcing assembly and supply operations and altering labour laws. The result of this radical change perpetuated the shrinkage of America middle and working classes with lower wages and limited worker benefits (i.e. healthcare).⁵⁹ The rise in American middle-class anxiety (as well, a general trend in Western developed countries) was demonstrated in Bruno Milanovic's book the *Global Inequality: A New Approach for the Age of Globalization*. The aim of Milanovic's work is to examine the dynamics

⁵⁶ John L. Campbell, *American Discontent: The Rise of Donald Trump and Decline of the Golden Age* (Oxford University Press, 2018), 31.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 33-34; Edward Luce, *The Retreat of Western Liberalism* (Grove Press, 2017), 9-10.

of globalization that drives inequality on a global scale. One particular graph (figure 1) that illustrates Milanovic’s argument is showing the percentage gain in real household per capita income between 1988 and 2008 at different points of the global income distribution. The findings in their data have suggested that the real income gains were the greatest in the 50th percentile of the global distribution (middle-class in developing countries, i.e. China and India) and the richest top 1% in developed countries. Milanovic concluded the biggest losers during this period were amongst the people around the 80 percentile, which are the West’s middle-class.⁶⁰

Figure 1: Global Distribution of Income 1988-2008



⁶⁰ Branko Milanovic, *Global Inequality: A New Approach for the Age of Globalization* (Harvard University Press, 2016), 11; Luce, *The Retreat of Western Liberalism*, 1.

The furthering of the dissolution of the American working and middle-class can also be linked to the Republican Party establishment embracement of the neoliberal policies. Ever since the Reagan administration Republican presidents (as well Democratic) have supported economic policies that helped contribute to the acceleration of inequality. When Reagan came into office in 1981, the President signed what at the time was the largest tax cut in U.S. history with benefits disproportionately going to higher-income groups.⁶¹ This would be followed by George W. Bush who pursued similar regressive tax cut for the wealthy during the 2000's. In addition to tax cuts, President George W. Bush would also defund President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty social programs and initiatives (Medicare and Medicaid) further creating more anxiety within the working and middle classes.⁶² Although President Trump would support these Republican traditional policies that benefited the wealthy POTUS would frame his non-establishment rhetoric by ensuring the protection of Mid-West and Middle Americans who were the most impacted by the neoliberal practices. This is apparent in the automobile and manufacturing industry, a major driving force for America golden age and its eventual demise, was heavily concentrated in states including, Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Not surprisingly, the Trump rhetoric was able to tap into the anger amongst disfranchised working-middle-class voters in the Mid-West and Middle America. Throughout the 2016 presidential election, Trump invoked nostalgia from the American golden age by promising to bring back the traditional American manufacturing jobs.⁶³ The implications of Trump's promise to bring back jobs to America shaped his critique towards the liberal international order. In particular, Trump would launch attacks towards multilateral institutions that promoted neoliberal

⁶¹ John L. Campbell, *American Discontent*, 47.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 48.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 52.

principles of free trade. This is apparent in Trump's discourse on NAFTA in which POTUS told to his supporters that he would "entirely renegotiate NAFTA" or "terminate it" because it "has destroyed our country".⁶⁴ Another example of Trump attacking neoliberal institutions is the WTO. Although the WTO main objectives is to regulate trade in goods, services and intellectual property between the participating countries, Trump rallied against the WTO as a "broken" system allowing "the world's richest countries [China] claiming to be a developing country to avoid rules and get special treatment".⁶⁵ The "cheating" rhetoric from President Trump is a powerful political discourse for Middle Americans who have been economically disadvantaged since the end of the Cold War. This is noticeable in a series of tweets in December 2015 in which help explain the rise of popularity and his attraction towards the forgotten middle-class:

"the middle-class has worked so hard, are not getting the kind of jobs that they have long dreamed of—and no effective raise in years. BAD."⁶⁶

By exploiting the failures of neoliberalism, Trump mobilizes an American First agenda that embraced a tougher stance on trade, outsourcing and the promise to increase worker wages. Moreover, Trump would attack the establishment and liberal managerial elites ("costal elites") who have failed in providing the economic prosperity and security for middle-class Americans. Despite Trump using his Washington outsider rhetoric to support the interests of workers POTUS would use this discourse to maneuver politically the protection of the wealthy class, including himself. Most notably, the passage of Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 exemplifies the continuation of similar policies that accelerated the rapid inequality in America.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 54.

⁶⁵ Behsudi, "Trump Ramps up Attack against WTO."

⁶⁶ John L. Campbell, *American Discontent*, 53.

Interventionist foreign policies

The second historical trend that helped to facilitate the rise of Trumpism were the shortcomings of the neoconservative interventionist foreign policy. In the aftermath of the conservative movement's departure from the American Old Right, neoconservative tendencies were influential in American foreign policy. During the Reagan administration, the United States aggressively pursued a policy of countering the Soviet Union. In advancing the Reagan Doctrine, the United States provided aid to anti-communist guerrillas and resistance movements in an effort to roll back the pro-Soviet governments in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.⁶⁷ The consequences of implementing the Reagan Doctrine proved to be successful in advancing American global interests and in ending communism. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, neoconservatives began to plan the new vision for American foreign policy, particularly how the United States would engage in the Unipolar Moment. Notably, Ben Wattenberg, an American neoconservative commentator, argued that the United States should engage internationally and launch a global campaign to wage democracy all around the world.⁶⁸ Additionally, the neoconservative view on foreign policy was further shaped by the conflicts in Somalia and Yugoslavia during the 1990's. The limitations of the American led intervention allowed the neoconservatives to form their worldview on how to conduct U.S. foreign policy. This includes the use of force as a preferred policy option, the black and white moralism as a preferred form of analysis and unilateralism as the preferred mode of execution.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Chester Pach, "The Reagan Doctrine: Principle, Pragmatism, and Policy," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2006): 76.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁶⁹ Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, *America Alone: The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order* (Cambridge University Press, 2005): 74.

The Bush Doctrine was a significant triumph for the neoconservative view of America's role in the world. Despite not campaigning to implement a neoconservative foreign policy during the election of 2000 President George W. Bush surrounded himself with ideological neoconservative figures following the 9/11 attacks.⁷⁰ The Bush Doctrine not only radically shaped American foreign policy but also the liberal international order. This is apparent in the main principles of Bush Doctrine which include advocating the preemption use of force, unilateralism and the endorsement for democratic regime change.⁷¹ The consequences of implementing the Bush Doctrine had profound implications for the liberal international system. Mainly, the neoconservative belligerent nationalist rhetoric in the Iraq war was a precursor of the current hostiles towards multilateral institutions.⁷² Within the neoconservative framework, the Bush administration supported the notion that the United States is the sole superpower in the international system and it seeks to preserve its hegemonic position.⁷³ In their advocacy for American primacy, neoconservatives view the balance of power politics as unnecessary and a hindrance toward achieving American national interests. With the growing concern of reaching an international consensus across a variety of countries neoconservatives felt it is necessary to proceed unilaterally. This was apparent with the Bush administration's decision to invade Iraq in 2003 circumvent opposition from the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). In believing America has the military superiority neoconservatives were confident that the United States could quickly and affordably achieve regime change in Iraq while defying the concerns from the international community. The implications for the United States in going alone in Iraq had a

⁷⁰ Ibid.,

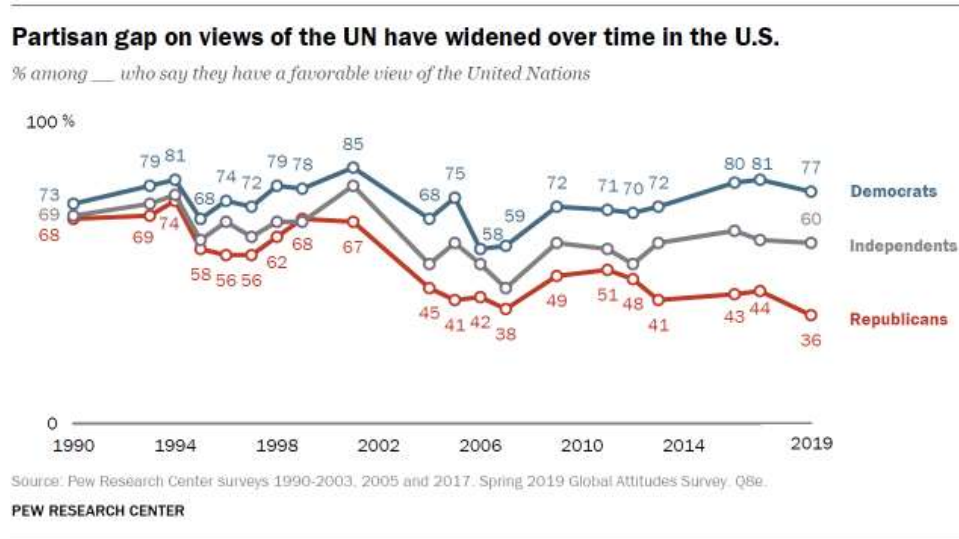
⁷¹ Brian C. Schmidt and Michael C. Williams, "The Bush Doctrine and the Iraq War: Neoconservatives Versus Realists," *Security Studies* 17, no. 2 (May 22, 2008): ,

⁷² Ibid,

⁷³ Ibid.,

profound impact in the American perception of the current order. Notably, public opinion suggested a widening partisan gap concerning the view towards the United Nations. According to *PEW Research*, Republican support of the United Nations in the aftermath of the American invasion of Iraq had dropped from 67% to 45% in favorability towards the multilateral institution. Upon examining in 2019, the self-identified Republicans view of the UN is at its lowest point in almost 30 years with 36% favourability.⁷⁴

Figure 2: U.S. Partisan Views Towards The United Nations (Pew)



In addition to growing mistrust towards multilateral institutions, the neoconservative interventionist foreign policy was further discredited not only by politicians on the left but also on the radical right. Although the aim of Operation Iraqi Freedom was to overthrow the Saddam Hussein regime, disarm Iraq WMD's, and promote liberal democracy the military operation was a disastrous campaign for the United States. The American public would soon learn not only that

⁷⁴ PEW Research and Inquiries, "United Nations Gets Mostly Positive Marks from People around the World," *Pew Research Center* (blog), accessed February 8, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/09/23/united-nations-gets-mostly-positive-marks-from-people-around-the-world/>.

there was not only no WMD's in the country but also the United States was facing a new challenge in dealing with sectarian violence, which resulted in heavy American casualties. The shortcomings in the intervention of Iraq further mobilized the American Old Right in its stance towards non-interventionist foreign policies. As noted by Pat Buchanan, the neoconservative policy in Iraq was a "utopian ideal" and imposing a "democratic imperialism" on other countries.⁷⁵ During the 2016 presidential election, Trump mobilized isolationist rhetoric to further attack his establishment Republican neoconservative opponents to further distinguish himself as a candidate. This was noticeable days before the South Carolina primaries, Trump accused the Bush administration of lying the United States into Iraq, which he called "big fat mistake" that "destabilize the Middle East".⁷⁶

The New American Consensus: Multicultural Nation

The final trend that helped to facilitate the rise of Trumpism is the demographic changes within the United States. Throughout its history, the United States has been characterized as a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant nation. Despite this depiction of America over the many decades, the United States is becoming increasingly diverse and multicultural. This became more apparent in the 2017 U.S. Census Bureau projections which highlighted that the majority of the U.S. population will be nonwhite by the year 2045.⁷⁷ The prospect of becoming the minority population has a profound impact on the psyche of white Americans. Many white Americans

⁷⁵ Pat Buchanan, *Where the Right Went Wrong: How Neoconservatives Subverted The Reagan Revolution and Hijacked the Bush Presidency* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004), 35.

⁷⁶ Larry Elder, "Trump: Bush Administration Knowingly 'Lied' About Iraq War Intel," 2016, https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2016/02/18/trump_bush_administration_knowingly_lied_about_iraq_war_intel_129695.html.

⁷⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, "Older People Projected to Outnumber Children," The United States Census Bureau, n.d., <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2018/cb18-41-population-projections.html>.

voiced their anxiety by highlighting their concerns on reverse racism and fears of systematic discrimination in the future. The implications of white American fears of losing their status resulted in the mobilization of white radical solidarity. According to political scientist Ashley Jardina's study drawing from a decade from the American National Election Studies had noted that between 30 and 40 percent of the white American population possesses a strong racial identity cutting across age groups, gender, region, income levels, occupation, and political identities.⁷⁸ President Trump exploited this anxiety from White Americans by fueling racial sentiments during and after the Obama presidency.

The 2008 presidential election was a historical achievement in American history. The Democratic presidential candidate Illinois Senator Barack Obama defeated the Republican neoconservative John McCain in a landslide victory. The outcome of the election resulted in Obama becoming the first African American President. Following 2008 election, many scholars have observed the rise of the Obama presidency was a major milestone trend towards a new America becoming pluralistic and a post-racial society. This is further evident with Obama advancing his progressive policies and winning reelection defeating another establishment Republican Mitt Romney in the 2012 presidential election. At the expense of neoconservative failures of allowing for a two-term Obama presidency, radical conservative rhetoric attempted to find conspiracy theories to delegitimatized the Obama administration. One particular conspiracy theory, the Birtherism movement, gained prominence with conservative media falsely accusing President Obama as not being an American born citizen rather that he was born in Kenya.⁷⁹ Prior to the 2012 presidential election, Trump would mobilize and rekindle the Birtherism movement

⁷⁸ Ashley Jardina, "White Identity Politics," Cambridge Core, 2019, 261.

⁷⁹ Alana Abramson, "How Donald Trump Perpetuated the 'Birther' Movement for Years," 2016, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/donald-trump-perpetuated-birther-movement-years/story?id=42138176>.

prompting the White House to release the long-form birth certificate.⁸⁰ The Birtherism movement was influential in the rise of a Trump presidential campaign. Notably, this movement helped launched Trump’s presidential ambitions by recognizing sizable support among Republican voters with resentment towards the Obama presidency and America’s new vision of a multicultural society. This is further demonstrated in Trump’s discourse during the 2016 election where the Republican nominee would exploit and mobilize support from White American resentment.

In the 2016 campaign, Trump’s “Make America Great” campaign utilized overt dog-whistle politics to mobilize his white conservative voter bloc. Starting with the announcement of his presidential campaign, Trump offered an inward and nativist path of an American post racial society. As evident in one of his major promises as a candidate, Trump proposed to build a wall along the southern border to stop illegal aliens entering the United States.⁸¹ Throughout the campaign, Trump made racial claims that Mexicans and other Hispanic migrants were not only taking away jobs from hard-working Americans, but they are “criminals, rapists and drug dealers”.⁸² The demonization of immigrants can be seen with Trump co-opting “the snake” song by Al Wilson:

On her way to work one morning
Down the path alongside the lake
A tender-hearted woman saw a poor half-frozen snake
His pretty colored skin had been all frosted with the dew
“Oh well,” she cried, “I’ll take you in and I’ll take care of you”
“Take me in oh tender woman
Take me in, for heaven's sake

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Campbell, *American Discontent*, 71.

⁸² Michelle Mark, “Trump Refers to Campaign Remarks Calling Mexicans ‘rapists’ - Business Insider,” 2018, <https://www.businessinsider.com/trump-mexicans-rapists-remark-reference-2018-4>.

Take me in oh tender woman,” sighed the snake
 She wrapped him up all cozy in a curvature of silk
 And then laid him by the fireside with some honey and some milk
 Now she hurried home from work that night as soon as she arrived
 She found that pretty snake she'd taken in had been revived
 “Take me in, oh tender woman
 Take me in, for heaven's sake
 Take me in oh tender woman,” sighed the snake
 Now she clutched him to her bosom, “You're so beautiful,” she cried
 “But if I hadn't brought you in by now you might have died”
 Now she stroked his pretty skin and then she kissed and held him tight
 But instead of saying thanks, that snake gave her a vicious bite
 “Take me in, oh tender woman
 Take me in, for heaven's sake
 Take me in oh tender woman,” sighed the snake
 “I saved you,” cried that woman
 “And you've bit me even, why?
 You know your bite is poisonous and now I'm going to die”
 “Oh shut up, silly woman,” said the reptile with a grin
 “You knew damn well I was a snake before you took me in
 ”Take me in, oh tender woman
 Take me in, for heaven's sake
 Take me in oh tender woman”, sighed the snake.⁸³

Furthermore, Trump utilized highly racialized speeches in his promise to crack down on migration from Muslim countries in which he professes those places spawning what he called as “radical Islamic terrorists”. Notably, during the Republican primaries, the Trump campaign

⁸³ Jeremy White, “The Snake in Full: Read Donald Trump’s Anti Immigration Poem,” accessed March 15, 2020, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/the-snake-read-in-full-trump-poem-cpac-anti-immigration-verses-mexican-border-a8225686.html>.

issued a press release stating that if he were elected as president he would have “a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States”.⁸⁴ Finally, Trump’s utilization of racial and identity politics was apparent in his rhetoric towards African Americans. Throughout many of his campaign rallies in Middle America, Trump assured voters that he would solve the problems of crime, decay and devastation in America’s inner cities of which he suggested the problems were partly due to conduct of African Americans. This is more apparent in July 2019, Trump used Twitter to criticize the late Maryland Democratic Representative Elijah Cummings and city of Baltimore that he represents as a “rat and rodent infested mess”.⁸⁵

The Tea Party

The final cultivation of anger towards traditional Republican neoconservatives was the emergence of the Tea Party. The first movement began in February 2009, when a CNBC reporter Rick Santelli on the floor of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange heavily criticized Obama’s proposal to help homeowners who could no longer afford their mortgages. On live television, Santelli accused the federal government of “promoting bad behavior” and proposed the idea of having a Tea Party (similar to the Boston Tea Party in the Revolutionary War) in Chicago on the shores of Lake Michigan to protest measures that “subsidize the losers”.⁸⁶ The consequences of Santelli’s comments sparked a radical fiscal conservative political movement within the

⁸⁴ Jessica Taylor, “Trump Calls For ‘Total And Complete Shutdown Of Muslims Entering’ U.S.,” 2015, <https://www.npr.org/2015/12/07/458836388/trump-calls-for-total-and-complete-shutdown-of-muslims-entering-u-s>.

⁸⁵ Donald J. Trump on Twitter: ‘As Proven Last Week during a Congressional Tour, the Border Is Clean, Efficient & Well Run, Just Very Crowded. Cumming District Is a Disgusting, Rat and Rodent Infested Mess. If He Spent More Time in Baltimore, Maybe He Could Help Clean up This Very Dangerous & Filthy Place’.

⁸⁶ Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 7.

Republican party advocating for lowering of taxes, the reduction of the national debt and government spending. The Tea Party movement had reached its boiling point in the summer of 2009 after President Obama announced his intention to pass massive healthcare overhaul allowing for the increase of health insurance coverage for all Americans.⁸⁷ Funded by advocacy organizations devoted to pushing free-market policies, the Tea Party amounted a fierce backlash during the first term of the Obama administration. In the 2010 congressional election Tea Party supporters and candidates allowed the surge of the Republican party to take over the House of Representatives. Although the tea party was primary concerned with Obama's expansionary economic and social policies in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, the Tea Party caucus promoted an anti-establishment agenda. This is apparent in the conduct of American foreign policy as the Tea party politicians were influenced by the ideals of Jacksonian democracy and American exceptionalism, are highly skeptical of America's ability to create a liberal world. Notably, both houses of Congress showed their willingness to cut foreign aid and denounce interventionism. In particular, Tea Party affiliate Republicans, such as Michele Bachmann, Jeff Duncan, Connie Mack IV, Jeff Flake, Time Scott, Joe Walsh, Allen West, Jason Chaffetz had supported a resolution from a progressive Congressman Dennis Kucinich to withdraw U.S. troops in Libya.⁸⁸ Similarly in the Senate, three Tea Party backed Republicans Jim DeMint, Mike Lee and Michael Crapo voted to limit foreign aid to Libya, Pakistan and Egypt.⁸⁹ In addition to the anger towards the foreign policy establishment, the Tea Party also brought forth reactionary racial resentment towards Obama presidency. In a 2010 comprehensive published report the

⁸⁷ Heidi Beirich and Evelyn Schlatter, "Backlash: Racism and the Presidency of Barack Obama," *Barack Obama and the Myth of a Post-Racial America*, 2013, 91.

⁸⁸ "H.Con.Res. 51 (112th): Directing the President, Pursuant to Section 5(c) ... -- House Vote #412 -- Jun 3, 2011," GovTrack.us, 2011, <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/112-2011/h412>.

⁸⁹ "S. 3576 (112th): A Bill to Provide Limitations on United ... -- Senate Vote #196 -- Sep 22, 2012," GovTrack.us, 2012, <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/112-2012/s196>.

racism in the Tea Party by the *Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights* which found associations between Tea Party organizations and extremists from anti-immigration activists, militia leaders and white nationalist. Furthermore, the report named several figures in the Tea Party who contributed to the movement. In particular, former Tea Party Express chairman Mark Williams who resigned from his organization due to allegations racial insensitive comments, calling President Obama a “Indonesian Muslim turned welfare fraud”.⁹⁰ Despite the Tea Party movement’s decline after the 2010 congressional election their attitudes carried over into the 2016 presidential election. Trump was able to exploit the anger and used to anti-establishment rhetoric against the traditional Republicans in his path towards the presidency.

⁹⁰ Heidi Beirich and Evelyn Schlatter, *Backlash*, 93.

Why the Trump Critique Matters

President Trump's rhetoric towards the current order draws a concerning trend about the future governance of the liberal international project. Specifically, Trump's American First foreign policy which advocates for Middle America further worsen the relationships with other states in the global community. This chapter will analyze the implications of Trump's discourse and explain why the critique matters. Although many Trump supporters and commentators have claim that the administration policies does not undermine the current order it hostile dialogue poses a real challenge towards the liberal project. This is apparent in the current administration actions to attack the three foundational principles of the liberal international project. This includes (1) political liberal governance, (2) economic liberalism, and (3) liberal intergovernmentalism.

Political Liberal Governance

The first major threat that Trump poses to the liberal international order is the hostile reaction in promoting political liberal governance. Since the end of the Second World War, the United States has attempted to advocate for liberal democratic values in non-democratic regimes. As is evident within the architecture of the liberal order, the international system establishes a framework for governments to protect individual rights for their own citizens.⁹¹ This is apparent with the variety of international treaties and agreements within the current international system that embraces political liberal governance principles and values. Notably, the passage of the United Nations Charter (1945), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the

⁹¹ Alexander Cooley and Daniel H. Nexon, *Exit from Hegemony: The Unraveling of the American Global Order* (Oxford University Press, 2020), 21.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Culture Rights (1966), and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) all helped to advance the promotion of basic human rights and freedoms in the global community.⁹² Despite advocacy from previous U.S. administrations, the Trump presidency presented a new radical direction of American policy in the promotion of political liberal governance. In particular, two developments within the current administration exemplified an opposition towards promoting liberal democratic values. The first hostile trend is Trump's apathy towards advancing a human rights agenda. Trump's America First foreign policy's endorsement of state sovereignty highlights America withdrawing its commitments to support human rights and democracy abroad. Although the Trump administration would advance some human rights campaigns that may benefit him politically at home (i.e. China Uighur population and Iran) POTUS's absence in confronting states human rights record and promoting democracy presents a universal challenge towards the liberal international system. Specifically, the dominant hegemon's lack of support towards promoting liberal democratic values abroad questions the legitimacy and effectiveness of the liberal order. The second development within the current administration undermining political liberal governance is Trump's fervent support towards dictatorial and authoritarian regimes. With the leader of the free world embracing illiberal regimes allows for despots to become further emboldened in their actions to damage the reputation of the liberal international system norms, rules and institutions. For these leaders the liberal international order is seen as a threat to the survival of their regime.

⁹² Ibid., 21-22.

Economic Liberalism

The second challenge that the Trump administration poses to the liberal international order is the subversion of economic liberalism and the commitment for free trade and financial liberalization. Trump's critique of the political liberal economy highlights the institutionalize neoliberal practices since the end of the Cold War. Throughout his rhetoric, Trump spotlight the failures of the neoliberal economic model and articulates a political message that is anti-globalist and zero-sum. This is apparent in Trump's discourse in which POTUS heavily attack institutions that are deeply routed by neoliberal economic policies, including, the WTO, IMF, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and even the European Union.⁹³ The implementation of an American First agenda highlights a radical change from the hegemonic leader to change the liberal international economy. Notably, Trump's policy prescriptions call for greater state intervention by implementing trade barriers to protect local industries. The implications of implementing the American First trade policy results in an increase level of mistrust injected within the global community. As a consequence of this tense trade environment would result in the long run for states to foster cooperation in the international economy.

Liberal Intergovernmentalism

The final threat posed by the Trump administration that damages the liberal international order is the erosion of liberal intergovernmentalism. Liberal intergovernmentalism describes the means or configurations of the international order structures.⁹⁴ Throughout the history of the post 1945 order, the liberal international project led by the United States had supported

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 22-23

multilateralism that regulated and monitor the compliance of multinational treaties, organizations and institutions.⁹⁵ With the growing influence of liberal intergovernmentalism within the global community, the Trump administration hostile attacks towards multilateralism weaken multinational cooperation to solve resolving global issues. Despite the Middle powers advocating for this means of international politics the Trump administration's attack on multilateral practices which undermines American interests. As a result, the Trump administration made a conscience decision to favour unilateralism and transactional bilateral relationships. The implications of the dominant hegemon advocating for greater unilateral approaches allow the United States to stand alone in global politics that has the potential to decouple relationships with strategic partners and long-standing alliances.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 23.

Does the Trumpism Critique Outlast a Trump Presidency?

By analyzing why the Trump critique of the liberal international order matters, the final chapter of this research paper will discuss the future of the Trumpism movement. Specifically, this chapter will investigate whether Trump's criticism towards the liberal international system would outlast a Trump presidency. In this chapter, the evidence will illustrate that the current domestic conditions inside the United States would allow the Trumpism rhetoric to become a powerful counter-revolutionary force within American politics. The domestic arguments for the Trumpism rhetoric to outlive a Trump presidency can be seen in three different factors. First, the attractiveness for future American politicians in using Trump's Middle America discourse which be an effective tool to attack domestic opponents who support globalist policies. Secondly, the increase in polarization in American politics and the lack of trust towards the federal government institutions can embolden radical conservative figures to enter into mainstream politics allowing hostile discord in promoting the radical right agenda. The final trend within the American domestic landscape that further fuels the Trumpism rhetoric is the rise of the radical conservative media outlets who promote the Middle American agenda.

The Strategic Advantages of Using Middle American Racialism in American Politics

Although predicting the future of the Trumpism movement is challenging among political scientists the domestic conditions inside American politics can indicate how the Trumpism critique of the liberal order can outlast a Trump presidency. The first domestic condition inside American politics that allow Trumpism to outgrow the Trump presidency is the attractiveness of utilizing Middle American radicalism resentments not only towards the American establishment but also the ruling liberal managerial elites. As mentioned in chapter one, Middle American

Radicalism reflects a segment of an American population that is a primary victim of the liberal expansionary regime. By looking at the paleoconservative scholar Sam Francis and later President Trump would exploit the economic, political and social insecurities within Middle America. Notably, President Trump would rail against globalism in which he claimed that the significant development of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century ignored the own national interest. Trump's utilization of anti-globalization rhetoric and the embracement of economic nationalism would be influential in American political discourse since the establishment of the American Old Right. This is apparent in the 2016 presidential election, Trump effectively labels his adversaries as "globalists" and claimed that Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton "watched on the sidelines as our jobs vanished and our communities were plunged into depression-level unemployment".⁹⁶ The utilization of rhetoric from President Trump attacking establishment figures past history on multilateral trade negotiations is a significant development within the Trumpism movement. The implications of this rhetoric would allow future radical right leaders in American politics to identify their enmity towards "globalizing elites" not fulfilling the American First agenda. This further perpetuates the sense of alienation and resentment amongst those who are portrayed as the victims of the liberal managerial regime thus emboldening agents to overthrow the international system.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ David Jackson, "Donald Trump Targets Globalization and Free Trade as Job-Killers," USA TODAY, 2016, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2016/06/28/donald-trump-globalization-trade-pennsylvania-ohio/86431376/>.

⁹⁷ Rita Abrahamsen et al., "Confronting the International Political Sociology of the New Right," *International Political Sociology* 14, no. 1 (2020): 99.

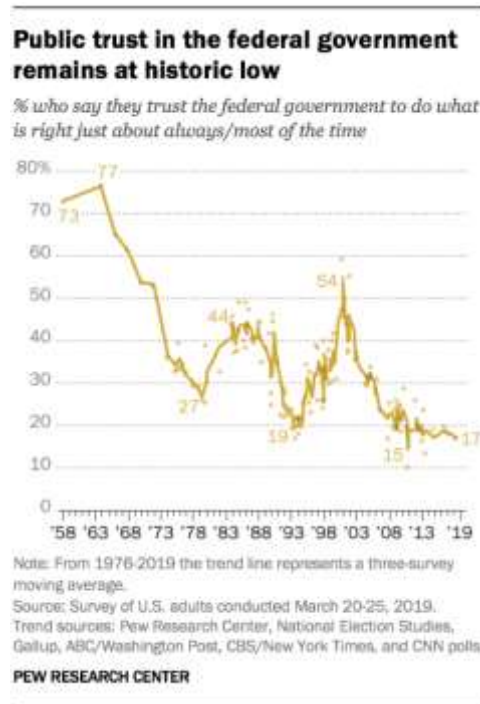
Polarization in American politics

The second condition which would allow the Trumpism movement to outlast the Trump presidency is the hyper-partisan nature in American politics and the lack of trust in institutions. The origins of the contemporary partisanship between both parties was apparent with the introduction of the Contract with America in 1994. Led by Georgia representative Newt Gingrich, Contract with America was a Republican legislative agenda proposal with its goal in advancing Republican voter bloc issues, including tax reform, government de-regulation, welfare reform, and fiscal responsibility.⁹⁸ Despite the Republicans winning the 1994 Congressional elections and taking over the House of Representatives for the first time in 40 years, the Contract with America signals a new period in American politics in which attacks from political opponents were highly personalized. Over the next two decades. The divisions between Democratic-Republican further led to personalized attacks which in turn resulted in deep partisanship. This was apparent more recently with Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation hearing and the impeachment of President Trump. The consequences of the red vs. blue partisanship allows for the lack of consensus in bipartisan decision-making to flourishing and the increase of mistrust towards government institutions. As shown in figure 3, the level of trust towards the federal government has been in steep decline as only 17% of Americans today say they trust the government in Washington to do the right thing always or most of the time.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Jeffrey Gayner, "The Contract with America: Implementing New Ideas in the U.S.," The Heritage Foundation, 1995, <https://www.heritage.org/political-process/report/the-contract-america-implementing-new-ideas-the-us>.

⁹⁹ PEW Research, "Little Public Support for Reductions in Federal Spending," 2019, <https://www.people-press.org/2019/04/11/little-public-support-for-reductions-in-federal-spending/>.

Figure 3: Americans Trust Towards the Federal Government (Pew Research)



The implications of low public trust towards the federal government embolden radical figures to further perpetuate the polarization. With signs of success of President Trump delegitimizing the institutions, future presidents will further mobilize attacking the government bureaucratic apparatus to achieve their political objectives.

Radical Conservative Media inside the United States

The final domestic condition that helps further growth of Trumpism beyond the Trump presidency is the rise of radical conservative media. Since the fall of the Nixon administration, radical conservative political commentators' objective has been to counter the liberal media bias by developing news outlets designed to predispose audience members to listen to conservative opinions/talking points. By the end of the Reagan administration, the radical right pundits have

gotten their opportunity with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in 1987 decision to repeal the Fairness Doctrine. The Fairness Doctrine was a policy mandated by the FCC that required every licensee to:

“devote a reasonable portion of broadcast time to present to the discussion and consideration of controversial issues of public importance and in doing so [the broadcaster] must be fair – that is, [the broadcaster] must endeavor to facilitate available expression of contrasting viewpoints held by responsible elements with respect to controversial issues presented”.¹⁰⁰

The implications of repealing this doctrine allowed radical conservative commentators to present the news based on their ideological world view which could be disseminated by syndicate broadcast across the United States. As a result, many of the radical right radio shows and cable television had emerged in American political discourse following the repeal. This includes Rush Limbaugh (1988), Fox News (1996), Sean Hannity (2001), Breitbart (2007), and One American News Network (OANN) (2013). President Trump and the Republican Party would utilize the radical conservative media by mobilizing conspiracy theories, attacking domestic opponents, and promoting the American First agenda. The rise of conservative media is not only a vital institution for Trump and the Republican party but also for future candidates and leaders of the American radical right mobilizing against liberal managerialism in both domestic and international politics

¹⁰⁰ Kathleen Ann Ruane, “Fairness Doctrine: History and Constitutional Issues,” *Congressional Research Service*, 2011, 2.

Conclusion

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the United States has shaped the global governing system by building grand bargains that fostered cooperation and establish a security community to avoid any future global conflicts. The success of the liberal regime was seen in the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, which amounted to the triumph of Western democratic institutions and their policies. Yet, thirty years after the collapse of the Soviet regime a new radical conservative trend has been rising within liberal democracies challenging the core principles of liberal international order. The most prominent case study of global radical right can be seen inside the United States with the election of Donald Trump and the advancement towards an American First agenda.

This research aimed to answer three unresolved questions about America's anti-liberal trend. The first research question attempted to determine if there were any historical comparisons with previous radical conservative figures within American politics. The second research question was interested in exploring the domestic considerations inside the United States that help facilitates the rise of Trumpism and the hostile rhetoric towards the liberal international system. The final research question concerned the implications of Trump's discourse and the lasting damages that it posed towards the liberal international project.

In examining one particular American conservative movement that predates the current Trump critique, this research argued that President Trump, in fact, utilizes a long historical tradition from the American Old Right and exploited Middle American paleoconservative discourse to challenge the liberal international order. Moreover, what allows the domestic trends to favor Trump's presidency were the glaring limitations of neoconservative legacies that help shaped the Republican party following the demise of the American Old Right. This includes the

limitations in promoting the Washington Consensus, interventionist foreign policies, and the handling of a new multiracial America. Finally, this research also contends that Trump's rhetoric damages the liberal international system by degrading critical aspects of liberal internationalism. Specifically, Trump's attacks towards political liberal governance, economic liberalism, and liberal intergovernmentalism reduce the effectiveness and legitimacy of global governing.

What I hoped to accomplish in this research is to give readers an understanding of the American case study of the global radical right seeking to change the liberal international order. Moreover, I not only wanted to present a narrative that Trump's anti-liberal rhetoric has not only been apparent in American history but note the resurgent rise of paleoconservatism (i.e. American Old Right) vis à vis neoconservatism and the failures of the traditional Republican party leaders. The lasting implications of this research is to highlight the precarious position of the liberal international order and the persistent Trump counter-revolutionary movement.

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