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POPULISM IN A DIVIDED AMERICA

Stephen Richardson

“It’s the answer spoken by young and old, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican, Black, White, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, disabled and not disabled Americans who sent a message to the world that we have never been just a collection of individuals or a collection of red states and blue states. We are, and always will be, the United States of America.”

— Former President Barack Obama’s 2008 Victory Speech

Former President Barack Obama most likely did not foresee how ironic this quote would become when he took the stage in Chicago after his historic 2008 election. Americans are now more divided and polarized than he could have imagined. Cultural divisions and political partisanship have been reaching fever-pitch, as a wave of populism has swept through Europe and the United States, fanning fears of demagoguery. With Brexit in the United Kingdom, and President Trump’s shocking victory in the US, many mainstream observers fear that fascism is both spreading through and threatening liberal democracies.¹

¹ Sheri Berman, “Populism is not Fascism: But it Could Be a Harbinger.” *Foreign Affairs*, December, 2016, 39.

Fascism is profoundly different than populism, and attempts to claim that recent events equate to fascism are exaggerated and incorrect. Nonetheless, concerns regarding economic insecurity, demographical shifts, anxieties over migration, and a cultural backlash from dominant groups who are losing influence and power has led to the emergence of populism. Populism is not the threat, but rather is symptomatic of issues facing liberal democracies. The exploitation by Mr. Trump of these issues were both the proximate and ultimate-factors that led to his victory. However, there are actions that may be taken to address these issues and thereby quell the spread of populism.

Populism, not Fascism

Given the controversial platforms of many Populist Parties, such as nativist sentiment, the incendiary rhetoric, and the questionable history of some populist leaders, it is understandable that the term “fascist” is prone to abuse. But questions arise over the fairness and accuracy of its application. In “Populism Is Not Fascism,” Sheri Berman says, “‘Fascist’ has served as a generic term of political abuse for many decades, but for the first time in ages, mainstream observers are using it seriously to describe major politicians and parties.”² This term is usually directed at conservatives in an effort to quickly discredit them, regardless of whether or not the conservative in question is even a radical. Ultimately, the term has become abused and as such, robbed of its power which once evoked dread and fear. “Fascist” is a potent term used to describe a very serious and frightening political ideology. What some refer to as fascism in the modern sense is populism, and the two terms should not be used interchangeably. While they may be similar, they are indeed distinct and signify two different political realities.³ As Berman notes, “Right-wing populism – indeed, populism of any kind – is a symptom of democracy in trouble; fascism and other revolutionary movements are the consequence of democracy in crisis.”⁴

The similarities between populism and fascism are less significant than their differences. The *Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism*, published in 1909 by Italian poet and futurist Pillippo Tommaso Marinetti, serves as the ideological bedrock of fascism.⁵ The *Manifesto* expressed the voice of many disillusioned

2 *Ibid.*

3 Berman, “Populism is not Fascism.” 39.

4 *Ibid.* at 44.

5 Pankaj Mishra, “The Globalization of Rage: Why Today’s Extremism Looks Familiar.” *Foreign Affairs*, December, 2016, 47.

and angry Italian men who felt antagonized by: invasive bureaucracy of the young Italian state, unwanted social change, and servitude to a rich minority.⁶ Their resentment turned grim in a yearning for “vengeful violence against the establishment.”⁷ Many, including non-Italians, were attracted to the cause by the allure of physical and sexual dominance.⁸ The futurists proclaimed,

“We want to glorify war – the world’s only hygiene – militarism, patriotism, the destructive act of the anarchists, the beautiful ideas for which one dies, and contempt for women. We want to destroy museums, libraries and academies of all kinds, and to fight against moralism, feminism, and every utilitarian or opportunistic cowardice.”⁹

It would be dishonest and unfair to equate or compare this sentiment to that of modern populist leaders such as Mr. Trump, Marine Le Penn of France and Prime Minister Theresa May of the United Kingdom. Modern populists are nowhere near as extreme nor as frightful as fascist leaders and movements of the past. The two ideologies are plainly distinct, and the two ultimately aim for different goals.

Defining Fascism

Fascism is a revolutionary political ideology¹⁰ that advocates a unitary-authoritarian government centered on a single dictator.¹¹ Fascists seek to reverse decadence and rejuvenate the “nation” through aggressive polices that “cleanse, purify, and redeem” the prescribed community.¹² Ultra-nationalism permeates into all fascism’s facets, purporting that the nation is a living organism whose health is determined by the purity and homogeneity of its demographics.¹³ Fascist leaders recognized that this concept of a nation is a myth however, rooted entirely in

6 *Ibid.*

7 Mishra, “The Globalization of Rage.” 47.

8 *Ibid.*

9 *Ibid.*

10 Cyprian P. Blamires and Paul Jackson, *World Fascism: A Historical Encyclopedia*. Vol 1 (2006): 2-3.

11 Walter Laquer, *Fascism: Past Present and Future*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, 35.

12 Blamires and Jackson, *World Fascism*. 2-3.

13 Blamires and Jackson, *World Fascism*. 2-3.

the mythos of their own thinking.¹⁴ Socially and politically, fascism is highly collectivist, putting the needs of the State before everything else, while subjugating the individual.¹⁵ In fact, the fascist claims that individuals exist only to serve the State and greater good, or otherwise have no right to life.¹⁶ Fiscally, fascism is corporatist,¹⁷ preserving private property, profits, and initiative¹⁸ – but under the watchful eye of the State which sets many guidelines and regulations.¹⁹ This marriage between the State and economy serves to merge the interests of the State, employers, employees, suppliers, consumers and each socioeconomic class.²⁰ Fascist thought is grounded in masculism,²¹ Social-Darwinism,²² the glorification of violence,²³ and a fascination with both killing and death.²⁴ Warfare is depicted in romantic terms,²⁵ and is seen as the highest expression of man, where death in battle is the most honorable passing.²⁶ The goal of fascism is to destroy both liberal democracy and capitalism,²⁷ while violently uprooting the international order,²⁸ which is embedded with hostile “others” who supposedly threaten the very existence of the nation.²⁹ The fascist yearns for adventure and danger, in a never-ending quest to prove himself while fighting for the cause, and battling the enemies of the nation.³⁰ The extreme nature of fascist mythos establishes a quasi-Religious essence, steeped in ultra-patriotism that resulted in the near worship of fascist dictators, the state and their conception of the nation.³¹

Modern populist thought has essentially none of these characteristics, while modern populists themselves have made no such claims, and have aired no such

14 Laquer, *Fascism: Past Present and Future*. 25.

15 Basch Ashton, *The Fascist: His State and His Mind*. New York: AMS Press, 1972, 31-34.

16 *Ibid.* at 33.

17 Blamires and Jackson, *World Fascism*. 188-189.

18 Ashton, *The Fascist: His State and His Mind*. 31.

19 Blamires and Jackson, *World Fascism*. 188-189.

20 *Ibid.*

21 George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, 155.

22 Blamires and Jackson, *World Fascism*. 717.

23 *Ibid.*

24 Laquer, *Fascism: Past Present and Future*. 26.

25 Mosse, *The Image of Man*. 156-158.

26 *Ibid.*

27 Berman “Populism is not Fascism.” 39.

28 *Ibid.*

29 Berman “Populism is not Fascism.” 39.

30 Laquer, *Fascism: Past Present and Future*. 26.

31 Ashton, *The Fascist: His State and His Mind*. 34.

desires. Instead, their stated goal is to improve democracy, so all have a voice and the “silent majority” is heard, rather than ignored by corrupt elitists’ own agenda.³² The fascist claims to know what is best for the people and so speaks on their behalf, while the populist claims to speak for the people, in order to magnify their voice.³³ Ultimately, it is expected that a populist veering from a stated path would draw criticism, however, a fascist doing the same would suppress such criticism. Mr. Trump is being criticized and even abandoned by some of his populist supporters, like Nigel Farage of the U.K.³⁴ and Marine Le Penn of France, for his decision to strike a Syrian airbase on April 6, 2017.³⁵ Mr. Trump retaliated against Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad due to his order for the use of chemical warfare agents on civilians. This action is claimed to be a violation of his campaign promises by Mr. Trump’s supporters.³⁶ Ironically, Mr. Trump’s most vocal critics have been white nationalists who oppose military-adventurism,³⁷ which is a notable departure from fascist’s aggressive militarist instincts. Some of these critics feel betrayed by Mr. Trump’s decision, because they perceive this as a departure from their own interests and promises broken,³⁸ while some of Mr. Trump’s traditional critics have praised his decision.³⁹ The fact that Mr. Trump’s supporters both at home and abroad openly criticize this as a departure from his populist platform is significant.

While modern populist leaders such as Mr. Trump and Marine Le Penn are anti-liberal, they are not anti-democratic, which is a crucial distinction.⁴⁰ A significant difference between fascism and populism is the broader political

32 Berman, “Populism is not Fascism.” 39.

33 *Ibid.*

34 Elise Labott and Nicole Gaouette, “After Syria strike, populist supporters abandon Trump at home and abroad.” *CNN*, April 7, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/04/07/politics/donald-trump-syria-populist-support/>.

35 Marine Penetier and Adrian Croft, “Syria strike brings rare criticism for Trump from France’s Le Pen.” *Reuters*, April 7, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-election-syria-idUSKBN179229>.

36 Matthew Haag, “Trump’s Far-Right Supporters Turn on Him Over Syria Strike.” *The New York Times*, April 7, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/07/us/trump-far-alt-right-syria.html>

37 *Ibid.*

38 Haag, “Trump’s Far-Right Supporters Turn on Him Over Syria Strike.”

39 Maggie Haberman, “Trump’s Syria Strike Has Some Critics Cheering and Some Fans Booming.” *The New York Times*, April 7, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/07/us/politics/john-mccain-chuck-schumer-support-airstrikes-syria.html>

40 Berman, “Populism is not Fascism.”

context.⁴¹ Fascism only arises in times of crises and devastation, the likes of which the west has come nowhere near to facing since the 1930's.⁴²

Defining Populism

Populism is hard to define as there is considerable debate over what it is – an ideology, a creed, a political movement or marketing ploy or a mixture thereof.⁴³ Michael Kazin, a historian from Georgetown University, states: “populists are praised as defenders of the values and needs of the hard-working majority and condemned as demagogues who prey on the ignorance of the uneducated.”⁴⁴ Populists have arisen in times of grievances, where large swaths of the electorate were made insecure by “an economic system that favors the rich, fear of losing jobs to new immigrants, and politicians who care more about their own advancement than the well-being of the majority.”⁴⁵ The American experience has given us two types: the leftist variety, and the rightist variety. The first was exemplified by the “People’s Party,” formed in in the late 19th century, which sought to liberate the political system from the poisoning influence of money in politics.⁴⁶ The “Bernie Sanders Revolution” is a reincarnate of this strain, representing cosmopolitan middle and working class values.⁴⁷ Senator Sanders’s rhetoric echoes the words of Ignatius Donnelly’s keynote speech at the People’s Party founding convention in 1892: “we seek to restore the Government of the Republic to the hands of the ‘plain people’ with whom it originated.”⁴⁸ The second was founded in the same era by Denis Kearney, a nativist labor leader calling his party the “Workingmen’s Party of California” (WPC).⁴⁹ This party was known for xenophobic sentiment and scorn towards the wealthy elite.⁵⁰ The WPC sought to bar Chinese and Japanese laborers from immigrating to the US, out of concern for the middle and working class, who Kearney claimed

41 *Ibid.*

42 *Ibid.*

43 Michael Kazin, “Trump and American Populism: Old Whine, New Bottles.” *Foreign Affairs*, December 2016, 18

44 Kazin, “Trump and American Populism.” 18.

45 *Ibid.*

46 Kazin, “Trump and American Populism.” 18.

47 *Ibid.*

48 *Ibid.*

49 *Ibid.* at 19.

50 Kazin, “Trump and American Populism.” 19.

were being sold-out and abused by a “bloated aristocracy.”⁵¹ It is this strain of populism that Mr. Trump and populist leaders in Europe, such as Marine Le Penn, are echoing.

In the modern sense, a populist is someone who: “claims that they alone represent ordinary people, present themselves as outsiders challenging corrupt elites, maintains direct links to their followers through rallies, television, social media etc.” and prioritizes election results over other aspects of democracy – arguing that winning elections grants wide discretion in governing.⁵² Mr. Trump, and other modern populist, embodies many if not most, of these characteristics. Demographical factors caused by mass-migration, cultural shifts, and the socio-economic degradation of middle and working classes contribute to the awakening and spread of populism sweeping across Europe and America.

Populism on the March

In his article, “Populism on the March” from *Foreign Affairs*, author Fareed Zakaria articulates the present state of populism, where it came from, and why it is occurring in America. Zakaria notes that economic status no longer serves as a reliable predictor of how an American will vote, but instead cultural issues and identity have moved to the forefront.⁵³ This largely stems from an economic stasis faced by the western world over recent decades, which has blurred the lines between economic classes.⁵⁴ This is partly due to the advances and changes attributed to globalization.⁵⁵ At first, markets, goods, and services were what became globalized, but now people are becoming globalized at unprecedented rates.⁵⁶ Globalizing the markets does not necessarily affect the daily life of average citizens in obvious ways, but when demographics are changed accompanying shifts are more noticeable, more pervasive, and inevitably become more entrenched.⁵⁷ Pervasive shifts in demographics and culture are bound to produce a backlash from the “losers” of such, especially if

51 *Ibid.*

52 D. Lombroso, A. Roth, U. Friedman, “Is Trump a Populist Authoritarian?” *The Atlantic*, February 3, 2017 <https://www.theatlantic.com/video/index/515610/is-trump-a-populist-authoritarian/>

53 Fareed Zakaria, “Populism on the March: Why the West is in Trouble.” *Foreign Affairs*, December, 2016, 11.

54 *Ibid.*

55 *Ibid.*

56 *Ibid* 12.

57 *Ibid.*

they were a once culturally-dominant demographic, as blue-collar Americans considered themselves.

In “Trump, Brexit, and the rise of Populism,” Ronald F. Inglehart and Pippa Norris submit a thesis strikingly similar to Zakaria’s as the intersection of economic insecurity and a cultural backlash is likely what breeds populism.⁵⁸ The negative effects of globalization mentioned by Zakaria are compounded by wage stagnation and increasing economic inequalities that have been plaguing Western democracies in recent decades.⁵⁹ Job security for blue-collar Americans has only become more questionable, while multi-national corporations seemingly never cease to find success.⁶⁰ Thus it would appear to many blue-collar Americans that corporations are benefiting from the very conditions that harm them.⁶¹ Meanwhile the government suspiciously appears either unwilling or unable to curb the flow of immigration, which worsens economic anxieties.⁶² Inglehart and Norris explain the “economic inequality argument,” by stating:

“...economic vulnerability is conducive to in-group solidarity, conformity to group norms, and rejection of outsiders. When threatened, groups are thought to seek strong, authoritarian leaders to protect them from what are perceived as dangerous outsiders seen as threatening jobs and benefits.”⁶³

Thus, large swaths of the American public are sensitive to economic uncertainty while simultaneously insecure about cultural change from foreigners and the progressives who embrace them.

To address this, policy makers are thus compelled to act, but are greatly limited by the constraints of “demographics, globalization, technology and budgets.”⁶⁴ The most feasible options are incremental reforms such as increased investments

58 Ronald F. Inglehart and Pippa Norris, “Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic Have-Nots and Cultural Backlash.” *Harvard Kennedy School*, August, 2016, 3.

59 *Ibid.* at 10.

60 Inglehart and Norris, “Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic Have-Nots and Cultural Backlash.” 11.

61 *Ibid.*

62 *Ibid.* at 10-11.

63 *Ibid.* at 11.

64 Zakaria, “Populism on the March.” 12.

in the public, improved job revocation training, and health care reform.⁶⁵ But slow progress is frustrating to many voters who want quick results and dramatic solutions. Their frustration turns into demands for a bold leader who is willing to exercise decisive action and is capable of bypassing the stagnate political order.⁶⁶ Voters in the U.S. and U.K. have been in this bind for years, and now it appears that something similar is occurring in France and Germany. When this frustration and pain is widely felt – a populist candidate steps in to exploit the situation. In the United States, this individual was Mr. Trump, who had been watching and monitoring the American people from the sidelines for years.⁶⁷

The Emergence of the Trump Era

Mr. Trump exercised a sort of political-genius in pinpointing his future base, and identifying their grievances.⁶⁸ More importantly, his timing was impeccable. Fittingly, the first major issue Mr. Trump decided to take on while campaigning was immigration.⁶⁹ This issue seemed to be the most incendiary of them all given the modern realities of terrorism, long-standing tensions over illegal-immigration in the US, and the demographical shifts in Europe.⁷⁰ Immigration is a major concern in the United States for many reasons, and as in other countries, the systems for integrating immigrants are buckling due to overwhelming strains.⁷¹ There were approximately 250 million international migrants in 2015, 65 million of whom were forcibly displaced, and 76 million of whom migrated to Europe.⁷² This makes the migration during the late 19th and early 20th centuries a drop in the bucket in comparison given that the United States received 20 million immigrants from Europe between 1880 and 1920, and far fewer from East Asia.⁷³ Lack of integration inevitably leads to identity issues in the form of in-group and out-group rivalries. This may instigate further furor by pundits or

65 Zakaria, "Populism on the March." 12.

66 *Ibid.*

67 M. Kirk et. Al, "Divided States of America." *PBS: Frontline*, January 18, 2017. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/divided-states-of-america/#video-2>

68 Zakaria, "Populism on the March." 14.

69 *Ibid.*

70 *Ibid.*

71 *Ibid.* at 15.

72 Zakaria, "Populism on the March." 14.

73 "U.S. Immigration Before 1965." *History.com*, 2009, <http://www.history.com/topics/u-s-immigration-before-1965>

politicians who are eager to exploit already present fears and anxieties.⁷⁴ Justin Gest, a public policy professor at George Mason University, found that 65% of White Americans polled said they would support a political party dedicated to “stopping mass immigration, providing American jobs to American workers, preserving America’s Christian heritage and stopping the threat of Islam.”⁷⁵ Gest concluded that Mr. Trump is temporary and reactionary, yet “Trumpism” is something that will outlast Mr. Trump himself.⁷⁶

Many find comfort in knowing that Mr. Trump is temporary, but many others find it perplexing that he was elected at all. Given his apparent character flaws, controversial history, unfiltered-unrefined-and-incendiary speech, it would be troubling if Mr. Trump could actually be elected because of immigration, xenophobia, racism, and a fear of terrorism. The truth is much more complicated, as populist sentiment became popular with Americans who were “disgusted with the corrupt establishment, incompetent politicians, dishonest Wall Street speculators, arrogant intellectuals, and politically correct liberals,” not just nativists and sexists.⁷⁷ These concerns were among many, thus, created a peculiar socio-political environment that placed great burden and stress on ordinary folk. Much of the American public therefore turned to the drastic solution of an “outsider” who claims to know the pain of the people and the solutions, no matter how controversial they may be.⁷⁸ Mr. Trump seemed to fit the profile of what many American voters were looking for, and he would continually affirm this on the campaign trail.

Why Trump is Winning

At the beginning of the election cycle Mr. Trump was a laughing stock and treated as a nuisance to the crowded field of the GOP. His shocking victory took almost everyone by surprise, proving to be even more perplexing when it became apparent that Mr. Trump had won over millions who voted for Former President Obama. Many were quick to point out what was self-evident to

74 Zakaria, “Populism on the March.” 14.

75 Justin Gest, “Why Trumpism will Outlast Trump.” *Politico*, August 16, 2016, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/08/why-trumpism-will-outlast-donald-trump-214166>

76 Michael Sainato, “Bernie Sanders Finally Blames Establishment Dems for Trump Victory.” *The Observer*, February 7, 2017, <http://observer.com/2017/02/bernie-sanders-blames-establishment-democrats-election-loss/>

77 Inglehart and Norris, “Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism.” 5.

78 Zakaria, “Populism on the March.” 12.

them - that sexism and racism were the driving factors. While these two factors certainly were in play, it is disingenuous to write off a victory with such terms. Speaking at the 2017 Sister Giant Conference in Washington, D.C. on Feb 2, Senator Bernie Sanders aired his annoyance with this line of reasoning. In a frustrated tone, he said “Trump’s victory was not a victory for Trump or his ideology. It was a gross political failure of the Democratic Party... if you think everyone who voted for Mr. Trump is a racist or a sexist or a homophobe, you would be dead wrong.”⁷⁹ The underlying message from Senator Sanders was that pervasive sexism and racism did not win over Obama voters, but rather, the Democratic Party failed to reach-out to them.

Another explanation for Mr. Trump’s victory is the hotly contended issue of Russia’s interference with the election; however, claims that this affected the outcome are difficult to substantiate. Secretary Clinton has stated that the media fallout over the John Podesta and Democratic National Convention email hacking was a decisive factor in her loss.⁸⁰ She further stated that the untimely letter from FBI director James Comey to congressional Republicans alerting them of a reopened investigation into her alleged misuse of a personal email server cost her “several swing states.”⁸¹ Much of the mainstream media echoed Secretary Clinton’s explanation, and social media was buzzing with this same narrative. The swing states referred to are those in the “rust belt” which is considered a valuable segment of the “blue wall,” in that every Democratic presidential candidate since 1992 had won those states.⁸² Ohio should not be lumped into this “lost coalition” for Secretary Clinton, since Mr. Trump won that state by 8.1%, whereas Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin were won by only .3%, .7%, and .7%, respectively.⁸³

79 Michael Sainato, “Bernie Sanders Finally Blames Establishment Dems for Trump Victory.” *The Observer*, February 7, 2017, <http://observer.com/2017/02/bernie-sanders-blames-establishment-democrats-election-loss/>

80 Rachael Revesz, “Hillary Clinton blames Russia hacking and FBI director James Comey for her election loss,” *The Independent*, December 16, 2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/hillary-clinton-blames-russia-vladimir-putin-election-hack-fbi-director-james-comey-a7480126.html>.

81 Revesz, “Hillary Clinton blames Russia hacking and FBI director James Comey for her election loss.”

82 Nate Silver, “There is no ‘Blue Wall,’” *FiveThirtyEight*, May 12, 2015. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/there-is-no-blue-wall/>

83 Jon Huang et al, “Election 2016: Exit Polls.” *The New York Times*, November 8, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/11/08/us/politics/election-exit-polls.html>

It is a hard case to make that the slim victories were nudged by media fallout, given that those blue states were already turning red.⁸⁴ Commentators such as Nate Silver had been warning for over a year prior to the election that the Democratic “blue wall” was crumbling due to recent trends that were being ignored, and it appears he was right all along.⁸⁵ This trend was further aided by Mr. Trump’s opportunism.⁸⁶ Secretary Clintons exacerbated this trend in neglecting those states, save only Pennsylvania, because she took them for granted.⁸⁷ Her extensive efforts in Pennsylvania were futile due to a cultural backlash from blue-collar voters who expressed strong economic pessimism and anxiety over the cultural change in America.⁸⁸ This change is largely attributed to Democrats, whom Secretary Clinton personified, and the increased pervasiveness of progressive cosmopolitan values.⁸⁹ This is an objective factor that one does not hear from the Democratic establishment, nor leftist pundits. Secretary Clinton lost the voters of those blue-states though her own efforts (or lack thereof) and those of the Democratic Party, and making claims of Russian influence are unneeded and dubious at best.⁹⁰ To be sure, the Democratic Party lost votes due to the media fall-out, especially among supports of Senator Sanders. The key factors to consider however are; the number of votes lost, and in which states they were lost. In these states, it seems clear enough that Secretary Clinton was going to lose anyway, namely because of a blue-collar backlash. If it were to be conceded, for the sake of fairness, that she would have won Michigan (lost by .3%) and Wisconsin (lost by .7%) if not for the email hack and James Comey letter, the result of the election remains the same.

84 Edward McClelland, “The Rust Belt was turning red already. Donald Trump just pushed it along.” *The Washington Post*, November 9, 2016

85 Silver, “There is no ‘Blue Wall.’”

86 McClelland, “The Rust Belt was turning red already. Donald Trump just pushed it along.”

87 Ronald Brownstein, “How the Rustbelt Paved Trump’s Road to Victory.” *The Atlantic*, November 10, 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/11/trumps-road-to-victory/507203/>

88 *Ibid.*

89 Brownstein, “How the Rustbelt Paved Trump’s Road to Victory.”

90 Ryan C. Maness and Brandon Valeriano, “Did Russian hackers elect the U.S. president? Don’t believe the hype.” *The Washington Post*, November 24, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/11/24/did-russian-hackers-elect-the-u-s-president-dont-believe-the-hype/?utm_term=.f47bff2663d5

Mr. Trump winning the male vote is evidence that gender was a factor in his win.⁹¹ Furthermore, whites were the only race in which Trump won both male and female voters, making race an apparent factor as well.⁹² Neither of these facts, however, are as telling as they appear. While Mr. Trump won the male vote, it was not by a huge margin. Mr. Trump won 53% compared to Secretary Clinton's 41% which is strikingly similar to past elections: Mitt Romney's 53% to Former President Obama's 45% in 2012; President George W. Bush's 55% to John Kerry's 44% in 2004; and the most similar, President Bush's 53% to Vice President Al Gore's 42% in 2000.⁹³ Since 2000, the only election that saw a near-even split among the male vote was between Senators Barack Obama and John McCain in 2008 with 49% and 48%, respectively.⁹⁴ While Mr. Trump's 12-point spread was the largest of these elections, it was not terribly so, and follows the pattern of recent trends. Given this fact, the claim that gender was a decisive factor in Mr. Trump's win is doubtful, at best.

Race, too, seems like an obvious answer but again the data hardly supports this. Non-white women and men, whether educated or not, are less trusting of Secretary Clinton than whites of the same category.⁹⁵ It might be tempting to dismiss this as an irrelevant factoid, but the voting results do not reflect the hysteria of racism allegations. Trump did better with each minority group than Mitt Romney in 2012, and better with the Black vote than Senator John McCain in 2008.⁹⁶ In fact, the only race that Mr. Trump did worse with than Romney was the white vote, ironically.⁹⁷ While it is true that Mitt Romney's performance with minorities is not exactly the gold standard for Republican candidates, the fact that he did worse in that regard than Mr. Trump discredits the race argument. Russian interference, gender, and race certainly played a role in Mr. Trump's victory, but in reality, these were mere proximate-factors. In order to properly analyze the Presidential election results, ultimate-factors must be examined. These ultimate-factors include; demographics, the troubled

91 Jon Huang et. al, "Election 2016: Exit Polls."

92 *Ibid.*

93 Jon Huang et. al, "Election 2016: Exit Polls."

94 *Ibid.*

95 "Hating Hillary," *The Economist*, October 22, 2016, <http://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21709053-americas-probable-next-president-deeply-reviled-why-hating-hillary>

96 Jon Huang et. al, "Election 2016: Exit Polls."

97 *Ibid.*

state of the Democratic Party, a backlash against the American left, Middle America's resentment, and legions of disillusioned Americans.

Demographics

Mr. Trump emerged victorious because he paid close attention to a crucial detail that was overlooked by the Democratic Party: demographics. The Democratic Party pursued a platform of inclusivity and diversity in order to appeal to a broader base and to keep pace with social change, yet they overlooked the white working-class.⁹⁸ The Democrats underestimated how much of their base was made up of this principle demographic, thinking that their gains with minority votes would make up for the white votes they were losing to Mr. Trump, and they were wrong.⁹⁹ The party seemed unaware of the extent to which Middle America was repulsed by their cosmopolitan liberal message, inadvertently pushing them into the arms of populist rhetoric. Perhaps, Democrats were insulated by their mainstream success in the media and favorable polling. Secretary Clinton had an overwhelming number of supporters, yet her voting base is concentrated in "Mega-Cities," those with a population of over 5 million.¹⁰⁰ Secretary Clinton won the major population centers by the greatest margins in recent Democratic history, towering over Mr. Trump by 30 points in almost every Mega-City.¹⁰¹ Once all the votes were counted, it became apparent that she had won the 100 most populous counties by an impressive 12.6 million votes – the greatest spread in any Presidential election.¹⁰² The numbers are not enough however, as a geographical dimension is critical to understanding the American electoral process.¹⁰³

Due to how the Electoral College is designed, a presidential candidate must have broad support among many states in order to win enough electoral votes to secure the presidency. States win the election, not the popular vote. Secretary Clinton had the numbers, but she did not have the broad state support. The Democratic coalition had failed to entice the diverse voting block it thought it had among less populated counties, namely in rural America.¹⁰⁴ Amongst a

98 Cohn, "Why Trump Won: Working-Class Whites."

99 *Ibid.*

100 Sean Trende and David Byler, "How Trump Won: Conclusions." *RealClear Politics*, January 20, 2017, http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2017/01/20/how_trump_won_-_conclusions_132846.html

101 *Ibid.*

102 Brownstein, "How the Rustbelt Paved Trump's Road to Victory."

103 Trende and Byler, "How Trump Won: Conclusions."

104 Brownstein, "How the Rustbelt Paved Trump's Road to Victory."

sea of red-counties in the nation's interior, there were blue islands from where Secretary Clinton could find support, but everywhere else, only contempt. An exemplification of this was her devastating "oops moment" at a CNN town hall on March 13, 2016 where she failed to properly articulate what she meant by: "we're going to put a lot of coal miners and coal companies out of business."¹⁰⁵ Regardless of the message she intended to convey, Clinton ended up alienating huge swaths of blue-collar America with that singular comment.¹⁰⁶ In rural America, the Clinton name became a byword for unwanted change and economic hardship. This ensured that she would not get the blue-collar vote, which is one of the biggest in the country and the most geographically widespread. Instead, these voters would turn to those who claimed to speak for "ordinary folk" and who would exalt their virtues where rhetoric coincides with the march of populism.¹⁰⁷ On a geographical basis, Secretary Clinton simply had little support and many enemies – many of whom were flocking to Mr. Trump.¹⁰⁸ Mr. Trump appealed to a geographically broader base of Americans than Secretary Clinton, who has been accused by this same base of either ignoring or alienating them.

These demographic and geographic facts reveal an America deeply divided. Americans have usually been divided along ideological party lines, especially during contentious election seasons, but this election has revealed the division between city and country, and urban and rural.¹⁰⁹ Ultimately, Americans are now sharply divided on three fronts: ideology, culture, and geography. Mr. Trump and Senator Sanders were the only candidates astutely aware of this, and sought to exploit the issue. Secretary Clinton ultimately failed to capitalize on much of the pain felt by her base and instead alienated large swaths of the American voters, whether Democrat, Republican, or neither. Such a failure is emblematic of wider problems that the Democratic Party is facing.

105 Lauren Carroll, "In context: Hillary Clinton's comments about coal jobs." *Politico*, May 10, 2016, <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/article/2016/may/10/context-hillary-clintons-comments-about-coal-jobs/>

106 Daniel Strauss, "Clinton haunted by coal country comment." *Politico*, May 10, 2016, <http://www.politico.com/story/2016/05/sanders-looking-to-rack-up-west-virginia-win-over-clinton-222952>

107 Inglehart and Norris, "Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic Haves and Cultural Backlash." 6-7.

108 Cohn, "Why Trump Won: Working-Class Whites."

109 Brownstein, "How the Rustbelt Paved Trump's Road to Victory."

Democratic Party in Trouble

There are a growing number of disillusioned Democrats who are either leaving the party, voting elsewhere, or not voting enthusiastically.¹¹⁰ The content of John Podesta's emails, released by WikiLeaks, revealed that the party was being run by elitists, the corrupted wealthy, and snobbish career politicians who were becoming increasingly out-of-touch.¹¹¹ Even before this revelation, however, Michael Moore had warned of the "Depressed Bernie Voter" who would negatively affect the outcome of the election by dropping their support for the Democratic candidate.¹¹² Moore warned that this would result in a net-loss of campaign volunteers, activists, and enthusiastic voters who are more likely to encourage others to vote.¹¹³ After deferring to Secretary Clinton, and initially refusing to criticize the Democratic Party, Senator Sanders has finally opened up about his true feeling towards the party; disappointment and frustration.¹¹⁴ He stated, "there are people in this country who are hurting, and they are hurting terribly... and for years they looked to the Democratic Party, which at one time was the party of working people, and they looked and they looked and they looked and they got nothing in return. And out of desperation, they turned to Mr. Trump."¹¹⁵ The Democratic Party has lost touch with its roots and sold-out to big-business and Wall Street, which is a sharp contrast to its historic leanings as "The Party of the People."¹¹⁶ Many who were disillusioned with Democrats looked for someone who would speak for them, the "ordinary" Americans. Some found a voice through Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson and Green Party candidate Jill Stein, but as Senator Sanders said, many turned to Mr. Trump.

The Democratic Party is split, and a growing number are dissatisfied with the establishment. This can be seen with the controversial election of Representative Nancy Pelosi as House Minority Leader, which has shown deep divisions within

110 Michael Moore, "5 Reasons Trump will win." *MichaelMoore.com*, July 20 2016, <http://michaelmoore.com/trumpwillwin/>

111 Victor Hanson, "Why Trump Won." *Hoover Institution*, November 11, 2016, <http://www.hoover.org/research/why-trump-won>

112 Moore, "5 Reasons Trump will win."

113 Moore, "5 Reasons Trump will win."

114 Sainato, "Bernie Sanders Finally Blames Establishment Dems for Turmp Victory."

115 *Ibid.*

116 Sainato, "Bernie Sanders Finally Blames Establishment Dems for Turmp Victory."

the party itself.¹¹⁷ Cenk Uygur, famous for his non-mainstream progressive commentary via The Young Turks video series, launched the “Justice Democrats” campaign a week after Mr. Trump’s inauguration in order to uproot “corporate democrats” and replace them with “true” progressives.¹¹⁸ The new wing of the party is falling behind Senator Sanders and now spurred by Representative Pelosi’s election, taking aim at the establishment.¹¹⁹ It is too early to see if this wing will prove to be effective, but the Democratic Party is in need of sweeping reform and a break from the status quo. If the fracturing of the Democratic Party is not enough of an incentive to reform, then a broader backlash should be.

Backlash Against the Left

An overlooked factor in the election’s outcome is the general sense of anger towards the American left. On one hand, there is a cultural-backlash from traditionalist Americans who feel their values and ways of life are under siege by the politically correct and cosmopolitan values of modern progressives.¹²⁰ On the other hand, there is a broader and less serious backlash against modern liberal discourse, which seems consumed by social justice and identity-politics.¹²¹ Even broader is the perception of liberals’ smugness, which has increasingly become a turn-off for many Americans.¹²² Often times, especially on social media, disagreeing with a progressive talking point is an invitation to scorn, belittlement, and even harassment. This has pushed many away from the left and into the arms of Mr. Trump who openly condemns this phenomenon.

Years of needless antagonization over singular issues drove away many would-be-allies of the progressive cause, some of whom were angry or even

117 Paul Kane and Ed O’Keefe, “Nancy Pelosi chosen again as House Democratic leader — but tally suggests deep division.” *The Washington Post*, November 30, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/wp/2016/11/30/nancy-pelosis-biggest-leadership-challenge-might-be-beating-expectations/?utm_term=.18b39c59258c

118 David Weigel, “Progressives launch ‘Justice Democrats’ to counter party’s ‘corporate’ legislators.” *The Washington Post*, January 23, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/postpolitics/wp/2017/01/23/progressives-launch-justice-democrats-to-counter-primary-corporate-legislators/?utm_term=.82bfb92fa3d

119 *Ibid.*

120 Inglehart and Norris, “Trump, Brexit, and the rise of Populism.” 14-15.

121 Elliot Hamilton, “Liberals Are Starting To Reject Leftist Identity Politics. Time To Unite Against It.” *The DailyWire*, November 30, 2016. <http://www.dailywire.com/news/11219/liberals-are-starting-reject-leftist-identity-elliott-hamilton#>

122 Emmett Rensin, “The smug style in American Liberalism.” *Vox*, April 21, 2016, <http://www.vox.com/2016/4/21/11451378/smug-american-liberalism>

infuriated by the kind of belittlement and harassment they had received.¹²³ British anti-Islamist activist Maajid Nawaz took issue with this in his 2012 book, *Radical: My Journey out of Islamist Extremism*, where he coined the term “regressive left.”¹²⁴ He describes “regressive leftists” as “well-meaning liberals and ideologically driven leftists” who naïvely and “ignorantly pandered to” Islamists, aiding the acceptance of Islamist ideology,¹²⁵ while reactively harassing those who are critical of it.¹²⁶ The term is used more broadly today in reference to reactionary social justice activism, after being popularized by commentators such as Bill Maher and Dave Rubin, and academics such as Richard Dawkins and Sam Harris.

Bill Maher, the controversial “politically incorrect” comedian has taken issue with this facet of American liberalism for over a decade now, but more so recently. He has gone so far as to blame Secretary Clinton’s loss on those leftists who antagonized too many, in zealous fits of outrage.¹²⁷ While previously being interviewed on Maher’s show *Real Time with Bill Maher* in October, 2015, Richard Dawkins expressed similar disdain towards these “regressive leftists” for smug attitudes, abrasive tactics, naivety, and hypocrisy on key issues.¹²⁸ Sam Harris, a neurologist and philosopher, was harassed for months after actor and filmmaker, Ben Affleck, accused him of racism while Harris and Maher were criticizing Islam on *Real Time*.¹²⁹ For that same conversation, students from the University of Berkley started a petition to disinvite Bill Maher from speaking at the University’s graduation ceremony in 2014, accusing him of being a “racist and bigot.”¹³⁰ Maher and Harris argue that liberalism needs to be saved

123 Hanson, “Why Trump Won.”

124 Maajid Nawaz, *Radical: My Journey out of Islamist Extremism*. London: WH Allen, 2012, 210.

125 *Ibid.*

126 *Ibid.*, 251.

127 Bill Maher, “Stop Apologizing.” *Real Time with Bill Maher*, January 27, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JaC1-U8LIY0&t=10s>

128 Josh Feldman, “Bill Maher, Richard Dawkins Rip ‘Regressive Leftists’ Giving a ‘Free Pass’ to Islam.” *Mediaite.com*, October 2, 2015. <http://www.mediaite.com/tv/bill-maher-richard-dawkins-rip-regressive-leftists-giving-a-free-pass-to-islam/>

129 Guy P. Harrison, “Deconstructing the Ben Affleck-Sam Harris Cage Fight.” *Psychology Today*, October 12, 2014, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/about-thinking/201410/deconstructing-the-ben-affleck-sam-harris-cage-fight>

130 Cheryl K. Chumley, “Bill Maher faces fire from Berkeley; he’s ‘racist and bigoted,’ students say.” *The Washington Times*, October 28, 2014, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/oct/28/bill-maher-faces-fire-from-berkeley-hes-racist-and/>

from itself, because mainstream modern liberal discourse has betrayed what liberalism once stood for.¹³¹

Adding to this sense of ideological abandonment, the tactics used by so-called “Regressive Leftist” further alienated both centrist and moderate leftist. By engaging in abrasive and at times, crass tactics, this faction has attracted widespread criticism and even condemnation from many who either identify as leftist or used to.¹³² As exemplified by Secretary Clinton’s “basket of deplorables” label, this pushback was either ignored by the Clinton Campaign, or simply written off as venting from bigots, racists, sexists, xenophobes, and/or the resentful white male.¹³³

Middle America’s Resentment

It goes without saying that Mr. Trump won the angry vote, given that 77% of those feeling angry towards the federal government voted for him, compared to 18% voting for Secretary Clinton.¹³⁴ More important than the angry vote, however, was the “resentful white male.”¹³⁵ Michael Moore had also warned about this demographic; suggesting that it was their last stand, and were no longer willing to tolerate the urban and politically correct message of the Democratic Party.¹³⁶ “White America” (Middle America) had largely felt ignored and left behind during the first two years of the Obama presidency, turning frustration from losing the 2008 election into fury.¹³⁷ This was exemplified through the Tea Party’s sweeping victories in the 2010-midterm elections, which took control of the U.S. House of Representatives, and six more Governorships, delivering a devastating defeat to the Democratic Party.¹³⁸ The antagonistic relationships between the Tea Party, the Republican establishment, and the Democratic Party,

131 Sam Harris, “Can Liberalism be Saved from Itself?” *SamHarris.org*, October 7, 2014. <https://www.samharris.org/blog/item/can-liberalism-be-saved-from-itself>

132 Hamilton, “Liberals Are Starting To Reject Leftist Identity Politics. Time To Unite Against It.”

133 *Ibid.*

134 Huang et al, “Election 2016: Exit Polls.”

135 Monica Potts, “Donald Trump Won on White-Male Resentment—but Don’t Confuse That With the Working Class.” *The Nation*, November 10, 2016, <https://www.thenation.com/article/donald-trump-won-on-white-male-resentment-but-dont-confuse-that-with-the-working-class/>.

136 Moore, “5 Reasons Trump will win.”

137 Michael Kirk et al, “Divided States of America.” *PBS: Frontline*, January 18, 2017. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/trumps-road-to-the-white-house/>

138 Kirk et al. “Divided States of America.”

is indicative of deepening divisions within the country itself.¹³⁹ Through the Tea Party, and more recently Mr. Trump, the resentful white male has made it clear that he will no longer be ignored.

Disillusioned Americans Were Ignored—Trump Listened

Under the leadership of Former President Obama, the Democratic Party embarked on a mission to rebrand the country, heal divisions, and create a more inclusive and liberal order.¹⁴⁰ For any number of reasons, many Americans were hesitant to comply, and skeptical of the need to do so. Many were more interested in working on issues like the economy and reforming politics in the capital, with little concern for socially progressive issues.¹⁴¹ The concept of political correctness was making in-roads due to the mainstream success it was achieving in the media.¹⁴² This was akin to an insult-added-to-injury, as many felt they could not escape scorn even in their own homes, because using the Internet and watching TV was an invitation to criticism and mockery.¹⁴³ Many conservative white Americans who already felt disaffected with the Obama administration found no quarter with the corrupt and out-of-touch Republican Party. To many, it felt as if the country and the government was turning on them, and the indignation this inflamed became too much to bear.¹⁴⁴ The Democratic Party did not listen to them and the Republican Party did not listen, so many felt that they did not truly have a voice. This changed when Mr. Trump seized an opportunity, and exploited angry public sentiment to suit his own cause.

In early 2011, tensions were high in the capital, as they were across the country. On, April 13, 2011 Former President Obama gave a speech to Congress in which he decried Representative Paul Ryan's proposed economic plan, not knowing that Ryan himself was sitting in the front row.¹⁴⁵ The Republican establishment, the Tea Party, and much of the far-right were outraged by this insult, and so the uneasy relationship between the two sides reached a boiling point, turning into an outright political war.¹⁴⁶ Mr. Trump, who had been sitting

139 *Ibid.*

140 Kirk et al. "Divided States of America."

141 Michael Kirk et al, "Trump's Road to the White House." *PBS: Frontline*, January 24, 2017. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/trumps-road-to-the-white-house/>

142 *Ibid.*

143 *Ibid.*

144 Sainato, "Bernie Sanders Finally blames Establishment Dems for Trump Victory."

145 Kirk et al, "Divided States of America."

146 *Ibid.*

on the sidelines looking for a controversy to exploit—had finally found one.¹⁴⁷ Mr. Trump used his celebrity status to exploit the issue and in doing so, created a foothold in the political arena. He capitalized on the anger towards Former President Obama by giving air to the “birther conspiracy,” in which many from the far-right fringe questioned whether Mr. Obama was truly born a U.S. citizen.¹⁴⁸ With Mr. Trump peddling it, this conspiracy theory would become mainstream overnight.¹⁴⁹ Mr. Trump knew that many Americans, namely white and conservative, questioned the legitimacy of Former President Obama, so he took it upon himself to vocalize this grievance on behalf of the many.¹⁵⁰ He initially found little success, but plenty of criticism.

Years later in 2015, Mr. Trump announced his candidacy in an already contentious election. With his straightforward talk, anti-political correctness sentiments, and unconventional style, Mr. Trump brought something new to the political arena. Many Americans who were fed up with both parties, the direction the country was headed, and economic woes would soon find a voice through Mr. Trump.¹⁵¹ He openly rejected political “rules,” decried social norms that censored unsavory speech, lambasted his opposition in an unconventional manner, and refused to apologize for any of it. While the media, both parties, and much of the public was taken aback by this, many greeted it with relief. The political climate seemed too much like an artificial game that was played by careerist politicians for their own benefit, at the expense of every day Americans. Many were tired of the system and wanted something else entirely. To this end, Mr. Trump would pick up the cause of conservative Americans who felt neglected and abused, expertly feeding off their angry energy to present his platform as their own.¹⁵² From this they felt as though they finally had found someone who understands them and “just gets it.” Mr. Trump promised to fight for them, take on corrupt politicians and toxic corporate influence, relieve their economic anxieties, and revamp their cultural dominance. Mr. Trump astutely formed a populist platform that greatly appealed to Middle America, giving them the cause and leader they had been yearning for. Regardless of how Americans feel about the tumultuous

147 *Ibid.*

148 *Ibid.*

149 *Ibid.*

150 Kirk et al. “Divided States of America.”

151 Kirk et al. “Trump’s Road to the White House.”

152 Kirk et al. “Trump’s Road to the White House.”

early months of the Trump presidency, most can currently agree that some reform is needed, whether in support or opposition of the administration.

What's to be Done

Mr. Trump is a product of the times and the result of deep, antagonistic relationships between divided Americans. He is symptomatic of a Republic in trouble, and one that needs urgent attention if a crisis is to be avoided. Mr. Trump is not the dreadful threat to democracy that he is made out to be, instead he is an opportunist who exploited public sentiment and rode a wave of anger into the White House. Mr. Trump will only be relevant if he is relevant, and it is the frustration and disillusion of many that makes him so. That is what needs to be fixed, because after Mr. Trump, another populist may emerge to do just as he has done. If, however, the structural and societal reforms that we need are implemented, then there will be no need for one. To that end, there are several needed reforms, three of which should be implemented in the immediate future.

First and foremost, the many problems surrounding immigration need to be addressed. Broken systems of integration must be fixed, so as to prevent further nativist clamor and to create a sense of shared community.¹⁵³ Public officials and leaders need to more adequately address the real concerns of dealing with foreigners that give way to racism and xenophobia – instead of simply accusing people of racism and xenophobia.¹⁵⁴ To this end, a greater education effort must be undertaken so those with xenophobic leanings have greater access to sound facts and the realities of immigration, instead of peddled fears and phobias.¹⁵⁵ Western governments may have to come to the conclusion that too-rapid cultural change can be disastrous, and so such efforts must be more organic and incremental, rather than hasty and forced.¹⁵⁶ This will come with the price of limiting the number of migrants and furthering restrictions of those allowed into the country.¹⁵⁷ Further, policy-makers must realize that the generational divide on immigration is the most significantly pronounced.¹⁵⁸ Millennials must be brought into the fold so that they can take charge and help solve this issue, which is more relevant to them than anything else. The Democratic Party

153 Zakaria, "Populism on the March." 15.

154 *Ibid.*

155 *Ibid.*

156 *Ibid.*

157 *Ibid.*

158 Zakaria, "Populism on the March." 15.

learned a painful lesson on appealing to the youth, and they must not repeat such mistakes if they are serious about reform.

Secondly, Congress needs reform as it has become deeply unrepresentative. One of the primary reasons for this is the influence of money in politics.¹⁵⁹ Vast amounts of money thrown into electoral campaigns have poisoned the system, making special interests the true constituents of elected representatives.¹⁶⁰ While there are some fundamental differences in opinion between Trump, Clinton, and Sanders supporters – they all share the same pain from a dysfunctional government. The disillusion and alienation many Americans feel, largely stems from an unrepresentative Congress. A core aspect of American democracy has been robbed from the people by special interests, and the people need to work together to overcome this.¹⁶¹ Dave Rubin, a political commentator and comedian tweeted a realization that could help heal the entire country, “After all this if we have a clean transition of power, and liberals and conservatives realize we aren’t enemies, the future will be bright.”¹⁶²

Lastly, Americans must spend more time listening to each other, and less time scorning or lecturing one another. Partisan battles have been tried, and have failed. The U.S. identifies with and is divided by the very identities that Former President Obama thought were superficial. If anything is to be changed for the better, Americans must look past partisan leanings and be willing to compromise with “the other,” in order to settle or at least work on problems. Questions over globalization, immigration, health care, and social issues are not going to go away, nor are they going to be resolved through more of the same. A genuine and dedicated effort is needed, and since it is the Democrats who are out of power, the responsibility falls on them.

159 Lawrence Lessig, “The Problem With Congress, and How to Fix It.” *The Atlantic*, August 17, 2016. <https://www.theatlantic.com/video/index/496262/lawrence-lessig-interview/>

160 *Ibid.*

161 *Ibid.*

162 Hamilton, “Liberals Are Starting To Reject Leftist Identity Politics. Time To Unite Against It.”