

Neoliberalism: Hegemonic Rhetorical Legitimacy, Social-
Impact, Crisis, and Spectacle in U.S. Presidencies

By Linette Muhm

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Sociology
California State University Bakersfield
In Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of
Masters of Arts in Sociology

Spring 2017

Copyright

By

Linette Muhm

2017

**CERTIFICATION OF COMPLETION OF ALL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
MASTERS OF ARTS IN SOCIOLOGY
THESIS OPTION**

This is to certify that Linette Muhm Candidate's Name has successfully completed all requirements for the Master of Arts in Sociology.

Under the direction of the following committee:

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. | <u>Rhonda Dugan</u> | <u>Rhonda Dugan</u> | <u>5/3/17</u> |
| | Name of Chair | Signature | Date |
| 2. | <u>Gonzalo Santos</u> | <u>Gonzalo Santos</u> | <u>5/3/17</u> |
| | Name of Member | Signature | Date |
| 3. | <u>Isabella Kasselstrand</u> | <u>Isabella Kasselstrand</u> | <u>5/3/17</u> |
| | Name of Member | Signature | Date |

Title of Thesis or Academic Area Examinations:

Neoliberalism: Hegemonic Rhetorical Legitimacy,
Social-Impact, Crisis, and Spectacle in U.S. Presidencies

Truncated Title of Thesis:

Check if thesis is:

Style used in professional journals of Major discipline
Turabian

Dedication and Acknowledgements

I dedicate this thesis to my parents
for the compassion, discernment, and strength they instilled.

I am eternally grateful to Dr. Gonzalo Santos and Dr. Rhonda Dugan
for generously lending their time, advise, and expertise.

And to Nick Gardner
for the unconditional support and encouragement.

ABSTRACT: Using Gramsci's theory of hegemony, this thesis examines neoliberal ideology as a fragmented hegemon that legitimizes itself through other cultural projects. Using narrative analysis, I produce speech excerpts from the Reagan administration to the Trump administration and discuss their social impact, ideological appeal, and economic appeal towards neoliberalism. Findings on neoliberal culture-projects are revealed through the War on Drugs, Welfare reform, War on Terror, and Immigration policy. In addition, I use Gramscian and Debordian theory to discuss the 2016 presidential election, the present crisis of legitimization, and the prospect of counter-hegemony.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	3
Formation of Neoliberalism	4
Antonio Gramsci and Hegemonic Legitimization	6
Neoliberalism as a Fragmented Hegemon	10
Social Impacts of Neoliberalism	11
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	13
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS / ANALYSIS.....	17
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION	42
Contrasting Neoliberal Culture-Projects with American History	43
Post-Election Lessons Learned	44
Implications for Counter-Hegemony	45
Limitations	46
Future Research	46
References	48

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

According to Antonio Gramsci (1988), hegemonic political discourses propagate from the continually shifting terrains of social relations, economic tensions, and political circumstances of society. In this thesis, I analyze neoliberal ideology as a fragmented form of hegemony that attaches to other cultural narratives to legitimize itself. I demonstrate how cultural narratives have evolved through U.S. presidencies yet retain a continuity of neoliberal undertones. Since hegemonic ideologies seek constant reproduction to remain legitimate, new cultural narratives emerge and produce varying social consequences of racism, sexism, and xenophobia toward subaltern groups. During every presidential cycle, an opportunity arises to fine-tune political discourses to reinforce consent and legitimacy towards neoliberalism. Beginning with the Reagan administration to the Trump administration, I analyzed hegemonic narratives to discuss their neoliberal undertones and their social consequences, using Gramsci's concepts of hegemony, organic crisis, intellectualism, and consent vs coercion. Towards the end of this study, I use Guy Debord's theory of political spectacle to discuss the current state of neoliberalism in the Trump administration and the prospect of a future counter-hegemony.

The topic of neoliberalism has resurfaced in recent years as a point of interest and concern in the modern U.S. political-economy. While many have explored the characteristics of neoliberalism as a hegemonic force, there is a lack of discursive understanding that specifies the ways in which neoliberalism behaves fragmentally in social and cultural spheres. Understanding how neoliberalism became hegemonic, retained legitimacy, and endures crisis is significant to the current political climate that is occurring in the U.S. Many other studies exist on the separate eras of neoliberalism; however, an overview of neoliberalism, its fragmentary behavior, and its

most recent social manifestation is currently lacking in the existing body of research. This study attempts to merge political and cultural fields of sociology by bridging the gaps between the theory of neoliberal hegemony and the social consequences in practice of neoliberalism using qualitative content analysis.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review defines neoliberalism and briefly explores its historical formation through U.S. presidencies. Then, it outlines Antonio Gramsci's concepts that serve as a theoretical framework in this thesis. Lastly, it provides an overview of past studies on the social impact of neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism Defined

Neoliberalism is a political ideology that encompasses the economic sphere and legislative action towards a deregulated free-market economy with minimal government intervention. The concept was developed by economists Milton Friedman (1962) and Friedrich von Hayek (1976) and instituted by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher with the view that “individual liberty and freedom are the high point of civilization [and] can best be protected and achieved by an institutional structure made up of strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade, [for] a world in which individual initiative can flourish” (Harvey 2005). In practice, the term is used to describe the conservative agendas implemented by these key figures, including practices of globalization, privatization, minimal government, and supply-side economics (Peck 2014). Jamie Peck describes the term “neoliberalism” as a stand-in for “political-economic zeitgeist” that empirically serves the analysis of social relations and economic exploitation (Peck 2014:28).

As Henry Giroux (2004: 52) defines it:

“Neoliberalism is not simply an economic policy designed to cut government spending, pursue free-trade policies, and free market forces from government regulations; it is also a political philosophy and ideology that affects every dimension of social life.”

Formation of Neoliberalism

Understanding the background of neoliberalism is necessary when attempting to understand the cultural projects that legitimize and articulate the neoliberal model. Each presidency has contributed to the construction of neoliberalism in some incremental way.

Historically, neoliberal ideology in the U.S began to gain traction in the 1950s. Andrew Kopkind (1983) recounts the rhetorical design of cold-war-liberalism and the ideological shift that occurred in civil and political society. According to Kopkind, the profound impact of the cold war thrashed the exercise and embrace of progressive politics; where rebellion and tender-mindedness transformed into conformity and hard-heartedness (Kopkind 1983:503). Cold-war-liberalism produced a full-fledged ideological attack on the left with accusations of Stalinist-appeals. The foundational platform of cold-war-liberalism was built upon an all-encompassing embrace of patriotism and loyalty:

“In the 1950s, the working definition was simple: allegiance to the United States and not to the Soviet Union. The cold war liberals justified the expulsion of Communists and fellow travelers from American institutional life—from labor unions, veterans’ groups, political parties, civil liberties organizations, universities, the media, the entertainment industry and, of course, government at every level - on the ground that the leftists were ‘under the discipline’ of a foreign, hostile power” (Kopkind 1983:504).

Neoliberalism gained an even stronger hold during economic crisis in the 1970s, ascending through ideological opportunism in more articulated presidential campaigns. Nixon’s presidency marked another significant transition in American politics. His presidency has been credited with dismantling FDR’s democratic coalition from the New Deal era and shifting government to a more conservative coalition. This transition occurred after the post-WWII economy peaked, during the time of the 1973 oil crisis. The Arab oil embargo against the U.S. produced economic stagflation that crippled the economy with high unemployment and high

inflation. This difficult time marked a crisis of legitimization in Keynesian economics (Harvey 2005; Peck 2014).

Keynesian economics was installed as a primary model during the Great Depression. The model gave weight to the idea that the private sector needed to be balanced out by the public sector, especially during times of recession when economic output and performance relied heavily on aggregate demand or total spending in an economy. Such issues were remedied by monetary policy by the Central bank and fiscal policy by the government. However, during the oil crisis and era of stagflation, liberal economics and the Keynesian model fell out of favor. This ushered in the new shift to supply-side classical economics led by Robert Lucas Jr. and Milton Freidman (Harvey 2005; Gray 1998).

Ground-work for neoliberal installment continued to unfold during Gerald Ford's and Jimmy Carter's presidencies, however, a most significant catalyst occurred during Ronald Reagan's presidency. The American economy still suffered from stagflation in the 1980s and Ronald Reagan campaigned under the banner of new leadership as a solution. During his first inaugural address, he urged that "government is not the solution to our problem, government is the problem" (Reagan 1981). Reagan's presidency also received the institutional support of the Heritage Foundation think-tank, who released a 3,000-page manuscript titled "Mandate for Leadership." It served as a guide to conservative governing. Its release came 10 days after Reagan's election, with a copy given to each of Reagan's cabinet members (Haney-Lopez 2014: 66).

According to Fred Block (2003), the technical nature of the new classical economic model alienated the public from any national economic discourse. This gave conservatives an

opportunity to fully impose free-market ideology, ushering in 1980s free-market Reaganomics after the role and size of the government was successfully blamed for the nation's economic troubles. This free-market ideology, termed neoliberalism, has persisted as the norm in U.S. economic policy since. Its installment leads to a continual embrace of privatization of public services, deregulation of the market, and minimization of government and social-safety nets (Peck 2014).

Noam Chomsky (2011) describes one way the neoliberal strategy can be observed today in privatization practices as a transfer of power between the state and market-economy. First, public goods and social resources become defunded to induce a state of chaos and dysfunction. Then, the solution of privatization expediently emerges to remedy the problem. Chomsky notes that this tends to happen specifically to social goods such as public education, social security, health-care and other pillars of a social-democracy because forms of public assistance are incompatible with a market-economy. Chomsky states that consent of such changes is manufactured through carefully crafted narratives that elevate economic independence, decry the nanny-state, and persuade the public that privatization is more efficient.

Antonio Gramsci and Hegemonic Legitimization

Antonio Gramsci developed his ideas during the 1920s and 30s during a period of heightened political revolution in Europe. In Italy, he witnessed the rise of fascism and was sentenced to 20 years in prison for his role as a Communist party leader and political activist. He spent the remainder of his life in prison where he developed most of his writings in "The Prison Notebooks" under the conditions of his deteriorating health (Bates 1975; Davidson 1972).

Antonio Gramsci's timeless writings offer a seamless understanding of the processes that operate to form ideological dominance. Gramsci's concept of hegemony extends our understanding of neoliberalism by conceptualizing how an ideology develops, gains institutional support, and achieves political organization in society. While many decades have passed since Gramsci's contribution, his framework and understanding of hegemony is still relevant to present-day political society. His most famous concept of hegemony serves as the main framework of analysis in this thesis. In addition, his other concepts will supplement my theoretical analysis including: organic and traditional intellectualism, consent vs. coercion and organic crisis.

Hegemonic Installment and Supporting Apparatus: According to Gramsci (1988), hegemony establishes itself in three ways. First, through common-sense ideology referring to the everyday assumptions about the world that are often contradictory and taken for granted. This process involves the cultural and ideological struggle to define the main norms, values, and ideas that we live by daily. Secondly, for these common-sense ideologies to function and be sustained as hegemonic, it must be supplemented by material accommodation for subaltern groups on behalf of the leading classes. In other words, dominant groups must offer compromise and compensation to the most *central interests* of subordinate groups. Third, to sustain these ideological and material forms of hegemony, support from social and political institutions must be involved in the development, reinforcement, and perpetuation of dominant ideologies to form what Gramsci called a hegemonic apparatus (Gramsci and Forgacs 1988; Lears 1985; Ozekin 2004; Woolcock 1985; Strinati 1995). The hegemonic apparatus includes social institutions that aren't legally a part of the state yet help to reproduce hegemony, such as media-outlets, schools, religions, or trade-unions (Ives 2004).

Organic and Traditional Intellectualism: In the *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci (1988) addressed the primary role of organic-intellectuals referring to those who actively attempt to organize or intervene within political processes, actions, or debates. This includes scholars, political activists, politicians, or any form of leadership that stems *directly* from the conditions in which an idea or world-view originates. The concept is contrasted with traditional-intellectuals who are autonomous to the connective conditions and present a more objective understanding of the world that typically serves to legitimize a dominant social group. This contrast is important to understanding the types of narratives that emerge and to what degree they may serve the interests of subaltern groups (those who are subordinated and led within the hegemonic apparatus) or of dominant social groups (those who construct and perpetuate a hegemonic apparatus). Peter Ives describes traditional intellectuals as “‘functionaries’ of the complex mediation whereby ‘social hegemony’ is secured through attaining a seemingly ‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life” (Ives 2004:29). This same idea is famously referred to by Noam Chomsky as “manufactured consent” (Chomsky 1999).

Organic Crisis and Consent vs. Coercion: Gramsci’s (1988) concept of organic crisis refers to the loss of legitimacy and consent. At times, a hegemonic ideology may retain its institutional *dominance* even when it no longer retains a position of *leadership* by social consensus. This notion of retained dominance and loss of leadership directly corresponds to Gramsci’s concepts of consent and coercion as the two main forms in which social power is secured in society. According to Gramsci, attainment of power by way of *dominance* is achieved through coercive force using the political means of the state. Power attained through moral and intellectual *leadership* is achieved through the active or passive consensus of a civil-society including large

portions of subaltern groups. Gramsci noted that hegemony develops from a mixture of both consent and coercion, though with greater emphasis on consent. Gramsci also specifies that sometimes coercion is designed to appear as though it were functioning under consent (Lears 1985, Munck 2010, Nardis and Caruso 2011).

Organic Crisis and Erosion of the Integral State: In combination, the three modes of hegemony (common sense ideology, material accommodation, and institutional support) help contribute to the formation of an integral-state which includes the forms of consent from civil society, coercion from the state, and the hegemonic apparatus of ideological, economic, and institutional control.

If the balance between consent and coercion is disrupted and these three modes of hegemony become unraveled (ideological, economic, or institutional), then an organic-crisis can occur. To qualify as an organic-crisis, it must involve a crisis of representation (or erosion of moral leadership, historical ties, and political institutions). A crisis of representation leads to a loss of leadership and consensus, meaning that the masses no longer believe or accept the dominant ideology. However, the state can still retain dominance through coercion in political society as opposed to achieving consent and leadership through civil-society (Simon and Hall 2002; Strinati 1995).

A fundamental task proposed by Gramsci is to study and identify the efforts of the ruling class that ensure force will appear to be based on the consent of the majority (Gramsci and Forgacs 1988). In other words, understanding attempts to reconstruct hegemonic legitimization by using methods of subtle coercion.

Neoliberalism as a Fragmented Hegemon

In terms of mass ideological consensus in the U.S., the key characteristics of neoliberalism (individualism, competitiveness, and consumerism) have become integrated into the common-sense values of subaltern groups (Peck 2014). As Gramsci suggests, common-sense ideology is necessarily fragmented, incoherent, and inconsistent so it is uneasily challenged. (Strinati 1995). Additionally, neoliberalism has functioned in every major U.S institution since the 1980's (Harvey 2005). While neoliberalism lacks the economic logic to produce economic accommodation as a qualification of hegemony, it can, however, produce other forms of compensation through the nature in which neoliberalism attaches itself to other cultural projects to build social consensus.

Neoliberalism became a part of a larger conservative platform that encompassed other cultural projects such as family-values, Christianity, nationalism, and patriarchal gender-relations (Carbone and Cahn 2011). By associating with these other cultural and social narratives, neoliberalism became accepted and perpetuated at the expense of other social consequences including racism, sexism and religious-persecution in the pursuit of neoliberal initiatives. This neoliberal attachment to cultural projects can occur as traditional intellectuals are produced on all levels of political, social, and economic life, including politicians and media-representatives. Gramsci warned that dominant groups produce their own intellectuals or absorb organic intellectuals to help articulate a hegemonic project. On the use of political acts as cultural objects, Wendy Griswold states that many acts are beyond the role of spectacle of power and into the role of claiming legitimacy (Griswold 2012:176). In the case of neoliberalism, intellectuals articulate its ideology through other cultural projects that are not necessarily a part of the neoliberal project.

Social Impacts of Neoliberalism

There are many studies that explore the social impacts of neoliberal policies using a variety of methodologies. The following six studies expose the nature of predation and hegemonic cover-up found in neoliberal state-craft. Alejandro Grimson (2005) examined xenophobia in Argentina during the 1990s, revealing that anti-immigrant discourses spread by the government's national media was largely exaggerated and sensationalized. "Official discourse blamed immigrants for the country's growing social and economic problems, and the national and local governments responded with similarly anti-immigrant initiatives and policies" (Grimson 2005:1). Grimson's analysis links the social scapegoating used against immigrants to the failure of neoliberal policies in Argentina while his examination of demographic data disproves any relation between crime, unemployment and increased immigration rates.

Philippe Bourgois (2011) conducted ethnographic fieldwork from 1994 to 2007 in San Francisco, studying a group of two dozen homeless drug addicts. Bourgois's analysis provides a first-hand account of the effects of the neoliberal War on Drugs policies as the "full force of the Reagan era cutbacks from the 1980s had trickled down to the street, shredding the already rachitic U.S. welfare safety net" (Bourgois 2011:1). His study examined the surge of incarceration, urban policing and systematic harassment against homeless drug addicts in need of treatment rather than imprisonment.

Loïc Wacquant's (2009) study constructs a comparative analysis explaining how and why neoliberal policy punishes the poor and vulnerable. He demonstrates how punitive policy builds public consensus while media narratives blur the lines between crime, poverty, and immigration as well as continually confusing "insecurity" with "the feeling of insecurity" (Wacquant 2009:3).

Wacquant's study reveals how the War on Drugs and crime served as a scapegoat and hegemonic distraction from the actual sources of unemployment and poverty in neoliberalism.

Justin Turner's (2015) study examines the social impact of neoliberal ideology on America's youth as they become socialized into a culture of consumerism that is strongly connected to race, gender, class, and other links to economic or cultural resources. "Neoliberalism submits youth to the logic of hyper-individualism and disengages them from community and society in general; this, in turn, leaves them more vulnerable to the rising insecurities that have come to accompany this logic" (Turner 2015:18).

Daniel Beland (2007) examines the relationship between President George W. Bush's and Margaret Thatcher's home-ownership narratives and its reinforcement of neoliberal values in individualism and self-reliance. Beland revealed how the narratives also boosted real estate markets, private banking and investment. In a similar vein, James McVey (2015) analyzed President Obama's State of the Union Address speech in 2011, revealing new terminology that covertly reframed the economic outcomes of neoliberal policy in the 2008 market-failure.

These findings provide a foundational basis for the relationship between neoliberal ideology, its social impacts and its rhetorical manifestations. As demonstrated, the relationship can be observed through a variety of methodologies, However, a content analysis of this scale has not yet been found in the existing literature. My thesis attempts to extend the understanding of social impact and rhetorical themes conducted by presidents over the past 27 years. The time-frame I have chosen is useful in examining the broader evolution, transformation, and continuity of neoliberal hegemony, a perspective that is currently absent from the existing body of research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Critical Discourse Studies: There is a wide range of approaches to discourse studies in academia. This thesis engages the approach of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), a methodological style that extends beyond identifying language categories and into a more interdisciplinary pursuit that examines linguistic manifestations of ideology and power by treating (written, spoken or visual) language as a social act (Ives 2004):

“Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people” (Wodok 2016: 6).

In addition, the CDS methodology allows researchers to “attempt to make their own positions and interests explicit while retaining their respective scientific methodologies and while remaining self-reflective of their own research process” (Wodok 2016: 3). The CDS methodology was developed and defined by critical theorists Michael Foucault, Jurgen Habermas, Ernesto Laclau and several others.

Since neoliberal ideology gained a firm footing in the 1980s, I began my analysis with the Reagan presidency and examined every consecutive presidency since then during the reign of neoliberalism. Each presidency was examined for cultural or social agendas that produced any ideological-reinforcement, economic-interests, or negative social-implication. My methodological approach in this study uses qualitative content analysis since it allows for an in-depth examination of language and rhetoric.

Data Source: Each presidency since the 1980s was examined using primary sources and supplementary academic peer-reviewed accounts of presidential agendas. Presidential speeches,

interviews, legislative actions, and press releases were examined over a total span of 6 weeks. Nearly 90 primary sources were found in the data base constructed by University California Santa Barbara (UCSB), known as the “American Presidency Project” at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/index.php>. Other items such as televised speeches or news interviews were obtained using online news sources and YouTube. These sources were primarily used to find more recent interviews and speeches for my analysis on the Obama and Trump administrations.

The UCSB database provides a search function that allowed me to input keywords and narrow my search to specific presidents. Using the search function, I inputted keywords such as “welfare”, “drug war”, “war on terror”, “immigration” and any related synonyms of social topics that served to reveal data on presidential narratives or agendas. Likewise, YouTube’s search function was utilized in a similar manner to source presidential interviews and speeches with social agenda topics.

Coding Technique: The examined items were indexed using a selective coding method. The core category employed in my analysis first designated items with a social-appeal. This included any inference or relation to gender, race, or religion. When a hidden or disguised appeal was suspected, it was also coded as a social-appeal even when a direct inference to race or gender wasn’t made obvious. These specific judgments were informed by supplemental studies on presidential agendas, such as Reagan’s “welfare queen” archetype. This was a necessary process since appeals to race and gender aren’t always politically correct enough for presidents to address directly. This phenomenon relates to Ian Haney Lopez’s (2014) concept of “dog-whistles” which identifies covert political rhetoric with hidden racial appeals. In a similar vein,

my analysis relates to Bonilla-Silva's conception of colorblind racism which examines hidden racial bias that is "subtle, institutionalized, and seemingly nonracial" (Bonilla-Silva 2010).

The three relational categories used in conjunction with the core category of social-appeal were ideological-appeal, economic-appeal, and social impact. In essence, I have adapted Ian Haney Lopez's "dog-whistle" concept to include rhetoric that also contains hidden ideological, economic appeal, and varying forms of social impact which I am calling neoliberal culture-projects. Any presidential agenda or narrative that met the following criteria was indexed as a neoliberal culture-project.

Ideological-Appeal: A presidential narrative or initiative was coded for ideological-appeal if it manifested (overtly or covertly) any values that are associated with neoliberalism, such as individuality, self-reliance, freedom, or competitiveness. The ideological value criteria are based on the neoliberal values defined by Harvey (2005: 31) and Peck (2014).

Economic-Appeal: A presidential narrative or initiative was coded for economic-appeal if it produced any major form of benefit to the private sector, marketization of the economy, or privatization of public services. The economic value criteria are based on the neoliberal economic values defined by Peck (2014: 28) and Giroux (2004: 52).

Social-Impact: If a presidential narrative or initiative produced an (overt or covert) social-implication such as a loss of civil liberty, stigmatization of identity, loss of social protection, targeted criminalization, or other social effects associated with neoliberalism, then it was coded as a social-impact. The criteria for determining neoliberal social impacts are defined by Chomsky (2011) and Wacquant (2009).

Neoliberal Culture-Project: When all three of the above criteria were satisfied by a narrative or agenda, revealing a form of ideological appeal, economic appeal, and social impact, then it was coded as a neoliberal culture-project. The concept of the neoliberal culture-project is adapted from Ian Haney-Lopez's (2014) concept of political "dog-whistles."

Any culture-project that exhibits characteristics of the three criteria above are discussed more in depth in terms of its meaning and implication. While every presidential speech or agenda most certainly has some form of social and economic impact, the purpose of identifying these culture-projects is to suggest that the legitimization of neoliberalism can create even more of an impact towards certain subaltern groups than others. In other words, some presidential agendas that affirm neoliberalism can create an impact of multiple jeopardy towards certain social groups of various religions, ethnicity, race, gender and sex (Collins 2013).

Additionally, examples that relate to Antonio Gramsci's concepts of organic vs. traditional intellectualism, consent vs. coercion, the hegemonic apparatus, and organic crisis are discussed as they become evident and applicable in my analysis of presidential culture-projects.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS / ANALYSIS

This section includes the narrative analysis from each presidency ranging from the Reagan administration to the Trump administration. Each presidency's section includes presidential speech excerpts, a Gramscian analysis of neoliberal culture-projects, and other supportive findings that were necessary when the culture-project was more covert and less quotable. The chapter ends with an analysis of the 2016 presidential election, President Trump's speech excerpts, and his use of political spectacle in the ongoing crisis of legitimization.

Ronald Reagan Presidency: "Welfare Queen" and "War on Drugs"

As the first presidency that fully legitimized and paraded neoliberal ideology, it can hardly be charged with producing a covert neoliberal project. President Reagan's speeches and addresses overflowed with neoliberal sentiments, calls for privatization, and reduction of government. On March 15, 1982, he addressed a joint session of Tennessee State Legislature in Nashville describing taxation in government, sentiments that were used repeatedly to legitimize tax-cuts across the board to fit his model of trickle-down-economics:

"Oppressive taxation is like a ball and chain on our economy, weighing it down by discouraging initiative, by punishing hard work, by making investment no longer worth the risk... Well, the American people are already taxed up to their eyeballs. Our budget deficit didn't come about because we're not taxing enough; we've got a deficit because we spend too much."

An example of a neoliberal culture-project is found in President Reagan's welfare reform agenda. While campaigning in Gilford, New Hampshire in 1976, Reagan introduced his archetype of the Welfare Queen. He asserted that:

"There's a woman in Chicago. She has 80 names, 30 addresses, 12 Social Security cards and is collecting veterans' benefits on four non-existing deceased husbands... And she's collecting Social Security on her cards. She's got Medicaid, getting food stamps and she

is collecting welfare under each of her names. Her tax-free cash income alone is over \$150,000.”

Reagan’s notion of welfare abuse and the undeserving poor became a recurring theme in his speeches after being elected president. The appeal was used to justify budget cuts in welfare, transforming them into block grants and cutting food stamps. In his address to Congress on February 18, 1981, he states:

“The Food Stamp program will be restored to its original purpose, to assist those without resources to purchase sufficient nutritional food. We will, however, save \$1.8 billion in fiscal year 1982 by removing from eligibility those who are not in real need or who are abusing the program.”

In the same speech, he states:

“Adding to our troubles is a mass of regulations imposed on the shopkeeper, the farmer, the craftsman, professionals, and major industry that is estimated to add \$100 billion to the price of the things we buy, and it reduces our ability to produce.”

Reagan’s tax-cut initiatives were often framed directly towards working-classes, contrary to his trickle-down economic model. As his fiscal priorities shifted from the public sector to the private sector, the basis for his welfare abuse claims were criticized as unfounded and exaggerated at best. A *New York Times* news article from February 15, 1976 described how Reagan’s anecdote based on Miss Taylor of Chicago, the welfare queen, didn’t check out.

“After a series of indictments each one of which was replaced by another indictment, winnowing down the number of charges, Miss Taylor is now charged with using not 80 aliases but four. The amount the state is charging that she received from her alleged fraud is not \$150,000 but \$3,000.”

This culture-project produced stigmas that were both racialized and gendered, with consequences affecting real families in need of support. Reagan successfully attached the face of the welfare queen to black women, enabling him to convince the nation that welfare was a fraudulent and threatening public service produced by wasteful government spending (Boris 2007). While racial reproach intensified against the “undeserving” poor, Reagan’s campaign against welfare legitimized massive tax cuts by convincing the public that the real threat to their lives was an indulgent government and not concentrated wealth. Additionally, the narrative

flaunted values of self-reliance, independence, and economic austerity. While speaking on the core of “American greatness” in his state of the union address on January 27, 1987, Reagan stated:

“The responsibility of freedom presses us towards higher knowledge and, I believe, moral and spiritual greatness. Through lower taxes and smaller government, government has its ways of freeing people's spirits. But only we, each of us, can let the spirit soar against our own individual standards. Excellence is what makes freedom ring. And isn't that what we do best?”

Reagan’s second neoliberal culture-project didn’t originate during Reagan’s presidency, it formed during the presidency of his predecessor, Richard Nixon. However, the issue was continually exasperated by Reagan and his successors up to the Clinton administration. Under Reagan, the War on Drugs grew fiercer, allowing Reagan to de-emphasize punishment of white-collar crime and divert federal efforts onto capturing “menaces to society” for street-crime (Haney-Lopez 2014). In his proclamation of National Drug Abuse Education Week on November 1, 1983, Reagan’s rhetoric in the war on drugs is potent:

“Drug abuse in the United States continues to be a major threat to the future of our Nation. Millions of our citizens are risking their health and their future by abusing drugs. The effects are clearly demonstrated by the tragic reports in daily news accounts of innocent people killed by drunk drivers, death by overdose, drug-related murders, drug smuggling, and other public outrages. Less obvious, but more pervasive, are the individual tragedies which destroy a person or family and which may cause loss of a job, interruption of schooling, and a reduction in our Nation's productivity.”

This was during a time when the public opinion polls found that Americans who saw drug abuse as the nation's “number one problem” was just 2 to 6 percent (Drug Policy Alliance 2017). Regardless, this culture-project led to higher rates of racial-incarceration against black and hispanic men while health care for drug treatment plunged, creating budget cuts on the national institute of drug abuse [\$274 to \$57 million] and anti-drug funding for the department of education [\$14 to \$3 million] (Haney-López 2014).

Both of Reagan's cultural projects promoted the ideology and economic model of neoliberalism at great expense to some of the most vulnerable subaltern groups in America. Often, Reagan encouraged ideals of American exceptionalism to promote the neoliberal agenda. Reagan believed his administration to be a vital turning point in America's history, and indeed his policies have transformed global economic predation and public health. In his remarks to his administration on December 13, 1988, towards the end of his presidency, Reagan stated:

“We all know that what has been at stake during our time in Washington is the course of an ancient and enduring struggle, a struggle in which we Americans have a special place. At its edges, this struggle is not so much between good and evil, between absolute freedom and immediate slavery; but between hope and despair, between those who shoulder the promise and the burden of freedom and those who would—in the name of a false determinism—take us a mile or two more down what Friedrich Hayek called the road to serfdom. History records a few significant turning points in this epic struggle, and surely in years to come it will tell that one of those turning points came when, after a generation of gestation, a revolution of ideas became a revolution of governance on January 20, 1981.”

In Gramscian terms, Reagan's narrative in the War on Drugs and welfare reform constitute as a form a subtle coercion appearing under a veil of consent. This is due to emphasis and exaggeration produced on the topics of drug abuse and welfare abuse despite contradicting public opinion polls and the specifics surrounding Miss Taylor's welfare case. For Reagan to suggest that drug abuse and welfare abuse were more pervasive than they actually were was an act of political deception. The spectacle of his culture-projects attempted to legitimize neoliberalism through the institutional support of privatized prisons, public education programs, and private sector tax-breaks beneficiaries, which birthed a supportive neoliberal hegemonic apparatus.

Additionally, Reagan's speeches serve as an example of organic intellectualism absorbed into the sphere of traditional intellectualism, helping to articulate the neoliberal model. In his speeches, Reagan referenced growing up during the Great Depression, enduring family hardships (Reagan 1982) as an attempt to relate to the vast number of unemployed Americans during the

1980s. Meanwhile, his administration received institutional support and guidance in conservative governing from the Heritage Foundation think-tank from the very start of his presidency, urging him to do their bidding.

While every presidency since Reagan has reinforced neoliberalism either through the military-industrial complex, the prison-industrial-complex, welfare reform, or free-trade agreements, never was the legitimacy of neoliberalism more forceful than during Reagan's presidency. As illustrated in the following sections, many of the trends examined here continue to unfold through-out the presidencies of Reagan's successors.

George Bush, Sr. Presidency: "War on Drugs"

George Bush Sr. continued the War on Drugs that began during the Nixon administration and added his own twist by racializing and confining offenders to public housing projects and outside U.S borders. He states in his National Drug Control Policy speech on September 5, 1989:

“While illegal drug use is found in every community, nowhere is it worse than in our public housing projects. You know, the poor have never had it easy in this world. But in the past, they weren't mugged on the way home from work by crack gangs. And their children didn't have to dodge bullets on the way to school.”

Bush later stated:

“The second element of our strategy looks beyond our borders, where the cocaine and crack bought on America's streets is grown and processed. In Colombia alone, cocaine killers have gunned down a leading statesman, murdered almost 200 judges and 7 members of their supreme court.”

Additionally, Bush outlined his goal to crack-down on the demand-side drug-use, which meant punishing drug users. This led to a surge of incarceration of drug-possession crimes rather than drug-dealing (Mackey-Kallis and Hahn 1994). On expanding his initiatives, Bush stated:

“I'm also proposing that we enlarge our criminal justice system across the board -- at the local, State, and Federal levels alike. We need more prisons, more jails, more courts, more prosecutors.”

To follow suit, William J. Bennett remarked on the new approach of expanded incarceration in the War on Drugs after being sworn in as director of the National Drug Control Policy on March 13, 1989:

“...change takes time and long, hard work, especially in Washington. We'll do it where necessary. We want to see waiting lines for drug treatment reduced and prison cells for drug pushers increased. We want to see the drug violence on the streets of our cities and the streets of our Nation's Capital stopped. And we want those overseas, too, to know that we mean business.”

As an extension of the elusive War on Drugs, Bush's rhetoric and actions constitute as a continuation of a long-standing culture- project that reinforced privatization of prisons at the expense of racialized mass incarceration. It produced racial prejudice and racial stigmas against minorities, predominantly black men, while continuing down the path of public service reduction. Additionally, Bush's use of the “War on Drugs” served part of his military agenda and foreign policy, a common nexus to neoliberalism and American interventionism. As blame was cast beyond national borders and onto Latin America, Mackey-Kallis and Hahn (1994:11) recount:

“The mass media's coverage of the December 20, 1989 invasion of Panama and the subsequent capture and trial of Manuel Noriega seemed to offer proof that Bush's rhetorical investment had paid off. The mainstream media, by and large, painted Noriega as a foreign criminal supporting drug trafficking through Panama to the States. The military action against him, the media implied, was justifiable.”

The social consequences in this cultural project are two-fold. They involve both damaging increases in racialized domestic incarceration and well as damages to Latin America's subaltern groups in the invasion of Panama. The culture-project supported practices in privatization and the military-industrial-complex while upholding neoliberal values of American exceptionalism. The ideological reinforcement is apparent here again as a form of subtle coercion, made evident by the type of volatile rhetorical spectacle used to garner consent while speaking on the War on Drugs, on March 13, 1989:

“Well, the soldiers in the drug battle have been risking their lives. Too often bureaucratic conflict here in Washington has hobbled our national effort. So, this has got to end. No war was ever won with two dozen generals acting independently. And I have chosen Bill Bennett to be the commanding general in the drug war. It is his responsibility, working with the departments and agencies headed by those you see here with me and others, to develop a strategy for this war. So, I charge him with putting all the parts of the Federal Government in harness, pulling together in a life-and-death struggle against a deadly enemy. I will not tolerate, and the country cannot afford, bureaucratic infighting that forces us to fight this battle with one arm tied behind our back.”

Bush often equated the War on Drugs to actual terms of war in his speeches to mobilize Americans with a sense of superficial fear and concern, for instance, Bush stated on September 5, 1989:

“If we fight this war as a divided nation, then the war is lost. But if we face this evil as a nation united, this will be nothing but a handful of useless chemicals. Victory -- victory over drugs -- is our cause, a just cause. And with your help, we are going to win.”

Under Bush’s administration, the neoliberal hegemonic apparatus expanded through the War on Drugs. In 1990, Congress passed the Violent Crime and Drug Control Act of 1990, a bill that coerced states into suspending driver's licenses and revoking government benefits of individuals convicted of drug offenses. If states did not cooperate with the actions mandated by the bill, they were punished with a substantial reduction in federal aid (Michel 1990). This strong-arm approach forced states to contribute and participate in the War on Drugs through coercive measures enlisted during the Bush administration. Using Gramsci’s terms, I designate this as an example of attainment of power by way of dominance since state participation was achieved through coercive force using the political means of the state rather than by consensual moral leadership. In the next section, attainment of power shifts from methods of coercive dominance to passively consented leadership.

Bill Clinton Presidency: “Crime Bill” and “Welfare Reform”

Clinton’s administration offers a unique situation under this analysis because Clinton’s speech rhetoric was somewhat misaligned with his legislative agenda. Often times, Clinton

criticized Reagan's neoliberal policies and trickle-down economics that led to a larger deficit, wealth inequality, and unemployment in Clinton's term. In Clinton's national address on his economic program on February 13, 1993, he stated:

“For 12 years we've followed a very different philosophy. It declared that Government is the problem, that fairness to the middle class is less important than keeping taxes low on the wealthy, that Government can do nothing about our deepest problems: lost jobs, declining wages, increasing inequality, inadequate educational opportunity, and a health care system that costs a fortune but does too little.”

In the same speech, Clinton spoke on fundamental change and political recourse during his term:

“My message to you is clear: The price of doing the same old thing is far higher than the price of change. After all, that's why you sent me here: not to keep this seat warm but to work for fundamental change, to make Washington work for all Americans, not just the special interests, and to chart a course that will enable us to compete and win in this new world.”

Clinton often spoke from a position of an organic intellectual, connected to the struggles of subaltern groups, offering a sense of empowerment:

“I'm confident in our cause because I believe in America, and I know we have learned the hard lessons of the 1980's. This is your country. You demonstrated the power of the people in the last election. I urge you to stay informed and to stay involved. If you're vigilant and vocal, we can do what we have to do.”

Clinton's ideological reinforcement appeared to aim towards embracing Keynesian sentiments in his attempt to revive the integrity of government involvement in social and economic policy. In Clinton's speech on his economic program on February 19, 1993, he stated:

“I believe that free enterprise is the engine of growth in America. We are fundamentally a conservative, private, capitalist free enterprise country. But every other nation with which we compete decided to take a slightly different course. They said to themselves in Germany and Japan: Well, we're in a global economy in which the government and the people in the private sector have to work together. We've got to work together to train and educate our people as well as possible. We've got to work together to have economic policies that encourage investment over consumption so we can always be competitive. We've got to have a good trade policy, and we've got to do things that make it possible to create high-wage, high-growth jobs so that all the students who go to school here will have a future, and so that America will be strong. That's what I think we have to do.

In other words, that is my vision. That is not what we have done. What we have done is to try for 12 years to cramp the role of Government. Now, look what's happened in practice. In practice, we have lowered taxes on the wealthiest Americans. Taxes on the middle class have actually gone up

in the last 12 years. We have run a horrendous Government deficit. The deficit is now 4 times as big as it was in 1980.”

Clinton’s rhetoric is interesting because his administration represented a peak in the neoliberal era after passing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Mexico and Canada and repealing the Glass-Steagall Act, dissolving the barrier between investment banking and commercial banking.

In terms of social impact, Clinton has been criticized for negatively imposing upon the lives of America’s most poor, particularly black men and minority women. Clinton’s Welfare Reform Act of 1996 (see Kasich) impacted single mothers by making it mandatory for recipients to work while receiving benefits and by limiting eligibility to 2 consecutive years. This made it difficult to produce any substantial change in economic status. Single mothers had to maintain disadvantaged skill-levels through the mandatory work requirement, making prospects of improvement through school or training unattainable. Clinton’s continued tough-on-crime approach negatively impacted black men the most by producing a surge in incarceration, 50% of which were drug related (Haney-Lopez 2014).

Michelle Alexander (2012) states in “The New Jim Crow” that Clinton’s crime policies resulted in the largest increase of inmate population than of any president in U.S history. Drug and crime policy researchers say that since the 1980s, low-income communities have suffered disproportionate rates of incarceration, racial-profiling, and severity in drug sentencing (Drug Policy Alliance 2017). The resulting rates of Black incarceration are not representative of actual drug use in the U.S, only of the focus and direction conditioned in law enforcement.

Additionally, the criminal justice system revealed sentencing disparities between crack and powdered cocaine possession sentencing which was found discriminatory against race,

marked by the federal court case U.S vs Clary (Palamar, et al. 2015; Alexander 2012). In conjunction with Clinton's three-strike provision in his 1994 crime bill (Brooks 1994), black men faced longer prison sentences after being sought out at higher rates, accumulating more strikes on their records (Patten 2016).

The continuation of the War on Drugs and welfare reform culture-projects produced similar effects to before, a satisfaction of demand for inmate populations by privatized prisons (the prison-industrial-complex), and an ideological reinforcement of self-reliance through reduced social safety-nets. These policies came at the expense of increased feminization of poverty and the derailment and loss of life-chances toward black and hispanic men (Solo 1995; Goede 1996; Weber 1968).

As a culture-project, Clinton's administration appeared contradictory in speech and action, which made it a challenge to identify any ideological reinforcement that related to his agenda. While Clinton did not rhetorically reinforce neoliberalism, his actions paint a different portrait. For purposes of my neoliberal culture-project criteria, Clinton's actions satisfy only the economic appeal and social impact, but not the ideological appeal. However, Clinton conceded to the idea that the U.S. was "fundamentally a conservative, private, capitalist free enterprise country" despite his remarks on political change and recourse during his 1993 economic program speeches, as previously quoted.

It remains unclear how his administration connects to Gramsci's concepts in terms of intellectualism. However, the Clinton administration makes a fine example of power attained through moral and intellectual leadership that is achieved through the passive consensus of civil society. In many ways, leadership through passive consensus is as harmful as the previous

administration's methods of subtle coercion. The main difference was that Clinton had the ability to act on behalf of neoliberalism without the need to rhetorically legitimize it, since by then, the neoliberal model was already a part of common-sense ideology and retained stable legitimacy. A shift in neoliberal legitimacy and more coercive methods of governing seem to take place under George W. Bush's administration.

George W. Bush Presidency: "War on Terror"

George W. Bush's presidency appeared to be the start of decline in hegemonic influence during the controversy that surrounded Bush's war in Iraq and his nation-building rhetoric. While neoliberal sentiment's continued to unfold in the form of the tax-cuts - the largest tax-cuts ever supplied in U.S history - a racial cover-up was still required (Haney-Lopez 2014). This time, it was constructed against Arab Muslims and Hispanics.

Rhetorically, Bush was careful not to equate the War on Terror to a War on Islam. He stated in a few speeches that the Islamic fundamentalism the nation was fighting is greatly departed from the traditional practice of Islam. At the Islamic Center in Washington on September 17, 2001, Bush stated:

"The face of terror is not the true faith of Islam. That's not what Islam is all about. Islam is peace. These terrorists don't represent peace. They represent evil and war."

"These acts of violence against innocents violate the fundamental tenets of the Islamic faith. And it's important for my fellow Americans to understand that."

"When we think of Islam, we think of a faith that brings comfort to a billion people around the world—billions of people find comfort and solace and peace—and that's made brothers and sisters out of every race—out of every race."

However, Sameer Ahmed agrees that the rhetoric used in the War on Terror by Bush and other political figures ensued a sense of moral-panic, legitimized the war in Iraq, and fueled

domestic islamophobia against Muslim-Americans and Arab-Americans. Ahmed (2017: 1536) documented:

“When urging Congress to pass the [Patriot] Act—legislation that expanded both the Terrorism Enhancement and material support laws — Attorney General John Ashcroft described terrorists as “savage,” “freedom’s enemies, murderers of innocents in the name of a barbarous cause,” who are “undeterred by the threat of criminal sanctions” and “willing to sacrifice the lives of their members in order to take the lives of innocent citizens of free nations.” And, at the [Patriot] Act’s signing ceremony, President George W. Bush added that the law “will help counter a threat like no other our nation has ever faced They recognize no barrier of morality; they have no conscience. The terrorists cannot be reasoned with.”

Khaled Beydoun (2016:1479) defines Islamophobia as “the presumption that Islam is inherently violent, alien and inassimilable, and expressions of Muslim identity correlative with a propensity for terrorism.” As the public interpreted the presidency’s actions in the realm of practical national security policy, many felt justified in discriminating against Muslims, leading to a variety of discriminatory acts, including “vandalizing mosques with anti-Muslim graffiti and dead pigs, burning down children’s play centers, pressuring local governments to bar mosque constructions and expansions on grounds that they are terrorist breeding centers” (Ahmed 2017: 2017).

In addition to Islamophobic appeals, the War on Terror also produced unprecedented license in security and surveillance against Americans, aimed at tracking terrorist activity. The unstrained power granted by the Patriot Act (Sensenbrenner 2001) generates a fear of abuse by authorities’ ability to track any activity without the requirement of probable cause. While the legislature came at the expense of civil liberties for all Americans, it negatively impacts the civil liberties of Arab-Muslims more severely as their rights to privacy and expression continually suffer in post 9/11 America. In 2016, nearly two-thirds of Muslims experienced discrimination while anti-Muslim hate crimes have become five times more common today than before 9/11 (Ahmed 2017: 2017).

Besides to social impact against Arab-Muslims, the ideological impact was one that reinforced American exceptionalism and freedom as 9/11 was continually framed as an attack on the American way of life and of freedom itself. In Bush's speech on improving counterterrorism intelligence, on February 14, 2003, he stated:

“One of the things this country stands for is freedom. That's what we believe. For years the freedom of our people were really never in doubt because no one ever thought that the terrorists or anybody could come and hurt America. But that changed. As a matter of fact, the more threatened we are here at home, the more we love freedom. The more there's a chance that somebody might think they can take it away from us, the more stubborn we are in our demand for freedom universally.

As I said in my State of the Union, liberty is not America's gift to the world; it is God's gift to each and every human being. So as we pursue peace, we also pursue liberty. We care about those who suffer under the hands of a dictator in Iraq. We care deeply about those who dissent and then are tortured, about those who express an opinion other than what the dictator thinks and are raped and mutilated. The condition of the Iraqi citizen is on our mind and in our hearts. As we work to secure the peace, we'll always hold those values of freedom dear to our heart.”

As the War on Terror transformed into the war in Iraq, Bush continually used freedom-defending rhetoric mixed with divine-right, similar to John O'Sullivan's sentiments in his manifest destiny doctrine. Bush continued to fuel moral panic against Iraq, in his national address on March 17, 2003, he stated:

“The danger is clear: Using chemical, biological or, one day, nuclear weapons obtained with the help of Iraq, the terrorists could fulfill their stated ambitions and kill thousands or hundreds of thousands of innocent people in our country or any other.”

The economic benefit of the War on Terror served the military-industrial-complex, a part of the neoliberal hegemonic apparatus, entrenched in privatized contracts for oil-suppliers, weapons-manufacturers, and other war-time expenses (Lichterman & Burroughs 2004, Reyes 2016). For all intents and purposes, Bush formed a hybrid culture-project that resembled a neoliberal-jihad. It served neoliberal interests while at the same time serving religious imperial interests against Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East.

Bush's method of gaining legitimacy was a much less subtle form of coercion. He used the power of the state at his disposal to create legislation and declare war that produced authoritative measures of security. With a faithful delivery of war-time-contracts and the institutional support of the oil-funded think-tank American Enterprise Institute (Reyes 2016), I designate Bush's brand of intellectualism as traditional, as it seems he was bolstered to serve neoliberal interests through the war in Iraq. In the Obama administration, coercive legitimacy fades more into methods spectacle as neoliberalism enters its organic crisis.

Barack Obama Presidency: "Immigration Policy, Birther Movement & Muslim-Accusations"

Obama's presidency differs from the others in that it was more of a target for overt neoliberal-projects rather than a producer of them. In terms of neoliberal culture-projects, Obama's presidency presents a similar situation to Clinton's presidency, in that there is some misalignment in ideological-appeals and economic-appeals.

In his inaugural address on January 20, 2009, Obama remarked on political rhetoric from the past in an attempt to move beyond political attitudes and restore the role of government:

“What the cynics fail to understand is that the ground has shifted beneath them, that the stale political arguments that have consumed us for so long no longer apply. The question we ask today is not whether our Government is too big or too small, but whether it works; whether it helps families find jobs at a decent wage, care they can afford, a retirement that is dignified. Where the answer is yes, we intend to move forward. Where the answer is no, programs will end. And those of us who manage the public's dollars will be held to account to spend wisely, reform bad habits, and do our business in the light of day, because only then can we restore the vital trust between a people and their government.

Nor is the question before us whether the market is a force for good or ill. Its power to generate wealth and expand freedom is unmatched. But this crisis has reminded us that without a watchful eye, the market can spin out of control. The Nation cannot prosper long when it favors only the prosperous. The success of our economy has always depended not just on the size of our gross domestic product, but on the reach of our prosperity, on our ability to extend opportunity to every willing heart, not out of charity, but because it is the surest route to our common good.”

In the aftermath of the 2008 housing crisis, Obama's speeches seemed to suggest that he was prepared to steer away from market-interests and hold the market accountable for its speculative practices. Though, to the disappointment of some, the 2008 bailout occurred surrounded by Too-Big-to-Fail rhetoric. The bailout may have made sense as the nation was in dire need of economic recovery; however, according to the neoliberal model, a truly independent market would have been left to its own devices during a market-failure, forced to reconcile its own mistakes. The bailout affirmed once again the idea of Keynesian embeddedness, as the market connected to society and producing social impact could not be left to its own devices.

With a strong neoliberal apparatus groomed over years of institutional and social legitimization, real economic change was a major challenge despite President Obama's ideological reinforcement of change. Though, his rhetorical approach was still skillfully effective in reaching across aisles. In his speech to the business council on May 4th, 2010, Obama remarked on the role of government in the economy, departing from the non-interventionists approach:

“As we've learned so painfully in recent years, Government has an obligation to set basic, commonsense rules in the marketplace. This is not a hindrance, it's essential to the functionings of the market. In the absence of these rules, it becomes more attractive for some to game the system than to compete and innovate honestly within it. And this erodes trust in our markets. It makes our economy less attractive to investors from around the world. And at worst, it can put the entire financial system in jeopardy, which serves no one.”

In terms of social impact, Obama's presidency is not without criticism. The administration was accused of unfair immigration policy that resulted in the deportation of nearly 400,000 people in 2010, more deportations than the previous administration's total amount (Silverleib 2011). This largely impacted Hispanic families, often separating them while the strict immigration policies fed into the prison-industrial-complex and privatized border security contractors tasked with tracking, detaining, and deporting immigrants. While border security

measures surged in the 1990s after the passage of NAFTA, since then, never has a country had so much capability to track, detain, incarcerate and deport so many people in what has become the most grand-scale roundup of immigrants ever sustained (Haney-Lopez 2014, Wallace 2012, Kroes 2014).

The deportation initiatives were surprising to many immigrant groups given Obama's rhetorical appeal to subalterns as an apparent organic intellectual. Obama's immigration policy again offers a misalignment with his ideological appeal towards social inclusiveness, opportunity, and equality. Dr. Cornel West (2016) remarked on Obama's rhetorical appeal to subaltern groups in his article in *The Guardian*:

“Obama's attitude is that of a neoliberal, and they rarely have solidarity with poor and working people. Whatever solidarity he does offer is just lip-service to suffering but he never makes it a priority to end that suffering.”

To contrast, since the Obama administration endured strong resistance and legislative “grid-lock” from conservative coalitions, the extent to whether Obama's appeals misaligned because of a hindered ability to act, warrant consideration.

As America's first black president, Obama was a constant target for neoliberal culture-projects and racialized rhetoric, Obama's presidency endured many slanderous accusations that were racially, religiously, nationally and ideologically charged. While implementing the Affordable-Care Act or “Obama-care,” he was relentlessly deemed a socialist whose values were unamerican and incompatible with neoliberal values of self-reliance. While anti-socialist and anti-death-panel rhetoric flooded conservative platforms during Obama's administration, on March 27, 2012, Representative Louie Gohmert said in a *Huffington Post* interview (McAuliff & Kenigsberg 2012):

“When the government controls everybody's health care, pays for everybody's health care, it is the government controlling everything. They have the power then to tell everybody how much they should put in, how much they take out....How much more socialist can you get than a

government telling everybody what they can do, what they can't do, how they can live...Individual liberty is gone as soon as this bill is held constitutional.”

Another common attack was on the legitimacy of Obama's Americanism itself, referred to in the birther-movement. The birther-cause was commonly touted by Donald Trump and others whom did not believe that Obama was born in the U.S, and was therefore unqualified to be president. Donald Trump tweeted on the issue frequently in 2011 as well as mentioning the issue in T.V interviews (Krieg 2016). On March 30, 2011, Trump commented on The Laura Ingraham Show:

"He doesn't have a birth certificate, or if he does, there's something on that certificate that is very bad for him. Now, somebody told me -- and I have no idea if this is bad for him or not, but perhaps it would be -- that where it says 'religion,' it might have 'Muslim.' And if you're a Muslim, you don't change your religion, by the way."

Again on April 7, 2011, on MSNBC's Morning Joe, Trump stated:

"His grandmother in Kenya said, 'Oh, no, he was born in Kenya and I was there and I witnessed the birth.' She's on tape. I think that tape's going to be produced fairly soon. Somebody is coming out with a book in two weeks, it will be very interesting."

While Obama's nationality was called into question, Trump simultaneously questioned Obama's faith, accusing him of being Muslim during a time (still) of fervent Islamophobia (Layman, et al. 2014, Pham 2015). To no-one's surprise, Trump's spectacle began to permeate public attitudes. At a Trump Rally in New Hampshire on September 24, 2016, a Trump supporter remarked:

"We have a problem in this country. It's called Muslims...You know our current president is one. You know he's not even an American."

To which Trump responded:

"We need this question...This is the first question." (Moody 2015)

The social impact of these narratives exposed clear xenophobic sentiments, felt by anyone who has ever had their religion, race, or nationality trivialized. The ideological reinforcement of neoliberalism was confoundingly tried against Obama as he symbolized a threat

to many of those values with his health-care and economic agendas. The economic value of character-assignation against Obama is less detailed in these cases, but still closely tied to ideological reinforcement of neoliberalism. By discrediting the Obama presidency with trivial social politics, his critics likely hoped that Obama's economic policy would also be discredited. The formation of these culture-projects and Donald Trump's involvement relate more to Guy Debord's (1994) concept of political spectacle than Gramsci's theory. Trump appears to thrive off the use of spectacle, as demonstrated in the 2016 presidential campaign.

Culture-Project Discussion:

For neoliberal-hegemony to thrive, the ideology requires constant reproduction to remain legitimate. These five presidencies have all presented firm examples of ideological and economic reinforcement towards the neoliberal model, to the misfortune of many social groups. However, after the U.S market-failure of 2008, the legitimacy of neoliberalism began to wane, ushering in a new organic crisis. The tense political climate in recent years has resulted in a transformation of presidential elections and a consequential exercise of political spectacle.

Crisis of Legitimization in the 2016 Presidential Election

The 2016 presidential election was like no-other in the history of the United States. The quality and content of the election seemed greatly influenced by the neoliberal crisis of legitimization, which produced a wrath of anti-establishment sentiments to be reckoned with. This specific political climate allowed for the procurement of two candidates that aggressively declared anti-establishment views, Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders. The brand of intellectualism they represented is arguable by their supporters. On the one hand, Sanders built a political career through his activism on controversial issues, such as gay rights, gender equality,

racial equality and economic equality. Sanders served the interests of many subaltern groups, which may stem directly from his personal life experiences in a Jewish immigrant family, suggesting a brand of organic-intellectualism. On the other hand, Donald Trump is an excessively wealthy business man with very different life experiences than his supporters possess. According to Christian Fuchs (2017: 3) “The typical Donald Trump voter is an older white man, who lives in rural America, has a middle or upper income, low education, has fears about immigration and economic decline, and is angry with the government.” Donald Trump liked to refer to his supporters as the “forgotten men and women in the country” (Trump 2016), a rhetorical label he borrowed from Reagan’s speeches. These differences in background would reasonably designate Trump as a traditional intellectual, whose views and connections are more autonomous to the conditions of subaltern groups.

The loss of consent towards established politics was a major theme in the 2016 presidential election, catered to by Trump and Sanders with different approaches. In a speech at the Brookings Institute (Dews 2016) on April 30, 2015, Sanders declared:

“There is a lot of sentiment that enough is enough, that we need fundamental changes, that the establishment — whether it is the economic establishment, the political establishment or the media establishment — is failing the American people”

In the same speech, Sanders added:

“I think it is imperative that we have candidates who stand up for the working families of this country, who are prepared to take on the big-money interests.”

In a similar tone, Trump stated at a rally in Virginia on September 24, 2016:

“We are going to take on the big donors, and big business, and big media – we are going to take on the rigged system that has shipped America’s wealth to other countries. We are going to replace our failed and corrupt establishment with a government that serves you, your family, and your country.”

This rhetorical overlap against big-money is where their anti-establishment likeness ends.

The agendas employed by Trump and Sanders were largely divergent from each other. In the

same rally in Virginia, Trump (2016) sums up his presidential plan, managing to mention every neoliberal culture-project that has been constructed since the 1980s:

“I’m going to lower your taxes... I’m going to eliminate every unnecessary regulation of which there are many... We’re going to unleash -and I mean unleash- American energy. We’re going to end illegal immigration – and yes we will build the wall... We’re going to rebuild your very depleted military... we’re going to save our 2nd amendment, which is under siege, and we’re going to appoint Justices to the Supreme Court who will uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

In addition to promising tax-cuts and deregulation, Trump rhetorically revives the War on Drugs and the War on Terror in the same speech:

“[Women] want a Commander-in-Chief that will defeat radical Islamic terrorism. We want to stop the massive inflow of refugees, protect our borders, and we want to reduce the rising crime and violence in our cities. We will build a wall – I promise – we will build a wall. And Mexico will pay for the wall - they will.”

“As I campaign across this country, I hear so many stories and pleas, from women especially, about drug addiction and opioid use. They are doing their best in their communities and for their families to provide a safe and nurturing environment.

But even the best-laid plans cannot always protect our youth, and increasingly, many adults, from the scourge of drugs – this is a scourge - We lose thousands of our fellow Americans every year to drug and opioid use. I will stop the drug inflow from our borders – believe me. These terrible drugs come over the border and make their way into our urban and rural communities, and into our suburbs.”

Trump’s sympathetic appeal to opioid-abuse is a clear comparative example to colorblind discourses and previous framing of drug-users in the War on Drugs. While rhetoric from the 80’s version of the drug war included more unforgiving racialized implications towards “crack gangs” and “muggers” in “public housing” (Bush 1989), Trump procures a much more subdued rhetoric with opioid-abusers, whom are represented more by white, middle class users. Additionally, Trump frames the source of conflict beyond U.S borders, much like George H. Bush’s drug war rhetoric, despite the more domestic pharmaceutical sources of opioids.

Overall, Donald Trump didn’t shy away from reinforcing neoliberalism during his campaign. Despite the neoliberal organic crisis, he attempted to rhetorically re-legitimize it on a

mass scale by appealing to tax-cuts, economic deregulation, and a War on Terror that is likely to produce disproportionate racialized outcomes, as history has shown. Due to the elusiveness of hegemony, re-legitimacy is easily sought after when subaltern groups cannot quite articulate, question, or even identify a hegemonic ideology that has been constructed as second-nature common-sense. Gramsci warned that if organic intellectuals can't seize an opportunity to develop a unified counter-hegemony during organic crisis, another narrative from the existing hegemony will emerge in its place to re-legitimize itself (Gramsci and Forgacs 1988). The following sections examine how Trump succeeded in reaffirming neoliberalism in his election with the use of rhetorical spectacle and how his presidency has shifted to more coercive modes of authoritarianism.

President Trump's Use of Spectacle

Guy Debord (1994) and Murray Edelman (1988) both produced extensive analyses on the shift of political discourse toward methods of spectacle and distraction. The strategy appears to have become more pervasive in modern elections as neoliberalism experiences a crisis of legitimization. The crisis produced a hegemonic need for less substance in political discourse and more distractive spectacle. With the ground-work already established under past culture-projects, it becomes an easy task to expand and escalate the amount of spectacle with existing culture-projects, as Trump did with his anti-Muslim and anti-Hispanic rhetoric.

On the use of political spectacle to advance ideology, Murray Edelman (1988) proposed that politicians drive their reform agendas utilizing two methods, the "onstage" public rhetoric and the "backstage" reality that remains concealed. Edelman suggests that politicians and the media transform their rhetoric into "spectacle" to produce a desired political outcome. In the case of neoliberal ideology, spectacle serves to advance private economic interests and market

deregulation. Edelman's theory closely relates to Guy Debord's (1994) theory in *The Society of the Spectacle*. Debord stated that "The spectacle is the ruling order's nonstop discourse about itself, its never-ending monologue of self-praise" (Debord 1994:24).

Donald Trump has built an entire career as the walking embodiment of the egotistical too-big-to-fail archetype. He successfully resisted the market failure of several of his financial decisions by branding them with his own name, which he constructed around notions of power, prestige, success, and being a "born-winner" (Wohl 1998). He personally thrived off the spectacle of his celebrity-status through-out his career, including his divorce with Ivana Trump, and his role in the reality show *The Apprentice*. This made him an ideal contender as an implant president or traditional intellectual in the current state of affairs, despite dis-ownership by the Republican party for his unpredictable nature. With neoliberal ideology in crisis, his talent for spectacle and entertainment has successfully distracted large portions of the electorate with racial and sexist appeals against Arab Muslims, Hispanics, and women, at full expense to those subaltern groups. On January 13, 2016, Trump made remarks on Muslim immigration after the mass-shooting at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida:

"We cannot continue to allow thousands upon thousands of people to pour into our country, many of whom have the same thought process as this savage killer. What I want is common sense. I want a mainstream immigration policy that promotes American values."

In the same speech, he adds:

"We've got to get smart, and tough, and vigilant, and we've got to do it now, because later is too late. Ask yourself, who is really the friend of women and the LGBT community, Donald Trump with his actions, or Hillary Clinton with her words? Clinton wants to allow Radical Islamic terrorists to pour into our country—they enslave women, and murder gays. I don't want them in our country."

Through the unfortunate exploitation of a tragedy, Trump furthered his Islamophobic agenda, knowing that it spoke directly to the public's sorrow, anger, and insecurity. His capacity to manipulate and fuel public emotion is a common tactic used in political spectacle. Trump's

campaign was filled with similar controversial comments (Enli 2017). When announcing his candidacy for president in June 16, 2015, Trump (2015) made a grand entrance at the Trump Tower in New York and proceeded to allude the media by suggesting the presence of “thousands” of supporters. At the same event, he made his controversial comments about Hispanics as “rapists” with an added sense of general xenophobia:

“When do we beat Mexico at the border? They're laughing at us, at our stupidity. And now they are beating us economically. They are not our friend, believe me. But they're killing us economically.

The U.S. has become a dumping ground for everybody else's problems.

When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.

But I speak to border guards and they tell us what we're getting. And it only makes common sense. It only makes common sense. They're sending us not the right people.

It's coming from more than Mexico. It's coming from all over South and Latin America, and it's coming probably — probably — from the Middle East. But we don't know. Because we have no protection and we have no competence, we don't know what's happening. And it's got to stop and it's got to stop fast.”

Many of Trump’s supporters characterize economic demographics that differ greatly from the business-elite that neoliberal policy would tend to benefit. Consequently, creating a spectacle of social issues allowed Trump to accumulate support from voters who were attracted to the potent sensationalism and fear spread by Trump’s anti-Hispanic and Islamophobic rhetoric. Through the rhetorical spectacle surrounding these social topics, Trump could produce his desired political outcome. The exploitation of voters in political spectacle is enabled by a fundamental flaw in American democracy. When a candidate manages to earn a vote in support for their social agenda, by association, that same vote will also support their economic agenda - and often, xenophobic or racial appeals are easier to peddle than the economic logic of neoliberalism. Overall, President Trump is well-fitted for the role of creating neoliberal culture-

projects and he is even more well-fitted to the spectacle and sensationalism of his culture-projects which makes his presidency a great concern.

President Trump's Shift to Authoritarianism

Gramsci noted that historic blocs are in constant need of reproduction and never remain stable (Ives 2004). As the organic crisis causes the neoliberal historic bloc to experience instability in economic, ideological, political, and institutional elements – culture-projects are likely to shift to more coercive efforts. Henry Giroux (2014) agrees that neoliberal hegemony has shifted to a form of neoliberal authoritarianism since expansive forms of consent are no longer viable through ideological or economic modes. Consequently, methods of coercion begin to emerge in the form of increased state resistance to social movements, increased security and surveillance, and in policy that is implemented in direct violation of law.

Such is the case with President Trump's Muslim-travel-ban executive order and his media ban against CNN, NY-Times, and BBC at an informal press briefing on February 24, 2017 (BBC 2017). In a *New York Times* interview about the unconstitutionality of Trump's executive ordered travel ban against Muslims, Nihad Awad stated on March 6, 2017:

“I think the Trump administration is trying to play around the language to avoid the court rejection because the court was very clear in announcing this policy and showing that it was unconstitutional because it had a clear reference to Muslims, and preference to non-Muslim refugees. The motivation, the intent behind this executive order is still the same, which is really anti-Muslim bigotry that's driving not only this executive order, but also many policies towards Muslims.”

Here, it is important to make a specification in authoritarianism. According to Giroux (2014), coercion can be secured ideologically and culturally, without using overt methods of violence as commonly expected with authoritarianism. Such subtle methods are expected to increasingly be aimed towards subaltern groups to affirm neoliberal authority. This can be

illustrated with the attitudinal trends that President Trump incites towards various subaltern groups, including Hispanics, Muslims, and women (Fuchs 2017).

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This conclusion outlines the findings from the analysis, provides a contrast with American history, discusses the outcomes of Trump's rhetoric in the 2016 presidential election, revisits Gramsci's concept of hegemony, and reflects on limitations and future research.

Neoliberal Culture-Projects

This study's findings on neoliberal culture-projects offer a solid examination in the political methods of hegemony, spectacle, and its resulting social impacts. The goal of this study was to bridge theories of ideological power to real historical and contemporary examples in practice. This was achieved by examining presidencies from Reagan to Trump for examples of political-baiting and neoliberal-appeal. Knowing how an elusive ideology like neoliberalism forms, legitimizes itself at the expense of others, and endures instability is a sociologically significant pursuit, as well as a basis for encouraging agency and empowerment in civil society.

The criteria used to examine neoliberal culture-projects bares resemblance to Gramsci's three qualifications of hegemony which enables the culture-projects to serve as an affirmation of the hegemonic nature of neoliberalism. In this respect, production of common-sense ideology is measured through ideological-appeal, institutional support in measured through economic-appeal, and material accommodation is measured through social-appeal and impact. As a fragmented portion of hegemony, material accommodation is adapted and served by the social consensus manufactured through culture-projects. Of course, these appeals don't serve the "central interests" of subaltern groups; instead, social-appeals attempt to convince subalterns that their central-interests *should* surround social topics constructed in neoliberal culture-projects such the War on Drugs, War on Terror, welfare reform, and immigration.

Contrasting Neoliberal Culture-Projects with American History

American history is filled with many unfortunate examples of racism, sexism, xenophobia, and religious-persecution. Under FDR, Japanese-Americans were put into internment camps. During the cold war, Americans were black-listed under suspicion of espionage during the red-scare. The military-industrial-complex predates neoliberalism, having developed during WWII. President Eisenhower (1961) warned the country about the military-industrial-complex in his farewell speech to the nation.

Then there is U.S slavery, which epitomized economic interest at the full expense of human exploitation through an economic model that produced enormous amounts of proprietor wealth. Consequently, the Civil War was cultivated from disagreements over the economic logic of slavery, which produced quick profits over economic growth; a striking resemblance to the economic logic of neoliberalism.

The difference in modern politics today (with exception to slavery) is that social impacts of racism, sexism, xenophobia, and religious-persecution are more a consequence by economic design. Under neoliberalism, privatized economic interests are central as they manifest through ideology and social-appeal. The neoliberal hegemonic model exhibits more defined economic motives of privatization and deregulation, where social impact is a *means* to an end rather than an end in and of itself. The neoliberal model is directly contradictory to the central interests of many subaltern groups in terms of social equality, financial security, public health, and economic mobility; which motivates the invisibility of neoliberalism. With the use of culture-projects, neoliberalism can distract from the social impact of its economic logic and divert blame onto things like drugs, race, immigration, or religion. This is where neoliberalism departs from pre-neoliberal historical incidences of racism, sexism, xenophobia, and religious-persecution.

Post-Election Lessons Learned

How can a vigilant electorate account for xenophobic, racial, or sexist discourses in the U.S. when they are largely dismissed within mainstream media and culture as ridiculous and unfounded? This is precisely what misled the predicted outcomes of the 2016 presidential election. While many pollsters, pundits and journalists reduced Trump's rhetoric to fear-mongering, they failed to consider the extent to which Trump's supporters felt he was telling the truth about the world as they knew it. William Isaac Thomas's Theorem reminds us that when people "define a situation as real, they are real in their consequences" (Young 1964). Meaning, any falsehoods that are perceived as real will produce real world action. With actions influenced by contextual subjectivity, Trump's capacity for spectacle gives him a large power over the public, one that has been thoroughly noted in autocratic leaderships through-out history under Adolf Hitler, Napoleon Bonaparte, and other leaders that secure complete control while enforcing personal ideas (White 1968).

Like many other presidents before him, Trump exploited and spoke directly to the anger and fears so many American's feel in our globalized economy while displacing them towards racial and xenophobic appeals. Consequently, the most vulnerable populations are forced to experience an additional social impact of racism, sexism, or prejudice on top of the economic impact felt by America's working-middle-classes. While understanding hegemony and political spectacle through the scopes of Antonio Gramsci and Guy Debord can help us to maneuver through a world of misinformation and political-baiting, our most useful resource lies in the use of academic and social platforms that serve to reach and empower subaltern groups with a more objective perspective of the world we live in. Neoliberal hegemony is often undetectable, and therefore, difficult to challenge without the contextual understanding social-theory offers.

Sociology as a discipline currently has a major role to play in this regard. Through various forms of research, it has the tools to bridge economic and political events into the paradigm of social research to produce a multi-disciplinary vision.

Implications for Counter-Hegemony

Although Antonio Gramsci came from a different socio-historical period, his work offers a vital framework of analysis that is not only relevant to the understanding of our modern-day market economy, but it also offers an understanding of the conditions and strategies that can be used to shape future political processes. Gramsci envisioned the conditions in which a polity could unify and produce a counter-hegemony, one that could unleash the potential for a properly democratized and high-participatory citizenry. Gramsci's multifaceted usage of his concept of hegemony includes the ability to describe how subaltern groups can foster counter-hegemony to organize, gain power, and emancipate themselves from the authority of a ruling class (Ives 2004). As Gramsci noted, it is essential to identify the ways in which success is achieved by hegemonic forces in order to establish a counter-hegemony of equal success. Such lessons have successfully shaped counter-hegemonic movements that challenge neoliberalism on a global scale. These movements from Latin America, such as the "Zapatistas (Chiapas, Mexico), the Landless Peasant Movement (MST) in Brazil, the indigenous movements of Bolivia and Ecuador, the Piqueteros or Unemployed Workers' Activists in Argentina, the students in Chile" and the Arab Spring all originate from outside the United States (Hunziker 2015). Only in recent years have such sentiments permeated the American electorate, beginning in 2011 with the Occupy Wall St. movement.

Fred Block (2003) warns that continued contradictions in political discourse will ultimately lead to increased tensions and crisis. In the end, a concrete alternative world-view

must be organized both culturally and institutionally in order to succeed. Overall, as society becomes more democratized and informed, only then will the economy and its dominant ideologies become less predatory.

Limitations

Due to time constraints, this thesis's analysis of impacts constructed by neoliberal culture-projects was limited to domestic social impact. The social impact produced by presidential foreign policy and globalization is a much larger topic that merits a separate project entirely.

Researching a concept like hegemony often poses a challenge when the concept is inherently fragmented and concealed. Additionally, connecting macro theory to a micro analysis of language can incur theoretical challenges when connections aren't always linguistically obvious. This was remedied by the more macro approach of Critical Discourse Studies, which helped to connect political discourses to broader concepts of ideology and hegemony.

Lastly, this study's interdisciplinary approach required an informed nexus between economic, political, and sociological fields, which served more as a motivational academic challenge than a limitation. The scale of this project was undertaken with the assumptions and awareness of these challenges.

Future Research

In this study, presidential agendas made an appropriate unit of analysis; however, there are many more ways to study how neoliberal ideology manifests from a local to global scale. Future research should continue to explore these numerous modes of hegemony that function to legitimize neoliberal ideology. This includes researching modes of hegemonic legitimization through cultural support along lines of race, class, ethnicity, gender, particularly in geographic

regions where neoliberal hegemony legitimizes itself the most; including mid-western, southern U.S. populations, and western countries in general. Political governing and institutional support in neoliberal hegemony should undergo continued examination at local, state, federal and global levels, including the role of news media, religion, social-media, advertising or any other social platform. The field of applied sociology has a significant opportunity to enlighten and examine the phenomena in our current political climate during its time of globally polarized political upheaval. The potential areas of research on such a pervasive neoliberal hegemonic apparatus are endless.

References

- Ahmed, Sameer. 2017. "Is History Repeating Itself? Sentencing Young American Muslims in the War on Terror." *Yale Law Journal*, 126(5): 1520-1576.
- Alexander, Michelle. 2012. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press.
- Allcorn, Seth, & Howard Stein. 2017. "The Post-Factual World of the 2016 American Presidential Election: The Good, the Bad, and the Deplorable." *Journal Of Psychohistory*, 44(4): 310-318.
- American National Election Studies, Stanford University, and University of Michigan. American National Election Study: 2016 Pilot Study. ICPSR36390-v1. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2016-03-16. <http://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR36390.v1>
- "Barack Obama: Remarks to the Business Council - May 4, 2010." *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved April 2, 2017 (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=87841>).
- "Barack Obama: Inaugural Address - January 20, 2009." *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved March 25, 2017 (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=44&st=&st1=>).
- Bates, Thomas R. 1975. "Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony" *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 36(2): 351-366.
- BBC News. 2017. "White House bans certain news media from briefing." *BBC News*. Retrieved April 15, 2017 (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-39085235>).
- Béland, Daniel. 2007. "Neo-Liberalism And Social Policy." *Policy Studies* 28(2):91–107.
- Beydoun, Khaled A. 2016. "Between Indigence, Islamophobia, and Erasure: Poor and Muslim in "War on Terror" America." *California Law Review*, 104(6): 1463-1502. doi:10.15779/Z38S56B
- Block, Fred L. 1977. *The Origins of International Economic Disorder: A Study of United States International Monetary Policy from World War II to the Present*. Berkeley: University of California.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2010. *Racism without racists: color-Blind racism and racial inequality in contemporary America*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

- Boris, Eileen. 2007. "On Cowboys and Welfare Queens: Independence, Dependence, and Interdependence at Home and Abroad." *Journal of American Studies* 41(3):599–621.
- Bourgois, Philippe. 2011. "Lumpen Abuse: The Human Cost of Righteous Neoliberalism." *City & Society* 23(1): 2–12.
- Brooks, Jack. 1994. "H.R.3355 - 103rd Congress (1993-1994): Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994." Congress.gov. Retrieved June 2, 2016 (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/103rd-congress/house-bill/3355>).
- Carbone, June and Naomi R. Cahn. 2011. *Red Families V. Blue Families: Legal Polarization and the Creation of Culture*. Oxford University Press.
- Chomsky, Noam. 1999. *Profit over people: Neoliberalism and global order*. New York: SevenStories Press
- Clinton, Bill. 1996. "The war against crime." *Vital Speeches Of The Day*, 63(1):2-5
- Collins, Patricia Hill and Valerie Chepp. 2013. "Intersectionality." *Oxford Handbooks Online*.
- Davidson, Alastair B. 1972. "The Varying Seasons of Gramscian Studies." *Political Studies*, 20(4): 448-61.
- Debord, Guy. 1994. *The Society of the Spectacle*. New York: Zone.
- Dews, Fred. 2016. "VIDEO: Bernie Sanders at Brookings on standing up for working families | Brookings Institution." Brookings. Retrieved April 26, 2017 (<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brookings-now/2015/04/30/video-bernie-sanders-at-brookings-on-standing-up-for-working-families/>).
- "Donald J. Trump: Remarks Announcing Candidacy for President in New York City - June 16, 2015." *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved April 26, 2017 (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=110306&st=&st1=>).
- "Donald J. Trump: Remarks at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire - June 13, 2016." *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved April 26, 2017 (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=117775&st=immigration&st1=>).
- "Donald Trump." *Biography.com*. Retrieved April 26, 2017 (<http://www.biography.com/people/donald-trump-9511238>)
- Drug Policy Alliance. 2017. "A Brief History of the Drug War." *Drug Policy Alliance*. Retrieved February 24, 2017 (<http://www.drugpolicy.org/facts/new-solutions-drug-policy/brief-history-drug-war-0>).

- Drug Policy Alliance. 2017 "The Drug War, Mass Incarceration and Race." *Drug Policy Alliance*. Retrieved March 25, 2017 (<http://www.drugpolicy.org/resource/drug-war-mass-incarceration-and-race>).
- Dwight D. Eisenhower: Farewell Radio and Television Address to the American People - January 17, 1961." *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved April 2, 2017 (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=12086&st=complex&st1=>).
- Edelman, Murray J. 1988. *Constructing the political spectacle*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Enli, Gunn. 2017. "Twitter as arena for the authentic outsider: exploring the social media campaigns of Trump and Clinton in the 2016 US presidential election." *European Journal Of Communication*, 32(1): 50-61. doi:10.1177/0267323116682802
- Friedman, Milton. 1962. *Capitalism and Freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fuchs, Christian. 2017. "Donald Trump: A Critical Theory-Perspective on Authoritarian Capitalism." *Triplec (Cognition, Communication, Co-Operation): Open Access Journal For A Global Sustainable Information Society*, 15(1):1-72.
- "George Bush: Remarks Following the Swearing-in Ceremony for William J. Bennett as Director of National Drug Control Policy - March 13, 1989." *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved April 2, 2016 (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=16769>).
- "George Bush: Address to the Nation on the National Drug Control Strategy - September 5, 1989." *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved February 1, 2017 (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=17472>).
- "George Bush: Inaugural Address - January 20, 1989." *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved February 2, 2017 (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16610>).
- "George W. Bush: Remarks at the Islamic Center of Washington - September 17, 2001." *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved April 5, 2017 (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=63740&>).
- "George W. Bush: Remarks on Improving Counterterrorism Intelligence - February 14, 2003." *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved April 5, 2017 (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=62559>).
- "George W. Bush: Address to the Nation on Iraq - March 17, 2003." *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved April 5, 2017 (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=63713h-congress%2Fhouse-bill%2F3162>).

- Giroux, Henry A. 2014. "Youth In Revolt: The Battle Against Neoliberal Authoritarianism." *Critical Arts: A South-North Journal Of Cultural & Media Studies* 28(1): 103-110.
- Giroux, Henry. 2004. *The terror of neoliberalism*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm.
- Goede, Marieke D. 1996. "Ideology in the US Welfare Debate: Neo-Liberal Representations of Poverty." *Discourse & Society: An International Journal For The Study Of Discourse And Communication In Their Social, Political And*, 7(3): 317-357.
- Gramsci, Antonio, and David Forgacs. 1988. *An Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings, 1916-1935*. New York: Schocken.
- Gray, John. 1998. *False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism*. New York: The New Press.
- Grimson, Alejandro. 2005. Ethnic (In)Visibility in Neoliberal Argentina. *NACLA Report On The Americas*, 38(4): 25-29.
- Griswold, Wendy. 2012. *Cultures and societies in a changing world*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Haney-López, Ian. 2014. *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class*. New York: Oxford.
- Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- Hawdon, James E. 2001. "The role of presidential rhetoric in the creation of a moral panic: reagan, bush, and the war on drugs." *Deviant Behavior* 22(5):419–45.
- Hayek, Friedrich. 1976. *The Road to Serfdom*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Hunziker, Robert. 2015. "Neoliberalism's Latin American Struggle." *www.counterpunch.org*. Retrieved May 5, 2017 (<http://www.counterpunch.org/2015/01/09/neoliberalisms-latin-american-struggle/>).
- Ives, Peter. 2004. *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci*. London: Pluto.
- Ives, Peter, and Rocco Lacorte. 2010. *Gramsci, Language, and Translation*. Lanham, MD: Lexington.
- Justice Policy. 2000. "The Punishing Decade: Prison and Jail Estimates at the Millennium." *justicepolicy.org*. Retrieved March 2, 2017 (http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/00-05_rep_punishingdecade_ac.pdf).

- Kasich, John. 1996. "H.R.3734 - 104th Congress (1995-1996): Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996." *Congress.gov*. Retrieved February 5, 2017 (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/104th-congress/house-bill/3734>).
- Kopkind, Andrew. 1983. "The Return of Cold War Liberalism." *Nation*, 236(16): 495.
- Krieg, Gregory. 2016. "14 of Trump's most outrageous 'Birther' claims -- half from after 2011." *CNN*. Retrieved April 6, 2017 (<http://www.cnn.com/2016/09/09/politics/donald-trump-birther/>).
- Kroes, Rob. 2014. "The Paradox of American Global Power." *Society*, 51(5): 492. doi:10.1007/s12115-014-9815-9
- Layman, Geoffrey C., Kerem Ozan Kalkan, & John C. Green. 2014. "A Muslim President? Misperceptions of Barack Obama's Faith in the 2008 Presidential Campaign." *Journal For The Scientific Study Of Religion*, 53(3): 534-555. doi:10.1111/jssr.12137
- Lears, T. J. Jackson. 1985. "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities." *The American Historical Review*, 90(3): 567-593.
- Lichterman, Andrew, & John Burroughs. 2004. "You don't get the war you want." *Peace Review*, 16(3): 257-262. doi:10.1080/1040265042000278478
- Mackey-Kallis, Susan and Dan Hahn. 1994. "Who's to blame for America's drug problem?: The search for scapegoats in the "war on drugs"." *Communication Quarterly* 42(1):1-20.
- "Manifest Destiny." *ushistory.org*. Retrieved April 2, 2017 (<http://www.ushistory.org/us/29.asp>).
- McAuliff, Michael and Sara Kenigsberg. 2012. "Obamacare Is Socialism: Reps. Louie Gohmert, Steve King Attack." *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved April 6, 2017 (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/27/obamacare-socialism-louie-gohmert-steve-king_n_1383973.html).
- McVey, James A. 2015. "Recalibrating the State of the Union: Visual Rhetoric and the Temporality of Neoliberal Economics in the 2011 Enhanced State of the Union Address." *Poroi: An Interdisciplinary Journal Of Rhetorical Analysis & Invention*, 11(2): 1-24.
- Michel, Robert. 1990. "H.R.5055 - 101st Congress (1989-1990): Violent Crime and Drug Control Act of 1990." *Congress.gov*. Retrieved January 5, 2017 (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/101st-congress/house-bill/5055>).
- Moody, Chris and Kristen Holmes. 2015. "Trump's history of suggesting Obama is a Muslim." *CNN*. Retrieved April 6, 2017 (<http://www.cnn.com/2015/09/18/politics/trump-obama-muslim-birther/>).

- Munck, Ronaldo. 2010. "Globalization, Crisis and Social Transformation: A View from the South." *Globalizations* 7(1-2): 235-46.
- Nardis, Fabio. & Loris Caruso. 2011. "Political Crisis and Social Transformation in Antonio Gramsci. Elements for a Sociology of Political praxis." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1(6): 13-23.
- New York Times. 1976. "'Welfare Queen' Becomes Issue in Reagan Campaign." *The New York Times*. Retrieved April 1, 2016 (http://www.nytimes.com/1976/02/15/archives/welfare-queen-becomes-issue-in-reagan-campaign-hitting-a-nerve-now.html?_r=1).
- New York Times. 2016. "Transcript: Donald Trump's Taped Comments About Women." *The New York Times*. Retrieved April 26, 2017 (https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/08/us/donald-trump-tape-transcript.html?_r=0).
- Ozekin, Muhammed K. 2004. "Restructuring 'Hegemony' in the Age of Neo-liberal Globalization" *Nisan*, 9(1): 91-112.
- Palamar, Joseph J., Shelby Davies, Danielle C. Ompad, Charles M. Cleland, & Michael Weitzman. 2015. "Powder cocaine and crack use in the United States: An examination of risk for arrest and socioeconomic disparities in use." *Drug And Alcohol Dependence*, 149:108-116.
- Patten, Daniel. 2016. "The Mass Incarceration of Nations and the Global War on Drugs: Comparing the United States' Domestic and Foreign Drug Policies." *Social Justice*, 43(1): 85-105.
- Peck, Jamie. 2014. *Constructions of neoliberal reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pham, Vincent N. 2015. "Our Foreign President Barack Obama: The Racial Logics of Birther Discourses." *Journal Of International & Intercultural Communication*, 8(2): 86-107. doi:10.1080/17513057.2015.1025327
- "Reaction to Trump's New Travel Ban." *The New York Times*. Retrieved May 5, 2017 (<https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/politics/100000004975388/trumps-new-immigration-ban-draws-mixed-reactions.html>).
- Reyes, Kevin D. 2016. "Global Societies Journal." *eScholarship*. Retrieved April 2, 2017 (<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/23w0n5sw>).
- "Ronald Reagan: Inaugural Address - January 20, 1981." *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved April 1, 2016 (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=43130>).

- “Ronald Reagan: Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Program for Economic Recovery - February 18, 1981.” *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved April 1, 2016 (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=43425>).
- “Ronald Reagan: Address Before a Joint Session of the Tennessee State Legislature in Nashville - March 15, 1982.” *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved April 1, 2016 (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=42270>).
- “Ronald Reagan: Proclamation 5123—National Drug Abuse Education Week, 1983 - November 1, 1983.” *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved April 1, 2016 (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=40705>).
- “Ronald Reagan: Remarks to Administration Officials on Domestic Policy - December 13, 1988.” *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved April 1, 2016 (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=35257>).
- Sensenbrenner, James F. 2001. “H.R.3162 - 107th Congress (2001-2002): Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT ACT) Act of 2001.” *Congress.gov*. Retrieved April 5, 2017 (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/107th-congress/house-bill/3162>).
- Silverleib, Alan. 2011. “Obama's deportation record: inside the numbers - CNNPolitics.Com.” *CNN*. Retrieved April 15, 2017 (<http://www.cnn.com/2011/10/19/politics/deportation-record/>).
- Simon, Roger. & Stewart Hall. 2002. *Gramsci's Political Thought: An Introduction*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Solo, Robert A. 1995. “The Topography of Liberalism... and Bill Clinton.” *Challenge* 38(1):46–50.
- Strinati, Dominic. 1995. *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Trump, Donald. 2015. “Presidential Announcement Speech.” *Time*. Retrieved April 1, 2016 (<http://time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/>).
- Trump, Donald. 2016. “The Forgotten Men and Women of our Country will be Forgotten No Longer.” *Vital Speeches Of The Day*
- Trump, Donald. 2016. “Trump Campaign Rally in Virginia.” YouTube. Retrieved April 26, 2017 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeQ7Dgd7TWM>).
- Turner, Justin. 2015. “Being Young in the Age of Globalization: A Look at Recent Literature on Neoliberalism's Effects on Youth.” *Social Justice*, 41(4): 8-22.

- Wacquant, Loïc. 2009. *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Wallace, Sophia J. 2012. "It's Complicated: Latinos, President Obama, and the 2012 Election*." *Social Science Quarterly (Wiley-Blackwell)*, 93(5): 1360-1383. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6237.2012.00922.x
- Weber, Max. 1968. *Economy and society*. New York: Bedminster Press.
- West, Cornel. 2016. "Obama has failed victims of racism and police brutality | Cornel West." *The Guardian*. Retrieved April 6, 2017 (<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jul/14/barack-obama-us-racism-police-brutality-failed-victims>).
- White, Jerome David. 1968. *Autocratic and democratic leadership and their respective groups' power, hierarchies and morale*. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms.
- "William J. Clinton: Address to the Nation on the Economic Program - February 15, 1993." *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved April 2, 2016 (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=47155>).
- Wodak, Ruth and Michael Meyer. 2016. *Methods of critical discourse studies*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
- Wohl, Alexander. 1998. "Donald Trump." *Biography*, 2(6): 14.
- Woolcock, Joseph. A. 1985. "Politics, Ideology and Hegemony in Gramsci's Theory." *Social and Economic Studies*, 34(3): 199–210.
- Young, Kimball. 1964. *The contribution of William Isaac Thomas to sociology*. Evanston, IL.