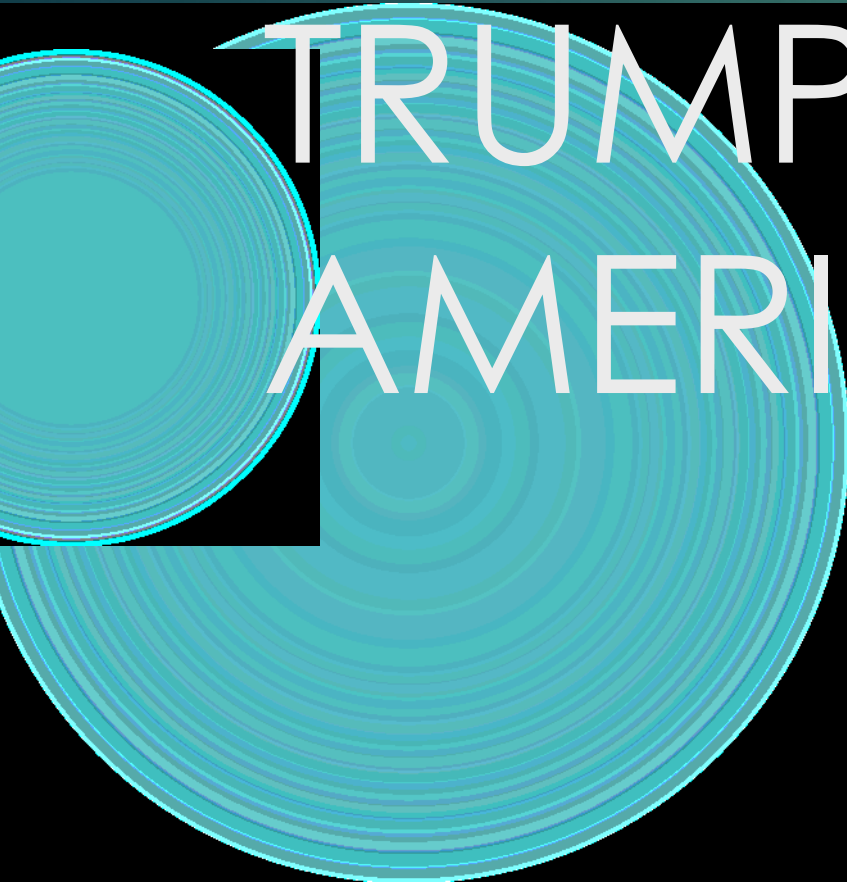


# TRUMP: AN AMERICA DIVIDED



# Economic Roots of Trumpism.

- ▶ Decline of the Rust Belt (factories closing). Decline of well paid manufacturing jobs due to both globalisation and neglect and a move to a 'New Economy' based on tech and services.
- ▶ Tremendous rise in drug use, etc, opiate crisis. Welfare of US children overall behind all of Western Europe and most of Eastern Europe, despite overall wealth of the USA.
- ▶ Culture of 'despair'. Suicide rates 3x that of the UK.
- ▶ General feeling of left-behindness'
- ▶ Primary appeal to White working class MEN who had lost their sense of identity

# Reaganomics.

- ▶ Trickle-down economics proposed and put into practice by Ronald Reagan failed to 'trickle down'. Instead, money remained at the top and wages stagnated for the poor.
- ▶ Collapse of Unions, 'tsunami of globalization', left many communities lacking identity in despair.
- ▶ Trump 'noticed' and spoke 'to' those voters. 'American Carnage'. 'I Love the Poorly Educated'. These ideas seemed contemptible to educated liberals but spoke to the despair of many in the Rust Belt—very crudely, but saying 'I'm on your side'.
- ▶ Trump provided an alternative 'identity' to those that had lost theirs. He did so by appealing to a particular, divisive form of Americanism.

# Two Americas. Horizontal and Vertical

- ▶ Horizontal America: Based on the fundamental truths of liberty, equality, and justice and premised in the idea of a 'Nation of Immigrants' in which all are welcome and 'equally American'. 'Obama's' America. Yes We Can, Hope, Change etc.

- ▶ Vertical America: Premised in much of the actual history of America. 'White Americans' and their culture are the 'true' Americans. Defined in the dominance of White Protestant Americans and the historical oppression of people of colour

# Trump and Nativism: The Vertical America

- ▶ At least in part a racial backlash against the First Black President.
- ▶ 'Mexicans.... They're Bringing Drugs, They're Bringing Crime' .....
- ▶ Judge shouldn't rule on his case because hes Mexican (he was Mexican American)
- ▶ 'People from 'Shithole African Countries' should not come to the United States. People from Countries like 'Norway' Should come

# Trump and Nativism: The 'Insider Outsider' Dynamic.

- ▶ The 'Wall' was a policy, but also a metaphor for an 'insider-outsider' dynamic that Trump chose to create an 'us and them' mentality between White Americans and Others.
- ▶ Employment of 'Birtherism' against Obama- tacitly suggesting that Obama cannot be truly American because he was black. 'Othering' Americans of Colour.
- ▶ Ilhan Omar 'Go back to where she came from..... If she doesn't like it here'.

# Trump and Nativism 2: Religion and Symbology

- ▶ Protection of 'traditional' (read white) American festivals like Christmas. 'They're trying to ban Christmas' conspiracy. Focus on Flag and 'Patriotism' and demonisation of anyone who challenged it. Colin Kaepernick 'Son of a b\*tch' for kneeling during National Anthem.
- ▶ 'Muslim Ban' - sought to other Muslim-American citizens and non-White, non-Christian citizens.
- ▶ Appealed successfully to a Exclusivist, Nativist American identity which was very popular among blue-collar, white men.
- ▶ Partially won because of the heavy concentration of these voters in swing states in the Electoral College.

# Trump and (Toxic) Masculinity.

- ▶ Trump built his campaign and presidency with 'Hyper Masculine Tropes'.
- ▶ Belittled opponents for being 'Little' or 'Low Energy'.
- ▶ Reverence for 'Tough Guys', whether they be Law Enforcement Officials or brutal dictators abroad.



# Trump and Toxic Masculinity (2)-

## Gender Roles

- ▶ Trump portrayed himself as the 'strong male protector', protecting borders against those 'rapists' who would protect 'our' women
- ▶ Called Megyn Kelly a 'Bimbo', who had 'Blood coming out of her wherever'.
- ▶ Played upon tropes of 'suburban housewives' Getting their husbands back to work (making the assumption that was the natural order of things)
- ▶ 2/3 of 2016 Trump supporters believed that America had been overly feminized. Trump was thus there to restore the patriarchy against this 'feminist insurgence'.
- ▶ Trumps largest support by far came from non-college educated white men. But 61% of non-college educated White women voted for him too. Internalised Patriarchy?
- ▶ Idea that parts of America wanted 'Strong Male Leadership', regardless of the character of that leader.
- ▶ Trump played on deeply embedded misogyny that existed in America and to varying degrees across the world.

# Trump and Truth: Fake News

- ▶ Trump employed the classic populist trope of denouncing factually accurate statements and replacing them with disinformation and conspiracy theories. 'QANON' being a good example.
- ▶ Huge online network of disinformation in the early stages of the campaign led by Steve Bannon.
- ▶ Bannon 'Massive Chaos' Strategy. Throw so much disinformation into the mix that it becomes impossible to tell truth from lies
- ▶ Not a Trump specific phenomenon- many people believe Conspiracy theories today due to free flow of false information through the internet

# America Divided

- ▶ Trumpism has left deep scars in America's psyche and a tremendous divide between Rural 'Trump' America and the increasingly Liberal cities and Suburbs.
- ▶ Trump's refusal to accept victory and claiming electoral fraud is an attempt to 'delegitimise' Biden and further entrench these divides.
- ▶ 71 million still voted for Trump- millions more than in 2016.
- ▶ Trump is defeated but Trumpism is far from defeated. Trumpian Takeover of the Republican Party in full swing.

# DISCUSSION QUESTION

► Why Did Donald Trump Beat Hillary Clinton but lose to Joe Biden?

-Coronavirus

-Patriotism

-Masculinity.

-Divisiveness

-Electoral College

What Lessons can we Learn from Trump's Win AND Trump's Loss?