

The Reemergence of Identity Politics: How Donald Trump Recaptured the Identity Politics  
Movement of George Lincoln Rockwell in the 1960's

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**Abstract:**

Donald Trump's win of the oval office was a result of successful campaigning through the idea of Identity Politics. While focusing his rhetoric on black empowerment, white vulnerability, and religious prejudice, Donald Trump's rhetoric appealed to millions of Americans nationwide; many of which were non-Hispanic whites. While the idea of Identity Politics and specifically non-Hispanic White Identity Politics appears to be new, it has been seen before through the works of American Nazi Party leader George Lincoln Rockwell. A maverick to the majority of the country, this Nazi sympathizer believed the presidential election of 1972 was to be his. But after proving ineffective during his time traveling the country in order to build support and financial stability, Rockwell was erased from the scene. However, even as a small irrelevant threat from 1959-1967, Rockwell spoke of the same issues President Trump campaigned on, and also projected his discourse at the same non-Hispanic white population. Through comparative analysis along with both qualitative and quantitative research, this paper will first prove that the concept of Identity Politics has existed prior to Donald Trump's election. Secondly, it will compare both George Lincoln Rockwell and Donald Trump through their parallel rhetoric of black empowerment, white vulnerability, and religious prejudice; and how regardless of success and failure, both utilized the concept of non-Hispanic White Identity Politics to build and secure a strong constituency.

## **Introduction:**

In the presidential election of 2016, Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton was confident and prepared to make her celebratory speech following the final tally of votes in early November. What was supposed to be an easy win turned out to be one the greatest upsets seen in presidential history. It was not Hillary Clinton who gave the inaugural speech on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Instead, it was the celebrity and business phenome: Donald John Trump. A campaign that was originally speculated as a joke given the unequivocal match-up to the more prominent nominees of Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders, Ted Cruz, and Jeb Bush, surprised many on the morning of November 8<sup>th</sup>. As Donald Trump was elected as the 45<sup>th</sup> president of the United States of America. Even with the current and increasing polarization of political parties, and rift amongst the Republican Party caused my Trump himself, he was still able to execute a strategically planned campaign.

People looking for an explanation on how Trump became victorious argued Hillary lost the presidency due to her email scandal, and the fact she was a female in a previously all male role. Others looked at third party factors, like social medias influence on Trump's narrative, lower voter turnout for democratic members, Russia's meddling in the process, and the Democratic Party's own support for Clinton over Sanders which lead to fractions among the party. Another group simply looked at the success Donald Trump had, or would have in office. People viewed him as a man who had not forgotten about the struggles working men and women faced and how he was the man to take that fight to Washington D.C. to enforce change as well as a drastic overhaul of the current system who many viewed as corrupt. While all of these factors played a part in Trump's election, there was one aspect of his campaign strategy that allowed

him to win the campaign, which paralleled a 1960's movement by American Nazi Party Leader: George Lincoln Rockwell.

A former naval pilot of the United States Navy, George Lincoln Rockwell was a puzzling yet intriguing figure throughout the late 1950's and early 1960's when he founded the World Union of National Socialists (WUNS) in 1959, which was later renamed the American Nazi Party the same year.<sup>1</sup> It was during his time spent stationed in San Diego where Rockwell encountered a woman who was the first person to present him with anti-Semitic literature and other forms of racial and prejudice views. From there on, Rockwell continued to read such literature that ultimately ended up waking him from what he deemed his thirty years of political stupidity.<sup>2</sup> After countless exposure to numerous prejudice and discriminating sources which included the works of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and anti-Jewish book entitled *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, Rockwell had become a loyal servant and devote preacher of Adolf Hitler.<sup>3</sup>

After his discharge from the Navy and return to the United States in December of 1954, Rockwell was stunned to see the height and reaction of the Civil Rights movement throughout the United States. Fearful of what might happen, Rockwell deemed the movement, coupled with the increasing fear of communists and Jews in the United States, as an increasing pressure and attack on the non-Hispanic white American society.

Pressured to act in defense, Rockwell believed it was his duty to unite the non-Hispanic white population of the United States and eventually the world, in hopes of retaining non-Hispanic white dominance. In an effort to do so, Rockwell formed the American Nazi Party as an

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Simonelli, *American Fuhrer: George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 28, 81

<sup>2</sup> George Rockwell, *This Time the World*. (York, SC: Liberty Bell Publications, 2004), 81

<sup>3</sup> Frederick Simonelli, *American Fuhrer: George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 21

organization intended to recruit members sympathetic with his cause, and ultimately pursue a political position in the White House so he could effectively end what he perceived as the growing threat of Jews, communists, and African-Americans in the United States. To achieve this goal, Rockwell held pickets and rallies, but mainly focused his resources on traveling the lecture circuit to attend multiple colleges and universities throughout the country. During this time, he would speak about the American Nazi Party's cause to gain financial support and appeal to the average non-Hispanic white citizen who was secretly empathetic to the party's goals and intentions.<sup>4</sup> While the objective was to build constituents and gain financial stability, Rockwell's ultimate goal was to garner enough support to make a presidential run for the 1972 election. To achieve this feat, Rockwell employed tactics that Trump later mirrored and utilized in an attempt to gain his own support from the non-Hispanic white American community.

The strategy employed by both George Lincoln Rockwell and Donald Trump, is called Identity Politics. More specifically, non-Hispanic White Identity Politics. Each individual aimed to secure support by framing part of their rhetoric to motivate the traditional white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant culture of the United States for their cause. During both respective time periods, each individual saw a pressing threat against the non-Hispanic white community and attempted to exploit it by crafting their rhetoric in an attempt to bring attention to the impending doom of the non-Hispanic white class. To bring this looming threat to the forefront, both of their rhetoric included the themes of white vulnerability, religious prejudice, and black empowerment to reveal how the non-Hispanic white Americans were under attack, and why they should back them.

Through white vulnerability, each candidate spoke of the fading non-Hispanic white majority status in America. Trump insisted this was caused by both job loss and mass

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<sup>4</sup> Rockwell, George Lincoln. "Playboy Interview: George Lincoln Rockwell." Interview by Alex Haley. *Playboy*, April 1966.

immigration. While Rockwell focused on the dangers of the racial mixing between whites and African-Americans. Religious prejudice also found relevance in both speakers' rhetoric. For Rockwell, his religious prejudice came in the form of anti-Semitism. Trump on the other hand held religious prejudice views of Muslims and believers of the Islamic faith. Through their similar rhetoric of black empowerment, Rockwell viewed the Civil Rights Movement during the period of 1954-1968, as a dramatic event that would bring about the end of the non-Hispanic white supremacy. Similarly, Donald Trump argued that black empowerment through the recent Black Lives Matter movement has been an excessively violent and dangerous form of protest. Furthermore, Trump also sought to discredit black empowerment by supporting the birther movement, which was an attempt to quell black support and empathy for Barack Obama by stating the past president was not born in the United States.

Together these themes all play into the concept of non-Hispanic White Identity Politics. When comparing the two, Trump focused part of his campaign on obtaining non-Hispanic white voters while Rockwell limited his audience to strictly the non-Hispanic white population. By analyzing their speeches and countless interviews, this provided the context for the comparative analysis which illustrates how similar their rhetoric was. And even though President Trump was more effective and supported through his use of non-Hispanic White Identity Politics, the comparative analysis shows us that both benefited from a political shift that enabled them to better structure their rhetoric in an attempt to appeal to the non-Hispanic white American voter. By first looking at the concept of Identity Politics, followed by their political timing, and paralleled rhetoric, it is evident that Trump was more successful. However, while Trump was successful and Rockwell was not, Rockwell's campaign in the 1960's provided evidence of one

of the first displays of non-Hispanic White Identity Politics which was mimicked by Donald Trump, and could set forth the standard for future political candidates run at office.

### **Literature Review:**

By the year 2017 there have been many published books and articles dealing with the rise of Identity Politics in the United States. Likewise, in regard to George Lincoln Rockwell and Donald Trump, numerous sources have been published which offer a multitude of perspectives and opinions on the individuals themselves, and how through the rhetoric of black empowerment, white vulnerability, and religious prejudice, both played the game of non-Hispanic White Identity Politics. By utilizing such sources, this capstone will be provided with a framework on Identity Politics; specifically in the usage of it by both current President Donald Trump, and past American Nazi Party leader George Lincoln Rockwell.

One source that pertains to the notion of Identity Politics comes from an article written by Cressida Hayes entitled *Identity Politics* which was published in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.<sup>5</sup> This article published by Hayes, provides an in depth look into what Identity Politics is, how it works, and why it can be successfully implemented. In the article, Hayes looks at not only past movements based on the concept of Identity Politics, but at how individuals are no longer basing their partisanship for a certain party on “belief systems, programmatic manifestos, or party affiliation.”<sup>6</sup> Instead, Hayes asserts that people are beginning to choose their political activity and adherence based on the “shared experiences of injustice of members of certain social groups.”<sup>7</sup> This has led to political parties aiming to “secure the political freedom of

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<sup>5</sup> Hayes Cressida, “Identity Politics,” <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-politics/>, (March 23, 2016)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



a specific constituency marginalized within its larger context.”<sup>8</sup> As a result, Hayes argues that “identity” has now become an indispensable part of today’s political discussion and could alter that way politics is conducted in the future.

In addition to Hayes work on the broader theme of Identity Politics, a book written by Zoltan Hajnal and Taeku Lee entitled *Why Americans Don’t Join the Party: Race, Immigration, and the Failure (of Political Parties) to Engage in the Electorate* provides a look into 21<sup>st</sup> century politics, and the failing of individuals to be cemented in one political party.<sup>9</sup> In their book, Hajnal and Lee root their theory in three concepts: ideology, information, and identity. They argue that due to “information uncertainty, ideological ambivalence, and identify formation,” individuals are now more likely to become independents as they realize their beliefs do not lineup with the typical left or right spectrum that currently defines American politics. Corresponding with Hayes work, Hajnal and Lee believe that these nonpartisan individuals are not voting based on the concerns they see themselves, but concerned about issues that relate to their racial or ethnic group. However, these are not the only groups people can identify with as Identity Politics can also play out based on one’s religion, social class, education, gender, occupation, among other individual affiliations.

Furthermore, Hajnal and Lee’s work also contradicts popular evidence that such non-partisan individuals are labeled as “moderates” whose ideology lies in the middle of the road between liberal and conservative. Instead, Hajnal and Lee state that these “moderates” are not people who find themselves in the crossroads of both political parties. But instead are found in the middle due to the political party’s inability to influence and find common ground with an individuals ideology, information, and identity. And since they find little relevance with what the

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Zoltan L. Hajnal, Taeku Lee, *Why Americans Don't Join the Party: Race, Immigration, and the Failure (Of Political Parties) to Engage the Electorate*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011)

major parties have to offer, they become more likely to base their support on which leader best identifies with what their racial group deems important or valuable.

Unlike Hayes, and Hajnal and Lee who discuss contemporary Identity Politics, an article in a book entitled *Global Modernities* by Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson, examines the rise of Identity Politics in the 1960's.<sup>10</sup> Entitled *The Birth of Identity Politics in the 1960s: Psychoanalysis and the Public/Private Division*, author Eli Zaretsky discusses the development of Identity Politics that arose from the private sector of life coming to the forefront of the public sector. This private sector in which people expressed themselves through beliefs, interests, and world views, led to individuals becoming more relatable to those who shared similar experiences, and less on people who had the same job, class, or status. According to Zaretsky, this development is contributed to the rising industrialization and “technological changes, along with the increased significance of knowledge, information and communication in production” which Zaretsky says, “gave the category of difference a new sphere in which to operate.”<sup>11</sup>

The sphere of difference Zaretsky is referring to is culture. Out of this difference and stronger intersubjectivity, to those who shared similar interests, Zaretsky writes,

“the result was a realignment or reorganization of the division between public and the private, which brought the private sphere, the sphere of culture but also the sphere of family, to the fore in a new way. What had previously been taken-for-granted background of political life, the process of identity creation, now became foreground and was politicized.”<sup>12</sup>

As a result, the political environment changed. No longer were policies and objectives specific to those who worked similar jobs or were part of the same socio-economic status. Instead, political motives were now more focused on the individual and their group identity because many of the

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<sup>10</sup> Mike Featherstone, et al., *Global Modernities*. (Sage Publications, 2002)

<sup>11</sup> Mike Featherstone et al., *Global Modernities*. (Sage Publications, 2002), 247

<sup>12</sup> Mike Featherstone, et al., *Global Modernities*. (Sage Publications, 2002), 240-241

previous issues that electives campaigned on were not the result of people's status in society, but instead on what their cultural values were. With the intersection of the private and public sphere, Zaretsky concludes "It has now become possible to see that many of the issues of modern society were essentially issues of identity."<sup>13</sup> Zaretsky's work resonates with both Hayes as well as Hajnal and Lee's work due to their belief of an individual's identity contributing to one's decision and partisanship based on which candidate or individual can resonate more with the individual themselves.

Since both men used the rhetoric of black empowerment during their time speaking and attempting to building a base, the book *Freedom Rights: New Perspectives on the Civil Rights* offers evidence to the continued struggle and empowerment for African Americans in their strive for true equality.<sup>14</sup> This book, written by Danielle L. McGuire and John Dittmer is comprised of twelve different essays which stretch throughout the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century in attempt to look past the traditional Civil Rights Movement from 1954-196. In doing so they attempt to expand and deepen the Civil Rights Movement to illustrate the idea that this movement was and has continued throughout all 240 years of the United States. Specifically analyzing the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the subjects and events the book addresses include the NAACP, the Young Women's Christian Association, felon disfranchisement, and the dismissing of the election of Barack Obama as signifying America as a post-racial country, among others. Together, these articles lay claim to the continuous fight for equality amongst African-Americans and how their movement did not end with the death of Martin Luther King Jr., but has remained a part of the United States identity.

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<sup>13</sup> Mike Featherstone, et al., *Global Modernities*. (Sage Publications, 2002), 251

<sup>14</sup>McGuire, Danielle L. and Dittmer, John., *Freedom Rights: New Perspectives on the Civil Rights Movement*. (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2011)

Much like the work of McGuire and Dittmer, Lothrop Stoddard's book entitled *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World Supremacy*, aims to provide context and evidence for each individuals rhetoric and use of Identity Politics through the concept of white vulnerability.<sup>15</sup> With the conclusion of World War I, Stoddard looks at how the advancement in transportation and concept of globalization increased the contact between various races of the world which resulted in both old and new racial and political rivalries.

Stoddard divides his book into three parts. The first part called "The Rising Tide of Color," looks at how the yellow, brown, black, and red man, have become and will continue to become restless over the dominance of white man in the global world due to both European and American imperialism. The second part entitled "The Ebbing Tide of White" first summarizes both the achievements of the white man and the increase in population dating back to 1500 A.D. but contrasts that to the heavy losses as a result of World War I. Stoddard also discusses the white man's disregard of eugenic ideals which Stoddard believed was necessary for racial improvement. Lastly, in part three called "The deluge on the Dikes," Stoddard looks at the end of imperialism in areas like the Philippines, Anatolia, and Asia, and how the white man's declining influence outside its country borders is just the beginning of their demise. Stoddard's further argues his point as he looks at both the opening of borders to allow unrestricted immigration, and the population boom in Third World countries. These events would then result in individuals of such countries to migrate to Europe and America in search of a better life. As a result, Stoddard ultimately argues that since World War I the white man's influence and prominence in both Europe and America has begun and will continue to falter and suffer from the increased interaction and population increase of other races.

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<sup>15</sup> Stoddard, Lothrop. *The Rising Tide of Color against White World-Supremacy*. (University Press of the Pacific, 2003)

Continuing on the secondary literature in regard to each speaker's rhetoric and usage of Identity Politics, the work of Lori Peek in *Behind the Backlash: Muslim Americans After 9/11* offers insight into the religious and racial prejudice seen in the United States before and during Donald Trump's rise to presidency.<sup>16</sup> In her book, Peek attempts to document and explain the post-9/11 backlash against the Muslim community in the United States. Only three weeks after the tragic event, Peek conducted a total of 140 interviews of young Muslim American men and women in order to gauge the feelings and reactions of those who suffered from increased violence and prejudice. From her book, numerous testimonies highlight the increased forms of harassment including verbal attacks, intimidation, racial profiling, physical abuse, and discrimination Muslims experienced following the mass hysteria 9/11 brought. What Peek finds and argues is that Muslims were scapegoated and excluded from what she calls "collective grief" in which Muslims were omitted from joining the nation in healing. A result of the figurative line in the sand being drawn between Muslim Americans and the rest of the country. Instead of being able to mourn, Peek writes about how the Muslims experienced the blunt force of public anger and fear in which Muslims found themselves in a national us versus them scenario that attributed to the developing of American political policies and motives. Most notably seen with Donald Trump's call for an immigration ban.

Like Peek's book, Sheila Cohen's book entitled *Jews In Wisconsin* provides an overview look of Jews in the State of Wisconsin dating back to the early 1800's up until the post WWII period.<sup>17</sup> This book provides in addition to the experience of Jews in Wisconsin and the United States who migrated from Germany and Eastern Europe, the racial prejudice and anti-Semitism felt throughout both Wisconsin and the nation as a whole. Battling both persecution and

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<sup>16</sup> Peek, Lori. *Behind the Backlash Muslim Americans After 9/11*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010.

<sup>17</sup> Cohen, Sheila Terman. *Jews in Wisconsin*. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2016.

assimilation, Cohen's work provides an in depth look into the religious faith of the Jewish people and their continued struggle but persistence in finding a place in American society. Both Peek's and Cohen's books provide substantial evidence and testimony in regard to both the Muslim and Jewish Americans tenacity and ability to fight through religious prejudice and discrimination in order to settle down and begin building a new life. More crucially though, both books provide an insight look into the public view of these groups and how both Donald Trump and George Lincoln Rockwell looked to capitalize on public attitude in order to present themselves as voices of the people.

The last secondary sources addressed pertain to the individual character and their opinions and views respectfully. The works of both Frederick Simonelli and William Schmaltz provide an extensive overview, yet different look into the American Nazi Party and its leader George Lincoln Rockwell. In Simonelli's book entitled *American Fuehrer: George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party*, Simonelli contends that Rockwell's life was of great importance because it laid the foundation for future radical-right affiliates to associate with the term, "White Power", which was coined by Rockwell in response to Stokely Carmichael's use of the phrase "Black Power" during the civil rights movement. Likewise, Simonelli notes the linking of Christian Identity to the American Nazi Party by Rockwell as a substantial stepping-stone for future right-winged parties as it allowed for anti-Semitic, racial, and Nazi ideologies to be cemented in a religious movement.

In contrast, Schmaltz's book *Hate: George Lincoln Rockwell & the American Nazi Party*, Schmaltz analyzes Rockwell and the effects of White Power, Holocaust Denial, and Christian Identity. He also answers the question of how Rockwell's personality and character lead to the demise and downfall of the party he created. Schmaltz concludes that it was Rockwell's lack of

patience and credibility that undermined his abilities to garner attention and following through “superficial cleverness, tricks, and crude, malicious humor.”<sup>18</sup> Schmaltz also notes that it was Rockwell’s recklessness and embarrassing remarks, as well as his vision for what religious ideologies the party would be affiliated with that lead to isolation amongst fellow members.

Like Schmaltz and Simonelli’s work, Roger Stone’s *The Making of the President 2016: How Donald Trump Orchestrated a Revolution* analyzes Donald Trump’s campaign for the presidency and how his rhetoric was successfully supported among a wide range of voters; specifically in the reliable democratic states of Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Michigan.<sup>19</sup> In addition, Stone’s chapter on the presidential debates provides a window to examine the preparations and debates themselves, which illustrate the way Donald Trump portrayed and carried himself in the public setting. In order to look at the character of Donald Trump further, and his ability to motivate such individuals in the previously mentioned democratic states, J.D. Vance’s book *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*, offers a look into the working-class family life and their overwhelming support for President Donald Trump.<sup>20</sup>

Vance’s book is heavily influenced by his own experience of growing up in Ohio whose family constantly struggled with alcoholism, abuse, poverty, and trauma. While not intended to be a look into the reasoning for non-Hispanic white working-class support for Trump, it does provide context into why many of these individuals found confidence in Trump’s ability to create change for them. That is, they viewed Trump’s character as someone whose upfront and willingness to “call it like it is” was something they believed demonstrated an opportunity for change. As Vance points out, government intervention had no longer been a solution to their

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<sup>18</sup> William Schmaltz, *Hate: George Lincoln Rockwell & the American Nazi Party*. (Washington D.C: Brassey’s Inc., 1999), XIII

<sup>19</sup> Stone, Roger. *The Making of the President 2016: How Donald Trump Orchestrated a Revolution*. New York, New York: Skyhorse Publishing

<sup>20</sup> Vance, J.D. *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*. New York, New York: HarperCollins

problems and to some extent, caused them to believe they are unable to improve their status by their own accord. Instead, they looked at the bold and brash Donald Trump as somebody willing to fight for change and someone who would make it happen. Coinciding with Stone's work, Vance's book provides reasoning and evidence of why Donald Trump's character, charisma, and rhetoric was something that resonated with millions of Americans nationwide, specifically in the rust belt states.

In all, these secondary sources mentioned are crucial into uncovering how and why both Rockwell and Trump utilized Identity Politics to their advantage. Furthermore, these books also provide examples of the social and political climate at the time along with public views towards certain groups and how it may have contributed to political decisions and policy making. Through their respective rhetoric of white vulnerability, black empowerment, and religious prejudice, these sources provide evidence to illustrate how both Trump and Rockwell attempted to appeal to the non-Hispanic white voters of the American society. In addition, these sources also offer evidence as to how each candidate benefited from a political shift during their time campaigning, and what ultimately led to their success and failure as a political candidate.

### **Identity Politics: What is it and how does it work?**

In order to grasp how the candidates' rhetoric appealed to the non-Hispanic white population, it is crucial to understand what Identity Politics is. To quote Cressida Hayes, who was the Graduate Chair in Political Science at the University of Alberta and is currently on the Canada Research Chair in Philosophy of Gender and Sexuality, Identity Politics is:

“The laden phrase “Identity Politics” has come to signify a wide range of political activity and theorizing founded in the shared experiences of injustice of members of certain social groups. Rather than organizing solely around belief systems, programmatic manifestos, or party affiliation, identity political formations typically aim to secure the



political freedom of a specific constituency marginalized within its larger context. Members of that constituency assert or reclaim ways of understanding their distinctiveness that challenge dominant oppressive characterizations, with the goal of greater self-determination.”<sup>21</sup>

In this journal published in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Hayes is stating that individuals of a certain group who find commonalities and shared circumstances through a combination or single aspect of race, gender, age, religion, occupation, wealth, and so forth, feel more united. Instead of focusing on the betterment of the country, individuals have become more concerned with policy making and how it directly effects them. Although difficult to enact change for oneself, finding support in others who also share a similar individual identity strengthens their cause and demand for alterations. Therefore, they find ability to enact change through numbers by bringing attention to a specific cause, and therefore become more likely to support a single person or organization that best represents the interests of their group.

In the case of each elective, both Donald Trump and George Lincoln Rockwell focused on the non-Hispanic white community of the United States by attempting to prove that their position in society was becoming diluted. By portraying this theory with their rhetoric, both individuals sought the broader non-Hispanic white population regardless of one’s personal affiliations. With both candidates bringing the previously mentioned themes to the broader non-Hispanic white population’s attention, people felt compelled to support not only their interests, but the interests of everyone else who fell under the same banner of being a non-Hispanic white. This allowed both candidates to craft their rhetoric much more easily. And in the case of Trump, his ability to obtain this vote came at the perfect timing as we will later see through Zoltan L. Hajnal and Taeku Lee’s work, which argues that with the increasing polarization of the American political sphere, more individuals are taking the position of moderates. And as the

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<sup>21</sup> Hayes Cressida, “Identity Politics,” <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-politics/>, (March 23, 2016)

increase of moderates grows, individuals begin aligning themselves not based on similar ideological preferences, but by how policies can enact change for individuals who categorize themselves as one group; in this case, being a non-Hispanic white.

### **The Timing:**

In Zoltan L. Hajnal and Taeku Lee's work: *Why Americans Don't Join the Party: Race, Immigration, and the Failure (of Political Parties) to Engage the Electorate*, they argue that Americans today are becoming more independent and nonpartisan when it comes to deciding on who to vote for.<sup>22</sup> The reason for this phenomenon, as explained by Hajnal and Lee, is due to three factors they call: information uncertainty, ideological ambivalence, and identity formation.<sup>23</sup>

Information uncertainty arises from individuals who do not lack interest in politics but instead find it increasingly difficult to know what truly is the best policy and how it works. As Hajnal and Lee write, "under conditions of uncertainty and low information about the party system and each party individually, nonpartisanship may simply be a rational adaptive strategy."<sup>24</sup> Instead of choosing a politically party based on popular trends and support for a party, individuals have recently taken the position of nonpartisanship because they find it increasingly difficult to side with a party they know little about. This could rise from their lack of knowledge on a parties' political stance and how it contrasts the other parties' policy.

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<sup>22</sup> Zoltan L. Hajna, Taeku Lee, *Why Americans Don't Join the Party: Race, Immigration, and the Failure (Of Political Parties) to Engage the Electorate*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 279

<sup>23</sup> Zoltan L. Hajna, Taeku Lee, *Why Americans Don't Join the Party: Race, Immigration, and the Failure (Of Political Parties) to Engage the Electorate*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 22-25

<sup>24</sup> Zoltan L. Hajna, Taeku Lee, *Why Americans Don't Join the Party: Race, Immigration, and the Failure (Of Political Parties) to Engage the Electorate*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 22

Consequentially, this idea found relevance during Trump's campaign as the idea of "fake news," heightened by scandals and hidden engagements, created a pause amongst many voters. Causing these individuals to struggle in deciding on what and what not to believe, and who to vote for.

Likewise, the concept of ideological ambivalence has grown to be a strong factor in pushing voters towards nonpartisan membership. This issue presents problems for voters in two separate situations. As Hajnal and Lee point out, one problem is that voters may hold,

"nonnegotiable positions on issues that the two major parties and their candidates either choose to avoid taking positions on if possible or choose positions that are so ambiguous and similar to the other party/candidate that for someone with intense preferences on the matter, the two parties look no different."<sup>25</sup>

The other reason for why ideological ambivalence may exist is that the voters may hold crosscutting ideological views where a voter could hold conservative views on economic policy, but adhere to liberal views in terms of moral and social discrepancies. Making it more difficult for them to become constituents of a major party. This idea finds application through the increasing contemporary polarization of American politics as noted by the Pew Research Center that concludes:

"The overall share of Americans who express consistently conservative or consistently liberal opinions has doubled over the past two decades from 10% to 21%. And ideological thinking is now much more closely aligned with partisanship than in the past. As a result, ideological overlap between the two parties has diminished: Today, 92% of Republicans are to the right of the median Democrat, and 94% of Democrats are to the left of the median Republican."<sup>26</sup>

As illustrated by this quote, millions of Americans find themselves caught between a figurative rock and a hard place as individuals are caught supporting policies on both sides. This binary form of politics leads to uncertainty as voters elect to be nonpartisan to avoid voting for a

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<sup>25</sup> Zoltan L. Hajnal, Taeku Lee, *Why Americans Don't Join the Party: Race, Immigration, and the Failure (Of Political Parties) to Engage the Electorate*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 24

<sup>26</sup> Pew Research, "Political Polarization in the American Public: How Increasing Ideological Uniformity and Partisan Antipathy Affect Politics, Compromise and Everyday Life," <http://www.people-press.org/2014/06/12/political-polarization-in-the-american-public/>, (June 12, 2014)

side where their belief in one policy supported by a party is outweighed by the multiple other policies that same party could have which they believe could have adverse effects. And with the scarce option of candidates who are willing to advocate for policies found on both sides, they may vote for the lesser of two evils, or vote for a third-party candidate.

Lastly, and most importantly, in terms of identity formation members base their political affiliation not on their liberal or conservative ideologies, but instead on what community they identify with based on their color, religion, or gender. And as Hajnal and Lee write,

“If the major political parties downplay their appeals to racial/ethnic minority groups or present appeals that run counter to the perceived interests of such groups or present appeals that run counter to the perceived interests of such groups, then a group-based political calculus may push one toward nonpartisanship rather than identification with a major party.”

In connection with Heyes assertion, this nonpartisanship creates the opportunity for candidates to focus their rhetoric on a specific group who may not support the party, but could choose to nominate them based on their willingness and ability to appeal to their particular group.

For the non-Hispanic white group in particular, a 2016 American National Election Studies survey provided statistics to show that a non-Hispanic white group was forming. The survey found that 36 percent of people believed their racial identity was either very important (16 percent) or extremely important (20 percent).<sup>27</sup> Another 25 percent said it was moderately important.<sup>28</sup> In accordance to Hajnal and Lee’s work, this survey showed that non-Hispanic white individuals collectively began positioning themselves not as voters with different ideological preferences, but as voters whose self-identification as non-Hispanic white could be easily persuaded by someone who directly appealed to their group. Ultimately this research

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<sup>27</sup> American National Election Studies, “2016 Pre-Election Survey,” [http://www.electionstudies.org/studypages/anes\\_pilot\\_2016/anes\\_pilot\\_2016.htm](http://www.electionstudies.org/studypages/anes_pilot_2016/anes_pilot_2016.htm), (January 2016)

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

shows that more people have begun identifying with the non-Hispanic white community. This in turn has created a large and reliable group of voters who can be more easily persuaded to support a candidate when they espouse policy plans that directly deal with their self-identified group. And that is why through non-Hispanic White Identity Politics, Trump did exactly that and was successful in doing so.

Throughout his campaign, Trump while tagged as a Republican candidate, was someone who never really represented the traditional Republican values. As writer and contributor of U.S. News, Kenneth T. Walsh believes, Trump's campaign was an attempt to "re-cast the GOP in his own image based on his ideas of the moment and the power of his celebrity."<sup>29</sup> But many of these ideas vastly changed over time to swing between what was most popular and what wasn't. Instead of making his policies binary, Trump was able to be seen as more of a moderate candidate due to his campaigning on a what Walsh states as, "a jumble of individual policies and attitudes, some liberal and some conservative and others defying categorization."<sup>30</sup> This allowed Trump to be accepted by millions of nonpartisan, non-Hispanic white voters because he not only espoused plans found on both sides, but also had policies such as his travel ban and promised return of manufacturing jobs that directly appealed to the non-Hispanic white class.

One of these specific groups for example were the working-class individuals found in the Rust Belt states of New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, and Wisconsin. As is the message in J.D. Vances book: *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*, the non-Hispanic white working-class of America has become progressively disengaged from the process of American change through political and economic policies. As Vance writes in his

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<sup>29</sup> Walsh Kenneth, "Is Trump Really a Republican?," <https://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/ken-walshs-washington/2016/02/22/is-trump-really-a-republican>, (February 22, 2016)

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

book a lot of these individuals, including himself, have experienced a life of poverty which Vance calls the “family tradition.”<sup>31</sup> For Vance and millions like his family, these individuals were descendants of their ancestors who were “day laborers in the Southern slave economy, sharecroppers after that, coal miners after that, and machinists and millworkers during more recent times.”<sup>32</sup> These same individuals who held no college education traveled to the Rust Belt states located in the Midwest and Northeast in search of manufacturing jobs and positions in steel and coal industries which were abundant, and promised social mobility. However, as time played out jobs began declining. Caused by high unemployment and smaller wages due to technological advancements, loss of jobs overseas, and the decline of steel and coal industries, these same families that once viewed these states as a greener pasture and platform for social change, where instead blindsided by unemployment and drug addiction.

In a CNN interview with J.D. Vance, when asked about why such individuals support Trump, Vance says that they simply, “Feel left behind in the modern American economy; and not just in the economy, but the modern American way of life.”<sup>33</sup> He further continues on how the loss of jobs had given rise to opioid addiction rates and family breakdown rates which caused “what they feel in some ways is this extraordinary disconnect from the people who are in Washington D.C.”<sup>34</sup> And when asked why Trump, Vance said it was because “even though Donald Trump says a lot of outrageous things, they see him as the person that’s taking that battle

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<sup>31</sup> J.D. Vance, *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*. (Harpercollins Books, 2016), 3

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Alexandra King, “New Book Gives Insight into Trump Fervor,”

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/08/14/politics/hillbilly-elegy-book/index.html>, (August 25, 2016)

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

to D.C. mainstream.”<sup>35</sup> Which is evident in Trump’s campaign and speeches that promise an administration which “will stop the jobs from leaving America.”<sup>36</sup>

While these non-Hispanic white-working class individuals in the Rust Belt clearly found relevance to what Trump offered, they were only part of a much larger movement that landed Trump in the White House. As Vance later discusses in his interview, his book not only provided evidence for the fervor seen in the Rust Belt states, but also nationwide. When asked how millions of non-Hispanic white people connected with one another through their support for Trump, Vance says:

“The reason I think my book, the message of it, is a little bit broader ranging than just Appalachia, is because the white working class is relatively culturally homogenous. So in New York and rural New York, or in northern Alabama, your going to find people who think broadly the same about a whole range of issues. And part of that is just because they’re working in the same sorts of jobs; they’ve always had a slightly ambivalent or even confrontational view of the rich man, or the elite; so I think that they find themselves in this political moment, feeling very similarly about a lot of different issues.”<sup>37</sup>

As this quote attests, the non-Hispanic white-working class of the United States was not the only non-Hispanic white group who were sympathetic to Trump’s cause. It was also the broad non-Hispanic white class of America who also supported Trump. As Vance points out, this “culturally homogenous” group was comprised of millions of non-Hispanic whites who regardless of social-economic status and other circumstances, held similar views of the political and economic elite found in Washington D.C. and nationwide.

While Trump benefitted from a time where nonpartisanship was high due to the information uncertainty, ideological ambivalence, and rise to identity formation, Rockwell also

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<sup>35</sup> Alexandra King, “New Book Gives Insight into Trump Fervor,” <http://www.cnn.com/2016/08/14/politics/hillbilly-elegy-book/index.html>, (August 25, 2016)

<sup>36</sup> Brendan Morrow, “Live Stream: Donald Trump Rally in Eau Claire, Wisconsin,” (November 1, 2016)

<sup>37</sup> Alexandra King, “New Book Gives Insight into Trump Fervor,” <http://www.cnn.com/2016/08/14/politics/hillbilly-elegy-book/index.html>, (August 25, 2016)

benefitted from a time in which people were becoming more likely to vote based on identity. In Eli Zaretsky's article *The Birth of Identity Politics in the 1960s: Psychoanalysis and the Public/Private Division*, Zaretsky analyzes the development of Identity Politics that arose from the private sector of one's life coming to the forefront of the public sector. With recent movements in the 1960s based on gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity, Zaretsky argues that these movements caused the:

“realignment or reorganization of the division between the public and the private, which brought the private sphere, the sphere of culture but also the sphere of the family, to the fore in a new way. What had previously been taken-for-granted background of political life, the process of identity creation, now became foreground and was politicized.”<sup>38</sup>

This realignment in the early-to-mid twentieth century caused people to not identify with a group based on occupation or social-economic status, but instead identify with one another based on racial or other group circumstances caused by three separate developments.

The first development as Zaretsky points out, was the development and need for higher education through knowledge and science, which is evident from the rise in programs encouraging people to pursue such careers to combat the advancement of the Soviet Union during the Cold War era.<sup>39</sup> Secondly, Zaretsky contributes this shift to the mass consumption seen throughout the United States following the post-World War II period where “mass consumption and mass culture emerged as a basic spheres for the formation of personal identity.”<sup>40</sup> Lastly, Zaretsky contributes the development to “a shift from a conflict model of society centered on the capital/labour relation to a co-operation model, associated in the United States with the term progressive era.”<sup>41</sup> In effect, with the development of higher education,

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<sup>38</sup> Mike Featherstone, *Global Modernities*. (Sage Publications, 2002), 241-242

<sup>39</sup> Mike Featherstone, *Global Modernities*. (Sage Publications, 2002), 243

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.



people began separating themselves by class. Likewise, with the development of mass consumption, people began pursuing their own interests that would have also separated themselves in terms of intersubjectivity. However, even though these individuals began distancing themselves from a variety of differences, they still had the commonality of being non-Hispanic whites which leads to Zaretsky's last point. The last point Zaretsky argues, is that even with this separation of class from higher education and the development of different cultural interests, the United States saw an increase in social movements. Such movements included the Civil Rights Movement, Second-Wave Feminism, and even the American Indian Movement that looked to combat the societal racism that was both present and rampant during the 1960's, conflicting with the institutional racism that has existed for the past 15-25 years. And so even with this separation, Zaretsky argues that people still grouped themselves based on whatever group they self-identified with. In the context of this paper, that group was being a non-Hispanic white. So even though a divide was created, individuals still associated themselves with groups who held similar beliefs and experienced similar circumstances.

Much like Trump in 2016, Rockwell attempted to attract voters for his cause by focusing on the non-Hispanic white class which Rockwell believed was becoming diluted and in danger of losing its prominent status as the racial group in charge. As we will see in the next and final section, prior to the conclusion, both Rockwell and Trump focused their respective rhetoric's on perpetuating the notion of an attack on the non-Hispanic white class through the themes of white vulnerability, religious prejudice, and black empowerment. And in doing so, hoped to motivate non-Hispanic white support for their cause by relaying the message they represented all non-Hispanic white Americans.

## **The Rhetoric: How Rockwell and Trump Appealed to the non-Hispanic White American.**

Both candidates traveled the country speaking at a multitude of Universities, and holding rallies in numerous cities in order to build a base. For Trump, his reasoning was simple. Just another stop, in another city, of another state, to conduct the same speech and espouse beliefs much like the day before. Rockwell on the other hand, had to travel on the “lecture circuit” as *American Fuhrer* author Frederick J. Simonelli, calls it, out of response to the method of quarantine.<sup>42</sup> This method, adopted by the National Community Relations Advisory Council, was a policy developed by Dr. Solomon Andhil Fineberg of the American Jewish Community.<sup>43</sup> The strategy was composed of two separate parts. The first part was to coordinate amongst the larger Jewish organizations, a united effort to minimize the confrontations between them and the anti-Semitic individuals to reduce their publicity.<sup>44</sup> The second part was to control the spread of anti-Semite coverage through news outlets and other flyers and bulletins hung around larger cities.<sup>45</sup> So while one was on college campuses as part of the traditional campaign run, and the other out of need; they do share one commonality: they both spoke at the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire.

On February 16<sup>th</sup>, 1967, American Nazi Party leader George Lincoln Rockwell spoke at the university during his time in Wisconsin, where he earlier spoke at Lawrence University in Appleton, and later at the University of Wisconsin Stout; University of Wisconsin River Falls; and the University of Wisconsin Waukesha.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, Trump spoke at the University of

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<sup>42</sup> Frederick Simonelli, *American Fuhrer: George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 60

<sup>43</sup> Frederick Simonelli, *American Fuhrer: George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 52-53

<sup>44</sup> Frederick Simonelli, *American Fuhrer: George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 52

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> William Schmaltz, *Hate: George Lincoln Rockwell & the American Nazi Party*. (Washington D.C: Brasseys Inc., 1999), 310-313

Wisconsin Eau Claire on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016. And although more than 50 years apart, their speeches held the same messages. In comparing their individual rhetoric, these two speeches will be the focal point of the comparative analysis to reveal their similar non-Hispanic White Identity Politics tactic. However, these speeches will also be supported by other articles and interviews to further provide evidence to their parallel rhetoric, in an attempt to acquire non-Hispanic white support through the themes of white vulnerability, black empowerment, and religious prejudice.

When examining their congruent speeches, both speakers reached out to the public through the concept of white vulnerability. This theme manifested itself in different contexts for both speakers but essentially conveyed the same idea: that non-Hispanic whites were losing their prominent status as the majority group in power of the United States. For Rockwell, white vulnerability revealed itself through what he believed to be the secret and silent takeover of America by the Jews who were part of the world-wide Zionist movement.<sup>47</sup> The Jews according to Rockwell were not a religious group, but instead a group of individuals who sought to control the world through supporting and espousing communism, which Rockwell concludes is an interchangeable term with Judaism.<sup>48</sup> In an interview with Alex Haley of Playboy Magazine, Rockwell said “The Jews operate behind the scenes, pulling the strings and holding the moneybags.”<sup>49</sup> One of these behind the scenes operations was the support of the Civil Rights Movement. Rockwell believed this movement was supported by communist Jews in an attempt to pursue the “mongrelization” of blacks and non-Hispanic whites to ultimately cause inferiority of intelligence and status.<sup>50</sup> In his speech, Rockwell perpetuated this idea by claiming that this

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<sup>47</sup> Rockwell, George Lincoln. "Playboy Interview: George Lincoln Rockwell." Interview by Alex Haley. *Playboy*, April 1966.

<sup>48</sup> Andresen, Carl. *George Lincoln Rockwell on Campus, 1967*. 1967.

<sup>49</sup> Rockwell, George Lincoln. "Playboy Interview: George Lincoln Rockwell." Interview by Alex Haley. *Playboy*, April 1966.

<sup>50</sup> Rockwell, George Lincoln. "Playboy Interview: George Lincoln Rockwell." Interview by Alex Haley. *Playboy*, April 1966.

was not only happening in the United States, but “all over the world” where “we (non-Hispanic whites), are being back down because the communists aren’t preaching love they are preaching pure unaltered hate of you.”<sup>51</sup>

For Rockwell, this interbreeding of black and non-Hispanic whites was essentially mixing inferior genes with superior genes. Rockwell knew this ideal was not widely accepted and argued that public views of blacks as being equals was the result of Jews controlling the publishing and distribution of books around the country. As Rockwell states:

“Whenever they tell you about anthropology you only hear the books that say negroes are equal or maybe even better. You are never told about the ones that say the opposite. And whenever you find one, they so, oh that’s a discredited guy.”<sup>52</sup>

Rockwell continued to argue his claim but referencing Henry Garrett, who was once head of the psychology department at Columbia University before being rejected by the university and academically everywhere after publishing an article about the inferiority of African-Americans. Nonetheless, Rockwell viewed the alleged Jewish support of the Civil Rights Movement as an attempt to dilute the non-Hispanic white status by mixing their superior genes with the inferior genes of African-Americans. While you may be thinking, that Jews are white, and indeed they are, Rockwell believed they viewed themselves as “the chosen people” who wouldn’t be mingling like the rest of the Americans.<sup>53</sup> This would then allow the Jews to “outwit and outmaneuver” the United States population, and “thus manipulate the mongrelized white man just the way he already does the niggers.”<sup>54</sup> In essence, white vulnerability for Rockwell held the idea that the non-Hispanic white American society was under attack by the Jews in an attempt to

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<sup>51</sup> Andresen, Carl. *George Lincoln Rockwell on Campus*, 1967. 1967.

<sup>52</sup> Andresen, Carl. *George Lincoln Rockwell on Campus*, 1967. 1967.

<sup>53</sup> Rockwell, George Lincoln. "Playboy Interview: George Lincoln Rockwell." Interview by Alex Haley. *Playboy*, April 1966.

<sup>54</sup> Rockwell, George Lincoln. "Playboy Interview: George Lincoln Rockwell." Interview by Alex Haley. *Playboy*, April 1966.

weaken their position in society through race mixing. Causing them to be more susceptible to the Jewish agenda.

In comparison to Rockwell, Trump took on a much different approach to the 21<sup>st</sup> century idea of white vulnerability. In his speech, Trump focused on two key aspects that dealt with the fading non-Hispanic white status of the United States: loss of jobs and mass immigration. As referenced by J.D. Vance, millions of white-working class Americans, including many other higher-up positions have been affected by the lay-offs and repositioning of manufacturing jobs overseas; leaving millions without a stable income. In attempt to repeal this recent trend, Trump in his speech promised to bring back jobs to the United States. In doing so Trump said,

“A Donald Trump administration will renegotiate NAFTA, and we will stand up to foreign product dumping all over, currency manipulation, and all of the unfair subsidy behavior that's going all over our country, makes it impossible for our businesses to compete. They'll be competing very soon. We will also immediately stop the job killing Trans-Pacific Partnership. That will be a disaster. As part of our plan to bring back jobs, we are going to lower taxes on American businesses from 35 percent down to 15 percent.”<sup>55</sup>

The idea is that with the return of manufacturing jobs, Americans, specifically non-Hispanic white Americans with the skills and demand for these types of jobs will be able to obtain greater job opportunities and return to the old traditional non-Hispanic white American who is hard working and full of grit.

Furthermore, Trump also sought the non-Hispanic white American population by maintaining the idea of building a wall between Mexico and the United States, as well as halting the immigration of Muslims into the United States through his proposed travel ban, which aimed

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<sup>55</sup> Brendan Morrow, “Live Stream: Donald Trump Rally in Eau Claire, Wisconsin,” <http://heavy.com/news/2016/11/donald-trump-rally-event-speech-eau-claire-wisconsin-live-stream-livestream-watch-online-youtube/>, (November 1, 2016)

to bar admission to the United States from the countries of Iraq; Iran; Libya; Somalia; Sudan; and Yemen for ninety days.<sup>56</sup> In pursuing the national security of the United States, Trump said,

“We have no choice. And we will keep radical Islamic terrorists the hell out of our country. A Trump administration will also secure and defend the borders of the United States. And as I said, and as you know, we're not playing games, yes, we will build the wall.”<sup>57</sup>

While focused on the protection of the United States, these ideals resonated strongly with non-Hispanic white Americans. Not only did it provide safety for them and other Americans, but it also had the underlying notion of protecting jobs from foreign immigrants seeking to exploit the manual labor job market that many non-Hispanic white Americans could only afford to work. Similarly, the prospect of constructing the wall and issuing the travel ban was also seen as an attempt to hold the majority status of non-Hispanic white citizens in America. Since history has proven the United States has consistently operated on non-Hispanic white, Anglo-Saxon, protestant ideals, both the wall and travel ban pursued retaining such traditional values by ensuring that whites still represented the racial majority.

Moreover, when analyzing both speeches, each person pursued the interests of the non-Hispanic white American public by discussing black empowerment and the negative effects it had on the United States. For Rockwell, black empowerment, especially through the Civil Rights Movement, was viewed as a dangerous social movement that threatened all non-Hispanic white Americans. Much of this rhetoric ties into the idea of white vulnerability, where Jews were responsible for the increasing push for integration as an effort to cultivate race mixing amongst the superior and inferior genes of the white and black population. Essentially Rockwell feared

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<sup>56</sup> Meghan Keneally, “10 Big Political Moments since Trump’s Election,” <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/10-big-political-moments-trumps-election/story?id=50986094>, (November 8, 2017)

<sup>57</sup> Brendan Morrow, “Live Stream: Donald Trump Rally in Eau Claire, Wisconsin,” <http://heavy.com/news/2016/11/donald-trump-rally-event-speech-eau-claire-wisconsin-live-stream-livestream-watch-online-youtube/>, (November 1, 2016)

the growing Civil Rights Movement would lead to the destruction of the non-Hispanic white American society and eventually, the overthrow of the American government by communist Jews. However, outside of the mongrelizing, Rockwell also argued one more reason why black empowerment was endangering the country.

In his speech Rockwell discussed a man by the name of Robert Williams. Williams, who was once head of the NAACP in North Carolina, led an armed rebellion against the state authorities and eventually fled to Cuba.<sup>58</sup> Once in Cuba, Williams ran a radio broadcast called “Radio Free Dixie” where he provided directions for armed rebellion against white racists and hatemongers all across the country.<sup>59</sup> While Rockwell first intended to motivate support by stating there would soon be a riot and overthrow against the non-Hispanic white population, he secondly tried arguing that the Civil Rights Movement had caused non-Hispanic whites to become weak and lazy; thus vulnerable to a black takeover of the United States if it was ever to happen.<sup>60</sup> As Rockwell says in his speech, “There doing it to you, there using you right now in the name of the oppressed negro people, they are using you to advance the communist revolution.”<sup>61</sup>

Rockwell not only feared black empowerment through the mixing of blacks and whites to create a vulnerable and easily manipulative American society, he also feared that blacks would evidently be successful in attempting a takeover of the United States that would leave non-Hispanic whites marginalized, and African-Americans and Jews in a position of power.<sup>62</sup> To

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<sup>58</sup> Andresen, Carl. *George Lincoln Rockwell on Campus, 1967*. 1967.

<sup>59</sup> PBS, “Negroes with Guns: Rob Williams and Black Power,”  
<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/negroeswithguns/more.html>

<sup>60</sup> Andresen, Carl. *George Lincoln Rockwell on Campus, 1967*. 1967.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

combat such a possibility, Rockwell held the belief that the only way to combat it was to unite all non-Hispanic white individuals under one pro, non-Hispanic white banner.<sup>63</sup>

In contrast of Rockwell's rhetoric of uniting the non-Hispanic white American society to combat the growing fear of black empowerment, Trump looked to quell the rise of the black empowerment movement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One way was by discrediting Barack Obama as a representative of the African community by insisting he was not a United States citizen. Likewise, Trump also sought to quiet black empowerment by rejecting the recent Black Lives Matter Movement as a violent and dangerous form of protest that had caused injury and destruction. However, since Trump references little to the issues of black empowerment, we will need to divert away from his speech in Eau Claire, and look more broadly at his message on a national level.

As previously mentioned, one way in which Trump appealed to non-Hispanic white voters was his discrediting of black empowerment through his involvement in the "birther" movement. This movement was an attempt to prove that past President Barack Obama was not a United States born citizen. The reason for this was because Trump saw a political advantage from such a movement. In a New York Times article, authors Ashley Parker and Steve Eder write:

"In the birther movement, Mr. Trump recognized an opportunity to connect with the electorate over an issue many considered taboo: the discomfort, in some quarters of American society, with the election of the nation's first black president. He harnessed it for political gain, beginning his connection with the largely white Republican base that, in his 2016 campaign, helped clinch his party's nomination."<sup>64</sup>

As is evident in the quote, Trump was able to capitalize on the movement by appealing to a broad range of white republican supporters who shared in his belief that Trump was not a United

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ashley Parker, Steve Eder, "Inside the Six Weeks Donald Trump Was a Nonstop 'Birther'," <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/03/us/politics/donald-trump-birther-obama.html>, (July 2, 2016)



States born citizen. As a Gallup poll from 2011 shows, 38 percent of people believed Obama was born in the United States.<sup>65</sup> Following Obama's release of the birth certificate, the results rose slightly but still was less than 50 percent, proving that many Americans still resonated with Trump's belief.<sup>66</sup> Even though Trump was able to gain support from his mounting pressure, the more important reason for this movement was to discredit Barack Obama as a representative of the African community. By perpetuating the notion of Obama not being born as an African-American citizen, Trump was essentially denoting that black empowerment, as seen through contemporary social movements, was still far away from reaching its ultimate goal of racial equality. An idea which coincides with the work of Brian Ward's essay "*I Want My Country Back, I Want My Dream Back: Barack Obama and the Appeal of Postracial Fictions*," which concludes that even with the election of a black president, racial sentiment still exists.<sup>67</sup> Ultimately the birther movement was an attempt to frame the idea that even with the equal rights enjoyed by all American citizens, non-Hispanic whites still hold the majority position of power.

In addition to perpetuating the birther movement, Trump also sought to stifle black empowerment by denouncing the recent Black Lives Matter movement as a dangerous and violent form of protest in demanding change in society. Trump effectively did this during an interview on Fox News with host Bill O'Reilly, when in response to a question about whether the movement has caused an increase in the death of police officers, Trump said "certainly, in certain instances they are."<sup>68</sup> He went on further to say "They certainly have ignited people and

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<sup>65</sup> Lymari Morales, "Obama's Birth Certificate Convinces Some, but Not All, Skeptics," <http://news.gallup.com/poll/147530/obama-birth-certificate-convinces-not-skeptics.aspx>, (May 13, 2011)

<sup>66</sup> Lymari Morales, "Obama's Birth Certificate Convinces Some, but Not All, Skeptics," <http://news.gallup.com/poll/147530/obama-birth-certificate-convinces-not-skeptics.aspx>, (May 13, 2011)

<sup>67</sup> Danielle L. McGuire, John Dittmer, *Freedom Rights: New Perspectives on the Civil Rights Movement*. (University Press of Kentucky Lexington, 2011), 329-664

<sup>68</sup> Jeremy Diamond, "Trump: Black Lives Matter Has Helped Instigate Police Killings," <http://www.cnn.com/2016/07/18/politics/donald-trump-black-lives-matter/index.html>, (July 19, 2016)

you see that—it's a very, very serious situation and we just can't let it happen.”<sup>69</sup> By making this accusation, Trump portrayed the movement as a threat to American society and by doing so, again appealed to the same non-Hispanic white audience who also shared his view on the birther movement. By attempting to discredit Barack Obama as a United States citizen as well as attempting to curtail the Black Lives Matter movement by depicting it as vicious form of protest, Trump sought to repel black empowerment and maintain the national view of non-Hispanic white prominence.

In examining their parallel rhetoric of religious prejudice, both individuals set their sights on two separate religious groups who they believed posed a threat to United States safety. By exaggerating this religious threat to American safety, Rockwell and Trump sought support from individuals who also feared the potential danger from these religious groups. For Rockwell, his rhetoric took the form of anti-Semitic connotations where he correlated all Jews in America as communist sympathizers who were set on seizing control of the United States and establishing a communist regime.

Trump on the other hand employed his rhetoric of religious prejudice through his proposed policy of barring immigrants from the Middle East. While the proposal did not explicitly mention religion as a determining factor, it was no coincidence that the several countries being barred entrance are predominantly part of the Muslim community. With the already mass hysteria seen domestically and abroad from recent terrorist attacks, Trump found non-Hispanic white voter support by simply labelling all individuals from the area as potential threats to the United States. In his response to Hillary Clintons proposal of opening up the United States borders to allow immigration from Middle East countries, Trump said the policy would be

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

“The most radical immigration proposal in United States history,” that would “lead to the loss of thousands and thousands of lives.”<sup>70</sup>

Furthermore, Trump also portrayed his rhetoric of religious prejudice during an interview with Yahoo News where he expressed his concern about the current American Muslim community. When asked how he would manage the Muslim community Trump responded by saying “we’re going to have to do things that we never did before. And some people are going to be upset about it, but I think that now everybody is feeling that security is going to rule.”<sup>71</sup> So not only, did Trump want to bar entrance from the thousands of refugees searching for a home in the wake of persecution, he also entertained the idea of heightening surveillance watch of the already American Muslim citizens. Both of which found wide support and responsiveness due to the panic that already existed from terrorist attacks and Trump’s role of feeding into an already disturbed public.

### **The Reemergence: How Donald Trump’s Victory Could Forecast Future Elections**

As is evident throughout this capstone, Donald Trump and George Lincoln Rockwell both sought to secure votes from the broad non-Hispanic white population through their ploy of Identity Politics. While one succeeded while the other failed, it is no coincidence that we see the emergence of Identity Politics in the 1960s, and 50 years later during the presidential election of 2016. What allowed for the parallel rhetoric of both speakers was the belief that there was mounting pressure on the non-Hispanic white group in the United States that demanded for a

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<sup>70</sup> Brendan Morrow, “Live Stream: Donald Trump Rally in Eau Claire, Wisconsin,” <http://heavy.com/news/2016/11/donald-trump-rally-event-speech-eau-claire-wisconsin-live-stream-livestream-watch-online-youtube/>, (November 1, 2016)

<sup>71</sup> Walker Hunter, “Donald Trump has Big Plans for ‘Radical Islamic’ Terrorists, 2016 and ‘that Communist’ Bernie Sanders,” <https://www.yahoo.com/news/donald-trump-has-big-plans-1303117537878070.html>, (November 19, 2015)

representative who was sympathetic to their cause. While it can be argued that there was little threat to the non-Hispanic white group of the 1960's, Rockwell truly believed that if no one stepped forward to represent this group, then like himself, his fellow non-Hispanic white Americans would lose their prominence in the country; finding themselves being marginalized and on the outside looking in. In an attempt to combat this, Rockwell believed that if we was able to portray the non-Hispanic white population as being under attack, then he would be able to motivate everyone for his cause which sought to retain dominance and uphold the systemic racism present in the country at the time. Not surprisingly however, there was little acceptance of his Nazi radical beliefs in addition to the fact that many of these non-Hispanic whites did not view their position in society as threatened. So, what was theoretically a good approach was undermined by Rockwell's character and how he essentially aimed to rebuild Nazism in the United States.

While there are of course differences between Trump and Rockwell, the commonality we find is that both attempted to use Identity Politics to support their cause during a time of social strife. As is evident during Trump's campaign, much like Rockwell's, non-Hispanic whites position in society was threatened, only this time it was real and Trump made it apparent. By placing the parallel rhetoric in a different context, Trump was successful in conveying to the non-Hispanic white population that there was a white vulnerability crisis, a rise of black empowerment, and a collective thought of religious prejudice towards the Muslim community as ISIS continued its global threat and attack on countries. In effectively doing so, more people were susceptible to Trump's rhetoric. Because even though Trump's policies were non-conventional, he was the only candidate who said things that many non-Hispanic whites thought. Which was that their position in was becoming diluted with the increase in immigration and loss

of manufacturing jobs; the idea that black empowerment as seen through the black lives matter movement was violent and dangerous; and that Islamic terrorism was a present threat and something that had to be taken into consideration when making decisions. So even though Rockwell had the same intentions, Trump was much more accepted, not because he wasn't a Nazi sympathizer, but because he simply was expressing the thoughts many non-Hispanic whites had. And that is why this victory could have potential impacts on future elections.

With Trump's success of effectively targeting a group within the United States and applying rhetoric that exploited these viewpoints, it now becomes a question of who will do it next and when it will occur. It is clear that through both Rockwell and Trump's campaigns, Identity Politics when employed is most effective when there is a social conflict amongst racial groups. This climate allows a candidate to target his preferred audience while alienated another in an attempt to side with the group who holds the majority, therefore becoming their representative; taking stances on policies that aim for the betterment of the group while holding the status quo for others. And as time progresses along with the shrinking non-Hispanic white class and rise of currently minoritized groups due to the rise of immigration, the question will be about who is representing who, and which candidate has not only my individual interests, but the interests of my group at heart.

## **Conclusion:**

Both Trump and Rockwell, while more than 50 years apart attempted to gain support during their respective campaigns. While one was a neo-Nazi in the 1960's, and the other a

presidential candidate in the year 2016, both attempted to persuade the non-Hispanic white population of America to vote for them. In order to do so, both employed the strategy of Identity Politics in which they framed their rhetoric to better reach out and appeal to the large group of non-Hispanic white voters of America who all shared similar perspectives and circumstances. In order to do so, each individual spoke about three themes which effected all non-Hispanic white individuals living in the United States during their respective times speaking and campaigning.

One of these themes was the notion of white vulnerability. For Rockwell, he viewed white vulnerability as an issue caused by the Jews of the United States in an attempt to overthrow the non-Hispanic white population and establish a communist regime as part of the larger Zionist movement. For Trump, his rhetoric of white vulnerability manifested itself from the increased loss of jobs overseas as well as the recent immigration trend that is slowly causing white majority status to decline, in addition to the dangerous criminals entering the country.

The second theme each candidate discussed was the idea of black empowerment and how it was posing a threat to the country, and more specifically to the non-Hispanic white voters of America. In his rhetoric, Rockwell viewed black empowerment as a threatening movement to the American society by first arguing that African-Americans were plotting an overthrow that had the potential of successfully controlling the United States. Secondly, he viewed black empowerment as a threat because he believed African-Americans were an inferior breed who by mixing with the superior non-Hispanic white breed, would allow Jews to easily manipulate the United States society. Trump on the other hand, while viewing black empowerment as a dangerous movement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century through the rise of police killings, also sought to suppress black empowerment by denouncing Barack Obama as a native-born citizen. In doing

so, Trump not only gained support by those who shared his beliefs, but he also looked to discredit Barack Obama as a representative of the African-American community.

Lastly, they also employed the tactic of non-Hispanic White Identity Politics through their religious prejudice views. Rockwell discussed religious prejudice in the form of anti-Semitic speech in which he argued that Judaism was essentially communism, and that all Jews in the United States were part of the larger Zionist movement. Likewise, Trump's rhetoric of religious prejudice took the form of banning predominantly Muslim countries from entering the country. Furthermore, Trump also expressed his religious prejudice views when he called for complete surveillance of the domestic Muslim community in response to not only his, but the nations fear of potential terrorist attacks.

Even though, both campaigned with similar tactics, one ultimately fell victim to the hands of one of his followers while the other was successful in obtaining the presidential election in 2016. For Rockwell, his lack of success was not due to his inability to effectively persuade the white voters to support his cause. His lack of success came simply from the fact that the white position in the United States was really under no pressure. Even though his timing overlapped with the 1960's political development of group identity being a factor in political affiliation, Rockwell was also espousing hateful and anti-Semitic views during a time when national pride was at its highest. Only 15 years removed from World War II, Rockwell found little to no support through his ploy of non-Hispanic White Identity Politics due to both his radical views and his personal devotion for Adolf Hitler; a man who the United States sought to destroy along with his Nazi party affiliates. Finding support would prove to be a dramatic challenge as the war along with the war effort in the United States brought individuals from all backgrounds closer together as they united for a single cause. Lastly, Rockwell was also unsuccessful due to the lack

of shared anti-Semitic views in the country during this time period. As Sheila Cohen notes in her book *Jews In Wisconsin*, the postwar period provided an optimistic future for Jews in the United States as Cohen writes,

“For the Jewish population in the United States, the situation seemed particularly hopeful. In addition to a sense of economic prosperity, Jews experienced a new sense of comfort as over anti-Semitism began to decline. When photos of emaciated death camp survivors and heaps of gassed bodies reached the US media, the nation as a whole became more supportive of the Jewish plight.”<sup>72</sup>

Even though Rockwell was unsuccessful in his ability to motivate the white American society through his use of non-Hispanic White Identity Politics, his effort reappeared in the wake of now President Donald Trump’s run at the presidency.

Much like Rockwell, Trump attempted to gain support for his campaign through the same strategy of non-Hispanic White Identity Politics, only this time it proved to be successful. Similar to Rockwell, Trump also benefitted from a new development in the political theory as Hajnal and Lee point out. During Trump’s candidacy, millions of individuals, began identifying themselves as nonpartisan voters. All across the United States, voters began taking positions of nonpartisanship, which meant instead of voting based on past affiliations and political ideologies, people began viewing themselves as a moderate due to the three ideas of ideological ambivalence, information uncertainty, and identity formation. When combined together, these ideas made it difficult for someone to vote for a party due to a multitude of factors ranging from being supportive of a policy on one side but disagreeing with the others, to conflicting viewpoints where they agreed with policies found on both sides of the political spectrum. So as nonpartisanship became the trend, Trump successfully exploited this large number of moderates’, specifically non-Hispanic white moderates, due to his ability to appeal to the broad

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<sup>72</sup> Sheila Cohen, *Jews in Wisconsin*. (State Historical Society of Wisconsin: 2016), 62



range of non-Hispanic white voters not based on ideals, but based on the group they identified with.

Ultimately Trump's ploy of non-Hispanic White Identity Politics was a successful strategy in motivating the non-Hispanic white voters of the United States because he was able bring to light the themes of white vulnerability, black empowerment, and religious prejudice by providing evidence of the pressing threat these themes had on the white status in the United States. However, even though Trump was able to appeal to the non-Hispanic white voters through the three themes, many voted for him simply because they viewed him as someone willing to not only fight for change, but to make it happen. Additionally, as discussed by J.D. Vance in his interview with CNN argued that an additional reason Trump was able to win was because of the way he conducted his speeches. As Vance says,

“...one of the trends in American society is this rising racial segregation by class, and so a lot of the wealthy folk, and a lot of the elites in our society, whether they live in Cincinnati, Ohio and are living pretty intact lives or in Washington D.C. where they have political power, they don't really know a lot of the people that are struggling in this 21<sup>st</sup> century economy,”<sup>73</sup>

And that is why Trump was able to win the non-Hispanic white vote. He not only took positions on policies that would directly benefit the non-Hispanic white class, but he made his message easily understandable and relatable. Making this the question of the future. How will future candidates approach the campaign of the presidency. By recognizing Trump's success of targeting a specific as part of the campaign, it may allow other candidates to develop their own tactic of Identity Politics in order to motivate a group for their cause. And as the non-Hispanic white class begins to shrink, the rise of Identity Politics may become the crucial factor in securing the presidency.

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<sup>73</sup> Alexandra King, “New Book Gives Insight into Trump Fervor,” <http://www.cnn.com/2016/08/14/politics/hillbilly-elegy-book/index.html>, (August 25, 2016)

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