

The Ideology of Trumpism and White Supremacy in the Post-globalization Geo-political Struggling

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Today there are neo-Nazis in the White House—the 45th president himself, his aides Bannon, Miller, Gorka, who are working hard to “Make America Great Again”—a code for making U.S. white again (Devega, 2017). Many are asking how this happened, especially white people who had been declaring for more than a decade that “racism is over”. Scanning the current public social arena in the U.S. highlights what black and brown people have never been allowed to forget—that racism is still active as an everyday practice. Globalization has widened the gap between the rich and poor in the United States since 1970s, which laid the economic foundation for the rise of anti-free trade and anti-immigration sentiments. After financial crisis of 2007-2008, gulf between rich and poor is growing in America, which prompted the emergence of Tea Party movement. Coverage of the Tea Party by American media created impression that the Tea Party was interchangeable with the Republican Party, paving the way for Trump to enter the Republican Party. Besides, the demographic changes within the Republican Party in the past decade—the base of the Republican Party has shifted from more wealthy and educated Americans to blue-collar and white voters without college degrees, have also provided the basis for the emergence of Trumpism. Populism is the core idea of Trumpism, gathering working-class whites support for Donald Trump, and promoting the Republican to become a party with more working-class voters. Although Trump loses the election in 2020, his supporters have stayed with him because of a complex interplay of economic, cultural, and racial factors, and Trumpism will have a long-term impact on Republicans. But it’s difficult for Republicans to find a heir to Trumpism because of its strong personal traits.

Keywords: Trumpism, White Supremacy, Tea Party, Media Diplomacy, Twitter President

The Background of Trumpism and Tea Party: Globalization Widens the Gap Between Rich and Poor

Since the collapse of communism in the late 1980s and the acceleration of economic globalization, the gap

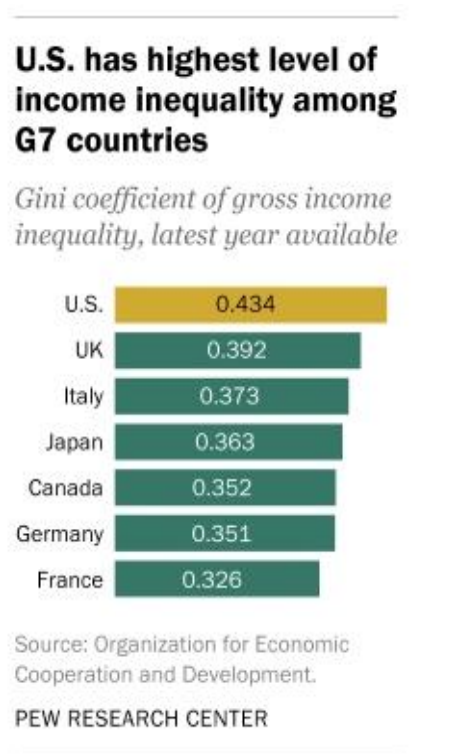
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between countries has narrowed. The average income gap has gradually narrowed in the past few decades, especially thanks to the development of China and India. But from an individual perspective, the equality of human beings as a whole has rarely improved (Stiglitz, 2013).

The ever-increasing income and wealth gap in the United States represents the trend of the Western world. Income inequality in the U.S. is the highest of all the G7 nations, according to data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development:

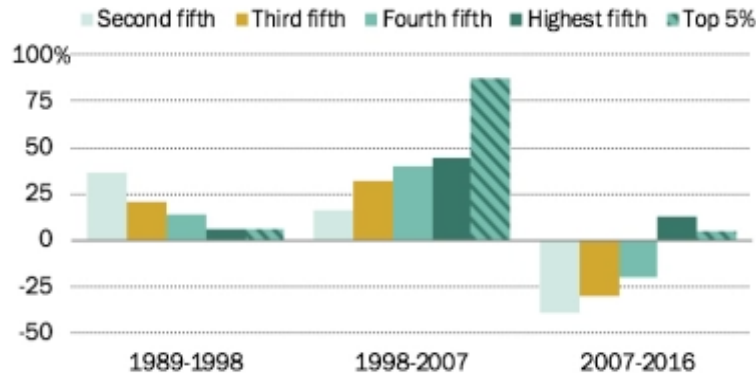


According to Pew Research Center's survey in 2020, the wealth gap between America's richest and poorer families more than doubled from 1989 to 2016. The richest families are also the only ones whose wealth increased in the years after the start of the Great Recession. The expansion of wealth over the last 40 years has gone almost entirely to the upper reaches of society. At the same time, the middle has stagnated or declined economically (Schaffer, 2020).

After financial crisis of 2007-2008, 95% of income increased in the United States went to the 1% richest group. According to census data released in 2013, the median income in the United States has remained unchanged for almost 25 years. The average American male's income (inflation has been considered) is lower than it was 45 years ago; American men who graduated from high school but did not get a four-year undergraduate degree earn nearly 40% less than American men who had the same degree 40 years ago.

The richest families are the only group to have gained wealth since the Great Recession

% change in median family wealth, by wealth quintile and for the top 5%



Note: Data for families in the first quintile (bottom 20%) are not shown. Their median wealth was as follows: 1989 – \$0; 1998 – \$0; 2007 – \$36, and 2016 – negative \$1,099 (figures in 2018 dollars).

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Survey of Consumer Finances.

Most Americans Say There Is Too Much Economic Inequality in the U.S., but Fewer Than Half Call It a Top Priority

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During the financial crisis of 2007-2008, Wall Street used excessive financial leverage to develop the US real estate industry, which caused a large number of poor people credit to buy a house but went broke after financial crisis. American in Central America believed that the financial crisis was caused by Wall Street. On February 19, 2009, CNBC reporter Rick Santelli used “Tea Party” for the first time in the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, criticizing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The Tea Party, who represents the local American public opinion, developed rapidly. In fact, Tea Party began with loosely knit activist groups; it’s not a strictly political party but a relatively loose faction of Republican Party. Tea Party prefers to solve the financial crisis through tax cuts and small government. A small government describes an economic and political system where there is minimal government involvement in certain areas of public policy or the private sector, especially matters considered to be private or personal.

The American media especially the mainstream media in New York and Washington are not very supportive of the Tea Party’s claims. Fox News has actively reported on the Tea Party movement, while the left-wing media MSNBC has a negative stance on the movement. MSNBC and Fox News both extensively emphasized their comments on the Tea Party in their own ways, and believed respectively that it represented the worst and best aspects of the Republican Party. Specifically, MSNBC associates the Tea Party with extremism, nativism, racism, and the Republican Party. Fox News cited the Tea Party as a way of emphasizing the silent majority of American (Rafail & McCarthy, 2018). Whether it is positive or negative reports, left-wing or right-wing media, all have promoted the effective operation of Tea Party. The media reported by the mainstream media mobilized potential supporters of the movement, and the problems pointed out in the news became the warning system (Laschever, 2017).

The members of Tea Party gained a sense of “political participation” by seeing the media’s reports on the movement, while the media reported on the Tea Party movement with their own political inclination to intervene in government work. The right-wing media Fox News has made great contributions to the Tea Party union; otherwise the Tea Party organization will lack a unified member certification and communication tool. For Fox News, the problems pointed out by the Tea Party movement are the best source of criticism of the Obama administration. “Washington Post” reporter Wesley Lowery (Wesley Lowery) believes that: Watching the right-wing media’s critical reports on Obama is experiencing a hysterical vent.¹

Some researchers believe that it is the populist, right-wing media and elite politicians provide vitality to the Tea Party. The political purpose of Tea Party is to connect the business elites who support the neoliberal political plan with white laborers and middle-class Americans so that they can form a new rights alliance. The “right-wing” and “neutral” media regard the Tea Party as a legitimate social movement, and thus the Tea Party is treated as a phenomenon of a popular movement, which has partially supported the right-wing populist discourse. Tea party’s emergence and growth provided the foundation for Trump to enter the Republican Party (Guardino & Snyder, 2012).

Populism Is the Core Idea of Trumpism

“Trumpism” is the result of the development of natural politics. Following the failure of George W. Bush’s interventionist foreign policy and the financial crisis of 2007-2008, the wave of populism has grown simultaneously with the negative socio-economic consequences of globalization and immigration. Right-wing populism and conservatism often share common ideas. From the 1990s to the early 2000s, the isolationist views gradually entered the mainstream of ideology and politics, which had a huge impact on foreign policy.

During Trump’s presidency, people accepted the idea of isolationism. The isolationism in the right-wing populism “Trumpism” is manifested in the following aspects: From the perspective of “Trumpism”, the foreign policy held by the “corrupt” elite is not in the interests of the “people” and erodes the “true” American identity. After Trump was elected president, he tried to prohibit citizens of seven mainly Muslim countries from entering the United States, but this decree was later cancelled by the DOJ. Trump’s anti-immigration rhetoric is characteristic of discriminatory attacks and opposition to all “other” communities except the “American people”.

Another important content of the “Trumpism” foreign policy is the criticism of the free world order ruled by “elite”. The liberal world order is regarded by “Trumpism” as an “elite” system, and their interests must be rebuilt. Therefore, the focus of US foreign policy is to strengthen national sovereignty, withdraw from supranational organizations and reduce funds (UNESCO, UN, NATO), strengthen defensive measures, and border controls to stop illegal immigration. The populist in the concept of Trumpism is based on the “noble American people” and opposition to the “corrupt Washington elite”, who “usurped” power of the people for their own purposes.

Trumpism coincides with Vladimir Tismanianu’s definition of populism, who believes that populism as a strategy can cause mass mobilization and provide support for “heterogeneous” leaders to oppose to the existing political system. Social groups in the context of Trumpism are mainly white, representing the movement of the urban and peasant classes, who is disappointed and loses confidence in economic inequality and modernization (Sokolshchik, 2020).

¹ Documentary: America’s Great Divide, Part 1 (full film) | Frontline, PBS.

White identities or white working-class voters are particularly attached to Trump. Justin Gest, author of “The New Minority”, believes that Trump’s populist appeal is due to his speaking ability and the content of the post-industrial communities where white people live in. According to a survey by George Packer, these people are pessimistic because they are obscured and their support of the ruling elite and neoliberalism has only brought them precarious lives.

Chuck Collins believes that the root of Trumpism lies in the belief that the economy is manipulated. It will only benefit those who already have wealth, while sacrificing the interests of the working class who are disadvantaged in the process. Their incomes and opportunities are becoming more and more unequal. More specifically, the 1970s policies planted the seeds of the current economic crisis and brought insecurity and anxiety. All these economic sufferings provide a catalyst not only for populism, but also for people’s accusations. As a result, class divisions has worsened since the 1970s, which exacerbated the despair of the white working class, who feel alienated and “cynic”, and lead to low self-esteem and nostalgia for the American dream.

Mohammed Cherkaoui therefore said that Trumpism is a manifestation of revenge. The “forgotten white men” and hard-working citizens feel that they have lost their political autonomy. The ruling elite and globalization reduce the wages of ordinary citizens while “increasing profits” for those who implemented a neoliberal economy. This first led to the Great Recession, which was caused by the cancellation and deregulation of economic nationalism, privatization, austerity policies, and the “pain politics” of companies that disrupted trade in rural America. Finally, 90.5% of the “silent majority” in rural areas since the Nixon era chose Trump to defeat Clinton in the 2016 election.

When investigating Trumpism, Steven Hahn believed that the victory of Trumpism expressed white anger because white voters were dissatisfied with the consequences of globalization and immigration, but Hahn also said that these two problems are intrinsically linked, because the intensification of globalization and the expansion of markets have also increased the level of immigration. Political isolation and distrust of government have replaced traditional values of faith and self-reliance. Trump’s voters are not driven by basic racism, but because they are angry with politicians for establishing an “elite pedigree”, which is triggered their “insecurities and political awareness.” Cultural inferiority also plays an important role in this anger. It is usually related to economic independence and opportunity. Logically speaking, when the economic independence and opportunities of one class increase, then the other social class accordingly lose these opportunities. In fact, according to Matthew Hughley, racial discrimination almost always depends on the degree of “economic inequality” and when resources are allocated to whites. It highlights the globalization of political core issues, which makes competing ethnic groups resist each other because they fight for “reduced resources”.

Some people believe that Trumpism is not the result of a “silent majority”, but should be called “the politics of intolerance”. Ross pointed out that there is dissatisfaction with economic stagnation within American society. He also asserted that Trumpism is a national violation of the “basic principles of dignity and equality”, that is focusing on misleading anger in response to the transformation of a homogeneous society to a pluralistic society. Trumpism and right-wing populism are widespread. According to Ross, it tends to mythify the past and move in the direction of “an era of national purity”. Ross further argued that values and human rights are fragile. In response to the overthrow of democratic governments and international institutions that defend vulnerable minorities, society needs to maintain a high degree of vigilance, “so that the fear of populism will not sweep the world” (Patenaude, 2019, p. 812).

“Twitter Presidency”: Reflection of Trumpism

Social media are hailed as a liberating tool that contributes to a more participatory democracy. It can immediately arouse people’s awareness of different social issues, form a new space, or become another tool of control and containment, that is to “completely eliminate Politicization”. Social media are favored by populist parties and their leaders because they are tools of “non-hierarchy and democracy” and have become a substitute for mainstream media. The populist believes that the content is created by honest and diligent ordinary citizens, so ordinary citizens should be trusted more than mainstream media (Gounari, 2018).

Trump used Twitter to attract the attention of many traditional news media when he was running for the 2016 election. Michael Tomasky quoted TV executive Les Moonves: The “Trump phenomenon” may be detrimental to the United States during the primary election, but it is beneficial to CBS. Meanwhile, this free and extensive media coverage also means that Trump can spend less money on political advertising to beat his opponents. In other words, Trump was able to bypass the role of reporters and mainstream media as “gatekeepers” through Twitter because they were forced to report Trump’s views in a highly competitive environment to get the audience (Schroeder, 2018).

Trump’s tweets created a unique and rapidly popular style. He posted on Twitter or other social media platforms, and the mass media also reported and responded to most of his tweets, which are often their front-page news. Trump himself has often emphasized that using Twitter can directly make contact with Americans without interference. At the same time, he often tweeted to divert the mainstream media’s attention from more important political topics.

His tweets tend to focus more on introducing himself or his policies, rather than from the perspective of the audience and the government. His tweets basically express three emotions: negativity, anger, and anxiety. During the 2016 presidential election, Trump tweeted more frequently than Hillary Clinton, about 25% of which were retweets, and he also interacted more with “ordinary users” because of 78% of his retweets are from the public. Trump tweeted from his @realDonaldTrump account and was more involved in the social media strategy, seeming to “emphasize that these tweets come directly from Trump himself, and not only managed and produced by his campaign”. 25% of his tweets are supportive comments and endorsements from others, and the other 25% are criticisms or attacks on others (Auxier & Golbeck, 2017).

The vast majority of Trump’s tweets are negative and insulting. A study shows that Trump’s attacks on independent press and press freedom have become a source of extreme ideas. His tweets often include such words as “idiot” (52 times), “annoying and loser” (64 times), “sad” (72 times), “doping” (117 times), “stupid” (183 times), “joker” (45 times), “distorted” (304 times), etc. (Gounari, 2018).

The “New York Times” survey of Trump’s Twitter after he taking office as president shows that more than 11,000 tweets are attacking individuals, heads of other governments, etc. The president reposted at least 145 unverified accounts, whose content is full of conspiracy theories or extremism. More than 20 accounts have now been blocked by Twitter. They include white racists, anti-Muslim paranoias, and followers of “QAnon”, which is a conspiracy theory involving evil pedophilia and “deep state”, whose followers are listed by FBI as a potential domestic terrorist threat (McIntire & Confessore, 2019).

The way President Trump uses Twitter is also different from any previous president. Although Barack Obama’s Twitter followers (105 million) are almost twice than that of President Trump (58 million), Obama’s Twitter basically focuses on introducing policies, while Trump uses Twitter more like making a speech with

offensiveness. Trump effectively used Twitter to reshape the audience's attention to news agendas, even exceeding the mainstream media's ability to design news agendas. Trump uses Twitter to change topics and public concerns when needed. Trump also uses Twitter to evaluate public support for policy recommendations. Sam Nunberg, an adviser to Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, said the campaign used Twitter as a focus group. Much of the information about the campaign depends on the number of times followers retweet Trump. Issues that have been retweeted more than 100 times are regarded as issues of public concern and will become part of campaign propaganda.

Trump sees Twitter as "a counterattack weapon for his suffering". In an interview with the U.S. Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network (C-SPAN), he stated that "Tweeting is 'my only form of defense' against media". Trump believes that Twitter is a great way to communicate because he can post things very quickly. "Otherwise, I don't know how to fight dishonest news reports".

Trumpism May Become the New Ideology Within Republican Party

Before Trump, the conservative commentator Patrick Buchanan ran for president twice in 1992 and 1996. He was a Republican and often conveyed similar messages like Trump. He believes that free trade is eating up American manufacturing jobs, and immigrants are competing for remaining jobs and driving down wages. The elites are benefiting; they despise the values and lifestyles of ordinary Americans. Republican pollster Bill McInturff later referred to Trump as "Pat Buchanan who owns his own plane". Buchanan sounded the alarm on behalf of the workers and believed that traditional free trade should be adhered to, while other conservatism Republicans are not yet ready to accept this message. Most of his message attracted blue-collar Americans, many of whom still belong to the Democratic Party.

The demographic composition of the Republican Party has also undergone significant changes in the past decade, and the proportion of blue-collar and white people has increased significantly because blue-collar voters are alienated from the Democratic Party's position on social issues (homosexual marriage, abortion, gun control). "Wall Street Journal"/"NBC News" poll data show that in 2010, 40% of self-identified Republicans were white Americans with college education. By 2016, this share had fallen to 33%. At the same time, the percentage of white Republicans without a college degree rose from 50% to 59%. Many of these new Republicans believe that traditional economic regulations are of no use to them.

The leaders of the Republican Party are also getting closer to the ideas represented by blue-collar whites. John McCain represents an anti-establishment group in the Senate. When he ran for president in 2008, Sarah Palin from Alaska became his running mates. Palin is a classic working-class populist figure, full of folklore charm, and disdain for the elite.

After the financial crisis of 2007-2008, the rise of the right-wing Tea Party movement and the left-wing Occupy Wall Street movement once again reflected people's dissatisfaction with the economy. They believed that the new economic achievements of globalization are flowing to the financial elite. Although the Tea Party movement later evolved into an attack on the Affordable Care Act, which was born in response to people's anger over financial aid, the movement opened up a vast space within the Republican Party, and its leaders mistakenly believed that the movement could be controlled. The members of Tea Party promote anger through the Internet and social media, because most of its founders are early users of social media, where they can organize and disseminate information. Eric Cantor became the first sitting House majority leader to lose a primary since the position was created in 1899 due to the Tea Party's social media attacks (Seib, 2021).

In general, the formation of Trumpism is the accumulation of forces within the Republican Party and the entire political organization. The working-class theme resonated in the Republican Party, but it lasted for at least two decades before it succeeded in the Trump election.

The rise of populism within the Republican Party has also become an important factor in the formation of Trumpism. At the beginning of the 2016 presidential election, Chris Christie, then governor of New Jersey, felt that in a reorganized Republican Party, people yearned for populist voices. A series of Republican leaders, including former President George W. Bush, the late Mr. McCain, and Florida Senator Marco Rubio, tried to support immigration reform to guide the party and accept the increasingly important role of immigrants in the United States. But now the party is ready to move away from traditional conservative stance towards populism.

The new Republicans worry about immigration. Traditional conservatives believe that immigration has a positive impact on the economy and society, but the decline in manufacturing has also caused serious economic anxiety among many Americans. They were shocked to observe that the number of undocumented immigrants doubled in the 1990s (about 8.6 million), and increased to 12 million in 2007.

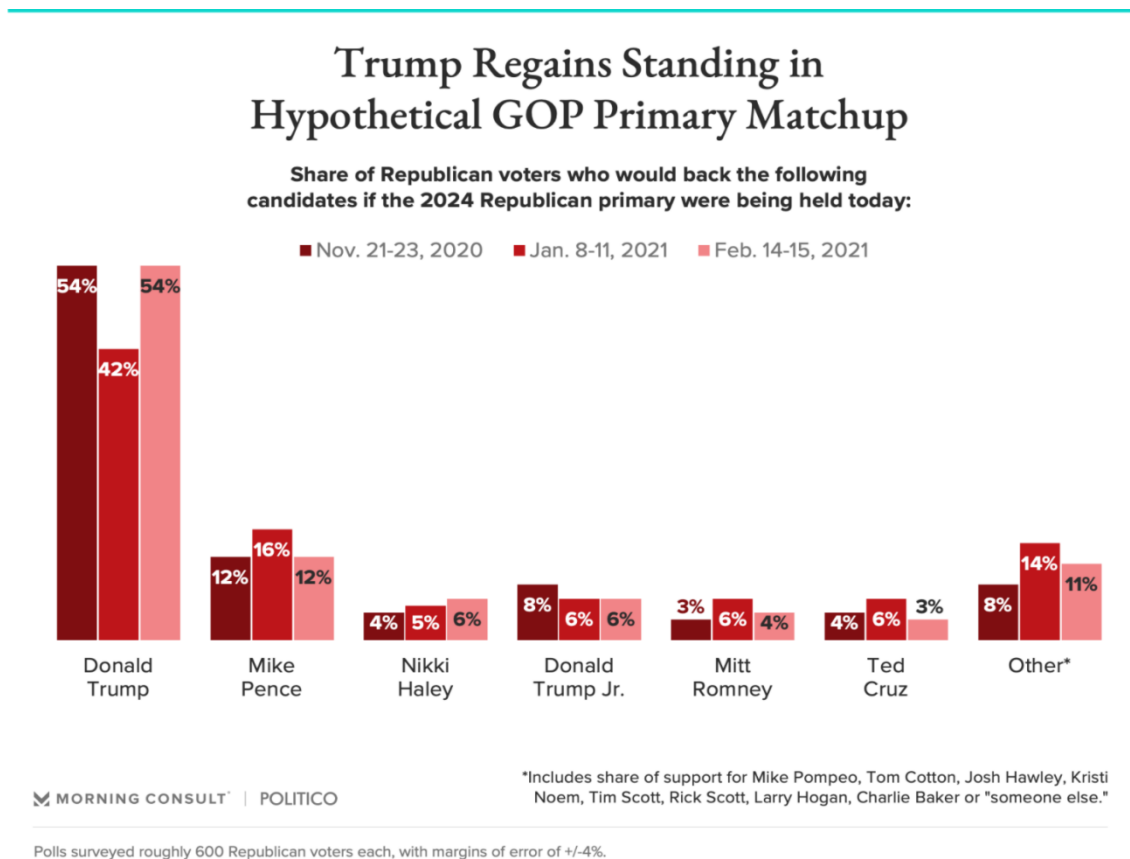
But it also reflects that American populism tends to blame outsiders for problems. Although trade patterns and the rise of new technologies in the workplace hit traditional employment more severely, many Americans believe that they have not only lost control of their economic future, but also of the country's race and culture.

Trumpism manifested the beginning of the new Republican Party. In 2016, Trump combined anti-immigration and trade protectionism messages and called for the dismantling of the rigid and corrupt bureaucracy to create a coalition with more blue-collar and white people. In 2020, he expanded his working-class base by winning more Latino Americans, especially in southern Texas and Florida. Columnist Ross Douthat wrote in *The New York Times*: "you can see the foundation of a possible after-Trump conservative majority that is multiethnic and middle class and populist, an expansive coalition rather than a white and aging rump" (Douthat, 2020).

Trump always serves as president in his personal capacity, rather than trying to lead a broader movement. Edwin Feulner, president of The Heritage Foundation, said: "He has no idea about the mechanisms and how the whole team work together". This kind of personalization prevents Trumpism from taking root. As the young conservative economic thinker organization—American Compass concluded in a retrospective analysis: "Trumpism cannot be said to be a success or a failure because it does not exist. It is neither based on an institution, facilities, nor a government. Trumpism lacks neither an overall vision nor a comprehensive policy agenda". Former Republican spokesperson John Boehner believes that Trump likes the spotlight and the enthusiasm of the cheering crowd, but unless he has future political ambitions or he may not have the patience and energy to work for Republican colleagues.

Although Trump loses the election, Trumpism that fueled his campaign and presidency did not magically disappear; Trumpism made Republican Party more likely a working-class party, helped change its attitude towards China's economy, and responded to the tiredness of national wars. Many of Trump's core supporters still maintain contact with him, and he still has strong support throughout the Republican Party. When the House of Representatives was preparing to impeach him for the second time, an Axios poll found that six in ten Republicans approve of his recent actions, and more than 90% of self-identified Trump supporters believe he should become the candidate in the 2024 presidential election (Douthat, 2020). The results of a joint poll published by Politico and Mourning Consulting on February 15 also proved the popularity of Trumpism in the Republican Party: 59% of Republican voters expressed their hope that Trump can continue to play an important

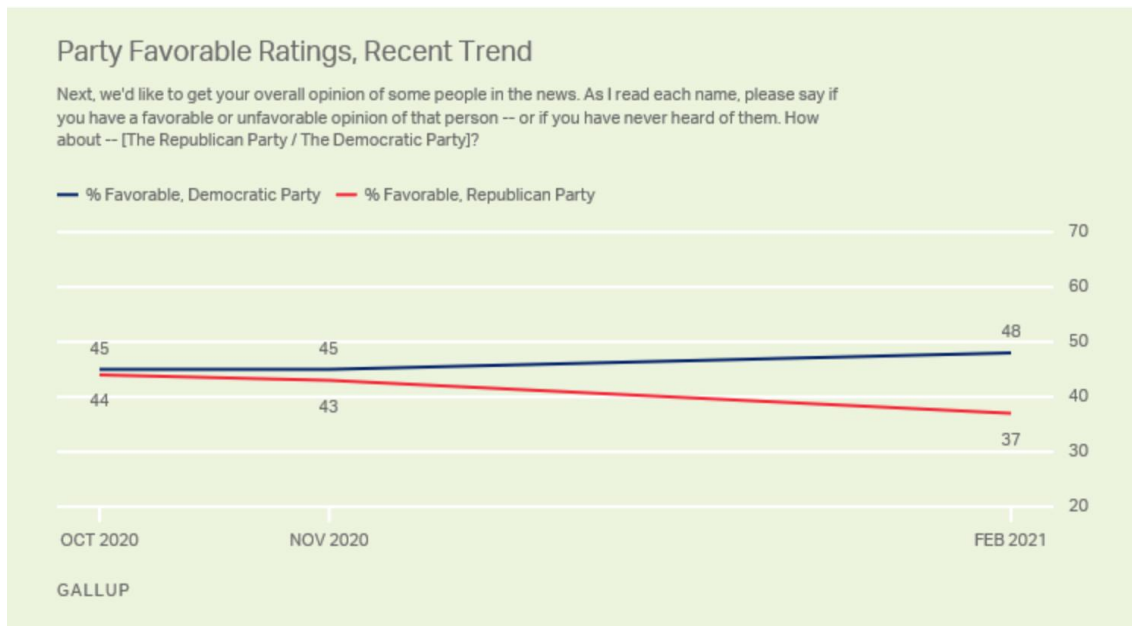
role in republicans. 53% of Republicans said that if the 2024 presidential election was held on the day of the polls, they would vote for Trump, while former Vice President Pence only received 12% support (Morning Consult, 2021):



In the 2020 congressional election, the Democratic Party's results in the Senate and House were not as optimistic as expected before the election. Although the majority position in the House of Representatives will continue to be controlled by Democrats, the Republican Party has captured several key battlefield districts, injecting more new blood into the Republican Party and expanding its power in the House of Representatives. For example, the Republican Stephanie Bice successfully defeated the moderate current Democrat Rep. Kendra Horn (D-OK) in the Oklahoma fifth district, as well as the Republican candidate Herley. Yvette Herrell defeated the current Democrat Rep. Xochitl Torres Small (D-NM) and won the seat in the second district of New Mexico. House Minority Leader McCarthy (Rep. Kevin McCarthy, R-CA) commented on the Republican victory in the House of Representatives: "The Republican coalition is stronger, more diverse, and more dynamic than ever before because of president trump, he tried to contact every group, and his efforts have positively changed the future of the Republican Party" (Diamond, 2016).

Hochschild, a sociologist at the University of California, Berkeley, believes that Trumpism is not just a wreath of public policy; it can also be used by any other Republican. Trumpism is an emotional planet that revolves around the Trump star. There is no way to separate Trumpism from Trump. The former governor of Ohio, John Kasich, who ran in 2016, believes that the party chose Mr. Trump's "negative populism", which is looking for a scapegoat and defining itself based on opposition (Thompson, 2020). According to Gallup's polls

on February 2021, the Republican Party's favorability has continued to decline from November 2020, and has dropped to 37% on February, widening the gap with the Democratic Party (Jones, 2021):



It remains to be seen whether the Republican Party will emphasize Trumpism to unite voters to regain support, but Trumpism is still the best tool to achieve this goal. Dr. Hart from the Australian National University commented that it is almost impossible to predict the direction of the Republican Party in 2024. However, if Trump is prevented from running for election again, Senators Ted Cruz and Josh Hawley are already trying to position themselves as heirs to Trumpism (Blakkarly, 2021).

The formation and development of Trumpism reflects anti-free trade and anti-immigration sentiment in American society. Trump has grasped this trend and formed Trumpism with its personal style. Trumpism is ingrained in white America with a large number of working-class voters for Trump himself and the Republican Party, which made it difficult for the Republican Party to separate from Trumpism in the future, but for now, the Republican Party does not intend to abandon Trumpism and a less Trumpy version of Trumpism might be the future of the Republican Party.

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