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## **ALT-RIGHT: A RISE OF RADICAL ALTERNATIVE RIGHTIST MOVEMENTS IN THE TRUMPIST FRAMEWORK**

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*The views and opinions expressed in this Paper are those of the authors and do not represent the views of the Valdai Discussion Club, unless explicitly stated otherwise.*

## Why Bother: a Historic Introduction

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The world is changing — that simple fact applies to all kinds of structures, from global ecology to municipal city management. However, it is the political changes which managed to attract the most attention during the last electoral cycle in the US. In order to understand what exactly went so different from the previous iterations, we need a small historical introduction.

It should not come as a surprise that the society we live in is heavily influenced by events of major importance (taking place somewhere in the past). Thinking about the last event of the same kind one may recall the stagflation crisis that haunted a number of Western and European countries since the end of the 1970s. Still it is widely debatable what served at its primal cause. Those on the Right tend to blame the ‘excessive government regulation’, including welfare state projects and increasing government spending (as a share of GDP). Supporters of the Left usually speak about inherent instabilities of the capitalist economies and the lack of desire to expand regulations even further.

But there is a fact we cannot argue — immense economic and political transformation that our world experienced as a result. Namely, the so-called ‘neoliberal’ model, consisting of budget cuts, deregulation, private sector expansion, stagnating wages and skyrocketing private debt began to be implemented. Symbolically, this shift is identified with the administrations of Ronald Reagan in the USA and Margaret Thatcher in the UK. This model not only gave the above-mentioned countries a few decades of growth (which was not very sustainable), it changed the political scene as well. The effect can be shortly described as ‘Center takes over’.

New neoliberal consensus, dubbed the Washington consensus, proved to be so powerful (as famous Thatcher’s ‘there is no alternative’ quote indicates), that even social-democratic, at least partly left political movements (including American democrats and liberals) submitted to its discourse. As a result, we were able to witness a Democrat president Bill Clinton promising to ‘end the Big Government as we know it’ and his British partner Tony Blair shaping what became called a ‘New Labour’, responsible for carrying out extremely neoliberal policies.

Along with that, a vast majority of the public displayed a constant loss of interest in political struggle on the whole, including elections (the last time voter turnout in USA exceeded 60% during presidential elections was in 1968). The idea that ‘there’s no difference’, ‘they are all the same’, ‘nothing depends on my decision’ began to spread further. Political parties and leaders still described themselves as ‘left’ or ‘right’, but as time went on it began to carry less and less meaning. The issue of ideological alignment obviously manifested itself in ‘cultural wars’ — endless debates regarding abortions, family values, LGBT, ecology, migration, social tolerance and so on. When it came to matters of economic policy, public sector share or increasing real income, parties usually reached some sort of agreement — the system must stay neoliberal, although some situational shifts are possible. That all contributed to a period known as ‘Great Moderation’, widely used to describe an economic situation of the era. Still, it was a Moderation in politics as well — the biggest scandals back then usually focused on personal (sometimes intimate) life of politicians, leaving any ideological battles on the periphery.

Securing some kind of political stability gave rise to another widespread belief — someone who is not ‘a part of the system’ just cannot rise to power without any help from the ruling elite and big media. If no changes are possible, why bother? That stability was perceived as the new norm until financial crisis of 2007–2008 erupted, catching many politicians and even intellectuals off guard.

## The End of Stability

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Having no space to investigate further on this issue within the limits of our paper, we will summarize it briefly. ‘A real change’, hence, the actions needed to be taken in order to fight the consequences of the crisis, became somewhat a new political agenda. One of the notorious illustrations would be a presidential campaign of Barack Obama in 2008, having ‘change’ as the main (and virtually the only) slogan, repeatedly addressed during numerous speeches.

Almost 10 years later we have to admit — no effective change had been made in order to reverse the effects of the crisis. Various methods showed to have very limited effect on stimulating real investments and driving up wages. On the contrary, austerity budget policies proved to be straight harmful, shrinking the effective demand and provoking political unrest in a number of regions.

Pretty common (yet cruel) empirical wisdom says it is unlikely even for a purely economic crisis to remain restricted to economy for a very long time. Sooner or later it will transform to a political crisis as well, which can serve as a method of changing the global governing approaches, giving birth to a new economic and geopolitical cycle. The same transformation took place in the 1920s–1930s, giving birth to a Welfare state, Big Government and other attributes of modern state.

So why is neoliberal period coming to its end? There should be a more reasonable explanation rather than ‘it just happens from time to time’, and luckily there is one. No economic strategy can be considered universally appropriate without a detailed analysis of very specific conditions, in which it is going to be applied. Even more, employing a strategy will result in changing the conditions themselves, making it unfit for a new, freshly created circumstances. A vague analogue to it would be the mechanism of self-fulfilling prophecy, rather than assuming the society we try to improve will not be changing as we carry on with our regulations.

Given that, what can be named among the greatest changes that were brought along with neoliberal shift is able to give us some insight on the reasons beyond its eventual failure. Undoubtedly a very harsh change indeed was made considering the status

of the working class and unions activity. In order to suppress any resistance and reshape the labor market neoliberal administrations needed to sufficiently decrease the motivation for union activity, showing that any protest is doomed to turn out pointless. Succeeding in that made the stagnating wages a new widely accepted norm, rather than a reason to revolt.

Stagnating wages lead to constricted demand, which is in no way beneficial to capital. The only way to increase demand while suppressing the growth of real income is expanding the private credit. Huge amount of finances pumped in the financial and banking sector allow to enjoy relatively low interest rates, creating an illusion of prosperity and rising standards of consumption.

Decreasing the government regulation not only results in the chain of events known as 'mergers and acquisitions', it lets financial sector grow rapidly, constantly inventing new instruments and methods of multiplying the wealth (which becomes progressively easier given the private sector debt statistics).

While the financial sector enjoyed incredible, never seen before growth, traditional sectors of economy (i.e. industrial sector) enters the period of depression. Lacking the sufficient investments to increase its productivity it slowly, but steadily changed the operating strategy maximizing the long-term goals and profits while trying to acquire financial assets. Luckily enough, together with domestic neoliberalism came global outsourcing, allowing the companies to take advantage of extremely low wages all over the planet, providing local customers with cheap products and privileged positions in production chains.

The very same issues that were presented as the strengths of neoliberal approach turned out to be its weaknesses. On the one side, the steady growth of wages in formerly poor countries in the end makes it less and less profitable to keep production capacities overseas. On the other side, uncontrolled market within the national borders is not only slowly destroying the middle class, increasing the wealth gap within the society. As some notable economists pointed out (mainly Hyman Minsky with his Financial Instability Hypothesis) the rapid growth of unregulated financial sector on par with striking government and private debt undermines the (formerly) rigid structure of the national economy itself.

In some way what we have been able to observe can be described within the approach promoted by Rosa Luxemburg. That is, capitalism never really solves its problems of efficiently overcoming the crisis. Instead, it expands even further, integrating new and new resources, workforce, territory, etc. What is so special about the present is that after the collapse of USSR, a dramatic shift in China's priorities after the death of Mao and so on, capitalism became truly global. Indeed, it became powerful enough to allocate resources on the scale bigger than ever, but on the same side it lost the ability to solve its crisis by expanding, since there's no place left to expand. That is why something needs to be done, and 'changes' have become an integral part of a new political discourse since the 2007–2008 crash. A call for 'changes' has managed to take different forms depending on the territory and cultural tradition. What is certain, during the last 5–8 years we were able to witness a rise of the so-called 'populist movements' all over the globe.

Their leaders usually do not belong to the current political system (or lack any considerable influence on it otherwise), and neither do they seem to have sophisticated theoretical models backing up their claims. Indeed, in their campaigns they mainly rely more on style, emotions, bringing the most glaring social problems (most likely, previously ignored by the mainstream) to the lights.

Those issues might be of various nature, including acts of corruption, income and wealth inequality, ecology, migration, religion and so on. Among the best examples of successful populist movements, we may list the Five Star Movement (Italy), the National Front (France), the British UKIP and others.

It is important to keep in mind that almost any influential political campaign has a high risk of being dubbed ‘populist’ by the media and its opponents. Marine Le Pen, Nigel Farage, Jeremy Corbyn, Bernie Sanders, Donald Trump – all of them were labeled ‘populists’.

## Alt-Right, You Say?

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But Trump is not regarded simply a ‘populist’ politician, he is widely described as a champion of Alternative Right (Alt-Right) ideology. What is Alt-Right? Simply put, it is how the right part of the populist political spectrum is characterized, however, it calls for further clarifications. Several approaches can be taken while investigating the Alt-Right phenomenon. One may talk about various right-wing movements, namely, UKIP, National Front, Dutch Party For Freedom, including Donald Trump and others. Contrary to that, Alt-Right can be viewed as a solely American ideology, restricting analysis to Trump’s campaign and the movement that formed around it during his short, but extremely controversial journey to presidency.

Considering a simple overview of search-engines statistics indicates that Alt-Right is mostly interesting to American audience (also Donald Trump being mentioned along with Alt-Right almost all the time), it would be reasonable to focus mainly on the American context. Still, when we talk about the European experience, that analogy should be made.

Alt-Right does not have any leading ideologists, sole representatives, or anything like a unified manifesto. This is what makes it so hard to analyze it without falling into one of preconceived categories. The only possible approach consists in characterizing Alt-Right views regarding various issues. And yet, even this task risks turning out problematic – there are numerous groups within the Alt-Right movement that can express different views on the same issues.

Despite its obvious popularity and wide usage in public discourse, Alt-Right has not been properly studied so far. Perhaps, the only attempt to summarize the groups that might

be considered integral parts of that crowd was made by Milo Yiannopoulos in his article 'An establishment conservative's guide to the Alt-Right'. According to Milo, those groups would include Natural Conservatives, Meme Lords, 1488-ers and the last but not the least, Intellectuals.

Another remarkable (yet partly debatable) attempt to trace the ideological background of Alt-Right, tying it to paleoconservative ideology, was made by Matthew N. Lyons in his 'An Antifascist Report on the Alternative Right'.<sup>1</sup>

## Alt-Right: Who are They

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One of the glaring problems for Alt-Right would be the total lack of any decent organization. Namely, what is Alt-Right? There is no single correct answer to that. Instead, we can only pay attention to a number of public figures identifying themselves with the movement (as long as they do so). If Alt-Right is bound to overcome its niche, rather marginalized status, its ideologists need to come up with some official documents, books and programs, revealing the core of its philosophy. Unfortunately, looking at the incredible diversity of Alt-Right representatives, the listed actions would be quite hard to actually be done within the reasonable time gap.

Among key intellectuals (and some of them turning politicians) who could nevertheless be regarded the founding fathers of the Alt-Right ideology we can name the following persons.

Milo Yiannopoulos — British-American political commentator who served as a senior editor for Breitbart News (until February 2017) and, among others, is considered to be one of the most vocal media-speakers, supporting Donald Trump during his presidential campaign. Labeling himself a 'firestarter', Milo relies on shocking or at least highly provocative public image, which ended in his Twitter account being permanently banned in 2016 as a result of his criticism of female comedians. It is also worth noting that he is no longer identify himself with the Alt-Right, labeling its proponents as racist, homophobic and narrow-minded people.

Gavin McInnes — Canadian-American political commentator, actor and a comedian, co-founder of Vice magazine and Vice Media. McInnes gained the most of his current popularity by collaboration with Rebel Media (he left it a few months ago), which started to operate in 2015. For years, Gavin had been criticized for sexism, racism and far-right political views, though he claims to be an anarchist and a libertarian. He repeatedly stated his support for Alt-Right and Donald Trump in particular, supporting 'Muslim ban' and other highly controversial decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> Lyons, MN, 2017, 'CTRL-ALT-DELETE: The Origins and Ideology of the Alternative Right', January 20. Available from: <http://www.politicalresearch.org/2017/01/20/ctrl-alt-delete-report-on-the-alternative-right/#sthash.MrRKd3eX.dpbs>

Ann Coulter — American writer, columnist, political commentator. Although Ann does not usually identify herself with the Alt-Right, saying she is just a Conservative and a Republican, she is indeed a highly popular figure within the Alt-Right community. She expresses typical conservative beliefs, opposing abortions, amnesty for immigrants, the theory of evolution and same-sex marriage. Her support for Trump resulted in a best-selling book called 'In Trump We Trust'. She regularly makes appearances on conferences, forums and various media outlets.

Ben Shapiro — American lawyer, writer and a columnist. Shapiro's role considering Alt-Right is somewhat dubious. On the one hand, Shapiro had been listed next to others as one of the most influential intellectual figures among the Alt-Right crowd. On the other hand, Shapiro himself rejects the Alt-Right premise, stating that Alt-Right movement is based on white supremacy ideals and is inherently racist, which Shapiro, being an orthodox Jew, cannot accept. He often criticizes left\liberal cultural agenda, as well as having a harsh view on Transgender movement, which led to a number of scandals.

Steve Bannon — American politician, investment banker, media executive and a producer. Bannon became the first man to be appointed as White House Chief Strategist, leading to assumptions that he was the mastermind behind the ideology of Donald Trump's movement. Being an executive of Breitbart news (which he reunited with after leaving the administration), he shares rather conservative views of a very interesting nature. Bannon prefers to call himself 'an economic nationalist', supporting increasing investments in infrastructure, increasing taxes on the wealthy (while decreasing for the middle class), raising trade tariffs in order to protect American industry from the 'unfair' Chinese competition. Regularly rejecting accusations of being a nationalist, Bannon, however, left his position in August of 2017, which many authors tie to the Charlottesville incident.

Jared Taylor — American writer, a founder of American Renaissance magazine, a board member of the Council of Conservative Citizens. Having a long history of political and economic writing, Taylor promotes the idea of race inequality — that is, races are not equal from the point of view of their intelligence, morality and creative potential. Taylor viewed Trump's victory as the "the sign of rising white consciousness", also in interviews he stated that Trump can slow down the process which would result in Whites becoming the minority in America. He also stated that Alt-Right is mainly an identity movement that emerged as a reaction to liberal attack on the foundations of White culture and civilization. He is often quoted by some authors (including Ben Shapiro) as a proof that all attempts to present Alt-Right as non-racist and non-supremacy based movement are doomed to fail.

## Economy

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Despite the success of many populist movements (Alt-Right included) clearly springing from the ongoing economic crisis (as well the lack of will within the ruling elite to come up with any radical decisions), its ideology offers fairly little when it comes to dealing with the problem itself. During his campaign Donald Trump attracted millions of voters by promising to ‘bring back the jobs’, threatening to end an ‘unfair competition’ led mainly by China and other countries relying on cheap labor. Also, he would speak about fighting illegal migration – another tendency harmful to local labor market. This idea was somehow embodied in the Mexico Wall project, sometimes presented as an example of Trump’s ridiculous suggestions.

Protecting the local market by imposing high tariffs on foreign products (including Chinese steel) was a widely mentioned method of “making America great again” as well as opposing the new international trade projects. Though it might not be obvious that any of those measures would restore the economic growth and improve the situation for years to come, one thing is dazzling obvious – none of those suggestions (except for possible tax cuts) can be called fully neoliberal.

The idea that the only thing any society needs from government is to completely avoid any regulation and let the market forces do the trick, seems to be officially buried. Thus, neoliberal ideology, which had been serving for decades, is no longer useful even for attracting conservative votes.

Some of these features can be found while analyzing the European context. However, in Europe most of the economic problems are usually associated with European Union and its centralized (but not democratic) structure, including the lack of right for sovereign money creation. Still, all that ideas revolve around protecting domestic markets and increasing government participation in the economy. It was made completely clear during the last British electoral campaign when Theresa May, being called ‘a red tory’, delivered a program which was criticized by some conservatives as ‘leftist’ and ‘populist’ at the same time. When a respectful Tory leader talks about ‘social justice’ and ‘fighting inequality’, you might guess that something really serious is about to happen.

## Racism, Migration and Charlottesville

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Perhaps, the most vocal and outrageous topic would be migration and all the related issues. Being one of the cornerstones of modern political affiliations, debates on migration tend to be the most intense and controversial, leading to mutual accusations and suspicions.

Radical right-wing ideology has been closely tied to all sorts of racism for a long time and that is not a pure coincidence. Being apologetic of income, wealth, educational and other inequalities, right-wing supporters come up with an argument that all the differences

are caused by individuals and their personal decisions rather than by an oppressive or rigged social system. If that premise is accepted, the only possible way to explain why some ethnic groups have it worse than others would be their inability to make proper choices and take care of themselves. Needless to say, all the ‘genetic’ and ‘biological’ explanations come in handy to justify the existing or even widening gaps.

Simple biological approaches do not tend to be exactly popular among modern nationalists (except for very small marginal communities), the concept of ‘cultural codes’ and ‘conflict of civilizations’ seem to have taken its place. According to that, some foreigners simply cannot or do not want to adapt to their fostering country, preferring to keep on with their tradition. As some Alt-Right supporters believe, government plays a crucial (and a very negative) role in that, giving foreigners enough resources to avoid looking for real jobs, thus integrating deeper in the society they need to live in. But there is another problem of the same token with those who tend to work illegally. That behavior is often marked as ‘stealing our jobs’, driving wages down and marginalizing the local population. All that is especially important in case of European multiculturalism, which begins to be treated as a failed, utopian idea leading to social chaos and disorder (at least when we take a look at those who criticize the modern state of affairs).

Due to the Mexican wall project and other notorious migration bans Donald Trump has been repeatedly called a racist, and that label is extremely unlikely to come off anytime soon. It is a highly debatable question whether Trump is actually racist per se. Anyway, an increased share of votes he received from ethnic minorities in swing states seem to be telling otherwise. The whole saga with Executive Order 13769 and Executive Order 13780 (dubbed a ‘Muslim ban’ in the media) caused a true public uproar. Thousands of citizens — including Congress members, scientists, business leaders, academics, various organizations (including universities) condemned this ban in various manners. That even led to a conflict with the Supreme Court, which is yet to be settled for good.

Perhaps, the most important racism-related episode up to date would be the events linked to the ‘Unite the Right’ rally that took place in Charlottesville, Virginia, on August 11–12. The main motivation behind the rally was opposing the removal of a Robert E. Lee statue from freshly renamed Emancipation Park (‘Lee Park’ 2 months earlier). Among others, protesters included a wide conglomerate of nationalists, neo-Nazis, white supremacists and local militias. During the rally racist (i.e. anti-Semitic) slogans got noticed, as well as swastikas, Confederate flags, hateful banners and Trump/Pence signs. On August 11 rally turned violent as protesters clashed with counter protesters in aggressive fight, leaving 14 people injured.

Moreover, on the next very day a man, who would later be revealed to have ties with far-right extremists, rammed his car into a crowd of counter protesters not so far away from the rally site, killing one person and injuring dozens. This act was described as domestic terrorism by Attorney General Jeff Sessions. Charlottesville mayor Michael Singer blamed Donald Trump and his colleagues by saying: *‘I am not going to make any bones about it. I place the blame for a lot of what you are seeing in America today right at the doorstep of the White House and the people around the president.’*

Later it was found out the driver was not only a far-right activist, but could be characterized as an Alt-Right follower, regularly posting their content and taking part in thematic discussions.

However, it was not the attack itself which caught public attention, but Trump's personal response, given in several statements. The first one was made on August 12, the day of the attack. Trump included the following phrase in his speech: '*... we condemn in the strongest possible terms this egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides, on many sides...*'

That served as a reason for another huge portion of criticism, indicating that Trump had not made himself clear on the real villains behind the incident. Even more, his speech could give an impression that the far-right extremists who provoked the initial clash were protecting their own rights. Some commentators even mentioned that instead of uniting the nation in the wake of another racial clash, Trump divided in even more by putting the blame on true victims.

After a huge portion of criticism, the second statement was made on August 14. In the second statement he said that it was racism and white supremacy that is the real root of social evil people faced in Charlottesville.

However, on August 15 the third statement was made, where Trump said he had nothing to apologize for and that his initial reaction was absolutely correct. That resulted in yet another backlash, far more massive. Many artists, politicians, celebrities stated that Trump clearly plays 'on the nazi side' and prefers to blame some mythical 'Alt-Left' rather than the real criminals and extremists. The former leader of Ku Klux Klan spoke too, reminding Trump that 'it was the white nationalists who put Trump in the office,' which did not help as well. It was soon followed by the 4th statement, including the most controversial thesis: '*They are trying to take away our culture, they are trying to take away our history.*'

Even though Trump dismissed Steve Bannon, who went on quite a detailed explanation why white Nazis are nothing more than 'a collection of clowns', it clearly was not enough. As an act of protest many respectful figures previously collaborating with the government resigned, including *Kenneth Frazier*, the CEO of Merck, *Kevin Plank*, the Under Armour founder and CEO, *Brian Krzanich*, Intel Chief Executive, *Richard Trumka*, AFL-CIO President, *Thea Lee*, economist and former AFL-CIO Deputy Chief of Staff, *Scott Paul*, Alliance for American Manufacturing President, *Denise Morrison* of Campbell Soup, and *Inge Thulin* of 3M.

Up until now the conflict still holds and has a strong potential for escalating as various mini-rallies emerge among Charlottesville, confederate monuments remain intact, but covered in black fabric.

In spite of the fact that the hostile attack that took place can obviously be described as an act of domestic terror, it remains unclear how serious it actually was. After all, the infamous

attack by Timothy Mcway did not lead to any political crisis despite its enormous casualties. So why today such a minor (considering other examples from the recent American history, i.e. the Las Vegas shooting) homicidal act has managed to lead to such a confrontation?

Since day one, being the only populist who had managed to rise to power, Trump has been under attack by many popular media outlets (which he tries to mock repeatedly given any opportunity). Almost any move made (or avoided) by the president was used to picture him as incompetent, overemotional and generally unfit for governing such a huge country. The trend continues with the current scandal — Trump is being constantly depicted as a racist and authoritarian (yet incompetent) leader along with some Ku Klux Klan imagery.

As for now it is safe to predict a number of outcomes. First — Charlottesville incident will be used as much as possible to mock Trump's reputation and, perhaps, serve as another argument for potential impeachment. Second — a controversy in the American society caused by both, Charlottesville incident and the whole 'war on monuments' will continue to strive, leading to heated discussions at minimum. Third — latest events will most likely bury all the attempts to present the Alt-Right as a serious intellectual movement and a new political philosophy. Instead, in popular culture it will most likely be forever associated with internet-memes and not-so-smart right-wing radicals, white supremacists, Nazi admirers, etc. Obviously, that does not apply to the USA exclusively.

One should keep in mind that in its current, possibly demonized and dumbed-down version, the support for the Alt-Right floats around 10% of the US population.<sup>2</sup> That is a high figure for any social movement or young ideology. However, it is not nearly high enough to present a stable support group for the presidential administration (which itself lacks any consistency).

## Social Justice Warriors

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Another important issue that could be able to mobilize (at least when it comes to Internet) Alt-Right followers would be the constant conflict with the so-called Social Justice Warriors (SJW). Being somewhat an informal way to characterize its opponents, SJW now serves for describing individuals who hold extremely hypertrophied views

<sup>2</sup> Clement, S & Nakamura, D, 2017, 'Poll shows clear disapproval of how Trump responded to Charlottesville violence', *The Washington Post*, August 21. Available from: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/poll-shows-strong-disapproval-of-how-trump-responded-to-charlottesville-violence/2017/08/21/4e5c585c-868b-11e7-a94f-3139abce39f5\\_story.html?hpid=hp\\_hp-top-table-main\\_trumppoll-503pm%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm\\_term=.e1672ee1a0b4](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/poll-shows-strong-disapproval-of-how-trump-responded-to-charlottesville-violence/2017/08/21/4e5c585c-868b-11e7-a94f-3139abce39f5_story.html?hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main_trumppoll-503pm%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm_term=.e1672ee1a0b4)

springing from progressive, liberal leftist ideology. Alt-Right community tries to present those views as ridiculous, absurd and socially harmful. Since no eloquent list of SJW views has been produced, their ideology and actions can be broken down into a number of popular categories.

## *1. Feminism*

One of the most debated subjects today when it comes to social and political questions would be feminism. The boundaries of that definition are quite transparent, so by 'feminism' we would mean mostly what is shaped by presentations and speeches given by individuals who publicly identify themselves as 'feminists' or 'women rights activists'. Alt-Right speakers produce their most viewable content by 'disproving the myths of feminism', showing that, as they believe, modern feminism 'has nothing to do with women's rights' and is being a mockery of its former self.

Among examples of such 'myths' would be the wage gap, sexual objectification, shallow (compared to men) possibilities for job and education, increased risk of sexual violence.

Using a number of data derived either from public studies or government statistics, Alt-Right speakers try to prove that none of those arguments hold anymore (even if they used to be true in the past). On the contrary, modern feminists are said to be 'punishing men for their gender', eradicating any man-like behavior. A good example of that reasoning would be the book 'The War Against Boys', written by C. H. Sommers and containing some meditations on how boys are being treated in the sphere of education (mostly in schools). The author comes up with a conclusion that modern educational trends are heavily influenced by obviously biased feminist agenda which does not promote any equality, but leads to serious potential psychological problems for individuals of both sexes.

## *2. Body Positive*

The ideology of feminism gets criticized from yet another viewpoint that is worth mentioning. It would be the Body Positive. In short, the Body Positive is somewhat an ethical and aesthetical approach saying that modern standards of beauty (especially for women) are artificially constructed and are completely unrealistic. Photoshopped pictures of female athletes and models do not promote any self-confidence for ordinary women, instead they make them feel more insecure about their looks, forcing to spend more money on beauty and fitness industries products.

Apart from that, these standards are believed to be imposed by the patriarchal structure of modern society, women are often pictured nude or semi-nude, presented as sexual objects rather than diverse individuals.

A possible solution arising from those facts leads to rejecting modern beauty standards generally, trying to ‘celebrate who you really are’, stop feeling guilty about any aesthetic drawbacks and imperfect looks, enjoying life no matter what.

Despite the fact that Alt-Right speakers agree that some people can be healthy without actually looking like someone from the cover of a fashion magazine, they attack Body Positive activists for going too far, advocating harmful and disgusting types of appearance. Usually the discussion revolves around praising fat women as an ideal of beauty, ignoring the fact that obesity has been proven to have a tremendous negative impact on nation’s health and should be considered a serious disease, not a personal achievement of any kind.

### *3. Gender issues*

Perhaps the newest issue in this list would be the questions of gender. One may note that we are not talking about ‘traditional’ LGBT debates or acceptance of gay-marriages (which some Alt-Righters are fine with). The problem lies deeper, in gender itself. Alt-Right speakers present the situation as following: taken to its extreme, leftist (or ‘cultural marxist’) approach to gender, possibly borrowed from the post-modern philosophy, states that unlike sex, gender is totally socially constructed. Therefore, not only is it incorrect to assume one’s gender by his or her physiological properties, it is also not correct to assume any gender at all unless an individual openly states that.

Thus, gender can be not only male or female, it can also be non-binary, or reflect any possible and thinkable combination of various traits. As a result, LGBT acronym gets modified too, resulting in, for example, LGBTTQQIAAP (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, ally, pansexual) and other variations.

Alt-Righters renounce this approach as harmful and forced upon, especially when it comes to medical sex-changing procedures applied to minors. There is a plethora of opinions among Alt-Righters on what ‘the real’ situation with genders is. It ranges from ‘there are only 2 genders’ approach to ‘no one should be able to ask for special treatment based upon self-assigned gender’ view. Anyone interested may find a number of regularly updated channels on YouTube, devoted to criticizing most notable and popular gender-activists. Those videos are often used in political discussions as well to prove that ‘only the turn to the Right can save the modern civilization’ and same purposes.

### *4. Offending and safe-space*

On par with other modern trends, the one that gets its share of criticism from Alt-Righters would be the general ‘offend’ and ‘safe-space’ culture, which seems to be spreading throughout US campuses. Summed up, it states that any individual can be offended either by actual behavior (say, for example, sexual harassment) or by facing some kind of opinion (believed

to be hateful discriminating or simply hostile) that can lead to emotional trauma. Among those types of behavior — refusing to use ‘gender-neutral pronouns’ to address individual and other examples. For such cases a special safe-space should exist, where any offended or traumatized student can hide in order to avoid further psychological damage.

Alt-Righters, except for advices ‘to grow a thicker skin’, argue that those trends simply defy the freedom of speech and present some kind of imposed censorship. Various academic institutions are traditionally viewed as a place for debates, exchanging arguments and working upon producing the most well proved concepts, which simply denies the possibility of any censorship.

## Foreign affairs

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What was so special about recent electoral campaigns (albeit the case of Trump, or parliamentary elections in the UK) is the amount of criticism towards foreign policy implemented by those in office. For the most part it was considered wasteful, careless, undermining national economy, while ignoring the most glaring social problems within the borders. Almost all candidates (as well as their respectful programs) promised to reverse the case, pumping resources back into the country, aiming to resolve conflicts caused by poverty, inequality, unemployment, stagnating wages and so on. That all was a part of Trump’s strategy ‘to make America great again’ as well.

During political campaigns a lot has been said about the geopolitical situation. In order to differentiate themselves from the establishment (which is the move shared by all of the modern populist politicians), leaders like Donald Trump and Marine Le Pen repeatedly stated their admiration of some political figures usually disregarded by the officials — mainly Vladimir Putin. That inevitably lead to a number of preposterous accusations that fueled the media, calling Trump or Le Pen (that even touched Jeremy Corbyn) ‘Putin’s agents’, whom he used to ‘destroy the world as we know it.’ However, usually these assumptions were made about Le Pen, since her victory could potentially result in FrExit, effectively destroying European Union as a whole.

Now, since some time has passed, the tables have turned, at least for Donald Trump. When it comes to foreign policy, he is being criticized not for the lack of will or desire to engage, but for the unreasonable, excessive amount of it. In respect of the situation in Syria, Venezuela or the ongoing crisis with North Korea, Trump is generally presented as a ‘firestarter’, a reckless individual who does not mind starting another war to boost his popularity and satisfy his power-hungry character. On the other hand, Trump gets his share of skepticism from the Alt-Right crowd for being not active enough, lacking the will to bring all the changes he spoke of explicitly during the presidential campaign.

## Conclusion

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Arguments presented in this paper can be summarized the following way:

We are witnessing the collapse of political Center in Western countries (including the USA), which is the result of employing various neoliberal strategies for the last 40 years and even more. Political movements, and the general public as well, become more and more radicalized and polarized, a new period of intense struggle seems almost inevitable. That will eventually result in a new consensus where left/right/central alignment would be fundamentally reassigned.

Such a collapse manifests itself as a collapse of the modern (yet unspecified) ideology, including the neoliberal dogma ‘the less government — the better’. Despite the lack of any advanced theory or manifesto, citizens start to put more and more of their hopes into the government, waiting for it to undertake real measures in order to promote economic growth and increase general wellbeing. All the ideas considering slashing the public sector are extremely unlikely to restore its former popularity anytime soon.

Alt-Right incarnation of the right-wing ideology presents a dubious and quite self-contradictive concept, trying to unite cultural conservatism with a somewhat protectionist economic policy. Yet, it does not completely reject with the idea of the ‘trickle-down’ economy and other measures of increasing growth by reducing taxes and widening privileges for capital.

Numerous attempts by popular media figures (mostly American) to present the Alt-Right as a modern, intellectual ‘common-sense’ movement will likely fail in the wake of racially motivated scandals (i.e. Charlottesville), in which Alt-Right supporters openly took part.

Given that, what we see so far — the Alt-Right movement is no way a final stage, but only a beginning of the massive ideological and political transformation that the whole world will endure on the verge of changing of the long-term economic and geopolitical cycles. In order to succeed during the transitional period, it is important to keep up with developing trends and understand the underlying mechanisms of global historical adaptation.

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