Abstracts

Donald Trump and the Incredibly Shrinking Presidency

Niels Bjerre-Poulsen, Associate professor, ph.d., Center for American Studies, SDU, nbp@sdu.dk

The article assesses how Donald Trump has handled the American Presidency, according to the criteria commonly used by political scientists and historians within the field. Niels Bjerre-Poulsen takes his point of departure in »The 2018 Presidents & Executive Politics Presidential Greatness Survey«, where 170 members of the American Political Science Association place Trump dead last among the 44 men, who have held the office. His first two years in the White House have been chaotic. Time after time, he has ignored advice from the experts within his own administration – not least assessments and advice from the intelligence agencies. While many of the president's supporters undoubtedly wanted him to be a disruptive force, both in Washington and in the international system, the article argues that Trump, due to lacking understanding of how the American political system works, has unintentionally diminished the role of the president within this system.

Trump Voters in Historical Perspective

Anne Mørk, ph.d in American Studies, annemork1507@gmail.com

Due to Trump's untraditional campaign, many expected that Hillary Clinton would win the 2016 presidential election. Yet, his victory is less surprising when understood in a historical perspective and when taking into consideration the growing gap between republicans and democrats. This gap is based not just on political ideology or economic interests, but on the social identification within each party. Since the 1960s the two parties have each promoted their idea of a just society which often diverges relating to gender, race and religion – three factors which shape the various social groups and their perception of the social order. As analyzed in this article, the historical development of the parties and their goal of mobilizing certain social groups has led to the current polarization amongst Americans and, as an extension of this, to Trump's electoral victory.

»Make America White Again«: Donald Trump and the Ethnic and Racial Minorities in the United States

Jørn Brøndal, Professor, ph.d., Center for American Studies, SDU, brondal@sdu.dk

This article analyzes, first, the ethnic and racial appeals Donald Trump employed both as presidential candidate 2015-16 and subsequently as president; second, the degree to which Trump's strategy represented a new Republican departure; and, third, what segment of the electorate Trump attempted to reach. As it turns out, in deploying an aggressive, identity-centered rhetoric Trump drew on an old right-wing populist tradition, rather than revamping the GOP's Southern strategy. While succeeding in reaching many white voters, a »diploma gap« opened up among white Americans, with the well-educated increasingly moving toward the Democratic column and the less well-educated making up the bulk of Trump's grassroots Republican army. In the final analysis, Trump emerged as a symptom of a crisis-ridden America, ethnoracially as well as politically.

American Foreign Policy under Donald Trump

Kristine Kjærsgaard, Associate professor, ph.d., Department of History, SDU, kristinek@sdu.dk

This article provides an overview of president Trump's foreign policy from his inauguration until 1 January, 2019. Trump's foreign policy decisions are analyzed against his campaign promises and against his predecessor, Barrack Obama's, foreign policy decisions. The study shows that Trump's foreign policy decisions are characterized by change as well as continuity. However, those foreign policy decisions that represent a continuity from Obama are marked not only by continuity, but also by a reinforcement of existing policies. Trump's foreign policy is explained with reference to the principle of 'America First', an increasing concentration of power with the president, as well as a room of maneuver defined by American interests, but also constrained by the economic interest of other states. Trump has advised NATO members including Denmark to increase their defense budgets. However, Trump has so far not upended Danish security policy.

Tears in the Predators' Club: White Emotions and Myths of Masculinity in Trumpland

Marianne Kongerslev, Assistant professor, ph.d., Department of Culture and Global Studies, University of Aalborg, kongerslev@cgs.aau.dk and Clara Juncker, Associate professor, ph.d. & dr. phil, Center for American Studies, SDU, juncker@sdu.dk

In this article we explore the contemporary affective political zeitgeist through an analysis of the Supreme Court hearings of September 2018, when Judge Brett Kavanaugh defended his wounded honor after Dr. Christine Blasey Ford accused him of attempted rape when they were both teenagers. At the hearing, Kavanaugh performed a specific kind of hegemonic masculinity – rhetorically, visually, affectively. This masculinity ideal predates the national birth of the US and provides a rhetorical trope that contemporary politicians articulate when they perform emotionality and identity. From a gendered and affective perspective, we discuss how Kavanaugh personifies the ideal and exposes aggrieved entitlement rooted in the fear of losing white, male privileges.

The »Deep State« in Trumpland: Conspiracy Theories Then and Now

Kasper Grotle Rasmussen, Associate professor, ph.d., Center for American Studies, SDU, grotle@sdu.dk

This article analyzes the fear of the so-called »Deep State« and its genesis in the time before and during the presidency of Donald Trump – along with his usage of the concept and the subsequent advent of new conspiracy theories, such as QAnon. The article argues that the American population's complex relationship to the state has given rise to the conspiracy theory of the »Deep State« and that Trump has used the concept as a means of diverting focus away from investigations of himself and of his campaign. The QAnon conspiracy theory was primarily created to express dissatisfaction with the Democrats and their associates and to express enthusiasm with Donald Trump who, in this context, represents a central heroic figure in a bright future-narrative.

The art of staying on budget – a study of the influence of the Sanktionslovgivning on budgetary tractability and political business cycles in the Danish municipalities

Camilla Friborg Madsen, cand.scient.pol., University of Southern Denmark, camilla-f-madsen@live.dk and Christoffer Wisén, B.Sc.pol., University of Southern Denmark, wisen.christoffer@gmail.com

Historically, budget overruns have been the norm rather than the exception in Danish municipalities. Consequently, the Sanktionslovgivning was implemented to strengthen the economic man-

agement of the municipalities. Based on the existing literature, this article examines whether the legislation has affected local politicians' prioritisation regarding policy areas with varying voter mobilisation (budgetary tractability) and across election periods (political business cycles). Data on the Danish municipalities' budgets and accounts between 2007 and 2016 constitute the foundation of the analysis, which shows that local politicians are still re-election oriented, but within budgetary limits. This is especially apparent for areas with high voter mobilisation, while budget overruns surprisingly still occur for areas with low mobilisation. Additionally, political business cycles seem to have lost their effect on budgetary consumption.

Review Article: Algorithmic Economies – How algorithms perform markets

Thomas Skou Grindsted, Assistant Professor, Department of People and Technology, University of Roskilde, tskoug@ruc.dk

Big data and algorithms are transforming the world, not least with regard to economy and politics. Algorithms support industrial production, logistics, marketing and is said to increase productivity and influence the ways in which political/public administration work. Also, financial institutions and security trades is increasingly handled by an algorithm, implying that a machine, not a human, takes economic decisions, buy, sell and carry thousands of trades per second. This article examine algorithmic economies, and the techno-financial acceleration at global stock exchanges. Supplemented with algorithms, Homo-Economicus of today also surrounds Techno-Economicus. Thus, the paper analyses relations between human and non-human economic decision makers. The paper concludes that Techno-Economicus give rise to new performative algorithmic markets.