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Sedimented Practices and American Identity in Donald J. Trump's Election

Campaign

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Introduction

This chapter makes the case for increased attention to the discourse theoretical notion of sedimented practices in populism research. It uses campaign speeches of America's 45th president Donald J. Trump as an illustration. In a nutshell, sedimented practices circumscribe the domain of credibility and intelligibility of a society's socioeconomic setting the norms, rules and institutions that are taken for granted by large parts of a society and which, over time, have obscured the evidence of their own contingent origins. It is argued here that every society is in constant need of reproducing itself, of procreating its founding myths and of stabilizing the norms and institutions it is founded on. In order to be credible and successful in elections, politicians need to refer to these myths and institutions. The norms and dominant discursive articulations that sedimented practices produce epitomize the temporary materialization of a society. These practices are deeply rooted within the structure of social relations and are thus hard to forgo. Sedimented practices set the framework for identities that are at least temporarily stable. In that sense, sedimented practices have severe ethical

implications, for they provide the discursive frame in which moral judgments and new political decisions are taken.

Against this background, we will argue that most of the issues that characterize Trump's campaign as well as his political program are deeply rooted in such sedimented practices, epitomized in the idea of American singularity and greatness. Although many commentators claimed that Trump broke with important foreign policy traditions,¹ this judgment seems superficial and misleading. Trump was successful, goes our main argument, because he successfully connected his program with the sedimented discourses around which American society is institutionally organized. To be sure, we do not claim to downplay the danger posed by Trump for American democracy, but merely to add to our understanding of Trumpism's appeal.

Our argument is organized as follows. While the next part of the chapter will present the notion of sedimented practices in more theoretical detail, the analytical part of the chapter will illustrate the nexus between sedimented practices and foreign policy formulation. This part has two purposes: First, the centrality of the theoretical approach for any kind of inquiry into social and identity change will be substantiated. Second, the analysis will put foreign policy formulation in Trump's presidential campaign into the context of sedimented practices in the United States. The conclusion will summarize the major findings regarding the nexus between sedimented practices and foreign policy formulation.

Sedimented Practices as an Analytical Tool

This chapter is concerned with stabilized forms of collective human behavior around which communication in a society becomes possible. The basic, underlying assumption upon which

such a concern is grounded is that the social—the norms, values, cultures of a given society as well as what its members commonly hold to be factually true—is discursively produced.² As Laclau explains, “[d]iscourse is the primary terrain of the constitution of objectivity as such [...]. [E]lements do not pre-exist the relational complex but are constituted through it”.³ Thus, the very foundations of society have to be seen as the contingent result of on-going practices of articulation in which different discursive elements are linked with each other.⁴ As a consequence, this paper directs analytical attention to the always only temporarily fruitful effort of grounding society, by codifying principles, norms, rules, institutions, etc. The temporary result of such practices are what Judith Butler refers to as “contingent foundations” and what Ernesto Laclau calls “sedimented practices”.⁵ As Laclau explains:

So, to the questions, Why prefer a certain normative order to others? Why invest ethically in certain practices rather than different ones? the answer can only be a contextual one: Because I live in a world in which people believe in A, B and C, I can argue that the course of action D is better than E; but in a totally presuppositionless situation in which no system of beliefs exists, the question is obviously unanswerable.⁶

This means that sedimented practices constitute political credibility as well as social intelligibility and circumscribe the possibilities of the ethical. New political projects must be connected with such practices at least to a certain degree to be successful. Put differently, if a new political project, such as, for instance, the one proposed by Trump in his campaign speeches, clashes with the “ensemble of sedimented practices constituting the normative framework of a certain society”,⁷ it will likely be rejected by a larger audience. Credibility implies availability, in that a political project has to be linked with certain political traditions that subjects identify with.

This argument will certainly lose persuasiveness with the extent of an articulation of societal crisis. The more far-reaching a crisis is articulated, the fewer principles will still be in place. However, it is hard to imagine that a society is represented as crisis-ridden to such a degree that it requires complete re-institution. Even in the most severe crisis, vast areas of societal sedimented practices remain intact. On that basis, a true Trumpian revolution—for instance, actually breaking with U.S. allies or openly opposing notions of U.S. exceptionalism—would certainly provoke far-reaching counter-reactions within the American society. One need not be a prophet to claim that a complete overhaul of long-standing principles of American foreign policy is impossible.

Against this background, let us now summarize the most important tenets of the notion of sedimented practices. In a nutshell, these practices entail three important dimensions: First, sedimented practices are often based on mythical purity. They conceal their worldly origins and often rely on transcendental or divine legitimacy. In order to elucidate the concept of sedimented practices, many poststructuralist theorists have devoted much time to the discussion of mythical purity and presence. In Derrida's work, for instance, this led to the deconstruction of origins. Defined as the original moment in a historical succession of moments, nothing precedes it, and it serves as a foundation for an understanding of today. The initial moment is constructed as troubleand crisis-free, characterized by purity and unadulterated self-presence. In that way, myths represent the absolute source of meaning and serve as a frame in which politics becomes possible. As Laclau explains with reference to Husserl, "the social is equivalent to a sedimented order, while the political would involve the moment of reactivation" of the founding moment of that order.⁸ This elucidates the close link between sedimented practices and myth.

Second, sedimented practices are constitutive of historical change. Meanings vary over time, later moments are sedimentations of former ones, and the inseparability of these moments is equivalent to historical difference. The transformation of society rests in its incompleteness: Sedimented practices never represent the social in its entirety; they are always internally incomplete and *dislocated*. The notion of dislocation is constitutive of critical and poststructuralist work stressing the differential quality of the social.⁹ It highlights societal fissures, antagonisms, the impossibility of essentialist subjectivities and the weakening of dominant imaginaries. Dislocations are crucial in the understanding of processes of social transformation, as they engender structural gaps that have to be filled, situations of fragmentation and indeterminacy of articulations, and in doing so substantiate a progressive notion of politics. Dislocations are intra-discursive, and they can be seen as windows of opportunity, as situations characterized by conversions of articulatory practices and accompanying shifts in public discourses, which can then be used as a platform for a hegemonic intervention. Once hegemonic relations are established, the primacy of the political is threatened by the quasi-naturalness of established social institutions, which in many cases involve bureaucratization and technologization. The prime example of this danger is the undoubted nature of the modern nation state, visible also in Trump's policy program, despite its only rather recent evolution, that is, after the Westphalian peace in 1648. The most brutal forms of war have since been fought in its name, and its almost natural legitimacy is institutionalized in international law and nationalist foreign policies. What is forgotten is its principal quality as politically constituted and historically contingent.

Third, in endowing certain political decisions with credibility and delegitimizing others, sedimented practices entail an ethical dimension. Like for Laclau, it is clear that for Michel Foucault, all social relationships are ethically permeated, even when it comes to the most

private spheres of the social, as, for example, in the domain of sexuality. For instance, Foucault argues that, “it [sexuality] doesn’t exist apart from a relationship to political structures, requirements, laws, and regulations that have a primary importance for it”.¹⁰ The emphasis on sedimented practices opens up a truly critical perspective in this context: The materiality of the body can be replaced by the materiality of gendered discourse; sedimented practices, which have produced dichotomous gender constructions over millennia, are complemented by radical performativity. The mind/body opposition is queried in this context, alongside binaries such as rational/irrational, inside/outside as well as public/private, and theorists ask “whether the [t]raditional hierarchical rituals of global power relations are indeed integral to the everyday practices of the world’s peoples and their various modes of life”.¹¹ In that way, even the most sedimented (and hegemonic) practices rest on contingency and can therefore be stripped of their essentialist appearance.

Thus, one can say that social change implies new sedimented practices in the form of institutions, the establishment of new power relations, forms of inclusion and exclusion and rights of access. The subject, and this equally applies to an American president as a rather privileged subject, becomes a subject only *qua* identification with particular structural positions.¹² While abrupt change becomes improbable from this perspective, it is still in principle possible. The dislocation of social identities sometimes leads to new institutionalized practices, which retroact on the essentially dislocated social structure. The dislocated social structure will never be fully sutured, hegemony remains a contingent intervention and institutionalization must be characterized as an on-going endeavor that continuously takes on new forms. Were signification and institutionalization eternal, dislocation would be replaced by stability. The fragility of the social and the impossibility of signification become the precondition of sociality on the one hand and the attempt to erect stable meaning systems on

the other. Yet, nothing is essential, nothing predetermined in this process, any infinite kind of historical form is possible, if linked with particular sedimented practices which have acquired credibility over time. Once a particular social force becomes hegemonic, however, it might be able to prevail for some time. This is precisely what we call sedimented practices. Laclau argues that when a discourse reaches the stage of establishing a dominant representation of reality for all those participating in the communicative process, it reveals a lot about the course of action in collective identity formation. If the same “reality” (for instance the slogan “Mexicans and Muslims are criminals; we need a wall and a ban on immigration”) is reflected in the articulations of all, or a broad majority of interacting subjects, one can speak of hegemony. Different subjects compete for hegemony by offering their specific “systems of narration” as a compensatory framework for an articulated crisis, thereby attempting to fix the meaning of social relations. Hegemony—the operation through which one particularity (e.g., one particular discourse) assumes the symbolic representation of the universal (e.g., the truth)¹³—therefore reproduces our daily life; it starts to be hegemonic when our everyday understanding of social relations and the world as a whole start to alter according to the framework that is set by the hegemonic discourse. It is an act of power because it makes the world intelligible: “The power of discourse to materialize its effects is thus consonant with the power of discourse to circumscribe the domain of intelligibility”.¹⁴ In generating sedimented practices, the discourse produces specific practices and institutions. It acquires material objectivity by becoming institutionally fixed. Reflecting Gramsci’s understanding of hegemony, institutions are supportive in providing stability in unstable social situations and therefore help to circumvent or minimize the use of force.

To conclude this brief theoretical discussion, one could state that sedimented practices are the prerequisite as well as the result of politics. They legitimize a certain strand of action, while

delegitimizing others. Without those long-held principles, norms and institutions, however, an understanding of politics would be impossible. On the other hand, sedimented practices will never circumscribe the entirety of all social intelligibility. The incompleteness of all social institutionalization makes social transformation possible and implies the hope for moral progress. To understand Trump's policies toward the world, let us now analyze previously sedimented US foreign policy practices, against which Trump's foreign policy program can be better understood.

Sedimented Practices in US Foreign Policy

As argued above, sedimented practices are best characterized by three features: First, they are often connected with myths; second, they are constitutive of historical change; and third, they entail an ethical dimension. Most crucially, founding myths and narratives of uniqueness are significant in any nation. Myths aim to produce the appearance of pure presence, they do not simply represent reality. As Alasdair MacIntyre aptly points out:

Questions of rationality and irrationality cannot be appropriately posed until in a given culture the relevant utterances are given a decisive interpretation in terms of genres. Myths would then be seen as perhaps potentially science *and* literature *and* theology; but to understand them as myths would be to understand them as actually yet none of these. Hence the absurdity involved in speaking of myths as misrepresenting reality; the myth is at most a possible misrepresentation of reality; for it does not aspire, while still only a myth, to be a representation.¹⁵

Myths provide powerful articulations of identity and difference. Importantly, myths essentially point to an absence, a fullness of society that can never be fully reached. Social transformation emerges as a result of struggles to fill that empty presence. "Myths are no more

than a foil which represents the missing fullness of a nation".¹⁶ Moreover, a myth has to remain empty because any attempt to actually fill a myth with specific meaning, to fix what it means (and what it does not mean) would mean to subject the myth to everyday political struggles, thus ending its mythical status. American exceptionalism is a case in point here, as Deborah Madsen argues: "American exceptionalism permeates every period of American history and is the single most powerful agent in a series of arguments that have been fought down the centuries concerning the identity of America and Americans".¹⁷

Myths like American exceptionalism point to an allegedly pure origin that has been lost. Thus, US exceptionalism is rooted in the nation's origins as a Puritan colony, envisioned as God's country, and the development from a colonial to a national identity.¹⁸ Needless to say, such a discourse is deeply ideological. Exceptionalism for instance rests on the claim that the United States is the richest, most powerful and, importantly, most virtuous country in the world.¹⁹ That is, central to exceptionalism is the claim that the US "system is superior to all others".²⁰ This is the basis for the demand for the United States to accept its responsibility for the global promotion of democracy and liberal values. This responsibility also functions as a justification for the need to continuously expand the economic and military power of the United States through the creation and maintenance of international institutions and the global spread of capitalism.²¹ The myth of exceptionalism thus formulates a (necessarily vague) vision of US identity and America's place in the world.

In that context, the notion of identity is crucial. Identity can only be established by drawing a line between the mythical Inside and a negative Outside, which is excluded from the myth, and this is closely related to crisis. Crisis must essentially be understood as articulations of threatened identities. We argue here that a foreign policy discourse that represents a particular Other as "alien, subversive, dirty or sick", as described by David Campbell in *Writing*

Security,²² has been rampant in the United States for a long time. One example here is the Cuban Missile Crisis, in which the deployment of Soviet missiles to Cuba was articulated not just as a military threat but as a threat to the United States' identity, to the American people's, indeed the entire West's, freedom. At the same time, the Cuban Missile Crisis also provided an opportunity for the United States to "reassert its leadership role".²³ Needless to say, the same incident was articulated in an entirely different way in Cuba and the Soviet Union, which represented the crisis as an expression of US imperialist aggression, a threat to socialism as a global emancipatory project and an incursion on Cuban sovereignty.²⁴

Furthermore, myths, such as the myth of American exceptionalism, result from what Laclau calls "the absence of God as fullness of Being".²⁵ Not surprisingly, discourses of US exceptionalism incorporate religious references, which lend additional credibility. Important in this context is the sense of US Manifest Destiny, broadly understood as America's Godgiven mission to improve the condition of all mankind by spreading universal democratic values around the globe.²⁶ Manifest Destiny has from the beginning been characterized by close links to expansionism, and as such goes beyond the mere exceptionalist claim that the United States is superior, best expressed by John Winthrop's well-known phrase that the American settlers "shall be as a city upon a hill" with "the eyes of all people [...] upon us".²⁷ Manifest Destiny goes one step further by stating that Americans had the (religiously inspired) mission to "climb down from their hill" and spread their values.²⁸

A deeper inquiry into the traditional dimensions of exceptionalism reveals the central role that "freedom" plays in US discourses of exceptionalism. This dates back to the American revolution, in which freedom referred mainly to independence from the English king.²⁹ At that time, freedom was intimately linked to religious terminology, as President Abraham Lincoln's famous Gettysburg address nicely illustrates. Lincoln stated "that this nation, under

God, shall have a new birth of freedom – and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth”.³⁰ Lincoln regularly relied on the notion of freedom to describe the uniqueness of American identity, and already then, the United States was presented as “the last, best hope of earth”.³¹

However, the “combination of exceptionalism with at least a theoretical universalism” only became a program in the twentieth century, as Godfrey Hodgson points out.³² The central point of reference here is Woodrow Wilson who outlines his famous 14 points in a speech to a joint session of Congress in 1918 in which he sketched his vision for keeping the peace in Europe. His speech contains ten references to freedom, including the “freedom of navigation upon the seas”, “[a] free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims”, the assurance to Russia “of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing” and “the freest opportunity of autonomous development” for Austria-Hungary.³³

What is also clearly visible here is that freedom implies a distinction between the free and the unfree. In US foreign policy discourses after World War II, this process is striking. Most crucially, National Security Council document number sixty-eight of April 7, 1950 (NSC 68), which is considered to be one of the founding documents of post-World War II US foreign policy,³⁴ establishes a direct connection by drawing a clear line between the free world and the world of slavery: “The idea of freedom, moreover, is peculiarly and intolerably subversive of the idea of slavery”. Overall, the document includes 59 references to “freedom” or the adjective “free”, at least one in almost every single paragraph. Around the notion of freedom, borders between different subjects are drawn and hierarchies established. For instance, the document states that “[t]he implacable purpose of the slave state to eliminate the challenge of freedom has placed the two great powers at opposite poles. It is this fact which gives the

present polarization of power the quality of crisis".³⁵ Crisis would become a central feature of US foreign policy discourses. Moreover, NSC 68 also articulated a specific notion of masculinity, drawing on traditional notions of the family in which the father reserves the right to protect his family.³⁶ This is also visible today in many instances in the United States, one prominent example being the gun discourse, primarily fabricated by the National Rifle Association of America (NRA). In this context, notions of manliness are closely linked to freedom, thus making the right to bear arms essentially about freedom.³⁷

In many US foreign policy documents of the past century, it seems as if the malevolent outside had already contaminated the inside. This suggests that, as Jacques Derrida would perhaps maintain, that "America" as a privileged signifier is not present prior to its infiltration by an external trace. Eventually, the outside becomes constitutive to its being, as Bennington explains: "it [the inside] is [...] always (already) becoming but never quite become".³⁸ Presence never rests in itself, but follows upon the infiltration by the trace-relation, and is therefore influenced by absence and otherness. Due to the subversion by the radically excluded, the equivalential chain that names the inside will never be pure and self-contained; otherwise, exclusion would be superfluous. The basis of Derridean deconstruction is to be found in the questioning of such binaries on the grounds of their mutual infiltration and subversion. It must be clear that traces of multiple identities rest in the "American", both within and outside of US borders.

Hence, throughout the twentieth century, the notion of freedom as the underlying principle of exceptionalism has been sustained by difference, and has generated the Manichean and gravely normative image of Americans versus Soviets, free versus unfree, liberal versus totalitarian, good versus evil and—crucially—the United States as leader versus their followers in the Western hemisphere. In US discourses of exceptionalism, the claim to global

leadership is intimately linked to American moral superiority. For instance, in 1961, John F. Kennedy declared that:

We will face challenge after challenge, as the Communists armed with all the resources and advantage of the police state attempt to shift the balance of power in their direction. [...] For we bring to the battle our own resources, the particular advantages of a free society – advantages which our adversaries cannot match [...]. And it is in this fact that is man's best hope. For our nation is on the side of man's desire to be free, and the desire of nations to be independent.³⁹

Here, freedom points to the need to overcome the antagonistic force and to thus achieve a full identity. Like Kennedy, numerous presidents have drawn on this construction of a world split between the free world and its opponents. For instance, during the Cold War Harry S. Truman stated that “[w]e cannot hope to maintain our own freedom if freedom elsewhere is wiped out”⁴⁰ and Dwight D. Eisenhower predicted that “[...] history does not long entrust the care of freedom to the weak or the timid. [...] For this truth must be clear before us: whatever America hopes to bring to pass in the world must first come to pass in the heart of America”.⁴¹ What this shows is that exceptionalism rests on boundarydrawing practices that demarcate the United States as the champion of freedom from multiple Others.

At the same time, exceptionalism is also ideological in the Laclauian sense. Ideology here refers to the moment of closure in which meaning is temporarily and partially fixed, at which point the contingency of the social is concealed because a contingent identity presents itself as fully constituted and self-transparent.⁴² Through the construction of a clear line between a pure (free) Self and a threatening (unfree) outside, any potential unfree, imperfect elements inside are denied. All elements that do not fit into this clear split of the discursive realm into two

neatly separable camps are expelled. Weakness, a lack of freedom, racism, inequality and injustice, etc. are firmly banned.

Importantly, the close connection between freedom and religious rhetoric remained prominent throughout the twentieth century. In almost all speeches of American presidents before Barack Obama, the call for freedom is related to basic principles of Christian faith and an adherence to the concept of the “chosen people”. Especially in America’s 40th President, Ronald Reagan, religious conservatives saw a president who advocated the nation’s Judeo-Christian heritage, frequently drew on Bible verses and put the notion of “freedom” at the center of his policies, for instance contending in a speech to the *National Association of Evangelicals* in 1983 that, “freedom prospers when religion is vibrant and the rule of law under God is acknowledged”.⁴³ Importantly, freedom’s opponents were linked to religious notions of evil. Some of Reagan’s statements on foreign policy which include references to “freedom” seem to reappear later in President Bush’s speeches after September 11, 2001 (though with a different ideological target), examples being Reagan’s prediction in 1982 that “[the] march of freedom and democracy [...] will leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash heap of history as it has left other tyrannies which stifle the freedom and muzzle the self-expression of the people”,⁴⁴ and Reagan’s 1983 representation of the Soviet Union as “the focus of evil in the modern world”.⁴⁵

Reagan is an obvious example here, but references to an evil Other were not limited to Republican presidents. For instance, in his inaugural address, Jimmy Carter also stressed a US sense of mission, closely linked to freedom and human rights,⁴⁶ and in 1992, as a presidential candidate, Bill Clinton painted the vision of “[a]n America that champions the cause of freedom and democracy”.⁴⁷ While religious vocabulary is much more toned down in Clinton and Carter’s speeches, it is still omnipresent.

Drawing on notions of freedom, religious vocabulary and the establishment of a clear frontier between the Self and an evil Other have contributed to the credibility of numerous presidents, candidates and policies in the past. Stuart Croft correctly points out that such a connection with preexisting narratives was necessary for the successful institutionalization of the “war on terror”.⁴⁸ The “good (new) war on terror”⁴⁹ that was proclaimed was only possible because it did not clash with sedimented practices, instead reinscribing past discourses of national security and exceptionalism into the present.

It is not surprising that some of the main tenets of the sedimented practices that constituted American frames of intelligibility over centuries were instantly employed in George W. Bush’s first speech on the evening of September 11. These included the reference to freedom (“our very freedom came under attack”), the allusion to a malevolent Other (“evil, despicable acts of terror”), the invincibility of the United States (“But they have failed; our country is strong”), its superiority (“we’re the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world”), the blaming of individual wrongdoing, not global political structures (“the very worst of human nature”), the immediate consideration of military options (“Our military is powerful, and it’s prepared”), the prominence of justice in US foreign affairs (“to find those responsible and to bring them to justice”), absolute determination (“we stand together to win the war against terrorism”), Christian faith (“spoken through the ages in Psalm 23”) and, finally, the notorious sense of mission (“we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world”).⁵⁰

All in all, the link with sedimented discourses can be seen as a precondition for successful hegemonic politics—both domestically and globally. Sedimented practices are intertextually entwined with the discourses of the present, thus lending the latter credibility. The United States has traditionally been articulated as strong, responsible, peace-loving, willing to lead—

with military means if necessary—modern, and free/liberal, exhibiting syntagmatic characteristics of masculinity, religiosity and dependability. Negative terms which are set in contrastive relations and delimit the meaning of the United States are criminal, socialist/communist, Muslim, war-prone and totalitarian. These binaries continue to shape Trump’s foreign policy, which we will analyze in the next section.

Sedimented Practices in Trump’s Campaign Speeches

When it comes to sedimented practices and actual foreign policy, one should expect more continuity than social change. However, in the debate about Trump’s political campaign and his expected presidency, the majority of observers have emphasized the exceptional nature of both his political demands and his campaign style. At a closer look, however, all three central tenets of the notion of sedimented practices—myth, dislocation in the form of external contamination as well as the severe ethical ramifications of hegemonic practices—are visible in Donald Trump’s campaign speeches. They are coupled with the most important pillars of American exceptionalism: the construction of a strict antagonism between the free United States and an unfree Other, leadership and transcendental legitimization, centering on the fundamental notion of “freedom”. As in other presidents’ speeches, Trump uses the standard freedom-centered vocabulary, ranging from conspicuous expressions like “our freedom, our safety and our country”,⁵¹ over “choice, freedom and opportunity”⁵² to “the liberties and freedoms of all America”.⁵³

Among the statements that seem to indicate a departure from longheld principles and institutions are Trump’s claim that NATO was obsolete, his putting in question unconditional US alliance solidarity, his announcement to re-evaluate each and every international treaty the

United States is party to in regard to its benefits for the United States, the travel ban for Muslims as well as his demand to torture terrorist suspects and to kill terrorists' families.⁵⁴ Thus, at first glance, Trump's campaign statements seem to clash with the sedimented practices that organize US foreign policy discourses. However, a deeper analysis of his campaign speeches unveils a different picture: Firstly, Trump is not the first president who *allegedly* breaks with the established traditions of US foreign policy.⁵⁵ Secondly, the analysis reveals that Trump's campaign speeches also display strong interpellations of sedimented practices, while at the same time claiming that a crisis situation requires the drastic measures he himself proposes. This second point is what we will focus on in the following. We will show that mythical purity, the danger of contamination and infiltration—what we summarize as dislocation—as well as the effort of shifting ethical boundaries go hand in hand in the process. To begin with, what is prevalent in Trump's campaign speeches is the claim that the United States finds itself at a crucial point in time in which past policies have failed to the extent that drastic change is required. As Trump put it, "Our country is in serious trouble. We don't have victories anymore. We used to have victories, but we don't have them".⁵⁶ In this context, Trump replicates an argumentative pattern that is typical for US presidents. One must not go back far into the history of US foreign policy to find abundant examples. September 11 is a prime example here. For instance, Bülent Diken and Carsten Lausten elucidate that September 11 was articulated as an absolute evil, comparable to the Holocaust.⁵⁷ The discourse just appeared to be ahistorical at times, since universal claims attempt to erase all traces of the past. September 11 *had to* be constructed as without a history, and the future had to be without comparison.⁵⁸ Comparable to Trump, George W. Bush described a break with everything that occurred before in world history: "All of this was brought upon us in a single day – and night fell on a different world",⁵⁹ and Vice President Cheney spoke of "a new era of international

security”.⁶⁰ There is an inherent tension between ahistoricity and historical continuity in both discourses, which describes an aspect that is characteristic for the analysis of sedimented practices. In a similar vein, Trump argued that the 2016 election was the last chance to turn the tide and avoid total catastrophe: “My message is that things have to change – and this is our one chance do it. This is our last chance to do it”.⁶¹ However, dislocation always implies the promise of a brighter future. As Trump put it, “to achieve this New American Future, we must break free from the bitter failures of the past”.⁶² The dislocation of sedimented practices, by questioning the stability and rationality of traditions, becomes the prerequisite for politics. The defining element of the social is its essentially dislocated character. One could state that Trump’s maneuver laid bare the fundamentally dislocated character of the American society. Without pointing to dislocated structures, political change would become unthinkable.

Importantly, the articulation of dislocated structures included both domestic politics and policy, and foreign policy. What is remarkable, in particular if compared to his opponent Hillary Clinton, is the dire picture that Trump painted of the current situation the American people finds itself in. Not only did Trump claim that domestic policy was not in the interest of the American people anymore, but equally US foreign policy was completely off the rails. The turning point, according to Trump, was the Cold War, during which US policy had been rational and principled. After the Cold War, Trump claimed in early 2016, US foreign policy “veered badly off course” and “logic was replaced with foolishness and arrogance”.⁶³ This led to what according to Trump amounted to “one foreign policy disaster after another”.⁶⁴ Indeed, Trump claimed, US foreign policy under President Obama lacked vision, direction and strategy, and had instead been marked by “randomness” and “chaos” and influenced by “ideology” rather than facts and rational thinking.⁶⁵ Overall, it could not be qualified as anything but “a complete and total disaster”.⁶⁶ More specifically, Trump took issue with the

Iraq and Libya interventions, which contributed to the rise of the Islamic State,⁶⁷ criticized the nuclear deal with Iran as “disastrous” and “catastrophic” for “stupidly and foolishly” giving Iran “billions and billions of dollars”.⁶⁸ To be credible to a large audience, Trump referred here to a policy that could be connected to fundamental pillars of US foreign policy: the Cold War as the period of “realism”, an epoch of great leaders like Henry Kissinger and John F. Kennedy. According to the Republican candidate, the reason for the dire state of US foreign policy was a corrupt and incompetent elite, incapable of leading. It is at this point where the relevance of sedimented practices becomes obvious. For the argument ties in with what Walter Russell Mead has called the “Jacksonian” tradition of US foreign policy,⁶⁹ which manifests itself mainly in a fundamental critique of foreign policy elites, their views and the worth of their expertise as well as in a nativist nationalism. America is usually depicted as white, nationalist and Christian.⁷⁰

A comparable argument is most clearly visible in Trump’s arguments about the need to exchange the whole foreign policy establishment. According to Trump, politicians “are all talk, no action” and

controlled fully by the lobbyists, by the donors, and by the special interests, fully. [...] We have losers. We have losers. We have people that don’t have it. We have people that are morally corrupt. We have people that are selling this country down the drain.⁷¹

Instead, Trump argued, referring to himself, the US needed “a truly great leader” who could “take the brand of the United States and make it great again”.⁷² Corresponding to long-held discourses about elitism in the United States, not just the top tier of the political establishment, but indeed most people active in government were portrayed as either incompetent or corrupt. According to Trump, the old foreign policy elites were made up mostly by “those who have

perfect résumés but very little to brag about except responsibility for a long history of failed policies and continued losses at war”.⁷³ Since one could never “fix a rigged system by counting on the same people who rigged it in the first place”,⁷⁴ the old elites had to be replaced: “We have to look to new people”.⁷⁵ Importantly, despite portraying himself as a radical outsider, claiming to have joined the political arena “so that the powerful can no longer beat up on people who cannot defend themselves”,⁷⁶ Trump was anything but. In fact, part of his credibility derives from a long history of businessmen claiming superior management skills as a basis for a political candidacy.⁷⁷

Moreover, leadership has always been accompanied by the imperative of burden sharing in US foreign policy. In fact, every US administration since WWII has pointed to this shortcoming, and the theory of collective action and burden sharing in NATO has long been an issue in IR theory debates.⁷⁸ Trump’s argument that the United States was “rebuilding other countries while weakening our own”, is old wine in new skins.⁷⁹ Specifically, Trump criticized US alliance policies, which he saw as financing security free-riders who “are not paying their fair share” because they saw the United States as “weak and forgiving”.⁸⁰ If this continued, the United States would have to “let these countries defend themselves”.⁸¹ While this is a statement that can be traced back into Cold War times, it has led Stephen Cimbala and Peter Forster to state laconically that “Alliances engaged in military deployments or other interventions cannot avoid wrestling with the thorny issue of burden-sharing”.⁸²

Equally, the attack on international organizations (IOs) more generally follows a long line of historical arguments critical of any international entanglements. Trump lamented the “utter weakness and incompetence of the United Nations” and claimed that the UN were indeed “not a friend of democracy”, to “freedom” or to the United States.⁸³ It is worth recalling here the unilateral turn of the George W. Bush administration and at times heavy neoconservative

criticism of IOs as well as isolationist tendencies among parts of the Tea Party.⁸⁴ Especially in the context of the Iraq war, great doubt was raised that United Nations weapons inspections could ever provide enough insurance of Iraqi disarmament to make an invasion unnecessary. On August 26, 2002, VicePresident Dick Cheney for example warned that weapons inspections might only “provide false comfort that Saddam was somehow back in the box”.⁸⁵ The United States finally started the invasion of Iraq on March 19, 2003 without a UN mandate, constructing it as a preemptive strike against an enemy state and implying a reformulation of traditional *ius ad bellum* in two ways: First, preemption reserves the right for the United States to intervene in any country that is judged to be a threat at any time in the future; second, it leads to a new concept of sovereignty in that governments are held responsible for what goes on within the borders of their states; those who fail to act in accordance with the norms set by the United States would lose their sovereignty. In Trump’s reading, as a result of weak and indecisive policies, and for not standing up to either against Iran, North Korea or China, neither US allies nor its rivals still respected the United States anymore.⁸⁶ In fact, the United States were “laughed at all over the world”.⁸⁷

These tendencies illustrate that the ground for Trump’s policies had already been prepared during the Bush years. In the “very, very troubled times of radical Islamic terrorism”,⁸⁸ Trump claimed, the world was actually “more dangerous now than it has ever been”.⁸⁹ In the United States, threat creation had become functional to political purposes after September 11, 2001.⁹⁰ Under Trump, this kind of threat creation goes hand in hand with a diminution (that is, feminization) of the United States, which was articulated as weaker than before: “If President Obama’s goal had been to weaken America, he could not have done a better job”.⁹¹ Indeed, according to Trump, the United States had “become a dumping ground for everybody else’s problems”.⁹² The consequence of this policy failure could only be to “shake the rust off

America's foreign policy"⁹³ and to replace it with "a disciplined, deliberate and consistent foreign policy. With President Obama and Secretary Clinton we've had the exact opposite — a reckless, rudderless and aimless foreign policy, one that has blazed the path of destruction in its wake".⁹⁴

At the same time, Trump equally incorporated elements from the long tradition of realism in US foreign policy. Arguments that emphasize strength and the ability to make unilateral decisions as well as express skepticism toward international entanglements of any kind are prominent in Trump's speeches, indeed so much so that some observers have claimed that his foreign policy strategy was a predominantly realist one.⁹⁵ Thus, Trump announced "America First" as "the major and overriding theme" of his administration,⁹⁶ meaning that his foreign policy would "put the interests of the American people and American security above all else".⁹⁷ Trump vowed to "no longer surrender this country or its people to the false song of globalism. The nation-state remains the true foundation for happiness and harmony. I am skeptical of international unions that tie us up and bring America down".⁹⁸ Specifically, Trump pointed out the need to be able to act unilaterally, preserving "our ability to control our own affairs".⁹⁹ Also, Trump advocated restraint, at least at times: "A superpower understands that caution and restraint are really truly signs of strength".¹⁰⁰ Indeed, Trump called for the US to get "out of the nation-building business" and to focus on "creating stability in the world" instead,¹⁰¹ explicitly rejecting any attempts to spread American values with force:

Instead of trying to spread universal values that not everybody shares or wants, we should understand that strengthening and promoting Western civilization and its accomplishments will do more to inspire positive reforms around the world than military interventions.¹⁰²

Especially with respect to the Middle East, Trump advocated for realism. “In the Middle East our goals must be, and I mean must be, to defeat terrorists and promote regional stability, not radical change”.¹⁰³ This very much follows a realist tradition in US foreign policy, predominant in particular during the Cold War, which also was the last time that the United States, according to Trump, actually had a coherent strategy.¹⁰⁴

However, what is a crucial and omnipresent continuity in American foreign policy is the articulation of antagonistic frontiers. In line with that, Trump demanded a Muslim ban¹⁰⁵ and in 2016 called Mexicans “rapists”, “criminals”, and the country’s government “totally corrupt”.¹⁰⁶ These statements are no surprise from a discourse theoretical point of view, as the eventuality of a hegemonic discourse depends on the construction of a threatening, excluded outside: “a radical exclusion is the ground and condition of all differences”¹⁰⁷; it is the unifying ground of any society. It is also worth remembering George W. Bush in this context, who deliberately avoided negative connotations of Islam but openly articulated the Self as Christian and thus implicitly constructed a non-Christian Other. While in almost all speeches of American presidents before Barack Obama, the call for freedom is related to basic principles of Christian faith and an adherence to the concept of the “chosen people”, this tendency is also conspicuous in Trump’s speeches. Given the deep division of American society, it is more the form than the substance of Trump’s statements which is at times surprising. The articulation of binaries, the depiction of an “evil” Other and antagonism are significant for the establishment of hegemonic relations in times of crisis.

In addition, established traditional notions of masculinity played a strong role in Trump’s campaign.¹⁰⁸ Especially US foreign policy and security discourse is strongly influenced by traditional masculinist norms.¹⁰⁹ Here, strength is prized above all, and weakness (or what could be seen as such) rejected. Trump’s speeches are replete with references to the need to

make America “strong” again.¹¹⁰ Strength is here mainly understood as military strength. Even the misogynist and racist elements in Trump’s campaign—precisely the statements that many liberals expected to lead to Trump’s downfall—primarily clashed with the sedimented practices in liberal discourses, not necessarily with everyday discourse in the majority, or at least a significant portion, of the population.¹¹¹ Indeed, Trumpism, including its racist and misogynist elements, is linked to a discursive stream in US history that portrays the American people as being mainly of European ancestry, that is, white and Christian. On white supremacy in the US, see e.g., Allen (2012) and McVeigh (2009). This nativist conception of the American people underpinned lobbying efforts for Congress to bar Chinese and Japanese workers from entering the United States in the late nineteenth century, helps understand the (at least temporary) success of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s as well as support for internment camps during the Second World War. It is no accident that especially the attack on “political correctness” was highly credible at least to a considerable part of the American public. In contrast, arguments about diversity, gender equality, LGBTQ and other minority rights, as well as against discrimination, demand acknowledgment of the very heterogeneous elements that according to the racial-nationalist tradition Trumpism draws on do not belong to the core of the American people. Thus, one could make the argument that even the most offensive statements resonate with discursive patterns in US public discourse.¹¹² Overt racism and misogyny might clash with the sedimented practices that govern the liberal elites, but that does not necessarily mean that the latter are relevant for the entirety of the United States.

In the two instances of domestic and foreign security discourses, a gendered articulation of state identity has been prevalent for a long time. Just like virtually every conservative president before him, Trump criticized his predecessors for neglecting the US military while “asking our generals and military leaders to worry about global warming”.¹¹³ As opposed to

that, Trump himself was in favor of strengthening the military, as he claimed in his announcement speech: “I love the military, and I want to have the strongest military that we’ve ever had, and we need it more now than ever”.¹¹⁴ Also the struggle against terrorism—or, as Trump put it, “radical Islam”—required above all to “get tough”.¹¹⁵ The alternative was nothing less than US demise: “If we don’t get tough, and if we don’t get smart, and fast, we’re not going to have our country anymore. There will be nothing, absolutely nothing, left”.¹¹⁶ The best way to ensure victory through strength was to vote for Trump, for “Nobody would be tougher on ISIS than Donald Trump. Nobody”.¹¹⁷ Such statements are hardly surprising, as the United States has traditionally been articulated as strong, responsible, peace-loving, willing to lead—with military means if necessary— modern, and free/liberal, exhibiting syntagmatic characteristics of masculinity, religiosity and dependability. Negative terms which are set in contrastive relations and delimit the meaning of the United States have frequently been criminal, socialist/communist, war-prone and totalitarian.¹¹⁸

Against this background, strength was articulated as the basis for any negotiations. As mentioned above, Trump seems predisposed with an alleged loss of respect by allies and rivals alike, which has to be restored through strength. The discussion of China is illustrative here. During his foreign policy speech in April 2016 Trump claimed that “China respects strength and by letting them take advantage of us economically, which they are doing like never before, we have lost all of their respect. [...] A strong and smart America is an America that will find a better friend in China, better than we have right now”.¹¹⁹ One example for how the invocation of traditional notions of masculinity resonated at least with some parts of the audience (demonstrating its compatibility with sedimented practices at least in some discourses) is demonstrated in reactions by Twitter users. One tweet, retweeted by Trump,

stated: “[...] Now you need not wonder why we are attracted to a strong leader like @realDonaldTrump. The rest don’t cut it. ALL WIMPS!!”.¹²⁰

At the same time, American strength was articulated as in the interest of the world as such, connecting to long-standing notions of the United States as a force for good, which had “saved the world” twice during the twentieth century, once from National Socialism, the second time from communism¹²¹:

The world is most peaceful and most prosperous when America is strongest. America will continue and continue forever to play the role of peacemaker. We will always help save lives and indeed humanity itself, but to play the role, we must make America strong again. [...] we must — we have to and we will make America great again. And if we do that — and if we do that, perhaps this century can be the most peaceful and prosperous the world has ever, ever known.¹²²

Like many of his predecessors, Trump frequently coupled the promise of prosperity with an emphasis on liberalism and freedom. Remembering conservative activist Phyllis Schlafly, he promised to follow her example and fight “very hard to the very end for a free and prosperous America”.¹²³ To conclude, one could therefore state that Trump’s campaign did not clash with important sedimented practices, around which the American society has been built over a long time.

Conclusion

Our brief analysis of the reference to sedimented practices in Trump’s campaign speeches illustrates how sedimented practices, dislocation, antagonism and institutionalization are all necessary constituents of a theory of foreign policy, while each element is constituted by all the others. Importantly, the appeal to sedimented practices can in principle go hand in hand

with noticeable breaks in a system of signification. The construction of anxiety by Trump, his depiction of “evil” Others (such as Muslims and Mexicans), the articulation of new institutions through the implementation of new legal structures are progenies of a discourse connected with (gendered) sedimented practices. Voids can only be filled and a lack can only be sutured if they do not clash with these traditional discourses; yet, the practice of filling and suturing remains contingent, and novel, unprecedented political decisions and processes of institutionalization can be the result.

A strong notion of agency is introduced by Trump, linked to equally strong notions of universality, truth and morality. Propositional assumptions thus play a prominent role in his speeches. The battle between discourses to become the leading interpretative structure brutally reveals the configuration of power relations in a given historical moment. Hegemonization makes power discernible in the first place. In any case, the form of power described here is uneven, not stable or static, but is rearticulated continuously, and new discursive perspectives are opened up by subversive practices. As it becomes hegemonic, the discourse generates new kinds of political action along the lines of the dominant interpretative framework. It is here where the moment of the subject in a poststructuralist theory of foreign policy might come into play. Yet, the transformation of hegemonic discourses are always connected with powerful sedimented practices (otherwise they would fail to become hegemonic) and as a result is at most an incremental process. Only by restoring the discourse of a mythical purity of the origin can a possible societal future and a sense of community and togetherness become tangible. The vision of a better future is most credible if linked to the transcendental, in the US case by linking it to imaginaries of America as God’s country. This however is in itself dangerous because such powerful myths risk becoming perceived as without alternative, producing the illusion that only one political option is feasible in a given

situation, which in itself is in tension with the ideal of a pluralist democracy. Also, it is questionable to what extent the US-specific rhetoric of freedom will be able to enlist more heterogeneous subjects outside of the United States as well. Reactions to Trump's statements so far seem to suggest that the appeal of the hegemonic project that he advocates is limited.

Notes

1. E.g., Fidler (2017), Ikenberry (2018, 2017), Jahn (2018), Patrick (2017), Stokes (2018), a rare exception is Abrams (2017).
2. Nonhoff and Stengel (2014).
3. Laclau (2005, 68).
4. Laclau and Mouffe (2001).
5. Butler (1992), Laclau (1996). Laclau (*ibid.*, 103) explains that: "If politics is the ensemble of the decisions taken in an undecidable terrain that is a terrain in which power is constitutive then the social can consist only in the sedimented forms of a power that has blurred the traces of its own contingency."
6. It should be clear by now that 'context' must not be conflated with 'foundations'. It does not refer to the determination of meaning from a location outside discourse. Laclau (2014, 134), in IR, the question of universal standards was raised, for instance, by Shapcott (2001, 10–12).
7. Laclau (2000, 82), see also Laclau (1990, 66).
8. Laclau (2014, 68). For a discussion of myth in Derrida's work, see Derrida (1992, 10–11), where he argues that: "Monogenealogy would always be a mystification in the

history of culture.” Cf. also Norval (1996, 7), who analyzes the “construction and purification of the Afrikaner community.”

9. For in-depth analyses of the term, see Nabers (2015, 2016).
10. Foucault (1984, 384). See also Foucault’s discussion of psychiatry: “I have tried to see how the formation of psychiatry as a science, the limitation of its field, and the definition of its object implicated a political structure and a moral practice” (Foucault 1984, 386).
11. George (1994, 7).
12. On subjectivity in poststructuralism, see Nonhoff and Gronau (2012).
13. Laclau (2005, 70).
14. Butler (1993, 187), see also Laclau (1977, 103), Laclau (2005, 106,115).
15. MacIntyre (1971, 253), see also de Beistegui (1998, 162), for a discussion of myth; finally, in IR, see Guillaume (2011, 2) and Der Derian (1995, 367), who investigates the “metaphorical and mythical beginnings of a uniform realism.”
16. Nabers (2015, 154).
17. Madsen (1998).
18. Bercovitch (1975). Prominent IR theorists have also called “exceptionalism” a myth; see, for example, Walt (2011), on national identity, see also Prizel (1998), on “America” as an “imagined community”, see Campbell (1998, 91–132).
19. For a *tour de force* through the history of American “exceptionalism”, see Hodgson (2009) and Madsen (1998).
20. Lipset (1997, 51).
21. Nabers (2015, 154).
22. Campbell (1998, 3).

23. Weldes (1999, 38). For the leadership role of the United States during the Cold War, see also Sjöstedt (2007), for a conceptualization of “threat” and “danger” as discursive conditions, see Campbell (1998).
24. Nabers (2015, 156).
25. Laclau and Zac (1994, 36), see also Laclau (1990, 78), Laclau (1996, 11), Laclau (2000).
26. Houghton (2002), McDougall (1997, 76–98), Watson (2018, Chapter 12), Weinberg (1935), Wickham (2002), for early articulations of Manifest Destiny in US foreign policy, see Fiske (1885), O’Sullivan (1839), Schurz (1893).
27. Quoted in LaFeber (1994, 9).
28. LaFeber (2002, 551).
29. For an overview of the period between the American Revolution and the Civil War, see Hodgson (2009, Chapters 1 and 2).
30. Lincoln (1863).
31. Lincoln (1862).
32. Hodgson (2009, 182).
33. Wilson (1918).
34. Campbell (1998, 23). For a broad analysis of the central tenets of US foreign policy during the Cold War, see also Weldes (1999, 41), who identifies four constitutive facets of US practices: “as a global and hemispheric leader, as the bastion and defender of freedom, as strong and resolute, and as credible.”
35. US Department of State (1950).
36. See also Young (2003).
37. See, for example, NRA Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer Wayne LaPierre’s summary of US identity: “Today’s NRA was built on the backs of the

greatest generation: the American heroes who fought and died for our freedom in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. [...] Those heroes left the battlefield but never the fight. Their voices rang out through every statehouse in America for decades, demanding every office holder recognize and fight for the same freedoms for which their brothers in arms died" (LaPierre 2013). For the argument of "masculinity" in US identity see also Weldes (1999, 46), who concludes that: "U.S. identity, in short was not only masculinist but aggressively macho"; finally Sjöstedt (2007, 241).

38. Bennington (2006, 193).

39. Kennedy (1961, 369).

40. Truman (1950).

41. Eisenhower (1953).

42. Laclau (2006, 103, 114; 2014, 15f).

43. Reagan (1983).

44. Reagan (1982).

45. Reagan (1983).

46. See Carter (1977): "Because we are free we can never be indifferent to the fate of freedom elsewhere. Our moral sense dictates a clearcut preference for these societies which share with us an abiding respect for individual human rights. We do not seek to intimidate, but it is clear that a world which others can dominate with impunity would be inhospitable to decency and a threat to the well-being of all people."

47. Clinton (1992).

48. Croft (2006).

49. Jackson (2005, Chapter 6).

50. The White House (2001a).

51. Trump on Sept. 12, 2016, in Baltimore.
52. Trump on Aug. 8, 2016, in Detroit.
53. Trump during the Final Presidential Debate on Oct. 19, 2016, in Las Vegas.
54. IISS (2015), Trump (2016d).
55. It is worth recalling though that George W. Bush's foreign policy was equally discussed, by some observers at least, as a radical departure from established traditions, indeed as a "revolution," see for example Daalder and Lindsay (2003).
56. Trump (2016c).
57. Diken and Lausten (2005).
58. For an analysis of the temporal dimension of the 'war on terror', see Lundborg (2012).
59. The White House (2001b).
60. The Vice President's Office (2003).
61. Trump (2016a).
62. Trump on Aug. 19, 2016, in Dimondale, Michigan.
63. Trump (2016b).
64. Trump (2016a).
65. Trump (2016b).
66. Ibid.
67. Trump (2016a).
68. Trump (2016e).
69. Mead (2002, 2011, 2017).
70. For a similar argument, see Cha (2017).
71. Trump (2016c).
72. Ibid.

73. Trump (2016b).
74. Trump (2016a).
75. Trump (2016b).
76. Quoted in *New York Times* (2016).
77. Neumeier (2018), Bloom and Rhodes (2018).
78. Stimulated, most prominently, by Oneal (1990).
79. Trump (2016b).
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid., Trump (2016j).
82. Cimbala and Forster (2005, 1).
83. Trump (2016e).
84. Carter (2003), Bolton (2000), Kagan (2002), Mead (2011).
85. See 'In Cheney's words: The Administration Case for Removing Saddam Hussein',
New York Times, Aug. 27, 2002.
86. Trump (2016b).
87. Ibid.
88. Trump (2016d).
89. Trump (2016b).
90. Jackson (2005), for a detailed account.
91. Trump (2016b).
92. Trump (2016c).
93. Trump (2016b).
94. Ibid.
95. Brooks (2016).

96. Trump (2016b). As Kazin (2016) points out, the idea of “America First” itself is not new. The America First Committee was a lobbying group that argued for isolationism during the 1940s and even included later President Gerald Ford. The committee stumbled over Hitler’s aggressive policies and openly anti-Semitic slurs of some of its supporters.
97. Trump (2016b).
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid.
101. Ibid.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid.
104. Ibid.
105. Donald Trump: Ban all Muslim travel to the US, [cnn.com](#), Dec. 8, 2015, [10 December 2016].
106. What Donald Trump has said about Mexico and vice versa, [cnn.com](#), Aug. 31, 2016, [10 December 2016]. See also Trump (2016c).
107. Laclau (1996, 39, also 52); for a comment Howarth (2000, 105), Critchley and Marchart (2004, 4), Gasché (2004, 25).
108. Also remarkable in this regard is Trump’s exceptionally blunt dismissal, mostly via Twitter, of competitors and critics alike as “weak” (read: feminine), including Hillary Clinton, Paul Ryan, Marco Rubio and Jeb Bush (Trump 2016f, h, i, j).
109. Cf. e.g. Cohn (1987, 1993), Nagel (1998), Poloni-Staudinger and Ortvals (2014).
110. Trump (2016b).

111. Neiwert (2017).
112. Gökarıksel and Smith (2016).
113. Trump (2016b).
114. Trump (2016c).
115. Trump (2016d).
116. Ibid.
117. Trump (2016c).
118. For a deeper analysis and more examples, see Nabers (2015, Chapter 4).
119. Trump (2016b).
120. Trump (2015).
121. Ibid.
122. Trump (2016b).
123. Trump on Sept. 9, 2016, in Washington, DC.

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