

## A Trump presidency and the prospect for equality and diversity

Donald J. Trump is calling for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on. According to Pew Research, among others, there is great hatred towards Americans by large segments of the Muslim population (Presidential Candidate Donald J. Trump, December 7, 2015).

When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending the best. They're not sending you, they're sending people that have lots of problems and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists [...] And some, I assume, are good people (Presidential Candidate Donald J. Trump, June 2016).

I don't even wait. And when you're a star, they let you do it, you can do anything [...] grab them by the p\*\*\*y (Donald J. Trump, 2005).

During the 2016 US Presidential election, Republican Candidate (now President) Donald J. Trump made headlines around the world for vitriolic and inflammatory remarks against women, immigrants, Muslims, and other minority groups. Trump promised to build a wall along the Mexican border, ban Muslims from entering the USA, tighten abortion laws, repeal the Affordable Care Act ("Obamacare"), and restrict press freedom (Bulman, 2016). His vision to "Make America Great Again" appealed to many white, working class Americans who were angry at or resentful of immigrants, a lack of opportunities for themselves, ideological-based terrorist attacks, and political correctness (Boag, 2016). Many lesser-educated white voters also felt abandoned by progressives (Vance, 2016). Indeed, a recent study has shown that sexism and racism predicted support for Trump much more than economic dissatisfaction (Schnaffer *et al.*, 2017).

The election of a candidate that so blatantly used an "us vs them" approach to campaigning has generated fear and uncertainty among a majority of people in the USA, but for women, racial, cultural, and religious minorities, as well as LGBTs, there is a serious worry that their hard-fought rights and social respect will disintegrate (Filipovic, 2016). For example, an increase in the number of hate crimes across the USA followed Trump's victory (Yan *et al.*, 2016), events in which the perpetrators clearly refer to the support offered by Trump and his rhetoric. Trump's election to the White House also seems to have energized the "alt-right" movement, which frequently uses unverified and completely fake news and "post-truths" in social media outlets, sometimes highlighting racial, gender, religious progressives and cultural differences in negative ways. We agree with Tourish (2017) and Ng's (2017) recognition that as academics, we have a responsibility to respond in a timely fashion about current events that affect our world. To that end, we have developed this special issue to reflect on the election of President Trump, as well as how his campaign and presidency relates to equality, diversity, and inclusion efforts in the USA and elsewhere.

### How did we get here?

According to conventional wisdom, timing is everything. Donald Trump grew up in a privileged home as the son of a wealthy real estate magnate in New York; he went to work

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for the family business after earning four military deferments and a degree from the University of Pennsylvania, and eventually gained cultural popularity as a businessman and celebrity starring in *The Apprentice* on NBC from 2003 to 2015 (Wikipedia, 2018). Mr Trump has shown interest in running for president several times since 1987 (Ifill, 2016), but never progressed past the primaries. What was different this time? Facing a divided Democratic party, which had a hard time uniting behind a single candidate, Trump used his well-honed television skills to run a campaign designed to entertain the public, based on attention-generating chaos caused by controversial statements (Schwartzman and Johnson, 2015). During this campaign, his staff correctly identified the need to appeal to the public's general sentiment of distrust for the "do-nothing Congress" and the "over-reaching Executive Branch" of the US Government by adopting a goal as an outsider to "drain the swamp." He took advantage of a rise in nationalism by using the slogan "Make America Great Again," implying that his predecessors created an "ungreat" America. He also went beyond nationalism to focus on isolationism, promising to build a wall on the Mexican border and withdraw from several agreements and treaties to which the USA was a signatory (e.g. the Paris Accord, Trans-Pacific Partnership). This appealed to voters who felt left behind by an increasingly diverse, global, technological, and confusing world. These voters who supported Mr Trump were actually in the popular minority; however, he was able to strategically capitalize on the Electoral College system to receive a majority of the representative votes to win the presidency.

This procedural divide created significant upheaval and concern among the majority of voters in the USA, as evidenced by the numerous protests across the country after the election (e.g. Levinson, 2017). Most importantly, concern was expressed over many personal comments, slogans, and "blame others" tactics used by Mr Trump and his staff which appealed to well-known hate groups like the KKK and the white supremacists, leading to repeated complaints of misogyny, racism, ethnocentrism, and other forms of prejudice (e.g. Leonhardt and Philbrick, 2018; Serwer, 2017).

Concerns about President Trump have not subsided in his first 11 months in office. Mr Trump selected the most white and most male executive cabinet since 1980 (*NY Times*, 2017a), lending credence to the claims about bigotry, despite his statements denying any race- or gender-based prejudice. His response to the events in Charlottesville, Virginia – during which over a thousand white supremacists marched to show support for "white rights" and Confederate Army statues and against women, Jews, and racial minorities in the USA – further inflamed many people's opinions that the current president is turning his back on 50 years of Civil Rights gains in order to appeal to his "base" (Serwer, 2017). If this was an isolated decision for President Trump, perhaps some would forgive it; however, his personal history is littered with examples of past prejudicial red-flags, such as an out-of-court settlement in 1970s related to a housing discrimination lawsuit, an advertisement in a prominent New York newspaper demanding that five children of color be executed for raping a woman in Central Park – a crime for which they were all later exonerated – and the perpetuation of the myth of President Obama's non-US birth (Berney, 2017; Leonhardt and Philbrick, 2018). Even after the controversy sparked by his lack of singular blame for white supremacists for a woman's death at Charlottesville, he agreed to pardon a law-breaking, anti-immigrant sheriff from Arizona and seemed to encouraged police officers to "rough up" people being arrested (e.g. Wootson and Berman, 2017).

Clearly, the USA is facing an enormous challenge to its identity as a country that supports equality for all. It therefore becomes critical to understand what has transpired in the US society to create a Trump presidency, including the biases that many citizens still harbor, in order to continue moving forward with diversity and inclusion efforts. Moreover, these concerns are not limited to the USA. They are also reflected in several events in Europe, such as the increase in hate crimes against ethnic and religious minorities in Britain

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after the vote to leave the European Union (e.g. Child, 2017); the inclusion of far-right, anti-immigrant politicians in Germany's Bundestag after the recent election (e.g. Applebaum, 2017), and the possibility of a conservative government at least partially controlled by a reconfigured Neo-Nazi Freedom-People's Party coalition in Austria (e.g. *NY Times*, 2017b). In this introduction to an important special issue on how the Trump Administration affects equality, diversity, and inclusion, we describe several domains related to organizations, society, and work that have been adversely impacted by President Trump's policies and actions. They include sexual harassment, LGBT rights, international relations, the Muslim ban, immigration, and refugees. From these recent events, it is evident that some of the civil rights gains may be in danger of being reversed and the prospects for a civil society based on equality and inclusion are diminished.

### **Sexual harassment**

Recently in the USA, there has been a tidal wave of people admitting that they have been the victim of sexual assault or sexual harassment by a growing number of men in power. Started by a few brave women, at least 80 have now accused Harvey Weinstein, a powerful Hollywood Producer (Williams, 2017), and claims have broadened to include other high-profile producers, directors, actors, news personalities, and politicians (Cooney, 2017). However, this is nothing new – several women have made past claims against Bill Cosby, Bill O'Reilly, Bill Clinton, and even President Trump (Tolentino, 2016), but it did not result in this widespread confession and call for change. All of Trump's bad behavior toward women – walking in on Miss Universe contestants in various stages of dress during the competition, the audio recording of him speaking to ET Host Billy Bush about “grabbing women wherever he wanted” because he could get away with it given his star status, and his misogynistic treatment of moderator Megan Kelly during the first presidential debate (e.g. Bates, 2016) – made no difference to the electorate during the campaign. The more than 16 women who came forward during the campaign to accuse him of sexual harassment were just dismissed by his supporters as “fake news” (Tolentino, 2016). What changed after the Trump presidency? Perhaps the current groundswell of support for ending sexual harassment and assault is due to the powerlessness felt by women when Trump was elected president. It is a way for them to take back their right to feel safe and respected.

### **LGBTs**

Women are not the only ones feeling threatened by the Trump administration. Shortly after taking office, the Trump Administration signaled its anti-LGBT stance by removing LGBT content from the White House and State Department websites (O'Hara, 2017). Further, President Trump drafted an Executive Order, “Establishing a Government-Wide Initiative to Respect Religious Freedom,” which would permit individuals or businesses to withhold services for LGBTs under the guise of religious liberty (Scott, 2017). Although the order was never signed, it would have allowed for legal discrimination against LGBT people. Attorney General Jeff Sessions later released a guidance statement on interpreting religious liberty protections in federal law that has the same effect (Gessen, 2017). Relatedly, the Department of Justice intervened in a court case involving a skydiving instructor who believed he was fired because he was gay on the basis that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 does not protect LGBT individuals (Green, 2017). Trump also used this reasoning to justify banning transgender people from serving in the military. The targeting and removal of LGBT workers' rights and protection is putting these individuals in “a place of fear” (Cain, 2017). Luckily, more compassionate minds have prevailed; for example, at the time of writing, a federal court judge has blocked the enforcement of Trump's memorandum banning transgendered individuals from serving in the military (de Vogue, 2017), while Trump's military generals have indicated that there is no policy change (*BBC News*, 2017a).

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## Domestic affairs and international relations

In addition to the concerns raised by women and LGBT individuals within the USA, Trump also espoused questionable ideas and policies related to working with other sovereign countries. Even the US territory of Puerto Rico experienced differential treatment by the Trump Administration and the Federal Emergency Management Agency after Hurricane Maria, compared to that received by Texas and Florida after Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, to the extent that the United Nations condemned the slow and inadequate response (Barron, 2017). The lack of urgency in addressing the needs of the Puerto Rican people, 3.5 million people who are US citizens, was first evident when Trump did not declare an emergency – which frees up federal relief funds – until a few days after the storm; for Texas and Florida, the emergencies were declared days before the hurricanes made landfall (Barron, 2017). The island was devastated, facing a completely destroyed infrastructure that prevented food, water, medicine, and electricity from getting to the people who desperately needed it, even two months after the storm hit. When Puerto Rican leaders complained that they needed more help from the US Government given the burgeoning humanitarian catastrophe, Trump criticized that the people were “lazy” and the leaders ineffective (Mazzei and Pascual, 2017).

This was not the first time Trump had publicly criticized other leaders. From his open feud with North Korea’s Kim Jong Un, in which he has referred to him in such denigrating terms as “little rocket man” (*BBC News*, 2017b), to obvious tension with Germany’s Angela Merkel when they first met in the White House (Keneally, 2017), Trump seems to thrive on challenging other world leaders. Shortly after taking office, Trump had two contentious phone conversations with the Prime Minister of Australia and the President of Mexico about refugees and immigrants, respectively. In both conversations, he was primarily concerned with the optics of looking like an effective leader and living up to campaign promises to limit foreigners entering the USA (Woodward, 2017), as opposed to building productive and respectful partnerships. Moreover, he has been complimentary to some world leaders who have been accused of human rights violations in their countries – namely Putin in the Soviet Union and Duterte in the Philippines – calling them “great leaders” and even “best friends” (Porter, 2017; Holmes, 2017). Trump’s pattern of behavior, and potential realignment of the US’s international relationships, may threaten the fair treatment and human rights of people throughout the world.

## Immigrants and refugees

In an effort to put America first, one of Trump’s key campaign pledges was to limit immigration into the USA. As he struggles to secure Congress’s approval to build the Mexican border wall, Trump announced an end to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program intended to protect undocumented immigrants who arrived as children (also popularly referred to as “Dreamers”) from deportation (e.g. Shear and Hirschfeld Davis, 2017). It is unclear if Trump is using DACA as leverage for the Mexican wall or for more hardline immigration policies. The announcement would affect approximately 800,000 Dreamers who have made their lives in the USA. Many Dreamers are enrolled in schools and colleges, started families, and have established successful careers (Kopan, 2017). The Cato Institute reports that Dreamers tend to be younger (average age of 22), better educated, and earn more than a typical immigrant (Brannon and Albright, 2017). Despite a broadly held false assumption, there is no evidence that immigrants take away jobs from American citizens (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017) and, in fact, immigrants often fill jobs Americans are unwilling to perform (Hoban, 2017). Estimates vary, but the cost of ending DACA and sending the Dreamers back to their birth countries ranges between \$230 and \$400 billion (Salisbury, 2017). Of course, this does not address the moral and ethical cost of removing

these individuals from their families and friends in the USA. While DACA is being debated and negotiated, the lives of 800,000 young individuals are hanging in the balance.

Furthermore, there is such an increased level of uncertainty and stress associated with being a non-native in the USA that a growing number of refugees who are currently in the USA have begun to illegally stream across the border into Canada. Many of these refugees come from Colombia, Syria, Eritrea, Iraq, and Burundi to seek protection from civil war, conflicts, and persecution in their home countries (Millward, 2017). Although these asylum seekers are legally allowed to remain in the USA, Trump's anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim rhetoric seem to have created a hostile environment for foreigners (Markusoff *et al.*, 2017). Additionally, many Central Americans and Haitians who suffered from devastating natural disasters (e.g. hurricanes, earthquakes) are also in the USA under the temporary protected status (TPS). The Trump Administration has signaled that it will cancel or not extend the TPS status when they expire, leading many of the refugees to flee north (Armus, 2017). Although many of these refugees have built lives in the USA, many perceived living without status (in Canada) is better than the uncertainty of their safety in the USA (Luscombe, 2017; Stevenson, 2017).

### Muslims

Immigration is not the only issue that illustrates Trump's issues with non-US individuals; in fact, Muslims in particular have faced an almost constant barrage of negative statements from Trump in interviews and on his Twitter feed. During the campaign, he repeatedly called for "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States [...] until our country's representatives can figure out what is going on" (cf. Johnson, 2015). He routinely made ill-informed, anti-Muslim statements, such as equating Syrian refugees with ISIS sleeper agents at a rally in New Hampshire, and arguing that a large Arab community in New Jersey cheered as the World Trade Center fell during 9/11 (Johnson and Hauslohner, 2017). He also stated that he would consider closing Mosques in the USA because of the "absolute hatred" coming from them, and creating a database of Muslims in the US to track their movements (Johnson and Hauslohner, 2017). Further, Trump actively and erroneously linked Muslim immigration with terrorist attacks in San Bernardino and Orlando, confusing Islam with Wahhabism and stoking Islamophobic attitudes (Johnson and Hauslohner, 2017). Most recently, he created significant controversy when he retweeted misleading anti-Muslim videos initially published by a well-known hate group entitled Britain First, angering many in Parliament and resulting in condemnation from Britain's Prime Minister, Theresa May (Korte, 2017).

On January 27, 2017, President Trump signed an Executive Order, titled "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States," banning citizens from seven Muslim countries – Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen – from entering the USA. The Executive Order intended to halt admissions of terrorists, despite the fact that no terrorist accused of crimes against the USA has come from any of these countries, is widely seen as a "Muslim ban." This Executive Order was roundly criticized and by several states and struck down by federal courts as being unconstitutional, so in March, Trump issued a second Executive Order, which included six countries (removing Iraq from the list above). Further, in September, Trump added travel restrictions for individuals from Chad, North Korea, and Venezuela, including a few non-Muslim countries, as well as removed restrictions for individuals from Syria (Jarrett and Tatum, 2017). However, the executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union, which is fighting the ban on travel from these countries, has stated that, "The fact that Trump has added North Korea – with few visitors to the US – and a few government officials from Venezuela, doesn't obfuscate the real fact that the administration's order is still a Muslim ban. President Trump's original sin of targeting Muslims cannot be cured by throwing other countries onto his enemies list" (cf. Jarrett and Tatum, 2017).

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Despite the White House's claim that the travel ban was "never, ever, ever based on race, religion, or creed" (Barrett, 2017), the evidence presented above appears to show clear evidence that Trump is targeting Muslims, supposedly to protect the USA from terrorism. In actuality, security experts and government officials have argued that Trump's criticism and targeting of Muslims has made the USA less safe (Illing, 2017; Mitchell and Duchon, 2017), given the anger and resentment that it has created throughout the world. For example, the ban effectively prevents innocent citizens and refugees from entering the USA to study, seek medical treatments, and reunite with families. Despite the fact that it appears to violate the 1964 Civil Rights Act protections based on nationality and religion, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals has allowed the ban to go into partial effect (Kaleem, 2017), and the Supreme Court has preliminarily allowed the ban to go into full effect at the time of this publication (Sherman, 2017).

### **Implications for equality, diversity, and inclusion**

How do we celebrate and make progress on equality, diversity, and inclusion issues in a time of nationalism and isolationism, with leaders that shy away from condemning, or flat out support, hate speech, and actions? Ignoring the words and actions of our leaders seems too reminiscent of the events in pre-Second World War Nazi-Germany. Do we wait and watch for the next few years until we are able to elect new leader? That, too, seems ineffective and undesirable. Luckily, there are hopeful signs that the importance of diversity and inclusion are not lost on the majority of people. The protests of President Trump's rhetoric and policy changes continue. As a result of Charlottesville, several southern US cities removed Confederate statues, which many felt represented continued support for racial bigotry (e.g. Carbone, 2017). The white supremacists were overwhelmed with counter-protesters in Boston (e.g. Etman, 2017) and then proceeded to cancel planned rallies in other US cities (e.g. Lowery, 2017; Steinmetz, 2017). There was a swift condemnation from police chiefs from all over the country after President Trump's call for less-than-gentle treatment of prisoners (Berman and Wootson, 2017). Recently, with the #MeToo (Twitter hashtag) efforts in response to the situation with Harvey Weinstein and others (including the recorded comments from President Trump about grabbing women wherever he chose to), the issue of and condemnation for sexual harassment and assault has come to the forefront of discussion (e.g. Zacharek *et al.*, 2018). These efforts strongly suggest that there are individuals – some who are in positions of power and influence – that are not only sensitive to issues related to gender, race, and inequality, but also are willing to take action.

We believe that the events in the USA and Europe create a literal call to action for those of us who research and practice the importance of equality, diversity, and inclusion. Similar to the 1950-1960s in the USA, this time in our history may be a "tipping point" for issues of xenophobia, misogyny, racism, and general bigotry, during which we have the opportunity to rally like-minded individuals to work toward gains in organizational/corporate practices, societal norms, governmental policy, and individual beliefs. Focusing on integration of common beliefs instead of denigration of different "others," highlighting common values instead of conflicting philosophies, recognizing the powers seeking to divide us through fear and conquering them through the power of kindness and compassion, are all choices that individuals can make in their daily lives to reduce the impact of incivility and hate. Consistent with this logic, we have invited several senior scholars to share their thoughts about the Trump Presidency and specifically, how it affects the landscape of equality, diversity, and inclusion. We detail each of the papers below.

#### *Denying racism to rationalize support for Trump*

Alison Konrad (2018) kicks off this special issue by documenting the racist undertones that characterize Trump's election campaign. Konrad draws some parallels between Trump's

campaign rhetoric with those from Hitler's, which seeks to dismantle public institutions that support society's weak and vulnerable members (racialized and marginalized groups).

She points out that by disguising the campaign as eliminating dependency on the state (i.e. social assistance and welfare system), Trump would appeal to those who blame the poor for contributing less to society. Konrad describes how racist individuals deny facts and their own racism to rationalize their support for a leader who promulgated racist speech. In this fashion, Trump's supporters absolve themselves from having any responsibilities in electing a racist to office. Konrad concludes with some effective anti-racist suggestions to counter interpersonal racism and the denial of facts.

*Is a female president too progressive for our time?*

Next, Corrington and Hebl (2018) write about how Hillary Clinton, who has been described by Barack Obama as the most qualified nominee in the US history, lost the election to President Trump. They note that while voters may have voted for Trump because of his promise to "Make America Great Again," white nationalism, keeping America safe, his anti-immigration stance, and misinformation generally, sexism may play a much more influential role than we acknowledge. The authors evoke overt and ambivalent sexism, social role incongruity, gender stereotyping, and systems justification to suppress out groups as explanations for Clinton's failed bid. They suggest that the USA may not yet be ready for a female president and offer theory-based solutions to get overly qualified women elected.

*Is the ideal president hypermasculine or androgynous?*

While Corrington and Hebl's (2018) conjecture on the role of sexism in explaining the election of President Trump *et al.* (2018) tested male and female leadership prototypes as the ideal president (for the USA). They found that an ideal president is likely to be more androgynous; however, individuals are more likely to vote for a hypermasculine candidate. Trump was rated more hypermasculine, which may contribute to why he won the Electoral College to win the presidency. Clinton, on the other hand, was deemed to be representative better representation of an ideal president, which in turn may explain why she won the popular vote. Of note, Powell *et al.*'s (2018) study highlights the role of gender stereotypes in influencing a voter's choice when selecting an ideal president.

*Deplorable economics?*

During the presidential campaign, Trump promised to enact economic policies that will grow the economy and create jobs for ordinary Americans. While the rhetoric seems to be appealing, it is unclear who will benefit from these policies – ordinary Americans and the declining middle class or Trump's wealthy friends. ogilvie (2018) closely examines Trump's economic policies and draws from past Democratic and Republican track records to explain how Trump's policies will contribute to greater income inequality. ogilvie goes on to make several policy recommendations in the areas of tax cuts (for small- and medium-sized enterprises rather than large corporations), incentives to support small business growth, entrepreneurship training, education and skills training (to retool Americans), and infrastructure spending to help restore the American economy.

*Trumped up data*

Since President Trump took office, we have been constantly exposed to alternative facts, post-truths, and fake news. Trump's data exaggeration ranges from "real" unemployment data and voter fraud to inflated murder rates in various US cities. Evading media attention, Gossett (2018), a Political Scientist, raises a red flag with respect to the new administration's practices with federal government data. He highlights major concerns with data collection,

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dissemination, and analysis of federal data, which can significantly impact our work as scholars. For example, the Trump Administration has already signaled intentions to cancel the collection of environmental data, while expanding data collection on voter registration (traditionally a state responsibility) and on the US Census (e.g. adding Middle East/North Africa category to race/ethnicity). Gossett cautions scholars to pay attention to changes the Trump Administration is making with respect to federal data, to ensure that we continue to have access to high-quality data to aid in sound policy making.

### *Boundaries of inclusion*

Ferdman (2018) makes the final contribution to this special issue by exploring the limits of inclusion. Drawing from his own personal and professional experiences, Ferdman poses the challenge of accepting those who hold different views from his own. Does he also engage with those who oppose inclusivity? More importantly, does inclusion extend to those who fundamentally and actively subvert progressive views? Ferdman explores three inclusive models and notes that only one is helpful to foster inclusion in organizations and societies. In the first model, conditional inclusion (i.e. inclusion only for select people or groups) requires assimilation and is thus not truly inclusive. The second model incorporates the inclusion of everyone without conditions or criteria. The unlimited tolerance can lead to the disappearance of tolerance, which is unsustainable in the long term. The third model sets boundaries for inclusion, requiring those who participate to adhere to certain principles as a condition for inclusion. Ferdman closes with recommendations for diversity and inclusion practitioners.

### **Conclusion**

In closing, we must remain vigilant, actively participate in governing and democratic processes, and in electing leaders who truly desire to serve the public rather than serving one's private (and business) interests. We must continue to strive for representative bureaucracy to ensure that the rights and interests of minority groups are protected and advanced (Ng and Sears, 2015). As a community of scholars, we must continue to research, write, and expose inequalities to advance social justice and the equality of opportunities for everyone. Finally, we echo Oscar Holmes IV (in his keynote address to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Conference; see Holmes) to move beyond scholarship and be a scholar-activist:

The power of one man or one woman doing the right thing for the right reason, and at the right time, is the greatest influence in our society (Jack Kemp).

In a gentle way, you can shake the world (Mahatma Gandhi).

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