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Relations of Race/Color Based Policies and Backlash from Loud Voice Majority —"Silent Majority"

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Introduction

This research note aims to provide a foundation to understand the polity of the mass media on color based social relations of elections, and to understand not as effect focused media study but a sociological analysis on ideological articulation of group of people in the arena of media discourse.

Studying how race/color becomes the focus of political conflict, and how they have come to infuse to U.S. society will give a clearer view of the complicating power structure. It is a general conception that Donald Trump in the 2016 U.S. presidential election promoted introvert racial discriminatory attitude from forgotten white working class, also known as "silent majority". With the aim of persuasively formulate and propagate its anti-immigration opinions based on its conservative ideology, Mr. Trump used rhetorical hyperboles such as ravaging, stealing, destroying or ripping, and metaphors such as "American carnage" to attack liberal immigration policies.

"… America's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and *decay*." "The wealth of our middle class has been '*ripped*' from their homes and then redistributed across the entire world."
"We must protect our borders from the '*ravages*' of other countries making our products, stealing our companies, and *destroying* our jobs".
"'We' will bring back 'our jobs'. 'We' will *bring back* 'our borders'. 'We' will *bring back* 'our wealth'. And 'we' will *bring back* 'our dreams'" (The Inaugural Address 2017).

The mass media may conclude that Donald Trump's speeches supplied the base for leading worse race relation in the United States[1], however, it needs more detailed research to say about the effect. Mass media portrayed Trump supporters as alienated whites whose unfortunate status is caused by immigrants and racial minorities who

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are believed to be given favorable treatment by the government thus those silent majority finally politically awaken in order to make their voice heard.

Because, many studies on ethnic groups and relations, neo-conservative wave has been overlooked due to convergence to the actual racist experiences of minorities. They have failed to address the historical condition of political emphasis on race/color differences and categorization provided a fertile ground for the rise of Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election. "Class" theories embrace class or nationalist perspectives submerge race relations in other social relations mainly class or color operated as form of new discrimination; discrimination against new minority—the failed white.[2] I argue that the conservative turn of the American society since the 1970s that has prepared the rise of Trump and his supporting social base.[3] Yet, to look into details beyond the mass media's claims that the supporters of Donald Trump are the "silent majority"[4], what is needed is to elaborate how the media portrayed this "divided nation".

Although the precise nature of the media's influence is hardly agreed on, it is clear that most knowledgeable observers recognize "media power" in politics, consumer behavior, and other arenas (Dennis & Wartella, 1996: vii). In fact, the idea that media and media messages have something to do with people's perceptions, attitudes, and opinions seems almost obvious. Because racial/color relation is a suture point of discourse practice inviting specific discourse socialized subject and the process of manifestation of ideologies (Hall, 1997: 5), looking into political conflict over color based policies and how debate of "equality" have come to pervade to U.S. media discourse will give a better understanding on current phenomenon. Instead of exploring how racial conflicts tremble the U.S. democratic base, mainstream approaches consider racial relation as a problem of policy, or state management.

In the next chapters, I consider in detail the process of constructing "silent majority," the word originally used by President Nixon and how debate of "equality" has a relation with the "forgotten" white people who are oppressed and politically awakened by those political candidates.
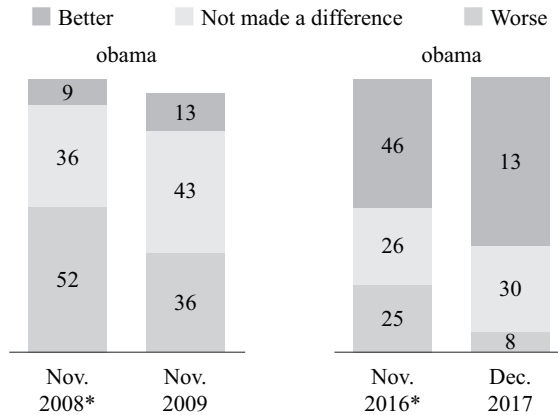
Division between the People and Rise of Trump

Silent Majority—Forgotten Working-Class Americans?

People fear that the Trump election has led to worse race relations in the United States. A survey conducted by Pew Research Center shows (see Figure 1), just 8% say Trump's election has led to better race relations, while 30% say it has not made a difference.[5]

Figure 1: "Majority of Public Says Trump's Election Has Led to Worse Race Relations".

% who say each president's election has led to ___ race relations in the U.S.

| | Better | | Not made a difference | | Worse |

obama   **obama**

	Nov. 2008*	Nov. 2009		Nov. 2016*	Dec. 2017
Better	9	13		46	13
Not made a difference	36	43		26	30
Worse	52	36		25 / 8	8

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted from November 29 to December 4, 2017 by Pew Research Center. * November 2016 and 2008 surveys based on those who reported voting; they were asked whether each president's election will lead to better or worse race relations.

White working-class are said to be politically awaken by Donald Trump (Edsall, 2016). They are said to be feel they are the only ones who are left out and are having ill feeling by the American society but haven't expressed well[5], thus they are called "silent majority" (Le Miere, 2017; see also, Watanabe, 2016; Cohn, 2016; Dione, 2015). Showing below is the New York Times report on Trump supporters.

> A study that was conducted by the University of Virginia's Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture and released in August, "The Vanishing Center of American Democracy," provides the strongest evidence of the presence of feelings of involuntary subordination among Trump supporters. The study found that when Trump supporters were asked if they agreed with the statement "These days I feel like a stranger in my own country," 46.2 percent said yes, compared to 30.9 percent of Clinton backers. 68.32 percent agreed that "The leaders in American corporations, media, universities, and technology care little about the lives of most Americans," compared to 53 percent of Clinton voters. Most significant, 75.7 percent of Trump voters agreed with the statement "the government in Washington threatens the freedom of ordinary Americans" — almost double the 39.5 percent of Clinton voters who agreed (Cohn, 2016).

It is a commonly shared image that the white working-class who feel alienated by personal failures as an inability to get a stable corporate job take out their

resulting frustration by blaming immigrants.

The alienated whites believe that their unfortunate status is caused by immigrants and those who are (believed to be) given favorable treatment by the government and are to mistake the problem of economic deprivation, unequal distribution of wealth and racial hierarchy.

Much of the analysis since has suggested that concerns over the economy and Trump's vow to bring jobs back from abroad were the crucial factor in swinging the vote so emphatically in his favor. But it is Trump's rhetoric over immigration that instead appears to have been a bigger driver of support to his camp.

Trump pledged to build a "great, great wall" along the entirety of the southern border with Mexico when launching his campaign for president in June 2015, describing Mexicans as drug smugglers, criminals and rapists. He also vowed to end then-President Barack Obama's executive action shielding immigrants from deportation. Later in his campaign, Trump called for a ban on all Muslims entering the country (Cooper, 2016).

During the 2016 presidential election campaign period, a book about those silent majorities became a bestseller; *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis* by J. D. Vance. It is arguably claimed the book to understand those who voted for Trump. [6] It is a book about a personal story of a 32 years old author who grew up in the Rust Belt, an area where jobs slowly started to disappear, women fell to social welfare raising their children on their own, and drugs took over thousands of lives. Vance is a Republican who is a former Marine and Yale Law School Graduate, and a poignant account. Despite of his political orientation, his book received accolades across the political spectrum. "Anyone wanting to understand Trump's rise or American inequality should read it," said Larry Summers, the Harvard economist and Bill Clinton's former treasury secretary (Dionne, 2015). Those who dwell in the Rust Belt identify themselves with the millions of working class white Americans of Scotch-Irish descent who have no college degree instead of WASPs of the Northeast[7]. "To those folks, poverty is the family tradition—their ancestors were day labors in the Southern slave economy, sharecroppers after that, coal miners after that, and mechanics and millworkers during more recent times" (Vance, 2016: 3). Though the book doesn't mention Donald Trump, it is hailed as a must-read prism into disaffection among America's white working class and the rise of the new president.

President Obama came on the scene right as so many people in my community began to believe that the modern American meritocracy was not built for them…Barack Obama strikes at the heart of our deepest insecurities. He is a

good father while many of us aren't. He wears suits to his job while we wear overalls, if we're lucky enough to have a job at all. His wife tells us that we shouldn't be feeding out children certain foods, and were hater her for it-not because we think she's wrong but because we know she's right. The people I know…simply don't believe them (the major news organizations) (Vance, 2016: 191-192)[8].

The mass media enhanced stereotypical image of those Hillbilly who are White Southerner who drives old beat up pickup trucks, poorly educated and is not so content with what they have are the supporters of Donald Trump in election and called them as "silent majority."[9,10]

Silent Majority vs. Loud Minority

On November 3, 1969, President Nixon addressed to the American nation about Vietnam War, now commonly known as "The Silent Majority" Speech.

Two hundred years ago this Nation was weak and poor. But even then, America wasthe hope of millions in the world. Today we have become the strongest and richestnation in the world. And the wheel of destiny has turned so that any hope the worldhas for the survival of peace and freedom will be determined by whether the American people have the moral stamina and the courage to meet the challenge of free world leadership. Let historians not record that when America was the most powerful nation in the world we passed on the other side of the road and allowed the last hopes for peace and freedom of millions of people to be suffocated by the forces of totalitarianism. And so tonight-to you, the great silent majority of my fellow Americans-I ask for your support. I pledged in my campaign for the Presidency to end the war in a way that we could win the peace. I have initiated a plan of action which will enable me to keep that pledge [underlined by the current author].

By saying "the American nation", Nixon directly addressed to those Americans who did not join in the large demonstrations against the Vietnam War. His speech was supported by "the silent majority" who did not like the massive social movements in the late 1960s and who did respect traditional conservative culture. The speech opened the way to a political opportunity for the Republican Party to assemble new majority in the society. Promoting conservative policies of Nixon's and following Regan's attacks on race-based policies, federal support and enforcement of any race-conscious programs greatly shrink. As these political expressions of making race as conflict brings emergence of "burse-discrimination" rhetoric on affirmative action (see Niijima, 2017). Those connection between the Nixon administrations in the 1970s and the Regan administration in the 1980s that

enhanced neo-liberal policies and the American society turned more conservative in the 1980s than previous decades is explained in my previous works (see Niijima, 2011, 2017) where the transformation of American society since the 1960s to the 1990s is overviewed, thus I avoid repeatedly make my point here, however how race based policy such as affirmative action had become bashing point for democracy may help to understand the media trends of the election of 2016.

The broad sweep of past compensation, abundant of history and implacable denial of political rights, affirmative action is characterized as harmful reform which can at time harmful for majority, instead of political victory for minorities, and for democracy itself. This shows dynamics of present-day racial politics in the U.S. "White plaintiffs filed several high-profile anti-affirmative action lawsuits complaining that "they had been turned down solely because of their race…the meaning of equality as a social goal has been re-cast by this resurgence in conservatism from equality for minority groups to mean no special treatment for any group" (Robeles, 2006: 25-26).

The startled majority began to criticize those minority groups who raise their voice to gain better social treatments in American society. This response can be described as "backlash" by majority; backlash to growing visibility of minority group members and recent immigrants, a reaction. The idea of self-responsibility driven by neo-conservatism enhanced antipathy towards African Americans and Latinos who were thought to be relying on welfares. "No sooner did the political tempests of the 1960s "began to 'decay', from the Nixon's 1970s to the early 1990s of Bill Clinton, the state has sought to absorb, to marginalize, and to transform (or "rearticulate") the meaning of the reforms won in the earlier decade" (Omi & Winant, 1994: 78).

Racial Equality and Welfare State

Desegregation to Enforced Racial Integration

The United States provides interesting mutual-changing relation of politics and society. In the course of history, immigrants from all over the countries establish ethnic towns such as little Italy, China town, Korean town, Japan town, and the list goes on. Today, the immigrants and their descendants (the second, third, fourth generations) may not stay within their original ethnic community as it used to be. However, housing and residential patterns divided by race and ethnicity remain to exist, even in the so-called liberal California urban areas; for instance, Gardena Los Angeles for Latinos, Torrance (L.A.) for Japanese, Santa Monica (L.A.) for White Americans, Oakland (San Francisco) for African Americans etc. The racial/ethnic division of residential patterns builds cultural barriers of social interactions, and thereby helps to make and strengthen racial and ethnic stereotypes of local residence.

Ethnic studies, such as Mirilitani (1987), Fong (1998), Feagin (2006) have been

revealing discrimination minority faces daily basis. Also, it encouraged minority movements from the 1960s by challenging dominant race/color conception. Quite apparent in the 1970s definitely in 1980s, by overturning existed mainstream scientifically proven racial theory and racial politics, ethnic studies helped to reveal racially discriminative political initiatives and state action. However, only a few studies have examined "neoconservative racial doctrine, with its combination of theoretical endorsement and practical abandonment of racial equality", then looked into subtext of "state's retreat from racial justice concerns (Omi & Winant, 1994: viii)". Popular approach concentrated on describing actuality of racial minority's ravaged and competitive social lives.

We can view the definition of racial equality through the famous "separate is inherently unequal" doctrine (Patterson, 2002). This principle was put forth by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1954. Some white who were liberal and progressive were satisfied with Brown and school desegregation, and see this decision as symbol broader ideology of the American Dream (Robles, 2006: 16). Throughout its history, desegregation has been debatable matter. "(I)deology that lay behind public schooling…served to make public school desegregation and, later, interaction and enduring public policy issue" (Robles, 2006: 16). "They defined racial equality, and, within that particular historical moment, racial equality meant eradication legalized racial separation" (Robles, 2006: 14).

In spite of the legal victory in court, Brown did little to change the practice of desegregation throughout the United States. Robles argues that "the resistance to implementing desegregation decided in Brown was a reaction to the Moral and Moderate Civil Rights movement, in that this movement attempted wholesale social change through legal channels and non-violent means" (Robeles, 2006: 17). Because of the reluctance of whites to give up privileges given to them by virtue of their race and the incompatibility of Civil Rights law, Civil Rights activists necessitated a call for more radical definitions of Brown decision (Robeles, 2006: 15).

> …(D)segregation is now framed as a "duty to take affirmative steps toward integration" as opposed to a "constitutional duty to desegregate." …The Supreme Court was forced to find a way to enforce racial integration that afforded all students, across race, equal educational opportunities (Robles, 2006: 21-22).

Having this call behind, the New Republican Party attacked traditional liberalism for supporting race-conscious remedies (Robeles, 2006: 18). They were successfully reconstructed Civil Rights demands for their own political purposes, and seeded a neoconservative backlash against race-based policies. This was the historical point at which desegregation began to be called integration, precisely

meaning affirmative efforts to integrate, and was "defined by the Supreme Court as the achievement of racial balance and not simply the eradication of racial barriers (Robeles, 2006: 21).

The framing of these affirmative policies as entitlements is what may have caused the tide to turn against race/color barrier. With these policies emphasizing and rearticulating categories by race/color differentiation, these eventually results in reverse discrimination. "(T)he shift to race consciousness in desegregation policy directly linked desegregation to affirmative action policy" (Robeles, 2006: 23). The 1960s ends with the rise of neo-conservatism which refurbishes the meanings of racial discrimination and equality in order to achieve conservative political goals.

Integration to Positioning

The social movements in this period redefined racism and racial inequality believing that racial equality would only take place if the actual structures of society were reversed. The racial minority movements set the stage for the racial reaction which first appeared in the late 1960s, grew and developed in 1970s, reached maturity in the 1980s was the time conservatives argued to stop "throwing good money after bad" (Omi & Winant, 1994: 116). Many of these complaints had racial subtexts. "'Racial' issues became central to the agenda of those forces and projects seeking a rightward realignment in U.S. politics. The far right, the new right, and neo-conservatism reopened the 1960s debates about racial identity and racial equality, and questioned once more the role of racial issues in the democratic political process (Omi & Winant, 1994: 116).

The Affirmative Action was ordered by President Johnson in 1965 because he thought Supreme Court decision on desegregation is not strong enough. He implemented this action aiming to end ongoing discrimination. Both judicial and political agendas had set their goals in ending discrimination against African Americans.

In 1969 Nixon became a president and the Modern Civil Rights Era provided ground for the coming "Co-optation of Civil Rights Era." The Republican Party during the Regan presidency signaled the end of unambiguous federal support for civil rights policies and a resulting shift away from race and race-conscious policies (Robles, 2006: 23). "Throughout the 1970s, and especially in 1980s... the Republicans mastered a language and party platform that touted equal opportunity and also eradicated race from their political rhetoric" (Edshall & Edshall, 1992: 139).

This interpretation of affirmative action soon leads to movement by majority to end affirmative action because this race-conscious policy discriminates the majority. The racial reaction that developed claimed to favor racial equality, this new justice is thought to be granting new privilege that of preferential treatment (Omi & Winant,

1994: 117). Through invoking merit and equality, the neoconservative framing of race-conscious policies has led to a backlash from whites, creating argument that social struggle of the majority caused by the minority prioritized welfare policies. Neo-conservatives found the way to attack Civil Rights programs by criticizing that these are unfair and discriminatory toward groups not included in these policies.

Prejudice and Fear of Being Taken Their Place

Shaping racial hierarchy is the process which the members of the both sides need to agree upon. The ideas of racial hierarchy are created through long social and historical process of group positioning. To extend Blumer's theory, those minority groups also take on the group positioning by the dominant group and follow the ideas of racial prejudice. The racial hierarchy is created by the dominant group; however, it also influences the understanding of each other among minority group members.

Ironically, the authorities of the bottom of the racial hierarchy accept their position. It is a case presented in a 1945 book entitled *Black Metropolis*. In *it*, Drake and Cayton argue that the discriminative line which separates two racial groups (the "color-line") is accepted by the African American communal authorities. They state, "Residential segregation is not only supported by the attitudes of white people who object to Negro neighbors-it is also buttressed by the internal structure of the Negro community... (African American) politicians, businessmen, preachers and civic leaders) all have a vested interest in maintaining a solid and homogeneous Negro community where their clientele is easily accessible" (Drake & Cayton, 1945: 586).

The acceptance of the racial prejudice stops one to go beyond the discriminative stereotyping. Minority groups are being oppressed and exploited by the dominant groups and unable to escape from discrimination. As argued, race prejudice is a way of group positioning rather than individualistic feeling toward one another. Blumer states, "race prejudice exists basically in a sense of group position rather than in a set of feelings which members of one racial group have toward the members of another racial group" (Blumer, 1984: 679).

Overall prejudice of minority as being subordinate to dominant majority group brings the feeling that their group positioning line is broken and another racial group invades to "steal their resources". This explains the reason why minority groups fear the material competition and express hatred toward other racial groups. The members of majority groups believe that over the years the outside groups desire greater share of economic capital or political power which once belong to the in-group.

Martin Blumer states, "a fear and suspicion that the subordinate race harbors designs on the prerogatives of the dominant race" is present in race prejudice in the dominant group (Blumer, 1984:680). "(T)he fear that the subordinate racial group will threaten the position of the dominant group", "the dominant racial group of

being naturally superior or better" and "the feeling on the part of the dominant group of being entitled to either exclusive or prior rights in many important areas of life" are the examples (Blumer, 1984: 680).

The many urban riots that exploded throughout the nation also signified African American frustration and anger. Those urban rioting and the Black nationalist movement ironically allowed the conservative political establishment to cast them as ungrateful beneficiaries of Civil Rights era programs exampled by school desegregation (Robles, 2006: 19). Robles points out that "…regarding public school desegregation as well as affirmative action, blacks were cast as the ungrateful beneficiaries of policies that proffered "preferential treatment" to racial minorities (Robles, 2006: 19). "(T)he ideological change shifted the meaning of racial equality to signify the demise of education policies to remedy racial inequality" (Robles, 2006: 24).

Despite of their color-blind claims, neoconservatives used coded language that implicitly racialized the groups who benefited from such race-conscious policies (Robles, 2006: 19). African Americans were redefined and no longer considered as victims of racial discrimination as the way in the early 1960s. "In this post-Civil Rights era, racial equality was rearticulated such that it came to mean the absence of institutional or legal discrimination without any meaningful structural or societal change occurring" (Robles, 2006: 20).

Maybe, silent majority are abundant supply of votes but in the same time are the trajectories of democracy, who are implacable of diversity or enthusiastic supporters of racial despotism but they started to be vocal because a President, the power put forth on stigmatization on people with color, such as by suspending entry of American Muslims reasoning detrimental to the interests or security of the United States. The fundamental problem causing recent backlash of silent majority against ethnic minorities is the mixture of authorized systematic racism and contemporary deprivation. Existing ethnocentrism and new rise of neo-conservative xenophobia together fanned the flames of ill feeling against minorities. And that is not a new political tactic as we seen in the shifting debate of "equality" of racial divided people of the United States.

Conclusion

Mass media portrayed Trump supporters as alienated white underclass people whose unfortunate status is caused by immigrants and racial minorities who are believed to be given favorable treatment by the government. Silent majority, the "forgotten" white people are said to be politically awakened in order to make their voice heard became the mass media analytical focus.

The fundamental problem causing recent backlash of silent majority against ethnic minorities is the mixture of systematic racism and contemporary deprivation.

Existing ethnocentrism and new rise of neo-conservative xenophobia together fanned the flames of ill feeling against minorities. Racial despotism or policies of minority extirpation appealing to overall White majority is a long used neoconservative project. Racial despotism and policies of minority extirpation appealing to White majority is a continuance phenomenon used from the 1960s. Neoconservative aimed with the still dominant social paradigm of equality theory, were able to carry on. They are able to rearticulate "silent majority," the word originally used by President Nixon.

This research note aimed to grasp the reason behind "silent majority" support of Donald Trump in election 2016, by following the changing argumentation surrounding the concept of "equality" and race/color in the U.S. society from the 1960s to 2016 and how that reflected in mass media news reports. Based on the analytical focus of the transformation of "equality" and construction of "silent majority," the main voters of Donald Trump, this research concludes today, as in the past, race/color based politics and mass media reports are not only assuming the dividing minority groups but resulted in failing to capture why Donald Trump attract the overall White majority.

The crux of my work is not wholly about following the changes in argumentation surrounding color/race in different arenas, but it is about examining the way that American politics has been concentrated on race/color. Although it is clear that each minority groups share the fear and threat over who holds more economic capital and who does not. The important point we need emphasis here is that the share of the material, economic, and political resources among minority groups are little compare to the share of the dominant group. The limitation of those resources accelerates the competition and hostility among minority groups.

NOTES

1. "How Trump won: White Working Class Voters Motivated by Fear of Immigrants Not Economic Woes" by Jason Le Miere, *Newsweek*, September 5, 2017. Retrieved January 15, 2018, from http://www.newsweek.com/trump-voters-immigration-working-class- 60 5930

2. "Truth of enthusiastic Trump supporter—White working class 'Hillbilly'" by Yukari Watanabe, *The News Week Japan*, November 4, 2016. Retrieved January 15, 2018, from http://www.newsweekjapan.jp/watanabe/2016/11/post-26_3.php.

3. My article (Niijima, 2017) explains social conservatism in the US – where does it come from and how does it gain social influence over decades to support the assumption that the rise of Trump highlights the divided nation even greater.

4. "Why Trump won: Working-class Whites" by Nate Cohn, *The New York Times*,

Novem ber 10, 2016. Retrieved January 15, 2018, from http://www.nytimes. com/2016/11/10/up shot/why- trump-won-working-class-whites.html

5. "Most Americans say Trump's election has led to worse race relations in the U.S.", *Pew Research Center*, December 19, 2017. Retrieved January 12, 2018, from http:// www. pe -ople -press.org/2017/ 12/19/most-americans-say-trumps-election-has-led-to-worse-race- relations-in-the-u-s/

6. "How Donald Trump courted White Americans to victory" by Matthew Cooper, *Newswe -ek*, November 9, 2016. Retrieved January 19, 2018, from http://europe. newsweek. com/ donald-trump-white-working-class-voters-ele-ction-2016-519095?rm=eu

7. J. D. Vance says, "This was about more than finances and the macro economical problem. As a culture, working -class white Americans like myself had no heroes. We loved the military but had no George S Patton figure in the modern army. I doubt my neighbors could even name a high-ranking military officer. The space programme, long a source of pride, had gone the way of the dodo and with it the celebrity astronauts. We had lost any trust in the media as guardians of truth and consequently many were willing to believe all manner of conspiracies about our allegedly foreign-born president and his supposed grabs for power" in "How Donald Trump seduced America's white working class" *The Guardian*, August 15, 2017. Retrieved January 19, 2018, from https://www. theguardian. com/commentisfree/2016/sep/10/jd-vance-hillbilly-elegy-donald-trump-us-white-poor-working-class

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