

The Road to Impeachment: Donald Trump

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Abstract

Purpose: Comparing Trump's presidency with that of the presidents before him who were impeached and evaluating his prospects of impeachment.

Methodology: Databases such as EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, and ProQuest were used for conducting the literature review regarding the United States political climate.

Findings: There are similarities in the leadership of Trump and other impeached presidents. For instance, both President Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton were impeached due to allegations of obstruction of justice and perjury, which Trump is also accused of. Due to the racial discrimination against blacks, the misappropriation of power, and the degrading of females by Trump, among others, the president has a high probability of being impeached.

Implications: The issues faced by the United States republic over several years have led to the current status of the country's socio-political and economic destabilization. For instance, racial discrimination of people of color by Trump has resulted in their alienation from matters regarding economic development.

Introduction

Over a long period, the United States government has been faced with various challenges under the leadership of different presidents. Some leaders were able to form collaborations with varied outside sources in efforts to resolve the issues, while others worsened the situation by hesitating to seek support from neighboring countries. The objective of this paper is to provide an overview of the history of the United States in regard to issues such as the impeachment process and, particularly, the withdrawal of power from the president, as well as other matters that surround the Trump administration. Donald Trump's dislike for non-Caucasians, his misappropriation of power and duties, his use of holes in the Constitution, and his degradation of women have been discussed in detail in the paper. Additionally, the Saturday Night Massacre of Richard Nixon's term and the events that led to the firing of the FBI director who was investigating Trump's illegal actions have been described and compared.

Search Strategy

A comprehensive literature review was carried out to gather evidence regarding the political history of the United States. Various databases were searched to gather evidence regarding the United States government under the administration of various presidents including Bill Clinton, Richard Nixon, and Donald Trump. The databases include EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, and ProQuest. Both the inclusion and exclusion evaluative criteria were applied to establish the suitability and validity of the selected articles. The inclusion criteria entailed all articles written in full text and in the English language only. In addition, the articles were from scholarly and peer-reviewed journals. On the contrary, the exclusion criteria was comprised of all articles that were not in full text and not written in English.

A number of keywords were used in the search strategy because they were closely linked to the journal's research questions. The words included the process of impeachment in the US, impeachment of President Richard Nixon, impeachment of Bill Clinton, impeachment of Donald Trump, the Saturday Night Massacre, Watergate, black lives matter, holes in the Constitution, cultural racism in the US, and Comey's dismissal. A total of 92,492 articles were generated from the search. Among them, only 6,001 were retained because they met the inclusion criteria.

Bipartisan Agreement to "Impeach"

Impeachment is among the four key reasons that force a president to be removed from office in the United States [1]. The other main reasons include bribery, treason, and conviction. The process of impeachment involves seven main steps that must be followed to successfully remove an elected government representative from office. The first step includes investigation of charges presented against the government official. In this case, an independent counsel or the Department of Justice is given the responsibility of conducting the investigation and presenting findings to the House Judiciary Committee (HJC) [1,2], which oversees the next several steps. The second step involves reviewing evidence, and the third step includes drafting articles of impeachment. The fourth step entails debating articles of impeachment within the HJC, and then the fifth step requires a debate of the articles by the entire House of Representatives [1].

In the sixth step, the Senate holds a trial on whether or not the official will be removed from office [1,2]. During this crucial step, HJC acts as the prosecutor by presenting evidence against the accused. The accused then seeks lawyers who will present for the defense. The Senate acts as the jury, while the Chief Justice (CJ) of the United States

Supreme Court judges and rules on receiving evidence. The seventh step requires that at least a two-thirds majority of the Senate must vote against the accused in order to have fairly impeached the person [2]. Only three presidents have been impeached in the history of the United States. The three include former President Andrew Johnson, Bill Clinton, and Richard Nixon [1]. Bill Clinton and Andrew Johnson were impeached but later cleared and maintained their positions in office, while Nixon decided to resign to avoid impeachment proceedings [3].

In 1998, the impeachment of President Clinton by the House of Representative followed the allegations of obstruction of justice and perjury [4]. The two accusations were based on a sexual harassment lawsuit filed against the president by Paula Jones. Clinton was also charged with a second perjury and abuse of power lawsuit in a case that was also filed by Jones. However, only the first two charges passed, while the other two failed; a second count of perjury in the Jones case, and one accusing the President of power abuse [4].

Clinton's trial by the United States Senate began after the 106th Congress seating, and a two-thirds vote was required to remove him from office [4]. Only 45 senators voted for removal of Clinton following the perjury charge, while 50 voted to have him removed on the charge of obstruction of justice. None of the Democratic Party members voted guilty to either charge against the president, and, as a result, Clinton was subsequently acquitted on all charges. Similarly in a previous era, President Andrew Johnson was impeached in the year 1868 following charges against violation of the Tenure of Office Act that had been initially passed by Congress [4,5].

On the other hand, President Richard Nixon opted to resign amidst the impeachment process against him, which was initiated in 1974 [3]. President Nixon was charged with crimes and misdemeanors mainly related to the Watergate scandal. The accusations involved contempt of Congress, abuse of power, and obstruction of justice [3]. Nixon, however, resigned to avoid a forcible removal from office because he knew that he did not have the "not guilty" votes to remain in office, unlike Clinton who believed that he could get the votes [3].

According to Riley [1], President Trump risks impeachment due to five charges filed against him. The charges include obstruction of the administration of justice; poor handling of his finances and real estate holdings; violation of Article II, Section 1, of the United States Constitution; and seeking to undermine the independence of the federal judiciary by criticizing judges who ruled against him. In addition, the president was also accused of attempting to challenge the freedom of the press provided by the First Amendment to the Constitution [4].

Trump's Dislike for Non-Caucasians

Trump's dislike for non-Caucasians or non-whites is evident when he embraces racism in words or actions [6]. President Trump has been involved in a number of incidences that prove that he is a racist, often discriminating against black people. His actions also portray that he is a racist, though he publicly condemns racism as evil. Among Trump's actions that reveal his racist nature include selecting top advisors with histories of prejudice, taking a long period of time to denounce the white supremacists who advocated for him, and his denial of being involved in racist incidences following his election [7]. Trump was especially hesitant to denounce the former KKK leader David Duke, who publicly claimed that failure to vote for Trump would be treason of one's own heritage.

It is also claimed that the Department of Justice sued Trump's company for racial discrimination against African-Americans while managing his family's real estate company, the Trump Management Corporation [8]. It is alleged that the justice department sued the company twice for discriminating against African-Americans who wished to rent apartments in the Staten Island, Queens, and Brooklyn regions of New York City [7].

Trump's racist nature was also portrayed when he consistently questioned whether Barrack Obama was born in the United States because he believed that Obama was an illegitimate president. In addition, during the 2015 presidential election rally in Alabama, Trump encouraged the mob that beat the Black Lives Matter protester [6,9]. The incident involved physical attacks on an African-American protester by Trump's supporters. The protester was chanting "black lives matter" during the rally when he was viciously assaulted. Talking about the incidence, the president claimed that the beating was justified because he believes that the "Black Lives Matter" movement lacks legal policy grievances [9].

Saturday Night Massacre

During President Richard Nixon's tenure, the Saturday Night Massacre was created by efforts to fire Archibald Cox, which led to the resignations of Elliot Richardson and William Ruckelshaus [10]. Nixon ordered the firing of Cox in 1973, who had initially served as a special prosecutor in the Nixon administration's justice department. He had been appointed to investigate the break-in by Republican operatives at the Watergate Hotel that occurred in 1972. Cox was offered the summaries of tapes that had recordings of conversations between Nixon and White House Officials [11].

However, Cox ordered the actual tapes from Nixon because he was dissatisfied with the summaries alone. Nixon failed to comply with the issued subpoena and opted to fire Cox. President Nixon asked Attorney General Elliot Richardson to fire Cox. However, Richardson refused to comply with Nixon's order and instead decided to resign from his position. Richardson's position was assumed by the Deputy Attorney General William Ruckelshaus, who was also reluctant to fire Cox and opted for resignation [11]. Cox was later fired by Solicitor General Robert Bork who had been appointed as the acting Attorney General. Bork also ordered the closure of the special prosecutor's offices and requested transfer of its responsibilities to the Department of Justice.

Trump, Like Nixon, Develops Scare Tactics to Hold the Press at Bay

President Trump rarely appreciates the role played by the press in keeping citizens updated about current news events [12] and in raising public awareness regarding issues of national importance. Despite the fact that the press is an essential tool in communicating agendas to the public, the president does not value speaking with the press, and he only does so when circumstances force him to address the press [12].

Trump often feels that the press creates tension among government leaders and presidents with the desire to influence the public and shape political messages due to the freedom bestowed on it [12]. As a result, the president often develops a number of strategies to keep the press at bay during public events to avoid interference. For instance, the president avoids hosting state dinners in order to prevent the press from attending the meetings for interviews.

Ethical Misappropriation of Power and Duties as President

According to Kane [7], Trump is an enemy of business in Washington and a disrupter of the status quo. The president rarely participates in activities aimed at solving the numerous problems existing in the social structure and values of the nation. One of the instances in which the president proved to be against business development in the United States involved the rejection of an international agreement that was meant to limit climate change. Nearly 200 countries were involved in the development and support of the Paris accord of 2015. However, Trump rejected the United States involvement in the plan because he believed that the accord would negatively affect the nation's economy [7].

Trump argued that involvement in the pact would put the country's sovereignty at risks of future intrusion and liability. Trump's policy decision of rejecting the international agreement was proof that he would be the first president to take on the Washington establishment and dispute conformist thinking [7]. Failure to collaborate with the 200 countries in the climate change deal upset the elites of the Washington capital. The president also upset the elites by setting a budget plan that involves massive investment in minor projects, thereby limiting the development of essential environmental programs [7]. President Trump is also in disagreement with a number of people in the foreign policy establishment due to his intention of renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement [7].

Holes in the Constitution

The United States Constitution has various areas that need to be fixed to correct inconsistencies as well as address issues that have never been considered before [13]. For instance, citizens have never been educated on what would happen in government if the vice president is impeached. Article I, Section 3 (Senate), Clause 6, clearly states the following:

The Senate shall have the sole power to try all Impeachments. When sitting for that purpose, they shall be on oath or affirmation. When the President of the US is tried, the CJ shall preside: And no person shall be convicted without the concurrence of two-thirds of the members present [13].

Conversely, Clause 3 of the same section states that The Vice President of the US shall be President of the Senate, but shall have no vote, unless they be equally divided. In this case, if the vice president was to be impeached, he would preside over himself [13].

There should be an amendment to fix Article I, Section 3, Clause 6, where in Clause 6 and 3 ought to be combined in order to maintain consistency. In an attempt to fix the problem of impeachment of the vice president by amending the Constitution, Amendment XXII, Section 1, should be considered [13]. The amendment states the following:

No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice, and no person who has held the office of President, or acted as President, for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected President shall be elected to the office of the President more than once [13].

Like Clinton, Trump has Openly Degraded Females

Bill Clinton was accused of having several affairs with women before and during his presidency. Clinton often boasted openly on how he had good taste in women. Among the women that Clinton was alleged to have had sexual affairs with include former Miss Arkansas, Lencola Sullivan; former Miss America, Elizabeth Ward Gracen; and Jennifer Flowers with whom he had a 12-year relationship [14].

There are several instances where President Trump has shown disrespect to women and openly degraded them. The way in which Trump often talks about women and the manner in which he treats them is a clear indication that he views women as sex objects [14]. Trump has always bragged about how he is attracted to beautiful women. Most of his comments are dehumanizing to women because he portrays ladies as being basically useful due to their sexual appeal [14]. According to Trump, the ability of women to be "first rate" is based on how readily their physical appearances astound his friends. Trump often views young, white, and slim women as sex objects who appeal to him. On the contrary, he dismisses those with stout and portly bodies as "dogs" and "pigs" because he feels they are sexually unattractive [14]. The president has often made comments sexualizing his own daughter's body and physical appearance and flaunts the fact that his daughter is beautiful and sexually appealing.

Trump believes that men do not have to be physically attractive or neatly dressed, because they are only valued based on their achievements and money [14]. The president argues that women are obliged to gain access to men's money by making themselves attractive enough in order to be noticed by men with power and resources, who in turn ask for sex in exchange for their wealth. However, the men have the authority to leave their model-like companions if they get bored with them or are attracted to other women [14]. Trump managed to win the highest governmental position in the United States, even though his misogyny was apparent, and it has often been encouraged by the press, the entertainment media, and business associates.

Like Nixon, Trump Fired the FBI Director Who Was Investigating His Illegal Actions

In 1973, Nixon fired the FBI director who was investigating his presidential campaign [12]. Archibald Cox was the director who Robert Bork fired following the Saturday Night Massacre. Cox was investigating the break-in at the Democratic National Committee's headquarters in the Watergate office in Washington, D.C., where Nixon and his associates were alleged to have been involved [12]. Like Nixon, President Trump also unexpectedly fired FBI Director James Comey, who had been requested to investigate ties between the Trump campaign and Russia [15]. Comey was investigating whether Trump's directors and advisors had collaborated with the Russian government to interfere with the outcome of the presidential election in 2016.

Comey learned of his firing when he noted television screens displaying the news while addressing bureau employees in Los Angeles [15,16]. Later, a letter from Trump was delivered to him in the FBI Headquarters in Washington. Trump explained the firing was due to Comey's handling of the investigation, and he mentioned that Comey had interfered with Hillary Clinton's private email server during the investigation [16]. However, some FBI officials said that the dismissal of Comey was mainly influenced by Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Deputy Attorney General Rod J Rosenstein.

Comey was four years into a ten-year term in office when he was fired. The FBI head was only the third director to be fired from office in history, after William Sessions was dismissed in 1993 by Bill Clinton [15]. The firing of Comey enraged FBI agents who generally liked his leadership, and most of the agents recognized Comey as an independent director and good manager. The FBI agents were worried that Trump would be forced to appoint any White House official to lead them following Comey's dismissal [15,17].

Conclusion

The political climate of the United States including issues affecting democracy within the country is important factors to its own citizens and the world. Among the issues addressed in the paper include the process of impeachment in the United States government, and a discussion of three former presidents, Richard Nixon, Bill Clinton, and Andrew Johnston, as well as the current president, Donald Trump. They have been discussed in detail in relation to impeachment proceedings. Additionally, various incidences that prove Trump's dislike for non-Caucasians have been identified and discussed, which clearly indicate that the President of the United States supports racism.

The Saturday Night Massacre has been described in detail. The event involved the intended firing of Archibald Cox and the resignations of Richardson and Ruckelshaus during President Nixon's term in office. Conversely, scare strategies applied by Trump in holding the press at bay have been discussed. Instances have been identified and explained regarding Trump's demonstrated misappropriation of power and duties, depicting him as an enemy of business and a disrupter of the status quo. Various areas that need to be fixed in the United States Constitution have been mentioned, as well as proposed recommendations that would ensure closure of the holes.

In addition, incidences have been described that show how President Trump has openly degraded women, particularly by viewing them as sex objects. The last section of the paper provides a description on how Trump fired FBI Director James Comey, who was investigating his illegal actions, including interference in the 2016 presidential election outcome.

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