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Original Research

The Technocratic Monarchist Movement in America: Theoretical Dimensions and Political Impacts

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The technocratic monarchist movement in America, also known as Neoreaction (NRx), is one of the emerging intellectual trends in the country's contemporary politics. Rooted in criticism of liberal democracy, this movement proposes that governance should be led not by public voting but by technocratic elites and a powerful sovereign. This article examines the historical and theoretical foundations of Neoreaction, its impacts on American politics, and its connections to tech elites and figures such as Donald Trump. Using qualitative research methods and content analysis of credible sources, the key perspectives of thinkers in this movement—particularly Curtis Yarvin—are explored, along with their influence on shaping American conservative policies.

Keywords: *Neoreaction, Technocratic Monarchism, Authoritarianism, Silicon Valley, Donald Trump*

1. Introduction

The Neoreactionary movement (NRx), often referred to as the "Dark Enlightenment," has emerged as a radical and intellectually provocative force that fundamentally challenges the core principles of liberal democracy. Originating primarily within the elite technological circles of Silicon Valley, this movement advocates for a profound restructuring of political governance. It promotes the replacement of democratic systems—characterized by popular participation, electoral competition, and pluralism—with a technocratic monarchist model. In this envisioned system, a sovereign "CEO-monarch," supported by a cadre of unelected experts and technocrats, wields centralized authority, governing society through a combination of pre-modern hierarchical structures and advanced algorithmic management.

NRx critiques democracy as inherently flawed, arguing that democratic governance is inefficient, unstable, and ultimately unsustainable in the face of contemporary social and technological challenges. Proponents contend that democracy's emphasis on equality and mass participation leads to bureaucratic inertia, cultural decay, and political fragmentation. Instead, they propose a fusion of traditional authority—such as monarchy or aristocracy—with cutting-edge technological governance, including artificial intelligence and data-driven decision-making, to create a more stable and effective political order.

The influence of this movement has transcended its initial online and intellectual confines, permeating mainstream American politics. Notable figures such as venture capitalist Peter Thiel and political actor J.D. Vance have openly engaged with NRx ideas, and elements of the movement's philosophy have found expression in policies and administrative reforms during

the Trump administration. This convergence raises urgent questions about the resilience and adaptability of democratic institutions in the United States, especially as technocratic and authoritarian tendencies gain traction within conservative political currents.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive examination of the Neoreactionary movement by exploring its intellectual genealogy and theoretical frameworks, analyzing its impact on American conservatism and policy design, and identifying structural vulnerabilities within democratic systems that facilitate the appeal of NRx. Through this analysis, the study seeks to illuminate the challenges posed by technocratic monarchism to the future of democratic governance.

2. Literature Review

The academic literature on the Neoreactionary movement (NRx) reveals a complex and multifaceted intellectual phenomenon that has increasingly attracted the attention of political scientists, sociologists, historians, and scholars of extremism. As a radical critique of liberal democracy and modern egalitarianism, NRx occupies a distinct and influential position within the broader spectrum of right-wing political ideologies. Its emergence and growing influence have prompted extensive scholarly inquiry into its theoretical foundations, sociopolitical implications, and connections to contemporary political movements, particularly within the alt-right ecosystem.

2.1. Neoreaction's Place within the Alt-Right

A significant body of research situates Neoreaction as a foundational intellectual current within the alt-right movement. It can be argued that the Dark Enlightenment—often used interchangeably with Neoreaction—represents "the most significant political theory within the alt-right" and is essential for understanding the ideological underpinnings of contemporary right-wing activism. This perspective highlights that NRx is not merely a fringe online subculture but a coherent and influential political philosophy that informs broader alt-right strategies and narratives.

The alt-right's emphasis on racial hierarchy, anti-globalism, and cultural traditionalism resonates with NRx's rejection of democratic egalitarianism and its advocacy for hierarchical governance. However, Neoreaction distinguishes itself through its sophisticated engagement with technology, cybernetics, and accelerationism, providing a techno-philosophical framework to its reactionary politics. This blend of reactionary social theory and technological determinism marks NRx as a unique phenomenon within right-wing political thought.

2.2. Ideological Characterizations and Accelerationism

Burrows (2018) offers a critical characterization of Neoreaction as "hyper-neoliberal, technologically deterministic, anti-democratic, anti-egalitarian, pro-eugenicist, racist and, likely, fascist." This framing situates NRx within a broader accelerationist political framework, which advocates for the intensification of capitalism and technological development to precipitate radical social and political transformation. Accelerationism, in the context of NRx, is not merely a call for faster technological progress but a strategic embrace of destabilization designed to dismantle democratic institutions and usher in a new order governed by technocratic elites (Burrows, 2018).

Further deepening this analysis, Dimitrakaki and Weeks (2019) link the Dark Enlightenment to neofascism through what they term Land's "capitalist eschatology." This concept envisions an inevitable collapse of democratic liberalism, followed by the rise of a hierarchical, racially stratified society governed by techno-capitalist elites. Dimitrakaki and Weeks argue that this eschatological vision is undergirded by supremacist theories echoing classical fascist ideologies, thereby situating NRx within a continuum of far-right extremist thought (Dimitrakaki & Weeks, 2019).

2.3. Technocracy and the Valorization of Expertise

A crucial dimension of the literature focuses on Neoreaction's relationship to technocracy and the valorization of expertise. Bertsou and Caramani (2022) provide empirical insights into technocratic attitudes, demonstrating that support for expert-led governance often correlates with democratic deficits and authoritarian tendencies. Their research suggests that populations with higher trust in technical expertise may simultaneously exhibit skepticism toward democratic participation, favoring governance models that prioritize

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efficiency and expertise over electoral accountability (Bertsou & Caramani, 2022).

This finding is particularly relevant to understanding NRx's appeal among Silicon Valley elites and technologically oriented professionals predisposed to favor algorithmic and data-driven governance solutions. The movement's advocacy for a "CEO-monarch" and neocameralist governance reflects this technocratic ethos, wherein political authority is concentrated in the hands of unelected experts who manage society as a corporate enterprise.

2.4. Silicon Valley's Political Influence and Mainstreaming of Fringe Ideologies

The political influence of Silicon Valley provides essential context for the rise and dissemination of Neoreactionary ideas. Duhigg (2024) and subsequent analysis by WBUR (Chakrabarti & Segal, 2024) describe Silicon Valley as having become "the most powerful lobbying force in American politics" and highlight how "tech, money and politics is making Silicon Valley tech titans the most powerful people in America." (Duhigg, 2024)

Through venture capital funding, media ownership, and strategic political donations, Silicon Valley elites have facilitated the mainstreaming of previously fringe ideologies, including NRx. Figures such as Peter Thiel have openly supported Neoreactionary thinkers and candidates, bridging the gap between online intellectual movements and institutional politics. This nexus of technology, capital, and politics has allowed NRx to transcend its initial marginality and exert tangible influence on conservative policy agendas, particularly during the Trump administration.

2.5. Multidisciplinary Perspectives and Research Gaps

The literature on Neoreaction spans multiple disciplines, including political theory, sociology, history, and media studies, reflecting the movement's complex and interdisciplinary nature. Scholars have employed qualitative content analysis, discourse analysis, and ethnographic methods to unpack NRx's ideological content and social dynamics.

However, gaps remain in the literature, particularly regarding the movement's long-term political impact, its reception among broader populations, and the

mechanisms through which its ideas diffuse from niche online communities to mainstream political institutions. Further empirical research is needed to assess how NRx shapes policy outcomes and public attitudes, as well as its potential to influence democratic resilience or erosion.

3. Theoretical Foundations

3.1. Historical Intellectual Roots

The Neoreactionary movement (NRx) is deeply rooted in a diverse set of intellectual traditions that predate its contemporary digital emergence. Unlike mainstream political ideologies that embrace progressive narratives of history, NRx explicitly rejects "Whig historiography"—the belief that history is a linear progression toward greater freedom, democracy, and enlightenment. Instead, the movement advocates a return to pre-democratic governance models, emphasizing hierarchy, order, and centralized authority. This rejection aligns NRx with a broader reactionary tradition that critiques modernity's liberal values while simultaneously integrating modern technological and cybernetic concepts.

One of the foundational philosophical influences on NRx is "Thomas Hobbes", whose theory of absolute sovereignty resonates strongly with the movement's preference for a powerful, centralized ruler or "CEO-monarch." Hobbes's "Leviathan" (1651) argued that to avoid the chaos of the state of nature, individuals must cede their rights to an absolute sovereign who maintains order and security. Neoreactionaries reinterpret this social contract as a justification for dismantling democratic pluralism in favor of technocratic autocracy, where decision-making is concentrated in a single executive authority supported by expert administrators. In addition to Hobbesian political philosophy, NRx draws heavily from "Austrian School economics", particularly the writings of "Hans-Hermann Hoppe". Hoppe's anarcho-capitalist and libertarian critiques of the state include a controversial advocacy for a feudalistic end-state in which private property owners exercise sovereign control over their domains. This vision of decentralized yet hierarchical governance appeals to NRx's anti-democratic and anti-egalitarian ethos, blending free-market principles with a rejection of mass political participation.

The movement's technological orientation is profoundly shaped by "accelerationist philosophy", especially the work of "Nick Land" during his tenure at the University of Warwick's Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (CCRU). Land's early writings explored the dynamic interplay between capitalism, technology, and social transformation, arguing that accelerating technological and economic processes would inevitably outpace and dismantle existing political structures. This techno-capitalist accelerationism provides NRx with a theoretical framework that justifies radical disruption of democratic institutions in favor of a post-democratic, algorithmically managed society.

3.2.   The Cathedral Theory

A central theoretical construct within Neoreactionary thought is "Curtis Yarvin's "Cathedral" theory", which offers a systemic critique of contemporary liberal institutions. Yarvin conceptualizes the Cathedral as an informal but powerful alliance of academia, mainstream media, and government bureaucracies that collectively uphold and propagate progressive ideology. According to Yarvin, this alliance functions as a self-reinforcing ideological apparatus that maintains its dominance by defining and enforcing a "progressive orthodoxy," while systematically marginalizing dissenting or heterodox viewpoints (Yarvin, 2013).

The Cathedral theory transcends traditional conservative critiques of media bias or academic partisanship by framing these phenomena as symptoms of a deeper structural hegemony. It draws implicitly on Antonio Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony, which describes how dominant groups maintain power not only through coercion but through control of cultural and ideological institutions. However, Yarvin redirects this framework toward a right-wing critique, arguing that the Cathedral's ideological control is a form of authoritarianism that undermines genuine intellectual diversity and political pluralism (Yarvin, 2013).

The appeal of the Cathedral theory lies in its explanatory power for individuals who feel alienated or disenfranchised by mainstream political and intellectual institutions. By attributing their marginalization to systemic institutional bias rather than personal failure or flawed ideas, the theory offers both a diagnosis and a justification for anti-institutional and anti-democratic sentiments. This framework helps to galvanize support for NRx's call to dismantle existing democratic structures and replace them with hierarchical, technocratic governance.

3.3.   Neocameralism and the CEO-Monarch Model

Building on these intellectual foundations, Yarvin proposes "neocameralism", a governance model inspired by corporate structures. In this model, the state is conceptualized as a joint-stock corporation, with a CEO-monarch at its helm who exercises sovereign authority akin to a corporate executive. Citizens are viewed as shareholders or customers, and governance is oriented toward efficiency, order, and profit maximization rather than democratic representation (Yarvin, 2013).

This model rejects the legitimacy of electoral democracy and separation of powers, advocating instead for centralized control by a rational, technocratic elite. The CEO-monarch is accountable primarily to shareholders (or, in some interpretations, to the market) rather than to the electorate. This approach reflects the movement's broader skepticism toward mass political participation and its embrace of "technocracy" as a superior form of governance.

3.4.   Cybernetic Governance and Algorithmic Control

Another modern dimension of NRx's theoretical framework is its embrace of "cybernetic governance", the application of systems theory, feedback loops, and algorithmic control to political administration. Drawing on the work of cybernetics pioneers like Norbert Wiener, NRx theorists envision a society where governance is optimized through data-driven decision-making and automated systems that minimize human error and political conflict.

This vision aligns with broader trends in "digital authoritarianism" and "surveillance capitalism", where technological platforms and artificial intelligence play central roles in social control. For NRx, cybernetic governance promises a more efficient, stable, and scientifically managed society that transcends the messiness and unpredictability of democratic politics.

3.5.   Philosophical Critiques of Modernity and Progress

Underlying the movement's theoretical foundations is a profound "critique of modernity and Enlightenment values". NRx rejects the liberal ideals of equality,

universal suffrage, and human rights as naïve and destructive. Instead, it embraces a "pessimistic view of history" that sees social and political decay as inevitable consequences of democratic egalitarianism.

This rejection of progressivism is coupled with a "romanticization of pre-modern political orders", including monarchies, city-states, and feudal hierarchies. By idealizing these past systems, NRx attempts to offer an alternative vision of social order grounded in hierarchy, tradition, and technocratic expertise.

4.   Technocratic Governance Models

Neoreactionary political theory advocates for a radical transformation of governance by replacing democratic systems with technocratic models inspired by corporate organizational structures. This vision draws on the broader tradition of technocracy, which emerged prominently in the early 20th century amid industrialization and modernization. Historically, technocracy emphasized governance by technical experts—scientists, engineers, and economists—rather than elected politicians, aiming to improve efficiency and rationality in public administration. However, neoreactionary technocracy diverges sharply from earlier technocratic movements by explicitly rejecting the democratic legitimacy of popular sovereignty and embracing hierarchical, authoritarian authority structures.

At the core of neoreaction's governance proposal is Curtis Yarvin's concept of "neocameralism." Yarvin envisions the state as a "gov-corp"—a government functioning like a joint-stock corporation, where citizens are treated as customers and the state competes with other gov-corps for their loyalty and "market share" (Yarvin, 2013). Unlike traditional democratic states accountable to their electorates, these gov-corps would prioritize governance efficiency and profitability over democratic accountability. The governing entity would be led by a "monarch-CEO", wielding centralized and unconstrained authority, free from constitutional checks, popular oversight, or electoral competition (Yarvin, 2013).

This model represents a form of techno-authoritarianism, where technological sophistication and managerial expertise legitimize authoritarian governance. Neoreactionaries argue that technical experts possess superior knowledge and rationality, enabling them to solve complex political and social problems objectively. Consequently, democratic deliberation and mass participation are viewed as inefficient, irrational, and ultimately detrimental to effective governance (Burrows, 2018). The assumption is that algorithmic and data-driven decision-making can optimize social order, resource allocation, and policy outcomes better than elected representatives or popular assemblies.

The neocameralist model also reflects a market logic applied to political governance, where competition between gov-corps incentivizes better performance and innovation in public administration. However, critics warn that this commodification of governance risks reducing citizens to mere consumers, eroding political rights and democratic engagement. Moreover, the concentration of power in the hands of a monarch-CEO raises concerns about unchecked authoritarianism, lack of accountability, and potential abuses of power.

Historically, technocratic governance has been associated with both democratic and authoritarian regimes, but neoreaction's explicit rejection of democracy marks a significant departure. While early 20th-century technocrats often worked within democratic frameworks to improve policy-making, neoreactionaries advocate dismantling democratic institutions altogether in favor of a hierarchical, expert-driven regime. This shift reflects broader trends in digital authoritarianism, where surveillance technologies and algorithmic governance enable centralized control with reduced public scrutiny.

In sum, neoreactionary technocratic governance models propose a corporate-style, authoritarian state led by a CEO-monarch and governed by technical elites. This model prioritizes efficiency and expertise over democratic legitimacy and popular participation, embodying a vision of governance that is both technologically advanced and politically autocratic.

5.   The Movement's Key Figures and Their Influence

5.1.   Curtis Yarvin: The Philosophical Architect

Curtis Yarvin, widely known by his pen name "Mencius Moldbug", is recognized as the primary intellectual architect of contemporary neoreactionary (NRx) thought. Born in 1973 into a liberal, secular family with Jewish-American communist grandparents, Yarvin's

ideological trajectory represents a striking departure from his familial political traditions. His journey—from a Silicon Valley programmer to the philosophical godfather of anti-democratic thought—illustrates the complex interplay between technological expertise and political radicalization in the digital age (Yarvin, 2013).

Yarvin's political philosophy first emerged through his prolific blogging career, which began in 2007 with the launch of his blog "Unqualified Reservations." Over the years, this platform became a crucible for many of the core concepts that would come to define neoreactionary ideology. His writings are notable for their unique blend of technical precision, historical analysis, and philosophical rigor, combining what he terms "the modern engineering mentality" with the "great historical legacy of antique, classical, and Victorian pre-democratic thought" (Yarvin, 2013). This synthesis resonates particularly with individuals possessing technological or engineering backgrounds, who tend to interpret social and political problems through the lens of technical optimization and systems design rather than traditional political ideologies.

Central to Yarvin's philosophy is a rejection of liberal democracy and its foundational principles of egalitarianism and popular sovereignty. He critiques democratic institutions as inherently inefficient, corrupt, and unstable, arguing instead for a neocameralist governance model—a corporate-style state led by a CEO-monarch who exercises centralized, unaccountable authority (Yarvin, 2013). This model envisions governance as a business enterprise, where citizens are akin to customers or shareholders, and the government's legitimacy derives from its performance and efficiency rather than electoral consent.

The influence of Yarvin's ideas extends well beyond academic or online intellectual circles. His current newsletter, Grey Mirror, has amassed over 57,000 free subscribers (Sidestack.io), reflecting a substantial and engaged audience. More importantly, Yarvin's concepts have been explicitly endorsed by prominent political figures, most notably Vice President J.D. Vance, who has publicly acknowledged Yarvin's intellectual impact on his political thinking (Ward, 2024). This endorsement signals the movement's penetration into mainstream conservative politics.

Perhaps the most tangible evidence of Yarvin's influence is visible in the policy shifts during the Trump administration. Several initiatives, such as the mass firing of civil servants, radical restructuring of federal agencies, and efforts to centralize executive power, align closely with Yarvin's recommendations for dismantling bureaucratic inertia and replacing democratic oversight with technocratic efficiency. These policies reflect a broader embrace of neoreactionary ideas within certain elite political networks, particularly those connected to Silicon Valley and conservative political operatives.

Yarvin's role as a bridge between technological expertise and political radicalism is emblematic of a new form of intellectual leadership in the digital era. His writings not only critique existing political systems but also offer a detailed blueprint for an alternative order that fuses corporate governance models with authoritarian sovereignty. This has resonated with a generation of technologists, entrepreneurs, and political actors disillusioned with democratic governance and eager for radical reform.

Beyond Yarvin, other key figures such as Nick Land, the British philosopher credited with founding accelerationist thought, and Peter Thiel, the Silicon Valley billionaire investor, have played pivotal roles in shaping and funding the movement. Land's work on technological acceleration and post-democracy provides the philosophical underpinning for NRx's embrace of disruptive technological change as a catalyst for political transformation (Dimitrakaki & Weeks, 2019). Thiel's financial support and political activism have helped translate these ideas into tangible political influence, including backing candidates aligned with neoreactionary principles. For instance, Thiel contributed more than $10 million to super PACs supporting J.D. Vance and Blake Masters in 2021, and Business Insider notes that his "significant financial backing and connections in Silicon Valley have been pivotal in advancing Vance's career" (Business Insider, 2024; The Guardian, 2022).

In summary, Curtis Yarvin stands as the intellectual fulcrum of the neoreactionary movement, whose writings synthesize historical reactionary thought with modern technological rationalism. His ideas have transcended niche online communities to influence mainstream political discourse and policy, marking a significant development in the intersection of technology, ideology, and governance in the 21st century.

5.2. Nick Land: The Accelerationist Philosopher

Nick Land is a seminal figure in the intellectual development of the neoreactionary (NRx) movement, primarily through his formulation of the "Dark Enlightenment", a philosophical framework that lends considerable theoretical depth and sophistication to neoreactionary politics. Land's academic background in continental philosophy, particularly during his tenure at the University of Warwick where he co-founded the Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (CCRU), provided him with a rich arsenal of theoretical tools. These tools, initially developed in an academic context, were later adapted explicitly for political purposes, bridging complex philosophical thought and radical reactionary ideology (Dimitrakaki & Weeks, 2019).

Land's Dark Enlightenment manifesto, published online in 2012, systematically critiques the foundational ideals of the Enlightenment—progress, equality, and democratic governance. Drawing heavily from Nietzschean philosophy, postmodern critiques of modernity, and accelerationist theory, Land constructs a vision that some scholars have described as "Deleuzian Thatcherism" or "based Deleuze"—a fusion of post-structuralist philosophy with radical free-market authoritarianism (Burrows, 2018) This philosophical sophistication has allowed neoreactionary ideas to penetrate intellectual circles that might otherwise dismiss overtly authoritarian political theories as crude or simplistic.

Central to Land's theoretical contributions is his development of accelerationist concepts which posit that technological development is an unstoppable force that will inevitably transcend and dismantle democratic political structures. He envisions a post-singularity future wherein artificial intelligence surpasses human intelligence, rendering traditional political institutions obsolete. This vision provides a seemingly scientific and deterministic justification for abandoning democratic governance in favor of algorithmic or technocratic rule, where decision-making authority is delegated to superintelligent systems (Land, 2012).

Land's accelerationism underpins much of NRx's techno-political agenda, emphasizing the inevitability and desirability of radical social transformation driven by technological and capitalist forces. His work challenges the Enlightenment's narrative of linear progress, arguing

instead that collapse and upheaval are necessary precursors to the emergence of a new order governed by technological elites. This perspective resonates with Silicon Valley technologists and entrepreneurs who see technological innovation as a disruptive, transformative force beyond political control.

5.3. Silicon Valley Connections: Thiel, Vance, and Tech Elite Influence

The neoreactionary movement's most significant political influence arises from its deep and strategic connections with Silicon Valley elites, whose financial resources, technological platforms, and political networks have enabled the mainstreaming of NRx ideas. Among these elites, Peter Thiel stands out as a pivotal figure. Thiel's famous declaration that "I no longer believe that freedom and democracy are compatible" provides a direct ideological link between neoreactionary theory and practical political action.

Thiel's influence extends notably through his mentorship of J.D. Vance, a political figure who has openly praised Yarvin's neoreactionary work and advocated for a "de-wokification programme" that echoes core NRx themes of cultural and institutional rollback (Pogue, 2022). Vance's rise to the Vice Presidency represents the highest level of political penetration achieved by neoreactionary ideas to date, providing a direct pathway for these ideologies to influence federal policy and administrative reforms.

Beyond Thiel and Vance, other Silicon Valley figures such as Elon Musk and Marc Andreessen have demonstrated varying degrees of sympathy for neoreactionary critiques of democratic inefficiency and the preference for technocratic governance solutions. Musk's public skepticism toward democratic institutions and his embrace of disruptive technological innovation align with NRx's techno-authoritarian vision. Andreessen, a prominent venture capitalist and co-founder of Andreessen Horowitz, has also voiced support for strong executive leadership and market-driven governance models that resonate with neoreactionary principles.

The growing political influence of tech billionaires, combined with their apparent receptivity to anti-democratic ideas, has led some scholars to characterize this nexus as an emerging form of "techno-fascism"—a hybrid political order where technological power and authoritarian governance converge (Burrows, 2018).

This phenomenon raises critical questions about the future of democratic governance in an era where economic and technological elites wield unprecedented influence over political institutions and public discourse. In sum, Nick Land's accelerationist philosophy provides the intellectual backbone for the neoreactionary movement's rejection of democracy and embrace of technological determinism. Meanwhile, Silicon Valley's tech elite, led by figures such as Peter Thiel and J.D. Vance, have translated these ideas into political influence, reshaping contemporary conservative politics and governance. This alliance between radical philosophy and technological power marks a significant development in the evolving landscape of 21st-century political thought and practice.

6. Integration into Trump Administration Politics

The neoreactionary movement's influence on American politics has become most tangible through its integration into the policies and administrative practices of the Trump administration, particularly during its second term beginning in 2025. The administration's approach to governance—characterized by mass firings of career civil servants, dismantling of institutional checks and balances, and elevation of loyalist executives—bears striking resemblance to Curtis Yarvin's specific recommendations for governmental restructuring (Yarvin, 2013).

The concept of "draining the swamp," while not originating with neoreactionary thinkers, has been operationalized in ways that align closely with neoreactionary critiques of bureaucratic governance. The administration's systematic targeting of career civil servants, independent agencies, and institutional expertise reflects neoreactionary preferences for dismantling what they view as the "deep state" or "Cathedral". More than 275,000 federal civil service layoffs have been announced by the second Trump administration, representing a 12% reduction of the 2.4 million civilian federal workforce (Wikipedia, 2025). This massive restructuring echoes Yarvin's RAGE (Retire All Government Employees) , concept which advocates for a complete overhaul of the federal bureaucracy (Spiegel, 2025).

The administration's personnel decisions further illustrate this alignment with neoreactionary ideology. Key appointments favor individuals who express skepticism toward traditional democratic norms and bureaucratic independence, reinforcing a governance style characterized by loyalty to the executive and willingness to bypass institutional checks and balances. This centralization of power and erosion of institutional autonomy are consistent with neoreactionary calls for a "CEO-monarch" model of governance, where authority is concentrated in a single executive figure supported by technocratic loyalists (Burrows, 2018).

The influence of neoreactionary thought within the Trump administration is further evidenced by the prominent role of figures like J.D. Vance, who has explicitly praised Yarvin's work and advocated for a "de-wokification programme" that strikes at the heart of progressive institutions. Vance's rise to the Vice Presidency represents the highest level of political penetration achieved by neoreactionary ideas, providing a direct pathway for these ideologies to influence federal policy (New York Times, 2025) . His public statements about replacing career bureaucrats with political loyalists and dismissing judicial constraints on executive power reflect core neoreactionary principles of centralized, unaccountable governance .

Perhaps most significantly, the administration's approach to international relations demonstrates neoreactionary influence extending beyond domestic policy. The radical proposal to transform Gaza into the "Riviera of the Middle East" through U.S. takeover and Palestinian displacement exemplifies the kind of top-down, technocratic approach to complex geopolitical problems that characterizes neoreactionary thinking (Al Jazeera, 2025). This proposal reflects a vision of governance that prioritizes efficiency and control over democratic deliberation or international law, embodying Yarvin's concept of neocameralist management applied to foreign policy.

The integration of neoreactionary ideas into Trump administration politics also signals a broader transformation within American conservatism toward embracing anti-democratic and technocratic impulses. This shift challenges conventional understanding of conservatism as a defender of constitutional norms and limited government, instead favoring strong executive authority and governance by a technocratic elite. The growing prominence of Silicon Valley figures like Peter Thiel and Elon Musk in conservative circles further reinforces this trend, as their technological expertise and

financial resources help translate neoreactionary theory into practical political influence (Conversation, 2025).

In conclusion, the Trump administration's governance style and policy initiatives provide the clearest evidence of neoreactionary influence on American conservatism to date. By operationalizing neoreactionary critiques of bureaucracy and democracy, and by adopting technocratic approaches to both domestic and foreign policy challenges, the administration has translated abstract ideological concepts into concrete political practice. This integration underscores the movement's capacity to shape not only intellectual discourse but also the practical mechanics of power in the United States.

7.   Influence on Conservative Intellectual Networks

Beyond its direct impact on policy and governance, the neoreactionary (NRx) movement has increasingly penetrated conservative intellectual networks, think tanks, and media outlets, reshaping the ideological landscape of American conservatism. This infiltration is particularly significant given the movement's foundational critique of liberal democracy, which resonates with broader conservative dissatisfaction regarding the outcomes of democratic governance—especially among segments that feel marginalized by demographic shifts, cultural transformations, and the perceived ascendancy of progressive social norms.

7.1.   Penetration into Conservative Intellectual Circles

Neoreactionary ideas have found fertile ground among younger conservative intellectuals and activists who have matured in digital environments where these concepts circulate freely and often unfiltered. Unlike older generations of conservatives who may have been more invested in traditional institutions and formal political structures, this younger cohort is drawn to the movement's sophisticated intellectual apparatus and its embrace of technological rationalism. They often find crude populism intellectually unsatisfying, yet share its anti-establishment sentiment, making NRx's blend of elitism, technocracy, and cultural pessimism particularly appealing (Burrows, 2018).

This intellectual appeal is amplified by the movement's ability to synthesize reactionary political theory with contemporary technological discourse. The deployment of cybernetic metaphors, accelerationist philosophy, and

critiques of democratic egalitarianism creates a compelling narrative for those disillusioned by what they perceive as the failures of liberal democracy. As a result, neoreactionary thought is no longer confined to obscure blogs and fringe online forums but is increasingly discussed within mainstream conservative academic and policy circles (Dimitrakaki & Weeks, 2019).

7.2.   Media Platforms and Mainstreaming

Conservative media figures have played a pivotal role in amplifying neoreactionary ideas. Personalities such as Tucker Carlson and Charlie Kirk have provided platforms for neoreactionary thinkers, either directly or indirectly, facilitating the mainstreaming of ideas that were previously relegated to the margins of political discourse. Carlson's prime-time broadcasts have frequently echoed neoreactionary themes, including skepticism toward democratic institutions, critiques of multiculturalism, and calls for a return to hierarchical social orders. Similarly, Kirk's organization, Turning Point USA, has become a hub for young conservatives receptive to NRx's anti-establishment rhetoric and technocratic governance proposals.

This media penetration is a crucial step in the transformation of neoreactionary thought from an internet subculture into a politically influential movement. By entering mainstream conservative discourse, these ideas gain legitimacy and reach a broader audience, thereby influencing public opinion and political agendas. The normalization of neoreactionary themes in conservative media also facilitates the recruitment of new adherents, particularly among politically engaged youth who consume these platforms regularly.

8.   The Role of Digital Platforms and Online Communities

The growth and dissemination of the neoreactionary movement have been significantly facilitated by digital platforms that enable the formation of ideologically cohesive communities while circumventing the gatekeeping functions of traditional media and academic institutions. Platforms such as Reddit, 4chan, and various blogging sites have provided spaces where

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neoreactionary ideas can be developed, debated, and refined without institutional oversight or mainstream critique (Burrows, 2018).

This digital infrastructure has enabled what some scholars describe as "stealth" political influence, wherein radical ideas incubate within online subcultures before being introduced into mainstream political discourse through more conventional channels such as conservative media and think tanks. The movement's sophisticated use of digital communication strategies—including the deployment of memes, coded language, and insider references—has allowed it to build coherent and resilient communities. These strategies not only foster a sense of belonging and identity among adherents but also enable the movement to evade direct confrontation with mainstream institutions that might otherwise marginalize or censor such content (Dimitrakaki & Weeks, 2019).

The online nature of neoreactionary organizing also reflects broader changes in political mobilization and influence, privileging technological savvy over traditional forms of political organization. This dynamic may provide neoreactionary activists with strategic advantages in political contests, particularly against opponents who rely on conventional grassroots organizing and institutional channels. The movement's ability to rapidly disseminate ideas, coordinate actions, and shape narratives online represents a new model of political influence in the digital age (Burrows, 2018).

Moreover, the decentralized and networked structure of these online communities complicates efforts to counter or regulate neoreactionary content, as the movement can quickly migrate across platforms and reconstitute itself in new digital spaces. This fluidity enhances the movement's resilience and capacity to adapt to changing political and technological environments, ensuring its continued relevance and influence within conservative intellectual networks.

9.   Critiques and Responses from Democratic Theory

The neoreactionary (NRx) movement has elicited significant scholarly critique, with most academic analysts characterizing it as a sophisticated form of authoritarianism or neo-fascism. Political scientists, historians, legal scholars, and theorists of democracy have rigorously challenged the foundational claims of neoreactionary thought, particularly its critiques of democracy and its advocacy for technocratic, hierarchical governance.

9.1.   Critique of Democratic Inefficiency Claims

Neoreactionaries argue that democratic governance is inherently inefficient, unstable, and prone to decline, advocating instead for rule by unelected experts or sovereign executives. However, comparative political research consistently demonstrates that democratic societies outperform authoritarian regimes across a wide range of human welfare and development indicators, including economic growth, public health, education, and civil liberties (Diamond, 2020). Democracies tend to be more resilient, adaptable, and responsive to citizens' needs, contradicting neoreactionary assertions that democracy is doomed to failure.

Political scientists highlight that while democracies may face challenges such as gridlock or populist pressures, these are often symptoms of political pluralism and accountability rather than inherent flaws. The mechanisms of electoral competition, judicial review, and free press serve as important checks on power, fostering transparency and protecting minority rights—features that neoreactionary models explicitly reject (Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018).

9.2.   Problems with Technocratic Governance Assumptions

Neoreactionary advocacy for technocratic governance, where policy decisions are made by technical experts rather than elected representatives, is also subject to critical scrutiny. Empirical studies on technocracy reveal significant accountability deficits and democratic legitimacy problems associated with expert rule. Technocratic regimes often marginalize public participation, reducing citizens to passive subjects rather than active agents in governance.

Moreover, research indicates that technocratic governance frequently privileges elite interests and entrenched power structures, failing to produce equitable or broadly beneficial policy outcomes (Streeck, 2014). The assumption that technical expertise inherently leads to better governance ignores the political nature of policy choices and the importance of

democratic deliberation in balancing competing interests and values.

9.3. Historical Misinterpretations and Legal Challenges

Historians critique neoreactionary historical narratives as selective and ahistorical. The movement's romanticization of pre-democratic governance—such as monarchies, aristocracies, and feudal systems—ignores the extensive evidence of violence, social inequality, and political instability that characterized these regimes (Pipes, 2011). While these systems may have provided order for elites, they often did so at the expense of vast segments of the population, lacking mechanisms for popular accountability or protection of individual rights. Furthermore, the scholarly consensus underscores the historical benefits of democratic development, including the expansion of political participation, the rule of law, and institutionalized protections against arbitrary power. Neoreactionary nostalgia for hierarchical and authoritarian pasts overlooks these advances and the ongoing struggles to deepen democratic governance globally (Tilly, 2007).

Also legal scholars have identified profound constitutional problems with neoreactionary proposals for governance. The movement's explicit rejection of constitutional constraints on executive power directly contradicts the core principles of American constitutionalism, including separation of powers, federalism, and individual rights protections.

Another critical legal and administrative concern is the neoreactionary proposal to "retire all government employees", effectively dismantling the professional civil service system. The U.S. civil service, established through reforms like the Pendleton Act (1883), was designed to create a merit-based, nonpartisan bureaucracy that ensures effective government administration and limits corruption (Light, 1999).

Eliminating this system would likely lead to significant governmental dysfunction, as institutional knowledge and expertise are lost. It would also concentrate patronage power in the hands of the executive, enabling widespread political appointments based on loyalty rather than competence. This scenario risks recreating the very corruption, inefficiency, and instability that civil service reform sought to eliminate (Rosenbloom, 2015).

9.4. Democratic Theory and Normative Critiques

From a normative standpoint, democratic theorists argue that neoreactionary governance models undermine fundamental democratic values such as political equality, participation, and deliberation. Democracy is not merely a mechanism for efficient governance but a system that embodies the equal moral worth of citizens and facilitates collective self-determination (Dahl, 1989).

Neoreactionary proposals to exclude mass participation and concentrate power in technocratic elites betray these democratic ideals. They risk creating regimes that are efficient but unaccountable, stable but unjust, and powerful but illegitimate. Scholars caution that such models may foster political alienation, social fragmentation, and ultimately, instability (Mounk, 2018). From the vantage point of democratic theory, neoreactionary (NRx) proposals raise fundamental concerns about political legitimacy that their proponents have not adequately addressed. Democratic theorists emphasize that legitimate political authority ultimately derives from the consent of the governed—a principle foundational to modern democratic governance (Mounk, 2018). Any governmental system lacking this basis of popular consent faces inherent moral and practical challenges, including instability, alienation, and resistance.

Neoreactionary advocates prioritize governance efficiency and technocratic expertise over democratic legitimacy, arguing that democratic processes are inherently inefficient and prone to dysfunction. However, extensive theoretical and empirical research contradicts this assumption. Studies in governance effectiveness demonstrate that political systems lacking democratic legitimacy often encounter significant implementation problems, widespread resistance, and eventual instability that undermine any purported efficiency gains (Jones et al., 2019). Public support and cooperation are essential for the successful enactment and sustainability of policies, underscoring the interdependence of legitimacy and effectiveness.

Moreover, democratic theorists critique the neoreactionary technocratic approach for its reductionist view of politics. By treating political questions as technical problems with objective solutions, NRx ignores the inherently value-laden nature of

political decision-making. Political systems are not merely instruments of administration but arenas where collective priorities, ethical considerations, and competing interests are debated and negotiated (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004). The exclusion of public deliberation and pluralistic discourse, as advocated by neoreactionaries, risks imposing narrow, elite-driven values that may not reflect the diverse interests of society.

The neoreactionary vision also neglects the normative purposes of government beyond efficiency, such as justice, equality, and the protection of rights. Democratic governance embodies these values by ensuring political equality and fostering inclusive participation. The technocratic monarchist model, by contrast, privileges hierarchical authority and excludes broad public engagement, raising profound questions about its moral and political legitimacy (Mouffe, 2013).

10. Conclusion

The technocratic monarchist movement in America represents a significant and multifaceted challenge to democratic governance that warrants serious scholarly and political engagement. Although the movement remains relatively small in direct adherents, its influence has grown substantially through connections with Silicon Valley elites and penetration into political circles associated with the Trump administration. Its sophisticated intellectual framework, combined with technological savvy and financial resources, has enabled it to exert disproportionate influence on American political discourse.

While the neoreactionary critique of democracy is internally coherent within its ideological framework, it rests on problematic assumptions regarding political authority, governance objectivity, and social hierarchy. Its historical analysis selectively ignores the extensive evidence supporting democratic development's benefits while romanticizing pre-democratic systems marked by violence, inequality, and instability (Pipes, 2011).

Perhaps most concerning is the movement's growing practical influence on American politics, exemplified by figures such as J.D. Vance and policies reflecting neoreactionary preferences for dismantling democratic institutions. The Trump administration's systematic efforts to weaken the civil service, undermine independent agencies, and circumvent constitutional

checks echo specific neoreactionary recommendations, signaling a troubling shift from theory to practice.

Addressing the challenge posed by neoreactionary thought requires sustained engagement from democratic institutions, civil society, and academic scholars. Dismissing the movement as mere fringe extremism overlooks its intellectual sophistication and demonstrated capacity to shape mainstream politics. Defenders of democracy must engage seriously with neoreactionary arguments while articulating compelling visions of democratic renewal that respond to legitimate concerns about governance effectiveness and accountability.

The rise of neoreactionary influence also highlights broader systemic issues in American democratic discourse, including the growing impact of concentrated wealth in politics, fragmentation of public spheres via digital technologies, and weakening of traditional gatekeeping institutions. Effective responses will likely require not only intellectual refutation but also practical reforms to strengthen democratic institutions and reduce the appeal of authoritarian alternatives (Mounk, 2018).

Future research should focus on understanding the social and psychological factors that make neoreactionary ideas appealing, particularly among individuals with technological backgrounds and elite education. Additionally, scholars should examine the mechanisms by which fringe political ideas gain mainstream traction in the digital age and develop strategies to preserve democratic discourse where traditional institutional filters have eroded.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

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In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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