Mediating American hospitality: Mark Zuckerberg's challenge to Donald Trump?

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Abstract
In 2017, Facebook founder and CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, travelled America with a former White House photographer who took pictures of him sharing meals with families, workforces and refugee communities. These were then posted to Zuckerberg's Facebook page, usually with a post by Zuckerberg drawing attention to socioeconomic issues affecting different American communities. This article argues that Zuckerberg is mediated on this tour as a worthy populist contender to Donald Trump, albeit of a centrist, liberal, corporate kind. In particular, divisions along the lines of race, migration and class, which have been appropriated and emphasised by Trump, are apparently bridged and resolved through the representation of Zuckerberg, and the promotion of Facebook as a mediated fulcrum for civil society. Zuckerberg is pictured sharing food with, for example, Republican voters in Ohio and Somali migrants in Minnesota. We investigate how the differences projected between Zuckerberg and Trump pivot on the commodification of hospitality, particularly the mediation of shared meals, American hospitality, masculinity and 'diversity work'. We contextualise this analysis within an understanding of how Silicon Valley's monopoly capitalism perpetuates inequalities in its workforces and through its product design. We also attempt to make sense of the different social actors involved in Zuckerberg's mediated 'Year of Travel', including the PR team, the people in the photographs, the commenters, as well as the users of Facebook. Through these contextualisations, we argue that this mediated contestation of hospitality – who is welcome in American society, who is not and why – is central to understanding the tensions in contemporary American political culture.

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Every year, Mark Zuckerberg shares his annual personal challenge 'to learn something new' with his Facebook followers. He built AI for his home, ran 365 miles, read 25 books and learned Mandarin. One year, he also only ate meat that he had killed himself. In 2017, his personal challenge was to visit every US state. In January 2017, he posts, 'After a tumultuous last year, my hope for this challenge is to get out and talk to more people about how they're living, working and thinking about the future' (Zuckerberg, 2017). He updates his travels on Instagram, his personal Facebook page and a Facebook group called 'Mark's Year of Travel':

> The trips will all take different forms – road trips with Priscilla [his spouse], stops in small towns and universities, visits to Facebook offices across the country, meetings with teachers and scientists, and trips to fun places the community will recommend along the way. (Year of Travel, 2017)

The images and text posted on these pages are not only for his followers and users of the platform but also for mainstream media circulation. Indeed, this kind of promotional material is frequently picked up by news outlets. In addition, using the features of Zuckerberg's Facebook platform, followers are encouraged to join a devoted Facebook Group and 'share your own story of travel' (Year of Travel, 2017). Of course, these posts are curated by a PR team. Also, and significantly, what is not made clear in the Facebook presentation of the tour is that Charles Ommanney, Barack Obama's and George W. Bush's former photographer, is part of the travelling team, as well as Obama's former campaign manager, David Plouffe. Presumably most or all of the posted photographs associated with the tour are taken by Ommanney. But why is a White House photographer following Zuckerberg, and why is his tour of the United States being organised like a political campaign?

This article argues that Zuckerberg is undergoing a rebrand on this tour. More than this, however, he is also mediated as a worthy contender to Donald Trump (Bilton, 2017). In particular, divisions along the lines of race, migration and class, which have been appropriated and emphasised by Trump, are apparently bridged and resolved through the representation of Zuckerberg, and the promotion of Facebook as a mediated fulcrum for civil society. In this way, we can understand Zuckerberg attempting to model populist leadership, but of a corporate, liberal, centrist kind. We focus particularly on the commodification of hospitality by analysing images where Zuckerberg is photographed sharing meals in a household, workplace or community centre. Zuckerberg is pictured sharing food with, for example, Republican voters in Ohio and Somali migrants in Minnesota. We investigate how the differences projected between the two billionaires, Zuckerberg and Trump, pivot on the mediation of American hospitality, masculinity and 'diversity work' (Ahmed, 2017). Despite these optics, however, we suggest that in attempting to convey people as citizens and hosts, rather than a collection of data points, the Year of Travel unwittingly reveals the deep inequalities of power between users, citizens and Facebook. In addition, employing Jacques Derrida's writing on hospitality, we argue for the close connections between hostility and hospitality, thus situating the Zuckerberg–Facebook assemblage in a wider critique of the racialised patriarchy of American West Coast Tech (Benjamin, 2019; Little and Winch, 2021; Noble, 2018).

Rebranding Facebook–Zuckerberg

Facebook is the most used social network in the world with 2.27 billion monthly active users worldwide. Every 60 seconds, 510,000 comments are posted, 293,000 statuses are updated and 136,000 photos are uploaded to the platform (Naughton, 2019). Facebook meets at least two of the four requirements of being a nation state (according to the Montevideo Convention on Statehood), and Zuckerberg has set up a diplomatic core to represent Facebook's interests in various countries and regions (Chander, 2012; Partzsch, 2017). By talking to people 'about how they're living, working and thinking about the future', Zuckerberg gives the illusion of democratic accountability. He may have been voted for by no one (he exercises absolute control of the corporation on a minority share-holding), but the images and posts are curated to give the impression that his power and reach have a political legitimacy, not just a corporate one.

The Year of Travel is an opportunity for Zuckerberg to explore the viability of running for presidential office. After all, he changed the Facebook constitution in order to make this possible.[1] The optics of the tour – as revealed on the platform – tell us much about the corporation's reach and ambition. Interspersed with the photographs, Zuckerberg announces policy, and comments on the socioeconomic and affective states of the people that he meets. When he guts fish in Alaska, he advocates a universal basic income – a policy popular in Silicon Valley tech culture. In South Dakota, he discusses fracking. Simultaneously to this, however, the Year of Travel is also an attempt to establish sovereignty over civil society. Siva Vaidhyanathan (2012) argues that Google has muscled into the Higher Education sector as a response to the gaps made by the neoliberal marketisation of universities. In addition, Zuckerberg's philanthrocapitalism as encapsulated in the Chan–Zuckerberg foundation also participates in the marketisation of, for example, education (Aschoff, 2015). José Van Dijck, Thomas Poell and Martijn De Waal have discussed the ways in which 'Facebook is progressively dominating the distribution and selection of news' (Van Dijck et al., 2018, 52) with right-wing effects. We develop this work to suggest that the Year of Travel tour functions to perform Facebook's role as the foundational infrastructure of what Antonio Gramsci called 'civil society'. Churches, unions, community groups, membership organisations and so forth are collective spaces that, crucially, are independent from the capitalist profit motive or the state (Gramsci, 1971). Throughout the tour, Zuckerberg makes the case that Facebook is the contemporary space for these things to occur, bridging the gap between atomised citizen and the material infrastructure of nations. Historically, the ideological space of nation was collectively imagined through shared media – newspapers and later TV; now Facebook provides that too (Anderson, 1983; Debray, 2007). More specifically, Zuckerberg is responding to what Michael Hardt (1995) has discussed as the 'withering' of civil society. When Zuckerberg posts about the importance of community as we discuss below, he is forging ways to embed Facebook and its acquisitions such as Instagram into foundational American social structures.

In claiming sovereignty over civil society, Zuckerberg–Facebook undergo a significant rebrand, drawing on digitally mediated hospitality in order to convey the values of authenticity, corporate social responsibility and a liberal universalism. The Year of Travel photographs are located in culturally significant American settings such as Vicksburg National Military Park – a key site of the American Civil War – and Mother Emanuel

African Methodist Episcopal Church, which has a radical Black history and was subject to a white supremacist shooting in 2015 where nine people were murdered. We see Zuckerberg sharing a meal with a family in Ohio, eating cheesesteak in Philly, drinking a milkshake with a resident at a diner in Iowa. He might share a plate of biscuits, a takeaway or a pizza in a workplace setting, or sit down for a meal in a restaurant or community centre. He sometimes promotes a Facebook feature, such as in May 2017 when he uses the recommendation feature for brats:

> Thanks to our community for the recommendations! I basically inhaled the first brat and cheese curds before remembering I should take a photo to thank you all for telling me to come here, so then I ordered this second brat. I do not regret it. (Zuckerberg, 2017)

Such posts model Facebook's blending of community, commercial promotion and digital sociality. They are organised around recognisable regional or national American dishes and are interspersed with pictures of Zuckerberg cooking or eating with his wife and two daughters at home in an attempt to give the heavily curated page the illusion of organic authenticity. Sarah Banet-Weiser (2012) has discussed the ways that brands draw on the tropes and affects of authenticity to garner value. Critics like Rosie Findlay and Brooke Erin Duffy note how authenticity is tied to techniques of intimacy to forge strong bonds with audiences and consumers (Duffy, 2013; Findlay, 2019). We see the Year of Travel marshalling these branding strategies. Zuckerberg is depicted as working to connect the world rather than reap immense profit from it. Facebook and its founder are co-deployed through the Year of Travel to each legitimate the other.

The Year of Travel – including the presidential photographs of Zuckerberg sharing meals with families, communities and workers – attempts to present a corporation personified in the grey T-shirted figure of its founder who is working for the common good and towards public values. Facebook has to engage with criticism and endure investigation and lawsuits from a variety of social and political actors. And because of this, Zuckerberg needs to posture in specific ways with specific intentions on the domestic and world stage. This is increasingly important as the corporation has been rigorously scrutinised, especially – but not only – by European governments concerned about the lack of adequate regulation. The tropes of hospitality partly work to reveal Zuckerberg as hosting a welcoming platform open to all, as well as demonstrating that Facebook, rather than being invasive, is a technology to be invited in. In other words, that we consent to its place in our homes, communities and workplaces rather than being coerced into it. Food is key here to producing the affects of hospitality and conviviality. Appearing to be eating the same foods as his hosts presents Zuckerberg as humble and responsible enough to accept invitations to dinner from ordinary people, as well as imbibe the same foods as them, whether this is local freshly caught seafood or home-made brownies. The images posted on Facebook portray the communities that Zuckerberg is visiting as having agency in the act of being hospitable.

Mediating hospitality: Zuckerberg versus Trump

Zuckerberg is represented through the Democrat tropes of liberalism and an apparent welcoming of diversity in order to prove him a viable opponent to Trump. In the run up

to the presidential election (prior to the tour), Zuckerberg's Facebook feed depicted him commenting on Trump's campaign. There were photographs of Zuckerberg viewing the election with his daughter, and he also spoke about the debates via Facebook Live while hosting a barbeque in his backyard (see Little and Winch, 2017). Notably, when Trump called a summit with business leaders from Silicon Valley, Zuckerberg sent his COO Sheryl Sandberg rather than attending in person, as Larry Page (of Alphabet) and Jeff Bezos (of Amazon) did. Nevertheless, it has been proved that Facebook helped Trump become president by embedding staff in his campaign (Bartlett, 2018; Vaidhyanathan, 2018). And 'making up' for this is key to the strategy of the tour. Even though Zuckerberg consistently denies that he is running for president, this tour was also called a 'listening tour' by the mainstream media, thus emulating political campaigns of the sort common in American politics particularly by Democrats and specifically, the Clintons (Wolvin, 2005). This was reflected in betting odds which at their peak in 2017 put him at 20:1 to be the next president equal to Bernie Sanders: an interesting measure of sentiment towards him given the odds had crashed to around 400:1 by early 2019 (paddypower. com). The Year of Travel tour promotes an anti-Trumpian agenda by making connections between race, class and migration – divisions that Trump successfully exploited in his proto-fascist campaign (Brown and Littler, 2018; Giroux, 2018).

On the Year of Travel feed, hospitality as mediated by images of Zuckerberg being a welcomed guest at meals is the fulcrum on which the differences in masculine leadership style are expressed. Indeed, the need for US presidential candidates to attend summer and state fairs, as well as eat food at them, is part of the political ritual. There is also a need for politicians to be seen eating the food correctly. For example, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio was mocked for eating pizza with a knife and fork (Grynbaum, 2014). Breaking bread with American people imbues Zuckerberg – and his platform – with a hospitable authenticity. Significantly, these connections are located in specifically patriotic terms, and this patriotism is often marked through nostalgic signifiers of hospitality and culturally significant food, as mediated through Facebook and the recurring figure of Zuckerberg. The meals he shares tend towards regional and national dishes as well as cuisines marked as part of specific migrant and diasporic cultures, thus marking both patriotism and diversity through the careful choice of meals. In the Year of Travel, hospitality is linked to the commodification of the ordinary as well as the optics of diversity. American people and refugees are represented as extending their hospitality to Zuckerberg, which is then made visible on Facebook's platform. More than this, Zuckerberg's hospitality (unlike Trump's) is extended to migrants, African Americans, immigrants and refugees, including Muslim students at the University of Michigan–Dearborn or Black male students at a Charter School in Chicago.

Zuckerberg's modalities of hospitality contrast with Trump's. Most famously, Trump fed football champions at the White House with, in his words, 'McDonald's, Wendy's and Burger King's with some pizza'. For Trump, monopoly fast food corporations are signifiers of patriotic hospitality: 'If it's American, I like it. It's all American stuff' (Cantor, 2019). Trump is in the hospitality industry. He owns golf courses, hotels, real estate. He also used to own Trump Steaks (a line of beef products) and Trump Water – now both defunct – although Trump Winery is still trading; in general, though, his hospitality extends towards a rentier model of capitalist accumulation. In trying to make sense of the way that

Zuckerberg and Trump marshal hospitality, we turn to Derrida's short book *Of Hospitality*. Derrida argues that the law of hospitality is perverse in that one can become virtually xenophobic in order to protect or claim to protect one's own hospitality. In other words, in order to be able to extend or withdraw hospitality, one needs to be 'master at home [. . .] to be able to receive whomever I like there'. Anyone who seemingly encroaches 'on my sovereignty as host, I start to regard as an undesirable foreigner, and virtually as an enemy. This other becomes a hostile subject, and I risk becoming their hostage' (Derrida, 2000, 55). This anxiety over loss of power and hostility towards a foreign other are exactly what Trump invokes and exploits in his anti-immigration rhetoric. Speaking to an implied white audience who have suffered from de-industrialisation, he suggests that by withdrawing hospitality, it is possible to retain and privilege one's sovereignty.

Using Derrida, we can understand hospitality to be connected to questions of nation and borders, as well as the threshold of the household, workplace, community centre. We argue that Zuckerberg's mediated challenge to Trump pivots on this dual understanding of hospitality. Trump's ostentatious wealth is wrought through the commodification of hospitality, as well as the over privileging of whiteness to signify the sovereign nation. In contrast, Zuckerberg's mediated hospitality reveals his platform – his keystone of civil society – to be hospitable to diversity.

One of Zuckerberg's challenges to Trump is also to emphasise the fact that he is Jewish, and this includes presenting his generational history of food. Zuckerberg celebrates Jewish festivals on his Facebook page. For example, by making hamantaschen for Purim or challah for Shabbat. We will argue below that the racialised and patriarchal assemblages of US West Coast Tech go some way to undermine the Year of Travel's claims to being hospitable to difference. Nevertheless, Zuckerberg's Jewishness impacts on his adjacency to whiteness and problematises a straightforward reading of Zuckerberg's racialised identity as white – he may be white, but he is not a WASP – the dominant ethnic group in US culture. As Catherine Rottenberg notes, '[w]ithin a racialised field there will also be a hierarchy or stratification of whiteness' where some groups have been or are 'interpellated as not-quite white' (Rottenberg, 2018, 206 n 48). These historical forms of discrimination and violence have contemporary manifestations. Significantly, Trump's administration (including but not limited to Steve Bannon's anti-semitism or Trump's equivocation between anti-fascist and fascist protestors at Charlottesville) reignites historical prejudices to render American Jewish identities and communities more vulnerable; as evidenced, for example, in the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting in 2018. Many of the critiques levelled at Zuckerberg are explicitly anti-semitic, especially following the Cambridge Analytica scandal. Consequently, we can see how white supremacy's coalition with anti-semitism (e.g. on the alt-right) is acute and terrifying with real traumatic traditions and legacies. The reactivation of these anti-semitic racial configurations in American politics make Zuckerberg vulnerable as a public figure in opposition to Trump and his allies, as well as a viable champion for a liberal race politics.

The traditional American family meal

One of the strategies of Zuckerberg's mediated hospitality is to represent the corporation as treating people as citizens rather than the collection of data points intrinsic to

Facebook's business model. In the images of Zuckerberg in people's homes, there are no phones, laptops or computers. Signifiers of the traditional American household are highlighted. Facebook is therefore represented not as a cornerstone of 'surveillance capitalism' and its processes of capital accumulation through data (Zuboff, 2019) but an invited guest. In the photographs we examine in this section, Zuckerberg visits two white families who formerly voted Democrat and then campaigned for Trump (Wier, 2017). These are the blue-collar workers who Trump was courting through his rhetoric of the 'working class' (which deliberately obfuscated Black and other ethnic minority working-class constituents) and who have been left behind by the long decline of heavy industry and manufacturing, and have not managed to successfully transition to the 'knowledge economy' that underpins data capitalism. Where there are photographs of Zuckerberg sharing a family meal, they are situated in the homes of white people, and so we can see how the Year of Tour apparatus invokes the white nostalgia of Trumpian rhetoric. Nostalgic sentiment pervades these photographs, and this is picked up by many of the commenters who note the lack of digital media present, as well as the idea of family meals being something of the past.

One meal is hosted on a farm in Wisconsin in April 2017. Zuckerberg, dressed in a plain dark jumper, is taking a plate of brownies and ice-cream from (we assume) the mother and grandmother of the family. Behind him is a fridge covered in children's pictures, magnets, coupons. The domestic intergenerational scene signifies ordinariness, authenticity, tradition, locality – all tropes the Year of Travel are keen to link to Facebook and Zuckerberg. Indeed, many of the comments pick up on these themes. Zuckerberg demonstrates respect for the family – and the demographic which they symbolise, by appreciating their hard work, but also highlighting his ability to share and listen at the dinner table. He posts,

> Family 'dinner' at noon. When you wake up at 4am, I guess your schedule is shifted up a bit. (Zuckerberg, 2017)

From the photographs and the posts, it appears that Zuckerberg has been invited into these families' homes, and they all seem to be eating the same food. They are presented as people worth listening to and making visible, as well as being invested with agency.

A photograph is also posted of a meal Zuckerberg shares with a family in Newton Falls, Ohio: 'Just got into Ohio. Thanks to Dan and Lisa Moore for welcoming me into your home for a wonderful dinner!' he posts (Zuckerberg, 2017). Ohio is a key state that turned Republican in 2016, and the members of this family were former Democrat voters who campaigned hard for Trump (Wier, 2017). Again, this seems to be another blue-collar family, suggested by the wallpaper trim, presentation cabinet, the colours of the room, the decoration hanging from the lamp and the clothes of the family at the table. In this photograph, no one is smiling apart from Zuckerberg; indeed, the meal appears awkward. The comments pick up on this, and there are ongoing discussions of why the family hosts Zuckerberg with paper plates and plastic cutlery, to the point that Zuckerberg has to wade in with 'It was a great meal and great conversation. I appreciate their hospitality!' (Zuckerberg, 2017). Although he is framed at the centre, in neither photograph is he at the head of the table; other men are given more presence either through body

language (including facial expressions), hair and attire, their connections with the other members (i.e. father), or location at the table. Zuckerberg is smiling, talking or listening to another person, rather than looking at the camera. He is depicted performing a style of leadership that focuses on interpersonal skills – as a luminous node in a network – rather than the peak of a hierarchy. In doing this, he performs a masculinity significantly at odds with the flamboyant patriarchal posturing of Trump. We can also see this in the plain dark clothes that he wears. Zuckerberg projects soft leadership by making the people he visits visible to a global audience; he is extending Facebook's arm of hospitality to former Democrat voters.

Zuckerberg also works to offset associations with 'toxic geek masculinity' (Salter and Blodgett, 2018), which have been associated with his founding of Facebook, as documented in the film *The Social Network* (Fincher, 2010) or popular texts like *The Boy Kings* (Losse, 2014). Zuckerberg's hacker personality whose motto was 'move fast and break things' is part of Silicon Valley's counterculture turned cyberculture where technology is perceived as anti-institutional and disruptive (Turner, 2006). This hubristic philosophy has been controversial for Facebook as it has particularly affected vulnerable communities who have been locked out of accounts, or denied them, or faced abuse. For example, Native Americans as well as Drag Kings and Drag Queens have been denied Facebook accounts because their names appear 'fake' (Wachter-Boettcher, 2017). This tour is an attempt to represent Facebook as a connective platform that extends its hospitality to diverse communities.

Significantly, according to *The Vindicator* – a local Ohio news outlet – the family in Newton Falls had no idea that Zuckerberg was coming to visit until 20 minutes before he showed up; the visit had been organised by the Year of Travel team (Wier, 2017). It goes some way to explain the paper plates. Although the family have extended their hospitality and agreed to the photographs being taken, uploaded and commented upon, their agency in the scenario has been circumscribed, as they are framed in such a way as to work towards the main intention of the Year of Travel; that is, for Zuckerberg to appear as a leader of civil society or even a viable presidential alternative to Trump.

Indeed, it is not insignificant that Zuckerberg is represented in people's homes and workplaces observing private behaviours and relationships – and sharing this information with users and media. It replicates what the corporation does – as part of the wider tech industry – as it surveils relationships and hoovers up data, and then aggregates that according to algorithmically determined demographics. Facebook inserts itself into intimate life and monetises it. What is also interesting here is the way that this scenario might replicate the ways in which we extend our hospitality to Facebook. As part of the corporate assemblage ourselves, we agree to its terms and conditions (although we might not agree to it wholeheartedly or even understand the implications of it). We agree to its capturing and sharing of data, tracking of activities online and offline. However, this agreement is lopsided and unequal. One could call it – perhaps like the family in Newton Falls – being coerced. Although we have agency – we can (almost) leave Facebook – we do not have control over the data they have, or the ways they might still be tracking us, or how information about us is stored and sold. These signifiers of hospitality, food and benevolence are attempts to humanise, legitimate and render benign the deliberately

mysterious and powerful arm of surveillance capitalism. However, the commodification of hospitality unwittingly reveals the reach of the Year of Travel's power.

Apple pie and Iftar dinner

America's historical and intergenerational trauma in connection to race, migration and socioeconomic deprivation are implied throughout the tour. For example, Zuckerberg visits Blackfeet Reservation in Montana, as well as Black men who have been wrongly incarcerated. Significantly, the Facebook platform attempts to visually resolve the complexities of these inequalities through the recurring figure of Zuckerberg and patriotic optics. Digitally mediated hospitality renders Facebook the host of connections in Trump's divided America.

Sharing food across cultural difference can contribute to an appreciation of the Other (Narayan, 1997, cited in Wise, 2011, 90). It can also be, in Amanda Wise's words, a form of 'low-level cosmopolitanism' as well as producing 'cultural anxiety and disjuncture . . . disgust and desire' (Wise, 2011, 84). It is key to the rebuttal to Trump, therefore, that Zuckerberg is pictured eating, in Ben Highmore's words, with 'not me worlds' (Wise, 2011, 90) – whether this is Republican voters or Somali migrants. Eating the food of those who have been coded as dangerous and disastrous reveals Zuckerberg's receptivity and acceptance of otherness and difference. As Rick Flowers and Elaine Swan (2018) argue, 'hospitality can feel precarious, dangerous, threatening or anxiety provoking' because the Other's food is imbibed – it crosses the threshold of the body (p. 277). The Year of Travel exploits this to promote Zuckerberg's presidential brand; that is harnessing the tropes of a typical Democrat who is open to liberalism and diversity – at least in the optics. The sharing of food – in person but then later as pictures on the platform – reveals Zuckerberg and Facebook as being both invited guest and hospitable host. In this section, we examine the ways that the Year of Travel depicts Zuckerberg as a viable politician, especially through the strategy of taking in difference through food, but also politically triangulating.

Zuckerberg stops 'by the Elkhart Fire Department to meet the crew and for some of the ribs and chicken they were cooking' (Year of Travel, 2017). In March, he visits Fort Bragg, where, 'I learned a lot at lunch with military spouses' (Zuckerberg, 2017), In this photograph, Zuckerberg leans into the middle of table, smiling, with a table of women. He is not at the head of the table. However, he is the only man visible and he is at the centre of the photograph illuminated by the natural light; thus, seemingly hinting at his good intentions or moral luminosity. In February, Zuckerberg is photographed having lunch with white members of the fishing community in Bayou La Batre. He posts,

> One of the families we met were the Zirlotts – they run an oyster farm and are succeeding by using Facebook and Instagram to show their product directly to chefs. The fishing industry is more than a job to these folks – it's their community and a way of life.

Zuckerberg is pictured at the centre of the photograph listening and looking at the other people who mainly have their back to the camera. This post, combined with the

photograph of sharing a meal is significant for its promotion of Facebook as the key facilitator of civil society. Its repetition of 'community' – 'I'm looking at more of the world through the lens of building community these days' – reveals the PR team working hard to legitimate Facebook as a hospitable location for civil society. These images attempt to integrate monopoly tech capitalism as a supporter of local communities and curate Zuckerberg as potentially a viable president.

Zuckerberg is also photographed at the iconic truckstop, Iowa 80 Kitchen, Walcott. He posts,

> I asked the truckers what's changed over the last few decades. When the truckers I met started driving, you logged your driving hours on pieces of paper. Now it's electronic and automatic, which makes it harder to drive more hours than you're supposed to. Some people said they want to work longer, but they feel like regulations are getting in the way of their freedom and doing what they want to do. It's tough because those regulations try to keep people on the road safe. (Zuckerberg, 2017)

Here, we can see Zuckerberg triangulating like a politician, finding a position between two poles that alienates as few people as possible. This triangulation continues in the optics. This is a significantly political picture. Accompanying this post is a picture of Zuckerberg eating apple dessert and ice-cream on a diner counter next to a Black man with a head piece. In the background to the right of the photograph is an unsmiling white man in a stars-and-stripes baseball hat that reflects the light of the ceiling lamp, thus illuminating its patriotic symbolism. Zuckerberg is located at the centre of the photograph, listening and talking to the Black trucker. They are both smiling. In the visual triangle between the three men, we can see how the Year of Travel represents Zuckerberg as a cohesive figure bridging divides.

If we juxtapose this photograph with the American families discussed previously, we can see how the Year of Travel marshals racial difference in order to visibly connect people through the platform. The mediated images of food are crucial to this cohesion. Food both alludes to politicians' need to be seen eating with citizens, and to be eating correctly, as discussed above, but it also functions to position Zuckerberg in opposition to Trump. Whereas Trump focused relentlessly on the links between whiteness and blue-collar America, and arguably won the presidency through this strategy, the intersection between race, class and national identity is brought together by the photograph of Zuckerberg eating apple pie at the truck stop. Whereas Trump spun stories about 'the white working class' in a bid to deepen divides along the lines of race, ethnicity and migration, the Year of Travel challenges this narrative semiologically. The framing of the photograph means that the image of Zuckerberg works to bridge race and class – through the man in the stars-and-stripes hat – in ways that are normally fraught with racism. And indeed, this is picked up by the commenters who discuss Trump, Obama and the politics of race in America. The comments below the image reflect the global plurality of the users of the platform and indeed the ways that the platform hosts a multiplicity of different voices and opinions.

At a rally in Minnesota in November 2016, Trump denounced Somali migrants as a 'disaster', claiming that some of the Somalis are 'joining Isis and spreading their

extremist views all over our country' (Jacobs and Yuhas, 2016). In retaliation and to promote Zuckerberg's more liberal values, the Year of Travel posts a photograph of Zuckerberg sharing an Iftar dinner. Zuckerberg is portrayed apparently accepting hospitality from Somali hosts in Minneapolis, and then reciprocating digitally by conveying his hosts and the meal through his platform, thus extending his hospitality to them. In these photographs, Zuckerberg is ostensibly participating in a meal in a community centre to which he has been invited. He is in the centre of the photograph bathed in the light of a ceiling window. He is flanked by four Somali women, and they appear to be engaged in conversation; Zuckerberg and two of them are smiling. There are 'Speak English' posters on the left-hand side of the photograph and the two posters behind Mark which conjugate the verbs for 'To Be' and 'To Do'. Zuckerberg posts,

> As a refugee, you often don't get to choose which country you end up in. When I asked one man, who had spent 26 years in a refugee camp, whether America now felt like home, he gave a simple and profound answer:

> 'Home is where you are free to do what you want. Yes, this feels like home'.

> There are few places in the world he felt comfortable to be who he is: the country he was born, and our country that values freedom.

> What a beautiful tribute to America.

> Thanks to my hosts for being so gracious at the very end of Ramadan. I left impressed by your strength and resilience to build a new life in an unfamiliar place, and you are a powerful reminder of why this country is so great.

The figure of Zuckerberg appears to accept difference but also resolves this through patriotic assimilation.

Migration, and its histories, becomes a site where Zuckerberg's leadership qualities are contrasted with the xenophobia of Trump; Zuckerberg's Jewishness – and the Chinese and Vietnamese heritage of his spouse Priscilla Chan – is marshalled to criticise Trumpian policy. In January 2017, he posts,

> My great grandparents came from Germany, Austria and Poland. Priscilla's parents were refugees from China and Vietnam. The United States is a nation of immigrants, and we should be proud of that.

> Like many of you, I'm concerned about the impact of the recent executive orders signed by President Trump.

Immigration, migration and hospitality are represented as cornerstones of American identity. Skilfully, the Year of Travel brings policy, personal and familial history, and the platform together.

Hostility or hospitality?

Zuckerberg's adjacency to whiteness is illuminated by the lighting and framing of the photographs. Indeed, the intersection of his class, wealth, heterosexuality, gender and race gives him a legitimacy in each of the photographs. His power is naturalised and centred in the photographs. More than this, Zuckerberg's privilege means that he can access, and be centred in, sites he would not otherwise frequent. Thus, we can read the smiling faces of the Somali women and the exhortations to 'Speak English' as what Elaine Swan calls 'strategies of containment', which are a means to contain any potential threat to the racial hierarchies and stratifications of the social field (Swan, 2009). This is pertinent when thought about alongside the numerous critiques that that have been levelled against Facebook in its treatment of vulnerable and minority groups, especially as these have partly been as a consequence of 'breaking things' and fixing them later.

Like other Silicon Valley tech companies, Facebook's workforce has a clear racial and gendered hierarchy. Data released in 2018 revealed senior leadership to be predominantly white or Asian (90%) and male (72%). The entire workforce is 63.7 percent male (Statistica, 2018). Of the top female senior executive women, 68 percent are white (O'Connor, 2017). In total, Facebook's staff is 46.6 percent white, 41.4 percent Asian, 4.9 percent Hispanic, 3.5 percent Black, 3 percent 'Two or more races'. This is skewed when compared to the background demographic data of the United States with Black and Latinx men and women hugely underrepresented (O'Connor, 2017; Statistica, 2018; Thomas, 2016). Even though Facebook admits to needing a more diverse workforce, in 2017, Bloomberg reported that the people responsible for final hiring approvals are 'almost all white or Asian men' who 'often assessed candidates on traditional metrics like where they attended college, whether they had worked at a top tech firm, or whether current Facebook employees could vouch for them' (Huet, 2017; Wachter-Boettcher, 2017). Because of this, little has changed.

Workforces' stratifications along the lines of race, class and gender affect the products that are created (Hasinoff, 2017; Lohr, 2018; Noble, 2018). In 2016, journalists found Facebook to be illegally allowing housing advertising to target customers according to their race. Facebook was using 'ethnic-affinity targeting', so that even though users are not asked their race when creating an account, their data reveal 'interest in race-related content'. In an interview, Safiya Umoja Noble states, 'We are being racially profiled by a platform that doesn't allow us to even declare our own race and ethnicity . . . What does that mean to not allow culture and ethnicity to be visible in the platform?' (Wachter-Boettcher, 2017: 113). Facebook has evaded responsibility for these practices by citing Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act (1996) to defend its advertising platform. Section 230 protects intermediaries from liability for distributing third-party user content. This means that social media companies are seen as tech companies rather than media companies, and so they are not liable for content that is uploaded on their sites. Facebook argues for immunity because it is the advertisers' responsibility. These practices around housing continue (Sylvain, 2018). In her critique of the way that Silicon Valley's private decisions influence public policy, Ruha Benjamin (2019) suggests an alternative motto for Facebook: 'Move Fast, Break People, and Call It Progress' (p. 13).

Siva Vaidhyanathan has also written extensively and passionately on the way that Facebook undermines democracy: 'the problem with Facebook is Facebook' (Vaidhyanathan, 2018: 1).

The patriotic optics of Trump and Zuckerberg might be different, but unless the tour works towards social justice, it is merely doing what Sara Ahmed calls 'diversity work'. Ahmed argues that 'using the language' – or in this case also the optics – does not 'translate into creating diverse or equal environments'. Indeed, there is often 'a gap between a symbolic commitment and a lived reality'. This means that, 'equality and diversity can be used as masks to create the appearance of being transformed' (Ahmed, 2017: 90).

Returning to Derrida can help us make sense of the way that hospitality pivots on the notion of otherness. Derrida makes a distinction between 'the foreigner and the absolute other' (Derrida, 2000, 23), as well as between the hospitality contract and 'absolute hospitality', the latter of which is 'to give up my home' to the absolute, unknowable, other (Derrida, 2000, 25). Derrida argues that, according to the hospitality contract, hospitality can only be offered 'to a foreigner "as a family," represented and protected by his or her family name' (Derrida, 2000, 23). That is, hospitality is extended to someone who can be known and identified by – presumably – their patrilineal name (father or husband – and all the patriarchal assumptions therein). And that person who accepts the hand of hospitality then enters into a contract where they have obligations. On the Year of Travel, hospitality was offered to Zuckerberg by workplaces and households because he is a known celebrity and because there were donations involved (Wier, 2017). Entering into the hospitality contract in this way gives Zuckerberg the aura of a politician's responsibility; one might expect him to now have an obligation to those who he visited – and this expectation runs through the comments. Whereas Trump aims to 'absolutely other' Muslim and Latinx people through the so-called 'Muslim ban', or the wall with Mexico, or by detaining families in border cages, Zuckerberg is represented as making these people visible and valued; as extending American hospitality to those who have been denied access to the American Dream.

Interestingly, we can consider this concept of the 'absolute other' and the foreigner known through naming in relation to the Facebook platform. For example, returning to the question of 'fake' names mentioned above, what does it mean that we can only create an account on Facebook with an 'authentic' name? To give another example of Facebook inhospitality, we can turn to the work of Rena Bivens. Even though Facebook eventually offered users a 'custom' option in addition to 'male' and 'female' in 2014, these non-binary possibilities of identification only exist at the surface level of the software. Deeper into the database, non-binary users are re-classified in order to meet the needs of advertisers and marketers (Bivens, 2017). Therefore, it is not insignificant that hospitality is extended to what Derrida defines as the 'foreign other' only once a user can be identified in a Western style and heteronormative patrilineal lineage. Facebook's product design means that those who deviate from the dominant norm are denied the recognition of personhood by the platform. In addition, Facebook will only give us an account if we agree to pay with our data from offline and online spaces. As long as the platform can thoroughly 'know' its users through their data, it will continue to extend hospitality and thus *retain* sovereignty. As Benjamin (2019) points out, because Facebook is advertising-driven, 'users *get used*' (p. 14). There are many critiques of the ways that Facebook

reinforces oppressions along the lines of race, class and gender. See, for example, the open letter from Civil Rights groups to Zuckerberg (The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, 2019).

Connected to how Facebook retains its sovereignty are its links to neoliberal capitalism. Zuckerberg is hospitable to global trade agreements, mobile workforces and flexible borders, whereas Trump runs an administration in opposition to this cosmopolitan, free market ideology. Nevertheless, they both believe in deregulating US corporations and pervasive marketisation. Van Dijck et al. argue that, even though Facebook portrays the corporation as a social infrastructure that helps people to build a global community, in its manifesto there is no mention of other established institutions such as governments or civil society groups. As mentioned above, Zuckerberg's philanthrocapitalism participates in the marketisation of education (Aschoff, 2015). This was evidenced in Zuckerberg's visit to the charter school in the Year of Travel. In adhering to neoliberal tenets, both Trump and Zuckerberg deepen inequalities and intersecting oppressions (Collins and Bilge, 2016; Perry, 2018).

To conclude, Zuckerberg mimicked the 'listening tours' of former presidents by visiting communities and sharing meals. The Year of Travel Facebook Timeline represented him accepting and offering hospitality to citizens across America. This functioned to reveal Zuckerberg as hosting a welcoming and welcomed platform, marked by tropes of multiculturalism, difference, ordinariness and connection – all conveyed by eating food. However, the representational strategies of 2017 did nothing to stem the critiques which eventually led to the Cambridge Analytica scandal which broke in September 2018. Following this, there were no posts on Zuckerberg's personal page until 5 days later when there is a photo of him and Priscilla baking hamantaschen. Since then, the posts are much less frequent. It seems that his attempt at being a celebrity statesman failed. The primary image of Zuckerberg that is circulated on social media at the time of writing – and from which many memes have been created – is of him drinking water during the 2018 senate hearings as if he is facing a prison penance. It is a distinctly inhospitable image; Zuckerberg has lost control of his mediated persona and is now placed in a hostile environment. The relative consequence of this has been minimal: Zuckerberg is currently only the fourth richest person in the world, rather than second. Nevertheless, it is clear that, at least for now, the presidential moment for Zuckerberg has passed. Instead, in 2018, Zuckerberg hired former deputy prime minister of the United Kingdom, Sir Nick Clegg, as Vice President of Global Affairs and Communications to be Facebook's political face. Clegg, experienced at handling substantive political criticism, acts as a lightning rod for the public fallout between Facebook's branding and its actions.

Facebook has strengthened its position as a cornerstone of our social infrastructure in a digital age. In the face of global criticism, Zuckerberg's strategy has simply been to acquire any company that looks to impinge in the spaces of social media that depend on affects of hospitality (WhatsApp, Instagram), a strategy that is likely to continue to succeed given Facebook's vast resources. More than this though, Facebook is embedded in the ever-expanding unregulated American monopoly tech industry. And this industry – with its gendered, classed and racialised logics – is only getting more powerful.

Significantly for the purposes of this article, Zuckerberg and Trump can be rivals who work in alignment to protect the terrain of their rivalry: American capitalism. Trump will

not regulate or break up Facebook, and Facebook will not censor Trump (at least not until political advertising was banned – rather than regulated – on Facebook in the week before the 2020 election). There is a struggle taking place in the Year of Travel, and this is visually mediated through representations of American hospitality: Trump's celebration of ostentatious wealth illustrated through his eponymous hotels and wine business, and Zuckerberg's commodification of the everyday, visually conveyed through his photographs of hamantaschen on Facebook. However, the basic structures of 'hospitable' sovereignty and capitalism underpin both. The aesthetics may be different, but the struggle is for pre-eminence within a racialised capitalist hegemony rather than a challenge to it.

Perhaps this is what they discussed over a patriotic meal when Trump invited Zuckerberg for a private dinner at the White House in October 2019 (Gabbatt, 2019). In any respect, it was nice for Trump to return the favour after Zuckerberg had been hosting the president's political campaigns on his platforms for so many years.

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Note

1. See 'Proposal Seven: Approval of the Adoption of Our Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation' where it states that 'Mr. Zuckerberg's leave of absence or resignation would not constitute a Voluntary Resignation if it were in connection with his serving in a government position or office'. https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1326801/000132680116000053/facebook2016prelimproxysta.htm#sbf2ac1bbbd0a4adbb8391a4afd2ef1c1. These changes to the constitution of Facebook took place in May 2016, so these ambitions predate Trump winning the Republican primary. It could therefore indicate a desire to serve in the presumed Clinton administration. Significantly, the phrase 'government position or office' appears 12 times in the document allowing Zuckerberg to take a leave of absence for up to 2 years in relation to a political role without losing his superior voting rights for the platform. Given the company's shareholdings are organised to give him complete control, this period could be extended or amended at a later date if need be (i.e. him winning elected office).

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