

Fear and Paranoia in Republican Presidential Campaigns

How Republican presidential candidates have used issues of crime, race, and immigration to mobilize voters in the 1988 and 2016 presidential elections

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

After reading news stories following the recent political and cultural development in the United States, one might get the impression that the rhetoric used in the political landscape today is more divisive and fearmongering than ever. However, in 1964, historian Richard Hofstadter released an essay called *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*. In his essay, Hofstadter argued that this type of rhetoric was nothing new to American politics and termed this rhetorical style “the paranoid style”(Hofstadter, 1964). To support this view, Hofstadter provides several examples of how the paranoid style has been part of the American political landscape since 1776. He suggested that what the practitioners of the paranoid style all have in common is that they feel like they are living at a “turning point” and that they “see the fate of conspiracy in apocalyptic terms” (Hofstadter, 1964). Moreover, they continuously warn their followers that the status quo is at risk and appeal to people’s fear of losing their way of life. Since Hofstadter’s essay was written in 1964, it does not contain any examples of the paranoid style usages in more modern times. This thesis aims to examine if Hofstadter’s paranoid style also can be applied to political rhetoric and movements that came after it was written.

In 1988 President George H. W. Bush built a campaign with Lee Atwater as his campaign manager. One of the center points for the Bush campaign was the Willie Horton case, where a convicted felon who was out of prison for a weekend through a furlough program committed assault, armed robbery, and rape. Atwater used the incident to launch an ad campaign against Michael Dukakis, the Democratic candidate, who had been supporting the furlough program when he was Governor of Massachusetts. In 2015, Donald Trump announced his candidacy for U.S. president. He promised that if he became president, he would build a wall between the United States and Mexico, and Mexico would have to pay for it. Throughout his campaign, Trump painted a fearful image of the state of the United States. He tweeted and released ads about the problem with immigration and insisted that illegal immigrants posed a threat to American citizens. Trump promised to tighten security at the border to Mexico and ban people from certain countries with large Muslim populations from entering the United States, proclaiming that immigrants from these countries would be dangerous. Both Bush and Trump used fear as a tool to mobilize voters in their respective campaigns. In this thesis, I will try to answer the following question. To what extent can Hofstadter’s thesis on the

paranoid style in American politics help explain George H. W. Bush's and Donald Trump's exploitation of race and fear during the 1988 and 2016 presidential campaigns?

In a thesis of this size, there is insufficient space to examine every presidential campaign that has used fear as a tool to mobilize voters. Therefore, this thesis will focus on the 1988 campaign of Bush, and the 2016 campaign of Trump. There are multiple reasons for why exactly these campaigns have been chosen. Firstly, both campaigns ended up winning the election. The fact that the campaigns won while using rhetoric about fear suggests that the effort was effective and successful. Some might argue that George W. Bush ran a campaign that exploited American's fear of terrorism in his 2004 quest for reelection, three years after 9/11, but this thesis will not cover his campaigns. The fear of immigration will be covered through Trump and his campaign. Bush Sr.'s campaign was more focused on issues of crime and race and offers a different perspective on fear-based campaigning. By focusing only on Bush Sr. and Trump, there is more room to examine their respective campaigns. There is also a significant difference between how campaigns were performed with the introduction of social media, which was a platform Trump used to his advantage. The passage of time between the two campaigns provides an interesting perspective on how campaigning has changed. Other possible candidates for this examination could have been Nixon or Reagan, but many books have already written about them and their campaigns.

In order to determine if Hofstadter's theory on the paranoid style can serve as a theoretical framework for an examination of the presidential campaigns of Bush and Trump, we need to understand what the paranoid style is. The second chapter of this thesis will focus on Hofstadter's essay *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* from 1964, where he first presented his theory in written form. In this essay, Hofstadter provides historical context and claims that one can find examples of the paranoid style being used from the earliest days of American history. He also explains what the paranoid style is and how it has been used. By examining the historical examples that Hofstadter uses in his essay we can see how the paranoid style has changed throughout the years, and what has stayed the same. This way, when we examine the presidential campaigns, we can identify similarities between Hofstadter's historical examples of the paranoid style in use with the more modern campaigns. We can also see if the Paranoid style has evolved or changed when we apply it to the campaigns.

The third chapter of this thesis will focus on the presidential campaign of George H. W. Bush in 1988. Bush chose Lee Atwater as his campaign manager, who had worked with President Ronald Reagan and become known for his aggressive campaign strategies. One controversial part of the Bush campaign was the ads concerning a convicted felon who became known as “Willie” Horton. Horton had been found guilty of murder and served time in Massachusetts, the state where the Democratic candidate Michael Dukakis was Governor. Dukakis supported a furlough program that gave people in jail an opportunity to get out of prison for a weekend. Horton escaped during his weekend furlough and ended up breaking into a home where he assaulted a man and raped a woman. The Bush campaign was appalled by this incident and accused Dukakis of supporting a system that could let people convicted of murder out of prison. To broadcast this event and make it known all over America, Bush ran ads attacking Dukakis for his support of the furlough program. The Republicans knew that they had to get the focus of the election away from the economy, as the Republican stances did not have the same broad appeal as they had during the Reagan years. It was considered to be easier to reach out to the masses with questions regarding crime and race. The sources used in this section are mainly books written by Doug Rossinow and John J. Pitney, Jr. Rossinow is a professor of history at Metropolitan State University and wrote the book *The Reagan Era: A History of the 1980s* in 2015. In a chapter named *The Election of Willie Horton* in this book Rossinow discusses how Bush and his campaign used the Horton incident and other tactics to attack Governor Dukakis during the presidential race. Pitney is a political scientist and Roy P. Crocker Professor of American Politics at McKenna College. He wrote the book *After Reagan: Bush, Dukakis, and the 1988 Election* in 2019. This book explores different explanations for the outcome of the 1988 election, as well as analyzing how the election influenced politics for decades. Pitney tries to explain why campaigns are consequential and how the 1988 campaign might have been more than most.

The fourth chapter of this thesis will focus on the presidential campaign of Donald J. Trump in 2016. Many criticized Trump for being racist and Islamophobic with his remarks and promises regarding immigration and illegal immigration into the United States. One of Trump’s most essential tools in his campaign was his Twitter profile, which allowed him to connect to his followers and express his opinions directly and unfiltered. One of the primary sources used in this section is the 2019 book *The Twitter Presidency: Donald J. Trump and the Politics of White Rage* written by Brian L. Ott and Greg Dickinson. Ott is Professor of Communication Studies and Director of TTU Press at the Texas Tech University, and

Dickinson is a Professor and Chair of Communication at Colorado State University. Their book explores the rhetorical style of Trump, and they argue that his manner of speaking and writing reflects “an aesthetics of white rage, and it is rooted in authoritarianism, narcissism, and demagoguery (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. Preface). The book explores Trump’s use of Twitter, as it was his preferred way of spreading his message, and argue that the platform allows Trump to speak effectively to people with “white rage” through the defining characteristics of the platform; “simplicity, impulsivity, and incivility”(Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. Preface). The authors also included a large selection of tweets made by Trump, from before he announced he was running for President of the United States until around halfway through his presidency. Some of these tweets will be looked closer at to see if they fit into Hofstadter’s theory of the paranoid style.

The fifth chapter will focus on the discussion and comparison of the campaigns and Hofstadter’s thesis. The goal is to examine if the ideas from Hofstadter’s essay can be used to understand the use of fear in the two campaigns that have been explored. Is Hofstadter’s thesis applicable to more modern instances of fearmongering, or does it fit best into Hofstadter’s historical and contemporary examples? In this chapter, examples of fearmongering from both campaigns will be compared to each other but also to Hofstadter’s thesis.

Chapter 2 – Hofstadter’s Thesis

2.1 The Paranoid Style

As mentioned earlier, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* is an essay first released in Harper’s Magazine in 1964. The essay was written by the historian and scholar Richard Hofstadter, who was DeWitt Clinton Professor of American History at Columbia University. In 1956 he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his book *The Age of Reform*, where he compared Progressives, Populists, and New Dealers, and in 1964 he won another Pulitzer Prize, this time for General Nonfiction with his book *Anti-intellectualism in American Life* (Olmsted, 2018, p. 38). Hofstadter altered his 1963 Herbert Spencer Lecture that he held at Oxford University into *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* essay (Hofstadter, 1964). The essay explores how, primarily, what Hofstadter calls minority movements on the Right had used a particular form of political persuasion (Olmsted, 2018, p. 40). Hofstadter opens his essay by explaining that there has often been room for “angry minds” in American politics. In the years running up to the release of this essay, Hofstadter had seen how these “angry minds” among extreme right-wingers had mobilized through the Goldwater movement and gained a lot of political leverage through what he called “the animosity and passions of a small minority” (Hofstadter, 1964). He coined this rhetoric and political discourse the paranoid style. Hofstadter explains his reasoning for choosing this name in his essay:

“I call it the paranoid style simply because no other word adequately evokes the sense of heated exaggeration, suspiciousness, and conspiratorial fantasy that I have in mind. In using the expression “paranoid style” I am not speaking in a clinical sense, but borrowing a clinical term for other purposes.” (Hofstadter, 1964)

Hofstadter specifies that this term is indeed supposed to be pejorative, expressing his contempt and disapproval for using this style, saying that “the paranoid style has a greater affinity for bad causes than good” (Hofstadter, 1964). At the same time, Hofstadter points out that there is not really anything that prevents the paranoid style from being used to promote reasonable demands or programs, as the style is not concerned with whether an idea is true or false but rather with how it is believed in (Hofstadter, 1964). Overall, Hofstadter’s goal was

to look at the psychology of politics in the U.S. through the rhetorical style of said politics. The paranoid style is not a new aspect of politics in the U.S. Hofstadter provides examples of the usage throughout American history, with citations from 1951, 1895, and 1855 (Hofstadter, 1964). The first example he provides is from Senator Joseph McCarthy, who in 1951 was speaking about the “parlous situation” in the United States for which he blames a “great conspiracy” in the government (Hofstadter, 1964). McCarthy has since probably been best known for the term McCarthyism which is named after him. The term refers to McCarthy’s outrageous and demagogic behavior and comments during his time as a Senator and can be defined as “the attempt to restrict individual dissent or political criticism by claiming that it is pro-Communist or unpatriotic”(Schrecker, 1988, p. 197). McCarthy often declared that the federal government was full of communist sympathizers, which led to the term being named after him. The second example of the paranoid style that Hofstadter analyzes is from fifty years earlier. In 1895 a manifesto signed by leaders of the Populist party suggested a conspiracy between European and American gold gamblers to “deal a blow” to the prosperity and the independence of the United States (Hofstadter, 1964). The last example provided is from an article in a newspaper from Texas. This article argues that European Monarchs and the Pope have infiltrated the Executive Chamber and that the president has been corrupted by the “infectious venom of Catholicism”(Hofstadter, 1964).

These three examples show us that the paranoid style has been consistently used throughout American history. Hofstadter was describing a contemporary political style and a style that had been consistently used for a long time. Hofstadter describes these three provided examples as the “keynote” of the paranoid style (Hofstadter, 1964). He also mentions several other examples of movements and instances of the style being used, such as the anti-Masonic movement, the contemporary American right-wing, and the anti-Catholic movement. Hofstadter clarifies that while he is mentioning a plethora of examples of the paranoid style being used, he focuses on a few major occurrences of the style throughout history, rather than determining all the different alterations of the style (Hofstadter, 1964). By concentrating on a few significant events, he can take a closer look at some of the events where the paranoid style appeared with all its characteristics (Hofstadter, 1964). Two of the episodes that he dives further into happened towards the end of the 1700s and in the beginning of the 1800s, where there was a lot of fear against Illuminism and Masonry.

Illuminism was first established in 1776 by a professor of law at the University of Ingolstadt, Adam Weishaupt. Hofstadter describes Illuminism as “no more than another version of

Enlightenment rationalism, spiced with the anticlerical atmosphere of eighteenth-century Bavaria”(Hofstadter, 1964). He also suggests that the movement was somewhat “naïve and utopian” in its objective for humanity to be led by reason and that its “humanitarian rationalism” seemed to be popular in the Masonic lodges (Hofstadter, 1964). When the movement reached the United States, there was a panic among those who believed that Illuminism would result in “subversive activities.” This reaction was partly because of the French Revolution’s common reception and how people in New England and the clergy responded to the rise of Jeffersonian democracy (Hofstadter, 1964). The first encounter the American people had with Illuminism was in 1797 when a Scottish scientist named John Robison released a book called *Proofs of a Conspiracy Against All the Religions and Governments of Europe, Carried on in the Secret Meetings of Free Masons, Illuminati, and Reading Societies*. Robison had been a minor follower of Masonry in Great Britain, but when he learned about the movement from Bavaria, he was stirred to anger (Hofstadter, 1964). Hofstadter describes how Robison looked at the political influence and moral character of Illuminism as if he had taken a “paranoid leap into fantasy” (Hofstadter, 1964). Robison thought that the purpose of Illuminism was to topple the European governments, abolish the religious establishments, and he blamed it for majorly contributing to the French Revolution. He described the movement as an evil plan wrecking Europe without moral principles (Hofstadter, 1964). According to Robison, the followers of Illuminism had plans for creating a tea that could cause abortion, a stench bomb-like device, and a substance that could blind or kill someone if it was sprayed on their face (Hofstadter, 1964). This conception of Illuminism was soon spread through New England. After reading Robison’s book, a minister of the Massachusetts Congregational establishment in Boston named Jedidiah Morse, delivered a sermon where he was convinced that Illuminism inspired a plot that the country should defend itself against (Hofstadter, 1964). Federalists throughout New England who agonized over the increasing religious unfaithfulness and support for Jeffersonian democracy took notice of Morse’s cautionary tale. Not before long, condemnation of the Illuminati was commonplace at sermons all over New England, trying to make people believe that the nation was full of followers of Illuminism (Hofstadter, 1964).

One of the other episodes Hofstadter described was the anti-Masonic movement of the late 1820s and the 1830s. The incident shares certain characteristics with the uproar against the Bavarian Illuminati, but where the first episode mainly happened in New England, the anti-Masonic movement spread over a large portion of the northern part of the United States

(Hofstadter, 1964). The anti-Masonic movement was not only popular because of people's "natural enthusiasm" for its traits but because it was attractive for politicians. According to Hofstadter, the movement was joined and used by many men who could not afford to ignore it, even though they might not initially have supported its philosophy (Hofstadter, 1964). At the same time, Hofstadter points out that the anti-Masonic movement was at its core a folk movement and that the real catalyst for the movement was the "rural enthusiasts" who fully believed in it (Hofstadter, 1964). Many considered Masonry to be a sinister conspiracy against republican government. It was thought to be especially connected to treason, such as the Burr conspiracy, which some declared had been managed by Masons (Hofstadter, 1964). The accusations against Masonry were numerous, such as establishing their authority within the state and federal governments and that they had created their own jurisdiction where they had their own commitments and penalties that could be enforced with the penalty of death (Hofstadter, 1964). Hofstadter points out that the friction between democracy and the secret society was so significant that other more innocent societies, such as the academic honor society Phi Beta Kappa, was also attacked (Hofstadter, 1964). People believed that the Masonic order held themselves exempt from common laws since they had pledged always to help each other no matter what and were supposed to "extend fraternal indulgence" at all times (Hofstadter, 1964). Following that logic, Masonic followers in law enforcement and with judicial influence had to be cooperating with criminals who were Masons. The press was presumed to be infiltrated by Masons, and therefore, all news that would paint Masonry in a bad light could be silenced by Masonic editors (Hofstadter, 1964). People accused Masonry of being a "fraternity of the privileged, closing business opportunities and nearly monopolizing political offices" (Hofstadter, 1964). Hofstadter clarifies that there may have been some aspects of reality and truth to the way people viewed Masonry at the time. He notes that the essential element is the "apocalyptic" and "absolutistic" way in which the animosity was articulated against Masons (Hofstadter, 1964). Hofstadter provides us with a quote from the author of the standard exposition of anti-Masonry, who stated that Masonry was "not only the most abominable but also the most dangerous institution that ever was imposed on man [...] It may truly be said to be Hell's master piece" (Hofstadter, 1964). Anti-Masonry clearly fits into Hofstadter's description of the paranoid style, with how the rhetoric was conveyed with a great amount of animosity towards its recipients.

2.2 Dispossession

After illustrating several episodes and instances of the paranoid style in use throughout the history of the United States, Hofstadter jumps forward into his own contemporary time to take a look at the right-wing's use of the style. The main difference between the earlier examples and Hofstadter's contemporary right-wing is that the right-wingers feel dispossessed. The people who believed in those previous movements felt that they were resisting people who posed a threat to their country and supported people who were still in control of their country. The right-wing at Hofstadter's time was different; they felt dispossessed (Hofstadter, 1964). They believed that their country had been taken away from them and that their way of life was in danger, but they were set on taking it back and avoiding falling further down the rabbit hole (Hofstadter, 1964). Hofstadter uses the explanation of the American sociologist Daniel Bell to show why the right-wing felt dispossessed:

“The old American virtues have already been eaten away by cosmopolitans and intellectuals; the old competitive capitalism has been gradually undermined by socialistic and communistic schemers; the old national security and independence have been destroyed by treasonous plots, having as their most powerful agents not merely outsiders and foreigners as of old but major statesmen who are at the very centers of American power. Their predecessors had discovered conspiracies; the modern radical right finds conspiracy to be betrayal from on high.” (Hofstadter, 1964)

In addition to feeling dispossessed, the paranoid style of Hofstadter's time is affected by the media differently as well. Compared with those whom the previous users of the paranoid style accused, the new right-wing of Hofstadter's time had a much more well-known opposition. Before the accused were groups and people like practitioners of Masonry and Illuminism who was not well known for the majority of the people in the United States, but now they had been replaced by prominent public figures such as Presidents, secretaries of State, and Supreme Court Justices (Hofstadter, 1964). These new more prominent figures made it easier for the paranoid style users to spread their message over the country. Significant events that happened on a global scale, such as World War Two, the Korean War, and the Cold War, gave the right-wing users of the paranoid style a “vast theatre for his imagination, full of rich and proliferating detail, replete with realistic cues and undeniable proofs of the validity of his suspicions” (Hofstadter, 1964). As Hofstadter's points out, the

real question for those who buy into the literature of the scholars of the paranoid style is not how the United States has managed to be affected by all the dangers they believe in, but rather how the country has been able to last at all (Hofstadter, 1964). Hofstadter divides the essential elements of the right-wing from his time into three. The first is about what they believe is a grand conspiracy to undermine capitalism and lay the foundations for socialism or communism to take over. The second argument is that the United States government has been heavily influenced by communists, which has resulted in policies that have been selling out national interests. Lastly, the entire country is supposedly so affected by Communist agents that the press, the media, and the education system are trying to undermine and halt the opposition of those who wish to fight back (Hofstadter, 1964). Hofstadter uses senator McCarthy as an example to show these elements of the contemporary right-wing in action. McCarthy delivered a formal accusation of the Secretary of State, George C. Marshall, in 1952 where he painted Marshall as a betrayer of American interests, the sole reason for every American failure or defeat, and blamed him for America's downturn in power during the Second World War (Hofstadter, 1964). McCarthy's accusations captivated the press who gave him all the attention he wanted, and the national leadership of the Republican Party had to submit to the "McCarthyite inquisition" (Olmsted, 2018, p. 38).

After providing various examples of the paranoid style's usage throughout American history, Hofstadter then tries to find the characteristics and define what the users of the paranoid style, or the paranoid spokesmen as Hofstadter calls them, have in common. One thing that is always a part of the paranoid style is that they feel like they are constantly living in a crucial moment in history, that their way of living is in danger (Hofstadter, 1964). The paranoid spokesman believes that the cause they are fighting for is a clash between good and evil, where they are on the good side. Since the conflict is against true evil, it is not enough for the paranoid spokesman to let politicians make compromises with the issues. They believe that they have to fight to the bitter end for their causes, end either win or lose (Hofstadter, 1964). The issue with this attitude to social conflict is that the demand for absolute success creates goals that would be unrealistic to achieve. The goals are often unattainable in practice, which results in a growing frustration among the paranoid spokesmen (Hofstadter, 1964). When your expectations towards what you can achieve through politics are never met, it makes you feel disappointed and ultimately grows your frustration with the system and the enemy. Hofstadter argues that even small victories will leave the paranoid spokesmen feeling powerless since they demand absolute victory over what they consider evil and wrong. Since

not even partial victories are satisfactory, the animosity towards the enemy is constantly growing (Hofstadter, 1964). They perceive their enemy as someone with a desire to harm, who are cruel and powerful. According to Hofstadter, the enemy of the paranoid spokesman does not view history the same way as they do. They believe that their enemies try to manipulate the process of history by creating disasters and crises and then profiting from the chaos (Hofstadter, 1964). The events of history are interpreted on a personal level for the paranoid spokesman. The events happened not because they were part of the natural flow of history but because of the actions of someone who wanted it to happen. The paranoid spokesman often believes that their enemies have tremendous amounts of influence and resources, in addition to owning the press, which is why they are able to alter history to their will (Hofstadter, 1964).

Hofstadter argues that the way the paranoid spokesman views his enemies can, on many occasions, be seen as projection (Hofstadter, 1964). This means that they project aspects of themselves on to their enemies. They can project both the positive and undesirable aspects of themselves on to others, but also model themselves or copy their adversaries. Hofstadter provides a few examples of what he calls “Secret organizations set up to combat secret organizations” and how they were using imitation. The Ku Klux Klan imitated Catholicism by wearing priestly robes and using elaborate rituals and hierarchy, and the John Birch Society was talking about a “ruthless prosecution of the ideological war” akin to what they would find among their Communist enemies (Hofstadter, 1964). Someone who was acquainted with this way of thinking was senator Barry Goldwater, who once wrote this in relation to his presidential campaigns: “I would suggest [...] that we analyze and copy the strategy of the enemy; theirs has worked and ours has not” (Hofstadter, 1964). With projection, advocates of the paranoid style can convey their concerns regarding elements they view as sinful or wrong such as sexual freedom and an absence of moral restriction, which they see in their enemies (Hofstadter, 1964). People have been linked to illegal sexual behavior because of their religion and race by the paranoids when often it is their own fantasies that are morally questionable (Hofstadter, 1964).

To summarize, Hofstadter argues that his thesis of the paranoid style is not just a new and contemporary phenomenon of his time but rather a rhetorical style that had been used consistently throughout most of American history. Hofstadter focuses mostly on the usage of the style in the United States but acknowledges that the style is not just an American concept as it can be found internationally as well (Hofstadter, 1964). He provides examples of the

style being used by people opposed to Illuminism around the 1800s, anti-Masons in the 1820s and 1830s, and Senator McCarthy in the 1950s. Hofstadter acknowledges that the usage of the paranoid style has evolved and changed throughout history. While the people connected to the old movements believed that they were resisting an enemy of their country, the contemporary paranoid spokesmen of Hofstadter's time felt like their country had been taken away from them. They felt dispossessed. They had to take their country back and restore their way of living. The new people who were accused by the paranoid spokesmen were no longer just followers of movements like Masonry and Illuminism, but prominent public figures such as secretaries of state and Presidents. This made it easier to spread the accusations since the people being accused were public figures that most people knew about. The paranoid spokesman believes that he is living at a crucial moment in history. They are fighting a battle between good and evil, and they are on the good side. They must fight until the bitter end since evil cannot be allowed to persevere. Hofstadter argues that the paranoid spokesman is often projecting themselves onto their enemies. They project both their undesirable and positive aspects onto their enemies, but they also model themselves after their opponents to use their political tactics. The two following sections of this paper will focus on the 1988 election and campaign of George H. W. Bush and the 2016 election and campaign of Donald J. Trump, respectively. After examining these two campaigns individually, they will be compared and discussed in light of Hofstadter's thesis of the paranoid style.

Chapter 3 – Bush and the Election of 1988

3.1 Bush and Dukakis

The presidential election of 1988 was an election where there was no incumbent president on the ballot. Since President Ronald Reagan was ineligible for a third term, the front runner for the Republican party was George H. W. Bush, who had served as the Vice President during Reagan's terms. Bush's main competitor in the Republican primaries was Senator Robert Dole from Kansas. According to Professor of history Doug Rossinow, neither Bush nor Dole were favorites among movement conservatives of the Republican party (Rossinow, 2015, p. 242). Some viewed Bush, with his tall and lean stature, as a part of the eastern establishment (Rossinow, 2015, p. 242). Bush and his family had moved from Connecticut to Texas, but they still owned a large family manor on the coast of Maine. It was hard for Bush to get rid of the public's image of him as an east coast elite who moved down south, but he continued to try during his 1988 campaign where he proudly showed his fondness of fried pork rinds (Rossinow, 2015, p. 242). Even though Bush had his skeptics, he was well-liked by those who got to know him personally. After becoming Reagan's running mate and later Vice President, Bush showed consistent support towards Reagan and his politics during his presidency (Rossinow, 2015, p. 242). Reagan, unsurprisingly, gave Bush his endorsement for president, but he did so without drawing much attention to it (Rossinow, 2015, p. 242). Bush had to show that he deserved the presidency, not just because he got endorsed by the departing president. Dole was an experienced lawmaker and won the state of Iowa in the Republican primaries, a state that Bush had taken in 1980 (Rossinow, 2015, p. 242). Another contestant who sought the nomination was televangelist Pat Robertson from Virginia, who did well in caucuses in both Iowa and Michigan (Rossinow, 2015, p. 242). As the primaries moved more towards the southern states, it was clear that Bush's support towards Reagan was popular among southerners, and Bush's nomination started to become a certainty (Rossinow, 2015, p. 242).

On the side of the Democratic Party it was the Governor of Massachusetts, Michael Dukakis, who was nominated for president. Dukakis's most significant contender for the Democratic nomination was Reverend Jesse Jackson, who had also tried to be nominated in 1984, with the idea of the rainbow coalition. Jackson did well in 1984, but he could not defeat Mondale,

and his success then and afterward had made him a strong competitor for Dukakis (Rossinow, 2015, p. 243). Even though Jackson had a considerable appeal across race and spoke harsher against Reaganism than Dukakis, Dukakis still managed to secure the nomination from the Democratic Party (Rossinow, 2015, p. 243). This meant that the presidential election of 1988 was between Bush as the Republican representative and Dukakis as the Democratic representative. Neither Bush nor Dukakis were known for their charisma, Bush could be petulant, and Dukakis had a very unresponsive demeanor, so the campaigns looked like they would be more policy driven (Rossinow, 2015, pp. 242-244). The political issues in 1988 suggested that the Democrats would have the advantage this time. Bush promised that he would not raise any taxes if he became president, which made him popular among Republicans, but there was no longer the same wide appeal for taxation policies that it had been in 1980 and 1884 (Rossinow, 2015, p. 244). Other issues such as social problems like homelessness, HIV and AIDS did not get solved by Reaganism, and internationally the threat that Communism had posed towards Americans and their way of living had diminished in the eye of the public (Rossinow, 2015, p. 244). Reagan had successfully restored a lot of trust with Gorbachev, which meant that Bush could no longer effectively use the Republican Party's long-established fearmongering towards Communism (Rossinow, 2015, p. 244). Since Bush did not have an incentive to focus on foreign policy the way his party had done before, it is not relevant to examine if the thesis of the paranoid style can be applied to Bush's foreign policies. The attention needs to be turned to domestic issues, which were epitomized by the fear of crime and connected to the issue of race. Dukakis, on the other hand, could run a campaign on domestic policy and offer a conceivable plan to fix the problems of the country and be at a great advantage (Rossinow, 2015, p. 244). The Bush campaign had to come up with a way to turn the tide and figure out how to respond to a political landscape disadvantageous to them. Bush had brought in Lee Atwater as his campaign manager, who had previously worked as an advisor for Reagan as well. Atwater and the Bush campaign started conducting research where they examined Dukakis's time as Governor in Massachusetts to see if they could find anything that they could use against him (Rossinow, 2015, p. 244). What they found were two complicated and possibly embarrassing situations for Dukakis, that according to Rossinow, Atwater viewed as "political dynamite" (Rossinow, 2015, p. 244).

The two incidents that Atwater and his team found regarding Dukakis were about bills that he had vetoed. One of the bills was a bill that the Massachusetts legislature had passed in 1976

that required students in public schools to recite the Pledge of Allegiance together with their teachers once every day (Rossinow, 2015, p. 245). Dukakis believed that since members of religious minorities had the right to refuse to make such pledges, the Pledge bill would be ruled as unconstitutional by the courts if it were to become a law (Rossinow, 2015, p. 245). Because of this, Dukakis believed that the bill was ostentatious and ineffective and therefore vetoed it (Rossinow, 2015, p. 245). However, as some of the Massachusetts legislators had foreseen, a considerable number of Americans would not accept such legal interpretation and rather believe that opposing such a bill showed “insufficient patriotism” by the opposer (Rossinow, 2015, p. 245). Atwater believed that the Bush campaign could use this veto to put Dukakis in a tough spot, but it was the other bill and the controversy surrounding it that became the center of the Bush campaign (Rossinow, 2015, p. 245).

3.2 Weekend Furloughs in Massachusetts

In 1975, Dukakis became governor of Massachusetts and took over a furlough program that was already established. The program was supposed to encourage good behavior among inmates by letting them get out of prison for a weekend (Rossinow, 2015, p. 245). People who served time for first-degree murders were not eligible to participate in the program, but the state Supreme Judicial Court ruled that they could not be refused to participate (Rossinow, 2015, p. 245). In 1976, Dukakis received a bill from the legislature that went against the ruling from the Court and demanded that inmates who served time for first-degree murder would not be eligible for the program (Rossinow, 2015, p. 245). Dukakis was confident that just like the Pledge of Allegiance bill, this new bill would be stopped by the courts, and he vetoed it (Rossinow, 2015, p. 245). Just as the pledge bill, this was seen as a controversial move and garnered a lot of attention locally, and eventually, Dukakis signed a bill that would remove prisoners who had a life sentence for murder from the program in 1988 (Rossinow, 2015, p. 245). However, in 1986 a man named William Horton, who would later be known as “Willie” Horton, ran away during his weekend furlough (Rossinow, 2015, p. 245). Horton had used the furlough program nine times earlier, but in 1986 he went out for the tenth time and did not return (Pitney, 2019, p. 147). On April 3, 1987, Horton had traveled to Oxon Hill in Maryland, where he broke into the home of a man named Cliff Barnes (Pitney, 2019, p. 147). Horton had tied up Barnes and was torturing him, and when

Barnes's fiancé came home, she was raped by Horton twice (Pitney, 2019, p. 147). When Barnes eventually managed to escape and call the police, Horton tried to flee the scene in a stolen car but was arrested by the police after a destructive chase (Pitney, 2019, p. 147).

Atwater believed that the Bush campaign could use these incidents to their advantage and wanted to test it out. In May of 1986, Atwater and the other closest advisors to the Bush campaign went to Paramus in New Jersey, where they planned to figure out how people would respond to their newly found information on Dukakis (Rossinow, 2015, p. 245). They managed to gather fifteen voters who had said that they had voted for Reagan in 1984 but were planning to vote for Dukakis this time around (Rossinow, 2015, p. 245). The voters were all white and mostly from a middle-class and catholic background (Rossinow, 2015, p. 245). Atwater and the other advisors used a moderator to lead the group, and they soon found out that the voters actually did not really know much about Dukakis (Rossinow, 2015, p. 245). The voters were then asked by the moderator what they thought about Dukakis' veto against the Pledge of Allegiance bill and how he supported a furlough program that had resulted in a convicted murderer committing assault and rape (Rossinow, 2015, pp. 245-246). The voters were shocked to hear this new information about the man they were planning to vote for and said that they would rather vote for Bush, which meant that Atwater and the Bush campaign had found a new tactic that they could use (Rossinow, 2015, p. 246).

After conducting his research, Atwater went to Bush's family estate in Maine, where he presented what he had learned and laid out his new strategy for the campaign (Rossinow, 2015, p. 246). At this point, Bush was behind Dukakis in the polls and thus agreed to use Horton and the veto of the Pledge bill as the main issues of the campaign (Rossinow, 2015, p. 246). They hoped that these cases would detract the focus from the agenda of national policy that did not favor Bush and his campaign (Rossinow, 2015, p. 246). According to Rossinow, many found it surprising that Bush seemed so eager to run a campaign based on a story of murder, assault, and rape, but there were no official rules that stated that Bush could not use these cases against Dukakis (Rossinow, 2015, p. 246). In the 1980s, crime was a major concern for the public which Bush and Atwater used to their advantage as they focused on the emotional details of the Horton case, where they tried to make Dukakis seem like a man who supported murderers, cold and unappealing (Rossinow, 2015, p. 246). Rossinow argues that Bush and Atwater "made their campaign a master class in demagoguery", pointing to a statement made by the chief of media for the Bush campaign, Roger Ailes, who said that "the only question is whether we depict Willie Horton with a knife in his hand or without it"

(Rossinow, 2015, p. 246). It was not common at the time to base a presidential campaign on a horrific crime story. Bush and the leadership of his campaign made the story of Willie Horton the fundament of the campaign, and it worked. At a campaign appearance, Bush exclaimed, “what is it about the American flag that upsets this man so much?” in an attempt to portray Dukakis as unpatriotic and as a supporter of Horton (Rossinow, 2015, p. 246). Later in the campaign, according to a reporter, Bush himself retold the story of Horton’s furlough in detail, and other republicans started to spread rumors without substantiation about Dukakis’s mental health and his wife Kitty’s past (Rossinow, 2015, p. 247). According to Rossinow, no one had seen American politics being discussed with such a careless disregard for consequences since the prime of McCarthyism in the beginning of the 1950s (Rossinow, 2015, p. 247).

3.3 Advertisements

John J. Pitney, Jr. is a Professor of American Politics at Claremont McKenna College and has written a book on the campaigns of the 1988 election between Bush and Dukakis. He argues that furlough and Horton issue’s media coverage was not substantial enough to cause Bush’s surge in the polls during the late summer, but when the issue started to be broadcasted through commercials, it started to become prominent and influential (Pitney, 2019, p. 149). The first commercial about the Horton issue was created by a part of a group called the National Security Political Action Committee, or the NSPAC for short (Pitney, 2019, p. 149). The part of the group that created the commercial was called Americans for Bush, who got help by a political operative named Floyd Brown (Pitney, 2019, p. 149). Brown once told reporters that “When we’re through, people are going to think that Willie Horton is Michal Dukakis’s nephew” (Rossinow, 2015, p. 246). The NSPAC raised money through donations, and in early September of 1988, they purchased a small spot for a cable television ad about crime, which mentioned Horton but did not show his face (Pitney, 2019, p. 149). Two weeks later, they ran a new commercial, but this time they included a mugshot in black and white of Horton’s face (Pitney, 2019, p. 149). The ad read like this:

Bush and Dukakis on crime. Bush supports the death penalty for first degree murderers. Dukakis not only opposes the death penalty, he allowed first degree murderers to have weekend passes from prison. One was Willie Horton, who

murdered a boy in a robbery, stabbing him 19 times. Despite a life sentence, Horton received 10 weekend passes from prison. Horton fled, kidnapped a young couple, stabbing the man and repeatedly raping his girlfriend. Weekend prison passes. Dukakis on crime. (Pitney, 2019, p. 149)

The ad was criticized by many. Some of the allegations in the ad were brought to question, such as the fact that it was not Dukakis who had started the furlough program in Massachusetts, but the former Republican Governor Francis Sargent, and that it had never been decided in a court that it was Horton who had stabbed Joseph Fournier, the boy who had been killed when Horton and two accomplices had robbed a gas station where he worked (Pitney, 2019, p. 149). The Bush campaign tried to distance themselves from the Americans for Bush project from the NSPAC. They wrote to the group in May of 1988 to inform them that they did not approve of the group's actions and that they wanted them to stop using the Bush name in the Americans for Bush project (Pitney, 2019, p. 149). The Bush campaign even filed a complaint with the FEC, or the Federal Election Commission, where they accused the NSPAC of deceiving its donors into thinking that they were a component of the Bush campaign, but they did not take up the subject matter of any ads (Pitney, 2019, p. 149). Both Atwater and another advisor from the Bush campaign, James Baker, wrote to the NSPAC after they had aired the Horton ad to complain about how they had used Bush's name in the ad, but neither of them asked for the ad to be pulled off the air (Pitney, 2019, p. 150). A lawyer from the Bush campaign informed that a request like that could be "legally problematic", as it could make people believe that NSPAC had worked together with the Bush campaign if they adhered to the request (Pitney, 2019, p. 150). Atwater denied having anything to do with the NSPAC for as long as he lived, and there was never any real evidence that could link him to the group (Pitney, 2019, p. 150).

Even though Atwater denied any cooperation between the Bush campaign and the NSPAC, there is still a possibility that the NSPAC was inspired by the Bush campaign. It is illegal for a campaign to be working together with outside groups such as the NSPAC, but according to Pitney, the campaigns and groups had invented "signal mechanisms" to be able to cooperate unofficially (Pitney, 2019, p. 150). A Republican political consultant named Karl Rove once said that while the outside groups cannot coordinate with or talk to the campaigns directly, they can "play bridge" (Pitney, 2019, p. 150). An example of this is a campaign that is giving a press conference where they are disclosing their plans and ideas, hoping that there are people from these groups who will pick up on it (Pitney, 2019, p. 150). It is possible that

Atwater tried to “play bridge” with groups such as the NSPAC to get them to push the correct narratives that would benefit the Bush campaign. In July of 1988, Atwater jokingly said that Horton could turn out to be Dukakis’s running mate while resting his arm around Jesse Jackson, a joke he later apologized for after the election (Pitney, 2019, p. 150). This might have been an attempt from Atwater to give a hint to groups such as the NSPAC. The NSPAC felt that they got a silent approval from the Bush campaign after airing the ads. The founder of the NSPAC said that while the Bush campaign had distanced themselves from them officially, he believed that they were excited about their actions unofficially (Pitney, 2019, p. 150).

The Bush campaign created their own ad about the furlough issue that they started to air after the NSPAC ad had finished its run. The ad became known as the revolving door ad, as it showed prisoners and criminals in two different lines where one line went into prison and the other went out of prison (Pitney, 2019, p. 151). The ad was in black and white, just as the picture of Horton in the NSPAC ad, and in a rather low picture quality (Pitney, 2019, p. 151). The reason for the ad being aired in black and white, according to the makers, was that it made a stronger impact (Devlin, 1989, p. 394). The people that were used in the ad were not prisoners, but a mix of around sixty young Republicans and people from the Salt Lake City area (Devlin, 1989, p. 394). The Republicans in the ad were described as looking like they could have been guilty of “heinous crimes” and the people from Salt Lake City were enlisted to make the ad more ethnically diverse (Devlin, 1989, p. 394). The voice in the ad had the following to say:

As Governor Michael Dukakis vetoed mandatory sentences for drug dealers, he vetoed the death penalty. His revolving door prison policy gave weekend furloughs to first-degree murderers not eligible for parole. [Onscreen text: 268 Escaped] While out, many committed other crimes like kidnapping and rape, and many are still at large. Now Michael Dukakis says he want to do for America what he’s done for Massachusetts. America can’t afford that risk. (Pitney, 2019, p. 151)

This ad made by the Bush campaign was criticized, just as the ad made by the NSPAC, for the way it presented the facts that were mentioned. The ad was criticized for how it superimposed the text “268 Escaped” over the image of the revolving door while the statement “His revolving door prison policy gave weekend furloughs to first-degree murderers not eligible for parole” (Devlin, 1989, p. 395). The reason why this was criticized

was because it was easily misinterpreted. When you see the text “268 Escaped” and you at the same time hear that first-degree murderers were granted weekend furloughs, it is reasonable to assume that the 268 people who escaped were all first-degree murderers. This was not the case. The truth was that there were only four first-degree murderers who escaped from the furlough program (Devlin, 1989, p. 395). A spokesperson from the Bush campaign defended the ad by stating that they never explicitly said 268 murderers (Devlin, 1989, p. 395). The 268 instances of people who ran away during their furlough were spread out over a decade. The ad did not mention the fact that at least seventy-two of the 268 runaways had been registered as escaping because they were over two hours late when they returned from their furlough and that at the time when the ad aired only three people were still missing, and neither of them were convicted murderers (Pitney, 2019, p. 152). Both the ad from the NSPAC and the ad from the Bush campaign were talked about and discussed in mainstream media, which meant that people who did not see the ads when they initially aired could still see them or learn about them afterwards. Pitney argues that for how much the ads were discussed in the mainstream media, there was an unexpected lack of conversation about the racial side of the ads (Pitney, 2019, p. 152). Later in the campaign, Democrats such as Jesse Jackson, brought the racial side forward and said that the Bush campaign had used racial prejudice to send signals to the American people (Pitney, 2019, p. 152). This was not the only criticism that the Bush campaign received regarding their use of racial prejudice through the election cycle.

George Bush and his campaign have been criticized for their rhetoric and their use of the racial fear in the 1988 presidential race. One part of the campaign that was criticized were the ads that both the Bush campaign and the NSPAC aired. The Bush campaign and the NSPAC were not allowed to cooperate, but as previously discussed, they might have sent some signals to each other. One of those signals might have been the way Atwater kept referring to Horton as “Willie”. Atwater always referred to Horton as Willie Horton, even though that name had never appeared on any official records. Horton himself told during an interview that nobody had ever referred to him as Willie before the ads and that his name was William (Pitney, 2019, p. 151). This might have been a way for Atwater to subconsciously tell people about Hortons without them having to see his picture, but according to Pitney, this is not something he ever confessed to (Pitney, 2019, p. 151). Rossinow argues that everyone on the Bush campaign knew that the story of Horton was particularly compelling due to the fact that “Horton was a black man who had raped a white woman” (Rossinow, 2015, p. 247). An

unnamed campaign official from the Bush campaign even told a *The New Republic* writer that “Willie Horton has star quality. Willie’s going to be politically furloughed to terrorize again. It’s a wonderful mix of liberalism and a big black rapist” (Noah, 2012). The Bush campaign increased racial feelings by using the Horton story, and by doing so they turned crime into a code word for race (Piliawsky, 1989, p. 32). Merle Black, an American political scientist, used a metaphor to connect the Republican usage of the Horton story to the George Wallace era that he called a “booster shot”. He said that “The use of Willie Horton here is like a booster shot. George Wallace gave the original inoculation and Republicans will periodically send out booster shots” (Piliawsky, 1989, p. 32). Black is describing how Republicans would use incidents such as the Horton one to increase racial feelings to mobilize voters.

Bush would also label Dukakis as a liberal, and at the same time connect that label to political issues that were often associated with racial issues. He criticized Dukakis for his membership in the American Civil Liberties Union and connected liberalism to: “a general softness, especially on crime and defense; alien values; threats to the family; rampant permissiveness; anti- Americanism; and radicalism” (Piliawsky, 1989, p. 32). Bush also connected the label “liberal” to more racially affiliated issues, such as welfare programs, civil rights, and affirmative action (Piliawsky, 1989, p. 32). By giving Dukakis a label that had such strong associations to racially charged issues, the Bush campaign could accuse Dukakis of caring more about those issues than white issues. A columnist for the Chicago Tribune, Vernon Jarrett, explained why Bush and his advisors used liberal as a label about racial issues: “When Republicans use the word “liberal” as a curse, they're telling whites - especially white males - that blacks do not deserve special treatment and will not get it if their party is elected. Why else would white blue-collar workers support the flagrantly anti-labor policies of the Republicans?” (Piliawsky, 1989, p. 32). Another way that the Bush campaign tried to appeal to the racial attitudes of white people was by showing how involved black people, such as Jesse Jackson, were with the democratic party. According to Monte Piliawsky, a professor of Political Science, by linking Jackson to Dukakis, they hoped to send a signal to white people that it was more important for the Democrats to help black people than white people (Piliawsky, 1989, p. 32).

Chapter 4 - Trump and the Election of 2016

4.1 The Candidacy of Donald Trump

Donald J. Trump announced his candidacy for President of the United States on June 16, 2015, from his own Trump Tower in New York City. Before his candidacy, Trump was best known for being a businessman and hosting the television program *The Apprentice*. At the time of his announcement, the idea that Trump actually sought to win the election and that the true goal was not just a giant publicity stunt was dismissed by many journalists and experts. One commentator stated shortly after the announcement that: “Donald Trump isn’t really running for president; he’s running to make more money and enhance a brand that’s bigger than his real-estate holdings and golf courses” (Francia, 2018, pp. 440-441). Even though many doubted both his intention and his ability to win, Trump ended up proving his critics wrong when he eventually won the election and became the 45th President of the United States. First, he beat 16 other Republicans in the Republican primaries and managed to secure the win even though the betting markets had given Hillary Clinton, the Democratic party’s candidate, more than a seven to one odds the day before election day (Francia, 2018, p. 441). Trump managed to win by running a campaign that turned out to be remarkably effective in convincing voters, but in return, faced a lot of criticism regarding comments and promises made during the very same campaign.

Since the announcement of Trump’s candidacy for president of the United States, the discourse of race and immigration has become more integrated with issues of crime and terrorism (Haner et al., 2020, p. 2). During his presidential announcement speech Trump made some remarks and promises that he was criticized for, but which would turn out to be one of the center points of his campaign. Trump made comments towards Mexican immigrants and claimed that they often turned out to be “criminals” when he said: “What can be simpler or more accurately stated? The Mexican Government is forcing their most unwanted people into the United States. They are, in many cases, criminals, drug dealers, rapists, etc.” (Haner et al., 2020, p. 2). In the same speech, Trump also promised that he would build a giant wall between the United States and Mexico and that he would make Mexico pay for that wall: “I would build a great wall, and nobody builds walls better than me, believe me, and I’ll build them very inexpensively. I will build a great, great wall on our

southern border and I'll have Mexico pay for that wall." (Haner et al., 2020, p. 3). Trump also made campaign promises regarding Muslim immigrants, stating that he would create a database to track all Muslims in the United States, advocated for the surveillance of mosques, and called for a ban that would prohibit Muslims from entering the country (Haner et al., 2020, p. 2). Hundreds of thousands of people criticized Trump for attacking the democracy and freedom of the United States with his comments and promises during his campaign, but he still managed to be elected president (Haner et al., 2020, p. 3). Trump managed to defy all odds and expectations, but what explanations are there to his win?

There are many theories and explanations regarding Trump's presidential victory in 2016. One of them is that Trump received a lot of free media coverage through his frequent use of Twitter. Studies have shown that Clinton had a tremendous advantage when it came to raising funds and buying advertisements on television, but in the end, it was Trump who got the most coverage in social media and the news (Francia, 2018, p. 441). By being the most covered person in both social media and news media, Trump would most likely also be the most talked about candidate between voters in conversations regarding the election (Francia, 2018, p. 441). Research shows that ads on television have the ability to influence how people are voting, which means that the more money a candidate can use on television ads, the more people they can influence (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 9). Clinton and her campaign spent over \$1 billion advertising on television, which was almost double the amount that Trump and his campaign spent (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 10). It might seem strange that Clinton lost even though she spent much more money on advertising than Trump, especially when research suggests that ads can influence voters. However, there are several factors that contributed to this. Trump had his own way of assuring that the spotlight stayed on him. In the 2019 book *The Twitter Presidency: Donald J. Trump and the Politics of White Rage*, authors Brian L. Ott and Greg Dickinson points to three strategies that Trump used. Firstly, Trump frequently hosted large campaign rallies for his supporters, which news channels like CNN often aired in their entirety during the primaries. Secondly, he was often put on the air by various news programs on Fox News when he called them. Lastly, he used Twitter to tweet several times every day, where many of his remarks and accusations were analyzed and reported on by several news outlets (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 10). It has been estimated that these strategies provided Trump with media coverage that would have been worth around \$5 Billion, which is many times more than what Clinton spent (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 10).

The strategies allowed Trump to stay in the media spotlight longer than Clinton without spending nearly as much money as her on advertisement.

4.2 Twitter

One of the characteristics that Trump has become known for during his campaign and his presidency is his frequent and distinctive use of the social media platform Twitter. Trump tweeted his own opinions on issues and policies almost daily, and his tweets regularly ended up being discussed on news shows, which gave him a lot of free publicity during his campaigning. Even though his relentless tweeting gave him much attention, it also opened him up to a large amount of criticism. Trump's tweeting was eventually deemed so harmful that on January 8, 2021, Twitter themselves permanently suspended the President's personal Twitter account due to the risk of "further incitement of violence", in response to tweets Trump had made after a mob of people had stormed the Capitol on January 6 (Twitter Inc., 2021). Twitter cited two tweets that Trump had made as the reason for the suspension. The first tweet was: "The 75,000,000 great American Patriots who voted for me, AMERICA FIRST, and MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN, will have a GIANT VOICE long into the future. They will not be disrespected or treated unfairly in any way, shape or form!!!" and shortly after the President followed up with: "To all of those who have asked, I will not be going to the Inauguration on January 20th." (Twitter Inc., 2021). The arguments made by Twitter were that due to the tension in the United States after the storming of the Capitol, the tweets made by the President had to be read in context and conclude that the tweets could "mobilize [...] different audiences" and "incite violence" which they deemed to be in violation of their policy (Twitter Inc., 2021). This was a huge defeat for Trump, as his Twitter profile had been extremely important for his ability to spread his opinions and policies. During his 2016 campaign, his use of Twitter gave him free media attention equivalent to \$402 million, whereas Clinton's use of Twitter only gave her the equivalent of \$166 million in free media attention (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 12). There is no denying that Twitter was a tremendously important tool for Trump during his campaign and presidency.

One interesting part of the use of Twitter during the 2016 election was how differently the candidates used the platform. Clinton used staffers and the Democratic party's expertise to run her social media in an innovative way that had not been done before, while Trump mostly

handled his Twitter by himself, which some viewed as amateurish (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 12). Research suggests that these different approaches to social media interaction with voters had appealed to different types of voters. People who were actively engaging on social media by posting and commenting on political posts were less likely to support Trump, while people who were more passive consumers of social media were more likely to support Trump (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 12). Trump understood the importance of having an image in the eye of the public and applied his knowledge from many years as the star of his own reality show on television to his advantage. Ott and Dickinson argue that Trump used sensationalism, promotionalism, and “authenticity” in the form of emotional transparency to manipulate the news media’s agenda (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 10). By regularly making “outrageous statements” on Twitter, his rallies, and on news programs, Trump secured an exceptional amount of free publicity through sensationalism and spectacle (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 11). His use of Twitter also gave him another huge advantage in that he could avoid the mainstream media, who often were critical of him, and focus the attention on the issues that he wanted to promote or discuss (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 11). Trump’s Twitter account was immensely important to his campaign, but a lot of his tweets were criticized for being spreading hate and fear.

During his campaigning, Trump’s Twitter became more political and more likely to have tweets regarding immigration, immigrants, and crime. This does not mean that Trump did not use his Twitter to share his political thoughts before he announced his candidacy for president. His twitter became more and more political the months before his announcement, and in the period from 2013 to 2014 Trump tweeted about President Obama 969 times, which means that he often tweeted about the President at the time more than once per day (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 70). From the moment he announced he was going to run for president, Trump’s use of Twitter changed from primarily promoting himself and his business to define himself as a candidate who was anti-establishment (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 72). Ott and Dickinson have categorized Trump’s tweets during his time as a presidential candidate, from June 16, 2015, to November 8, 2016 to be exact, into three different categories that often overlap. The first category is “defining” which are tweets that contain “sloganeering aimed at promoting a unified and unifying political vision” (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 66). An example of this could be his continuous use of his slogan MAGA or Make America Great Again. The second category is “disrupting” which refers to tweets that are “subversive statements aimed at demonstrating anti-establishment credential” such as tweets where he

would reference “the swamp” or “the puppets of politics” (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, pp. 66, 74). The last category is “demeaning” which includes tweets that have “derogatory statements aimed at uncrowning political elites”, such as his name calling of other candidates (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 66). Many tweets can be labelled with more than one of the categories, but it is the first category, defining, that includes most of the tweets that have been criticized for being racist or ignorant.

Many of Trump’s tweets had showcased a quite dark and negative side of the United States. He regularly tweeted about crime, illegal immigrants, and the feeble economy. It often seemed like he viewed, or wanted people to view, America as a country that had become unsafe because of two terms with a Democratic president. On August 10, 2015, Trump tweeted “We must stop the crime and killing machine that is illegal immigration. Rampant problems will only get worse. Take back our country!” (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 73). With this tweet, Trump is conveying a message that crime and murder committed by immigrants is a huge problem in the United States and that the problem will only get worse if something is not done. Before this tweet, Trump had tweeted something similar on June 30, 2015, when he wrote “We MUST have strong borders and stop illegal immigration. Without that we do not have a country. Also, Mexico is killing U.S. on trade. WIN!” (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 73). This tweet is also referencing the problems of illegal immigration, with a special focus on the border and border control. Trump is also adding in a comment on the economy at the end by stating that Mexico is “killing” the U.S. on trade. Trump continued to tweet about immigration, and on March 26, 2016, he wrote “Nobody will protect our Nation like Donald J. Trump. Our military will be greatly strengthened and our borders will be strong. Illegals out” (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 73). This tweet focuses more on strengthening the borders and the military, but the closing statement is once again regarding the deportation of illegal immigrants. Trump is portraying a dark vision of the United States. Even though he did not always have the facts or the truth on his side, his followers would still feel like it was the truth for them (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 74). After hearing a presidential candidate sharing their belief of the cause of their problems, they knew whom they would vote for.

The tweets made by Trump shown in the last paragraph clearly contains a scary message meant to incite fear in those who read them. With statements such as “killing machine”, “Rampant problems will only get worse”, and “Without that we do not have a country”, Trump is painting a vivid and fearful message about the state and future of the country. Trump’s message was often revolving around fear. In his acceptance speech at the

Republican National Convention Trump made it clear that his campaign would continue to use a narrative of fear:

“The attacks on our police, and the terrorism in our cities, threaten our very way of life [...] Any politician who does not grasp this danger is not fit to lead our country. Americans watching this address tonight have seen the recent images of violence in our streets and the chaos in our communities. Many have witnessed this violence personally; some have even been its victims.” (Ball, 2016).

The talking points are recognizable from his tweets. Trump is stating that the United States has become a more dangerous country to live in because of crime and terror and that other politicians are not fit to lead or fix the problem. Trump probably knows exactly what he is doing by conveying such a fearful message in his campaign. Research suggests that people who are more politically conservative tend to be more wary of the unfamiliar and more sensitive to threats (Ball, 2016). Polling during the 2016 election also showed that people who voted for Trump were disproportionately fearful. They had a much larger fear of terror and crime than other groups of Americans and were also more wary of social change and the influence from foreign countries (Ball, 2016). These studies suggest that Trump managed to mobilize large groups of voters by scaring them into voting for him. In an interview with *The Atlantic*, historian and author David Bennet suggested that Trump managed to combine the American peoples fear of foreign immigration with the fear of foreign ideology better than any other fearmongering politician in the past, with his emphasis on both immigrants from Mexico and Islamist terror (Ball, 2016). Trump’s rhetoric was largely effective and was spread through multiple types of mediums. While he effectively used Twitter in a new and efficient way, he also used more traditional ways of communication with the voters, such as advertisements on television.

4.3 Advertisements

Both Clinton and Trump spent a lot of money on advertisement during the 2016 election, but as mentioned above, Clinton spent nearly twice as much on television ads as Trump. Trump had several strategies to ensure that the media spotlight stayed on him, even without spending as much money on ads as Clinton, such as using Twitter and calling Fox News. There were other factors at play in addition to Trump’s ability to capture the attention of the media that

resulted in Clinton's ads being less effective for the outcome of the election. Even though Clinton spent much more money than Trump on ads, she spent less than what Obama had in both of his races, and she did not advertise broadly in important Rust Belt states such as Michigan and Wisconsin until the end of the campaign (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 10). Trump, on the other hand, spent more on advertising in Michigan in just September than both Romney and Obama did combined in 2012 (Ott & Dickinson, 2019). This tactic proved to be successful for Trump since he won the state of Michigan with under a 1% margin, securing him sixteen electoral votes from a state that historically has often gone to the Democratic candidate (The New York Times, 2017). Clinton also focused less on policy and more on character in her ads, which was a change of theme in advertisements from former elections and campaigns (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 10). One of these advertisements was *Hillary's America*, which first aired at the Democratic National Convention, or the DNC, in Philadelphia. The ad shows Clinton herself talking about her wish for a diverse America by telling the story of a U.S. Army captain named Humayun Khan who died saving other American soldiers from a car bomb in Baghdad in 2004, emphasizing Khan's relevance and significance for the United States (James et al., 2017, p. 502). This ad by the Clinton campaign was an effort to show Clinton as a patriotic American who had an optimistic view on the diverse nature of the United States (James et al., 2017, p. 507). Trump also had an ad to show at the Republican National Convention, or the RNC, which also dealt with a diverse America, though with a completely different message than Clinton's ad.

At the 2016 Republican National Convention in Cleveland, the Trump campaign showed a video during a segment called "Make America Safe Again," which illustrated Trump's approach to immigration as a political issue (James et al., 2017, p. 502). The Make America Safe Again ad, which got its name from the segment it was shown during, is comparable to the Clinton ad regarding how it also tells the story of an American citizen who died in service of their country, but that is also where the similarities end. The Trump ad describes what happened to a border patrol agent by the name of Brian Terry, who was shot and killed by a Mexican drug cartel when a shootout broke out on the border between Mexico and Arizona in 2010 (James et al., 2017, p. 502). Where Clinton's ad tries to unify and send a message of hope, Trump's ad wants to show the dangers that illegal immigration can pose for American citizens. The story of the Trump ad is told through a series of headlines from Fox News which are highlighting crimes and misdemeanors committed by undocumented immigrants and uses graphics that show criminal acts that have threatened American citizens (James et

al., 2017, p. 502). These two ads demonstrate the dichotomy between the way the Democrats and the Republicans wanted to handle the issue of immigration, which became one of the most important issues during the 2016 election. Clinton wanted to send a message of unity, while Trump insisted that the only solution would be deportation. The Trump ad is very clearly trying to paint a fearful image of the situation. The ad is set to an ominous score with bleak visuals and is accompanied by words and statements such as “violent felons,” “raped, robbed, murdered,” “gang members,” and “shot in the back and killed” on the screen with images of news anchors, police cars and police officers, where one officer is carrying another officer on his back (James et al., 2017, pp. 503-504). At the climax of the video there is a voice stating that “someone has to be raped, robbed, murdered before they’ll become a priority”, while a new text appears on the screen with the text “Mother of teen murdered by illegal immigrant tells Congress: ‘DO SOMETHING—IT IS YOUR JOB’”, and finally the ad ends with the text changing into “MAKE AMERICA SAFE AGAIN” in capital letters (James et al., 2017, p. 504). Trump’s ad is insisting that something needs to be done with the immigration situation in America and is using scary visuals and messages that showcase the implied severity of the situation.

The video from the Republican National Convention in Cleveland was not the only ad the Trump campaign aired regarding illegal immigration. The first general election advertisement that the Trump campaign put out was called *Two Americas: Immigration* and showed the American people two different outcomes from the upcoming election, according to Trump. The ad ascertains that if Clinton should win the election and become the president, the system “stays rigged against Americans”(Fielding, 2019, p. 302). Pictures of refugees are shown in a grey tint while the narrator is stating how “Syrian refugees flood in” (Fielding, 2019, p. 302). After the refugee photos, the ad then shows immigrants who have their faces blurred out while being detained by border patrol officers while the narrator, once again with an ominous tone in his voice, explains how convicted illegal immigrants are allowed to stay in the United States while they collect social security benefits (Fielding, 2019, p. 302). The first half of the commercial is concluded with the narrator stating, “Our border open, it’s more of the same but worse” while a train with people sitting on top is showed, and finally a picture of Clinton is shown and fades into the second part of the ad (Fielding, 2019, p. 302). The second half shows how America will be if Trump is elected president. The narrator assures us that “Donald Trump’s America is secure” with footage of patrolling helicopters, and then a black American family is standing on their porch looking at an American flag while the narrator

states, “Our families: safe”(Fielding, 2019, p. 302). Lastly, an image of a huge U.S Navy vessel is displayed with the text “Make America Safe Again” prominently on the screen (Fielding, 2019, p. 302). The first half of this commercial is portraying immigrants and refugees coming to the United States as a problem and a threat to people living there. It also implies that the problem will get even worse if Clinton is elected president. The immigrants in the commercial are mostly showed in grey colors and in large groups, sometimes even with their faces blurred. Associate Professor J. David Cisneros argues that when immigrants are framed visually and metaphorically like this, they are portrayed as something contaminated and contagious that is also dangerous (Fielding, 2019, p. 302). The immigrants are portrayed in a dehumanizing way to support the narrative that it is problematic for Americans if they enter the United States, and the only candidate that can fix the problem is Donald J. Trump.

The *Two Americas: Immigration* commercial showed a dark and scary image of American immigration policies if Clinton were to be elected president, according to Trump. This was not the only advertisement that Trump and his campaign aired regarding immigration. On October 19, a month after his first general election advertisement, the Trump campaign aired an advertisement simply called “Laura”. Where the first ad had categorized immigrants as something pollutant, this commercial told a story that aimed to categorize them as something much more violent (Fielding, 2019, p. 303). The advertisement features a woman named Laura Wilkerson who is retelling the story of the murder of her own son, who was killed by “an illegal alien”(Fielding, 2019, p. 303). She tells the story in explicit detail, telling us that “The killer hit him on the head with a closet rod so hard that it broke in four pieces, and then he took him to a field and he doused him with gasoline and set him on fire.” (Fielding, 2019, p. 303). There is no footage or images of the incident shown on the screen, just Laura retelling the story of her son’s murder while she is crying. By not showing any images of the incident, the audience must create their own picture of what happened. When people are left using their own imagination to visualize the details in such a story, the story can seem even more horrific to the audience (Fielding, 2019, p. 303). The only picture shown is a black and white photograph of the Wilkerson family, with the son Joshua present, while Laura states that “Hillary Clinton’s border policy is going to allow people into the country just like the one that murdered my son.” (Fielding, 2019, p. 303). This advertisement is telling Americans that if Clinton is elected president, her border policies will enable violent murderers to come into their country, and the only solution is once again to elect Trump as president instead.

The Trump campaign received a variety of criticisms for the advertisements that they aired during the campaign period. In the immigration ads, the campaign showed images of people running toward a fence on the border while the narrator promises that Trump will “stop illegal immigration by building a wall on our southern border that Mexico will pay for” (Vitali, 2016). It turned out that the footage was from a Spanish enclave in Morocco from 2014 and not from the border between the United States and Mexico. Corey Lewandowski, who was the campaign manager at the time, responded to the criticism by saying, “No s***, it's not the Mexican border but that's what our country is going to look like. This was 1,000 percent on purpose” (Vitali, 2016). Lewandowski argued that the point of the ad was to show the American people the “severe impact of an open border” and the “very real threat” that Americans would have to deal with if illegal immigration was not stopped. Senator Al Franken from Minnesota accused the Trump campaign of being anti-Semitic in his ads about the economy, stating that the images and rhetoric used had been used by anti-Semites for decades (Wootson, 2016). The Trump campaign was also criticized by the Anti-Defamation League for airing ads with “anti-Semitic undertones”, because of ads featuring primarily Jewish people with the promise that Trump would “take back this country for you and make America great again” (Hodges, 2016). Trump often proclaimed that immigrants were violent people who brought drugs and crime into the United States during his speeches and his ads. While Trump seemed certain in his message, studies have shown that there is no evidence to suggest that immigrants commit more crimes than Americans born in the United States (Lee, 2015). Since the 1990s, immigration into the United States have increased, while crime has decreased, which suggests that immigrants have increased the total population but not the number of criminals (Lee, 2015). The Trump campaign was criticised for how they portrayed certain groups in their ads, and also for using misleading images and statements.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

5.1 Categorizing Presidential Campaigns

Ott and Dickinson argue that scholars typically divide the way presidential campaigns have used communication with the public into three distinct categories: premodern, modern, and postmodern (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 8). According to them, each one of these categories is categorized by a “guiding paradigm”, a “dominant medium of communication”, and a “particular type of messaging” (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 8). For example, the premodern campaign commonly followed a party logic which was shared through partisan radio broadcasting and newspapers and expressed a message in line with the party’s philosophy (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 8). The modern campaign had more of a media logic. The messages were mostly shared through the television, often on national news programs, and targeted a large audience through impressions, sound bites, and images (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 9). Lastly, the postmodern campaign is more driven by marketing logic. It focuses more on digital media, which includes both social media platforms and niche television programming, where it uses micro-messaging and narrowcasting to target distinct groups of voters (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 9). Regarding the campaigns discussed in this paper, the Bush campaign of 1988 would fall under the modern campaign category, and the Trump campaign of 2016 would fall under the postmodern campaign category. The Bush campaign used the medium of television to spread its messages. As we saw with the commercials that the Bush campaign aired, there was a focus on leaving the public with a specific type of impression after seeing them. The revolving door ad used striking images of prisoners moving in and out of prison using a revolving door to convince the public that Governor Dukakis approved of letting convicted felons out of jail.

The Trump campaign of 2016 fits well into the postmodern campaign category. Using social media to reach out to voters was nothing new during this election, but Trump managed to utilize the medium in a fashion few had done before him. He gained a lot of publicity for his comments and managed to synergize the medium of television with social media in an extraordinary way (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 9). Trump could start a conversation on Twitter that would be the main story on the evening news, creating a new bridge between the mediums. Trump also used advertisements during his campaign, but he spent almost half the

amount of money that Clinton spent on ads. The advertisements made by the Trump campaign would be aired on television in either specific states or for the entire nation but would also be discussed during news programming and on social media.

5.2 Advertisement, Then and Now

The Trump campaign and the Bush campaign can be categorized differently, as postmodern and modern campaigns, respectively, but both campaigns used one particular type of communication quite similarly, advertisement. Both campaigns aired advertisements that were criticized for how they depicted issues of crime and race. Bush had his “revolving door” advertisement, which accused Governor Dukakis of letting prisoners in and out of prison freely through a weekend furlough program that he had supported during his time as Governor of Massachusetts. The “Americans for Bush” arm of the NSPAC had their “Dukakis on crime” advertisement, which might have been partly inspired by comments made by the Bush campaign official Lee Atwater, which also accused Dukakis of being weak on crime by showing a mug shot of Willie Horton. Trump aired several advertisements that showed the dangers of letting Clinton become the next president. His first advertisement, “Two Americas: Immigration”, showed his take on how the United States would look like if he or Clinton would win the election. His America would stop illegal immigrants from entering and deport those who were already there, while Clinton’s America would allow more violent immigrants into the country. Another Trump advertisement, called “Laura”, featured a grieving mother retelling the story of how her son was violently murdered by an illegal immigrant. This advertisement also warned Americans about increased criminal activity if Clinton were to be elected president.

Both Bush and Trump used advertisements with the intent to incite fear and warn the American people of possible outcomes of the election, should they not win the election over their opponents. Trump’s advertisements encapsulated a rhetoric that painted the United States as a nation in danger, especially from the threats of violent, illegal immigrants, by stirring xenophobic fears among voters (James et al., 2017, p. 511). Hofstadter argued that those who use the paranoid style often believe that their country is being taken away from them, and that their way of life is in danger. This can be seen in the advertisements from the Trump campaign, where the message is both a warning of what could come but also a

showcase of how bad the situation is. In some of his advertisements, such as the “Make America Safe Again” video from the Republican National Convention, Trump uses footage from news programming to make a newsreel. This style can seem more trustworthy to viewers, even though it creates a biased portrayal of immigrants through handpicked clips and dog-whistle terminology (James et al., 2017, p. 511). In making the advertisements seem more trustworthy, they also gain an amount of credibility, which can lead the viewers to the conclusion that what they are witnessing is a real and important issue.

The campaign advertisements from both Bush and Trump often focused on the issue of crime in America, and it is hard to overlook the inclusion of race in the narrative. Bush and his campaign brought up the question of crime and questioned Dukakis’s stance on the issue with the Willie Horton incident. At a campaign speech in June 1988, Bush asked:

“What did the democratic governor of Massachusetts think he was doing when he let convicted first-degree murderers out on weekend passes? Even after one of the criminals brutally raped a woman and stabbed her fiancé, why didn’t he admit his mistake?” (Pitney, 2019, p. 148).

The Bush campaign most likely knew that the story of Willie Horton was especially compelling because of the racial element. Horton was a black man who had raped a white woman (Rossinow, 2015, p. 247). The “Dukakis on crime” advertisement was originally made by the NSPAC but was partially inspired by comments that had been made by Bush campaign manager Lee Atwater. The advertisement featured a black and white mugshot of Horton, with a narrator retelling the story of what he did after he escaped from his furlough. Because of how the ad showed Horton’s face and told the story of a violent black man raping a white woman, the advertisement was called “a case of overt racism” by political commentators for decades (Pitney, 2019, p. 149). A democratic strategist commented on the issue in 2013 and said the ad made white Americans, and especially white southerners think that “We can’t have a man from Massachusetts releasing quote black criminals all across the country and letting them rape our white women and children. That was the point of the ad.” (Pitney, 2019, p. 150). Atwater always referred to Horton as “Willie”, which soon became the name that people recognized Horton with, even though it did not appear on any official records (Pitney, 2019, p. 150). This could have been a way for Atwater to signal to people who did not see his picture that Horton was a black man.

The “Dukakis on crime” ad made a point out of showing white Americans what would happen to their country if they were to vote for and elect Dukakis as president. The goal of the ad, along with the Bush campaign’s own “revolving door” ad, was to make voters afraid of violent criminals whom they warned could escape more easily with Dukakis as president. Hofstadter argues that part of the paranoid style is to convince voters that people with ill intentions are trying to take control of their country (Hofstadter, 1964). The enemy might even have gained some control, and it is important to fight back to ensure that the situation does not get worse. Hofstadter cites sociologist Daniel Bell in his essay, stating that the right-wing feels dispossessed: “America has been largely taken away from them and their kind, though they are determined to try to repossess it and to prevent the final destructive act of subversion.” (Hofstadter, 1964). Using the narrative of a violent and criminal black man who had escaped from his furlough, the Bush campaign spread racial anxiety among American voters. Bush also accused Dukakis of creating a situation where dangerous criminals could escape more easily. Hofstadter wrote that the paranoid style changed when mass media became more available to more people and the villains became more prominent public figures than before, “The villains of the modern right are much more vivid than those of their paranoid predecessors, much better known to the public” (Hofstadter, 1964). Bush was not pointing to some “vaguely delineated” group of people to be the source of the problem, but a Governor and presidential candidate.

The idea that those who preach and digest the paranoid style feels dispossessed also fits with Trump’s ads and narrative on race and immigration. Ott and Dickinson argue that Trump appealed to a specific type of voters by embodying and expressing a populist style that they refer to as “white rage” (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 2). Trump managed to mobilize voters through a shared sense of dispossession, many of them were “feeling like a stranger” in their own country (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 7). This sentiment is similar to Hofstadter’s theory that people feel like their country is being taken away from them, and they have to prevent it from being taken over completely. Trump’s advertisements echoed the same narrative. The ads showed dangerous illegal immigrants committing crimes against American citizens while accusing Clinton of being part of the problem. The one who could fix it was Trump. The rhetoric in these ads is based on perversive sentiments about race, such as anxiety and fear, and tries to appeal to groups of Americans who believe that the United States has changed for the worse and marginalized them (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, pp. 28-29). These groups of Americans, which primarily consist of white working-class people, are afraid that this new

and changed version of the United States will become a place where they will face more challenges if they are white (Ott & Dickinson, 2019, p. 29). They fear that the country is changing against their favor. Social scientists argue that fear makes people more wary of things they find unfamiliar and wanting to feel more protected (Ball, 2016). Trump is offering this protection. He wants to build walls and keep dangerous immigrants out of the country.

Trump is depicting a world where he will keep good and hardworking Americans safe from evil and dangerous immigrants. Hofstadter argued that the paranoid spokesperson depicts a conflict between absolute good and absolute evil (Hofstadter, 1964). The ad “Two Americas: Immigration” depicts two different outcomes of the election, according to Trump. Either he will, and American citizens will become safe, or Clinton will win, and the country will be swarmed by illegal immigrants. The dichotomy between the two outcomes that the ad is portraying is striking. Trump is depicting the election between himself and Clinton as a battle between good and evil, where he is on the good side. Hofstadter argued that when the conflict is depicted as being between good and evil, the incentive is not to compromise but to fight until the end (Hofstadter, 1964). There is no middle ground being presented by Trump, either he wins, or the country will become more dangerous. Bush similarly depicted two different outcomes of the election. In the “revolving door” ad, Bush warned that if Dukakis would become president, he would do for America what he had done for Massachusetts. Bush warned that Dukakis was not tough enough in his crime policies and that the United States would become a more dangerous place with him as president. This rhetoric can also be compared to Hofstadter’s argument of conflicts between good and evil. Bush argued that there should be no compromise when it came to dangerous criminals, as he was for the death penalty and against the furlough programs that Dukakis supported.

5.3 Hofstadter’s Historical Context

The historical examples of the paranoid style’s usage provided by Hofstadter can also be used to examine the campaigns of Bush and Trump. When the American people first learned about Illuminism, they were told that it was a dangerous movement that sought to destroy American institutions and posed a violent threat (Hofstadter, 1964). Those who preached about the dangers of Illuminism insisted that the country was full of followers of Illuminism. Trump similarly insisted during his 2016 campaign that the United States was full of dangerous and

violent immigrants. He told stories of illegal immigrants committing heinous crimes, suggesting that these incidents were common and would become even more prominent if he should not be elected. Bush told the story of Horton and other convicted criminals that had escaped from their furlough, suggesting that Dukakis would allow even more dangerous criminals to get out of prison and endanger American citizens if he became president. His revolving door advertisement even used manipulative imagery and numbers to suggest an overwhelming number of criminals who had been released from prison. Similar to those who preached that the United States was full of dangerous followers of Illuminism, Bush and Trump told voters that the United States was full of dangerous criminals and immigrants.

Another historical example from Hofstadter is the anti-Masonic movement of the late 1820s and 1830s. The rhetoric of those who were against Masonry was filled with a great amount of resentment towards the recipients. Bush was for the death sentence and accused Dukakis, who was against it, of being too soft when it came to criminal issues. Bush used the example of Horton, who had assaulted and raped a young couple after his escape from prison, to show voters what types of dangerous people that could escape back into society with Dukakis's furlough program. Bush's condemning of Dukakis's support of the weekend furlough program can be compared to anti-Masonic rhetoric, which condemned Masonry. Trump showed little empathy toward immigrants during his 2016 campaign. He stated that the people who came into the United States from Mexico had "lots of problems", that they were rapists and brought drugs and crime with them (Lee, 2015). Even though Trump said he assumed some of them were good people, his comments are suggesting that most Mexican immigrants are dangerous people who should not be allowed to enter the United States. Anti-Masons believed that the press was infiltrated by Masons, which meant that negative news towards Masonry could be repressed. This belief is comparable to Trump and his insistence on "fake news" from the mainstream media. Trump's rhetoric regarding immigrants was filled with a resentment that can be compared to the anti-Masonic movement and their view of Masonry.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

The rhetoric and discourse in the American political landscape might seem rougher and more fearmongering than ever, but the historian Richard Hofstadter argued that this style had been used in American politics since the beginning. Hofstadter termed this style “the paranoid style” and argued that its practitioners used it to appeal to people’s fear of losing their way of life. The people who were most influenced by the paranoid style often felt dispossessed, like they were starting to become strangers in their own country. Hofstadter provides several historical examples of the paranoid style being used from various points in American history. One of these historical examples is from the late 1700s when fear of Illuminism spread through the United States. Another historical example was from the early 1800s, where Hofstadter describes the anti-Masonic movement that warned people of the dangers of Masonry. Hofstadter also shares examples from his own time in the 1950s and 1960s, where the accused shifted groups and movements to more well-known public figures like Presidents and Governors. The paranoid spokesman believes that they are fighting a battle between good and evil, where compromise is not an acceptable outcome.

In more recent times, we have seen the paranoid style being used by politicians to mobilize voters and undermine their opponents. In election years there is often used fearmongering rhetoric to persuade voters to cast their vote for the right candidate. One of the campaigns that incorporated the paranoid style was the Bush campaign in 1988. Bush had to get the focus of the election away from the economy and painted a picture of the United States where dangerous criminals threatened the life of honest Americans. Bush learned that Dukakis had supported a weekend furlough program in Massachusetts during his time as governor. A convicted murderer by the name Willie Horton had escaped during this program and ended up breaking into the home of a young man and raping his fiancé. The Bush campaign launched ads that criticized Dukakis for his furlough support and insisted that many more of these dangerous criminals were still at large. An important factor of the Horton issue was the fact that Horton was a black man, something the Bush campaign knew would get many white Americans riled up. Bush was criticized for how they portrayed the racial side of the issue and for the misleading statements in the ads, but he ended up winning the election, nevertheless.

In 2015 Donald Trump announced that he wanted to run for president of the United States. Before this Trump was mostly known for being a reality-star and businessman who frequently voiced his opinions on the social media platform Twitter. Trump immediately made headlines with his comments towards Mexican immigrants, where he stated that they were violent and dangerous and that he would build a wall on the border to keep them out. Trump continued to make comments towards what he described as dangerous illegal immigrants during his campaign. Trump was an avid Twitter user, and he utilized the platform in a way that gave him a tremendous amount of attention. He also made ads that focused on dangerous illegal immigrants and promised that everything would be better if he won the election. According to Trump, if Hillary Clinton were to be elected president, the problem would escalate, and dangerous illegal immigrants would flood over the border. The ads often focused on making America safe again, implying that there was a large problem with unsafety and immigration. Even though Trump was criticized for being racist and anti-Semitic, he still won the election and became president of the United States.

Both Bush and Trump used fear as a tool to mobilize voters to win the election, although they did focus on slightly different issues. Trump had a stronger focus on immigration and illegal immigrants, while Bush mostly focused on crime. However, Trump often accused illegal immigrants of being involved with criminal activities. Both candidates used negative ads during their campaigns. They aired ads that showed Americans what their country would be like if the opposing candidate were to be elected president. This was not a pleasant-looking future. Bush argued that even more violent criminals would escape from prison and endanger American citizens if Dukakis became president, and Trump argued that dangerous illegal immigrants would come in large numbers over the border if Clinton became president. Hofstadter argued in his essay about the paranoid style that those who are susceptible to the paranoid style often feel dispossessed. They feel like the United States is being taken away from them. The Bush campaign told voters that their country would be filled with more dangerous criminals if Dukakis won. The Horton story also created racial anxiety because it was a story of a black man who had raped a white woman. Trump appealed to the dispossessed even more effectively. Many of his white voters were scared that they would end up living in a country where they would lose some of their privileges. Trump fueled this belief and told people that their problems would get even worse with Clinton as president.

Hofstadter argued that the paranoid spokesperson believes their fight to be a battle between good and evil. Trump depicted the election between him and Clinton as a battle between good

and evil. Either Trump wins and he keeps American citizens safe, or Clinton wins and lets the country get invaded by illegal immigrants. There is no middle ground, it is good against evil. Many who voted for Trump feared this scenario. Bush similarly warned against Dukakis, claiming that the country would be filled with more dangerous criminals if he became president. Bush on the other hand, would be strict and keep the criminals in prison.

The presidential campaigns of Bush and Trump can also be compared to Hofstadter's historical examples of the paranoid style. Those who spoke against Illuminism claimed that it was a dangerous movement that would destroy American values. The United States was supposedly full of followers of Illuminism. Similarly, Trump told voters that America was full of illegal immigrants and that even more would follow if he did not win the election. Bush told voters about convicted criminals that had escaped during their furlough and warned that more would escape with Dukakis in the White House. Hofstadter also used the anti-Masonic movement as an example of the paranoid style. Those who were against Masonry spoke against the movement with resentment. Similarly, Bush was harsh in his critic against Dukakis and his support of the weekend furlough program, accusing him of making a huge mistake that ended up letting a convicted murderer escape from prison. Trump accused illegal immigrants of being violent and dangerous. His rhetoric was filled with a resentment that his base shared with him, against this group that they believed was making their lives and country worse. The historical examples provided by Hofstadter are still relevant today.

According to Hofstadter, the paranoid style has been used by politicians to gain votes for decades and as a political and rhetorical tool for even longer. Hofstadter provided examples of the paranoid style being used to speak against movements and ideologies since the very beginning of American history. Why has the paranoid style been used by Republican presidential candidates to mobilize voters? One of the answers might be that it is an effective tool. Tax cuts for the rich are not always an easy issue to sell to working- and middle-class Americans. By shifting the focus of the elections over on issues of race, patriotism, and fear, Republican candidates can often mobilize voters more effectively than with a focus on economic issues. This means that fear and the paranoid style will most likely be used in future elections. Campaigns often look to the past to see what has worked before, and the paranoid style has worked for Republican candidates several times. Can Hofstadter's thesis of the paranoid style be used to help explain Bush's and Trump's exploitation of race and fear during their presidential campaigns? Many of the examples provided by Hofstadter share similarities with parts of the Bush and Trump campaign. Both candidates appealed to voters

who felt dispossessed. Both candidates warned that the situation would get even worse if they did not win the election. The advertisements from the candidates involved scary messages that were meant to make voters fear the outcome of the election if they did not vote for the right side.

The United States is a massive and diverse country. For a long time, white Americans have been the majority of the population, but this is changing. Statistics show that the United States will become “minority white” in 2045, meaning that for the first time, the number of white Americans will be under 50% of the total population (Frey, 2018). Many of these might not like the changes to their country and are scared that their way of life is at danger. The paranoid style appeals to this type of voters. Promises that things will go back to the way they were, from a candidate who share their frustration. Bush promised that he would be strict against criminals. Trump promised that he would be strict against immigrants. If there are groups of people that American citizens can be afraid of, the paranoid style will be relevant and possibly incorporated into the campaign of a Republican presidential candidate. Fear is a powerful emotion, and conservatives have turned that emotion into Republican votes for decades.

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