

**Self-made Men and Scapegoats:
How America's exceptional optimism empowered the charismatic leadership of Richard
Nixon and Donald Trump.**



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Date of submission: 27-07-2017
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RESEARCH MASTER'S THESIS

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1.	Introduction	4
2.	The theoretical framework	7
	2.1. Historiography	8
	2.2. Charismatic Leadership within American democracy	13
	2.3. The Just World Hypothesis: Americans believe good things happen to good people	17
3.	Charisma in practice	24
	3.1. Unlikely beginnings: building a political persona	25
	3.2. Nixon and Trump as self-made men	33
	3.3. Promoting American Justice	42
	3.4. Spreading the good word	50
	3.5. Out-groups as threats to the status quo	62
	3.6. Why the Democratic Party is to blame for everything	70
4.	Conclusion	79
5.	Bibliography	83

1. Introduction

On July 18, 2016, in an attempt to stir up more media attention for his candidate's presidential nomination acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention, then Trump-campaign manager Paul Manafort announced to the press that the speech would mirror the one given by Richard Nixon 48 years earlier, citing the belief that it was "...in line with a lot of the issues going on today" and even describing it as "instructive".¹ The comparison between Donald Trump and Richard Nixon had been making the rounds in the media discussion circuit ever since Trump had announced his candidacy for the Republican nomination in 2015, with commentators pointing out Trump's use of the term 'silent majority' and divisive rhetoric as clear signs that he was running on the same playbook that Nixon had utilized in 1968 to ultimately win the presidency.² This comparison has only become more fitting in recent days following Trump's firing of FBI director James Comey, which many media commentators and politicians have compared to Nixon's firings of special prosecutor Archibald Cox and the subsequent resignations of Attorney General Elliott Richardson and his deputy at the height of the Watergate investigation.³ Even the Nixon presidential library was aware of this particular parallel.⁴

In this thesis I will, with a focus on the 1968 and 2016 Republican presidential campaigns, seek to answer two questions: to what extent were Richard Nixon and Donald Trump similar candidates in the way they conducted their campaign and what was it about these campaigns that made them ultimately successful in spite of their poor positioning at the start of the campaigns. Both men were unlikely candidates, with Nixon last being seen on the national stage after two humiliating back to back electoral losses, one for the presidency in 1960, in which he lost to young upstart John F. Kennedy, and one for the governorship of California in 1962, his home state, and Donald Trump in 2015 being primarily associated with reality television and flashy and exaggerated displays of wealth and success. In order to answer the first question I will analyse the campaign trails of both men, through both primary sources (memoires and autobiographies, speeches, debates, campaign advertising material) and secondary sources (news articles, polls and surveys, opinion pieces, historical analyses). In order to answer the second question I will try to elaborate my answers by relying on two specific theoretical frameworks, namely charismatic leadership and the Just World Hypothesis.

Charismatic leadership is a term that is often associated with the exploitation of civil unrest and violent totalitarianism, both in ancient and contemporary history. The Gracchi brothers, through their passionate populism, brought about years of public unrest and an eventual civil war that would mark the end of centuries of Roman republicanism. Genghis Kahn, through his divine mandate to

¹ Ashley Killough, "Top aide: Trump will channel 1968 Nixon in speech," *CNN*, July 18, 2016, accessed May 11, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/07/18/politics/donald-trump-richard-nixon-speech/>.

² Michael Barbaro, "Donald Trump, Praised by Former Presiden Nixon, Biography Says," *The New York Times*, September 8, 2015, accessed May 12, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2015/09/08/donald-trump-praised-by-former-president-nixon/>;

Caitlin Cruz, "Richard Nixon To Trump: You 'Will Be A Winner' If You Ever Run For Office," *Talking Points Memo*, September 8, 2015, accessed May 12, 2017, <http://talkingpointsmemo.com/livewire/donald-trump-richard-nixon-letter>;

Bloomberg Politics, "The Parallels Between Richard Nixon and Donald Trump," *Bloomberg*, December 12, 2015, accessed May 12, 2017. <https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/videos/2015-12-12/the-parallels-between-richard-nixon-and-donald-trump>.

³ Alayna Treene, "All the people comparing Trump to Nixon," *Axios*, May 9, 2017, accessed May 12, 2017, <https://www.axios.com/all-the-people-comparing-trump-to-nixon-2400516338.html>.

⁴ Zach Schonfeld, "Nixon Library uses Trump to make Nixon look wholesome," *Raw Story*, May 10, 2017, accessed May 12, 2017, <http://www.rawstory.com/2017/05/nixon-library-uses-trump-to-make-nixon-look-wholesome/>.

conquer the world, forged disparate tribes of nomadic horsemen on the Mongolian steppes into a conflagration that would set Asia, Russia and the Islamic world ablaze and even singe the edges of Western Europe. In the twentieth century Adolph Hitler, by presenting himself as the man who would save Germany from the indignities of the Versailles Treaty, plunged the world into the most destructive conflict in human history.⁵ In Russia and China Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong forged cults of personality that solidified their authority even as tens of millions died due to totalitarian oppression and economic mismanagement. And yet charismatic leadership can be just as potent a force in democracies, especially democracies in which the elections for the highest position are as personality driven as in the United States. By going through the developments of academic writings on charismatic leadership, from the original formulation of the idea by Max Weber to contemporary writers such as Jerrold M. Post and Ruth Ann Willner, I will show how concepts of charismatic leadership can be applied to the presidential campaigns of Richard Nixon and Donald Trump in very similar ways.⁶

The Just World Hypothesis is an idea from mass psychology can be explained as the belief that good things happen to good people and, vice versa, that people who are unfortunate have done something to deserve their misfortune. The Just World Hypothesis can also be applied in wildly different ways to public perceptions of both individuals and societies. In order to show how this hypothesis can be used to further our understanding of the electoral success of Nixon and Trump I will first specify exactly what the Just World Hypothesis entails, how powerful this belief is among Americans, and how intertwined it is with the concept of American exceptionalism. Through the use of theoretical secondary sources and research, I will detail how Nixon and Trump both appealed to this belief in various ways, ranging from positioning themselves as self-made men who reflect the perception that anyone can be successful in America if they work hard enough, to exploiting those same beliefs in singling out groups of people within American society who either threaten the ability of the U.S. to function as the land of opportunity or who have taken advantages of the opportunities offered to them to the detriment of the general public.

I will use these concepts to build my comparison along two dimensions. I will use charismatic leadership in order to analyse how both candidates appealed to the electorate, and I will use the Just World Hypothesis to explain what it was in the candidates' rhetoric that appealed to the voter. It's my hope that this dipartite comparison will allow for a clearer understanding of the similarities between the successes of both candidates. I will study how the rise to the candidacy and eventual presidency of both men began from disparate yet similarly unlikely beginnings. Next, I will discuss how both men, whether justifiably or not, promoted themselves as self-made men who were living examples of

⁵ It's a common misconception that Adolph Hitler was democratically elected. Democratic elections brought Hitler to prominence, but even prior to those elections his political behaviour was already totalitarian and the final steps of his rise to absolute power were carried out in wholly undemocratic means.

⁶ "The term 'charisma' will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a 'leader.'" – Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, vol. I: 242.

"It will be observed that I speak not of charismatic leaders but rather of charismatic leader-follower relationships. I will be elaborating the political psychology of this tie between leaders and followers, attempting to identify crucial aspects of the psychology of the leader that, like a key, fit and unlock certain aspects of the psychology of their followers." – Jerrold M. Post, *Leaders and their Followers in a Dangerous World*: 187-188.

"Charismatic authority ... is distinctly personal. It rests on 'devotion to the specific sanctity, heroism, or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him.' Charismatic authority, therefore, is lodged neither in office nor in status but derives from the capacity of a particular person to arouse and maintain belief in himself or herself as the source of legitimacy." – Ruth Ann Willner, *Spellbinders*: 4.

America's unique ability to offer opportunity to anyone who works hard enough to seize it. Following this I will show how this self-made man framework was reflected in their electoral rhetoric and how they appealed to the belief that their success was attainable for any American. Next I will analyse how both candidates used the media, each in their own way, to present their message and spread their world view, and how this media presence played a central role in the way both men presented themselves as charismatic leaders. I will also discuss which groups were identified by both candidates as threats to the American status quo, and how both candidates sought to blame the policies of the Democratic incumbents for empowering these groups. Finally I will discuss the way in which both candidates presented themselves as the ones who could save the electorate from the threats these groups posed. Throughout these chapters I will show how the behaviour of both candidates, and the response they got from the electorate, fit within existing literature regarding charismatic leadership and the uniquely American belief in the Just World Hypothesis.

The Theoretical Framework

2.1. Historiography

There is perhaps no American president whose life, political career and psyche have been so meticulously picked apart by historians and other academics as Richard Milhous Nixon, the thirty-seventh president of the United States. This is, given the extraordinary nature of the man and his career, no surprise. As Nixon biographer Tom Wicker notes: “Americans seldom have been sure of what lies beneath the façade Richard Nixon constantly presents.”¹ Richard Nixon fascinates. His public career spanned nearly thirty years, with a six year intermezzo announced by a now almost mythical press conference in which he left the political stage in melodramatic fashion, and ending in scandalous ignominy with the Watergate affair, a scandal that left such a deep mark on the American political psyche that the suffix –gate became so synonymous with corruption and abuse of power that it has since been applied to any incident that might involve these things, even those not involving politics or happening outside of the United States.² Even the name Nixon has become an adjective, Nixonian, identifying something as being similar to the scandalous behaviour that Nixon has become most infamous for. Interestingly enough the use of the word ‘Nixonian’ in news media has exploded in use in the first ten days of May of 2017, following Donald Trump’s firing of FBI director James Comey.³

The Watergate scandal had a twofold effect on the historiography of Richard Nixon. First, it created a massive public interest in not just Richard Nixon, the thirty-seventh president, but also in Richard Nixon, the man. As more and more details of the Watergate scandal entered the public record the question became how any man who could attain the office of President of the United States was capable of such a gross, and in retrospect unnecessary, abuse of power. In a way picking apart the personality of Richard Nixon became part of a national healing process.⁴ This interest in Nixon’s personality was further bolstered by new developments in the field of psychology during the nineteen-sixties and seventies. There was a need among the American public to understand what flaws in Nixon’s personality led to his ultimate self-destruction. If there was something uniquely Nixonian about the events leading up to the Watergate scandal it would be a reassurance that this was the result of the flaws of one man, not systemic shortcomings of the American political system. Second, the Watergate scandal and the subsequent investigations created a vast public record of testimonies and evidence created by those closest to the president that academics from a wide range of disciplines found a wealth of information to base their writings of Richard Nixon on. In general any American president has a moderate degree of control over to what extent private papers become part of the public record, through their presidential library or otherwise. Due to the investigation into the

¹ Tom Wicker, *One of Us: Richard Nixon and the American Dream* (New York: Random House, 1991): xiii.

² Gladwin Hill, "NIXON DENOUNCES PRESS AS BIASED: In 'Last' News Conference, He Attributes His Defeat to Crisis Over Cuba Nixon, Bitter at His Defeat by Brown in California, Denounces the Press as Biased SAYS CUBAN CRISIS COST HIM ELECTION Gives No Hint of Plans-- Asserts Others Will Have to Lead Coast G.O.P. Blames Cuban Crisis Changes His Plans," *The New York Times*, November 8, 1962: 1, 18;

Eleanor Maier, OED, "The 'gate' suffix | Oxford English Dictionary," *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, accessed May 14, 2017, <http://public.oed.com/aspects-of-english/english-in-use/the-gate-suffix/>.

³ Katherine Connor Martin, "Nixonian: what does it mean and why are people using it? | OxfordWords blog," *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, May 11, 2017, accessed May 14, 2017, <https://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2017/05/nixonian/>;

As tracked by the Brigham Young University tracking tool NOW Corpus (<http://corpus.byu.edu/now/>), which allows for the tracking of the use of words and phrases in online news articles. As of May 14, 2017, the word ‘Nixonian’ was tracked in 94 news articles since the firing of James Comey, compared to 37 news articles using the word ‘Nixonian’ in 2017 prior to the firing..

⁴ J. Anthony Lukas, *Nightmare: the underside of the Nixon Years* (New York: Viking Press, 1976);

Aldebaran, *Nixon and the foxes of Watergate* (Whitestone: Published for the Walter Bagehot Research Council by Griffon House Publications, 1980);

Tom Wicker, *One of Us: Richard Nixon and the American Dream* (New York: Random House, 1991).

Watergate scandal Nixon was never afforded this kind of control, something which he contested all the way to the Supreme Court.⁵ Nowhere is this more obvious than in the Nixon Tapes, a set of recordings made in secret by Nixon between 1971 and 1973 via a voice-activated tape recorder hidden in his desk in the Oval Office. These recordings have since become welcome fodder for researchers, especially after the complete collection of the tapes was digitized and released to the public in 2010.⁶ If it hadn't been for the congressional investigation of the Watergate scandal the existence of these tapes might not even be known. Due to the investigation however, the tapes eventually became part of the public record, offering unique insights into Nixon's private thoughts on anything ranging from abortion to panda bears.

As the Watergate scandal slowly disappeared in the rear view mirror of history a public re-evaluation of Nixon, the man and the politician, slowly took place. This re-evaluation can be shown in public opinion polls regarding public perception of who the worst president in American history was. Data accumulated from the Roper Center iPoll Database showed that the percentage of people who consider Nixon the worst president in American history has steadily declined over the past few decades.⁷ This is also reflected in the academic writing regarding Nixon, which several books being published in which the authors set out to separate Nixon's personal and political achievements from the scandal that marred them.⁸ Other biographies even cast Nixon as the resurgent elder statesman, who overcame the Watergate stigma to regain a degree of respect in the final years of his life.⁹ Other books focused less on the person and policies of Nixon but rather on the effect that his campaign tactics and subsequent reshaping of the relationship between the Republican and Democratic parties have had and the way they permanently changed the American political landscape.¹⁰ A special note should be made for the works of Kevin Phillips, the Nixon campaign strategist who in 1968 masterminded the Southern Strategy, which he subsequently explained in the book *The Emerging Republican Majority*.¹¹ Since then he has become one of the Republican Party's most vocal critics.¹²

Nixon himself was a prolific author. Following his 1962 exit from national politics he wrote his first book, *Six Crises*, in which he reflected on his political career through what he considered the six

⁵ Justia US Supreme Court, "Nixon v. Administrator of General Services (Full Text) :: 433 U.S. 425 (1977) :: Justia U.S. Supreme Court Center," *Justia U.S. Supreme Court Center*, accessed May 14, 2017, <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/433/425/case.html>.

⁶ Douglas Brinkley, Luke A. Nichter, *The Nixon Tapes: 1971-1972* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2015);

Douglas Brinkley, Luke A. Nichter, *The Nixon Tapes: 1973* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2016);

Ken Hughes, *Chasing Shadows: The Nixon Tapes, the Chennault Affair, and the Origins of Watergate* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015);

Ken Hughes, *Fatal Politics: The Nixon Tapes, the Vietnam War, and the Casualties of Reelection* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016).

⁷ Roper Center For Public Opinion Research, "The American Public's Attitudes about Richard Nixon Post-Watergate," *Cornell University*, accessed May 14, 2017, <https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/the-american-publics-attitudes-about-nixon-post-watergate/>.

⁸ Douglas E. Schoen, *The Nixon Effect: How Richard Nixon's Presidency Fundamentally Changed American Politics* (New York: Encounter Books, 2016);

Lawrence J. McAndrews, "The Politics of Principle: Richard Nixon and School Desegregation," *The Journal of Negro History* 83(3) (1998): 195-196.

⁹ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nixon. Vol. 3: Ruin and recovery, 1973-1990* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991);

Monica Crowley, *Nixon In Winter* (New York: Random House, 1998).

¹⁰ Rick Perlstein, *Nixonland: the rise of a president and the fracturing of America* (New York: Scribner, 2008);

Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: the making of the Christian right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

¹¹ Kevin P. Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority (James Madison Library in American Politics edition)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

¹² Kevin P. Phillips, *Boiling point: Republicans, Democrats, and the Decline of Middle-class Prosperity* (New York: Random House, 1993);

Kevin P. Phillips, *Arrogant Capital: Washington, Wall Street, and the Frustration of American Politics* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1994);

Kevin P. Phillips, *Wealth and Democracy: A Political History of the American Rich* (New York: Broadway Books, 2002).

most important moments of it.¹³ Since then he published two memoirs, one immediately following his second departure from the political life and one in his twilight years.¹⁴ He also produced several books in which he commented on the state of international politics, which was always his main passion.¹⁵ He also published a wide range of articles, especially during his time away from politics and during his preparation for his second run at the presidency in 1968.¹⁶ Just as Nixon himself produced many works on foreign policy, so was the foreign policy aspect of his presidency extensively studied. Nixon's foreign policy goals and actions played a relatively minor goal in his 1968 presidential campaign however, so they will not be discussed here.

In terms of the number of books published that list Donald Trump as a (co-)author, he is an even more prolific writer than Richard Nixon was. His bibliography spans more than twenty books, although most of these focus on his business dealings. Only three titles, *The America We Deserve*, *Time to Get Tough: How to Make America #1 Again* and *Crippled America: How to Make America Great Again* deal explicitly with political topics.¹⁷ The first was written to accompany his 2000 run for the presidency on the ballot for the Reform Party, the second in anticipation of a potential 2012 run as a Republican, the third to accompany his 2016. All three books have essentially been written as campaign platforms. Interestingly enough the platform he set out in *The America We Deserve* mirrored that of his 2016 campaign in many issues. Even in 2000 he advocated being tougher on China and North Korea, limiting and renegotiating free trade agreements to better suit American economic needs, increased military spending, rolling back government oversight, limited social security and being tougher on crime.¹⁸ His 2016 platform wasn't copied one for one from this earlier work however, as the 2000 book also advocated policies such as universal health care, an assault weapon ban, waiting times and background checks for gun purchases and abortion rights (excluding partial birth abortions).¹⁹

Trump's run for the 2000 presidency as a third party candidate was largely overshadowed by the contest between the two largest parties. The Reform Party had more financial means and access thanks to their showing in the 1996 election under Ross Perot but attention for Trump's campaign and the book that accompanied it was extremely limited. His 2016 run however was much more high profile. Since 2000 he had developed a successful reality television show that created several spinoffs and, as a verbal critic of president Barack Obama, had become a frequent guest in right wing media in general and FOX News in particular. He had also been making several other appearances to boost his celebrity status, most notably as a guest manager for a professional wrestling match at WrestleMania 23, billed as *The Battle of the Billionaires*, and as the guest of honour at a 2011 comedy roast for the

¹³ Richard M. Nixon, *Six Crises* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1962).

¹⁴ Richard M. Nixon, *The memoirs of Richard Nixon* (London: Book Club Associates, 1978);

Richard M. Nixon, *In the arena: a memoir of victory, defeat and renewal* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990).

¹⁵ Richard M. Nixon, *The Real War* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1980);

Richard M. Nixon, *Leaders* (New York: Warner Books, 1982);

Richard M. Nixon, *Beyond Peace* (New York: Random House, 1913-1994).

¹⁶ Richard M. Nixon, "What Has Happened to America?" *Reader's Digest*, October 1967, accessed April 10 2016, http://college.cengage.com/history/ayers_primary_sources/nixon_1967.htm;

Richard Nixon, "Asia After Viet Nam." *Foreign Policy Magazine*, 111(1967-1968): 111-125.

¹⁷ Donald J. Trump, *The America We Deserve* (Los Angeles: Renaissance Books, 2000);

Donald J. Trump, *Time to Get Tough: Making America #1 Again* (Washington DC: Regnery Publishing, 2011);

Donald J. Trump, *Crippled America: How to Make America Great Again* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015).

¹⁸ Trump, *The America We Deserve*: 117-118, 274; 145; 14; 44-45; 93-94.

¹⁹ *Ibid*: 206-208; 102; 31-32.

cable network Comedy Central.²⁰ While the demand for his 2000 book was limited due to the fact that he ran as a third party candidate and demand for his 2011 book was limited due to the fact that he did not run at all, the 2015 book *Crippled America* proved to be far more popular.

This arc, from Donald Trump as a real-estate mogul, to a celebrity, to a political commentator, to a politician, is also reflected in the books written about Donald J. Trump. During the eighties and nineties many books were written on Donald Trump, the real-estate mogul.²¹ As Trump began to profile himself more and more as a celebrity these books became more frequent, along with books more focused on his personal life than his business dealings.²² Many of the books published following his 2015 candidacy announcement were either written by Trump supporters (some of whom had had an active role in his campaign) or opponents.²³ So far there have been very few books written on Trump from an academic perspective. Even books written prior to his presidency are often written in a sensationalist tone, focusing either on Trump's success as a businessman or his tumultuous personal life. There is no true academic historiography of Donald Trump. Prior to his 2016 run there was not enough interest, and not enough time has passed for historians and political scientists to assess Trump as a politician since then, especially in light of the deluge of scandals and conflicting information that have marked Trump's highly volatile presidency so far.

As with any research subject who has been active in the public domain it would be impossible to assume that any truly unbiased book has been written on the subject. However, both candidates' historiographies still hold a core of valuable information, information that becomes more accessible when one keeps in mind the various backgrounds of the authors writing the work. What's more problematic is the type of writing that's available. Richard Nixon has, since 1972, been picked clean again and again by historians, political scientists and psychologists, all writing from the very least from an academic background, and according to academic standards. The writings on Trump have generally been written from a more journalistic perspective, often to a degree that borders on sensationalism. These books have been written for mass market appeal, or to promote a specific political agenda, not academic use, thus making their value for academic research into Donald Trump as a politician and his 2016 campaign limited. Furthermore, due to the fact that Trump's own books have often been written through a ghost writer we can reasonably assume that while they do reflect Trump's ideas at the time of writing they have been phrased and framed not by Trump himself but with whomever was asked by

²⁰ World Wrestling Entertainment, *WrestleMania 23*. DVD. Stanford: World Wrestling Entertainment, 2007; Internet Movie Database, "Comedy Central Roast of Donald Trump (TV Movie 2011) - IMDb," accessed May 8, 2017, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1865333/>.

²¹ Jerome Tucille, *Trump: The Saga of America's Most Powerful Real Estate Baron* (London: Penguin Group, 1985); John O'Donnell & James Rutherford, *Trumped!: The Inside Story of the Real Donald Trump – His Cunning Rise and Spectacular Fall* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991); Timothy O'Brien, *TrumpNation: The Art of Being the Donald* (New York: Warner Books, 2005).

²² Robert Slater, *No Such Thing as Over-exposure: Inside the Life and Celebrity of Donald Trump* (Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall, 2005);

Simone Payment, *Donald Trump: Profile of a Real Estate Tycoon* (New York: Rosen Publishing, 2007).

²³ Ann Coulter, *In Trump We Trust: E Pluribus Awesome!* (New York: Sentinel Publishing, 2016);

Jeffrey Lord, *What America Needs: The Case for Trump* (Washington DC: Regnery Publishing, 2016);

Roger Stone, *The Making of the President 2016: How Donald Trump Orchestrated a Revolution* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2017);

Michael Kranish & Mark Fisher, *Trump Revealed: An American Journey of Ambition, Ego, Money, and Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016);

Matt Taibbi, *Insane Clown President: Dispatches from the 2016 Circus* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2017).

writing down those ideas on his behalf. It is my intent to provide a more academic approach to the Donald Trump phenomenon, specifically from the perspective of Trump as a charismatic leader.

For my primary sources, besides the aforementioned autobiographical works, I will mainly rely on campaign materials such as speeches at rallies, broadcast news appearances and physical artefacts such as campaign posters, buttons and other memorabilia. I will also focus on print media such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. I will favour larger newspapers due to accessibility for two reasons. First, due to the fact that newspapers such as these focus on national coverage, they will often have the same reporters and editors covering candidates for extended periods of time, and due to the prestige associated with their employer they generally have better access to sources, both within the campaign and outside of it. Second of all, these larger newspapers are more accessible for research, with vast digital archives available online through databases such as ProQuest and LexisNexis. For the 2016 campaign however a much larger amount of news media becomes available, mainly due to the proliferation of online news reporting. I will also use survey data from institutions such as Gallup, the Pew Research Center and various United States government agencies.

It's my hope that through the approach of this thesis – combining the Just World Hypothesis with charismatic leadership and applying it to the 1968 and 2016 presidential campaigns of Donald Trump and Richard Nixon – new insights can be reached in the way campaign rhetoric specifically addressing the idea of American exceptionalism can be used to better understand the leader/follower relationships that are inherent to charismatic leadership, especially in the context of a western democracy.²⁴ It should be noted that the focus will be entirely on campaign rhetoric, not subsequent policy making and rhetoric surrounding that. The focus will be on the traditional foundations of charismatic leadership, i.e. the relationship the leader builds with their followers, and the way the leader shapes the perceptions their followers have of them and their opponents.

²⁴ For a further discussion as to why western democracy would be expected to make charismatic leadership less likely to succeed see chapter 2.2.

2.2. Charismatic Leadership within American democracy

The term 'charismatic leadership', as first set out by German sociologist Max Weber early in the twentieth century, is part of a larger typology of leadership in which Weber differentiated between three types of leader: the traditional, the rational-legal and the charismatic.¹ Of these three the charismatic leader could be argued to be by far the most powerful one. Even the title of Ruth Ann Willner's seminal book on charismatic leadership, *Spellbinders*, suggest that those who are leaders in the charismatic mould have a unique ability to enthrall their followers, to push them beyond common sense and rationality through almost supernatural means. Weber went beyond charisma as simple likeability and instead defined charisma as a quality that assigns the leader certain extraordinary qualities or abilities, unobtainable to the ordinary person, which gives the leader the ability to appeal to an authority that's based on the way their followers perceive them on an emotional level.² Unlike the traditional leaders, such as kings who inherit their power, or rational-legal leaders, who obtains their authority from the institutional framework of the polity they rule, the charismatic leader is by definition unique – dependent entirely on a relationship between him- or herself and their followers, a relationship that's built on and fuelled by unique characteristics that leader alone possesses. By definition charismatic leaders are irreplaceable, as they represent a unique vision and a unique ability to call on the adulation of the masses that their successors, even when appointed by the leader themselves, do not possess. In order to better clarify the manner in which the 1968 and 2016 presidential campaigns of Richard Nixon and Donald Trump might be understood in terms of charismatic leadership this chapter will first set out how the topic of charismatic leadership has been explored throughout the twentieth century. Beyond this general assessment of the way charismatic leadership has been used in academics there will also be a discussion as to how charismatic leadership can be applied to the specific institutional framework of western liberal democracies in general and the American institutional framework in particular.

The power of charismatic leadership can be seen in the academic explorations of the term during the twentieth century. These explorations focused on two events – World War II and the subsequent wave of decolonization that swept across Asia and Africa.³ The role of charismatic leadership in World War II especially illustrates how charismatic leadership can be a downright frightening concept. Adolph Hitler was undeniably a charismatic leader, and through his leadership he had set the world ablaze. Being a charismatic leader in the truest sense of the word, being able to appeal to the emotional needs of the masses, being perceived as uniquely gifted to a degree that can even transcend mere mortality, allows the charismatic leader to drive his followers to participate in, or at least be complicit in, a system of atrocities that goes far beyond what might be expected to be the limitations of human decency and morality in the twentieth century and beyond. As Weber notes, charismatic leadership is transcendent. They present a mission or vision to their followers that their followers accept, which

¹ Jay A. Conger, "Charismatic Leadership." *Oxford Handbooks Online*, December 12, 2012, accessed May 21, 2017, <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195398793.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195398793-e-21>.

² Jerrold M. Post, *Leaders and Their Followers in a Dangerous World: The Psychology of Political Behavior* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004): 188-189;

Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, vol. I (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978): 242-243..

³ Conger.

legitimizes the leader's claim to obedience.⁴ Hitler's charisma allowed him to direct his followers into behaviour that the leadership of the prior Weimar Republic never could have expected from its inhabitants, as its leaders did not possess the charisma that Hitler possessed.

Just like Hitler was responsible for atrocities at home and abroad, Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong each oversaw regimes that were marked by man-made famines, flawed economic modernization policies and systematic oppressions of not just political opponents but entire segments of the population that were considered to be subversive that resulted in tens of millions of deaths. In spite of these horrifying conditions their authorities were justified by a charismatic leadership that was so powerful that it took the form of a cult of personality. Interestingly enough, after their respective deaths the communist party cadres of neither the Soviet Union nor China allowed a new charismatic leader to rise from their midst. Yet even so the academic discussions surrounding charismatic leadership were not merely focused on totalitarian dictators. Mahatma Ghandi, Winston Churchill and Franklin Delano Roosevelt were all considered to be charismatic leaders as well, and due to the role they played in their respective nations' history their charisma was seen as a force for good.⁵ Ghandi's pacifistic resistance brought independence to the Indian subcontinent. Churchill's stoic leadership allowed the inhabitants of the British isles to persevere in the face of the Battle for Britain and the merciless bombardments of the German Luftwaffe. Roosevelt's ability to bring together disparate forces within the American political systems to push through unheard of government interventions in the American economic system brought the country back from the brink of the stock market crash and subsequent economic crisis of the late twenties and early thirties.

For the purpose of this thesis charismatic leadership will therefore be approached as a set of behaviours that define it, both on the part of the leader and of their followers, rather than a set of traits. As Beckhard notes: "Leadership comes into being when followers perceive the leader's behavior in a certain way, accept the leader's attempt to influence them, and then attribute leadership status to that individual. Without the followers' perceptions, acceptance, and attributions, the phenomenon simply would not exist."⁶ Likewise, *successful* charismatic leadership will not be defined in terms of Nixon's or Trump's ability to convert their rhetoric into policy. The focus of this research is on the campaign, not the subsequent administrations, and on the relationship between and behaviour interchange between the leader and their followers, not the traits they possess. Subsequently, leadership effectiveness will be defined in terms of attributions of favourable qualities by followers towards the leader, their compliance behaviours and their commitment to attitudes and values espoused by the leader.⁷

Following World War II the writings on charismatic leadership had two focuses. First, attempts were made to define the charismatic personality, a certain set of traits that was universal among all charismatic leaders.⁸ Second, there were attempts to define a set of circumstances in which a society might exist that might make the emergence of a charismatic leader more likely.⁹ The first focus, concentrating on the psychology of the individual, has born little academic fruit. While efforts have

⁴ Thomas E. Dow Jr., "The Theory of Charisma," *The Sociological Quarterly*, 10(3) (1969): 307.

⁵ Conger.

⁶ Jay A. Conger & Rabindra N. Kanungo, *Charismatic Leadership in Organizations* (London: SAGE Publications, 1998): 38-39.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Ann Ruth Willner, *The Spellbinders: Charismatic Political Leadership* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984): 14-15.

⁹ William H. Friedland, "For a Sociological Concept of Charisma," *Social Forces* 43(1) (1964): 20.

been made to define certain common behaviours a charismatic leader might exhibit there appears to be no real consensus on any common personality traits that are universal to charismatic leaders.¹⁰ Likewise, there has been only limited success in finding a uniform set of personality traits for those followers who might be attracted to charismatic leaders.¹¹ In more recent writings on charismatic leadership a dichotomy is proposed – socialized or personalized charisma – that seeks to distinguish between positive and negative outcomes of charismatic leadership. Essentially, socialized leaders serve the interests of the collective while personalized leaders seek to serve their own needs.¹² This is an ideal model however, with several authors noting that in reality charismatic leaders often possess both traits.¹³ Likewise, there is no uniform consensus on which societal conditions might lead to the emergence of a charismatic leader. There are conditions that might make the emergence of a charismatic leader more likely – exceptional, unique or dynamic situations – yet none of these conditions are necessary.¹⁴

It seems that a functioning western democracy in general and American democracy in particular, with its focus on checks and balances and a separation of powers, is anathema to the practice of charismatic leadership. A leader might present a mission or vision for their followers, but institutional constraints such as term limits, judicial oversight and parliamentary control on the executive branch will severely restrain the leader's ability to push through the laws and policies necessary to complete this mission. If a leader can only hold the top job for a maximum amount of years, and is dependent on the support of a parliament made up of a plurality of parties or political thoughts, they are severely limited in what can be achieved. Even if the leader then seeks an institutional shakeup such as an amendment of the constitution that would allow them more freedom to exercise their power the process of such constitutional change is so convoluted and drawn out, in both the institutional and temporal dimension, that the leader will have left office by the time they could benefit from it. The system might even adjust itself. The idea that a president of the United States could only serve two terms was a result of tradition, going all the way back to George Washington, not of a formalized constitutional restraint. It should be noted that Washington in his farewell address gave his age as reason for stepping down, not concerns about a disruption in the balance of power.¹⁵ These concerns were still present, as evident in the writings of Thomas Jefferson.¹⁶ For the majority of American history however tradition, not constitutional restraints, had set the term limits for American presidents. Although several presidents had run for office more than twice only Franklin Delano Roosevelt had, against the twin crises of the recession of the thirties and World War II, been elected to the office of president an unprecedented four times. Yet after his death Congress passed the twenty-second amendment establishing that “no person shall be elected to the office of

¹⁰ Jay A. Conger & Rabindra N. Kanungo, "Perceived Behavioural Attributes of Charismatic Leadership," *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science* 24(1) (1992): 96;

Willner: 14.

¹¹ Robert J. House & Jane M. Howell, "Personality and Charismatic Leadership," *The Leadership Quarterly* 3(2) (1992): 174.

¹² Conger.

¹³ Ronit Kark & Boas Shamir, "The Two Faces of Transformational Leadership: Empowerment and Dependency," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 88(2) (2003): 253.

¹⁴ Boas Shamir & Jane M. Howell, "Organizational and Contextual Influences on the Emergence and Effectiveness of Charismatic Leadership," *The Leadership Quarterly* 10(2) (1999): 278.

¹⁵ George Washington, "Avalon Project - Washington's Farewell Address 1796," Accessed May 21, 2017, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/washing.asp.

¹⁶ Thomas Jefferson, "Letter to the Legislature of Vermont | Teaching American History," December 10, 1807, accessed May 21, 2017, <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/letter-to-the-legislature-of-vermont/>.

President more than twice.”¹⁷ In response to Roosevelt’s charismatic leadership a new institutional check was put in place to constrain future presidents. As noted before, this self-correcting behaviour following a charismatic leader leaving the scene to stymie the ability of future charismatic leaders to rise to power is not exclusive to democracies.

These self-corrections on excesses of executive power within the United States are limited however. As shown in Arthur M. Schlesinger jr.’s *The Imperial Presidency* the twentieth century saw a marked shift in the use of executive power as the lines between domestic policy and foreign security blurred. Starting with the 1919-1920 anarchist bombing campaigns targeting American business, political and law enforcement interests there has been an increasing trend of foreign threats to the stability of the United States operating in a non-conventional manner. Faced with foreign threats that took the form of infiltration and espionage by foreign agents rather than armies massing at the border there was no longer a clear line to be drawn between domestic and foreign policy. In particular, the 1936 Supreme Court decision *U.S. v. Curtiss-Wright Corporation et al* ruled that the office of the President had an inherent authority in foreign affairs and that it did not require an act of Congress to exercise this authority.¹⁸ Although the United States presidency had a history of being more powerful in times of crisis, such as during the Civil War or World War I, the peaceful aftermath of these crises often saw a reassertion of Congressional authority. Following World War II however the aftermath was far from peaceful, with the looming Cold War and the Korean War. While the twenty-second amendment was a clear repudiation of the Presidency and Congress repeatedly thwarted president Truman’s attempts to transition from Roosevelt’s New Deal policies to Fair Deal policies the looming spectre of Cold War nonetheless created a situation in which, as Schlesinger, put it, “The menace of unexpected crisis hung over the world, demanding, it was supposed, the concentration within the government of the means of instant decision and response. All this, reinforcing the intellectual doubt about democratic control of foreign relations, appeared to argue more strongly than ever for the centralization of foreign policy in the Presidency.”¹⁹ With the office of President coming to represent the final authority on how the United States is to defend itself from foreign threats, both conventional and unconventional, it’s easy to see how a charismatic candidate for the presidency might, in the framework of Willner’s leader as saviour charisma, be empowered in their charismatic leadership by presenting themselves as the only ones who are knowledgeable and determined enough to confront America’s foes. As later chapters of this thesis will show both Nixon and Trump sought to present themselves as the only ones who had the knowledge to identify foreign threats and the willingness to combat them by any means necessary.

The institutional restraints that are inherent in the American system do not disqualify charismatic leadership for the purpose of this thesis, not simply because of the existence of democratically elected charismatic leaders. While checks and balances might limit a leader’s ability to put their charismatic vision in practice there is nothing inherent in democracy that disqualifies charismatic leadership as a strategy to seek power, which is where the focus of this thesis lies. Charismatic leadership is a valid

¹⁷ National Archives, "The Constitution: Amendments 11-27," accessed May 21, 2017, <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/amendments-11-27#toc-amendment-xxii>.

¹⁸ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. *The Imperial Presidency* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973): 101-102.

¹⁹ Schlesinger, 127-128.

method for politicians to seek the popular support necessary to obtain office. The focus of this thesis is on the presidential campaigns of 1968 and 2016 and the way Richard Nixon and Donald Trump conducted them, not how they used their power once they obtained it. As such the focus will be on campaign behaviour and the relationship between Nixon and Trump and their respective followers. Charismatic leadership, as defined by Weber and further explored by other academics is a concept that's defined by the relationship between the leader and their followers, especially in terms of how the followers regard the leaders. As other writers have noted there is no uniform charismatic leader personality profile. As such the personalities of Nixon and Trump are irrelevant for the use of charismatic leadership in the comparison this thesis sets out.

While this thesis will pay extensive attention to the contextual conditions from which both men emerged as charismatic leaders, especially in chapters 3.3, 3.5 and 3.6, the focus will be on how Nixon and Trump used these conditions to strengthen their charismatic appeal for their followers, not how these conditions might have been responsible for the emergence of Nixon and Trump as charismatic leaders. Given the nature of democracy and its inherent institutional makeup and its plurality of political ideologies and beliefs it should be noted that a leader using charismatic methods to obtain a position of authority does not need to appeal to the electorate as a whole. A charismatic leader in a democracy only needs to appeal to enough of the electorate to obtain a majority.²⁰ When using charismatic leadership theories in this thesis the assumption will therefore be that the objective of both Nixon and Trump in using charismatic leadership was to achieve a majority of votes, not to obtain absolute control. Furthermore, given that the dichotomy of socialized versus personalized charismatic leadership is an ideal type that belies the complexities of the practical reality this thesis will not seek to establish a psychobiography of either candidate. Giving an accurate assessment of the campaign behaviour of Nixon and Trump in terms of socialized and personalized would not provide any significant new insights in their behaviour for the purpose of this thesis, as earlier literature has shown that charismatic leaders can generally be expected to possess both.

²⁰ As the 2016 election results have shown institutional idiosyncrasies might mean that a leader does not even need to obtain a popular majority in order to achieve an electoral victory.

2.3. The Just World Hypothesis: Americans believe good things happen to good people

In March of 2017, at the height of the Republican efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act and replace it with their own American Health Care Act of 2017, Republican congressman Jason Chaffetz remarked that "...maybe, rather than getting that new iPhone that they just love and they want to go spend hundreds of dollars on, maybe they should invest in their own healthcare. They've got to make those decisions themselves."¹ It was a staggeringly callous remark, especially when one considers that at the time he made that remark the most expensive model iPhone when bought directly from Apple cost \$769, while annual premiums for employment-based insurance averaged \$6.250 in 2015 and was projected to rise to \$6.400 in 2016.² This would mean that an individual would have to buy eight of the most expensive model iPhones a year to spend the same amount of money that the average working American would spend on insurance premiums in 2016. The dismissive remarks about people who are unable to afford health insurance are indicative of an attitude that's prevalent among Republican voters, a belief that's summarized in the Just World Hypothesis – the belief that good things happen to good people. The Just World Hypothesis has been phrased as follows: "Individuals have a need to believe that they live in a world where people generally get what they deserve. The belief that the world is just enables the individual to confront his physical and social environment as though they were stable and orderly."³ In order to fully understand how this belief affects perceptions of leaders and society among Republican voters a fourfold explanation of the Just World Hypothesis is posed:

1. Good things happen to good people.
2. Therefore, bad things happen to bad people.
3. Therefore, those who have bad things happen to them must have done something to deserve this.
4. Conversely, those who have had good things happen to them must have done something to deserve this.

In the this chapter I will set out how each of these four beliefs is a prevalent attitude among American voters in general and Republican voters in particular. In subsequent chapters I will show how these attitudes were confirmed and reinforced in the rhetoric and campaign behaviour of Richard Nixon and Donald Trump, in 1968 and 2016 respectively. First however, I will set out what the Just World Hypothesis entails exactly. I will also discuss the link between believing in a just world and Evangelical Christianity and show to what extent this belief has shaped the views of the American electorate, both in terms of perceptions of the individual and of society as a whole.

The first uses of the Just World Hypothesis in the psychology of perceptions of the individual came through several research papers published in the sixties. Melvin J. Lerner in particular was at the

¹ Ian Simpson, "U.S. congressman stirs backlash over healthcare versus iPhone comment," *Reuters*, March 7, 2017, accessed May 14, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-obamacare-iphone-idUSKBN16E2RM>.

² Apple, "Buy iPhone 7 and iPhone 7 Plus - Apple," accessed May 14, 2017, <https://www.apple.com/shop/buy-iphone/iphone-7#>;

Congressional Budget Office, "Private Health Insurance Premiums and Federal Policy," February 2016, accessed May 14, 2017, https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/114th-congress-2015-2016/reports/51130-Health_Insurance_Premiums_OneCol.pdf.

³ Melvin J. Lerner & Dale T. Miller, "Just World Research and the Attribution Process: Looking Back and Ahead." *Psychological Bulletin* 85(5) (1978): 1030.

forefront of using this theory to better understand group dynamics. First, by conducting an experiment wherein observers watched a pair of individuals work on a task, in which one of the two workers was randomly assigned the reward for completing that task at the end, he showed that observers found the person being rewarded more attractive, regardless of actual contribution to the task.⁴ Next, he showed that observers of a suffering victim, feigning being subjected to electrical shocks in an experimental setting similar to the infamous Milgram experiment, would find the individual on whom the feigned electrical shocks were inflicted less attractive, especially when they themselves were unable to do anything to alleviate that suffering without breaking with the instructions given to them by the supervisors of the experiment.⁵ This experiment showed the strength of the Just World Hypothesis as a coping mechanism. By reassuring themselves that the victim of the fake shocks was somehow deserving of her suffering that suffering became more morally acceptable.

In their 1968 article *The Protestant Ethic as a Personality Variable* Herbert L. Mirels and James B. Garrett set out a methodology which sought to define to what extent an individual subscribes to Protestant ethics and how these beliefs can be measured in terms of a personality variable. This work was inspired by the work of German sociologist Max Weber, who posited a causal relationship between Protestant ethics and the rise of capitalism in western society.⁶ This formalized approach to Protestant ethics as something that could be measured in an individual's personality was used in research regarding the Just World Hypothesis by Zick Rubin and Letitia Anne Peplau, who found a strong correlation between being religious in general and holding Protestant ethics in specific and believing in a just world.⁷ Other researchers found strong links between belief in a just world and personal views closely related to conservatism, authoritarianism and law and order related value systems.⁸

A strong link exists between these beliefs (conservative and authoritarian personality traits, valuing law and order) and voting Republican. Simultaneously, Evangelical Christians have consistently voted Republican over the past five decades.⁹ This strong link between Evangelical beliefs and voting Republicans is something that has been actively fostered by the Republican party since the advent of Nixon's Southern Strategy, which fostered the link between Republican political campaigns and influential Evangelical preachers.¹⁰ In 2016 in particular Evangelical support for Donald Trump was remarkably strong. A Pew Research Center survey found that 81% of polled Evangelicals voted for Trump, compared to 78% of Evangelicals voting for Republican candidate Mitt Romney in the 2012 elections. Perhaps just as remarkable is the drop in Evangelical support for the Democratic candidate,

⁴ Melvin J. Lerner, "Evaluation of performance as a function of performer's reward and attractiveness," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 1(4) (1965): 358-359.

⁵ Melvin J. Lerner & Carolyn H. Simmons, "Observer's Reaction to the "Innocent Victim": Compassion or Rejection?," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 4(2) (1966): 209-210.

⁶ Herbert L. Mirels & James B. Garrett, "The Protestant Ethic as a personality Variable," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 36(1) (1971): 40-41.

⁷ Zick Rubin & Letitia Anne Peplau, "Who Believes in a Just World?," *Journal of Social Issues* 31(3) (1975): 78-79.

⁸ Norman T. Feather, "Human Values, Global Self-Esteem and Belief in a Just World," *Journal of Personality* 59(1) (1991): 103-104.

⁹ One notable exception here is Jimmy Carter's election in 1976. This can be explained by the fact that Carter was the only Democratic candidate in the last fifty years who openly identified as a born-again Evangelical Christian. Furthermore he specifically appealed to Southern identity in his campaign and he benefited from backlash against the Republican party following Watergate and President Ford's pardon of Richard Nixon.

¹⁰ Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press 2010): 91

from 21% in 2012 to 16% in 2016.¹¹ This strong Evangelical support for Trump is noteworthy, as his past behaviour seems to disqualify him as a credible candidate among Evangelicals. Not only does he have a well-documented record of marital infidelity, as well as participations in radio and television shows in which he openly bragged about this, but he also flubbed a reference to a Bible verse during a speech on the campaign trail, using the phrasing ‘Two Corinthians’ rather than ‘Second Corinthians’, which led many to question his familiarity with the Bible and his Christian credentials.¹² In spite of this he not only drew more voter support from Evangelical Christian voters than previous candidates, especially George W. Bush, who himself identified as an Evangelical Christian, but he also drew enthusiastic support from many Evangelical leaders such as James Dobson, Ralph Reed, James Robison, Robert Jeffress and Jerry Falwell, Jr..¹³

Belief in a just world is something that separates Democrats and Republicans – a separation of world view rather than of policy. As a recent survey published by the Pew Research Center points out: “Beyond partisan differences over economic policies, there are stark divisions on a fundamental question: What makes someone rich or poor? Most Republicans link a person’s financial standing to their own hard work – or the lack of it. Most Democrats say that whether someone is rich or poor is more attributable to circumstances beyond their control.”¹⁴ This assertion is backed up by the survey, in which 66% of Republican or leaning Republican voters asserted that a person’s wealth depends more on whether a person has worked harder rather than whether that person has had advantages in life. Likewise, according to 56% of Republican respondents, poverty is a result of lack of effort on the part of the poor person rather than circumstances beyond their control. Conversely, among Democratic or leaning Democratic respondents only 29% believes that hard work is the primary explaining factor in personal success, and only 19% responded that poverty is primarily explained by lack of effort.¹⁵ This ties back to congressman Chavetz’ remarks regarding iPhones and healthcare. After all, if one believes that wealth and poverty are primarily contingent on personal responsibility, it makes sense to assume that those who can’t afford health insurance must have made some personal decisions in their life – in this case buying iPhones – that explains why they can’t afford their insurance. Party affiliation plays a role in whether or not a person believes the American socio-economic system is unfair in general. When asked whether the system is fair to them personally however, the answers from respondents become much more uniform. Republicans are slightly more likely to believe that the system is fair while Democrats are slightly more likely to believe the opposite.

¹¹ Pew Research Center, "How the Faithful Voted: A Preliminary 2016 Analysis," November 9, 2016, accessed May 19, 2017, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/how-the-faithful-voted-a-preliminary-2016-analysis/ft_16-11-09_relig_exitpoll_religrace/.

¹² Eric Bradner, "Trump blames Tony Perkins for '2 Corinthians'," CNN, January 22, 2016, accessed May 19, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/01/20/politics/donald-trump-tony-perkins-sarah-palin/>.

¹³ Kyle Mantyla, "Trump Is Giving His Evangelical Advisory Board Unprecedented Access To Help Shape His Administration," *Right Wing Watch*, December 7, 2016, accessed July 2, 2017, <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/post/trump-is-giving-his-evangelical-advisory-board-unprecedented-access-to-help-shape-his-administration/>.

¹⁴ Samantha Smith, "Why people are rich and poor: Republicans and Democrats have very different views," *Pew Research Center*, May 2, 2017, accessed May 7, 2017, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/05/02/why-people-are-rich-and-poor-republicans-and-democrats-have-very-different-views/>.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

When it comes to the question as to whether the system is fair to them *personally* however, equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans, about two thirds, believe that it is.¹⁶

The way the Just World Hypothesis influences one's perception of society as a whole can be observed in a 2014 experiment by Judith Niehues, in which residents of various Western countries were asked what they believed was an accurate representation of income distribution among its population. These survey results were then mirrored with the actual income distribution for each country, thus determining how accurate inhabitants of each countries perceived the distribution of income among its population. Remarkably, of the countries surveyed this way the United States was the only country in which its population *underestimated* the percentage of its population that had an income that was lower than the median.¹⁷ Similarly, Americans vastly underestimate how much wealth is held by the top quintile of its population measured by income. A survey held in December of 2005 (notable because it was held before the social unrest following the 2008 housing market crash) found that Americans estimated that the upper quintile held nearly 60% of all wealth when in reality they held nearly 85% of all wealth at the time of the survey. In a reflections of the findings of the Niehues survey respondents also vastly overestimated how much wealth the bottom three quintiles held.¹⁸ This can be explained through a belief in the Just World Hypothesis. After all, if a person is to believe that the economic system is inherently fair they are less inclined to believe that poverty can exist within the system to the extent that it does in America.

These perceptions of poverty also affect individual policy preferences. African Americans are more likely to be perceived as poor, and European Americans who most overestimate the number of African Americans living in poverty are also most likely to oppose welfare policies.¹⁹ The contrast between Republican and Democratic support for a \$15 Federal minimum wage is stark, with 82% of Democrats supporting the idea of such a minimum wage, compared to only 21% of Republicans. Similarly, 72% of Democrats believe the federal government should do more to aid the needy, compared to only 21% of Republicans.²⁰ Both Democratic and Republican administrations have pushed policies that placed tighter restrictions and work requirements on those receiving government benefits.²¹ They also affect the perceptions of the working poor, those who live in relative poverty in spite of the fact that they have at least part-time employment. The percentage of Americans who live in poverty in spite of the fact that they held employment for at least 27 weeks out of the year has been steadily rising.²² In spite of this there seems to be very little awareness of the existence of the working poor among the American public. The idea that someone can live in relative poverty in spite of working is anathema to the Just World Hypothesis and the Horatio Alger myth of rags to riches by way of

¹⁶ John T. Jost, Danielle Gaucher & Chadly Stern, ""The World Isn't Fair": A System Justification Perspective on Social Stratification and Inequality," in *APA Handbook of Personality and Social Psychology*, ed. Mario Mikulincer et al. (Washington DC: APA Books, 2015), 318-319.

¹⁷ Judith Niehues, "Subjective perceptions of inequality and redistributive preferences: An international comparison," *IW-TRENDS discussion papers 2* (2014): 10-11.

¹⁸ Michael I. Norton & Dan Ariely, "Building a better America—One wealth quintile at a time," *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 6(1) (2011): 9-12.

¹⁹ Matin Gilens, "Race and Poverty in America: Public Misperceptions and the American News Media," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 60(4) (1996): 516.

²⁰ Pew Research Center, "Issues and the 2016 presidential campaign | Pew Research Center," August 18, 2016, accessed May 19, 2017, <http://www.people-press.org/2016/08/18/5-issues-and-the-2016-campaign/>.

²¹ David K. Shipler, *The Working Poor: Invisible in America* (New York: Albert A. Knopf, 2004): 40;

Bill Clinton, "How We Ended Welfare, Together," *The New York Times*, August 22, 2006: A19.

²² U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics, "A Profile of the Working Poor, 2013," *BLS Reports*, July 2015, accessed May 19, 2017, <https://www.bls.gov/pub/reports/working-poor/archive/a-profile-of-the-working-poor-2013.pdf>.

bootstraps.²³ These debates on the nature of labour, poverty and the role government has in fighting it are not unique to the past two decades. In 1964, a mere four years before Nixon's second run for office, Lyndon Johnson launched his War on Poverty, and a year later Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his American Dream speech, laying out the ideas that would eventually form the foundation of his 1968 Poor Peoples' Campaign. In the speech King argued about the problem of poverty among working people: "This is why we must join the war against poverty and believe in the dignity of all work. What makes a job menial? I'm tired of this stuff about menial labor. What makes it menial is that we don't pay folk anything. Give somebody a job and pay them some money so they can live and educate their children and buy a home and have the basic necessities of life. And no matter what the job is it takes on dignity."²⁴

The Just World Hypothesis is a coping mechanism. As sociologist Nathan Glazer notes: "What we have today is outrage against those who do not play fair – not outrage over inequality as such."²⁵ Americans justify inequality as something that is earned – rich people work harder and poor people don't – and come to resent those who are wealthy and successful without being perceived as deserving. If one believes that success is contingent on a certain amount of effort then it logically follows that those who appear to achieve success without the required amount of effort must have somehow cheated the system.²⁶ This can offer an explanation of the push among Republican politicians and commentators for Barack Obama to release his college records beyond a simple cynical attempt to undermine his credibility. After all, if one believes, as most Republicans do, that Barack Obama is a bad person, then it would make sense that his academic achievements, graduating Harvard Law School, were not the result of hard work and effort, since believing in the Just World Hypothesis would mean that someone who is successful would have to be a good person. Rather, he must have been guilty of some academic indiscretions that allowed him to cheat the system. These claims that Obama's college records would somehow show that he did not earn his academic achievements first originated on right wing website World Net Daily. Donald Trump himself was one of the key figures in spreading this misinformation, repeatedly falsely claiming that Obama spent \$4 million in legal fees to keep these records sealed.²⁷

The Just World Hypothesis is a fairly simple premise – the belief that the universe is inherently fair, and thus will reward good behaviour while punishing bad – yet its implications are myriad, both for the perception of the individual and society as a whole. It's a system justification theory, a way for those who believe in it to cope with the simple fact that sometimes bad things happen to good people,

²³ Shipler: 5;

For more information on the Horatio Alger mythology and its effect on American perceptions of the attainability of success see chapter 3.2..

²⁴ Martin Luther King Jr., "The American Dream," *The Stanford King Encyclopedia*, July 4, 1965, accessed May 19, 2017, http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/documentsentry/doc_the_american_dream/.

²⁵ Nathan Glazer, "On Americans & Inequality." *Daedalus*, 132(3) (2003): 111.

²⁶ Being successful without being deserving of it (i.e. having worked hard for it) creates cognitive dissonance. This belief is illustrated in the movie *Patch Adams*, a rather melodramatic retelling of the life of the doctor by the same name starring Robin Williams. In one of the pivotal scenes of the film the main character is confronted with accusations of having cheated on his exams while in medical school. After some discussion these accusations are shown to have stemmed from his roommate, who can't bring himself to believe that Adams is somehow at the top of his class without ever having been seen to have studied. *Patch Adams*, directed by Tom Shadyac (1998; Orlando, FL: Universal Studios, 2002), DVD.

²⁷ Michelle Ye He Lee, "Trump's zombie claim that Obama spent \$4 million to conceal school and passport records," *The Washington Post*, August 19, 2015, accessed May 15, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2015/08/19/trumps-zombie-claim-that-obama-spent-4-million-to-conceal-school-and-passport-records/>.

something that allows them to stave off the existential horror of the possibility that fate might deal them an undeserved wildcard.²⁸ Those who believe in it most strongly tend to view those who have achieved wealth and status more favourably while holding those who haven't in less regard. When one believes in a just world the logical assumption is that those who are successful must be good persons, and those who aren't must have done something to deserve it. It can make an individual overly optimistic about the socio-economic conditions of their fellow countrymen, as shown in the way Americans consistently underestimate the percentage of Americans who live in relative poverty. If an individual believes that those who are poor must have done something to deserve this, as the victimhood justification aspect of the Just World Hypothesis suggests, they are less likely to support policies specifically designed to aid the poor. These beliefs can also lead to cognitive dissonance when success is perceived in someone whom the individual is likely to regard negatively for some other reason. The conservative outcry for the release of Barack Obama's college records has shown this.

These beliefs are not uniform among all Americans. A wide range of surveys has shown that they are most likely to occur in Protestants in general and Evangelical Christians in particular. They are also more pervasive among those who vote Republican, and those who have an authoritarian personality. Yet while Democrats and Republicans are divided on whether the American capitalist system is to society in general they seem to perceive the system as being fair to them personally in roughly equal measure. This shows that while the belief in a just world is more common among Republican voters it does also exist, although to a lesser degree, among Democrats. This makes affirming and reinforcing the Just World Hypothesis through campaign rhetoric and policy proposals a valuable strategy to appeal to American voters. In subsequent chapters I will set out how both Richard Nixon and Donald Trump, each in their own way, showed political behaviour on the campaign trail that appealed to those who believe in a just world.

²⁸ John T. Jost et al., "The World Isn't Fair": A System Justification Perspective on Social Stratification and Inequality," in *APA Handbook of Personality and Social Psychology*, edited by Mario Mikulincer & Philip R. Shaver (Washington: APA Books, 2015): 334.

Charisma in practice

3.1. Unlikely beginnings: building a political persona

On March 15 2011 Comedy Central aired the Roast of Donald Trump. It was part of a larger series of comedy roasts of celebrities, a modern revival of the traditional New York Friars Club events which have been held at least since 1910, in which a guest of honour was subjected to a series of good-natured jokes by his or her peers.¹ Surrounded by (pseudo-)celebrities and comedians Trump sat centre stage as every aspect of his public persona, from his diction to his litigious tendencies and his use of branding, was picked apart and mocked, before each individual speaker finished by reassuring Trump that they really loved him, that they were huge fans, that it was all said in good humour. Host Seth McFarlane immediately set the tone for the evening by using his opening remarks to joke: “By the way, Donald, it's pronounced ‘huge,’ not ‘eyuge’. Also, it's pronounced ‘I am fucking delusional,’ not ‘I am running for President.’”² It's typical for the perception that existed of Donald Trump in 2011. He was a caricature, and the very idea that he had a shot at the presidency of the United States was ludicrous. The theme of mocking Trump for his presidential ambitions continued throughout the night.

It's a problem that is essential to the campaigns of both Richard Nixon and Donald Trump. Both were seen, even months before they announced their candidacy, as extremely unlikely candidates – Nixon due to the electoral defeats of 1960 and 1962, and the subsequent dramatic exit from the public stage, and Trump due to his complete lack of political experience and odd celebrity status, which seemed to be entirely based on his (claimed) wealth and the success of his reality TV show – yet both not only won the nominations but the presidency. The question then becomes: how did both men build themselves up as credible candidates from such unlikely beginnings? This chapter will set out the steps both presidents took on the earliest stages of their respective roads towards the White House, how they built up the foundations of their eventual electoral victory, before their electoral campaigns had even started.

Richard Nixon's press conference on November 8, 1962, was essentially little more than Nixon handing in his resignation to the American public at large. He had suffered back to back electoral defeats – first succumbing to young upstart John F. Kennedy in the 1960 presidential campaign and then failing to win the governorship of his home state, a state he had carried in 1960 as a presidential candidate – that had left him visibly drained. During the press conference, in which he famously announced “You won't have Nixon to kick around anymore,” Nixon repeated and doubled down on his 1960 assertions regarding the press and their repeated failures to fully represent his views in their writings, singling out two reporters as exceptions to this as he accused them repeatedly of twisting his words and delighting in his recent electoral defeats.³ The New York Times dutifully not only published

¹ The New-York Daily Tribune, "Friars "Kid" Mr. Harris. Veteran Theatrical Manager Butt of Jokes at Dinner. WAS GUEST OF HONOR, TOO. Well Known Thespians, However, Mingle Their Jest with Praise.," *The New-York Daily Tribune*, December 19, 1910: 7.

² Internet Movie Database, "Comedy Central Roast of Donald Trump (TV Movie 2011) - IMDb," accessed May 24, 2017, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1865333/>.

³ Gladwin Hill, "NIXON DENOUNCES PRESS AS BIASED: In 'Last' News Conference, He Attributes His Defeat to Crisis Over Cuba Nixon, Bitter at His Defeat by Brown in California, Denounces the Press as Biased SAYS CUBAN CRISIS COST HIM ELECTION Gives No Hint of Plans-- Asserts Others Will Have to Lead Coast G.O.P. Blames Cuban Crisis Changes His Plans," *The New York Times*, November 8, 1962: 1, 18.

an article on the press conference from a journalistic perspective, but also a full transcript.⁴ Besides his repeated lambasting of the media and their reporting on him Nixon also devoted quite a bit of time playing to his favourite subject, foreign politics, discussing the Cuban Missile Crisis and noting that while president Kennedy was currently enjoying increased popularity thanks to the way he handled it the resolution did very little to deal with the larger problems of having a communist nation mere dozens of miles from the United States coast. Following these remarks he seemed to come to a conclusion, announcing his intentions to take “a long holiday from political life” and “getting reacquainted with his family,” only to double down on his criticisms of the press once more. It’s a testament to his confrontational attitude that Nixon considered the press conference an “opportunity to test wits with you” and finished his statement by saying that the press should “...recognize that they have a right and a responsibility, if they're against a candidate, give him the shaft, but also recognize if they give him the shaft put one lonely reporter on the campaign who will report what the candidate says now and then.”⁵ It was about as dramatic as an exit he could have made. Outside of his brief remarks about the Cuban missile crisis, his opponent in the gubernatorial election and his perspective on the upcoming 1964 elections, it was entirely dedicated to airing out the grievances he felt he had had with the press at least since 1960. He left the public stage with the stigma of being bitter in defeat, having lashed out one last time at his perceived enemies, and it was a stigma he would have to overcome if he were to make his 1968 return to politics a successful one.⁶

The first step on Nixon’s journey back to relevance was a change of scenery. He was vague about his exact plans for the near future entailed in his press conference, but he soon moved to New York to resume practising law, the first stage of what Nixon would later dub his ‘wilderness years’.⁷ The move to New York was ostensibly simply a career move – becoming a full partner in the law firm Mudge, Rose, Guthrie and Alexander, which added his name, against an impressive \$250,000 a year salary – but it would also put him in a new political landscape, right in the back yard of New York Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller, a prominent member of the Republican Party’s liberal wing and briefly a challenger to Nixon for the 1960 nomination.⁸ Nixon staved off Rockefeller’s challenge with what would become known as the *Fifth Avenue Pact*, but it would not be the last time the two clashed over the soul of the Republican Party.⁹ The move to New York was engineered by Elmer Bobst, chairman of the board of the Warner-Lambert Pharmaceutical Company and longtime friend of Nixon, going back to Nixon’s time as vice president under Eisenhower.¹⁰ Although Nixon himself framed Bobst’s reasoning behind the move entirely for professional and personal reasons, arguing that life in New York would offer better employment opportunities and that life there would be “much more interesting and stimulating,” it had an almost immediate impact on the future of Nixon’s political career.¹¹ It was at the now renamed Nixon, Mudge, Rose, Guthrie and Alexander that Nixon met and

⁴ New York Times, The, "Transcript of Nixon's News Conference on His Defeat by Brown in Race for Governor of California: Thanks Volunteer Aides Notes Rockefeller Victory 'America Has Got to Move' Has No Hard Feelings Gives Views on Press," *The New York Times*, November 8, 1962: 18.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Roger Morris, "The President Behind the Mask," *The New York Times*, February 4, 2009, accessed May 24, 2017, <https://100days.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/02/04/the-president-behind-the-mask/>.

⁷ Richard Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (London: Book Club Associates, 1978): 361.

⁸ Tom Wicker, *One of Us: Nixon and the American Dream* (New York: Random House, 1991): 6-7.

⁹ Douglas E. Schoen, *The Nixon Effect: How Richard Nixon's Presidency Fundamentally Changed American Politics* (New York: Encounter Books, 2016): 148.

¹⁰ Wicker: 4.

¹¹ Nixon: 247.

befriended Leonard Garment, who would go on to be closely involved with Nixon's political rebirth during the wilderness years and become a key member of the Nixon White House.¹²

One could wonder whether this move as a full partner at a prestigious New York law firm was suitable for Nixon. On a professional level he had relatively little experience practicing law. He certainly had the academic credentials – graduating third in his class of twenty-five at Duke – but in practical terms his career as a lawyer spanned roughly five years, working for Wingert and Bewley in his hometown of Whittier from 1937 until 1941, and for Los Angeles based law firm Adams, Duque and Hazeltine in 1961.¹³ The former ended with Nixon taking a series of government jobs that saw him more and more involved in the American efforts in World War II, the latter ended with his 1962 gubernatorial run. On a personal level Nixon seemed to have little love for the New York City environment, describing it as “a cold and expensive city” in his memoirs when discussing his first trip there during his 1936 Christmas break from his studies, which he and several fellow students had taken in order to gauge to what extent the city offered them opportunities for employment.¹⁴

Two electoral milestones remained between Nixon's 1962 press conference and the 1968 candidacy. The first, the presidential elections of 1964, was the year of the infamous Barry Goldwater campaign and the most crushing Republican defeat since World War II. Lyndon Johnson, heir apparent to the assassinated John F. Kennedy, easily defeated the divisive arch-conservative Barry Goldwater, who won only six states: his home state of Arizona – by less than 1% of the votes – and Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and South Carolina, all part of the Deep South.¹⁵ As the Republican candidate in the previous presidential election Nixon gave a speech presenting Goldwater to the convention. It had been a contentious primary season, which saw the Republican electorate split between the conservative Goldwater, who was slated by his opponents as belligerent and dangerously aggressive, and the liberal Rockefeller, who was primarily attacked on the marital infidelities he had been involved with. The heated political battle between the two would spill over into the Republican National Convention that year, with Rockefeller's speech being drowned out by shouts, boos, and even cow bells and squeeze horns.¹⁶

Although Nixon used his presentation speech to emphasize the importance of unity within the party Goldwater's subsequent acceptance speech was described by Nixon himself as “strident, divisive”, and identified as the moment Goldwater lost any hopes of unseating Johnson.¹⁷ In the subsequent campaign Nixon made numerous appearances on behalf of local candidates who repeatedly asked him not to associate them with the Goldwater campaign. The biggest impact on Nixon's political future came in the days following the defeat however. Nelson Rockefeller, the New York governor who Goldwater had defeated in the primaries, released a statement the day after the election placing the blame for the crushing defeat squarely at Goldwater and those who had supported him. In response Nixon gave a press conference on November 5 in which he blistered Rockefeller as a

¹² Wicker: 281; 490.

¹³ Nixon: 22; 231.

¹⁴ Nixon: 21.

¹⁵ “1964 Presidential General Election Results,” *US Election Atlas*, accessed May 26, 2017,

<http://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/national.php?year=1964&off=0&f=1>.

¹⁶ John Dickerson, “Never Goldwater: The attempt to wrest the 1964 GOP nomination from the Arizona senator and the birth of the modern GOP,” *Slate*, May 12, 2016, accessed May 26, 2017,

http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2016/05/never_goldwater_the_failed_attempt_to_wrest_the_1964_gop_nomination_from.html.

¹⁷ Nixon: 259-260.

“spoilsport and a divider”, and wrote him off as irrelevant as a Republican leader outside of New York.¹⁸ It was a confrontation between the two that had been more than a year in the making, ever since Rockefeller approached Nixon in September of 1963, seeking his support for his 1964 run for the Republican candidacy, an offer that Nixon rejected in favour of remaining neutral for the sake of Republican Party unity.¹⁹

The 1964 press conference placed Nixon centre stage when it came to rebuilding the Republican party. It was a role he considered a personal responsibility, claiming that this was the moment that he realized that: “there was no other life for me but politics and public service.”²⁰ His role in supporting Goldwater and denouncing Rockefeller, even after the former’s electoral defeat, more thorough and humiliating than anything Nixon himself had ever endured, placed him squarely at the heart of the Republican party once more. During the 1966 midterm elections Nixon once again took to the campaign trail on behalf of Republican candidates for Congress and the Senate, this time in a much more public fashion. In an interview for the *US News & World Report* published on October 3, 1966, Nixon talked extensively on the scale of his work campaigning on behalf of Republicans challenging Democrats for their seat and even speculated that the 1968 candidacy race would be decided between himself and Michigan governor George Romney.²¹ It was the first time Nixon hinted at once again seeking elected office.

The preparations Nixon made during his wilderness years weren’t limited to the domestic stage. Following his 1962 electoral defeat Nixon started 1963 by taking a six-week vacation with his wife and children. Even as the Nixon family toured the pyramids of Egypt, the Berlin Wall and the Eiffel Tower Nixon dedicated a substantial amount of time to meeting foreign heads of state.²² This vacation was followed by a series of visits to Vietnam in 1964 and 1965 and trips throughout 1967 which were, in Nixon’s own words, meant “to renew my contacts and refine my ideas about current conditions in the world.”²³ Foreign policy had always been Nixon’s first passion and it was one of the few issues he would publicly speak on during his wilderness years outside of the 1964 and 1966 campaign trails. These trips abroad became the lynchpin of the foreign policy rhetoric of the Nixon campaign. Throughout the campaign he repeatedly stressed not only his own foreign policy credentials but his personal familiarity with many world leaders and his first-hand experience with a perceived weakening of American respectability on the foreign stage, something that he was uniquely qualified to push back against.²⁴

In the same month that Seth McFarlane joked about Donald Trump being “fucking delusional” about his presidential aspirations he took the first official step onto the platform that would allow him to transition from being a reality television star to a credible voice in American politics. On March 31, 2011, Trump was formally announced as the guest host of a weekly segment on the Fox News talkshow

¹⁸ Nixon: 263-264.

¹⁹ Nixon: 251-252.

²⁰ Nixon: 264-265.

²¹ Alex Marshburn, "The Beginning of a Comeback," *The Richard Nixon Foundation*, November 14, 2015, accessed May 26, 2017, <https://www.nixonfoundation.org/2015/11/the-beginning-of-a-comeback/>.

²² Nixon: 248-250.

²³ Wicker: 282; Nixon: 279-280.

²⁴ Richard Nixon, "Asia After Viet Nam." *Foreign Policy Magazine*, 111(1967-1968): 111-125;

Richard Nixon, "Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Miami Beach, Florida," *The American Presidency Project*, accessed April 15, 2017, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25968>.

Fox and Friends titled *Mondays with Trump*.²⁵ It was the start of a long and fruitful relationship between Trump and the conservative news network. A potential Trump presidency was often speculated about by Fox News hosts and hinted at in on screen graphics, and between January 2013 and April 2015 Trump made 48 appearances on prime-time Fox News programming.²⁶ At the time Fox News already employed several prominent members and former elected officials of the Republican party such as Herman Cain, Newt Gingrich and Rick Santorum.²⁷ The relationship between Fox News and Donald Trump has not always been a fully positive one however. When Fox News hosted the first primary debate among Republican candidates for the nomination of the presidency host Megyn Kelly challenged Trump on past sexist statements he had made about women. In response, Trump attacked Kelly viciously in both media appearances and on Twitter, infamously claiming that she had "...blood coming out of her eyes, blood coming out of her wherever."²⁸ When Fox News refused his demand that Kelly be removed as host of the final primary debate Trump blasted the network and went through with his threat not to attend.²⁹

Donald Trump's unique contribution to the media landscape was his ability to give credibility to ideas that up until he voiced them only existed on the fringe of American politics and media.³⁰ The moment he contacted Joseph Farah, owner of conservative website *WorldNetDaily*, to inform him of the fact that he shared his beliefs that Barack Obama was not in fact a natural born citizen, having been born in Kenya rather than Honolulu, Hawaii, and as such was ineligible for the presidency, he brought that idea into the mainstream. What had until then been a fringe conspiracy theory suddenly became part of the mainstream news narrative, with broadcast outlets repeatedly airing Trump's views on the matter, even if they did not repeat the questions of eligibility.³¹ Prior to the March 31 announcement that Trump would become a regular contributor he had already been making frequent appearances on Fox News, and several Fox News hosts picked up on Trump's comments surrounding Obama's birth to promote the conspiracy theory on a mainstream media platform.³² A Gallup poll held around this time, conducted to measure the impact that Obama's release of his long form birth certificate had had on public opinion regarding his status as a natural born citizen, highlights the fact that although up until then mainstream news media paid relatively little attention to the theory, a large percentage of Americans nonetheless questioned whether Obama was born in Hawaii. Prior to the April 27, 2011 release of his birth certificate, only 38% of Americans believed that Obama was "definitely born in U.S.", with 15%, 9% and 19% of those polled believing that he was probably or

²⁵ Frances Martel, "You Saw This Coming: Fox News Announces 'Mondays With Trump' On Fox & Friends," *Mediaite*, March 31, 2011, accessed May 26, 2017, <http://www.mediaite.com/tv/you-saw-this-coming-fox-news-announces-mondays-with-trump-on-fox-friends/>.

²⁶ Willis, Oliver. "Donald Trump & Fox News: Timeline of a Relationship," *Media Matters for America*, February 1, 2016, accessed May 26, 2017, <https://www.mediamatters.org/blog/2016/02/01/donald-trump-amp-fox-news-timeline-of-a-relatio/208286>.

²⁷ Martel;

Christina López, "Jason Chaffetz Might Be Next Republican to Join Fox News' Elephant Graveyard: Former Republican Politicians Have Found Employment At The Network While They Rehab Their Careers," *Media Matters for America*, May 15, 2017, accessed May 26, 2017, <https://www.mediamatters.org/blog/2017/05/15/chaffetz-might-be-next-republican-join-fox-news-elephant-graveyard/216446>.

²⁸ Paola Chavez *et al.*, "A History of the Donald Trump-Megyn Kelly Feud," *ABC News*, October 26, 2016, accessed May 26, 2017, <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/history-donald-trump-megyn-kelly-feud/story?id=36526503>.

²⁹ Maggie Haberman & Nic Corasaniti, "Donald Trump, in Feud With Fox News, Shuns Debate," *The New York Times*, January 26, 2016, accessed May 26, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/27/us/politics/trump-feud-fox-debate.html>.

³⁰ See also chapter 3.4.

³¹ Ashley Parker & Steve Eder, "Inside the Six Weeks Donald Trump Was a Nonstop 'Birther'," *The New York Times*, July 2, 2016, accessed May 24, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/03/us/politics/donald-trump-birther-obama.html>.

³² Chelsea Rudman, "Fox Hypes Trump's Birtherism," *Media Matters for America*, March 24, 2011, accessed May 26, 2017, <https://www.mediamatters.org/research/2011/03/24/fox-hypes-trumps-birtherism/177912>.

definitely born in another country or believing that they did not know enough to say for certain, respectively. While the release of the birth certificate did seem to change the opinions of those surveyed a substantial amount of respondents still questioned Obama's legitimacy, with 23% of Republicans, 14% of independents and 5% of Democrats still believing that he was definitely or probably born in another country.³³

His relationships with Fox News got him attention, but not the institutional access he needed to get his foot in the electoral door. In 2015 he began expanding his political staff in preparation of his campaign. One of the most notable hires from that time, one that links directly back to Richard Nixon, was Roger Stone, a Republican operative who had been working on campaigns to elect Republican officials since 1972, when he was part of Nixon's Committee to Re-Elect the President, colloquially known as CREEP. As an operative for CREEP Stone had been actively involved in undermining the primary campaign of Pete McCloskey, a Republican congressman who was challenging Nixon on a pro-peace platform.³⁴ While working for CREEP Stone donated money to the McCloskey campaign on behalf of the Young Socialist Alliance, then sent the receipt for the donation to a local newspaper in an anonymous letter.³⁵ Although Stone had been active in Republican campaigns since 1972 he had left the party behind following a scandal during the 1996 campaign on behalf of Clinton challenger Bob Dole, where it was revealed that Stone and his wife placed advertisements looking for partners in a swingers magazine.³⁶ The fact that Stone had been out of active Republican campaign work since then made him a perfect advisor for Trump: with decades of experience campaigning on behalf of Republicans, yet now far enough removed from them not to threaten Trump's outsider credentials. Stone departed the Trump campaign in August of 2015, of his own free will according to Stone himself but forcibly ousted according to Trump, although he remained a vocal Trump supporter.³⁷

Those who held key positions in the Trump campaign were either drawn from the fringes of the Republican party or were, like Stone, operatives who had in the past worked for Republican campaigns but were several years removed from active involvement, allowing Trump to maintain the outsider narrative. Cory Lewandowski, who joined the Trump campaign formally as campaign manager at the launch of the campaign on June 16, 2016, had been tapped for the job six months earlier. Prior to joining the campaign he had been involved in several state-level campaigns and employed by Americans for Prosperity, a Koch brothers-backed conservative lobbying operation.³⁸ He was fired almost a year later.³⁹ Prior to his firing he had been replaced as campaign manager by Paul

³³ Lymari Morales, "Obama's Birth Certificate Convinces Some, but Not All, Skeptics: Less than half of Republicans still say he was definitely or probably born in the U.S.," *Gallup*, May 13, 2011, accessed May 24, 2017, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/147530/obama-birth-certificate-convinces-not-skeptics.aspx>.

³⁴ The Economist, "White knight in a battle-bus: An elderly Republican tries to clean up his party," *The Economist*, June 1, 2006, accessed May 27, 2017, <http://www.economist.com/node/7008750>.

³⁵ Anthony J. Lukas, *Nightmare: The Underside of the Nixon Years* (New York: Viking Press, 1976) 165;

Rick Perlstein, *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* (New York: Scribner, 2008): 631.

³⁶ The Reliable Source, "GOP trickster Roger Stone defects to Libertarian party," *The Washington Post*, February 16, 2012, accessed May 27, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/reliable-source/post/gop-trickster-roger-stone-defects-to-libertarian-party/2012/02/16/g1QASlvUIR_blog.html.

³⁷ Robert Costa, "Trump ends relationship with longtime political adviser Roger Stone," *The Washington Post*, August 8, 2015, accessed May 27, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/08/08/trump-ends-relationship-with-longtime-political-adviser-roger-stone/>.

³⁸ Grant Welker, "On the Stump for Trump: Lowell native Corey Lewandowski running presidential campaign," *The Lowell Sun*, July 24, 2015, accessed May 27, 2017, http://www.lowellsun.com/news/ci_28532424/stump-trump-lowell-native-corey-lewandowski-running-presidential.

³⁹ Maggie Haberman, et al., "Donald Trump Fires Corey Lewandowski, His Campaign Manager," *The New York Times*, June 20, 2016, accessed May 27, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/21/us/politics/corey-lewandowski-donald-trump.html>.

Manafort, who, along with Roger Stone, had founded a political consulting company in 1980.⁴⁰ Manafort was a Republican campaign veteran, having participated in the 1976 campaign for Gerald Ford, the 1980 campaign for Ronald Reagan, the 1988 campaign for George H.W. Bush and the 1996 campaign for Bob Dole, along with indirect involvement in the 2008 campaign for John McCain.⁴¹ He was removed from the campaign following revelations that he had received more than \$12 million in payments from ousted Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich.⁴² He was replaced by Kellyanne Conway and Steve Bannon. Conway, now a White House aide, entered the Trump campaign in the summer of 2016.⁴³ She had made her career as CEO of a polling company and political commentator and had gotten herself involved in the 2016 presidential campaign on behalf of Ted Cruz.⁴⁴ She became a trusted member of the Trump campaign team and subsequent administration in spite of her vocal criticisms of Trump early in the 2016 campaign. She represented the super-PAC of Robert Mercer, co-founder of the Renaissance Technologies hedge fund and major contributor to the Ted Cruz campaign.⁴⁵ Bannon entered the Trump campaign as an investment banker turned documentary maker, once described by Andrew Breitbart, founder of *Breitbart News*, as “the Leni Riefenstahl of the Tea Party Movement.” Bannon would become executive chairman of *Breitbart News* following Breitbart’s death in 2012.⁴⁶ Like Conway Bannon would go on to become an integral part of the Trump White House staff, and his involvement in the campaign gave Trump access to a wide network of right-wing populist news media that exists on the fringes, yet commands a vast audience.⁴⁷ Following Trump’s victory these news media would become part of the White House press room landscape, much to the dismay of more traditional news outlets.⁴⁸

When looking at the period of time that can essentially be seen as ‘campaign preparation’, those five years leading up to the actual election where both candidates jockeyed for position in order to come

⁴⁰ Special to The New York Times, "A Political Power Broker," *The New York Times*, June 21, 1989, accessed May 27, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/06/21/us/a-political-power-broker.html>.

⁴¹ Matthew Mosk, "Top McCain Adviser Has Found Success Mixing Money, Politics," *The Washington Post*, June 26, 2008, accessed May 27, 2017, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/25/AR2008062502858.html?sid=ST2008062502934>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/19/us/politics/potential-gop-convention-fight-puts-older-hands-in-sudden-demand.html>

Jeremy W. Peters, "Potential G.O.P. Convention Fight Puts Older Hands in Sudden Demand," *The New York Times*, April 18, 2016, accessed May 27, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/19/us/politics/potential-gop-convention-fight-puts-older-hands-in-sudden-demand.html>;

Rebecca Savransky, "Trump hires strategist Paul Manafort," *The Hill*, March 28, 2017, accessed May 27, 2017, <http://thehill.com/blogs/ballot-box/presidential-races/274511-trump-hires-strategist-paul-manafort>.

⁴² Andrew E. Kramer et al., "Secret Ledger in Ukraine Lists Cash for Donald Trump's Campaign Chief," *The New York Times*, August 14, 2016, accessed May 27, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/15/us/politics/paul-manafort-ukraine-donald-trump.html>.

⁴³ Sean Sullivan, "Trump hires ex-Cruz super PAC strategist Kellyanne Conway," *The Washington Post*, July 1, 2016, accessed May 27, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/07/01/trump-hires-ex-cruz-super-pac-strategist-kellyanne-conway/>.

⁴⁴ Public Broadcasting Service, "To The Contrary Panelists | To The Contrary," *PBS*, archived November 23 2013, accessed May 27, 2017, <https://web.archive.org/web/20131123134932/http://www.pbs.org/to-the-contrary/panelists/41/conway>; Sullivan.

⁴⁵ Joshua Green & Zachary Mider, "New Super-PAC Launches for Donors Who Won't Back Trump But Loathe Clinton," *Bloomberg Politics*, June 22, 2016, accessed May 27, 2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2016-06-22/new-super-pac-launches-for-donors-who-won-t-back-trump-but-loathe-clinton>.

⁴⁶ Joshua Green, "The New Vast Right-Wing Conspirator Wants to Take Out Both Clinton and Bush: Steve Bannon is using hedge fund money and Seinfeld royalties to try to stop the Clintons from retaking the White House. And the Bushes, too," *Bloomberg Businessweek*, October 8, 2015, accessed May 27, 2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/graphics/2015-steve-bannon/>.

⁴⁷ Jonathan Martin, Jim Rutenberg & Maggie Haberman, "Donald Trump Appoints Media Firebrand to Run Campaign," *The New York Times*, August 17, 2016, accessed June 11, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/18/us/politics/donald-trump-stephen-bannon-paul-manafort.html>; See also chapter 3.4.

⁴⁸ Rick Perlstein, "Forget Sean Spicer – the freak show in the new White House press corps is worse," *Raw Story*, April 8, 2017, accessed May 27, 2017, <http://www.rawstory.com/2017/04/forget-sean-spicer-the-freak-show-in-the-new-white-house-press-corps-is-worse/>.

out of the starting blocks in the most advantageous way, an immediate and clear distinction immediately pops out. For Richard Nixon this process, between his November 1962 press conference and his January 1968 announcement that he would run for the candidacy, this process played out almost entirely internally. In the timespan of five years Nixon stayed behind the scenes, making only limited public appearances other than on behalf of other Republican candidates but always working, building up his contacts, both within American politics in general and in the Republican party in particular, and always keeping in touch with those foreign leaders with whom he had built a relationship during his years as Dwight Eisenhower's vice president, developing cordial relations with political leaders from a wide ideological and geographic spectrum. The former provided him with the crucial institutional support to overcome the fact that Ronald Reagan had edged him out in popular votes during the primaries, the latter gave him the credentials he needed to present himself as uniquely able to assess and address the challenges American faced abroad and to restore the credibility of the United States, both militarily and politically, that he claimed had been squandered during the past eight years of Democratic rule.

By contrast Donald Trump's campaign preparations were expressly public and almost entirely outside of the institutional confines of the Republican party. After already being featured frequently calling in on Fox News shows to challenge the credibility of Barack Obama and critique his policies, he became a weekly guest on the Monday morning talkshow *Fox and Friends* in March of 2011, the same month the Comedy Central roast aired. Even then there were those who thought he might run for the nomination in 2012. Trump himself did little to discourage those ideas as evident by the fact that he published a book of his political ideas that same year, something he had done previously for his candidacy in 2000 as the candidate for the Reform party. Like with Nixon before him, those five years prior to his candidacy set the tone for his campaign rhetoric: presenting himself as uniquely capable of representing the American people in the White House due to the fact that he wasn't a product of the Republican party, subscribing to their ideals but not corrupted by the outside influence of lobbyists and donors (even as he integrated numerous staff members into his campaign who, while not formally a part of the Republican party, had nonetheless worked on high profile political campaigns for its candidates), and the only man who was able to confront the multi-headed monster that was the Democratic party, with Hillary Clinton as the most dangerous head of them all.

Their methods were vastly different – Nixon prepared in private, behind the scenes wherever possible and making public appearances only where he was truly obligated to, within the party, Trump in public, outside of it – but the impact it had on their campaigns was surprisingly similar. Both Nixon and Trump used the five years leading up to their respective campaigns to not only lay the ground works in term of the contacts and exposure they'd need to win the presidency, but also to set the tone of the campaign, to give it a voice with which they could speak to the electorate, and to craft the foundations of a rhetoric that they would use throughout their run for the White House.

3.2. Nixon and Trump as self-made men

With the very first line of his first memoirs, published in 1978 and written in the years following the Watergate scandal, Richard Nixon begins his life story with the line “I was born in a house my father built.”¹ It immediately sets the tone for the memoirs in general and the first chapter in particular, which deals with Nixon’s life from his birth in 1913 up to 1946, when he first ran for public office. Nixon is a man who earned everything he has through hard work and dedication, a standard that was set for him by his family. He describes a college experience in which his rigorous discipline in maintaining his studies compensated for a lack of natural talent that certain fellow students seemed to possess, an experience that was mirrored in his participation in collegiate sports and his preparations for his first run for public office.² Thrift was another recurring theme in Nixon’s early adulthood, with Nixon saving money in college by using university facilities for his daily hygiene needs and even subsisting on canned food during his two week honeymoon.³ It’s easy to see the virtues pushed in the early life narrative that Nixon sets out. Hard work. Discipline. Perseverance. Frugal living. The Richard Nixon in these memoirs managed to achieve through determination and hard work what those around him had handed to them by virtue of their innate talents.

It’s a narrative that lies at the very core of American identity and the Just World Hypothesis. America as the land of opportunity, the one country in the world where *anyone* can make a success of themselves if they just work hard enough. In order to fully understand the role that the image of the self-made man played in the campaigns of Richard Nixon and Donald Trump a logical first step would be to examine why the self-made man is such a powerful image, not just in American politics but in American life in general. The self-made man has been a staple of American life for at least the past century and a half. The occupation of the man shifted – from the frontiersmen and fortune seekers of the mid nineteenth century such as Davey Crockett and Buffalo Bill to wealthy industrialists such as John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie to modern day kings of Silicon Valley like Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg who managed to turn one or two breakthrough ideas into billions of dollars – but he has always had a presence in the American psyche as living proof that anyone could obtain success through hard work. Even when running for office being a self-made man is often a recurring theme. Candidates who can’t reliably present themselves as one will instead point to their fathers or grandfathers, noting how they often either fled from war-torn countries or oppressive regimes to find a better life for their children or worked long hours at exhausting jobs to put their kids through college. In 2016 Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz, both candidates for the Republican nomination, repeatedly brought up the fact that they were sons of Cubans fleeing the Castro regime in order to assert themselves within the American Dream narrative.⁴

Even if the candidates themselves can’t realistically portray themselves as self-made, they can still fit their family history into the narrative to increase their credibility and appeal to a shared vision of what America represents. Conversely, depicting an opponent’s success as less than legitimate has

¹ Richard Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (London: Book Club Associates, 1978): 3.

² *Ibid*: 35-36.

³ *Ibid*: 21, 25.

⁴ Mary Jordan, "Marco Rubio's cold war: While Americans' views have shifted on Cuba, he refuses to budge," *The Washington Post*, January 24, 2016, accessed May 31, 2017, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/national/2016/01/24/deciders-rubio/>; Matt Flegenheimer, "Ted Cruz Plays Up Cuban Heritage Before Florida Primary," *The New York Times*, March 9, 2016, accessed May 31, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/10/us/politics/ted-cruz-cuban-florida-primary.html>.

also become a common tactic, the most notorious example of which was probably the campaign put out by a group called the Swift Boats Veterans for Truth (SBVT), which sought to counter 2004 Democratic candidate for the presidency John Kerry's claim to legitimacy via his service in the Vietnam war by putting out campaign ads and a book that sought to discredit his military record.⁵ Since then swift-boating has become part of the vernacular of American politics as a verb describing performing or being on the receiving end of a political attack or smear.⁶ In 1952, during his infamous *Checkers Speech*, discussed more extensively later, Nixon sought to make the Democratic candidate Adlai Stevenson less than legitimate in the eyes of the American public by claiming that his candidacy for the presidency was only possible because of the money he had inherited from his father, whereas he, living relatively modestly, had earned everything he had through hard work.⁷ Likewise, Barack Obama's 2008 campaign was plagued by repeated attacks based on the suggestion that affirmative action, not academic abilities, were the reason he was able to make it through Harvard Law School, attacks that Donald Trump himself carried on well after the 2008 campaign was over.⁸

The ostensible autobiography of Davy Crockett, published in 1834, can provide some insights into why this self-made man narrative took off when it did. Crockett, born in 1786, ten years after American independence but ten years before his home state of Tennessee became incorporated into the United States, was the poster-child of a new generation of Americans.⁹ Where the previous generation of American politicians could draw their political credibility from their own or their family's participation in the war of independence these younger politicians had to find a new source of legitimacy. That legitimacy was found in the frontier. As America expanded west those who led the expansion became figures of myth, which some of them managed to translate into electoral success. Crockett himself turned his role in establishing the community that would eventually become Lawrence County, Tennessee, serving as a justice of the peace and a colonel of the local militia, into several electoral victories.¹⁰ This idea of frontier democracy becoming part of the national narrative of American politics was first put forward by American historian Frederick Jackson Turner in his seminal work *The Frontier in American History*. Turner put forth his thesis at an interesting time in American history, starting in 1893, the waning years of the frontier and the end of the first economic boom in the American steel industry.¹¹ Turner's book cites several examples of frontier politicians who rose to the presidency of the United States during the first half of the nineteenth century, supplanting the original stock of presidents whose credentials tie back to the American revolution. Men such as Andrew Jackson, Martin van Buren, James Polk and Abraham Lincoln all represented a class of politician who

⁵ William Safire, "Swift Boat," *The New York Times*, September 19, 2004, accessed May 31, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/19/magazine/swift-boat.html>.

⁶ Oxford English Dictionary, "swift-boat - definition of swift-boat in English | Oxford Dictionaries," accessed May 31, 2017, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/us/swift-boat>.

⁷ Richard M. Nixon, "The 'Checkers Speech'," *The American Presidency Project*, accessed June 1, 2017, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=24485>.

⁸ Maggie Haberman, "Trump: How'd Obama get into Ivies?," *Politico*, April 25, 2011, accessed May 31, 2017, <http://www.politico.com/story/2011/04/trump-howd-obama-get-into-ivies-053694>.

⁹ M.J. Heale, "The Role of the Frontier in Jacksonian Politics: David Crockett and the Myth of the Self-Made Man," *Western Historical Quarterly* 4(4) (1973): 407-408.

¹⁰ Heale: 409.

¹¹ William Appleman Williams, "The Frontier Thesis and American Foreign Policy," *Pacific Historical Review* 24(4) (1955): 380-381.

rose through the highest office from frontier origins, deriving their legitimacy from the harsh conditions they faced growing up and their contributions to the building of America.¹²

These wild west frontier myths were not limited to American political life, or even its primary expression, at home or abroad. The frontiersman standing against everything the elements and savage nature could throw at him became a central figure of American popular literature and theatre, with touring acts such as *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show* not only drawing large audiences domestically but also taking the frontier abroad, solidifying it as a core ingredient of European perceptions of America during the mid to late nineteenth century.¹³ Likewise, the frontier became a popular theme in both popular literature catering towards adults and that marketed towards children and teenagers. Authors such as James Fenimore Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry David Thoreau all drew inspiration from either growing up on the American frontier or at least making tours of it, and laced their prose with heroes coming face to face with the hardships of it and subsequently overcoming it through force of character, skill and perseverance.¹⁴ This interdependence between the American frontier, the culture of its inhabitants and the kind of attitudes it fosters is illustrated by Albert von Frank: "The provincial mind, as it is usually understood in relation to the American context, is one that has succumbed to environmental pressures and has been drawn away from its cultural heritage; frontier consciousness is the provincial mind in protest and is, therefore, in its essential genius, conservative. It is a mind that knows the meaning of a loss of heritage; it is a mind that identifies itself in cultural terms and so regards the threat to culture as a threat to personality as well."¹⁵

Interestingly, the post-Civil War era saw a new type of literary contribution to the self-made man mythos that supplanted the frontier literature of the first half of the nineteenth century. Horatio Alger, author of over 120 young adult novels, created a repeating narrative of the poverty-stricken boy who through respectable behaviour and perseverance eventually becomes the beneficiary of the charity of some wealthy man whose eye he catches through his virtuous conduct.¹⁶ Again and again, the heroes of Horatio Alger continue to struggle against a harsh world until they're finally uplifted to middle class prosperity by someone whose eye they catch. This charity isn't framed in terms of good fortune but rather the deserved reward for a life well lived in the face of adversity. Alger's moral lessons were the result of a combination of classical education at antebellum Harvard and his perceived responsibility as a "genteel moralist" to speak to the nation's youth on the importance of virtue from a position of moral authority.¹⁷ Like the frontier authors before him he wrote a reflection of the environment he lived in, this time urban New York rather than the untamed wilds of the west, where he met his target audience, those who were most in need of his teachings, the stray youths that littered the city streets.¹⁸ This narrative pattern has become known as the Horatio Alger myth. It's a pattern that fits neatly into the Just World Hypothesis, both for its perpetuation of the idea that hard work and virtuous life will

¹² Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920): 253-255.

¹³ Dave Russell, "Popular entertainment, 1776-1985," in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*, edited by Joseph Donohue (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 372-373.

¹⁴ Edwin Fussell, *Frontier: American Literature and the American West* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965): 32; 69-70; 177.

¹⁵ Albert J. von Frank, *The sacred game: Provincialism and frontier consciousness in American literature, 1630-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 157.

¹⁶ Britannica Academic, "Horatio Alger," accessed June 1, 2017, <http://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/Horatio-Alger/5694>.

¹⁷ Carol Nackenoff, *The Fictional Republic: Horatio Alger and American Political Discourse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 12-13.

¹⁸ Gary Scharnhorst & Jack Bales, *The Lost Life of Hoatio Alger, Jr.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985): 70.

always be rewarded and for the fact that it provides a psychological coping mechanism against the painful realities of inequality in daily life.¹⁹

Nixon's appeal to self-made man status goes back all the way to 1952, during what had become known as the *Checkers Speech*. It was a speech that Nixon gave in response to accusations of him using a campaign donations fund to pay for personal expenditures. A fund set up by California businessmen was seen as a supplementary salary.²⁰ It had been brought to the attention of the press by an anonymous source who supported the Republican candidacy of California governor Earl Warren, who in part due to the involvement of Richard Nixon had lost the Republican candidacy for president at the 1952 Republican National Convention.²¹ The tone of the reporting was set by *The New York Post*, which broke the headline "SECRET NIXON FUND," followed by the subhead "Secret Rich Men's Trust Fund Keeps Nixon in Style Far Beyond his Salary," and discussed the fund in terms of "The existence of a 'millionaire's club' devoted exclusively to the financial comfort of Senator Nixon, GOP Vice Presidential candidate."²² The speech became most famous for Nixon's claim that the only personal gift he had received was a dog that his six-year-old daughter had named Checkers, and that he had no intention of returning it. In the moments leading up to the Checkers statement however, Nixon first set out a brief biography of himself, highlighting his upbringing in relative poverty, the hard work he and his family put in and the thrift he lived in to this day.²³ This segment of the speech was more or less a brief summary of the first chapter of his 1978 memoirs, in which he, as noted before, described a life of hard but honest work and thrift that eventually gave him both the knowledge and discipline necessary to first successfully run for office. It allowed him to frame the accusations made against him not as untrue but as unfair. The \$18,000 he was accused of spending through the fund were necessary expenses to continue to carry out his work as a politician since he, coming from a poor background, did not have the financial means to do so on his own dime. The speech was a rousing success. Nixon's appeal to the framework of himself as a self-made man being unfairly attacked by those who could rely on their family fortunes to build their political careers resonated powerfully with the public.²⁴

This appeal to the self-made man mythology was not only applied to Nixon himself but also to the policies he proposed to the benefit of the American people. His campaign rhetoric prior to and during the 1968 campaign especially pushed this idea. In an article published in the October 1967 edition of *Reader's Digest* titled *What Has Happened to America* he concludes by saying: "To heal the wounds that have torn the nation to asunder, to re-establish respect for law and the principles that have been the source of America's growth and greatness will require the example of leaders in every walk of American life."²⁵ It discusses the theme of the article – a perceived rise in permissiveness and declining respect for law and order that's the cause of the riots that plagued American cities in the late

¹⁹ James V. Catano, "The Rhetoric of Masculinity: Origins, Institutions, and the Myth of the Self-Made Man," *College English* 52(4) (1990): 424.

²⁰ Richard M. Nixon, *Six Crises* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1963): 87.

²¹ Gladwin Hill, "G.O.P. RIFT IN WEST TIED TO NIXON DATA: 'Disgruntled' Warren Booster Blamed for Disclosure After Split at July Convention," *The New York Times*, September 22, 1952: 9.

²² Nixon: 94.

²³ Richard M. Nixon, "The 'Checkers Speech'," *The American Presidency Project*, accessed June 1, 2017, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=24485>.

²⁴ Roger Morris, *Richard Milhous Nixon: The Rise of an American Politician* (New York: Henry Holt, 1990): 844.

²⁵ Richard M. Nixon, "What Has Happened to America?" *Reader's Digest*, October 1967, accessed April 10 2016, http://college.cengage.com/history/ayers_primary_sources/nixon_1967.htm.

sixties – in terms of this idea that America is the land of the self-made man; America is a land of growth and greatness, although opportunities for people to capitalize on that growth and greatness are stymied by a rising lawlessness. It's a sentiment that Nixon expanded on in his 1968 acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention. Nixon stated that "America is in trouble today not because her people have failed but because her leaders have failed. And what America needs are leaders to match the greatness of her people." He explicitly identifies himself as that leader by going back to his self-made man roots at the conclusion of the speech, describing himself as the product of "A father who had to go to work before he finished the sixth grade, sacrificed everything he had so that his sons could go to college. A gentle, Quaker mother, with a passionate concern for peace, quietly wept when he went to war but she understood why he had to go. A great teacher, a remarkable football coach, an inspirational minister encouraged him on his way. A courageous wife and loyal children stood by him in victory and also defeat. And in his chosen profession of politics, first there were scores, then hundreds, then thousands, and finally millions worked for his success. And tonight he stands before you—nominated for President of the United States of America."²⁶

And this is clearly the point where charismatic leadership and the Just World Hypothesis are brought together in the persona of the self-made man. Nixon positions himself as uniquely gifted, uniquely able to address the concerns of those who "For the past five years we have been deluged by government programs for the unemployed; programs for the cities; programs for the poor. And we have reaped from these programs an ugly harvest of frustration, violence and failure across the land."²⁷ He can help America achieve greatness because he is living proof of its potential: that through hard work, discipline and respect for authority, any American can achieve what he has achieved, the nomination for the presidency of the United States as the candidate of the major party. The policy platform that he sets out during the speech is a reflection of his desire to bring back that American ideal to the American people, to give them the ability to pursue the success and happiness all Americans are hypothetically able to achieve within America's exceptional system without having to worry about those who would take advantage of it or those leaders who put in place the policies that empowered them to do so. Nixon is exceptional in the sense that he fulfills the ideal-type of the self-made man who overcame the economic limitations of his background through hard work and perseverance and who offers the American voters a vision of an America where only he can restore the exceptional American opportunities that Democrats have squandered for the past eight years.

For Donald J. Trump the foundations of his fortune were built on government grants and programs. In the midst of the Great Depression the funds made available through the Federal Housing Act (FHA) allowed his father, Fred Trump, to make millions constructing houses in Brooklyn. During and after World War II that same Federal Housing Act gave Fred Trump access to lucrative contracts building homes for naval personnel near the shipyards of the east coast.²⁸ In spite of the simple fact that his father's fortune and by extension his own was built on government contracts Donald Trump himself does not seem to believe that it's the government's place to hand out grants like the ones included in

²⁶ Richard M. Nixon, "Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Miami Beach, Florida," *The American Presidency Project*, accessed June 1, 2017, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25968>.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Brian Miller & Mike Lapham, *The Self-Made Myth: And the Truth About How Government Helps Individuals and Businesses Succeed* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2012): 28-29.

the FHA that allowed his father to make millions. In *The America We Deserve* he notes that government should get: "...back in the business of providing for public convenience (transportation, public works) and safety (police and firefighters), and make sure it does so efficiently. Then judge its efforts by visible, definable results and fine-tune as needed."²⁹

For someone looking to present themselves as a self-made man these kind of details – a father who built his fortunes on government grants and an inheritance that lay at the very foundation of one's own personal wealth – are anathema to the narrative that they are trying to create. As such, throughout his career, Donald Trump has repeatedly downplayed to what extent his father depended on government support and to what extent his own business empire was contingent on his father's fortune. This came to a head at the first presidential debate where Hillary Clinton challenged Donald Trump on his repeated assertions that his business empire was entirely the result of his own hard work. She pointed out that Trump had received \$14 million in loans from his father's company, Trump countered by stating he had only borrowed \$1 million, a fraction of his self-proclaimed worth. In a way, both were right. The \$1 million statement from Trump is based on a single loan he received from his father in 1975. The \$14 million comes from a 1985 court filing that lists \$14 million in debts that Trump held to his father's company.³⁰ Trump had made the \$1 million loan claim in his 2015 book *Crippled America*: "He loaned me a small amount of money – loaned, not gave – around \$1 million – money that I probably could have gotten from a bank – and the biggest part of my journey began. I paid my father back a few years later, with full interest, after my Manhattan deals started to come in – and very successfully."³¹ The first time Trump threw out the \$1 million "small" loan line on the campaign trail was at a Town Hall campaign event in October of 2015, where he also tried to downplay the extent to which he benefited from the loan by stating that "...a million dollars isn't very much compared to what I've built."³² He repeated the claim at a February 26, 2016, press conference, in response to Republican rival Marco Rubio's attacks challenging his self-made man status, stating "He (Marco Rubio) also said I got \$200 million from my father. I wish. I wish. I got a very, very small loan from my father many years ago. I built that into a massive empire and I paid my father back that loan....The number is wrong by a factor of hundreds of – I mean, by a fortune. I got a small loan. I started a business."³³ It's the self-made man narrative in a nutshell, Trump downplaying the role his father played in building his empire, emphasizing that the \$1 million loan dwarfed in comparison to the billions of dollars he made since then.

These discussions about Trump's alleged status as a billionaire and the role his father and other financial backers played in allowing him to build his empire have been going on for some time. For Donald Trump, being perceived as wealthy and successful has become part of his business. The Trump name has become a brand that has been licensed to both real-estate and consumer goods. On

²⁹ Donald J. Trump, *The America We Deserve* (Los Angeles: Renaissance Books, 2000): 60.

³⁰ Alexandra Berzon & Richard Rubin, "Trump's Father Helped GOP Candidate With Numerous Loans: Although Donald Trump says he built his empire from a \$1 million loan from his father, a court document shows frequent borrowing from Fred Trump and his companies," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 23, 2016, accessed June 6, 2017, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/trumps-father-helped-gop-candidate-with-numerous-loans-1474656573>.

³¹ Donald J. Trump, *Crippled America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015): 99.

³² Jeremy Diamond, "Donald Trump describes father's 'small loan': \$1 million," *CNN*, October 27, 2015, accessed June 6, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/10/26/politics/donald-trump-small-loan-town-hall/index.html>.

³³ Glenn Kessler, "Trump's false claim he built his empire with a 'small loan' from his father," *The Washington Post*, March 3, 2016, accessed June 6, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2016/03/03/trumps-false-claim-he-built-his-empire-with-a-small-loan-from-his-father/>.

the real-estate side, Trump is frequently paid millions to allow developers around the world to use his name for their project. As such, a Trump hotel or resort may have no actual involvement with Donald Trump beyond that payment to license the Trump brand – the mere association with Donald Trump is considered to increase the value and prestige of a real-estate project.³⁴ The Trump name licensing for consumer goods has been applied to an incredibly wide range of products, such as perfume, vodka, mineral water, men’s wear and mattresses.³⁵ Trump licensed products are sold next to his books in the lobby of Trump Tower, creating the air of the cornerstone of Trump’s real-estate empire as a tourist destination.³⁶ In 1989 the Trump brand and likeness were even loaned to a board game, simply named *Trump: The Game*, a Monopoly-like board game in which players circle a board representing New York City while bidding on various properties. In the end the player who has accumulated the most wealth wins. The game shows how pervasive the Trump brand can get: his face not only dominates the box art but also takes centre stage on the game board and even the paper money that players use to pay their transactions.³⁷ This perception of wealth through building remains at the core of the Trump identity even after his electoral victory, with former congressman and Trump supporter Newt Gingrich claiming that “He really is Queens and not Manhattan,” and that “He is blue collar, middle-class America. He builds buildings. He doesn't finance them.”³⁸

This same presentation of Donald Trump as a wealthy and successful businessman has carried over as he transitioned into the world of reality television. Starting in 2004 Donald Trump starred in the show *The Apprentice*, in which teams of aspiring Trump employees competed in challenges tangentially related to their supposed business acumen, with a member of the losing team being dismissed at the end of each episode with what has become a catchphrase for Trump: ‘You’re fired!’. This phrase became so synonymous with Trump that he tried to trademark it almost immediately after the first episode aired.³⁹ The show has had several international adaptations, as well as a celebrity spinoff. Since then Trump has appeared in several other projects that bolstered his status as a celebrity. In 2007 he became part of a storyline rivalry with Vince McMahon, owner of World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE), that was billed as the Battle of the Billionaires. Both men managed a wrestler, with Vince McMahon choosing a primitive-looking Samoan billed as ‘Umaga’, complete with face paint, loincloth and braided hair, and Trump being represented by a former United States Army sergeant named Bobby Lashley. At that year’s WrestleMania, the biggest WWE show of the year, both wrestlers met in the ring with the stipulation that the manager of the losing fighter would get his head shaved.⁴⁰ For his participation in this storyline, and his hosting of several major WWE shows in the

³⁴ Katherine Clarke, "What does Donald Trump really own? TRD takes an exhaustive look at the Mogul's global assets," *The Real Deal - New York Real Estate News*, July 1, 2013, accessed May 5, 2017, https://therealdeal.com/issues_articles/the-8-billion-dollar-man/.

³⁵ Aaron Williams & Anu Narayanswamy, "How Trump has made millions by selling his name - Exploring President Trump's licensing and management agreements around the world," *The Washington Post*, January 25, 2017, accessed May 5, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/world/trump-worldwide-licensing/>.

³⁶ Clarke.

³⁷ Board Game Geek, "Trump: The Game | Board Game | BoardGameGeek," accessed May 6, 2017: <https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/1824/trump-game>.

³⁸ Washington Post Live, "Gingrich: Trump really is 'Queens and not Manhattan'," *The Washington Post*, December 16, 2016, accessed June 6, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/postlive/gingrich-trump-really-is-queens-and-not-manhattan/2016/12/16/cd652684-c3b2-11e6-92e8-c07f4f671da4_video.html.

³⁹ Peter Lemire, "Who owns the trademark to 'You're fired!'"? Hint: It's not who you think," *Coloadobiz*, January 12, 2016, accessed May 8, 2017, <http://www.cobizmag.com/Trends/Who-owns-the-trademark-to-Youre-fired/>.

⁴⁰ World Wrestling Entertainment, "Mr. McMahon and Donald Trump's Battle of the Billionaires Contract Signing," December 8, 2013, accessed June 6, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vVeVcVBW_CE; World Wrestling Entertainment, *WrestleMania 23*. DVD. Stanford: World Wrestling Entertainment, 2007.

eighties, Trump has since been inducted in the WWE Hall of Fame in 2013.⁴¹ As noted in chapter 3.1 he also participated in a comedy roast of himself in 2011, organized by broadcaster Comedy Central, in which he was ridiculed by several celebrities and comedians.⁴² Many speakers at the event ridiculed Trump's presidential aspirations.⁴³

The importance of a perception of wealth and prestige associated with the Trump brand, which Trump himself has contributed to establishing in many ways, is also shown in several high profile lawsuits that he ran. In 2008 he sued Deutsche Bank for \$3 billion in response to the bank's attempts to collect a \$40 million payment on financing they had provided for a Trump-backed construction project in Chicago.⁴⁴ Also in 2008 Trump's licensing company, Trump Marks LLC, was involved in a lawsuit against New York legal firm Morrison Cohen LLP, in part over the way Morrison Cohen advertised their employment by Trump from 2001 until 2006 on their website.⁴⁵ That same year he sued the author of the book *Trump Nation: The Art of Being the Donald* for defamation over the author's estimations that the net worth of Donald Trump was approximately \$150 to \$250 million, rather than the billions of dollars Trump himself claimed.⁴⁶ The lawsuit was dismissed, then appealed by Trump in 2011, where it was dismissed again.⁴⁷ A common thread throughout these litigations is that Trump repeatedly argued that attempts to collect debts he owed or estimations that undervalued his net worth were not only false but also damaged his ability to earn money off of his name, which is why he felt he was owed hundreds of millions or even billions in compensatory payments. Over the years litigation has become a key part of the Trump brand even though he has lost or settled out of court all the lawsuits described in the preceding paragraph. As ghost writer of the Donald Trump book *The Art of the Deal* Tony Schwartz explains: "...if you lose, declare victory. And that's exactly what happened there. He lost as clearly as you could lose but he loudly proclaimed his victory."⁴⁸

This appears to present an odd dichotomy. On the one hand Donald Trump is, in his own eyes, the pinnacle of wealth and prestige, uniquely gifted with the business acumen and shrewd negotiating skills that have allowed him to turn that "small" \$1 million loan into a business empire worth several billions of dollars, based on the twin ideas that he is so successful that other developers will pay him millions simply to have his name on their buildings and that he has such a discerning taste that any consumer good bearing his name must be of the highest quality. On the other he presents himself as concerned with the American working class, wealthy yet down to earth enough that he understands

⁴¹ World Wrestling Entertainment, "Donald Trump | WWE," accessed May 8, 2017, <http://www.wwe.com/superstars/donald-trump>.

⁴² Internet Movie Database, "Comedy Central Roast of Donald Trump (TV Movie 2011) - IMDb," accessed May 8, 2017, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1865333/>.

⁴³ Most notably, host Seth McFarlane joked "By the way, Donald, it's pronounced 'huge,' not 'eyuge'. Also, it's pronounced 'I am fucking delusional,' not 'I am running for President.'" Rapper Snoop Dogg joked "Now he's talking about running for President. Why not? It wouldn't be the first time he kicked a black family out of their house."

⁴⁴ Floyd Norris, "Trump Sees Act of God in Recession," *The New York Times*, December 4, 2008, accessed May 5, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/05/business/05norris.html>.

⁴⁵ Christine Caulfield, "Trump Loses Bid To Oust Morrison Cohen From Case," *Law360*, October 8, 2008, accessed May 7, 2017, <https://www.law360.com/articles/72022/trump-loses-bid-to-oust-morrison-cohen-from-case>.

⁴⁶ Reuters, "Judge Michele Fox tosses out Donald Trump's lawsuit against 'Trump Nation' author Timothy O'Brien," *New York Daily News*, July 16, 2009, accessed May 7, 2017, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/money/judge-michele-fox-tosses-donald-trump-lawsuit-trump-nation-author-timothy-o-brien-article-1.394167>.

⁴⁷ Justia US Law, "DONALD TRUMP v. TIMOTHY L. O'BRIEN," September 7, 2011, accessed May 7, 2017, <http://law.justia.com/cases/new-jersey/appellate-division-published/2011/a6141-08-opn.html>.

⁴⁸ David Leonhardt, "Donald Trump's Playbook for Smearing," *The New York Times*, October 17, 2016, accessed May 7, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/17/opinion/campaign-stops/donald-trumps-playbook-for-smearing.html>.

their problems and concerns.⁴⁹ But it fits in with the Just World Hypothesis – the idea that through exceptional talents and abilities Trump was able to turn ‘just’ \$1 million into a massive empire, and that anyone who works hard enough can do the same, that his success, while the result of hard work and sacrifice, are attainable for anyone who is willing to work hard enough. Trump has also made this part of his political persona, repeatedly claiming that his skills at making business deals would translate to making diplomatic deals that would benefit the American people, warning that treaties like NAFTA had been a “total disaster for the United States” and that it “has emptied our states of our manufacturing and our jobs.”⁵⁰

Like Richard Nixon and many American politicians before him, and like some of his Republican rivals in the 2016 primaries, Donald J. Trump needs his electorate to believe that he is essentially a self-made man, someone who has built an empire out of almost nothing. This isn’t true of course. But it’s a narrative that he managed to sell to his audience. It’s where he deprives his charismatic leadership from, the fact that he is perceived as wealthy and successful by the virtue of his business acumen, not any kind of government support or inheritance from his father. It’s American exceptionalism writ large, the idea that the American system is the only one in the world where a man like Donald J. Trump can fully exercise his talents and become a multi-billionaire. It goes beyond Horatio Alger, whose heroes were merely rewarded for their virtuous living with middle class respectability. To those who believe in a just world, Trump is a good person because he is wealthy, and because he is wealthy he must be a good person. Even his repeated assertions that his father loaned him ‘just’ a million dollars fit into this narrative – if his wealth was inherited rather than earned it would make him not just less deserving of that wealth, but less morally superior.

⁴⁹ Ronald Brownstein, "The Billionaire Candidate and His Blue-Collar Following," *The Atlantic*, September 11, 2015, accessed June 6, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/the-billionaire-candidate-and-his-blue-collar-following/432783/>.

⁵⁰ BBC, "Donald Trump's top four 'deals' for foreign policy," *BBC News*, April 27, 2016, accessed June 6, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/election-us-2016-36154988>.

3.3. Promoting American justice

“The great Reagan myth lives on and the country with the highest incarceration rate in the world is the one with the absurdly liberal criminal justice system.”¹ With this one line the author of a review of the movie *Punisher: Warzone* neatly sums up the political message of the movie in which a lone vigilante singlehandedly murders hundreds of low level criminals and one of the most bizarre discrepancies between perception and reality in American society. No country imprisons more of its population than the United States, per capita or in absolute numbers.² And yet law and order, harsher punishments and more money for law enforcement have all become part and parcel of Republican campaign rhetoric. This chapter will discuss how both Richard Nixon and Donald Trump utilized law and order rhetoric to appeal to their voters, how this rhetoric can be used to diminish legitimate grievances that certain groups in America might have with American society as a whole and the policies of the Republican party in particular and why appeals to law and order resonate so strongly with large segments of the American electorate, in a wider context of the Just World Hypothesis. I will also discuss the societal context of the 1968 and 2016 elections to show why the law and order narrative was more appealing to American voters during those particular years.

1968 was a year of unrest in a long line of years of unrest. During the mid to late sixties violent riots broke out, in various degrees of intensity, in New York, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Tampa, Chicago, Los Angeles and other urban areas, usually preceded by acrimonious interactions between the police departments of those cities and its African American inhabitants.³ Race and police oppression were a major catalyst for riots, but they weren't the only ones. At the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago violent clashes broke out between a loose coalition of various anti-Vietnam war protestors and the Chicago police. These riots were especially noteworthy because among those targeted by the Chicago police were dozens of journalists, which led to the unusual sight of mainstream American media turning against government institutions.⁴ Another aspect of the urban riots of the sixties that made them unique compared to similar race-related unrests prior to World War II was the increasing proliferation of television sets in American households and an increasing capability to broadcast unrests live into the living rooms across America, thus vastly increasing their visibility. Riots that Americans earlier in history would have read about in newspapers the following day could now be broadcast right into their living room, complete with ominous background commentary. Most notably during the 1965 Watts riots in Los Angeles local television station KTLA-TV had a first in broadcast television history – the first riot filmed from the air. They were the first station in the country with a news helicopter, a relic from the Korean War, and it gave viewers across the nation a bird's eye view of the riots, complete with a broadcaster constantly describing it in Old Testament terms: “Then with the

¹ Erich Schulte, "PUNISHER WARZONE - Ruthless Reviews," Ruthless Reviews, December 12, 2008, accessed June 7, 2017, <http://www.ruthlessreviews.com/697/punisher-warzone/>.

² Roy Walmsley, "World Prison Population List (tenth edition)," *International Centre for Prison Studies*, November 21, 2013, accessed June 7, 2017, http://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/wppl_10.pdf.

³ Robert M. Fogelson, "From Resentment to Confrontation: The Police, the Negroes, and the Outbreak of the Nineteen-Sixties Riots," *Political Science Quarterly* 83(2) (1968): 217-218.

⁴ David Culbert, "Television's Visual Impact on Decision-Making in the USA, 1968: The Tet Offensive and Chicago's Democratic National Convention," *Journal of Contemporary History* 33(3) (1998): 440.

suddenness of a lightning bolt and all the fury of an infernal holocaust, there was HELL in the City of Angels!”⁵

This increasingly violent urban unrest, and the increasing fears of it, were major themes in Richard Nixon’s rhetoric before the campaign even started. In the October 1967 *Reader’s Digest* article discussed earlier in this thesis Nixon stated that “There has been a tendency in this country to charge off the violence and the rioting of the past summer solely to the deep racial division between Negro and white. Certainly racial animosities--and agonies--were the most visible causes. But riots were also the most visible causes. But riots were also the most virulent symptoms to date of another, and in some ways graver, national disorder--the decline in respect for public authority and the rule of law in America. Far from being a great society, our is becoming a lawless society.”⁶ This is, in a nutshell, Nixon’s law and order rhetoric – riots were not only an issue that needed to be addressed, by increased repression and increased police spending, but also symptomatic of a larger problem, a growing decline in trust in the American system, a decline that has been empowered by liberal politicians and judges and that only the Republican party in general and he in particular can avert. The article also shows another side of the law and order rhetoric: its ability to diminish and discredit legitimate grievances that certain minority groups might have with the wider institutional context of American society.⁷ Specifically Nixon writes, in the introduction to the article, that “Just three years ago this nation seemed to be completing its greatest decade of racial progress and entering one of the most hopeful periods in American History. Twenty million Negroes were at last being admitted to full membership in the society, and this social miracle was being performed with a minimum friction and without loss of our freedom or tranquillity. With this star of racial peace and progress before us, how did it happen that last summer saw the United States blazing in an inferno of urban anarchy?”⁸ In one fell swoop Nixon trivializes the entirety of the Civil Rights Movement of the fifties and sixties by claiming not only that those victories gained by the movement had come about with “minimum friction” and “without loss of our freedom or tranquillity”, but that with what had been achieved so far the Civil Rights movement essentially no longer had any legitimate grievances, and that the riots of the past few years were thus entirely unjustified.

Nixon didn’t pull this framework out of thin air. It was language used by news commentators throughout the sixties in a vain attempt to make sense of what seemed like a spontaneous outbreak of lawlessness and breakdown of societal values. The KTLA-TV broadcast of the Watts riots described Los Angeles as having “...a virtually ideal climate, surrounded by natural beauty, and the benefits of economic prosperity,” and a community that “had prided itself on its relatively harmonious racial relations, few demonstrations, no massive civil disobedience, little trouble from militant factions.”⁹ Broadcasts framed the riots in terms of civil war, talking about battles, snipers on rooftops and even open war.¹⁰ When rioters fired on the KTLA-TV news helicopter, it was widely reported.¹¹ But it wasn’t

⁵ Rick Perlstein, *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* (New York: Scribner, 2008): 3-4.

⁶ Richard M. Nixon, “What Has Happened to America?,” *Reader’s Digest*, October 1967, accessed June 7, 2017, http://college.cengage.com/history/ayers_primary_sources/nixon_1967.htm.

⁷ See also chapter 3.5.

⁸ Nixon.

⁹ Perlstein, 3.

¹⁰ CBS News Special Report, “Watts, Riot or Revolt?,” *CBS News*, December 1965, accessed June 8, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LL2CSSEHeJE>.

¹¹ KABC-TV, “Watts Riot Coverage, August 1965,” *KABC-TV*, August 1965, accessed June 8, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ciWJYFlfik>.

just the riots as war against the American way of life narrative or the suggestion that rioters were burning down paradise that Nixon drew from the media. On August 1, 1966, a former United States Marine sharpshooter climbed the bell tower at the University of Texas and started opening fire at random, killing fifteen people and injuring more than thirty others before police were able to gun him down. It became almost impossible for the media to explain. Whitman had been an eagle scout at age twelve, highly successful in school and scoring in the top five percent of the nation on standardized testing.¹² When he began basic training as a marine in October of 1958 he showed similar dedication and skill, especially on the shooting range.¹³ It seemed to go against all common sense – the model student and eagle scout turned marine sharpshooter lashing out so violently without warning. News broadcasters found their answer in another major theme of *What Has Happened to America?*: moral licentiousness. Initially struggling with the idea that Whitman, an “all-American boy” was capable of such senseless violence, they found their answer in the account of an Austin merchant who claimed that Whitman attempted to sell him “a nice supply of pornography.”¹⁴ Whitman’s acts were just rationalized by the fact that he was, essentially, a pervert, a man without morals. It was confirmation of a larger narrative that existed within American media that linked the apparent increase in violent crime, not just in the form of riots but of every day criminal acts, to an apparent breakdown of American values.

It’s a sentiment that Nixon doubled down on during his acceptance speech at the 1968 Republican National Convention. In his opening remarks, asking his audience to take a look at the state of America, he noted that “As we look at America, we see cities enveloped in smoke and flame. We hear sirens in the night. ... We see Americans hating each other; fighting each other; killing each other at home. And as we see and hear these things, millions of Americans cry out in anguish.”¹⁵ Later on in the speech, addressing the domestic unrest the United States faced, he stated “Let us always respect, as I do, our courts and those who serve on them. But let us also recognize that some of our courts in their decisions have gone too far in weakening the peace forces as against the criminal forces in this country and we must act to restore that balance. Let those who have the responsibility to enforce our laws and our judges who have the responsibility to interpret them be dedicated to the great principles of civil rights.”¹⁶ The domestic policy portions of the speech repeat in essence what was already set out in the *Reader’s Digest* article – America is under threat from civil unrest and rioting, this rioting is a direct result of Democratic policy makers and elites creating a society in which permissiveness and licentiousness have empowered the lawless to do as they please, and the Republican party is the only choice for Americans who wish to return to the peaceful stability of the status quo.

Calling out protesters as dissatisfied malcontents causing unrest for unrest’s sake rather than giving voice to legitimate grievances wasn’t just campaign rhetoric for Nixon. It became part of his everyday campaign strategy. At a campaign rally in Teterboro, New Jersey, Nixon campaign staff instructed the police detail that secured the event to let a small group of protestors, large enough to be

¹² Gary M. Laverne, *A Sniper in the Tower: The Charles Whitman Murders* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1997): 5-6.

¹³ Laverne, 17-18.

¹⁴ Perlstein, 113.

¹⁵ Richard M. Nixon, "Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Miami Beach, Florida," *The American Presidency Project*, accessed June 7, 2017, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25968>.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

heard but small enough not to pose any real threat, and as they began disrupting his speech by chanting obscenities aimed at the Vietnam war and Nixon personally Nixon responded in almost patriarchal fashion: "Is that the voice of America? I say to you it is not. It is a loud voice but, my friends, there is a way to answer: Don't answer with violence. Don't answer by shouting the same senseless words that they use. Answer in the powerful way that Americans have always answered. Let the majority of Americans speak up, speak up on November 3, speak up with your votes. That is the way to answer."¹⁷ It was a devious yet effective rhetorical turn. In those brief remarks he not only trivialized the grievances of those who protested against the Vietnam war and the policies Nixon campaigned on but he also positioned himself as the father figure, the one who understood that those protesters were in essence just children throwing a tantrum, and Americans could fight back by voting for him.

Nixon's call for law and order was almost immediately met with scepticism from civil rights leaders, even those who identified as Republicans, with one NAACP board member stating: "Nixon's appeal for law and order has a special meaning when he uses it. I'm all for law and order, but he is trying to get the support of the white backlash around the country."¹⁸ They placed the law and order rhetoric of the Nixon campaign within a wider historical context, associating it not with the numerous urban riots of the sixties but with the violent suppression of Civil Rights activism in the Jim Crow south. Segregationists such as governor George Wallace of Alabama often equated their violent repression of peaceful civil rights protests with maintaining law and order.¹⁹ The fact that doubling down on a law and order rhetoric and trivializing the grievances of African American movements would cost them certain groups of voters, especially on the east coast, was offset by the fact that it would allow them to gain massive support from white voters in the traditionally Democratic bastion of the Solid South. Nixon's campaign strategy was predicated on the fact that on a nation-wide basis he only needed two percent of the African American vote.²⁰ Introducing law and order rhetoric and combining them with calculated demographic targeting was part of a larger campaign strategy based on demographic shifts since World War II. The disastrous Goldwater statement during the 1964 presidential campaign that America would be better off if the entire eastern seaboard were to be cut off and cast out to sea, one that was extensively capitalized on by the Johnson campaign, was quietly put into practice.²¹

As Nixon campaign strategist Kevin Phillips put it in *The Emerging Republican Majority*: "By dint of the 1964 election, the Republican Party shed the dominion of its Yankee and Northeastern Establishment creators, while the Democrats, having linked themselves to the Negro socioeconomic revolution and to an increasingly liberal Northeastern Establishment shaped by the success of the New Deal, sank the foundations of their future into the Northeast."²² It was a realization that lay at the heart

¹⁷ Andrew A. King & Floyd Douglas Anderson, "Nixon, Agnew and the 'Silent Majority': A Case Study in the Rhetoric of Polarization," *Western Speech* 35(4) (1971): 252-253.

¹⁸ Thomas A. Johnson, "Negro Leaders See Bias in Call Of Nixon for 'Law and Order'," *The New York Times*, August 13, 1968: 27.

¹⁹ E. Culpepper Clark, *The Schoolhouse Door: Segregation's Last Stand at the University of Alabama* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995): 200.

²⁰ Harrison E. Salisbury, "Nixon: Then and Now: Nixon Then and Now: Contrast With 1960 Campaign Is Marked," *The New York Times*, September 16, 1968: 1, 40.

²¹ Museum of the Moving Image, s. v., "1964 Johnson vs. Goldwater," accessed June 8, 2017, <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1964/eastern-seaboard>.

²² Kevin P. Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (*James Madison Library in American Politics edition*) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015): 9.

of Nixon's Southern Strategy and the shifting of the magnetic poles of American politics that marked the 1968 Nixon campaign. Civil Rights and emancipation had pushed the balance of power within the Democratic Party firmly towards the urban areas of the eastern seaboard, at the cost of the Dixiecrats, those southern Democrats who back in 1948 had dramatically walked out of the Democratic National Convention in protest of an attempt by the more liberal wing of the party to add a progressive policy plank to the 1948 presidential election program and to ignore their own push for a states' rights policy plank that would essentially result in a Federal government unable to deal with segregation, suppression of voting rights and lynching in the Deep South.²³ They had been brought back into the party fold since then, but it was always a tenuous relationship, especially in the years following the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision ending school segregation. Strom Thurmond, who had ran as presidential candidate in 1948 for the States' Rights Democratic Party, a party organized by those southern Democrats who walked out of the 1948 convention, drafted the *Southern Manifesto*, which was an attempt to unify southern Democrats as a power bloc within the party and expand their influence. In the manifesto Thurmond stated: "We reaffirm our reliance on the Constitution as the fundamental law of the land. We decry the Supreme Court's encroachment on the rights reserved to the States and to the people, contrary to established law, and to the Constitution. We commend the motives of those States which have declared the intention to resist forced integration by any lawful means."²⁴ The manifesto is a prime example of how states' rights had become the tool by which the Deep South justified the segregation and oppression of the Jim Crow era. The manifesto was signed by nineteen senators and seventy-seven congressmen, with only a few holding out, most notable of whom was Lyndon Johnson, then senator representing the state of Texas.²⁵ With the various Civil Rights laws of the Johnson era being pushed through the break seemed permanent. Nixon's Law and Order rhetoric were the answer to a question that Goldwater had failed to deal with – how can the former Dixiecrats be brought into the Republican electoral fold in a way that doesn't alienate the rest of the country? The answer was states' rights. By picking up the states' rights banner that the Democrats had dropped in the process of pushing through civil rights legislation Nixon brought millions of former Democratic voters into the Republican fold. At the same time the Southern Strategy essentially left the liberal wing of the Republican party, still led by New York governor Nelson Rockefeller and losing ground in the same coastal urban areas where the Democrats were now gaining more and more support based on their role in passing civil rights legislation, completely isolated. Furthermore, the end of the New Deal Coalition meant that Nixon would not only find millions of new voters in the Deep South, but also, as the number of signees on the Southern Manifesto showed, Dixiecrats on all levels of government who could be welcomed into the Republican party fold.

When Donald Trump announced his candidacy in June of 2015 his announcement speech was relatively light on the themes of law and order. He only mentioned crime once, in his now infamous statement about Mexican immigration: "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems,

²³ Sarah McCulloh Lemmon, "The Ideology of the "Dixiecrat" Movement," *Social Forces* 30(2) (1951): 168.

²⁴ Strom Thurmond *et al.*, "The Southern Manifesto" March 12, 1956, accessed June 8, 2017,

<http://sti.clemson.edu/component/content/article/192-general-info/790-1956-qsouthern-manifestoq>.

²⁵ Tony Badger, "Southerners Who Refused to Sign the Southern Manifesto," *The Historical Journal* 42(2) (1999): 518-519.

and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.”²⁶ The rest of the speech was relatively light on themes of law and order, with Trump playing to his strengths, or at least what he believed his strengths to be, focusing on employment, free trade and other economic subjects, along with a strengthening of America’s military and some nebulous statements about America being taken advantage of by other countries, in terms of trade and military support, something that would end under his presidency. Yet even though his acceptance speech was light on law and order it was by no means unfamiliar ground for Trump. In *The America We Deserve*, the 2000 book to accompany his candidacy for the presidency that year on behalf of the Reform Party, Trump seems to echo *What Has Happened to America?* on several key points, challenging the idea that there are societal factors that might be partially responsible for criminal behaviour, calling for the ousting of lenient judges and attributing criminal behaviour to immoral influences from the media.²⁷

In his 2015 book *Crippled America*, which, like his speech announcing his candidacy, was relatively light on Law and Order rhetoric, Trump stated that “Our country, our people, and our laws have to be our top priority.”²⁸ Outside of *Crippled America* and his campaign announcement speech however, Trump proudly bore the law and order banner. When protests broke out in Charlotte, North Carolina following the police killing of an African American man, Trump speculated that “If you're not aware, drugs are a very, very big factor in what you're watching on television at night,” and that “Our country looks bad to the world, especially when we are supposed to be the world's leader. How can we lead when we can't even control our own cities?”²⁹ Immediately after the Trump inauguration on January 20, 2017, a section titled *Standing Up For Our Law Enforcement Community* was added to the official White House website, claiming that “The Trump Administration will be a law and order administration,” and that “Our job is not to make life more comfortable for the rioter, the looter, or the violent disrupter. Our job is to make life more comfortable for parents who want their kids to be able to walk the streets safely. Or the senior citizen waiting for a bus. Or the young child walking home from school.”³⁰ In May of 2017 at a memorial event for police officers killed in the line of duty Trump stated that “We are living through an era in which our police have been subject to unfair defamation and vilification, and even worse ... hostility and violence.”³¹

Like Nixon before him in 1968 Trump was also confronted with protests at his campaign events. Unlike Nixon however, he adapted a far more aggressive, confrontational stance towards them. In August of 2015 trump speculated that if a Black Lives Matter (BLM) protestor tried to take his microphone like one had done at a Bernie Sanders event earlier that month: “I don't know if I'll do the fighting myself, or if other people will. It was a disgrace. I felt badly for him, but it showed that he was

²⁶ TIME Staff, "Here's Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech," *TIME*, June 16, 2015, accessed June 9, 2017, <http://time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/>.

²⁷ Donald J. Trump, *The America We Deserve* (Los Angeles: Renaissance Books, 2000): 94; 106-107; 104.

²⁸ Donald J. Trump, *Crippled America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015): 30.

²⁹ Candace Smith & Adam Kelsey, "Donald Trump: Drugs a 'Very, Very Big Factor' in Charlotte Protests," *ABC News*, September 22, 2016, accessed June 9, 2017, <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/donald-trump-drugs-big-factor-charlotte-protests/story?id=42282437>.

³⁰ Whitehouse.gov, "Standing Up For Our Law Enforcement Community," accessed June 9, 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/law-enforcement-community>.

³¹ Dave Boyer, "Trump takes aim at Black Lives Matter, slams 'hostility and violence' against police," *The Washington Times*, May 15, 2017, accessed June 9, 2017, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/may/15/donald-trump-police-need-better-protection/>.

weak.”³² In November Trump responded to a protestor being ejected from a rally he held in Birmingham, Alabama by saying that “Maybe he should have been roughed up because it was absolutely disgusting what he was doing.”³³ In December of that year, at a campaign event in Grand Rapids, Michigan, after disruptive protestors had been ejected, Trump speculated that they might have been “on drugs”, and simultaneously chided them for being “so weak” in not resisting security as they were escorted out of the building while also wondering why protestors “would draw attention to themselves in a group of 9,000 maniacs who want to kill them.”³⁴ In February of 2016 Trump responded to a protestor being ejected from a Las Vegas campaign rally by claiming that he was “nasty as hell” and expressing his desire to personally punch him in the face.³⁵ In March of 2016 so many protesters had managed to get into the Chicago arena where he was to hold a campaign rally that it was abruptly cancelled.³⁶ These are a handful of incidents but they mark a recurring pattern in the way the Trump campaign dealt with protesters and how they compared to the 1968 Nixon campaign in that regard. Both candidates sought to marginalize those who protested against their candidates, to emphasize the fact that their supporters vastly outnumbered them and to create a narrative in which the grievances the protesters might have had with their candidacies were illegitimate. However, while Nixon chose an almost paternalistic approach, emphasizing that those who protested were misguided youth led astray by failing leadership and noting that he would not stoop to their level, Trump was aggressively confrontational, directing security personnel from the stage and speculating multiple times that he would have personally fought his detractors if he had only been given a chance.

Interestingly enough the Trump campaign, like the Nixon campaign, also launched during a time where racial unrest in general and protests in response to perceived racism of police forces against African American communities in particular. In August of 2014 unrests broke out in the city of Ferguson, Missouri, following the fatal shooting of Michael Brown by the local police department. In April of 2015 riots broke out in the city of Baltimore following the death of Freddie Gray due to injuries sustained while being transported in police custody. In August of 2016 several days of riots broke out in Milwaukee, Wisconsin following another police shooting of an African American man. In September of that year the aforementioned riots in Charlotte broke out following another police killing of an African American man. One thing that is notable about these riots is that they seem almost trivial compared to the ones of the sixties, in terms of duration, damage done and number of casualties. In 1965, the Watts riots in Los Angeles led to 34 deaths, more than a thousand injuries and more than 600 damaged and destroyed buildings, most of them due to arson.³⁷ By comparison the damages of the

³² David Wiegel, "In Michigan, Trump attacks China, critiques auto bailout, and judges Bernie Sanders 'weak,'" *The Washington Post*, August 11, 2015, accessed June 9, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/08/11/in-michigan-trump-attacks-china-critiques-auto-bailout-and-judges-bernie-sanders-weak/>.

³³ Philip Bump, "Could Donald Trump be held legally responsible for inciting violence at his rallies?," *The Washington Post*, March 14, 2016, accessed June 9, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/03/11/could-donald-trump-be-held-legally-responsible-for-inciting-violence-at-his-rallies/>.

³⁴ Emily Flitter, "Young protesters heckle Trump during Michigan speech," *Reuters*, December 21, 2015, accessed June 9, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-trump-idUSKBN0U50D020151222>.

³⁵ Jeremy Diamond, "Donald Trump on protester: 'I'd like to punch him in the face,'" *CNN*, February 23, 2016, accessed June 9, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/02/23/politics/donald-trump-nevada-rally-punch/index.html>.

³⁶ Monica Davey & Julie Bosman, "Donald Trump's Rally in Chicago Canceled After Violent Scuffles," *The New York Times*, March 11, 2016, accessed July 2, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/12/us/trump-rally-in-chicago-canceled-after-violent-scuffles.html>.

³⁷ Valerie Reitman & Mitchell Landsberg, "Watts Riots, 40 Years Later," *Los Angeles Times*, August 11, 2005, accessed June 9, 2017, <http://articles.latimes.com/2005/aug/11/local/la-me-watts11aug11>.

Baltimore riots in 2015 were relatively low: no deaths, 113 police injuries and 61 damaged buildings.³⁸ Yet in spite of the fact that both the number of casualties and the number of buildings injured are a factor of ten lower in the Baltimore riots compared to the Watts riots they nonetheless dominated the news cycle in much the same way. Like the Watts riots of 1965 and other riots of that era the impact of the riots of the years preceding the 2016 elections was magnified by new ways in which the media operated, especially in terms of their online presence.³⁹

Both Richard Nixon and Donald Trump relied heavily on law and order rhetoric to empower their charismatic leadership, in a way that appeals to the Just World Hypothesis. Both crafted narratives in which perceived rises in criminal activity and civil unrest were attributed to declining moral values rather than legitimate grievances. They were both confronted by protestors at their campaign events and they both responded to those protests in a way that both trivialized their message and reinforced their own charisma. Both men presented a framework in which they were the only ones who would see to it that criminals would be punished, which in turn was the only thing that would deter criminal behaviour. They both wanted to make sure bad things happened to bad people.

However, where Nixon's language regarding law and order and the way he dealt with protesters was patriarchal, creating a framework in which he and his followers would not stoop to their levels but rather respect the law of the land and respond to these protesters at the ballot box, Trump was far more confrontational, pushing the idea that he himself might physically fight those who would challenge him, and encouraging others to do so, to the point where he is currently facing a lawsuit for inciting a riot due to his encouragement of supporters who physically assaulted protesters at his rallies.⁴⁰ And where Trump mostly framed protesters as attacking him personally Nixon painted them as attacking the American system as a whole, pushing the idea that the Civil Rights movement had been a brief moment of upheaval, mostly peaceful, and that any race-related unrest following it was therefore unjustified. Trump actually tried to appeal to African American dissatisfaction, albeit in a very awkward manner, saying "To those I say the following: What do you have to lose by trying something new like Trump? What do you have to lose? You live in poverty, your schools are no good, you have no jobs, 58 percent of your youth is unemployed — what the hell do you have to lose?"⁴¹ In many ways this was an awkward attempt by Trump to appeal to a group that, since 1968, has been supporting the Democratic party more and more. According to a Pew Research Center poll 79% of Clinton supporters claimed that the treatment of racial and ethnic minorities was very important in determining their choice for their preferred presidential candidate, compared to only 42% of Trump supporters.

Of all the issues included in the poll the treatment of racial and ethnic minorities showed by far the biggest disparity between Republicans and Democrats in terms of how important they

³⁸ Sheryl Gay Stolberg, "Crowds Scatter as Baltimore Curfew Takes Hold," *The New York Times*, April 28, 2015, accessed June 9, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/29/us/baltimore-riots.html>;

Sabrina Toppa, "The Baltimore Riots Cost an Estimated \$9 Million in Damages," *TIME Magazine*, May 14, 2015, accessed June 9, 2017, <http://time.com/3858181/baltimore-riots-damages-businesses-homes-freddie-gray/>.

³⁹ See also chapter 3.4.

⁴⁰ Elliott C. McLaughlin, "It's plausible Trump incited violence, federal judge rules in OK'ing lawsuit," *CNN*, April 3, 2017, accessed June 9, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/04/02/politics/donald-trump-lawsuit-ignite-violence-kentucky-rally/index.html>.

⁴¹ Tess Owen, "Trump's pitch to black voters: 'What the hell do you have to lose?'," *VICE News*, August 20, 2016, accessed June 9, 2017, <https://news.vice.com/article/trumps-pitch-to-black-voters-what-the-hell-do-you-have-to-lose>.

considered it to be in making their choice.⁴² In the end, both candidates pushed a very similar message, one that fits within a Just World Hypothesis framework – law and order as a way to protect their supports from real or imagined threats in the form of criminality and civil unrest – although there were notable differences in the ways in which they put the message in practice. In the campaign rhetoric for both Nixon and Trump criminal justice was explicitly separated from social justice, which fit in their overarching rhetorical strategy of delegitimizing those protestors for whom the two are explicitly linked. The institutional impact of their message was also profoundly different. By making the Republican party the party of law and order, and by taking up the banner of states’ rights, Nixon brought millions of Southern Democrat voters and hundreds of Democrat officials on all levels of government into the Republican party. For Trump Law and Order was simply reaffirming a message that already existed, and doing it louder and more brashly than any Republican candidate before him.

⁴² Hannah Fingerhut, "Is treatment of minorities a key election issue? Views differ by race, party," *Pew Research Center*, July 13, 2016, accessed June 9, 2017, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/13/partisan-racial-divides-exist-over-how-important-treatment-of-minorities-is-as-a-voting-issue/>.

3.4. Spreading the good word

The importance of studying the relationship between candidates for political office and the media should be obvious. Politicians rely on media not just to get elected, but to achieve their policy goals once they are in office.¹ Due to the highly commercialized nature of the American media, the mutual relationship between the news world and political candidates is a unique feature. On the one hand, candidates rely on news media coverage to disseminate information on campaign activities and their standpoints to the general public. This is part of a larger process in which consumption of news media plays a fundamental role in the development of political beliefs and behaviour of those who consume the media.² It should be obvious that media consumption behaviour consists of a self-reinforcing cycle; individual consumers are more likely to access and trust news media produced by outlets which align with their political views and these outlets in turn reinforce already existing ideas and ideals that the consumer holds.³ This behaviour is often referred to as *the drunkard's search*, an analogy which likens the media consumer to a drunk man who has lost his house keys on his way home from the bar and is now trying to find them under the streetlights, not because that's where the keys are most likely to be found but because it's easier to search there⁴. Likewise, a media consumer conscious of their political ideas and ideals is more likely to consume media that present political news and viewpoints in a framework that confirms their already established beliefs. As will be shown in this chapter both candidates employed not only very specific messages to broadcast to the public, but also carefully picked the platforms they used to get these messages across. This chapter will compare the way both candidates used the media to further their election campaigns, not only in terms of what they said and where they said it, but also in terms of the broader media landscape they operated in and how they both at times sought to make the media itself a part of the political narrative they put forward.

A core component of the American media landscape in 1968 was the so-called Fairness Doctrine. Arguably the biggest battle over the role of media in society was fought in the forties, over radio broadcasts. In 1941 the Mayflower Doctrine had become the law of the land, essentially banning any kind of political editorializing in radio broadcasts.⁵ This was part of a larger debate surrounding the increased commercialization of radio broadcasts and the fact that increased dependence on advertising revenue would make radio broadcasters more likely to be pro-business.⁶ It was the classic dilemma of free speech vs. public interest – should radio broadcasters be allowed to fill the airwaves without any kind of restriction on them, even to the detriment of the listening public? The fairness doctrine was meant as a compromise – give broadcasters the ability to discuss politics on the air once again, but in such a way that they increased the public's ability to form their own opinions rather than stifle it.⁷ It is

¹ Gadi Wolfsfeld, *Making Sense of Media & Politics: Five Principles in Political Communication* (New York, Routledge), 7.

² Marko Calavita, *Apprehending Politics: News Media and Individual Political Development* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 125-126.

³ Richard M. Perloff, "Political Persuasion," in *The SAGE Handbook of Persuasion: Developments in Theory and Practice*, 2nd edition, ed. Lijiang Shen & Dillard James. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2013), 269.

⁴ Martha L. Cottam, Beth Dietz-Uhler, Elena Mastors & Thomas Preston, *Introduction to Political Psychology* (2nd edition), (New York: Psychology Press, 2010): 143.

⁵ Victor Pickard, *America's Battle for Media Democracy: The Triumph of Corporate Libertarianism and the Future of Media Reform* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 103.

⁶ *Ibid*, 107.

⁷ *Ibid*, 118.

within this context of legislated fairness that Richard Nixon found himself in when he gave what was undoubtedly the most important speech of his early political career in 1952.

In 1952, under fire for alleged improprieties in his handling of campaign funds, Nixon gave his infamous Checkers Speech, in which he deflected (but not denied) the allegations by stressing that he was a man from humble beginnings who did not have millions of dollars to throw at his political career like some of his opponents, and the only actual gift he had received had been a puppy that his six year old daughter had named Checkers.⁸ The popular response to the Checkers speech taught Nixon the value of television as a means to broadcast a controlled image and reach millions of viewers without having to be subjected to questioning.⁹ The speech had been carefully crafted. Broadcast from an NBC studio in Hollywood, a venue chosen for its superior lighting, Nixon delivered a speech in which he candidly discussed his personal finances, detailed the extent to which legal experts had examined the fund's administration and found no wrong, and challenged Illinois governor and Democratic presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson to be as open in regards to his finances as he had been.¹⁰ The message had been an undeniable success. In response to his call to the public to let the RNC know whether or not he should stay on as vice president based on the contents of his speech more than four million telegrams, letters and calls were put out, even to Nixon's parents in Whittier. The response was overwhelmingly positive.¹¹ Controlled television became a central tenet of his 1968 campaign, allowing him to move past the stigma of 1960 to present a new, warmer Nixon to the audience.¹² In spite of the fact that media in general and television in particular was a useful tool for him at times Nixon had a relationship with the media that was acrimonious at best. He first showed his true colours in the infamous 1962 press conference following his loss in the California gubernatorial elections – blasting the press as biased, complaining that they didn't cover him fairly, that they were delighted at his defeat, singling out two reporters he believed to be the exception among hundreds of press corps members by being fair to him, pleading with the press to “put one lonely reporter on the campaign who will report what the candidate says every now and then,” and concluding that “you won't have Richard Nixon to kick around anymore, because, gentlemen, this will be my last press conference.”¹³ Even though he decried the press in this particular press conference he had, a decade earlier, learned just how useful the press could be.

In the years leading up to the Nixon candidacy American television consumption, already ahead of the world, had expanded rapidly. UNESCO data shows that in 1953 90% of all television broadcasting transmitters were located in North America. By 1960 that number was 32%, although that was a matter of the rest of the world catching up to the massive proliferation of television

⁸ Richard M. Nixon, "The "Checkers Speech", " *The American Presidency Project*, accessed June 1, 2017, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=24485>.

⁹ John Herbers, "THE 37TH PRESIDENT; In Three Decades, Nixon Tasted Crisis and Defeat, Victory, Ruin and Revival," *The New York Times*, April 24, 1994, accessed June 10, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/04/24/obituaries/37th-president-three-decades-nixon-tasted-crisis-defeat-victory-ruin-revival.html>.

¹⁰ Roger Morris, *Richard Milhous Nixon: The Rise of an American Politician* (New York: Henry Holt, 1990): 825; Gladwin Hill, "I'M NOT A QUITTER': Senator Says He'll Let Republican National Committee Decide HE REVIEWS HIS FINANCES Accepts Bid to Meet General -- Cites Legal Opinions on Use of \$18,235 Fund NIXON PUTS FATE UP TO G. O. P. CHIEFS," *The New York Times*, September 24, 1952: 1, 23.

¹¹ *Ibid*: 844.

¹² Joe McGinniss, *The Selling of the President 1968* (New York: Trident Press, 1969): 34.

¹³ Gladwin Hill, "NIXON DENOUNCES PRESS AS BIASED: In 'Last' News Conference, He Attributes His Defeat to Crisis Over Cuba Nixon, Bitter at His Defeat by Brown in California, Denounces the Press as Biased SAYS CUBAN CRISIS COST HIM ELECTION Gives No Hint of Plans-- Asserts Others Will Have to Lead Coast G.O.P. Blames Cuban Crisis Changes His Plans," *The New York Times*, November 8, 1962: 1, 18.

broadcasts in the United States.¹⁴ That same UNESCO report showed that the number of televisions in the United States had risen from an estimated 27 million in 1953 to an estimated 56 million in 1960.¹⁵ Television broadcasts were playing a larger role in the way politicians communicated with their electorate with every passing year. In 1960 Nixon debated his opponent John F. Kennedy on live television, the first debate of its kind among American presidential candidates to be broadcast in this way. It became a milestone in the history of the relationship between politics and media, with the common perception being that the younger, more photogenic Kennedy was considered the winner by television audiences, while the more experienced Nixon was considered the winner by radio listeners who did not process Nixon's visibly uncomfortable performance as part of their evaluation. This perception has since been challenged, but it nonetheless remains a key feature of the politics-media relationship.¹⁶ In his own memoirs Nixon did highlight the role appearances played in the debate, mentioning that Kennedy looked "tanned, rested and fit", and that he himself, underweight from a bout of illness, foolishly declined any make up beyond concealing his perpetual five o' clock shadow.¹⁷ He does note however that the television debate seemed to have little impact on the razor-thin margins in the polls during the campaign. With Nixon's own estimation that the television audience outnumbered the radio audience by a factor of five to six, one would expect a noticeable shift in the polls following the first debate.¹⁸ Nonetheless Nixon considered this first television debate to be one of his biggest mistakes on the campaign trail, not because of his appearance but because he agreed to let the first debate be about domestic rather than foreign policy, allowing Kennedy to draw him out of his comfort zone for the first televised confrontation.¹⁹

The tone for Nixon's relationship with the media was set early in his presidency. On November 13, 1969, Nixon's vice president Spiro Agnew gave a speech in Des Moines, Iowa, which he concluded by saying that "In tomorrow's edition of the Des Moines Register you will be able to read a news story detailing what I said tonight; editorial comment will be reserved for the editorial page, where it belongs. Should not the same wall of separation exist between news and comment on the nation's networks? We would never trust such power over public opinion in the hands of an elected government--it is time we questioned it in the hands of a small and unelected elite. The great networks have dominated America's airwaves for decades; the people are entitled to a full accounting of their stewardship."²⁰ These remarks were made well after the 1968 election but they highlight the extent to which Richard Nixon seemed to consider the broadcast media hostile opposition to not only his politics but to his person. The remarks reduced the heads of broadcast media to a shadowy cabal of unelected elites who nonetheless wielded tremendous power in shaping the nation's public opinion and thus its policies.

In his first set of memoirs, written in the years immediately after Watergate, Nixon talks about "my adversaries in the press," but he also talked about using speculation about a potential run in 1968

¹⁴ UNESCO, *Statistics on radio and television, 1950-1960* (Paris: United Nations Educational and Cultural Organization, 1963): 10.

¹⁵ *Ibid*: 26.

¹⁶ David L. Vancil & Sue D. Pendell, "The Myth of Viewer-Listener Disagreement in the First Kennedy-Nixon Debate," *Central States Speech Journal* 38(1) (1987): 24-25.

¹⁷ Richard M. Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (London: Book Club Associates, 1978): 219.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 221.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 217.

²⁰ Spiro T. Agnew, "On the Media - Spiro T. Agnew 1969," *EmersonKent.com*, accessed June 10, 2017, http://www.emersonkent.com/speeches/on_the_media.htm.

to create more media attention.²¹ In a private conversation with reverend Billy Graham Nixon remarked that “...Newsweek is totally, it’s all run by Jews and dominated by them in their editorial pages. The New York Times, the Washington Post, totally Jewish too...” When Graham expresses the belief that “their stranglehold has got to be broken or this country will go down the drain,” Nixon asks whether Graham believes that. When he answers in the affirmative, Nixon states “I can’t ever say it, but I believe it.”²² It’s hard to gauge whether Nixon was sincere in his remarks about Jewish control of the media. He might have simply been agreeing with Graham for the sake of his support, since the popular televangelist had become a valuable political ally for Nixon.²³ Yet regardless of whether or not Nixon sincerely believed in some sort of vast (Jewish) conspiracy of control over the media and thus public opinion, his remark that he can’t say it shows that he is very much aware of the fact that open hostility to the media is not a viable strategy for him. In fact, when Nixon was critical of the media, with the exception of his outburst at the 1962 elections, he always seemed tactful in the way he went about his business in that regard. He had been, throughout his career, very much aware of the power the media had in directing American public opinion, and used it as such a tool whenever he could. He was very much aware of the fact that he needed the media.

In order to understand how Richard Nixon sought to use the media to spread the new tone of his 1968 campaign and bring his views to new audiences two articles by his hand should be analysed. First, in an article titled *What Has Happened to America?*, Nixon discusses the growing atmosphere of urban unrest that marked the second half of the sixties.²⁴ Second, *Asia After Viet Nam* deals with America’s involvement in the Vietnam war and from there discusses its broader role in global politics. These articles were published almost concurrently, in October of 1967, in *Reader’s Digest* and *Foreign Policy Magazine*, respectively. They form an interesting diptych, one dealing with the challenges America faced at home and one dealing with challenges abroad, neither part of the official Nixon campaign in spite of the fact that they were published on the eve of the Republican primaries for the 1968 elections.²⁵ They are also clearly targeted at two different audiences.²⁶ *Reader’s Digest*, which, according to its mission statement, strives to “...deliver expertly curated content that is concise, timeless and accessible. We create content that is real, optimistic, authentic, inspiring and actionable. Reader’s Digest is a read of lasting value and importance—an oasis from snark, celebrity hype and pessimism,” has a far more informal readership, less politically engaged, catering to families with a combination of advisory articles and light-hearted anecdotes.²⁷ *Foreign Policy* meanwhile touts itself as “A Trusted Advisor for Global Leaders When the Stakes are Highest.”²⁸ The magazine targets an audience who are interested in global affairs with articles written by both journalists and leaders from the political, financial and academic worlds.

The *Reader’s Digest* article shows how Nixon catered to its readership’s sensibilities right from the start. The title *What Has Happened to America?* shows that Nixon sympathizes with the reader’s

²¹ *Ibid*, 271; 279.

²² Douglas Brinkley & Luke A. Nichter, *The Nixon Tapes: 1971-1972* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2015): 571.

²³ Daniel K. Williams, *God’s Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010): 90-91.

²⁴ Richard Nixon, “What Has Happened to America?” *Reader’s Digest*, October 1967, accessed April 10 2016, http://college.cengage.com/history/ayers_primary_sources/nixon_1967.htm.

²⁵ Richard Nixon, “Asia After Viet Nam.” *Foreign Policy Magazine*, 111(1967-1968): 111-125.

²⁶ For a more in-depth quantitative analysis of the linguistic complexities of both texts, see appendix 1.

²⁷ Reader’s Digest, “Mission Statement,” accessed April 14, 2017, <http://mediakit.rd.com/>.

²⁸ The FP Group, “Foreign Policy: A Trusted Advisor for Global Leaders When the Stakes are Highest,” accessed April 14, 2017, <https://fpgroup.foreignpolicy.com/>.

concerns regarding the growing political unrest that America faced during the second half of the decades. It's noteworthy that Nixon starts out describing the Civil Rights Movement as a "...social miracle was being performed with a minimum friction and without loss of our freedom or tranquillity."²⁹ It's an assertion that would be heavily contested by those either involved in the movement or the opposition to it, yet one that resonated with the sensibilities of those not actively participating in the struggle. Nixon goes on to state that the rising crime rates and numerous riots aren't the result of lingering racial tensions but rather of permissiveness, of certain segments of social leadership having created a culture in which respect for law and order and societal institutions has diminished. In Nixon's own words: "Men of intellectual and moral eminence who encourage public disobedience of the law are responsible for the acts of those who inevitably follow their counsel: the poor, the ignorant and the impressionable."³⁰ The article shows Nixon taking a very paternalistic attitude towards the rioters: they are not directly responsible, rather, they are misguided, led astray by authority figures, requiring not just a firm hand but also a renewed respect for the establishment in order to be brought back into the fold of civil society.³¹ The *Foreign Policy Magazine* article meanwhile is much more formal in its tone. It shows Nixon's confidence in matters of foreign policy. He had stood toe to toe with Nikita Khrushchev in full view of the world in 1959, when both attended the American National Exhibition in Moscow which, combined with a similar Soviet exhibition in America, was meant to foster understanding between the two Cold War antagonists by giving each other's populations a better understanding of their respective lifestyles.³² He had spent the time between his 1962 electoral defeat and his 1968 fostering the foreign diplomatic ties he had first developed during his time as vice president in the Truman administration, building diplomatic ties that would go on to serve him well during his presidency and personally gauging the attitudes towards America held by both its diplomatic allies and its adversaries.³³

Of the two articles, the *Reader's Digest* one is clearly more interesting when analysing the personality framework Nixon sought to project. The *Foreign Policy Magazine* article is well written but argues from Nixon's foreign policy expertise, utilizing complex language in order to convey complex ideas. The *Reader's Digest* article meanwhile argues from emotion. It appeals to the concern and outrage its target audience would feel over the rising crime rates, the numerous riots and the perceived licentiousness of American youth. It simultaneously argues for a strengthening of the capabilities of the police and judiciary to appropriately deal with these crises as well as the importance of rebuilding the understanding that the American justice system is, in Nixon's own words: "There is little question that our judicial and legal system provides more safeguards against the concoction of an innocent man than any other legal system on earth. We should view this accomplishment with pride,

²⁹ Nixon, "What Has Happened to America?"

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ See also chapter 3.3.

³² Harrison E. Salisbury, "NIXON AND KHRUSHCHEV ARGUE IN PUBLIC AS U.S. EXHIBIT OPENS; ACCUSE EACH OTHER OF THREATS: NO TEMPERS LOST Both Express Hopes for Agreement in Geneva Talks NIXON IN WRANGLE WITH KHRUSHCHEV," *The New York Times*, July 25, 1959: 1;

Susan E. Reed, "Who Will Beat Whom?: Soviet Popular Reception of the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9(4) (2008): 856;

Marilyn S. Kushner, "Exhibiting Art at the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959: Domestic Politics and Cultural Diplomacy," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4(1) (2002): 8.

³³ Richard Nixon, *RN: The memoirs of Richard Nixon* (London: Book Club Associates, 1978): 257;

Andrew L. Johns, "A Voice from the Wilderness: Richard Nixon and the Vietnam War, 1964–1966," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 29(2) (1999): 319-320.

and we must preserve it.”³⁴ Nixon repeatedly states and reemphasizes the belief that those who engage in the kinds of destructive behaviour the article laments are not malicious but simply misguided. The *Reader's Digest* article shows that Nixon's 1968 campaign sought a new message, different from Nixon's earlier writings in not just its contents and tone, or the complexity of the language used, but in the media platform he published it on.

Whereas Nixon kept his contempt for the media hidden during his political career Donald Trump had no qualms criticising them loudly and frequently. A substantial amount of the opening pages of his book *Crippled America* are devoted to it, including the entire second chapter, which is titled “Our “Unbiased” Political Media”.³⁵ Trump brags about his relationship with the media, stating that “The cost of a full-page ad in the New York Times can be more than \$100,000. But when they write a story about one of my deals, it doesn't cost me a cent, and I get more important publicity. I have a mutually profitable two-way relationship with the media--we give each other what we need. And now I am using that relationship to talk about the future of America,” and he talks about journalists as being “...honest, decent and hardworking; they bring honor to their profession,” yet even as Trump repeatedly claims that he loves the media and journalists and that they love him he also claims that the media is abusive. Trump claims that “I've definitely met people at both the very top as well as the lowest end of the food chain. I mean, the very bottom: They are horrible human beings, they are dishonest. I've seen these so-called journalists flat-out lie. I say that because incompetence doesn't begin to explain the inaccurate stories they have written. There is no other explanation.”³⁶ Herein lies the crux of the way Trump has framed his relationship with the media: anyone who gives him coverage he likes is honest, decent and hardworking, anyone who criticizes him is a horrible human being, and not just being incompetent in their reporting but actively out to get him. Later in the book he complains that “It's incredible to me how dishonest the media in this country really is. People sometimes forget that the newspapers and television stations are profit-making business – or at least they're trying to be. If they have to choose between honest reporting and making a profit, which choice do you think they will make? The sad thing is that all it does is prove that both liberal and conservative news outlets can lie and distort the news shamelessly. I've had meetings with reporters who faithfully recorded what I said, then changed the words and the meaning.”³⁷ It's a framework that resonates because it fits what Americans already believe – that the media is more concerned with profit than accurate reporting – then applies it to him personally, thus fostering the idea that any critical reporting on him is simply scandalmongering for the sake of circulation and ratings.

Trump created a narrative in which the majority of mainstream media was directly opposed to him, and thus, by extension, to his supporters. Perhaps the most notable example of the way he depicted the media as hostile to him was an incident at a campaign event in Biloxi, Mississippi. In the middle of the event he suddenly singled out a single camera operator saying “Look at the guy in the middle. Why aren't you turning the camera? Terrible. So terrible. Look at him, he doesn't turn the

³⁴ Nixon, "What Has Happened to America?"

³⁵ Donald J. Trump, *Crippled America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015): 15.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 18.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 109.

camera. He doesn't turn the camera."³⁸ He would go on to say that "It's so damn unfair, the press... That guy right there, who do you shoot for? That guy right there has not moved that camera. It's disgusting. All right... He's instructed by his bosses to not move the camera."³⁹ Trump is correct in that the camera man had been instructed not to move the camera, to focus on tight shots of the speaker, but he used the cameraman as part of a larger narrative – that the media was deliberately refusing to show the size of the crowds at his rally in order to downplay his popularity. That single cameraman, simply following instructions and focusing on filming the candidate, was turned by Trump into the representative of a vast media conspiracy to discredit him. This was not an isolated sentiment. By putting forward the idea that the media could not be trusted to accurately inform the public about politics in general and his campaign in particular he was playing to a rising distrust in the media among the American public. Trust in mass media had been steadily declining for the past twenty years, with those aged 18 to 49 years old being more distrustful than those over fifty, and Republicans being far more distrustful than Democrats of mass media. In a Gallup survey held in 2016 only 14% of respondents identifying themselves as Republican reported a great deal or fair amount of trust in mass media, compared to 51% of democrats.⁴⁰

Nonetheless, Trump found the platform for his transformation from reality star to serious political contender in the mainstream media, on Fox News, as noted before.⁴¹ The cable news station had already built a close relationship with the Republican party, having given employment to several prominent Republican politicians, most of whom used the station as a way to stay in the public eye in between runs for office.⁴² He found his voice outside of the mainstream, however, by giving credence to conspiracy theories such as Obama's alleged Kenyan birth previously only entertained by fringe conservative websites such as *WorldNetDaily*.⁴³ When Trump hired former Breitbart editor Steve Bannon to lead his campaign it was an obvious signal that these right wing websites were no longer on the fringes of American media – they had become a key part of the Trump apparatus in a very public way.⁴⁴ Internet pseudo-journalism had burst into the mainstream on January 17, 1998. On that day Matt Drudge, owner of the website *Drudge Report*, broke the news story that president Bill Clinton had had a sexual relationship with White House intern Monica Lewinsky. The article not only noted that Clinton had had this extramarital affair, but that Newsweek, a weekly news magazine published since 1933 and very much a part of the main stream media, had known about it but decided not to

³⁸ Erik Wemple, "Donald Trump again singles out camera operator for mass derision," *The Washington Post*, January 11, 2016, accessed June 10, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/erik-wemple/wp/2016/01/11/donald-trump-again-singles-out-camera-operator-for-mass-derision/>.

³⁹ Erik Wemple, "Donald Trump just cannot abide an independent media," *The Washington Post*, January 7, 2016, accessed June 10, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/erik-wemple/wp/2016/01/07/donald-trump-just-cannot-abide-an-independent-media/>.

⁴⁰ Art Swift, "Americans' Trust in Mass Media Sinks to New Low," *Gallup*, September 14, 2016, accessed June 10, 2017, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/195542/americans-trust-mass-media-sinks-new-low.aspx>.

⁴¹ Frances Martel, "You Saw This Coming: Fox News Announces 'Mondays With Trump' On Fox & Friends," *Mediaite*, March 31, 2011, accessed May 26, 2017, <http://www.mediaite.com/tv/you-saw-this-coming-fox-news-announces-mondays-with-trump-on-fox-friends/>; see also chapter 3.1.

⁴² Christina López, "Jason Chaffetz Might Be Next Republican to Join Fox News' Elephant Graveyard: Former Republican Politicians Have Found Employment At The Network While They Rehab Their Careers," *Media Matters for America*, May 15, 2017, accessed May 26, 2017, <https://www.mediamatters.org/blog/2017/05/15/chaffetz-might-be-next-republican-join-fox-news-elephant-graveyard/216446>.

⁴³ Ashley Parker & Steve Eder, "Inside the Six Weeks Donald Trump Was a Nonstop 'Birther'," *The New York Times*, July 2, 2016, accessed May 24, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/03/us/politics/donald-trump-birther-obama.html>.

⁴⁴ Jonathan Martin, Jim Rutenberg & Maggie Haberman, "Donald Trump Appoints Media Firebrand to Run Campaign," *The New York Times*, August 17, 2016, accessed June 11, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/18/us/politics/donald-trump-stephen-bannon-paul-manafort.html>.

pursue it.⁴⁵ It marked a new era in American journalism, in which the internet not only changed how fast the news could be reported, but also who could report the news, bypassing the journalistic checks and balances of traditional print and broadcast media. The *Drudge Report* article circumvented any hesitation that *Newsweek* had had in publishing it. *Newsweek* reporter Michael Isikoff had been investigating the story for more than a year, but the editorial board had held off on publication due to concerns over the authenticity of a recording of a conversation between Lewinsky and a friend that was at the core of the story.⁴⁶ Drudge showed no such hesitation. The way the Lewinsky story was broken showed that such concerns were becoming less and less relevant in news reporting.⁴⁷ As Trump's involvement with the birther conspiracy shows the internet had drastically changed the way information was reported on. As evidenced by incidents such as the videos targeting Planned Parenthood and the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), the gatekeeping role of traditional media was undermined.

The case of the edited Planned Parenthood videos produced by the Center for Medical Progress (CMP) provides a perfect cross-section on how the internet has fundamentally changed the agenda setting power of traditional news media. The Center for Medical Progress, which touts itself as "...a group of citizen journalists dedicated to monitoring and reporting on medical ethics and advances," is an anti-abortion organization which counts among its board members several radical anti-abortion activists.⁴⁸ In July of 2015 the CMP released a series of videos claiming to show hidden camera footage that confirmed their belief that Planned Parenthood illegally profited from the sale of tissue harvested from aborted fetuses.⁴⁹ These videos, which had been proven to be deceptively edited, not only led to several congressional investigations, including through a congressional select committee, but were also used by Republican presidential candidates Carly Fiorina and Bobby Jindal in order to support their pro-life standpoints and bolster their pro-life credentials.⁵⁰ Fiorina became especially notorious for her insistence that the videos were not only real, but that she had personally seen videos she claimed showed the actual harvesting process being performed on an aborted but still living foetus.⁵¹ All this is in spite of the fact that a Texas grand jury investigation into Planned Parenthood of the Gulf Coast not only found no wrongdoing on the part of Planned Parenthood but actually indicted David Daleiden

⁴⁵ Matt Drudge, "NEWSWEEK KILLS STORY ON WHITE HOUSE INTERN - BLOCKBUSTER REPORT: 23-YEAR OLD, FORMER WHITE HOUSE INTERN, SEX RELATIONSHIP WITH PRESIDENT," *Drudge Report*, January 17, 1998, accessed June 10, 2017, http://www.drudgereportarchives.com/data/2002/01/17/20020117_175502_ml.htm.

⁴⁶ BBC News, "Scandalous scoop breaks online," *BBC News*, January 25, 1998, accessed June 10, 2017, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/special_report/1998/clinton_scandal/50031.stm.

⁴⁷ Bruce A. Williams & Michael X. Delli Carpini, "Unchained Reaction: The Collapse of Media Gatekeeping and the Clinton-Lewinsky Scandal," *Journalism* 1(1) (2000): 72-73.

⁴⁸ Center for Medical Progress, "About Us," accessed April 9, 2017, <http://www.centerformedicalprogress.org/about-us/>; Eli Clifton and Amanda Marcotte, "Who's Behind the Planned Parenthood Sting Video? Troy Newman and Other Rabid Anti-Choicers," *The Nation*, July 16, 2015, accessed April 9, 2017, <https://www.thenation.com/article/whos-behind-the-planned-parenthood-sting-video-troy-newman-and-other-rabid-anti-choicers/>.

⁴⁹ Frederick Clarkson, "When Anti-Abortion Propaganda is Accepted as Investigative Journalism," Political Research Associates, August 10, 2015, accessed April 9, 2017, <http://www.politicalresearch.org/2015/08/10/when-anti-abortion-propaganda-is-accepted-as-investigative-journalism/>.

⁵⁰ Jackie Calmes and Nicholas St. Fleur, "House Republicans to Investigate Planned Parenthood Over Fetal Tissue," *The New York Times*, July 15, 2015, accessed April 9, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/16/us/house-republicans-to-investigate-planned-parenthood-over-fetal-tissue.html>;

FOX News, "Can Carly Fiorina capitalize on breakout debate performance? Plus, Catholic leaders preview Pope Francis' trip to the US," *FOX News Transcripts*, September 20, 2015, accessed April 9, 2017, <http://www.foxnews.com/transcript/2015/09/20/can-carly-fiorina-capitalize-on-breakout-debate-performance-plus-catholic.html>;

Molly Redden, "Gov. Bobby Jindal: 'Planned Parenthood Is Selling Baby Parts Across the Country'," *Mother Jones*, September 16, 2015, accessed April 9, 2017, <http://www.motherjones.com/mojo/2015/09/bobby-jindal-planned-parenthood-debate>.

⁵¹ FOX News, *ibid*.

and Sandra Merritt on a felony charge of tampering with a government record.⁵² The videos have spurred a cycle of disinformation in which they are initially discussed on internet news websites which have a strong anti-abortion agenda such as Breitbart and The Blaze, who accept the videos on face value without even discussing the possibility that they are the result of deceptive editing.⁵³ From there the news coverage surrounding the videos moves on to more mainstream conservative news outlets such as FOX News. This process of deception gaining legitimacy through media coverage is reminiscent of the work of James O'Keefe, who through his Project Veritas campaign has made a name for himself since 2009, disseminating deceptively edited hidden camera footage in order to promote conservative causes and conspiracy theories.⁵⁴

The fact that these deceptions are capable of influencing policy making is shown in the way his videos succeeded in terminating funding for ACORN. In these videos, O'Keefe and a female accomplice dressed up as a prostitute and her pimp, soliciting the aid of ACORN employees in several illegal schemes. These videos were then published through conservative media outlets such as FOX News and Breitbart.com affiliate BigGovernment.com.⁵⁵ In spite of the fact that ACORN had been cleared of any wrongdoing in the case by several investigations the organization was forced to file for bankruptcy in 2010 due to the loss of government contracts, private donations and government funding.⁵⁶ Since his success in bringing down ACORN O'Keefe has made numerous attempts to discredit liberal individuals and organizations through similar hidden camera recordings of dubious credibility, for which he has received a welcome platform on conservative media outlets.⁵⁷ Project Veritas' business model appears more concerned with gaining attention for their videos than actually exposing anything, often only releasing heavily edited clips while making nebulous statements promising that their raw footage holds even more damning material.⁵⁸ Even though O'Keefe has yet to prove any kind of substantial wrongdoing by the target of his videos, they have nonetheless become part of conservative news discourse, and even been discussed on the campaign trail as factual and accurate by Donald Trump.⁵⁹

The way the edited videos regarding both Planned Parenthood and ACORN became a part of national debate and national policy highlights the way news gathering, dissemination and consumption has changed in the era of the internet. They gain traction through non-traditional news

⁵² Trevor Hughes, "Grand jury indicts 2 behind Planned Parenthood videos," *USA Today*, January 25, 2016, accessed April 9, 2017, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2016/01/25/planned-parenthood-videos-grand-jury-indictment/79318450/>.

⁵³ Austin Ruse, "Planned Parenthood Official Taped Discussing Sale of Aborted Baby Body Parts," *Breitbart.com*, 14 July 2015, accessed April 9, 2017, <http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2015/07/14/planned-parenthood-official-taped-discussing-use-of-aborted-baby-body-parts/>;

Kate Scanlon, "'Like a Harvesting Pod': Center for Medical Progress Releases New Recap Video of Their Findings," *The Blaze*, January 12, 2016, accessed April 10, 2017, <http://www.theblaze.com/news/2016/01/12/like-a-harvesting-pod-center-for-medical-progress-releases-new-recap-video-of-their-findings/>.

⁵⁴ Molly Redden, "Pro-Choicers Are Actually Freaked Out About These Planned Parenthood Sting Videos - And they should be," *Mother Jones*, July 23, 2015, accessed April 10, 2017, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2015/07/planned-parenthood-sting-videos-explained>.

⁵⁵ Brian Montopoli, "ACORN Sting Lands Housing Group in Conservative Crosshairs," *CBS News*, September 16, 2009, accessed April 9, 2017, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/acorn-sting-lands-housing-group-in-conservative-crosshairs/>.

⁵⁶ Andy Newman, "Advice to Fake Pimp Was No Crime, Prosecutor Says," *The New York Times*, March 1, 2010, accessed April 10, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/02/nyregion/02acorn.html>;

The Associated Press, "Census Bureau Drops Acorn from 2010 Effort," *The New York Times*, September 11, 2009, accessed April 9, 2017, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/12/us/politics/12acorn.html?_r=1&scp=3&sq=census%20bureau&st=cse;

CBS News, "House Votes to Defund ACORN," *CBS News*, September 17, 2009, accessed April 10, 2017, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/house-votes-to-defund-acorn/>.

⁵⁷ Philip Elliott, "Everything We Know About the Latest James O'Keefe Video Sting," *Time*, October 19, 2016, accessed April 9, 2017, <http://time.com/4536212/james-okeefe-project-veritas-video-democrats/>.

⁵⁸ Zeke J. Miller, "Conservative Sting Video Goes Inside Clinton Campaign Training," *Time*, August 26, 2015, accessed April 9, 2017, <http://time.com/4010778/hillary-clinton-sting-project-veritas/>.

⁵⁹ Elliott, *ibid*.

outlets who rely on sensationalism and partisan reporting to bolster their viewership and in turn their advertisement income, bypassing standard journalistic practices regarding confirmation and corroboration. These stories reach the consumers faster, and are spread faster through social media such as Twitter and Facebook. It's a cliché maxim to say that falsehood flies while the truth comes limping after it but it has never been true than in the era of modern internet reporting. By the time that official investigations have definitively rebuked these false claims they have already become part of national discourse, and even led to adjustments in national policy. What's new about the situation in 2016 compared to previous election cycles is that these deceptive news stories now gain credibility by being discussed by political candidates.

The term 'citizen journalist' is oddly paradoxical. On the one hand, it appeals to the traditional authority of journalism, yet at the same time caters specifically to a public that has become far more sceptic of traditional journalism, which, especially among conservative Republicans that groups such as the CMP appeal to, is considered exceptionally biased.⁶⁰ It's a term that simultaneously grants those who use it to mask their political activism a veneer of respectability while also placing them firmly outside of the mainstream of American media, which is often distrusted by those they seek to influence. After all, if a CMP report is ignored by mainstream media it's a confirmation of their beliefs that these media deliberately ignore unfavourable news, yet if it's discussed by these media, it's seen as a legitimization of their cause. Likewise, any factual refutation of these videos by mainstream media is seen as simply confirming the existing belief that these media are biased. The fact that non-mainstream news organizations are more likely to accept the narrative presented by so-called 'citizen journalists' only adds to their perceived legitimacy in the eyes of those already sceptical of more mainstream media. These nonconventional conservative news organizations have profited massively from their support for the Trump campaign. Their journalistic credibility has been bolstered by increased access to the White House press corps, with many fringe websites and reporters being granted White House press credentials and access to briefings by White House press secretary Sean Spicer.⁶¹

Both Nixon and Trump respected the media, in terms of what it can be achieve, how powerful it can be in swinging public opinion, one way or another. They both considered the media openly hostile to not just their politics but their persons. Yet whereas Nixon always tried to hide his true feelings about the media Trump proclaimed them openly and proudly, noting how he used the media to build his brand and to get attention for his political campaign. *Crippled America* discusses the American media in typical Trump rhetoric: he loves the media, and they love him, yet at the same time the media is also part of a vast conspiracy against him. By openly making the media out to be a single monolithic and shadowy organization Trump has created a narrative in which he is the victim of a vast conspiracy to stop him, a conspiracy that also hurts the American people, because he is the only one that will tell them the truth. By making the media part of the conspiracy against him Trump used it to bolster his charismatic leadership in a way that Nixon never did. For Nixon television broadcasts were certainly a

⁶⁰ Amy Mitchell, Jeffrey Gottfried, Michael Barthel and Elisa Shearer, "Trust and accuracy of American news organizations | Pew Research Center," July 7, 2016, accessed April 14, 2017, <http://www.journalism.org/2016/07/07/trust-and-accuracy/>.

⁶¹ Rick Perlstein, "Forget Sean Spicer — the freak show in the new White House press corps is worse," *Raw Story*, April 8, 2017, accessed April 9, 2017, <http://www.rawstory.com/2017/04/forget-sean-spicer-the-freak-show-in-the-new-white-house-press-corps-is-worse/>.

tool, a way to reach the audience in a way that was convenient for him, but he never went as far as Trump did. But the 2016 presidential campaign was part of a vastly different media landscape than the 1968 one. As the reporting on Monica Lewinsky has shown internet reporting has drastically changed how the news reaches people. Trump's birtherism showed a knack for circumventing traditional media in favor of these new outlets as a way to make his personal opinions part of the national conversation. He had the advantage that two of the major checks that existed on political speech on television broadcasts during the Nixon years had vanished since then. First, the Fairness Doctrine had been abolished in 1987.⁶² Second, cable news channels such as Fox News exist outside the context of traditional regulation by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) because they transmit their program over privately owned and maintained broadcast infrastructure rather than the publicly owned airwaves.⁶³ In practice the media was merely a tool for Nixon. He kept his low opinions of the media mostly private. For Trump the media was more than just a tool – although obviously also that, as evident in the way he brags about using the media to create and advertise his brand – it became a key part of the narrative he created for himself. The suggestion that there existed a vast media conspiracy against him that was part of a larger overarching effort by the political mainstream to keep him out of power and deny his followers the representation they deserved. For Nixon the media was merely a way to bolster his charismatic leadership. For Trump it became not just a way to transmit the message but part of the message itself.

⁶² Susan Low Bloch, "Orphaned Rules in the Administrative State: The Fairness Doctrine and Other Orphaned Progeny of Interactive Deregulation," *The Georgetown Law Journal* (76) (1987): 60.

⁶³ Brendan Koerner, "Can the FCC Regulate HBO?," *Slate*, February 12, 2004, accessed June 11, 2017, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/explainer/2004/02/can_the_fcc_regulate_hbo.html.

Appendix 1 – A comparison of linguistic complexity of the two Richard Nixon articles.

In order to better illustrate how the *Reader's Digest* and *Foreign Policy Magazine* articles not only fundamentally differed on target audience and subject matter but also in the complexity of language presented I have processed both according to different formulas designed to quantify the level of intricacies of both texts independent of their actual length. These formulas include the Dale-Chall Readability Index, the Automated Readability Index, the Coleman-Liau Index, the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Index and the Gunning Fog Index⁶⁴.

The Dale-Chall score is derived from two variables – average sentence length in words and the prevalence of words outside the Dale list of 3.000 common words. The Automated Readability score is based on the average length of sentences in words and the average length of words in characters. The Coleman-Liau score is calculated on similar variables used in a different formula. The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score is derived from the ratio between simple (mono- and disyllabic) and hard (polysyllabic) words divided by average sentence length. The Gunning Fog index is likewise calculated by a formula that uses sentence length and the number of polysyllabic words as its variables. Using these five different methods allows us to quantify both texts in terms of both their syntax and vocabulary. The texts have both been processed in their entirety as printed with minor adjustments for idiosyncrasies in spelling and punctuation. ⁶⁵ When analysing both texts according to these various formulas we get the following results:

Table 1: Quantitative analysis of two Richard Nixon texts according to five different formulae.

	<i>Asia after Viet Nam</i> ⁶⁶	<i>What Has Happened to America</i> ⁶⁷
Dale-Chall Readability Index	10.3	9.3
Automated Readability Index	18.8	13.8
Coleman-Liau Index	19.6	18.8
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	14.6	10.4
Gunning Fog Index	17.9	13.6

Looking at the table it quickly becomes obvious that the *Foreign Policy Magazine* article scores higher on each of the five complexity indices used. This confirms the earlier observation that the *Reader's Digest* article was written to be read by a much wider audience. By each standard used the text is more accessible than the one of the *Foreign Policy Magazine* article. What's interesting is that the indices that show the greatest degree of variance (Automated Readability, Flesch-Kincaid, Gunning Fog) are the ones that place more relative weight on word length in their formulae, which suggests that the increased complexity of *Asia after Viet Nam* is found in its vocabulary rather than its syntax.

⁶⁴ William H. Dubay, *The Principles of Readability* (Costa Mesa, CA: Impact Information, 2004): 23-24; 49; Meri Coleman & T.L. Liau, "A computer readability formula designed for machine scoring," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 60(2), 1975: 283-284; Dubay: 21-22; 24.

⁶⁵ In the text *Asia after Viet Nam* the original spelling of 'Viet Nam' has been adjusted to 'Vietnam' and the en dash (–) between words has been separated from the words it links by spaces.

⁶⁶ Richard Nixon, "Asia After Viet Nam." *Foreign Policy Magazine*, 111(1967-1968): 111-125.

⁶⁷ Richard Nixon, "What Has Happened to America?" *Reader's Digest*, October 1967, accessed April 10 2016, http://college.cengage.com/history/ayers_primary_sources/nixon_1967.htm.

3.5. Out-groups as threats to the status-quo

Charismatic leadership does not require something to push back against, although it definitely helps, especially when talking in terms of the leader-as-saviour framework. A charismatic leader is, as Weber notes, a leader who can present a singular empowering vision in which the leader is the only individual who can achieve it. It's easy to see how in such a vision, some sort of adversarial threat to be fought back against can empower the leader in presenting themselves as a potential saviour. Franklin Delano Roosevelt fought back against the Great Depression, then the Axis forces in World War II. Adolph Hitler promised to restore Germany to its former glory by ending the vast international Jewish conspiracy that oppressed the German people and Aryans everywhere. Postcolonial leaders like Mahatma Ghandi and Kwame Nkrumah were empowered by their promise to end foreign occupation of their peoples' homelands and lead them into independence.

If such threats, real or perceived, can be used to empower charismatic leadership, it logically follows that creating a narrative in which the danger that these adversarial forces pose for the followers is a sound tactic in gaining more power or, in case of a democracy like the United States, votes. This chapter deals with the way both Richard Nixon and Donald Trump identified certain groups of people as threats to the American system, either implicitly or explicitly, and how they presented themselves as the ones who could save their voters from these threats. I will discuss the various out-groups both candidates identified as dangerous, what rhetoric they used to achieve this and why these particular groups were suitable to be identified as such by the candidates.

The nineteen-sixties were a turbulent time in American history. The post-World War II generation was coming of age and with it a whole new host of political issues. It was the rise of what would later be identified as post-materialism – a new generation who had grown up in relative luxury thanks to the post-World War II economic boom and who as a result of that were less concerned with economic matters and more concerned with non-materialist matters such as civil rights, feminism, environmentalism, access to higher education and decolonization. By the late nineteen-sixties this had broken down into more and more violent civil unrests, with as absolute nadir the riots following the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968. It was also the time of a notable generation gap: the post-war generation, having grown up in relative prosperity compared to their parents and grandparents, pursued a radically different set of values from those of the previous generations. This has become known as the scarcity hypothesis of value systems. In essence, all groups pursue those things that are scarce.¹ For the pre-war generation these took the shape of political issues such as a liveable wage, manageable food prices and affordable housing. The post-war generation had little to worry about in regards to these material concerns. Their political priorities lay in the post-material, prioritizing non-economic issues because economic issues had never been a problem for them. Of course post-materialism and the scarcity hypothesis are by no means the only explaining factors for the reason why the post-war generation was so at odds with the pre-war generation. It was also the time of the Civil Rights movement, and for African-Americans materialist concerns were very much at the forefront of

¹ Ronald Inglehart, "Post-Materialism in an Environment of Insecurity," *The American Political Science Review*, 75(4) (1981): 881-882.

their political concerns. Employment opportunities, police and political oppression and unequal protection under the law were very much at the heart of the civil rights movement. But with a more politically engaged post-war generation their struggle did find more fertile political ground to take root in. In terms of mass media coverage several issues were pushed to the forefront of the public space through coverage in mass media. A 1973 study of the subject matter of three major news magazines – *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News* – shows that during that decade the primary issue discussed was the Vietnam war, followed by racial issues and racial unrests, with campus unrests, television and mass media and crime following at considerable distance.²

When looking at the Nixon campaign rhetoric in 1968, especially that rhetoric which identified specific groups, individuals and organizations as threats to the American way of life, it's easy to see emerging patterns. In Nixon's narrative those who protested against the Vietnam war, participated in campus protests or in the numerous violent urban riots that marked the second half of the sixties weren't just wrong, they were misguided. In Nixon's own words: "Just three years ago this nation seemed to be completing its greatest decade of racial progress and entering one of the most hopeful periods in American History. Twenty million Negroes were at last being admitted to full membership in the society, and this social miracle was being performed with a minimum friction and without loss of our freedom or tranquillity. With this star of racial peace and progress before us, how did it happen that last summer saw the United States blazing in an inferno of urban anarchy?"³ The message here was simple: with the passing of the civil rights legislation of 1964 and 1965 all racial issues in the United States were solved, therefore racial issues are no longer a valid concern, only an excuse for violence and looting. Nixon's paternalism shines through clearly when he states that the blame for these riots falls on "Men of intellectual and moral eminence who encourage public disobedience of the law are responsible for the acts of those who inevitably follow their counsel: the poor, the ignorant and the impressionable."⁴

For Nixon the out-group was not necessarily clearly identifiable. He relied more on defining the in-group, those who he represented, defined in Nixon's acceptance speech for the Republican nomination as "...the great majority of Americans, the forgotten Americans—the non-shouters; the non-demonstrators. They are not racists or sick; they are not guilty of the crime that plagues the land. They are black and they are white—they're native born and foreign born —they're young and they're old. They work in America's factories. They run America's businesses. They serve in government. They provide most of the soldiers who died to keep us free."⁵ This was the coalition that Nixon would base his victory on, the Silent Majority. The term silent majority was first used after the 1968 election, in a televised speech held on November 3, 1969, in which Nixon asked for the political support of the American people in adjusting America's involvement in Vietnam by saying "And so tonight-to you, the great silent majority of my fellow Americans-I ask for your support."⁶ Although Nixon debuted the

² G. Ray Funkhouser, "The Issues of the Sixties: An Exploratory Study in the Dynamics of Public Opinion," *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37(1) (1973): 62-75.

³ Richard M. Nixon, "What Has Happened to America?" *Reader's Digest*, October 1967, accessed June 15 2017, http://college.cengage.com/history/ayers_primary_sources/nixon_1967.htm.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Richard M. Nixon, "Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Miami Beach, Florida," *The American Presidency Project*, accessed June 15, 2017, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25968>.

⁶ Richard M. Nixon, "'Silent Majority' Speech," *C-SPAN*, November 3, 1969, accessed June 15, 2017, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?153819-1/silent-majority-speech>.

phrase after the 1968 elections those who he included in this Silent Majority were nonetheless a core component of his electoral strategy. By unifying a disparate group of Americans who were, for one reason or another, fed up with riots, constant protests and the Civil Rights movement, Nixon not only managed to expand his electoral base but to find his voice on one policy dimension he was by his own admission weaker on – domestic policy – by presenting himself as the man who would put the vocal minority back in its place.

By framing his domestic policy concerns in decidedly moral terms Nixon managed to attract a group of supporters to his campaign that had previously been only marginally involved in American politics on the national level. As with most matters involving Nixon's campaign strategy however, it was not something that materialized out of thin air but something that had been carefully cultivated over several years before the public ever caught wind of it. Billy Graham, one of the nation's most influential evangelical preachers, had been in correspondence with Nixon for years. It was a highly personal relationship, with Graham visiting the funeral of Nixon's mother in 1967.⁷ Graham spent the final days of 1967 at his vacation house in Florida with Graham as a guest, where they studied the Bible and shared several meals. At the closing of the trip, after Nixon asked Graham whether he should run, Graham reassured Nixon that he was "the best prepared man in the United States to be president" and "I think it is your destiny to be president."⁸ Graham's support for Nixon, at first private but later in the campaign very public, was a dramatic shift precipitated by years of fundamentalist and evangelical Christian concerns over changing social norms in America. Four years earlier, in 1964, Graham had declined to endorse any candidate.⁹ Fundamentalist churches refused to endorse Goldwater out of a fear that such an endorsement would revive the criticism they had faced over their defence of legal segregation. Evangelicals had refused to do so on grounds that they still supported the civil rights legislation that Goldwater campaigned against and refused to take up the defence of legal segregation in the South as fundamentalist churches had done. Nixon's 1968 platform allowed him to unite these two groups. The evangelicals abandoned their support for civil rights in favour of supporting law and order policies and the fundamentalists had come to accept top-down desegregation of the South as the law of the land.¹⁰ This allowed them to unify by a candidate who framed his domestic policy proposals in unambiguous moral terms, identifying declining moral standards, increasing licentiousness and a judicial system that was no longer willing to properly punish either as the main causes behind all the social ills that had befallen America during the sixties. With Graham's support came his crusades, massive rallies of evangelical Christians that drew audiences of thousands, and millions more via radio and television, allowing Nixon to tap into the conservative base in a whole new way.¹¹

Nixon's own memoirs of the 1968 elections are relatively sparse on the contents of his campaign rhetoric, focusing instead on the fight for the Republican nomination, attacks he and Spiro Agnew received from the media, poll numbers and the impact of Lyndon Johnson's eleventh hour announcement of a North Vietnam bombing halt had on the campaign.¹² When he did talk about his Silent Majority rhetoric he framed it as a tactic in which he tried, with each campaign stop, "...to have

⁷ Richard Nixon, *RN: The memoirs of Richard Nixon* (London: Book Club Associates, 1978): 288.

⁸ *Ibid*: 292-293.

⁹ Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010): 69.

¹⁰ *Ibid*: 92.

¹¹ *Ibid*: 100.

¹² Nixon, 322-325.

some new ammunition to fire at Humphrey.”¹³ At a campaign stop in Ohio he equated “a burned out library, a desecrated flag,” with “a ship captured by outlaws on the high seas,” a rhetorical framework in which unrests at home became equated with the hostility Americans faced abroad, thus framing the growing unrests, crime and violence in America as a direct challenge to America’s pride and dignity.¹⁴ In order to further bolster this rhetoric he built his new campaign on. An incident during a campaign speech in a New Jersey hangar is typical for the way Nixon positioned himself as being capable of rising above the civil unrest.¹⁵ Like most of his campaign speeches there were protesters in attendance, but they had been separated from the main audience by the police. At the behest of the Nixon campaign however, a small group of protestors, large enough to make some noise but not large enough to pose a security threat, were admitted to the hangar. After the protestors started several chants filled with profanities Nixon calmly asserted that these people did not represent the American public, that he would be the one that would give a voice to the silent majority who had to suffer the indignities inflicted on them by people like these protestors and the ones who had, one way or another, enabled their destructive behaviour.¹⁶ This technique of using loud and obnoxious protestors to create a contrast between the idealized Middle America he claimed to represent and those who were dissatisfied with their lot in life was perfected during the 1972 re-election campaign, when members of the Nixon campaign organization would actually invite small groups of protestors, usually less than a dozen, to disrupt campaign rallies and speeches. After the television cameras caught sight of these small groups of protestors Nixon would redirect their attention to the large pro-Nixon crowds, thus creating a framework in which his supporters vastly outnumbered the protestors – if only the media would actually acknowledge them.¹⁷

The out-groups Nixon identified were nebulous – faceless masses of arsonists and looters besieging American cities, hordes of unwashed protestors indoctrinated at university campuses who disrupted the daily life of ordinary Americans with vulgar profanity-laced chanting and shady figures hiding in every alley seeking to corrupt America’s impressionable young with drugs and pornography – but they nonetheless became an effective rhetorical foundation to build his electoral support on. It allowed his rhetoric to be empowering by reassuring his voters that although those groups were loud, destructive and highly visible in the media, they nonetheless formed a minority of un-American forces who could be soundly defeated if only people would vote for him. Furthermore, by not explicitly identifying specific groups beyond vague assertions of them not appreciating the American dream, being corrupted by academics and irresponsible rhetoric from community leaders and having no legitimate grievances, he could deflect two charges that would be highly damaging to his campaign – that he was racist, or that he was reiterating the fears of communist subversion that marked the era of the House Un-American Activities Committee that he himself had been heavily involved in, having gotten his first taste of national prominence at the Alger Hiss hearings.

¹³ Nixon, 320.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ See also chapter 3.3.

¹⁶ Andrew A. King and Floyd Douglas Anderson, "Nixon, Agnew, and the "Silent Majority": A Case Study in the Rhetoric of Polarization," *Western Speech* 35(4) (1971): 249.

¹⁷ Douglas E. Schoen, *The Nixon Effect – How Richard Nixon’s Presidency Fundamentally Changed American Politics* (New York: Encounter Books, 2016): 17.

When Donald Trump gave his speech announcing his candidacy for the presidency of the United States one line stood out more than any other. The claim that “When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best. They’re not sending you. They’re not sending you. They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists. And some, I assume, are good people,” was met with disbelief.¹⁸ Yet within the wider context of the speech the phrase takes on a different meaning. Talking about China, Japan, Saudi Arabia and Trump sets out a narrative in which it isn’t just the people of those countries that are hostile, but the governments.¹⁹ Mexico, in Trump’s eyes, simply takes it a step further by not only competing economically but also sending its undesirables over the border into the United States.

And that’s the crux of Trump’s exclusionary rhetoric. Mexican immigrants are a problem of course, but they’re a symptom of a larger problem in Trump’s view of world affairs in which governments around the world are laughing all the way to the bank as they plunder the United States economy and use the United States military to fight their wars for them. He placed the blame for this at the feet of “our leaders”, saying “our leaders don’t understand the game,” asking “how stupid are our leaders?”²⁰ This adds another dimension to Trump’s narrative. Not only are foreign governments conspiring to take advantage of America economically and militarily, but America’s leaders are also too incompetent to effectively deal with this in any way. When Trump said in his inauguration speech that “...we are transferring power from Washington, D.C., and giving it back to you, the people,” he essentially confirmed the idea that by electing him those same ‘our leaders’ from his announcement speech had now been ousted in favour of himself, the master of the deal.²¹ This narrative is an interesting play on the fact that a majority of Americans is distrustful of institutions. In a 2016 Gallup poll only three institutions could boast a majority of respondents trusting them ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’: the military (41% and 32%, respectively), small businesses (30% and 38%) and the police (25% and 31%). The presidency only scored 16% and 20%. Congress was at the bottom, with 3% and 6%. Interestingly enough Trump himself represents the second least trusted group, big business, which scores 6% and 12%.²² Yet in his announcement speech Trump distances himself from big business. His argument basically amounts to the idea that he would use his powers for good – he knows all the negotiators, he knows all the CEOs, all their tricks, and under a Trump presidency they wouldn’t dare collaborate with Mexico and China as these countries take advantage of American workers.

¹⁸ TIME Staff, "Here's Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech," *TIME*, June 16, 2015, accessed June 18, 2017, <http://time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/>.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

“Our country is in serious trouble. We don't have victories anymore. We used to have victories, but we don't have them. When was the last time anybody saw us beating, let's say, China in a trade deal? They kill us.”

“When did we beat Japan at anything? They send their cars over by the millions, and what do we do? When was the last time you saw a Chevrolet in Tokyo? It doesn't exist, folks. They beat us all the time.”

“Saudi Arabia, they make \$1 billion a day. \$1 billion a day. I love the Saudis. Many are in this building. They make a billion dollars a day. Whenever they have problems, we send over the ships. We say "we're gonna protect." What are we doing? They've got nothing but money. If the right person asked them, they'd pay a fortune. They wouldn't be there except for us.”

“When do we beat Mexico at the border? They're laughing at us, at our stupidity. And now they are beating us economically. They are not our friend, believe me. But they're killing us economically.”

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Rachel Cao, "Read President Trump's full, blistering inaugural speech, attacking Washington, promising 'America first'," *CNBC*, January 20, 2017, accessed June 18, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/20/transcript-of-president-trumps-inauguration-speech.html>.

²² GALLUP, "Confidence in Institutions," accessed June 18, 2017, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1597/confidence-institutions.aspx>.

In general, the Gallup polls show a worrying trend in American society – a steadily declining trust in most societal institutions.²³ This distrust is ingrained in the foundations of Trump’s divisive rhetoric, with the out-group not just being single easily identifiable groups of people within American society but an overarching government, media and business elite that empowers those groups. At a campaign rally in Waukesha, Wisconsin, Trump remarked that “The special interests, the arrogant media, and the political insiders, don’t want me to talk about the crime that is happening in our country and in our inner cities. They don’t want you to know about the hurt and pain that is happening to our fellow citizens. They want me to just go along with the same failed policies that have caused so much needless suffering and so much preventable heartache.”²⁴ Trump tapped into a nebulous fear of ‘political correctness’ by using it as its defence every time he was challenged on remarks about women, immigrants or other groups of people.²⁵ Political correctness implied a kid gloves approach, refusing to address the real problem in favour of coddling certain groups who, through that same coddling, had become privileged members of society, allowed more rights and more freedoms than ‘the average American’. With several high profile minority rights struggles taking place in the years leading up to the 2016 election (a renewed focus on police violence, the Obergefell v. Hodges Supreme Court decision legalizing gay marriage, North Carolina’s infamous ‘bathroom bill’) it was easy to create a narrative in which, through the assumption that civil rights are a zero-sum game, ‘political correctness’ was used by small but increasingly loud groups to intrude into the lives of average Americans.

Both Richard Nixon and Donald Trump used divisive rhetoric to empower their charismatic leadership and create a narrative in which their voters, the average Americans, were under threat from certain groups of individuals. They would be the saviours, the ones who would oust from power those who had empowered these groups and turn power over to their base once more. They played to the idea of a just world in an insidious way – painting those who spoke out against their policies as subversive, arguing that protesters and rioters were ingrates with no legitimate grievances and politicians who challenged their narratives as soft on those who threatened American interests and American citizens – and as such presented themselves as defenders of American justice, as those who would deny those groups who sought more than they deserved the ability to do so. There is one point where the Trump narrative radically deviates from that of Nixon. Whereas Nixon boasted about his political experience, suggesting that it was his political experience that would allow him to represent his electorate and achieve the policies that they needed, Trump pushed himself as the outsider. He did not, as some would suggest, undermine the trust the American public has in its political institutions. Rather, he seized on a trust that was already growing and amplified it, presenting himself as the only candidate who understood what the voters already believed – that Washington elites no longer had their best interests at heart. Trump also implicated the media in this vast overarching narrative of elites suppressing American interests, claiming that they treated him unfairly, that they wouldn’t tell the truth about him, that any news story challenging his assertions was ‘fake news’. Of course, as discussed

²³ See appendix 2.

²⁴ Donald J. Trump, "FOLLOW THE MONEY," September 28, 2016, accessed June 18, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/DonaldTrump/posts/10157785869445725>.

²⁵ Moira Weigel, "Political correctness: how the right invented a phantom enemy," *The Guardian*, November 30, 2016, accessed June 18, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/30/political-correctness-how-the-right-invented-phantom-enemy-donald-trump>.

earlier, Trump had an advantage here, in a more partisan media, growing distrust of mass media and access to fringe internet websites to spread his message.²⁶

Neither candidate however created their divisive narratives in a vacuum. They both responded to rising sentiments within American society. They both affirmed and reaffirmed beliefs that certain minority groups were getting too many rights, too much representation, at the cost of mainstream America. Interestingly enough, both Nixon and Trump, even as they criticized African Americans, immigrants and, in the case of Trump, members of the LGBTQ community, they both claimed that they actually had their best interests at hand. They didn't want to oppress these groups, they simply provided 'tough love', being strict with these groups to their long term benefit. Nixon repeatedly emphasized that black business owners were as much victims of arsons and lootings during the riots of the sixties as white business owners were. Trump repeatedly asserted that African Americans love him, that everybody loves him, even as of those same African Americans less than 10% voted for him. Likewise, less than 15% of voters who identified as LGBTQ cast their vote for Trump.²⁷ This highlights the insidious nature of such rhetoric. When candidates like Nixon and Trump claim that they only have the best interests at heart for groups they criticize they are not reaching out to those groups. Rather, they are reassuring their voters that they are not racist, or homophobic, and that their voters aren't racist or homophobic just for voting for them.

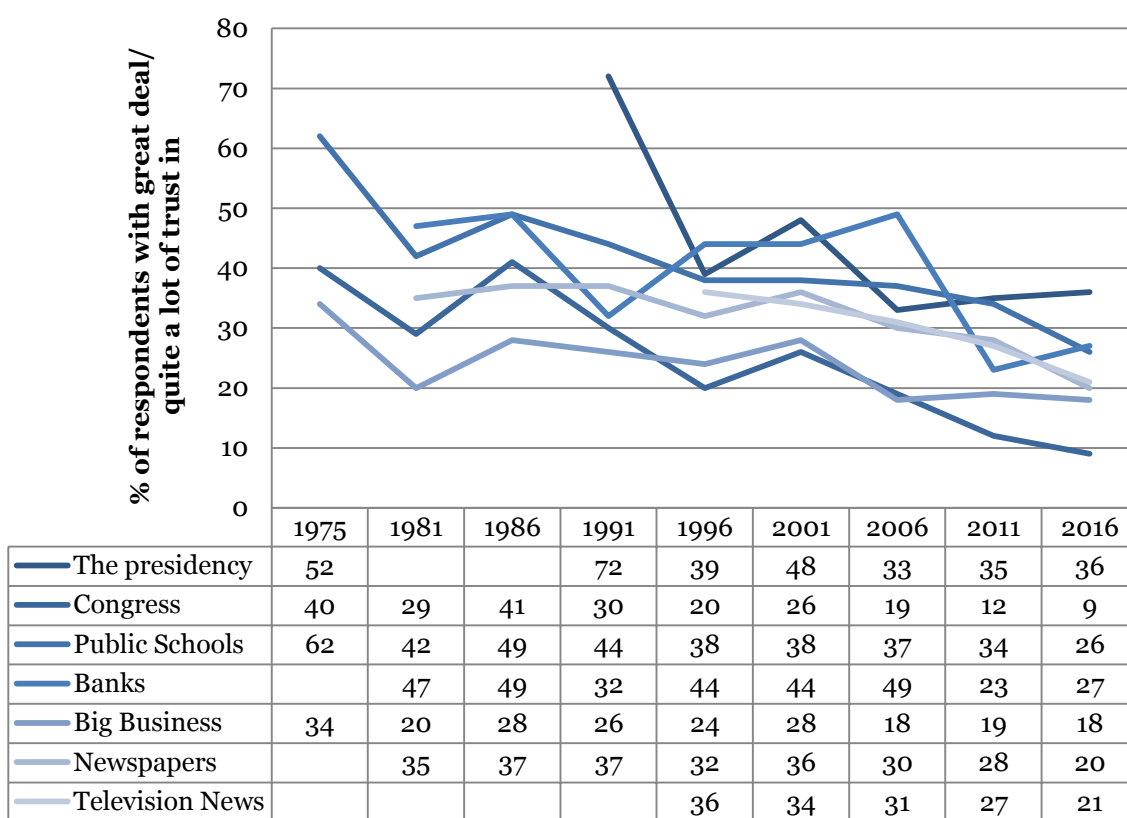
²⁶ See also chapter 3.3.

²⁷ Jon Huang et al., "Election 2016: Exit Polls," *The New York Times*, November 8, 2016, accessed June 18, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/11/08/us/politics/election-exit-polls.html>.

Appendix 2 – Declining trust in American institutions over time.

The following chart has been compiled based on Gallup Historical Trends data regarding the trust Americans have in various institutions.²⁸ I have chosen three public institutions (the presidency, congress, public education) and four private institutions (banks, big business, newspapers and television news). The data is represented in five year intervals (save for 1975) based on data available. Perhaps the most dramatic drop in trust can be seen in the trust Americans have in Congress, but the overall trend is towards declining trust in institutions in general, with few exceptions (the military, small businesses, the police).

Faith in public and private institutions.



This growing distrust is part of a general trend. Historical data from the Pew Research Center shows a historic drop in Americans who trust their government, with only 4% of respondents in their most recent survey stating they can trust the Washington government to do what’s right “just about always” and only 16% responding “most of the time.”²⁹ The data show that one of the key differences between the 1968 and 2016 elections was that in 2016 Americans who trusted their government were the minority. As such, they were far more responsive to a candidate presenting the outsider narrative than they would have been during the 1968 elections.

²⁸ GALLUP, "Confidence in Institutions," accessed June 18, 2017, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1597/confidence-institutions.aspx>.

²⁹ Pew Research Center, "Public Trust in Government: 1958-2017," May 3, 2017, accessed June 18, 2017, <http://www.people-press.org/2017/05/03/public-trust-in-government-1958-2017/>.

3.6. Why the Democratic Party is to blame for everything

In his seminal 1957 article *An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy* Anthony Downs used the work of economist Harold Hotelling on the behaviour of two competing vendors operating in the same market to predict the behaviour of parties in a two party system. Bypassing institutional assumptions that might influence whether a system can support two or more major political systems Downs proposed that since voters are a commodity that parties compete for, they will coalesce around areas of policy where most voters can be gained. If there are two such areas, the result is a two party system.³⁰ It's obvious that America's two party system is the result of the way its electoral system is organized, but Downs' theoretical discussion does open up new avenues of thought as to how Republicans and Democrats compete for votes. Because the American system is definitely polarized. This in itself isn't odd in terms of electoral behaviour. In any two party system it would make sense for the incumbent party to defend the policies of its previous term while the opposition party challenges them. The economists weren't the only ones who thought of electoral politics in market terms. As political journalist Richard Rovere noted as early as 1956, when talking about Richard Nixon's role as vice president in the Eisenhower administration: "Nixon appears to be a politician with an advertising man's approach to his work. Politics are products to be sold the public – this one today, that one tomorrow, depending on the discounts and the state of the market."³¹ Effective marketing was key – the public only had one vote to spend, so in order to get them to spend it on Nixon he would have to present himself as he superior product to the most likely alternative: Hubert Humphrey.

In regard to their opposition Nixon and Trump both found themselves in a very similar position. They both campaigned from the position of the opposition party against a representative of the incumbent party who was looking to succeed the president, in Nixon's case because Johnson had decided not to run, in Trump's case because Obama had reached his term limit. But both Nixon and Trump went further than just challenging the current administration's record. They both presented a rhetoric in which the policies of the previous Democratic governments weren't just less favourable than what they proposed, they were downright dangerous, having done tremendous harm to American interests and the American people in the years leading up to the election and, if allowed to continue, would mean the end of the American way of life through the election of a new Democratic candidate. This chapter will set out how both Nixon and Trump framed Democratic policy as not just worse than the Republican alternative but downright disastrous. It will also lay out how they identified similar running threads in Democratic policy that they both highlighted as potential causes for this disaster. I will also note those points where the narratives deviate. Finally I will discuss how these narratives fit within the broader scope of both men's charismatic leadership and the Just World Hypothesis framework.

As discussed in previous chapters Richard Nixon didn't just single out rioters, protesters and organized crime as threats to the nebulous group of Americans he would eventually dub the Silent Majority. Both in the 1967 *Readers' Digest* article and in the 1968 acceptance speech for the

³⁰ Anthony Downs, "An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy," *Journal of Political Economy* 65(2) (1957): 143.

³¹ Richard Halworth Rovere, *Affairs of State: The Eisenhower Years* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1956): 302.

Republican candidacy for the presidency Nixon promised to not just address those groups, but those who had empowered those groups and allowed their destructive behaviour – academics, judges, preachers and other elites – those who had stymied the ability for police to enforce the law, those who had made civil disobedience something to be applauded rather than something to be addressed as what it really was, the breaking of the law.³² This echoes the way in which he challenged protesters at his speeches as nothing more than misguided youth who were no longer receiving the firm hand they needed but rather had had their heads filled with nonsense thanks to liberal teachers, liberal judges and a media that refused to call them out for the loud and disruptive groups that they were.³³ In his speeches Nixon repeatedly asserted that black Americans would benefit from stronger law and order policies as much as whites, a claim that Civil Rights leaders were sceptical about.³⁴

When Nixon stated in his acceptance speech that “For the past five years we have been deluged by government programs for the unemployed; programs for the cities; programs for the poor. And we have reaped from these programs an ugly harvest of frustration, violence and failure across the land. And now our opponents will be offering more of the same—more billions for government jobs, government housing, government welfare. I say it is time to quit pouring billions of dollars into programs that have failed in the United States of America,” he clearly linked the domestic unrest he so often used as a platform for his domestic policy ideas to wider (and failing) trends in Democratic policy making such as the War on Poverty.³⁵ Likewise, he claimed that even the urban African American poor that were to be the main beneficiaries of the War on Poverty policies did not want these programs, as “Black Americans, no more than white Americans, they do not want more government programs which perpetuate dependency. They don't want to be a colony in a nation. They want the pride, and the self-respect, and the dignity that can only come if they have an equal chance to own their own homes, to own their own businesses, to be managers and executives as well as workers, to have a piece of the action in the exciting ventures of private enterprise.”³⁶ Essentially, Nixon claimed that the government giving aid to people would make them dependent on those government benefits and that it would disincentivize them to work for a living and build their own wealth.

It's a rhetoric that Republicans use to oppose welfare and social security programs to this day. As Barack Obama notes: “Once, while still in the Illinois Senate, I listened to a Republican colleague work himself into a lather over a proposed plan to provide school breakfasts to preschoolers. Such a plan, he insisted, would crush their spirit of self-reliance. I had to point out that not too many five-year-olds I knew were self-reliant, but children who spent their formative years too hungry to learn could very well end up being charges of the state. Despite my best efforts, the bill still went down in defeat; Illinois preschoolers were temporarily saved from the debilitating effects of cereal and milk.”³⁷ Nixon himself echoed these sentiments in private, as recorded on the Nixon Tapes, stating that: “We're going to (place) more of these little Negro bastards on the welfare rolls at \$2,400 a family ... let people

³² Richard M. Nixon, "What Has Happened to America?" *Reader's Digest*, October 1967, accessed June 19, 2016, http://college.cengage.com/history/ayers_primary_sources/nixon_1967.htm;

Richard M. Nixon, "Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Miami Beach, Florida," *The American Presidency Project*, accessed June 19, 2017, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25968>.

³³ See also chapter 3.3.

³⁴ Thomas A. Johnson, "Negro Leaders See Bias in Call of Nixon for 'Law and Order'," *The New York Times*, August 13, 1968: 27.

³⁵ Richard M. Nixon, "Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Miami Beach, Florida," *The American Presidency Project*, accessed June 19, 2017, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25968>.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Barack Obama, *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006): 60.

like Pat Moynihan and Leonard Garment and others believe in all that crap. But I don't believe in it. Total emphasis of everybody must be that this is much better than we had last year... work, work, throw 'em off the rolls. That's the key."³⁸ In the same conversation Nixon goes on to claim: "I have the greatest affection for them (blacks) but I know they're not going to make it for 500 years. They aren't. You know it too. I asked Julie about the black studies program at Smith. The Mexicans are a different cup of tea. They have a heritage. At the present time they steal, they're dishonest. They do have some concept of family life, they don't live like a bunch of dogs, which the Negroes do live like."³⁹ Placing the emphasis on failing Democratic policies was a key rhetoric strategy for the 1968 Nixon campaign. As then-campaign strategist Kevin Phillips notes: "Democratic "Great society" programs aligned that party with many Negro demands, but the party was unable to defuse the racial tension sundering the nation. The South, the West and the Catholic sidewalks of New York were the focal points of conservative opposition to the welfare liberalism of the federal government... The Democratic Party fell victim to the ideological impetus of a liberalism which had carried it beyond programs taxing the few for the benefit of the many (the New Deal to programs taxing the many on behalf of the few (the Great Society))."⁴⁰ This shows why Nixon's delegitimizing rhetoric was so important – framing the protesters and rioters as ungrateful and threats to the American dream with no legitimate grievances – it not only diminished their political legitimacy but also that of the Democratic Party, which had poured billions of tax dollars into programs meant to help those specific people yet had only gotten increasing crime and civil unrest in return, thus creating what Nixon would claim was "ugly harvest of frustration, violence and failure across the land."⁴¹ In the rhetoric of the 1968 Nixon campaign the Democratic Party had wasted billions of tax payer dollars on programs for those who responded not with gratitude but with violence.

Nixon likewise took the offensive in the realm of foreign policy, bolstered by the highly unpopular escalation of the Vietnam war and his own personal experience in this regard. He used the contacts he built up during his wilderness years to not only re-establish his foreign policies credentials as a candidate but also lay the groundwork for what would eventually become his greatest achievement – opening up relations with China. In a one minute television add titled *Decisions*, images of nuclear warheads, communist dictators such as Mao, Castro and Brezhnev were accompanied by a narrator saying: "Think about it. Who is the one man who has the experience and the qualifications to lead America in these troubled, dangerous times? Nixon's the one."⁴² It was a sentiment echoed in many of Nixon's speeches. In his acceptance speech Nixon noted that the Vietnam war had become so unpopular not just in America but around the world that Johnson couldn't travel abroad without expecting to be met by hostile protests. He framed Democratic policy regarding Vietnam as affecting Americans personally by repeatedly referring American soldiers dying abroad as a result to these policies. He claimed that "...we face the stark truth that we are worse off in every area of the world

³⁸ James Warren, "Nixon on Tape Expounds on Welfare and Homosexuality," *The Chicago Tribune*, November 7, 1999, accessed June 19, 2017, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1999-11-07/news/9911070165_1_oval-office-tapes-nixon-john-d-ehrllichman.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Kevin P. Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority (James Madison Library in American Politics edition)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015): 15.

⁴¹ Richard M. Nixon, "Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Miami Beach, Florida," *The American Presidency Project*, accessed June 19, 2017, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25968>.

⁴² Museum of the Moving Image, "The Living Room Candidate - Commercials - 1968 - Decisions," accessed June 22, 2017, <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1968/decisions#4017>.

tonight than we were when President Eisenhower left office eight years ago.”⁴³ When the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia on August 21, 1968, it provided to be an invaluable break to the Nixon campaign, essentially reaffirming his assertions that the Soviet Union was still belligerent and dangerous, that any appeasement would be foolish. The invasion of Czechoslovakia was met with cheers from his campaign.⁴⁴

No other campaign ad summarized the Nixon campaign's message regarding the Democratic Party as the one titled Convention. The campaign featured pompous, swelling music, with rapid cuts of still photographs of a smiling Hubert Humphrey, but every time the image held on him for more than a few seconds the music would start skipping and the image would start shaking violently, then be replaced by some sort of Democratic failure. First the riots and the unrests at the 1968 Democratic National Convention, then the war in Vietnam, and finally images of poverty-stricken Americans.⁴⁵ The ad was only ran once before being pulled over protests from the Democrats, yet the ensuing controversy only served to draw more attention to it. The message – the Democratic party had presided over eight years of domestic and foreign policy failures and Humphrey represented more of the same – was simple, but the way it was presented was incredibly effective. It reinforced the message that Democratic policies of the last eight years had been an unqualified failure, and only Nixon and the Republican party could change the course of America. Like all other Nixon campaign television ads this one ended with the exhortation “This time vote like your whole world depended on it.”

If Rovere’s assertion of the politician as a salesman of policies holds true then Donald Trump’s career couldn’t have been a better preparation for his 2016 run for office. For the past thirty years Trump had made most of his money selling himself, turning himself into a brand. The Trump name had become a commodity to be bought and sold, both in the billion dollar real-estate market, ensuring that Trump’s name could be seen on hotels, resorts and other large scale projects around the world without him ever having to be involved in managing them. Likewise, the Trump name has been lent to a wide range of consumer goods.⁴⁶ Trump gets paid to have his name advertised around the world. Trump had already sold himself as a billionaire, now he had to sell himself as a president. How he did this has already been extensively discussed in terms of his outsider narrative. During the primaries his main focus was on separating himself from his Republican opponents. Even in announcing his candidacy however he put the Democratic party in general and the Obama administration in particular firmly in his crosshairs: “You know, when President Obama was elected, I said, “Well, the one thing, I think he’ll do well. I think he’ll be a great cheerleader for the country. I think he’d be a great spirit.” He was vibrant. He was young. I really thought that he would be a great cheerleader. He’s not a leader. That’s true. You’re right about that. But he wasn’t a cheerleader. He’s actually a negative force. He’s been a negative force. He wasn’t a cheerleader; he was the opposite. We need somebody that can take the

⁴³ Nixon.

⁴⁴ Joe McGinniss, *The Selling of the President 1968* (New York: Trident Press, 1969): 49-50.

⁴⁵ Museum of the Moving Image, “The Living Room Candidate - Commercials - 1968 - Convention,” accessed June 22, 2017, <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1968/convention#4019>.

⁴⁶ Katherine Clarke, “What does Donald Trump really own? TRD takes an exhaustive look at the Mogul’s global assets,” *The Real Deal - New York Real Estate News*, July 1, 2013, accessed May 5, 2017, https://therealdeal.com/issues_articles/the-8-billion-dollar-man/.

brand of the United States and make it great again. It's not great again."⁴⁷ In a way Hillary Clinton was a perfect opponent in this narrative. Not only was she, as a former New York senator and the wife of Bill Clinton, directly linked to the establishment in general and the Democratic party in particular, her former role as Secretary of State in the Obama administration linked her directly to Obama himself. Furthermore, with numerous congressional investigations into the September 11, 2011 attack on the American embassy in Libya, as well as extensive coverage on Fox News and other right-wing outlets, a narrative was already in place in which she allowed the Benghazi attack to happen and as such was representing failing Democratic foreign policies that had allowed America to be weakened in such a way that this attack became possible. On top of that the continuing FBI investigation in how she handled her official e-mails through a private server and claims about using her charity foundation to exchange donations for political favours gave Trump all the fodder he needed brand his opponent 'Crooked Hillary'.

A key issue of Trump's rhetoric was law and order, in which he mirrored Richard Nixon's campaign 48 years earlier almost verbatim. Like Nixon before him Trump repeatedly blamed Democratic policies for weakening law enforcement to the point that they were unable to push back against the rise of crime and riots that he perceived. In this he challenged the data from the Brennan Center for Justice, which found that crime had been steadily declining in all major American cities for the past 25 years.⁴⁸ In terms of homicides the Brennan Center did find increases over a year in 14 of the examined cities, although none of those were statistically significant enough to indicate a trend. These findings were mirrored in similar research performed by The Marshall Project.⁴⁹ In asserting that crime has been rising in America as a direct result of limiting the ability of police to do their work has become known as the Ferguson effect, named at the Missouri city that saw riots break out over police violence in 2015: "First, it holds that crime is rising significantly nationwide. Second, that police officers in general have altered their behaviour as a result of renewed scrutiny of racialized police violence. Finally, that the second phenomenon is a direct cause of the first."⁵⁰ By pushing back against regulations on law enforcement Republican candidates in general and Donald Trump in particular were pushing back against Democratic support for more thorough investigations into police violence and measures meant to combat it. Trump simply did it louder and more publicly than any other candidate, saying that "police are the most mistreated people in this country" at the Republican primary debate on January 14, 2016.⁵¹ These unconditional statements of support towards American law enforcement earned him the endorsement of the Fraternal Order of Police, the country's largest law enforcement union, an endorsement that was at least partially motivated by Clinton making reforms of the criminal justice system a key part of her policy platform.⁵² While attacking Clinton's

⁴⁷ TIME Staff, "Here's Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech," *TIME*, June 16, 2015, accessed June 9, 2017, <http://time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/>.

⁴⁸ Matthew Friedman et al., "Crime in 2015: A Preliminary Analysis," *Brennan Center for Justice*, November 18, 2015, accessed June 23, 2017, https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/publications/Crime_In_2015.pdf.

⁴⁹ Bruce Frederick, "About Those Rising Murder Rates: Not So Fast (And the same goes for the 'Ferguson Effect'.)", *The Marshall Project*, September 4, 2015, accessed June 23, 2017, <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2015/09/04/about-those-rising-murder-rates-not-so-fast>.

⁵⁰ Steve Cohen, "The Democrats Have Learned to Say, 'Black Lives Matter.' Now What?," *New Republic*, November 15, 2015, accessed June 23, 2017, <https://newrepublic.com/article/123856/democrats-learned-say-black-lives-matter-now-what>.

⁵¹ Nick Wing, "Donald Trump Says 'Police Are The Most Mistreated People' In America," *The Huffington Post*, January 14, 2016, accessed June 23, 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/donald-trump-police_us_569869d1e4b0b4eb759df9b8.

⁵² Louis Nelson, "Trump wins endorsement from Fraternal Order of Police," *Politico*, September 16, 2016, accessed June 23, 2017, <http://www.politico.com/story/2016/09/trump-fraternal-order-of-police-endorsement-228296>.

proposed reforms as weakening American law enforcement to the detriment of its citizens Trump also repeatedly referred to 1996 remarks Clinton made when discussing the 1994 Violent Crime Control Act, when she referred to inner city criminal gangs as ‘superpredators’.⁵³ Although Clinton had admitted early on in her campaign that this designation was a mistake and that she wouldn’t use it today the remarks continued to haunt her throughout her presidential campaign.⁵⁴

Trump also linked a perceived rise in crime to immigration, for which he once again placed the blame squarely at the feet of the Democrats. At a campaign speech in Phoenix, Arizona on August 31, 2016, Trump railed against the release of 13,000 illegal immigrants who had been arrested for some sort of crime by stating that “These 13,000 release occurred on Hillary Clinton's watch. She had the power and the duty to stop it cold, and she decided she would not do it.”⁵⁵ In statements such as these Trump tied immigration to crime, as he had done in his infamous statements that Mexico sends “drugs” and “rapists” in the announcement speech for his candidacy.⁵⁶ Another group of immigrants that Trump explicitly targeted in his campaign rhetoric were immigrants from majority Muslim countries.⁵⁷ At a campaign speech held on August 15, 2016, Trump claimed that “The rise of ISIS is the direct result of policy decisions made by President Obama and Secretary Clinton.”⁵⁸ In that same speech Trump claimed that Clinton’s election program would mean a 550% increase in immigration to the United States from Syria. According to Trump, Muslim immigration would open up the United States to even more Islamic terrorism, something that the Obama administration refused to acknowledge. Interestingly enough this was also the time that Trump began openly referring to ‘the Obama-Clinton administration’, explicitly articulating that Clinton would be a direct continuation of the Obama policies that he campaigned against.

One of the main lines of attack on the Democratic party Trump followed was tying them to trade agreements such as the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which essentially created an open market for goods between Canada, the United States and Mexico when it came into effect in 1994. Throughout his campaign Trump would repeatedly argue that NAFTA was “... the worst trade deal maybe ever signed anywhere, but certainly ever signed in this country,” and responsible for the loss of American manufacturing jobs as American companies opened up new plants in Mexico to benefit from cheaper labour there.⁵⁹ Calling NAFTA the worst trade deal ever was his response to Hillary Clinton defending her own expertise on trade deals by pointing out that it was passed under Bill Clinton. Of course in tying the Democrats to NAFTA Trump ignores the fact that while it was

⁵³ Jessie Hellman, "Trump: 'How quickly people forget' Clinton 'superpredator' remark," *The Hill*, August 26, 2016, accessed June 23, 2017, <http://thehill.com/blogs/ballot-box/presidential-races/293477-trump-how-quickly-people-forget-clinton-super-predator>.

⁵⁴ Jonathan Capehart, "Hillary Clinton on 'superpredator' remarks: 'I shouldn't have used those words'," *The Washington Post*, February 25, 2016, accessed June 23, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/wp/2016/02/25/hillary-clinton-responds-to-activist-who-demanded-apology-for-superpredator-remarks/>.

⁵⁵ Los Angeles Times staff, "Transcript: Donald Trump's full immigration speech, annotated," *The Los Angeles Times*, August 31, 2016, accessed June 23, 2017, <http://www.latimes.com/politics/la-na-pol-donald-trump-immigration-speech-transcript-20160831-snap-htlmlstory.html>.

⁵⁶ TIME Staff.

⁵⁷ The Associated Press, "How Donald Trump's Plan to Ban Muslims Has Evolved," *Fortune*, June 28, 2016, accessed June 23, 2017, <http://fortune.com/2016/06/28/donald-trump-muslim-ban/>.

⁵⁸ Politico Staff, "Full text: Donald Trump's speech on fighting terrorism," *Politico*, August 15, 2016, accessed June 23, 2017, <http://www.politico.com/story/2016/08/donald-trump-terrorism-speech-227025>.

⁵⁹ Patrick Gillespie, "Trump hammers America's 'worst trade deal'," *CNN Money*, September 27, 2016, accessed June 23, 2017, <http://money.cnn.com/2016/09/27/news/economy/donald-trump-nafta-hillary-clinton-debate/>.

signed into law by president Clinton, it was actually voted through Congress on Republican support.⁶⁰ It proved to be a devastatingly effective strategy. It tapped into the kind of resentful Rust Belt sentiments that made the destruction of a Japanese car the main event at the annual Central Labor Council picnic in Dayton, Ohio.⁶¹ Tying the Democratic party to NAFTA and other free trade policies that Trump claimed were directly responsible for the loss of American manufacturing jobs proved to be devastatingly effective. In the Rust Belt, the area of America where most manufacturing jobs are concentrated, Trump not only won the swing states of Ohio and Indiana, but also Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, states that had not gone Republican since the 1984 Reagan landslide.⁶² As with the manufacturing industry, Trump put the decline of the coal mining industry directly at the feet of the Democrats.⁶³ By challenging global warming, promising to pull out of the Paris climate accords and announcing his intention to roll back Obama-era regulations on coal mining Trump crafted a narrative in which he would be able to bring back coal mining jobs, even though the decline in coal mining started long before Obama took office and 2008, and was the result of competition from cleaner and more efficient energy sources rather than overregulation of the mining industry.⁶⁴ When talking about free trade in the way he did Trump went against established Republican orthodoxy. Yet it allowed him to tap into the electorate of several solidly blue states in a way that no candidate since Reagan had done. The promise to restrict free trade in order to bring back manufacturing jobs to the Rust Belt wasn't just economically appealing. It spoke to a uniquely American pride – Trump's promise to renegotiate NAFTA and protect American workers from foreign competition appealed to those who believed in a just world, those who were desperate to work for a living but who had been passed by by both major parties in thirty years of neoliberal economic and open market policies. Trump didn't come offering hand outs or entitlements, he came offering Rust Belt workers a chance to once again make a living with their hands.

In their attacks on the Democratic party in general and the Democratic administrations that preceded them in particular both Richard Nixon and Donald Trump employed very similar rhetoric. They both took policy issues that had been moved to the forefront of American public discourse by the media in the years preceding their elections and framed them in such a way that the blame for them, even if these issues were part of a long term historical trend rather than a direct result of policies of the previous eight years, would lay squarely at the feet of the Democratic party. They employed essentially a twofold narrative: everything that's wrong with America, both domestically and abroad, is directly the result of the policies of the previous Democratic administration, and voting for my opponent would be a vote to continue these policies. They both presented themselves as champions of the American

⁶⁰ 102 Democrats and 132 Republicans voted in favour, 156 Democrats, 43 Republicans and one independent (2016 Democratic primary challenger Bernie Sanders) voted against, making the final vote 234 in favour and 200 against.

Govtrack.us, "H.R. 3450 (103rd): North American Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act," accessed June 23, 2017, <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/votes/103-1993/h575>.

⁶¹ Michael McQuarrie, "From Solidarity to Trump: White Working-Class Culture in the Rust Belt," *New Politics*, August 19, 2016, accessed June 23, 2017, <http://newpol.org/content/solidarity-trump-white-workingclass-culture-rust-belt>.

⁶² Michael McQuarrie, "How the Rust Belt delivered Trump the presidency: a deep dive," *Newsweek*, November 19, 2016, accessed June 23, 2017, <http://www.newsweek.com/how-rust-belt-delivered-trump-presidency-deep-dive-522091>.

⁶³ Jim Axelrod, "Pennsylvania coal miners all in for Trump," *CBS News*, October 31, 2016, accessed June 23, 2017, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/blue-collar-pennsylvania-voters-all-in-for-trump/>.

⁶⁴ Darryl Fears, "Trump promised to bring back coal jobs. That promise 'will not be kept,' experts say.," *The Washington Post*, March 29, 2017, accessed June 23, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/03/29/trump-promised-to-bring-back-coal-jobs-that-promise-will-not-be-kept-experts-say/>.

people, those who were victimized by eight years of Democratic policies at the cost of special interests and minority groups. This victimization came in the form of slackening on law and order that emboldened criminals that targeted American families. It came in the form of overregulation of industries that directly affected the ability of American companies to do business and thus to employ American workers. It came in the form of over-taxation of the American middle class to pay for welfare programs for the undeserving. What makes the opposition rhetoric of both Nixon and Trump stand out in these cases was that they didn't merely present themselves as opposition candidates offering more favourable alternatives to Democratic policies. Rather, they explicitly framed Democratic policies as not just ill-advised but outright dangerous, to the point of being an existential threat, with Trump taking it one step further by charging the Democratic party as having actual malice towards the American people.

Where Nixon and Trump diverged was determined by two factors: historical context and the comfort zones for both men. Obviously migration from Mexico and the Islamic world wasn't an issue in 1968. Neither was free trade. On the other hand, in 1968 the Soviet Union and China were still perceived as existential threats to the United States. In 2016 the Soviet Union had dissolved and China was mainly perceived as an economic threat, something Trump considered himself uniquely qualified to address. Nixon's language on morality was also somewhat hampered by the fact that he was introducing Evangelical Christianity to the political domain. By the time Trump ran his own campaign these same Evangelicals had been part of the national discourse of the Republican party for nearly half a century. Furthermore, Nixon articulated a clear, distinct vision in terms of American foreign policy in regards to the use of its military whereas Trump rarely went beyond 'making NATO members pay their fair share' and pouring billions of additional dollars into the American military. At the same time, Trump was able to draw on his perceived business acumen in a way that Nixon couldn't. Trump often framed foreign policy, both militarily and economically, in terms of negotiations. He had branded himself as a master negotiator for more than three decades, which made his promises to use these negotiating skills to get 'better deals' for Americans more credible to his followers. Although Nixon and Trump differed on these details they both showed very similar overarching rhetorical strategies as opposition candidates dealing with an opponent that represented the previous administration without being the incumbent president.

4. Conclusion

The final question then becomes: Was Trump's 2016 campaign Nixonian? And, by converse, was the 1968 Nixon campaign proto-Trumpian? They both started out from fairly similar positions as extremely unlikely candidates that nonetheless managed to claim the nomination. They both went up against Democratic opponents who represented the incumbent party without being the incumbent president. They both managed to bring the Republican party into new territory – the Deep South for Nixon and the Rust Belt for Trump – and they did so by campaigning on programs that at least partially went across what was expected from a Republican candidate in their respective timeframes.⁶⁵ They both built a rhetoric based on appealing to the exceptional optimism of the American public. They both presented a narrative in which America was the land of opportunity, the land where everybody could make an honest living if they were willing to work hard enough, even though this utopia was under threat because of mismanagement under the respective incumbent Democratic governments. They both pushed back against perceived unrest, both abroad and at home, in the form of failing military interventions abroad, a declining credibility of American foreign policy among its allies and claims of rising crime rates and riots. Neither man crafted this narrative out of thin air but rather expanded on sentiments that had become part of the American public discourse through disproportionate attention in the news media. And both men used that same news media to create support for their respective campaigns in ways that previous candidates hadn't, tapping into new technologies and audiences.

There were several major differences between Nixon and Trump however, the most important one being how both men presented themselves. Nixon explicitly presented himself as the veteran politician, the one who had the experience necessary to bring America from the brink that Democrats had brought it to. By repeatedly stressing his experiences in dealing with foreign politicians and making 'Do Your Trick Dick' a secondary campaign slogan Nixon wore his political experience on his sleeve. In 1968 the electorate was ready for an internal problem solver, someone who knew what to do to get America back on track. By contrast Trump constantly presented himself as the perennial outsider, the one that couldn't be bought because he was already a billionaire, the one who would drain the proverbial Washington DC swamp and bring the government back to the people. This dichotomy is a result of a trend that was initiated by Nixon himself through the Watergate scandal the subsequent pardoning of Nixon by Gerald Ford: a continuing decline in trust in government institutions.⁶⁶ Trump was bolstered in this by the fact that he was running against the perennial establishment candidate in Hillary Clinton: the former New York senator and secretary of state under the Obama administration, the wife of former president Bill Clinton and the woman who came into the 2016 elections with the triple stigmas of having lost the 2008 nomination, being under investigation by the FBI for how she

⁶⁵ It should be noted that it was Alabama governor George Wallace who, as a third party candidate, who won four of the five Deep South states. However, in two of those four states Nixon was the runner up over Humphrey, and Nixon's subsequent political strategy allowed him to bring senators and congressmen from these states into the Republican party fold, thus allowing him to claim the Deep South as long term Republican territory. Nixon himself considered Wallace a spoiler, without whom he would have received the same electoral mandate in 1968 that Eisenhower received in 1952.

⁶⁶ GALLUP, "Confidence in Institutions," accessed June 24, 2017, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1597/confidence-institutions.aspx>;

Pew Research Center, "Public Trust in Government: 1958-2017," May 3, 2017, accessed June 24, 2017, <http://www.people-press.org/2017/05/03/public-trust-in-government-1958-2017/>.

handled her e-mails as secretary of state and being secretary of state during the attack on the American embassy in Libya in 2011. Even though her guilt had never been proven in either of the latter two cases it was nonetheless very much a part of the public perception of her, something that was exacerbated by Trump's insistence on referring to her as 'Crooked Hillary'. On top of that, with the way scandals like Watergate, Iran-Contra and even the Lewinsky affair were handled without those responsible for them being punished, it's easy to see how the public could consider Clinton to be guilty even if numerous government investigations found otherwise. After all, if Americans don't trust the government, why would they trust the government when it says that Clinton is not guilty of the crimes she's being accused of?

Another major difference between the campaigns was the degree of organization. Nixon went into the 1968 campaign having already been part of three presidential campaigns, in 1952 and 1956 as Dwight Eisenhower's vice president, in 1960 leading his own ticket, and it showed in the way the campaign was run – disciplined and focused, with first-hand knowledge of how to run the Republican primary system in such a way that he could stave off challenges from both the conservative (Reagan) and liberal (Rockefeller) wings of the Republican party. On top of that the 1968 campaign was marked by a clear demographic strategy from the hand of Kevin Phillips which provided the Nixon campaign with a clear demographic battle plan that would allow them to turn the general discontent with eight years of Democratic rule and the growing backlash against the Civil Rights movement into not just an electoral victory in 1968 but a long term stable Republican hegemony. By contrast the 2016 Trump campaign was not only marked by revolving door campaign chairs but also a disconnect from the RNC establishment that seriously hampered his fundraising abilities.⁶⁷ Locked out from traditional sources of campaign funding the Trump campaign turned to social media for its donation drives.⁶⁸ Yet in spite of all these problems – or maybe because of them, as the Trump campaign often spun these problems as proof that Trump was the outsider fighting back against the establishment – Trump managed to win first the nomination, and then the presidency. That same degree of organization also applied to the way they communicated with the voters. The Nixon campaign was marked by tightly orchestrated public and television appearances, with a constant focus on the same message. Trump meanwhile became notorious for repeatedly going off script, attacking immigrants, women, the news media, anyone who evoked his ire for one reason or another. Yet even as news and political commentators wondered if each new gaffe would be the nail in the coffin of the Trump campaign his support continued to grow.

In the end both candidates were charismatic in the traditional Max Weber definition – they had a relationship with their followers in which they were assigned extraordinary qualities or abilities, unobtainable to the ordinary person, which gave them the ability to appeal to an authority that was based on the way their followers perceived them on an emotional level.⁶⁹ They were able to do so because they were capable of presenting the electorate with a narrative that resonated with their unique cultural identity as Americans – their strong belief in a Just World, and their desire for a leader

⁶⁷ Steve Benen, "In more ways than one, the Trump campaign is broke," *MSNBC*, June 21, 2016, accessed June 24, 2017, <http://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow-show/more-ways-one-the-trump-campaign-broke>.

⁶⁸ Charlie Warzel, "Trump Fundraiser: Facebook Employee Was Our 'MVP'," *Buzzfeed News*, November 12, 2016, accessed June 24, 2017, <https://www.buzzfeed.com/charliwarzel/trump-fundraiser-facebook-employee-was-our-mvp>.

⁶⁹ Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, vol. I (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978): 242-243.

who would make their world a just one. Neither man built their rhetoric in a vacuum. Rather, they both built on concerns that already existed among the American public, concerns that were insufficiently acknowledged by their opponents, both in the primary contests against their fellow Republicans and in the national campaigns against their Democratic opponent. The power of Trump's charismatic appeal can be seen when comparing his policy positions to those of his three major Republican challengers Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz. An analysis of the political programs of all four candidates on a two axis scale (economic left/right and social authoritarian/libertarian) shows that there is very little practical differences between the four candidates in terms of the policies they proposed.⁷⁰ Yet Trump, running on a platform that was virtually identical to that of his main Republican rivals, beat them handily in the primaries. This is identity politics writ large – Trump's outsider background and unique charismatic relationship with his followers made him the most successful candidate in a field that on a rational policy level seemed to offer very little actual choice.

When taking into account the similarities between Nixon and Trump – not in their backgrounds or the way they ran their campaigns but in the way they built a fundamentally charismatic relationship with their followers by appealing to the exceptional American belief in a just world – two names immediately present themselves for further study: Ronald Reagan in 1980 and Barack Obama in 2008. Both men were undeniably charismatic, and both provided a vision for America that was rooted in just world beliefs and American exceptionalism. For Reagan it was the Shining City on the Hill. For Obama it was Yes We Can. They would provide another interesting dichotomy, with one having come from the conservative wing of the Republican party and the other from the liberal wing of the Democratic party, one having had a relatively long career, the other a relatively short one. They both ran as opposition candidates that explicitly pushed back against the party in power at the time of their campaign. It could be argued then that the 1968 Nixon campaign and the 2016 Trump campaigns were not anomalies but rather part of a trend that Nixon started with his 1968 campaign – a series of candidates who provided a charismatic appeal to the exceptional American optimism against the historical context they campaigned in. Even the 1992 Clinton campaign with its Putting People First slogan could be included in this broader historical arc of Nixon in 1968, Reagan in 1980, Clinton in 1992, Obama in 2008 and Trump in 2016. With six cases, four Republican and two Democrat, it would be possible to not only determine similarities and differences in the campaign rhetoric of each individual candidate but also more closely investigate whether there were distinguishable differences between the Republican and Democratic candidates in which segments of the American people they appealed to, how they appealed to them, how they responded to perceived threats to the American system and which groups of people they identified as responsible for these threats. When put against a wider historical context of steadily declining trust among the American people in its institutions, this historical arc could also be used to investigate the other side of the coin of charismatic leadership – what happens when a leader isn't able to deliver the proverbial goods, how does this affect the perception of the leader once he leaves the stage, and how does this affect the perception of the institutional framework in which these leaders operated? Do the followers of a failed leader blame the leader, or the institutions?

⁷⁰ The Political Compass, "The US Presidential Candidates 2016," accessed June 24, 2017, <https://www.politicalcompass.org/uselection2016>.

As for Nixon and Trump, they were very different candidates in an institutional sense, representing parties that functioned differently, running in an electorate that had very different concerns, to become chief executive of a federal government that functioned very differently, yet in terms of their fundamental rhetoric and political behaviour they were very similar. They both presented themselves as saviour candidates, the ones who understood the concerns and fears of the American public in a way that their opponents did not, and as such the only ones who could give the American people the policies needed to combat these concerns and fears. They both relied heavily on relatively new media platforms to spread their message in ways that hadn't previously been done. They both relied heavily on a narrative that identified several vaguely defined out-groups as threats to the American system while at the same time maintaining that they actually had these groups' best interests at heart, that they weren't racist for proposing policies that would disproportionately affect, for example, African Americans, and that their electorate wasn't racist for voting for them. They both depended on backlash against the Democratic party to build their base and they both claimed that the Democratic party was responsible for the perceived weakened state that America was in when they ran, not just because of poor policy decisions but because they actively empowered those groups, both domestic and foreign, that most threatened American peace and stability. When asking whether Trump is Nixonian or whether Nixon was proto-Trumpian the answer depends on how one would define either Nixonian or Trumpian – as simply the rhetorical behaviour they displayed while campaigning, which has been the subject of this thesis, or the subsequent political behaviour once they came into power. Semantics aside however, their campaigns were clearly the result of very similar rhetorical tactics, a similar charismatic relationship with their followers and similar appeals to American optimism and exceptionalism, and their successful application of these tactics allowed them to break into states that had been traditionally Democratic.

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